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LORENZO
THE MAGNIFICENT

"—— Laurens, haud ultima Phœbi
Gloria, jactatis Laurens fida anchora Musis."

ANGELO POLIZIANO (*Rusticus*)

MEDICI PORTRAITS, REPRODUCED FROM LITTÀ

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LORENZO THE MAGNIFICENT

AND FLORENCE IN HER GOLDEN AGE

BY

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AUTHOR OF "SAVONAROLA," "WATERLOO"

WITH TWENTY-FOUR ILLUSTRATIONS
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PREFACE

THIS book has been written for those who will read it whoever they may be, though the writer is not without hope that serious students of the Italian Renaissance will find it—or parts of it—not wholly unworthy of their attention.

I am well aware that there are works of great excellence upon Lorenzo dei Medici already open to the English reader. None the less I will venture to make an effort to justify the appearance of another.

Of existing works in English there are three which may claim to be classics—Mr. Roscoe's life of Lorenzo dei Medici; the English translation of Baron von Reumont's elaborate study; and Mr. Armstrong's monograph.

Roscoe's book, written nearly a century ago, can never be entirely superseded. It retains, moreover, among its many excellences, the prestige attaching to the work of a pioneer. But in the course of a century much fresh light has been thrown on Lorenzo's work and character. Baron von Reumont, therefore, supplied a pressing need by the publication of his volumes, based on most minute, careful and conscientious researches. Almost every available document and source was ransacked by Von Reumont to provide material for his book, and, since his researches were completed, comparatively little that is fresh has come to light.

But it must be confessed that the English translation of Von Reumont's Lorenzo is—to put it frankly—unreadable. However much it may be a treasure to the student, to the general reader it is a terror. It is full of inaccuracies and almost wholly lacking in style. It can only be regarded as a misfortune that a book which is so keen and fine a study

of Humanism should, in its English dress, be wanting in those humanistic qualities, which, had they been present, could scarcely have failed to bring Lorenzo home to every student of character and to every lover of Florence. To re-translate Von Reumont in an interesting way would be in itself no small literary service.

Mr. Armstrong's monograph is a book differing in scope and kind from the productions of Roscoe and Von Reumont. In it we have, from the hand of an acknowledged master, a brilliant impressionist sketch of Lorenzo's character and career. The hero is thrown up in strong relief against a background of deep, though unobtrusive erudition, painted from the fullest knowledge of all the varied aspects—political, constitutional, literary, philosophic, artistic—of the period which he dominated.

Mr. Armstrong's book has been in a sense my despair, for he may seem to have done for Lorenzo all that needed to be done—all that could be done—in a supremely able way.

Yet Mr. Armstrong himself was one of the first to spur me on to accomplish this work which is now presented to the public. The thirty years of continuous friendship which has existed between us, and the grateful memories of a pupil for his tutor, afford sufficient assurance that it is only in a spirit of admiring humility that I venture upon ground already trodden by him.

There are, however, reasons which lead me to hope that this book will to some extent supplement not only Mr. Armstrong's monograph, but also the works of Roscoe and Von Reumont.

For the more I studied Lorenzo the more I became impressed with the quality of his work as a poet. Roscoe told us much of this, and Armstrong knows all, but, as far as I am aware, no writer in English has yet attempted an analysis and critical estimate of Lorenzo's poetic achievement on a scale adequate to his merit. Vernon Lee in her *Euphorion*, Symonds in his "Renaissance in Italy", have done much to stimulate an appetite, but the scope of their work scarcely afforded them the opportunity to satisfy it.

In successive chapters I have reviewed Lorenzo's poetry,

in the hope that *Nencia*, *Ambra*, *Corinto* and the *Capitoli*, by becoming better known, may inspire the sense of appreciation, occasionally rising to enthusiasm, which they have aroused in me.

It was necessary for my purpose to extract, somewhat generously, illustrative passages, and these passages I have given in the original. Each passage is accompanied by a translation, for which, except in one or two specified cases, I am responsible. As I can make no pretensions to be a poet, I cannot hope that my efforts have truly caught the spirit and *brio* of Lorenzo's muse. The only merit that I can claim for them is that, in so far as I could make them so, the translations are faithful and literal.

Though a full harvest has already been reaped from the documents and authorities which supply the material for our knowledge of Lorenzo as a statesman, yet I have perhaps been able to glean here and there some trifles which may serve to enhance the interest of Lorenzo's story. My narrative is based throughout upon original texts and original authorities which I have been able to study at leisure in the quiet atmosphere of the noble library founded by Mrs. John Rylands at Manchester. In that temple of peace which receives the student, dizzy with the roar of Deansgate, into a Gothic shrine dedicated to the service of scholarship and reflection, I have spent many of the happiest hours of my life.

There are to be found not only inestimable treasures which quicken the pulses of *virtuosi* and collectors, but all the apparatus of sound learning, and all the comfort in acquiring it which the heart of a scholar can desire.

Manchester has long been known, to those who know her, as a city pre-eminent for her enthusiasm for the things of the spirit. Permeated as she may be with the passion of commercialism, yet she has never lacked those who have been able to impress upon her corporate life a sense of the dignity of Art, the glory of literature, and the nobility of the service of man. Her galleries, her public libraries, the social effort of her worthiest sons and daughters, have been for years her speaking testimony to the truth that

man, even in Manchester, does not live by bread alone. Now, in her Rylands Library, she challenges the attention of scholars, wherever they may be throughout the world. Now she may dare to aspire to a scholastic reputation akin to that enjoyed by an Oxford or a Cambridge.

I have been permitted to lay a few of the rarities of the library under contribution for the purpose of illustrating this book.

My warmest thanks are due to The Provost of Queen's College, Oxford, for his kindly encouragement; —to Mr. Henry Guppy, Librarian of the Rylands Library, who has seemed to take a positive pleasure in satisfying my every want, at whatever cost of trouble to himself;—to Mr. Frederick B. Miles of New York, President of the American Society for the extension of University Teaching, whose special skill in verse translation has given peculiar value to his criticisms on my verses;—to the proprietors of the rights in Botticelli's illustrations of Dante for permission to reproduce the illustration of Canto X of the "Inferno";—and to my publishers, who, without a murmur, have permitted me to extend the scope of this book far beyond the limits which they originally assigned to it.

Even so I fear that I can make no claim to completeness. There will be found only a few brief and casual references to the Art of Florence in Lorenzo's day, though I have lived for long under its spell. My original intentions have been modified by exigencies of space, and even more so by the contemplation of the many recent works on Florentine Art which, for the time, have exhausted the subject. Want of space again has combined with a sense of my own incompetence as a philosopher to debar me from giving that prominence to the Neo Platonic revival which its interest and importance merit.

E. L. S. H.

St. Helens,
Isle of Wight,
1908.

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LORENZO
THE MAGNIFICENT

INTRODUCTION

THE STATE OF ITALY IN THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

A. VENICE—MILAN—NAPLES

Venice—Milan—Naples—Claims of the Papacy on Naples—The House of Suabia in Naples—Frederick II.—Naples and Henry III. of England—Charles of Anjou—Conflicting claims of Anjou and Aragon to Naples—Reign of the Angevin queen Giovanna I. in Naples—Charles of Durazzo secures the crown of Naples—Renewed rivalry between Houses of Aragon and Anjou—Alphonso of Aragon gains the crown of Naples—Ferrante succeeds to the crown of Naples—Claims of the French kings to Naples.

THE tortuous policy and diplomatic falsities of Italian statesmen of the Renaissance are not necessarily evidence of an abnormal superfluity of naughtiness in those statesmen. Their policy and their diplomacy alike are the reflection of the political conditions at that time existing in Italy. In times that were distracted and out of joint, no State and no statesman could have survived who sought to mould their statecraft on the principles of the Decalogue. An adequate comprehension of the men who directed Italian politics during the last half of the fifteenth century is impossible without a close and connected study of the complicated relations existing between State and State in Italy, and of the almost equally complicated conditions which existed within each State individually. Thus any estimate of the life, character, and policy of Lorenzo the Magnificent must rest largely upon his work as a prince and ruler in Florence, work which was determined not only by the internal conditions prevailing in Florence itself,

but by her relations to her neighbour States, and by the activities and ambitions of the World-Powers of the time.

The latter half of the fifteenth century marks the period when the energies of Western Europe were largely absorbed in the task of formulating and realising the principles of self-contained and consolidated national life. We see the process of nation-making vigorously in action in England, in France, and in Spain. Edward IV. and the Tudors in England, Louis XI. and his successors in France, Ferdinand the Catholic and Isabella in Spain were, each and all, in their respective dominions, engaged in work of the same order. They acted not so much from conscious intention as under the influence of irresistible tendency and the compelling spirit of the age. From this movement towards nationality, however, Italy stood deliberately and consciously aloof. Her aspirations turned rather to the development of the individual than to the development of the nation. The preservation of the distinctive features of her Communes seemed to her of more importance than the unification of her geographical area. To be a Florentine, a Venetian, or a Roman was more than to be an Italian.

Yet Italy had not surrendered a national ideal without many struggles, nor could she wholly escape from the tendencies of the age. The aspirations of Dante's "De Monarchia" still find an echo, two hundred years later, in Macchiavelli's "Prince." Cesare Borgia was perhaps trying to effect in a practical way what Henry of Luxemburg only dreamed of as an idealist. The whole policy of Robert the Wise of Naples was directed towards the unification of Italy under the dominion of his House. The Visconti, operating from Milan and the North, contemplated the realisation of a similar purpose. But circumstances were too strong for such ambitions. The tradition of the Roman Empire had accustomed Italians to regard themselves as superior to the trammels of a narrow national existence. The World-Power of the Papacy in the domain of spiritual affairs made it difficult, if not impossible, for

the Papacy to accommodate itself to the idea of a supreme temporal Power in Italy other than itself. No Italian State would have consented to the establishment of a universal temporal sovereignty in Italy vested in the Popes, nor could there have been any guarantee for the permanence or effectiveness of such a sovereignty, had it been established.

Thus Italians, in their several States and Communes, were thrown back upon themselves. The swelling tide of nationality passed by them to wash other shores. Italy was content to be politically a chaos, if intellectually she might rule the world.

Such efforts, however, as in the past Italy had made towards consolidation had, in the fifteenth century, assumed forms of definite achievement. Five Governments now stood out from the rest, occupying almost the position of Great Powers in Italy, the smaller communities having been absorbed by them, or being in rapid process of absorption. Venice and Milan in the north, Florence and the States of the Church in the centre, the kingdom of Naples in the south, these States now practically partitioned Italy between them. In a measure independent and self-contained, yet they were for the most part intimately associated by the ties of common and contrary interests. Naples and Milan, however, though they made so brave a show, were doomed to fatal weakness and instability by claims upon them from outside which might at any time be asserted and might very possibly be enforced.

I.

Of these five Powers by far the most stable, the wealthiest, and the most considered was Venice. Her geographical position had proved favourable to the extension of her territories and influence in directions where Italian rivalry was scarcely to be feared. She had carried her dominion over the Adriatic, and established it over the eastern coastline of that sea, over the Morea, Cyprus, Candia, Negroponte, and many of the smaller islands of the Grecian

Archipelago. Her fleets patrolled the Dardanelles and the Black Sea. Her argosies with portly sail ventured far, eastward and westward, and Venice became the *dépôt* for the trade of the known world. Not content with holding the gorgeous East in fee, Venice prosecuted her conquests beyond the westward limits of her lagoons, and established herself as a territorial Power upon the mainland of Italy. Padua, Verona, Brescia, Bergamo were successively forced to own her sway, and by 1454 the River Adda formed the boundary westward of the Venetian dominions. To the south she had secured Ravenna, and in the War of Ferrara, in 1481, it seemed to be her purpose, by the acquisition of Ferrara, to consolidate her possessions south of the River Po.

The circumstances in which Venice had acquired her maritime and territorial influence had not been entirely of her own choice and making. Nature had prescribed to her her influence in the East, though her own efforts had established it. Self-preservation had compelled her to make good her insular position when it was menaced from Padua, from Verona, or from Milan. But a certain aloofness on the part of Venice from the common concerns of Italian life, her hard, dry, persistent prosecution of her own ends without regard, as it seemed, to any of those prejudices or restraints which were operative elsewhere, created the general impression that in the game of Italian politics she played for her own hand alone: there was an uneasy suspicion that she would never relax her zeal for dominion until she had secured the sovereignty of the whole of Italy. That this suspicion was less than just to Venice did not mitigate its force, though in a war of recrimination she could raise a powerful voice. She could point to sixteen years of constant warfare against the advancing power of the Turks (1463–1479), to the fact that she had entered upon that war relying on the faith of Papal representations and on the security of European support, but that she had been forced to bear the ruinous burden of it single-handed. If at last she made peace with the victorious Sultan from sheer inability to support her burden any longer, she cannot

therefore be justly accused of opening the way to Italy for the Turkish forces. Yet when Otranto fell, in 1480, this was the accusation brought against her. Suspicions were deepened when she refused to make common cause with the Italian States against the Turks, and utilised the advantages of her own position to begin a war of aggression against Ferrara.

The fatal blow to Venetian supremacy and Venetian pride came, not from Italy, but from an unsuspected and far-off quarter. The discovery of the Cape of Good Hope, and the rounding of that cape by Vasco da Gama, opened out the Atlantic as a waterway to the East. The monopoly of the Adriatic and of the Mediterranean was gone, and the decline of Venice, the great monopolist, followed as a natural consequence. But these events belong rather to the sixteenth than to the fifteenth century. In the days when Lorenzo ruled at Florence, Venice, though in straits with the Turks, displayed towards Italy an arrogant and haughty front. She was the great enigma, the incalculable element in Italian politics, except that men were persuaded that, whatever her action, it would be dictated solely by self-interest and the spirit of aggrandisement.

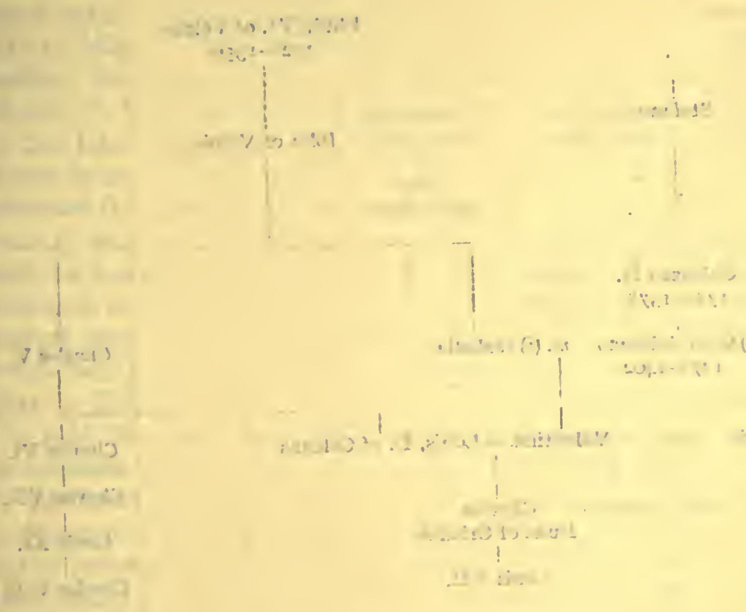
II.

In close proximity to Venice, and frequently in deadly rivalry with her, was the State of Milan. Originally a fief of the Empire, the Imperial Vicars had at last succeeded in obtaining over Milan a practically independent sovereignty. By letters patent from the Emperor Wenceslaus in 1395 Milan was created a Duchy for Gian Galeazzo of the ancient House of Visconti. This was but the recognition of the fact that the Visconti had now become masters, not of Milan only, but of a vast extent of surrounding territory. Gian Galeazzo had carried his victorious arms eastward as far as Verona. To the south, Pisa, Siena, Perugia, Assisi, Bologna, Spoleto fell before him. Visions of himself as King of Italy rose before his eyes. He even went so far as to demand the title from the existing Pope. By his wife

Isabella of France Gian Galeazzo had an only daughter, Valentina. Her he betrothed to Louis, Duke of Orleans, brother of the French king Charles VI. From this marriage there arose the claim of the House of Orleans to Milan which was ultimately to be the source of so many woes alike to Italy and to France. By his second wife, Caterina Visconti, Gian Galeazzo had two sons, Giovanni Maria, who succeeded him in 1402, and Filipo Maria, the last of the Visconti, who succeeded his brother in 1412. The reign of this prince is marked by the wars between Milan and Venice which resulted in those accessions to the Venetian territory which have already been referred to.

The military adventures of Filipo Maria led him to seek the assistance of Francesco Sforza, the most skilful and powerful of those mercenary captains of the time whose arms were at the disposal of the highest bidder. The services rendered by Sforza to the Visconti were so great as to make him indispensable. The auxiliary began to show himself more powerful than his employer. There was the constant danger that if Sforza were not satisfied he would transfer his own brilliant talent and his fighting strength to the side of the enemies of Milan.

To avert this contingency Filipo Maria gave to Francesco the hand of his illegitimate daughter Bianca, his only child. Thus, through his wife, Sforza could put forward formidable claims of his own to succeed to the Duchy of Milan, claims which when backed by the practical argument of irresistible military force were not likely to be denied. He was, however, a prudent and deep-scheming man, who knew well how to bide his time and catch the favourable moment. When, on the death of Duke Filipo Maria in 1447, Milan declared herself a republic, Sforza apparently acquiesced in the arrangement. He accepted the position of Captain-General of the Milanese forces, and, while moulding events, seemed only to wait upon them. Three years later the pear was ripe, and Sforza only had to pluck it. In 1450 he possessed himself without a blow of the sovereignty of Milan, and established the House of a peasant adventurer in the proud seats of the Visconti.



This steadfast, silent, implacable advance towards an end long foreseen, remorselessly pursued, and victoriously achieved, has won for Sforza the admiration of Macchiavelli. He is an example held up before the eyes of princes for their edification and imitation. Princes, says Macchiavelli, should lay the foundations of any new power they may seek to acquire long before they strike the blow which will acquire it. "Francesco, by suitable measures, being endowed with great qualities, from a private citizen became Duke of Milan. He had spent a thousand toils to gain the position, but once gained, he maintained it with little difficulty." This was true, but Macchiavelli was to live to see the fatal weakness of the Sforza position. It rested ultimately on nothing but force, and superior force would overthrow it. The French claim to Milan, through Valentina Visconti, was in abeyance, but it was not forgotten. It could be held *in terrorem* over the Sforza dukes by any enemies to whom they were opposed, and it offered to their political opponents the fatal inducement to summon the French into Italy to assert and make good their hereditary rights in Milan.

In 1466 Francesco Sforza died, and was succeeded by his son Galeazzo Maria. Galeazzo plays an important part in the diplomacy of Lorenzo dei Medici, and, worthless as was his personal character, yet he stood as a sort of guarantee for the peace of Italy. The dramatic circumstances of his assassination in 1476 mark a crisis in the history of the country. "To-day," said Pope Sixtus, "the peace of Italy is dead." The Pontiff himself could scarcely have known how true a word he spoke. Galeazzo Maria left a young son, Gian Galeazzo II., and a bevy of ambitious brothers, intent only upon their own aggrandisement, and upon wresting all authority from the hands of their sister-in-law who was Regent for her youthful son. Of these brothers, Ludovico, popularly known as Il Moro, was the most aspiring, the most unscrupulous, and for a time the most successful.

Favoured by circumstances, he secured the guardianship of his nephew, kept him studiously in retirement,

and usurped the sovereignty of Milan. But the action of Ludovico only made the Sforza tenure in Milan still more precarious and uncertain. Ludovico's whole policy was necessarily directed to maintaining himself, and he could stand only so long as he was supported. Supposing himself to be a master in statecraft, he set in motion all the apparatus of falsehood, fraud, and chicanery which passed for statecraft in Italy in those days; and at last he found himself caught in his own toils. In an incautious moment he had permitted his nephew, the young Duke Gian Galeazzo, to marry Isabella, the daughter of Alphonso, heir to the kingdom of Naples. Ludovico's own sister, Hippolita, was Isabella's mother. Thus he had to fear the intervention of Naples in assertion of the rights of his nephew, and in his diplomatic relations with Naples he found himself constantly hampered by the irregularity of his personal position. It was of course an easy expedient for Ludovico to make counter-play with the claims which France possessed to the Neapolitan kingdom, but the game was dangerous in the extreme. While prosecuting one claim in Italy, France might think it well at the same time to prosecute another. By calling in the French in order to distract the attention of Naples from himself, he ran the risk of attracting very forcibly the attention of France to the desirability of ousting Ludovico and establishing her own sovereignty over Milan.

III.

The question of the French claims upon Naples involves a survey of what Bishop Creighton calls a "dreary and complicated history." Of the complications there can be no doubt, but if only it be possible to find a clue to guide us through a labyrinth of genealogical involutions and international pretensions, the history of Naples from the days of Frederick II. to the coming of Charles VIII. of France (1494) supplies abundant elements of drama and romance. Though the story is somewhat long for an introductory chapter, yet the relations between Naples and Lorenzo dei Medici

were so intimate and important, and, moreover, without a clear knowledge of the situation in Naples, so difficult to understand, that proportion will not be violated if some considerable space is given to the presentment of the broad outlines of the story.

The Neapolitan kingdom was originally established by Norman adventurers out of territories which they had wrested from the Saracens. War against the infidel was holy war, carried on under the ægis and sanction of Holy Church. The victorious Normans regularised their position in Naples by securing Papal recognition for their tenure of it. The Popes accordingly claimed to be the suzerains of Naples, and whoever held it, held it, according to Papal theory, as a vassal of the Holy See. This condition is constant throughout the period with which we are concerned, and is the first perplexing element in the situation which it is necessary to have constantly in mind.

Naples passed in due course from the Normans to the House of Suabia, and under its most brilliant representative, the Emperor Frederick II., Naples and Sicily became his chief paradise of delights, that corner of his dominions which he most loved ; on which he lavished all his care. The bitter enmity between Frederick II. and the Papacy affords the chief dramatic interest of his brilliant reign, and it was a natural consequence of that enmity that the Popes, mindful of their sovereign rights over Naples, should look outside the line of Frederick for some suitable ruler for the Papal fief.

It is at this point that the crown of Naples and Sicily became mixed up with our English history. The realm was offered by Pope Innocent IV. to Richard of Cornwall, brother of the English king Henry III. ; though refused by Richard, it was accepted by Henry on behalf of his own son Edmund, Earl of Lancaster.

Thus Henry was made the cat's-paw of Papal ambition. He permitted the country to be drained by ruinous exactions, extorted to support a wild-cat scheme of adventure in which his subjects could feel no interest ; thus he precipitated the Barons' War, and came within an ace of losing his own kingdom.

A more promising opportunity for Papal action was afforded by events which followed the death of Conrad, the son and successor of Frederick II. Even in Conrad's lifetime his authority had been maintained chiefly through the strength, vigour, and brilliant qualities of his illegitimate brother Manfred. When, in 1254, Conrad was succeeded by his son Conradin, a child not three years old, the actual government fell naturally to Manfred, who became the avowed head of the anti-Papal or Ghibelline party in Italy.

Successive Popes by this time had realised that nothing more was to be got from England. Nor was the Papacy strong enough to enforce its own assertion that Naples had reverted, as a lapsed fief, to the Holy See. At this juncture recourse was had to France, and the crown of Naples and Sicily was offered by Pope Urban IV. to the brother of St. Louis, Charles of Anjou.

It was in 1265 that Charles of Anjou came to Italy to win from Manfred the kingdom with which the Papacy had endowed him. Guelph and Ghibelline stood facing each other, for once the recognised symbols of an intelligible antagonism. On the fatal field of Benevento Manfred fell, (1266). Two years later the chivalrous, gallant young Conradin became a prisoner in the hands of Charles, and was barbarously executed. The House of Suabia had fallen. The House of Anjou was established upon the throne of Naples.

But though the last legitimate scion of the House of Suabia had been cut off, the independent claims of the House of Manfred were not extinguished. Manfred's daughter Constance had married Peter III. of Aragon, and through her the Aragonese sovereigns could still assert a claim to the crowns of Naples and Sicily. The Aragonese claim on Naples was strengthened when Sicily revolted against the tyranny of Charles of Anjou. The Sicilian Vespers in 1282 sounded the knell of French domination in the island. An appeal was made to Aragon to assume the sovereignty of Sicily. An Aragonese dynasty ruled there independently for more than a century, when Sicily became incorporated into the kingdom of Aragon.

Meanwhile the fortunes of the House of Anjou in Naples had been subjected to many changes and vicissitudes. The ramifications of the family almost defy analysis, and test beyond endurance even the strongest memory. Conflicting claims to the throne of Naples arose among the Angevins themselves, and a crisis ensued upon the death of Robert the Wise when his direct heir proved to be a woman, whose rights, apart from the question of sex, were by no means unimpeachable.

For forty years, however, Giovanna I. maintained herself precariously upon the throne, but upon her death, in 1382, she left everything in a welter of confusion. Though four times married, she left no children to succeed her, and during the later years of her reign she had kept Naples agog by her ever-shifting dispositions in regard to the succession.

The claims of the two great Houses of Durazzo and Tarento, which sprang from two brothers of Robert the Wise, seemed to be concentrated in the person of Charles of Durazzo, who regarded himself as Giovanna's heir. Indeed, he endeavoured to anticipate his succession by an expedition in quest of the Neapolitan throne during Giovanna's lifetime. The queen retaliated by adopting as her heir and successor Louis of Anjou, Count of Provence and brother of the reigning King of France, Charles V. (1380). By this time the great Schism in the Papacy had begun, and the rival Popes of Rome and Avignon fought one another through the medium of Naples. Each Pope simultaneously claimed to be the suzerain of the kingdom, and to possess the ultimate rights over the disposal of it.

The expedition of Charles of Durazzo was under the immediate sanction of the Roman Pope, Urban VI. Clement VII. at Avignon was equally active in support of the queen and of Louis of Anjou. The success of Charles, which was consolidated by the murder of Giovanna in 1382, was followed by his assumption of the crown under the title of Charles III., and he was able to transmit his kingdom to his two children in succession, Ladislas, who died without issue in 1414, and Giovanna II., who died without issue in 1435.

The situation was now much what it had been in the time of Giovanna I. No one knew who was to succeed, and the queen herself had covered the tracks with astonishing and truly feminine ingenuity. She was a woman of infamous character, and on her caprices and gallantries age seemed to have no effect. Foremost and most influential among her various favourites was Giovanni Carracioli. By his insolence and self-seeking he succeeded in alienating from Giovanna the support of Sforza Attendolo, foremost among the *Condottieri* leaders, and one of the most remarkable men at that time in Italy.

Sforza's natural course, in opposing Carracioli and the queen, was to attach himself to the cause of Louis of Anjou, who maintained the claims of his grandfather to the throne of Naples. In her straits Giovanna looked around for assistance, and bethought herself of the House of Aragon and its claims to Naples, which were certainly equally valid with those of Anjou. If Alphonso V. of Aragon would now come to her help she would adopt him as her heir, and upon her death he would succeed to the Neapolitan crown. The bait was irresistible: Alphonso threw himself with vigour into the contest. But it was not long before the capricious queen grew frightened by the resolute character of her ally. Dissatisfaction and distrust arose on each side; when Alphonso attempted to anticipate his fortunes by seizing Carracioli and making himself master of the queen herself Giovanna retorted by disinheriting Alphonso and adopting Louis of Anjou as heir to her crown.

Thus it was that on Giovanna's death the Houses of Aragon and Anjou stood facing one another in deadly rivalry for the possession of Naples. Louis of Anjou was now dead, but on his death the queen had recognised his brother René as her heir, and, under the terms of her will, René promptly asserted his rights. The Pope in the meantime insisted that, in default of lineal successors, Naples had reverted to the Holy See. Angevin claims, Aragonese claims, Papal claims, all stand out prominently and in opposition at the same time. Alphonso was the claimant who best knew how to take occasion by the hand. He was

able to turn even his defeats to his advantage. Taken prisoner by the Genoese, and committed to the custody of Filipo Maria Visconti as overlord of Genoa, he succeeded in persuading Visconti that the interests of Milan required that the French should be kept out of Italy. With the House of Aragon in possession of Naples, in close alliance with Milan, the key to the situation in Italy would be in the hands of the Milanese duke. The personal fascinations of Alphonso were as powerful as his arguments. An alliance was formed between Filipo Maria and his prisoner, and in due course Alphonso V. of Aragon became Alphonso I. of Naples.

But the triumph of the House of Aragon in Naples by no means implied any abandonment of their claims on the part of its rivals. René of Provence still continued to style himself King of Naples—his son, John of Anjou, was known as the Duke of Calabria, the title usually borne by the heir-apparent to the Neapolitan throne. The Papacy, not strong enough to enforce its own independent claims, could make the situation dangerous and precarious for every one else. Thus Naples became the most important piece upon the political chessboard. If France should prove troublesome, an immediate and obvious retort was to support the Aragonese dynasty. If Naples should show herself aggressive or refractory, she could be brought to heel by the threat of enforcing French claims.

Alphonso found his position difficult notwithstanding his eminent capacity and brilliant gifts. Upon his death it seemed likely that confusion would be worse confounded, for there was no legitimate heir of his body to succeed him. All his political efforts therefore had been directed to securing the succession to Naples for his illegitimate son Ferdinand, known commonly as Ferrante; but, notwithstanding the laxity of view which prevailed in Italy on the subject of legitimacy, the fact of Ferrante's birth, taken in conjunction with the general weakness of the Aragonese position in Naples, contributed still further to complicate conditions which were already sufficiently tangled.

In 1458 Alphonso died, and his kingdoms of Aragon and

Sicily passed to his brother, John II. There was no question of Ferrante succeeding there, although his father had been able to induce successive Popes to recognise his legitimacy, and this recognition, if it had been anything more than nominal, would have entitled him to succeed to all the possessions of Alphonso. But the action of the Popes in regard to the matter must only be taken as an expression of their weakness at the moment and their need of Alphonso's support. Eugenius IV. had his own troubles with the Council of Basle, and Nicolas V. wanted to compose all enmities in order that Christendom might show a united front to the Turks, now masters of Constantinople (1453), and bent upon extending still further their dominion in Europe.

Ferrante was content to put forward his claims to Naples alone, and was strong enough and astute enough to enforce them. An attempt on the part of John of Anjou to secure the kingdom for his father René only served to show how incompetent the Angevins were to take advantage of their own successes. René was fitter for poetry and a quiet life than for the conquest of kingdoms. Pope Calixtus III. was violently hostile to Ferrante, but this was only because he saw an opportunity of conferring the crown of Naples upon one of his own nephews, Pedro Borgia. Fortunately for Ferrante, Calixtus died before he could take any action to effect his purpose. Pope Pius II. took a more reasonable view of the situation. He wanted a king at Naples who would be useful to the Church, and Ferrante was more likely to be useful than the feeble René, than any interloper imposed upon Naples by the Papacy whom nobody at all would recognise. Moreover, Pius II. had deeply at heart his own projects for a general crusade against the Turks. In the circumstances it seemed best to recognise Ferrante's position. Accordingly in 1458 the Pope granted to him the investiture of Naples, " without prejudice to the rights of another," on condition that the king should pay to the Holy See an annual tribute, should withdraw his troops from the States of the Church, and should restore to the Church, either immediately or in due course, those

ecclesiastical fiefs which had been granted personally to Alphonso.

The reign of Ferrante, extending from 1458 to 1494, more than covers the whole political career of Lorenzo dei Medici. It is therefore only necessary, at this point, to note the position of the Angevin claims up to the time of the expedition against Naples undertaken by Charles VIII. of France in 1494.

René of Provence and Anjou—the father, it may be noted, of Margaret of Anjou, "she-wolf of France," wife of Henry VI. of England—survived his son, the Duke of Calabria, and his grandson. His claims passed to his nephew—Charles, Count of Maine—who died without issue in 1481. By his will he bequeathed his dominions, together with his claims on Naples, to Louis XI. of France.

This sagacious monarch was glad to get Provence, for thus he was able to round off his work of consolidating the kingdom, but he was content merely to note, as an interesting and picturesque accompaniment to his substantial titles, the pretensions which the crown of France could now put forward to an Italian kingdom.

His son, Charles VIII., was fired by more romantic ambitions. He determined actively to prosecute his Neapolitan claims. He was, indeed, urged to do so by those Italian statesmen who saw their own advantage in the confusions of Italy. In 1494 Charles had completed his plans. The Italian expedition was launched which was to prove the ruin of Italy: which was to prove, it may almost be said, the beginning of the modern world. Incidentally, as a consequence of the expedition, the House of Medici was overthrown in Florence, and the brief theocracy of Savonarola was established under the patronage of the French king. Lorenzo himself, fortunate in his death, was spared from being a witness of the destruction of his hopes, the ruin of his policy, and the degradation of his country. He had died in 1492.

B. THE PAPACY

The Papacy in the fifteenth century—The Papacy in relation to its temporal power—The great Schism of the West, 1378–1417—The Papacy after the Schism—Eugenius IV.—The Conciliar spirit—Nicolas V.—Extinction of the Conciliar spirit—Policy of Nicolas V.—Papal policy in regard to the States of the Church—Advantages attaching to the Papacy from its dual position—Disadvantages—Papal nepotism—The Papacy and the Italian Powers—Florence—Venice—Milan—The Italian Powers and the Turks—The Popes and Prince Djem.

The position of the Papacy in the fifteenth century is so anomalous, and the conduct of successive Popes is so at variance with the Christ-like character, that it is difficult even for unprejudiced critics to reconcile its pretensions with its actions. The Papacy, however, like all other institutions, must be judged in relation to its historical environment; so judged, it will be found that the corruption of its ideals and the characters of its representatives were the result of the prevailing conditions rather than of the individual wickedness of the Popes themselves. The times indeed were such, that men of scrupulous and saintly character upon the chair of St. Peter could have brought nothing but ruin to that fabric of Papal power which had been transmitted to them from the past. The question whether that fabric should ever have been reared, whether it was worth transmitting, whether the object should have been, not to preserve it, but to destroy it, is another question which is not under discussion. The Renaissance Popes found their position defined for them. They had not created it, but they felt themselves bound, to the utmost of their power, to maintain it; had they not sought to maintain it, they would undoubtedly have lost the respect, and probably the allegiance, of all Christendom.

The possession of a temporal sovereignty, especially a sovereignty situated in Italy, placed the Papacy in a dilemma. On the one side was its spiritual position, to be enforced by spiritual arms alone. On the other side lay its temporal dominions, exposed to the greedy covetousness of all its neighbours. If these dominions were not to be lost they must be governed by men acting as other men; by astute

politicians ready to match their political sagacity against the most unscrupulous statecraft that the world has ever seen ; by resolute Princes whose business it was to put armies in the field, despatch them to service, and if need be encourage them on campaign ; by men of the world in fact, in contact with the world as it was, not by ascetics and pietists who dreamed of a world as it ought to be.

The student of the Papacy is almost compelled to the opinion that the greatest and most fatal of its acquisitions was the acquisition of a temporal sovereignty in Italy. He may agree with Dante that the Church had then made to herself a god of silver and of gold, and that the chief difference between the Pope in Dante's day and the idolater was that " he worships one and ye a hundred."

> Ahi, Constantin, di quanto mal fu matre,
> non la tua conversion, ma quella dote
> che da ti prese il primo ricco padre.
>
> *Inferno*, C. xix. 115.*

But the fatal gift had been accepted long ago in the dim recesses of time. Territorial sovereignty had become inextricably bound up with the very existence of the Papacy as a spiritual force. To the best of Popes, as well as to the worst, it may have seemed the first and most sacred duty at all hazards to maintain it.

At the beginning of the fifteenth century the Papacy found itself at the lowest level of its fortunes. The brightness of its mediæval glory had long been dimmed ; the splendid visions of a Gregory VII. or an Innocent III. had vanished into the mists. For nearly a century successive Popes had been content to abandon the ideal of universal spiritual dominion over Christendom, to abandon Rome, the fount and seat of their greatness, in order to live at ease in Avignon and enjoy the protection and contemptuous patronage of the Kings of France.

The return of the Papacy to Rome (1378) was immediately followed by the outbreak of the Great Schism of the West,

* " Ah, Constantine ! how much evil was born as from a mother, not by reason of thy conversion, but by that gift which the first rich Father took from thee," alluding to the alleged Donation of Constantine the Great of territorial possessions in Italy to the Papacy.

when first two Popes, and then three, strove each against the other for the allegiance of Europe. One question, when the fifteenth century dawned, engrossed the minds of all serious men. How was the Schism to be healed? How was the unity of the Christian Church to be asserted? A General Council of the Universal Latin Church seemed to offer the best hope of a settlement, and the Council of Constance (1415), summoned by the joint authority of the Emperor and one of the contesting Popes, seemed to be the nearest possible approach to a representative ecclesiastical Parliament. But the theory of the validity of a Universal Council to make and unmake Popes was at variance with the first principle of the Papal monarchy which the Middle Ages had so laboriously constructed—the principle of its complete and unquestioned absolutism. A Pope deriving his position from a Council must acknowledge that, as a creature, he was less than his creator, and yet, if he were to be faithful to his trust, he must acknowledge his inferiority to no man and no body of men. But the exigencies of the situation did not admit an absolute and purely logical settlement. By a Council only could the Schism be healed, for no man knew who was in truth the rightful Pope. By the vote of the Council of Constance Martin V., of the great House of Colonna, was elected Pope, and was generally acknowledged. But his position was difficult. He must aim at regaining the lost prestige, the lost privileges of the Papacy, and the lost control of the Papal territories in Italy, at a time when every territorial rival was keen to take advantage of the weakness of his position. Naples especially had old scores to settle. Martin might flatter himself that he enjoyed the obedience of Christendom, but it was an obedience which he enjoyed indirectly through a Council rather than directly as absolute Pope. Moreover, the Council of Constance had taken care not to dissolve without providing for the frequent convocation of future Councils; and as long as this Conciliar spirit prevailed, no Pope could call himself master in his own house. Respect and true obedience would follow only from the possession of absolute

power, and that power only would be understood and realised which took the material form of a temporal sovereignty, ready to enter into competition with other temporal sovereigns, and to engage them with their own weapons.

The truth of this had been sufficiently demonstrated during the Pontificate of Eugenius IV., who succeeded Martin V. Eugenius suffered to the full under the outburst of Conciliar enthusiasm. It was indeed this enthusiasm which proved the salvation of the Papacy. The Council of Basle, summoned in due course in accordance with the decrees of Constance, showed itself extreme, pragmatical, and contumacious. When it went to the length of renewing the Schism by electing a Pope of its own, and deposing Eugenius, it exceeded its mission and lost the popular support of Christendom on which alone it rested. Moreover, Eugenius was astute enough to utilise the Conciliar spirit to the advantage of the Papacy. He took the wind out of the sails of the Council of Basle by calling a Council on his own account at Ferrara. Its purpose was international, and in a sense practical, for the aim of Eugenius was to see if anything could be done to bring about a reconciliation between the Latin and the Greek Churches. The business of conciliation on which the Pope was engaged contrasted favourably with the factious and schismatic endeavours of the disaffected clique at Basle, which persisted in calling itself a Council of the Universal Church.

Though the efforts of the Fathers gathered at Florence (the Council was transferred from Ferrara to Florence in 1439) were successful only on paper, the terms of union to which the Greeks had consented being emphatically rejected at home, yet the Pope could claim at any rate a nominal triumph, and the attempt itself counted to him for righteousness.

The reign of Nicolas V., the successor of Eugenius, was not troubled by Councils. Conciliar enthusiasm had worked itself out, and Pius II. by 1460, had re-established Papal autocracy on a sufficiently strong basis to issue the Bull *Execrabilis*, in which he declared that it was an

execrable abuse, unheard of in ancient times, to appeal to a Council which the Pope had not authorised. Any such appeals, if made, were declared to be invalid; any one making them was *ipso facto* excommunicated, together with those who framed or witnessed any document containing such appeals.

The Bull marks an epoch, not so much because it secured immediate and general recognition—Councils still continued to be used as threats held *in terrorem* over Popes by their political and spiritual opponents—but because it was an evidence that the assertion of the representative principle in the government of the Church was no longer potent; that the counter-assertion of Papal absolutism was in a fair way to general recognition. "The Bull of Pius II., though not immediately successful, worked its way into the ecclesiastical system, and became one of the pillars on which the Papal authority rested." *

There were other ways, besides war against the Conciliar movement, by which the Popes could re-establish their sovereignty and restore the weakened prestige of the Holy See. To secure themselves in Rome, and identify the traditions of Imperial Rome with the splendours of the Papal Court, were projects which would make a strong appeal to the imaginations of men, and at the same time give weight, stability, and consideration to the Papacy itself.

Something might also be gained by associating the Papacy with the spirit of Humanism and the passion for classical scholarship and antiquity which were the dominant characteristics of the Renaissance in Italy. It is thus that the reign of Nicolas V. (1447–1455) assumes a special importance in the Papal history of the fifteenth century. A scholar and a humanist, raised to the highest seat from a position of obscurity, he gave to the world, in his own person, an example of what the forces then at work could do for a man who gave them full scope to act upon him. Rome was dignified and ennobled by the concourse of scholars and artists who gathered around the court of Nicolas and

* Creighton, "History of the Papacy," iii. 240.

enjoyed the patronage of a Pope who was himself a scholar and a connoisseur. It is not necessary to suppose that the action of Nicolas V. was governed solely by policy and calculation. He loved art, scholarship, and magnificence for their own sake. But he was also conscious of their political value as instruments whereby to recover for the Papacy its prestige, and few of his successors could afford to be entirely indifferent to the special claims of culture upon the Roman Pontiff.

In the same manner Nicolas V. devoted himself to the task of making Rome a fitting capital for the Holy See. To make it sanitary, to widen its streets, to adorn it with splendid churches and palaces, became the recognised policy of the Papacy from the time of Nicolas V. If, indeed, the Coliseum became a stone-quarry, and the precious remains of ancient Rome were incorporated into modern structures, this is only one example of many of the strange incongruities and contradictory ideas which characterised even enlightened men in these strange times. The Rome of Leo X. was foreshadowed and prepared by the policy of Nicolas V., of Sixtus IV., of Alexander VI., and Julius II.

But all this, important as it was, was of small account if the Popes were not masters over their own territories. Men might entertain an abstract regard for a Pope who was cultured and magnificent, but, when it came to the point, they would only obey a Pope who was strong and had force at his command. In the circumstances it is difficult to see how the Popes of this time could possibly have avoided the policy of straining every nerve to make their sovereignty effective over the States of the Church. If the necessity of the policy be granted we must accept it, and with it the consequences which it entailed.

On the field of Italian politics the Pope would find himself on every side surrounded by adversaries. The semi-independent feudatories of the Holy See, who had profited by the distractions of the Papacy to secure to themselves an almost uncontrolled supremacy in their respective States, would oppose to the utmost any attempt to reduce them within the legal limits of their tenure. A vigorous

policy of Papal self-assertion in Italy would inevitably rouse the suspicions and distrust of the greater Italian powers, each as jealous of the aggrandisement of others as intent upon aggrandising itself. It would not be sufficient for the Pope to employ military forces and engineer campaigns from the recesses of the Vatican. He must himself descend into the arena, and fight among the other gladiators for his own hand. He must be a match for his opponents at their own game, and oppose Italian statecraft, which was made up of force, fraud, treachery, and lies, by a statecraft equally subtle and unscrupulous. It was only so that politics at this time could be carried on in Italy. It is indeed deplorable that the Vicars of Christ should have been called upon to take part in such a sordid game. But the Renaissance Popes were not responsible for the conditions; they were only responsible for confronting the conditions with vigour and address. It is a point capable of argument that had they adopted methods in harmony with the sanctity of their position, the ultimate results would have more than justified them. It is conceivable that a regenerated Italy might have arisen, called into being by the spectacle and example of a firm, prudent, and saintly Pope. It is possible that no Reformation would have been needed. But the hard logic of facts seems to show that Popes of good character were out of place at this time—the experiment with Adrian VI. was a hopeless failure—and when we wonder how it was that a particular period gives us a succession of Popes whose characters harmonise only too faithfully with everything that was most corrupt in the Italian of the time, we have to remember that such men were deliberately chosen as Popes because their characters gave evidence that they were fitted for the work which had to be done.

In the game of politics, as carried on in Italy, the Popes possessed both advantages and disadvantages peculiar to themselves. Their advantage lay in the fact that they possessed, and could simultaneously exercise, both temporal and spiritual weapons. Worsted in the field of battle, they could retaliate upon their adversaries by excommunication

and interdict. Even in Italy Papal thunders were not wholly without effect, and outside Italy their force was considerable. Nothing is more remarkable in this sceptical and unchristian age than the mingled contempt and respect with which the Papacy was regarded. Men whose every action in life had stamped them as careless of God or Devil yet could not die happy without the Papal absolution. Men who had given their lives to opposing the political action of the Pontiff were yet impressed by the deepest sense of reverence for his spiritual office. This double character with which the Pope was invested gave him a distinct advantage in times of emergency, and he knew how to make full use of the superstition and credulity of the day.

Another advantage of somewhat doubtful efficacy was the Pope's power to bind and loose. It came practically to mean that nothing could bind the Pope. A treaty might be a convenient way of getting out of a difficulty, but, the difficulty once overcome, there was no obligation on the Pope to observe the treaty. And the same latitude which he claimed for himself he could extend to others. A Prince, sheltered behind a Papal Brief, could conscientiously excuse himself for breach of faith, however flagrant. Macchiavelli, when instructing his Prince as to how he should keep faith, assures him that pretexts need never be wanting which will justify him in breaking faith when it is expedient to do so. Thus—and this is the disadvantage of the situation—an atmosphere was created of general mistrust. Nobody put any confidence in anybody, and the most deliberate assurances and the most solemn oaths were only binding as long as it was convenient to observe them.

The most serious disadvantage in the position of the Papacy is to be found in the tenure by which each Pope held office. He was Pope only for life; he was elected at an age when it was improbable he would live long: if in the case of Leo X. he was elected when young, this was only because Leo suffered under an incurable disease which, it was thought, must inevitably cut short his life. There

was no guarantee for continuity of policy from one Pope to another, and hence the Papal government was constantly exposed to individual caprices and violent changes. Macchiavelli estimated the Pope's tenure of office at ten years on an average. In the Italian States, on the other hand, the government passed by inheritance; there was some guarantee for continuity of policy, and while Popes were constantly changing, the temporal despot might live for a long term of years. Ferrante of Naples ruled for thirty-six years. During this time he saw the election of five Popes. The government of Lorenzo dei Medici in Florence, begun under Paul II., extended over the Pontificates of Sixtus IV. and Innocent VIII. Francesco Sforza governed Milan for sixteen years.

Of this disadvantage the Popes had long been fully sensible. The difficulty lay in finding any remedy for it. The conditions of his election, of his celibacy, and of his office necessarily condemned each Pope to a position of isolation. Thus, the temptation to make as much individual profit as possible out of his brief tenure of power was almost irresistibly strong. Leo X. was only a little more frank and a little more cynical than others when he hailed his election with the remark, "Let us enjoy the Papacy, since God has given it to us."

But if a Pope was precluded from establishing for himself individually a position of territorial power, he might do much during his Pontificate to enrich and aggrandise his family. With many of the Popes of this period it became an object to carve out of the States of the Church principalities for scions of their house: the flagrant and unblushing nepotism of Sixtus IV. and Alexander VI. is only an extreme expression of a policy which Popes had followed for centuries.

It was, moreover, always possible for Popes to deceive themselves that in acting in the interests of their families they were in truth acting in the interests of the Church. If it was a paramount necessity that the rebellious and semi-independent States of the Church should be reduced to obedience, the Pope must use for this purpose some secular instrument on which he could absolutely rely. He must

have some one at his disposal who thoroughly understood and sympathised with his policy, who had some personal interest to gain from it, and who in the field and in the council chamber was a match for the military and political antagonists by whom he was confronted. Where was a Pope to look for such instruments outside his own family? If he relied upon a Condottieri general there was no guarantee that he would not be betrayed at every turn. He could not rely upon the Italian Great Powers to help him, for their interest lay in keeping the Papacy, as a temporal sovereignty, weak and embarrassed rather than powerful and untrammelled. He could not rely on his own subject Princes, for it was precisely against them that his strokes were aimed. Therefore, if the States of the Church were to be recovered—and that this was a legitimate object of Papal policy is presupposed—the best prospect of success seemed to lie in using all the resources of the Papacy to establish some Papal "nephew" in strong possession over some part of the Papal States. Using what he had gained as a base for further operations, he might end in gaining the whole; owing everything to the Papacy, there was at least a hope that he would respect the source from which he derived all his power.

It is improbable that such Popes as Sixtus and Alexander coldly and formally defined the precise motives which governed their policy. The motives under which men act are mixed, and the temperament which can strike an exact balance between considerations of self-interest and public policy is rare. But when such a phenomenon as Papal nepotism is constantly before us at a certain period of history, when we find it practised, to a greater or less degree, by good Popes and bad alike, it is not sufficient merely to condemn it with disgust and scorn. We must examine it, analyse it, and, so far as is possible, endeavour philosophically to understand it.

In whatever manner the Papacy might attempt to recover or make good its hold upon its temporal possessions, such attempts were certain to bring it into collision with the other Italian Powers. Florence, for example, whose eastern

boundary extended to the Papal territory of Romagna, would view with jealousy and distrust any activity, in the neighbourhood of the frontier, designed to strengthen the influence of the Holy See in that quarter. It was the interest of Florence to keep the Papacy fully occupied with its own affairs. It would thus have the less opportunity of interfering in the affairs of Florence. Moreover, in the times of Papal weakness and disorganisation some of the Lords of Romagna had commended themselves to the protection of Florence, and recognised its suzerainty rather than that of the Pope. In Città di Castello it was the constant policy of Lorenzo dei Medici to support the Vitelli against the pretensions of the Pope; it was, indeed, partly as a consequence of this support that Lorenzo was brought into violent and dangerous antagonism to Sixtus IV.

Venice, with its eye directed southward and in actual occupation of Ravenna, was bent upon thwarting the efforts of the Popes to reassert their authority in the north of Romagna, and was intent upon extending its own sovereignty in that quarter. Of all the opponents of the Papacy Venice was perhaps the most dangerous, for it was involved, less than any other Italian Power, in internal and external complications. Therefore it was able to pursue its own course with a more detached, frigid, and inevitable precision than was possible in the case of other States, though this very aloofness from any common interest, and from the troubles which affected other States, might prove as much a source of weakness as of strength. The common apprehensions of all from Venice might result in rousing common action against her.

Milan, in her fears of Venice, would be inclined to support the Papacy, while her alliance with Florence, on which the Sforza dynasty depended, would often lead her to oppose it. The Pope could then play against Milan the Orleanist claims to the Duchy, and could neutralise the action of Naples by forwarding the French claim to that kingdom. Everything in Italy was in a state of such delicate balance that the smallest disturbance was liable to create a crisis; yet at a time when the country was a powder magazine its

statesmen, in that contempt which is bred of familiarity with the danger, amused themselves, with fatuous audacity, in playing with the fire which was to destroy them.

The political career of Lorenzo dei Medici derives much of its interest from the fact that he was the one statesman in Italy who saw something of the trend of things, and who in the main directed his efforts to avert the calamities of Italy which so many of his contemporaries were frivolously and unconsciously precipitating.

Before passing to a review of the State of Florence up to the time of the accession of Lorenzo to power, it may be well here to note a further complication in Italian politics which affected not the Papacy only, but all the Italian States in the latter half of the fifteenth century.

The advancing power of the Turks threatened Italy with disaster more sinister and calamitous than any that impended from the intervention of France. The French might be to the Italians barbarians, but they were at least fellow Christians. The infidel Turk brought with him not only fire and sword, but the destruction of the faith and Church of Christendom. The fall of the Eastern Empire by the Turkish capture of Constantinople opened the way for fresh efforts to plant the Moslem banners in the West. At such a time we should expect to see all differences composed, and all Italy united to confront the common enemy of the Christian world. We are able to gauge therefore the folly, frivolity, and irresponsibility which characterised Italian statecraft at this epoch by the fact that, far from any combination being effected to resist the Turk, many of the Italian Powers were ready to coquette with the menace of Turkish invasion, and use it to suit the purposes of their individual policy. It was a common thing for an Italian statesman, when hard pressed, to threaten to call in the Turks, and "there was scarcely a government of any consequence," says Burckhardt, "which did not conspire against other Italian states with Mohammed II. and his successors." Venice, it is true, only made a treaty with the Turks in 1479 under the compulsion of sixteen years of continuous and

ruinous war against them. The Papacy, under Nicolas V., Calixtus III., and Pius II., did seek to reanimate the crusading spirit and organise a great campaign of resistance. Then Pius II. attempted to effect the conversion of the Turks by argument, and his curious letter to the Sultan which propounds to the Mohammedan ruler the superior advantages of Christianity can still be read. Alexander VI. proceeded to make a treaty with them. The King of Naples encouraged the Turks in their operations against Venice, and Lorenzo dei Medici was credited, though without justification, with inciting the Turks to their attack upon Otranto to serve his own ends. Venice probably did actually incite it, while among the Princelings of Italy there was scarcely one who would have hesitated to call the Turks into the country if his own petty interests of the moment could be advanced thereby. Sigismundo Malatesta of Rimini, Bocalino Guzzoni of Osimo, had no scruples in the matter. Bocalino's negotiations with the Turks are extant, and will be referred to in detail in a subsequent chapter, while the people of Osimo frankly declared that if the choice lay between the domination of the Pope or the Turk, they would prefer that of the Turk.

But the episode which most completely illustrates the cynicism of the times towards the Turkish danger is the captivity of the Turkish Prince Djem in the hands of successive Popes, and the utterly shameless proceedings which characterised the transaction. On the death of Mohammed II., the great Sultan, his dominions were contested between his two sons, Bajazet and Djem, with the result that Bajazet defeated his brother, who threw himself upon the protection of the Knights of St. John at Rhodes. The new Sultan was glad to pay a large annual sum to any one who would act as Djem's gaoler and keep him out of the way. Djem therefore assumed a money value of 45,000 ducats a year, and a general European scramble for the money ensued. Being entrusted by the Knights of Rhodes to the more secure custody of the King of France, Djem was—to use Creighton's phrase—"put up to public auction" among the competitors for his maintenance fees. Of the competitors Pope

Innocent VIII. was the highest bidder. A cardinalate for the Grand Master, a dispensation for Anne of Brittany's marriage, were powerful arguments in the Pope's favour. Djem was transferred to the custody of Innocent, and his entry into Rome was a public spectacle. The Sultan, however, did not yet feel quite at ease. Though lavish with his payments to the extent of giving to the Pope three years' salary in advance, still it would prove more convenient for him if so dangerous a hostage for his own good behaviour should opportunely cease to exist. It was well understood that the price which the Sultan was prepared to pay to any one who would finally dispose of Djem was a princely one, and it was with difficulty that he was kept alive. But 45,000 ducats a year while he lived was better than a lump sum down for poisoning him. Thus Djem survived for a time : a few years later the Pope received, as a mark of the Sultan's favour and gratitude, the Holy Lance—the head of the spear which pierced the side of Christ upon the Cross. Strange and fantastic were the times when the most sacred relics became objects of exchange between the representative of the Prophet and the representative of Christ, in order to mark the infidel's appreciation of an infamous service rendered to him by the successor of St. Peter.

Alexander VI., Innocent's successor, was eventually compelled to part with Djem, and reluctantly to hand him over to Charles VIII. of France. To the public opinion of the time it seemed incredible that Alexander would relinquish so valuable an asset without at any rate making it valueless for anybody else. Djem's death, therefore, shortly after leaving Rome, was generally attributed to the slow poison of the Borgias. Alexander, on the evidence, seems to stand acquitted of this crime, but the fact that at the time, and ever since, he has been commonly credited with it, is a commentary upon the estimation in which the Pope was held in his day.

Thus the Papacy, in the last fifty years of the fifteenth century, shows itself to be the creature of its times. If no worse, it was certainly no better than the secular Italian governments of the day. The Popes indeed were secula

Princes: they frankly recognised the fact, and acted in accordance with the character. The charge that lies heavy against them is, not that they failed to reach an ideal standard of saintliness and spirituality, for such a standard would have been entirely out of harmony with the spirit of the age, and could have worked no permanent good, but that, in the prevailing corruption around them, they made no effort to rise superior to it; that they adapted their own policy to its worst manifestations, and identified the Papacy with all that was most cynical, shameless, and iniquitous in the politics of the time. And so the Papacy of the Renaissance proved itself unfaithful to the mediæval ideal which dignified the secular policy of a Gregory VII. or an Innocent III.; so its policy rendered inevitable a Reformation of the Church in its Head and in its members, if the Church as an institution in Christendom was still to survive.

C. FLORENCE

I.

Geographical and political position of Florence—Her attitude towards Italian questions—Conditions governing the development of Florence—Tendencies towards despotism in Florence before the Medici—Rise of Florence—Beginnings of a Constitution—Florence and the Guelph and Ghibelline contest—Florence divided by internal factions—Florence commends herself to Charles of Anjou—Reorganisation of the Constitution, 1267—Gradation of class in Florence—Attempts to exclude the nobility from power—The Signoria established—Giano della Bella's "Ordinances"—Neri and Bianchi factions—Reorganisation of the Constitution, 1328—Tyranny of the Duke of Athens—His expulsion—Defeat of the nobles—Revision of the Constitution—Rise of a burgher aristocracy—The Albizzi—Fresh divisions consequent on war with Pope Gregory XI.—Opposition of the Signoria and Parte Guelfa—Revolt of the Ciompi—Michele di Lando—The Albizzi recover control of the State, 1381—The Medici and the Albizzi—Character of the Albizzi government—Impending crisis between Albizzi and Medici.

The political relations of Florence with the other Italian Powers, and her own internal condition from 1450 to 1500, necessarily form no small part of the subject-matter of any work upon the career of Lorenzo dei Medici. The purpose of an introductory chapter is not to anticipate the policy and events which fall naturally into the general narrative, but to indicate the lines, marked out by circumstances and

MAP
to show
THE TERRITORIAL POWER OF THE
PAPACY
1450 — 1500

English Miles

her past history, which the policy of Florence would naturally follow, and to trace in broad outline the development of the Florentine State up to the time when it fell under the control of the Medici family.

The geographical position of Florence, situated centrally between the four rival Italian States, predestined her to play a mediating part in the contentions and complications in which they were involved.

More fortunate than Milan to the north and Naples to the south, Florence was not embarrassed by the claims of an ultramontane Power to the sovereignty of her State. But ultramontane claims upon her neighbours could not fail profoundly to influence her own political action. If the French succeeded in establishing themselves in Milan, it was not likely that their ambitions would stop short at that point. Florence would live under the constant apprehension of the advance of a great foreign Power upon her own territories. This danger would exist quite apart from the French claims upon Naples, but taking the Milanese and Neapolitan claims in conjunction, the position of Florence was doubly insecure. Any advance of the French towards Naples must be through Florentine territory, or must at least bring the foreigner into tempting proximity to the frontiers of the State. If the effort were successful, and the King of France should rule in Milan and Naples alike, Florence might soon find herself ground to powder between the upper and the nether millstone.

It is true that Florence, as a great Guelphic commonwealth, traditionally based her policy upon friendship with France. But France outside Italy was one thing ; France seated secure at Milan and Naples was quite another. There was small probability, if French ambitions were fully realised, that Florence would be preserved from absorption into the French vortex merely on the strength of old friendship. To keep the French out of Italy was therefore the policy naturally marked out for a State situated as was Florence. This could best be done, not by stirring up confusion, and so affording opportunities for foreign intervention, but by maintaining an equilibrium between the existing Italian Powers, by throwing weight now into this scale, now into

that, so as to maintain as far as possible the Italian *status quo*, and to enhance her own reputation by the influence which on all sides she was able to exercise.

Thus when Francesco Sforza succeeded in making himself master of Milan, it was the policy of Florence to support him. The Sforza dynasty, as long as it lasted, was a guarantee against the occupation of Milan by the French; it would act also in restraint of Venice, who had her own ambitions in Lombardy, ambitions which, if she had attained them without the help of Florence, she would undoubtedly have exercised in a spirit of hostility.

So too in Naples it was to the general interest of Florence to support the Aragonese occupation of that kingdom against the pretensions of France, though, if the King of Naples should at any time adopt a policy of aggression towards Florence, it would be necessary as a matter of course to oppose him by the means most suitable to the purpose. A policy of balance implies many contradictions and apparent incongruities, but in the main the interests of Florence demanded a condition of peace in Italy, not of war, and under Lorenzo for the most part such a condition was maintained.

But Florence could not be limited exclusively by considerations of foreign policy. There were matters of great importance to her which lay outside the Italian claims of France and the conflicting ambitions of the Italian Princes. Her own domestic interests must be subserved, and nothing must be allowed to hamper her legitimate expansion, or neutralise the advantages which at great cost she had gained.

Florence, from a city, had become a City-State largely under the irresistible compulsion of her commercial interests. At an early stage in her history she had become notable as a centre of commercial activity. Her wool, silk, and leather were not for her own consumption only. They were for the world at large, and it was of paramount importance that she should have free outlets for her products.

First of all it was of importance to have control over the mouth of the Arno, and to possess a port upon the open sea. The long struggle for the possession of Pisa becomes, in this aspect, a matter of life and death to Florence. But

it was also necessary that she should command the Apennine passes through which, to the north and east, all her exports had to go. Enclosed by the mountains on two sides, Florence would have found herself excluded from contact with the outer world unless she gained control over the roads which led to it. The tendency to expand grows by what it feeds upon. Beyond the Apennines to the eastward lay the great high-road which formed one of the main arteries of communication in Italy, and beyond that lay the Adriatic with all the alluring visions of commercial expansion which the possession of an Adriatic port conjured up. Though these visions were never realised, yet they serve to explain the trend of Florentine expansion eastward towards Romagna, where it was brought up short by the Papal suzerainty over that region. On the debatable frontier of Romagna the action of both Florence and the Papacy becomes touchy, irritable, and nervous. Petty disputes and interferences, which seem on their merits to be of no importance, assume serious proportions, and sometimes threaten ruin to the whole fabric of the Florentine State.

The student of Italian history at this period constantly finds himself baffled by the tremendous consequences which seem to hang upon the merest trifles. But the geographical and commercial position of Florence gives the clue to the mystery. Those things were not trifles on which, indirectly, the commerce, and therefore the existence, of the State depended.

From the moment therefore when Florence first rose from a position of obscurity to become a thriving commercial town, a definite problem was presented to her for solution: to devise a form of government under which the natural activities of her citizens could be securely exercised, and by which she would be guaranteed against pressure and interference from outside. No form of government would satisfy the liberty-loving Florentines which was not democratic, at any rate in appearance; but a democratic government was not the one best fitted in mediæval Italy to conduct a spirited and independent policy in regard to matters of external politics. The municipal government which suited

the City of Florence was not the kind of government which suited a territorial State. Something of civic liberty must be sacrificed if the sovereignty of the State was to be secured. The people of Florence wanted the sovereignty without the sacrifice, and the result was years of constitution-making and civil strife, until at last, in the government of the House of Medici, a tolerably acceptable compromise seemed to have been secured.

The government of the Medici gave to Florence the forms of republican freedom and democratic independence which were so dear to the hearts of the people : at the same time it gave them security for a continuity in public policy which was of vital necessity in the conduct of diplomatic business and foreign affairs. Florence could pretend not to recognise that she was subject to a despot, when the despot himself was nothing more than a leading citizen living the unostentatious life of a wealthy and distinguished burgher. In the hands of such a man her commercial interests were safe, for they were his own ; and by his wealth he could frequently gratify the public passion for ceremony and pageant which was so marked a feature of the Florentine character. If it fell to him to receive distinguished guests in the name of the Republic, and entertain them with lavish hospitality, his temporary assumption of the headship of the State was more than compensated for by the fact that a private person largely defrayed expenses which otherwise the people must have borne. Thus the dignity of the State was maintained, the public pocket was spared, and Florence was grateful on both counts. When, in addition, the Medici despot faithfully and genuinely represented the highest aspirations of the national character, when in a city devoted to art, scholarship, and literature he was the best connoisseur, the best friend of scholars and artists, and in the case of Lorenzo almost, if not quite, the best poet, it is not difficult to understand how a practical tyranny should have been almost unconsciously set up over a people passionate for their liberties, how they might still continue to delude themselves that they were free, when by subtle arts their freedom had insidiously been filched from them.

It only remains, before dealing with the actual despotism of Lorenzo, briefly to state the various stages through which Florence had passed before she developed that particular and peculiar kind of despotism which found its most complete expression in the Medici family.

II.

Fiorenza mia . . . che fai tanti sottili
Provvedimenti, che a mezzo novembre
Non giunge quel che tu d'ottobre fili.
Quante volte del tempo che rimembre
Legge, moneta, officio e costume
Ha tu mutato, e rinovato membre!
E se ben ti ricordi e vede lume,
Vedrai te simigliamente a quella inferma,
Che non può trovar posa in su le piume,
Ma con dar volta suo dolore scherma.

Purgatorio, vi. 142.

Oh my Florence . . . who dost make so many subtle provisions that that which thou spinnest in October reaches not to mid-November. How often in the time that thou rememberest, laws, coinage, offices and customs hast thou changed, and renewed thy members! And if thou wilt well bethink thee and see clear, thou shalt behold thyself like unto that sick one who can find no rest upon the down, but by turning about shuns her pain. [WICKSTEED'S *Translation.*]

The opinion that Florence, having built up for herself a constitutional system distinguished for democratic independence and republican freedom, was at last enslaved by the designing arts of unscrupulous Medicean despots, derives no warrant from the history of the rise and development of that State.

It will be found, on the contrary, that Florence, with strong cravings for what she called liberty, had at no time a sound comprehension of the meaning of the word; that her conception of liberty was scarcely to be distinguished from licence; that the very elaboration of her constitutional safeguards only conduced to the absence of all real freedom, and that from the earliest times Florence was perpetually subjecting herself to the domination of a master. The processes of constitutional evolution eventually resulted in the establishment of a form of despotism which was to her mind. It preserved in a measure the externals of freedom; it was exercised under the semblance of republican institu-

tions; it did not jar against her history in the past nor against her ideals for the future, but it was none the less a despotism which imposed upon her the strong hand of a master whose autocracy was the sole safeguard for the preservation and for the peace of the State.

Of this form of despotism the Medici were the last, the most complete, and the most effective representatives. The organisation of their government was not a creation of their own, but an embodiment of past experience. In its architecture we can see the traces of successive constitutional styles and various political ideals, the completed edifice exhibiting at last a structure in general harmony with centuries of striving and aspiration.

The cradle of every people is shrouded by curtains of legend and of fable, and the legendary story of Florence is one of peculiar fascination. We must, however, pass over the Trojans, Julius Cæsar, Rhadagasius, the good Bishop Zenobius, and many others, and come to the time when Florence more definitely emerges into the light of history as a town upon the Arno colonised by settlers from Fiesole, a vigorous centre of commercial activity, owing a general allegiance to the Holy Roman Emperor, and, as a part of Tuscany, under the actual government of the Margraves of Tuscany, who ruled either as Imperial Vicars, or as independent Princes, according as the power of the individual Emperor was weak or strong over his dominions.

Of the Tuscan Margraves who made a deep and lasting impression upon the City of Florence, the most famous was the Margravine Contessa Matilda, exalted by Dante to be the guardian of his earthly Paradise. Her strong government gave protection under which commerce and the arts of peace could flourish, while her system of exercising her own authority through the medium of delegates chosen from the citizens themselves seems to have given to the Florentines their first instincts of self-government and political independence. The seed sown by Matilda fell on favourable soil, for the Florentines were soon to prove themselves, of all the Italian peoples, the most fertile in constitutional expedients, the most restless experimenters in the mysteries of political science.

The position of Florence towards the great struggle between Popes and Emperors which followed upon Matilda's death was determined by circumstances which may be called local, as much as by those which were of general application to Italy. Florence was of necessity deeply concerned in the result of the contest between imperial rivals for the possession of Matilda's inheritance, for her own position depended on the issue; locally, however, she was even more concerned by the question which must be decided at home, whether the citizens within her walls were to be the dominant power over Florence, or the nobles who lived in their strong castles outside. It was a question not only of class but of race. The citizens were in the main of Latin stock; the nobles of Teutonic origin: thus the struggle between them may be regarded as a survival of the efforts of barbarian invaders against the Roman Empire. The feudal tendencies of the nobles were in sharp contrast with the municipal tendencies of the citizens. The nobles would be inclined to the side of a German feudal Emperor, the citizens to that of the Popes, who professed themselves the friends of municipal liberties. Thus Guelph and Ghibelline came to have a sort of meaning for Florence. They represented different and antagonistic ideals. For the dwellers within the walls Ghibellinism meant a feudal domination in the hands of an alien caste; Guelphism meant a measure of municipal independence, the control of the City-State by its own pure-blooded Italian citizens.

But if Ghibellinism meant, as perhaps it did, submission to the imperial sway of an Emperor, Florentine Guelphism by no means meant submission to the imperial sway of a Pope. The ambition of Florence was to be independent of both, and to stand out as a free State governing itself. It was very willing to accept what help the Pope would give towards this end, an end which was more likely to be attained through the assistance of the Papacy than through the adoption of Ghibelline principles. But the identification of Florentine Guelphism with the recognition of a Papal temporal supremacy over Florence is altogether mistaken. While always regarding herself as a dutiful daughter of the Church, Florence was ever as ready to rebel

against the Papacy as to support it, if it appeared that Papal ambition was aiming at the assertion of sovereign power over her.

No denunciations of a Pope have been more ferociously outspoken than those levelled against the Vicar of Christ by the Guelphic City of Florence in the times of Sixtus IV. and Alexander VI. This disposition, so marked in their day, to discriminate between the Papacy as a temporal power which was to be resisted, and the Papacy as a spiritual force which was to be respected, makes its appearance very early in the history of Florence.

At a time when Emperor and Pope were fully occupied by their doubtful and prolonged contest, Florence profited by the distractions of both. She carried on her own struggle against her threatening nobles and forced them to come within the walls. She organised her industrial interests by means of the Guild system, by which the status of the citizen element within the city was strengthened and confirmed. She enlarged her boundaries by the building of her second walls (1173); then, on the basis of this municipal extension, she formulated a constitution, by which the city was to be governed by an executive Council of twelve Consuls (two being chosen from each of the six wards, or *sesti*, into which the new city was divided), and a legislative Council of a hundred members, annually elected, and chosen mainly from the industrial Guilds.

Outside the walls her territories began to extend under the irresistible impulse of commercial requirements. Though Florentine independence was as yet an infant birth, liable constantly to be strangled by Imperial or Papal hands, as the fortunes of the grand struggle swayed this way and that, yet at the beginning of the thirteenth century Florence stood out declared, containing within herself, in embryonic forms, the forces which were ultimately to mould her destiny. She now enjoyed what Dante calls *sua postrema pace*—her last time of peace.

Scarcely, however, had Florence begun to display the semblance of a homogeneous State when the city broke into factions whose furious animosities were to have consequences reaching far into the future. The romantic story of

young Buondelmonte is comparatively so near to the time of Dante that we may accept his references to it as giving some guarantee of its authenticity. Macchiavelli tells us that Buondelmonte dei Buondelmonti had betrothed himself to a maiden of the Amidei family, but was enticed from his faith by the extraordinary attractions of a daughter of the House of Donati. Whereupon the Amidei determined on revenge: at a council of their partisans it was resolved to assassinate Buondelmonte on the first suitable occasion. As the young gallant came riding into Florence on Easter Day (1215) he was attacked by the conspirators at the foot of the Ponte Vecchio and slain, close to the statue of Mars which had been set up there. Whereupon the whole city took sides in this family feud, one party supporting the Amidei, another the Buondelmonti, "and as these families possessed men and means of defence, they contended with each other for many years without the one being able to destroy the other." The contending parties roughly followed the lines of the Guelph and Ghibelline struggle, the partisans of the Buondelmonti sympathising with Guelph principles, those of the Amidei and Uberti with the policy of the Emperor Frederick II. Thus the distractions of Italy found intense and concentrated expression within the narrow circuit of the walls of Florence. A contest which hitherto had been a contest of principles and political ideals was now embittered by the infusion of frantic personal animosities which two centuries were scarcely sufficient to allay.

> O Buondelmonte, quanto mal fuggisti
> Le nozze sue per gli altrui conforti!
> Molti sarebbon lieti, che son tristi
> Se Dio t'avesse conceduto ad Ema
> La prima volta che a città venisti.
>
> *Paradiso*, xvi. 140.*

"Oh Buondelmonte, how ill didst thou flee its nuptials at the prompting of another! Joyous had been many who now are sad, had God committed thee to the Ema the first time that thou camest to the City." [WICKSTEED'S *Translation*.]

The death of the Emperor Frederick II. marked a crisis in the history of Italy and of Florence. The confusion which followed from the succession of a child to Frederick's

* See also *Inferno*, xxviii. 103–111.

BOTTICELLI'S ILLUSTRATION FOR DANTE'S INFERNO, CANTO X

DANTE AND FARINATA DEGLI UBERTI

"Volgiti, che fai!
Vedi là Farinata, che s'è dritto
Dalla cintola in su tutto il vedrai"
Inf. x 31

Italian dominions, from the usurpation of Manfred, Frederick's illegitimate son, and from the envenomed controversy between Manfred and the Papacy, tended to strengthen the Guelph cause in Florence. The constitution was remodelled in the Guelphic interest, and the Ghibelline nobles were expelled from the city. The Ghibelline exiles seized the opportunity offered by the distractions which everywhere prevailed to regain their position. In 1260 they won a great victory over the Florentine Guelphs on the field of Montaperti, near Siena, when "the Arbia ran red with blood," and the conquerors doomed the city to utter destruction. From this fate it was saved by the fiery protest of the great Ghibelline chieftain, Farinata degli Uberti, whose patriotism, even at the expense of his party, has been nobly celebrated by Dante in the tenth canto of his *Inferno.* Though Florence was saved, yet within her walls the hand of Ghibelline domination lay heavy upon her. When, in 1265, Pope Clement IV., in virtue of his suzerainty over Naples, called in Charles of Anjou, brother of the French king St. Louis, to contest the crown of Naples with Manfred, the Florentine Guelphs rallied to the standard of Charles, and on the fatal field of Benevento helped him to win that victory which brought ruin and death to Manfred and established the House of Anjou in southern Italy.

The Guelph triumph at Benevento was followed in Florence by a fresh reorganisation of the constitution. An attempt was made to effect a reconciliation between the contending factions. The government was entrusted to two knights of the Order of the Virgin Mary—the *frati gaudenti*, as they were called—of whom one was a Ghibelline and one a Guelph. They were assisted by thirty-six assessors "from the higher ranks of the people," and by this Macchiavelli means that they were chosen from the members of the great commercial Guilds, not from the noble families. The chief exploit of the new administration was the organisation of the Trade Guilds as separate centres of military force. Each Guild was to have its banner, and to the banner every member of the Guild was to rally in arms when summoned. The effect of the measure was that the Florentine burghers began to realise their military strength, and determined to

use it. The Ghibellines were again expelled or retired into voluntary exile; while the victorious Guelphs, in order to preserve the authority which they had won, commended Florence to the charge of Charles of Anjou for a limited term of years. Charles became the first of a succession of foreign rulers to whom Florence submitted herself rather than endure the distractions to which its own civic feuds had given rise.

The advent of Charles of Anjou, and his Principate over Florence, marks the beginning of that attachment of Florence to France which was for more than two centuries to be a leading principle of Florentine policy. The belief that a combination of the lilies of France with the lilies of Florence would prove irresistible was as strong an article in the political creed of Savonarola at the end of the fifteenth century as in that of the Parte Guelfa towards the end of the thirteenth. A statesman of the calibre of Lorenzo dei Medici might perceive, while keeping on good terms with France, that the aggrandisement of a foreign Power in Italy must lead eventually to the ruin of Italy and Florence alike. But the Florentine Guelphs hailed Charles of Anjou as a Crusader going forth to fight against the powers of darkness, represented by Manfred and the Ghibelline House of Hohenstaufen, and even so the followers of Savonarola hailed Charles VIII. of France as one sent by God to chastise Italy for its sins, and to establish the State of Florence as a fitting seat for the throne of Christ the King.

In his treatment of Florence Charles of Anjou showed unusual moderation. He permitted the city to govern itself upon the lines already laid down. The constitution was again remodelled, and Guelph ascendency was made complete. The constitution* of 1267 shows in the elabora-

* Details, especially as to figures, of the constitution of 1267 differ to such an extent in the various authorities that figures must be received with caution. The following outline seems fairly accurately to represent the main facts:

i. Twelve Buoniuomini with a two months' tenure of office. Germ of the "Signoria." Assisted by a Council of 100.

ii. Capitano del Popolo. Assisted by

(a) Consiglio del Capitano e Capetudine. Known as the Credenza.

tion of its machinery of checks and counter-checks the sensitive Florentine jealousy of any strong and concentrated authority, a jealousy which was the leading cause of the eventual establishment of such an authority. The executive government was placed in the hands of four distinct persons, or bodies of persons, each to be assisted by one or more deliberative councils. Twelve " " Buoniuomini "—two from each division of the city—were, during their two months' term of office, to be assisted by a council of 100. Legislation initiated by the Buoniuomini, and sanctioned by their Council, was in turn submitted to the Capitano del Popolo and the two advisory Councils attached to his office ; then to the Podestá and two further Councils which were associated with him. Working behind the scenes and pulling all the political wires was the " Parte Guelfa," a secret society operating generally in the Guelph interest—a sort of mediæval Tammany—which was composed of six " capitani " (though the number was subject to variation) and two Councils. It was not long before the political organisation of the Parte Guelfa, acting under influences so favourable to mystery and sudden *coups d'état*, became a despotism, swamping all the flimsy constitutional checks which had been so laboriously established, and exercising supreme authority in the State. Indeed at all times in Florence, beneath the forms of constitutional liberty, there lurked a despotism of some kind ; it

Consisted of eighty members. The Capetudine were the consuls of the Guilds.

(*b*) General Council of 300. A purely popular Council, made up of thirty citizens from each sesto = 180 }
The Credenza = 80 } 272 according to Macchiavelli.
The Buoniuomini = 12 }

iii. The Podestà. A foreigner, appointed periodically, impartially to administer civil and criminal justice. His functions now become more definitely political. Assisted by

(*a*) The Consiglio del Podestà, ninety members.

(*b*) The Consiglio del Commune, 300 members (Macchiavelli says 120). A mixed Council of nobles and people.

iv. The Parte Guelfa. Six Capitani, three nobles, three people's representatives.

Two Councils, at one time acting independently as a secret advisory body to the executive of the Parte Guelfa, at another time acting openly and publicly with the Consiglio del Commune, its members being also members of that body. (Von Reumont.)

was merely a question of the particular shape which that despotism should assume.

It will be seen that this constitution endeavoured to strike a fairly even balance between the nobles and the burghers, giving to each party its due share of authority. But a division of classes into nobles and burghers by no means represents the intricate ramifications of class interest which disintegrated the State. The key to future dissensions can only be found in an understanding of the various sections into which society in Florence was split, and the distinct and antagonistic aims which animated each section. The nobles may be regarded as a tolerably homogeneous body, but the burghers were only united by a common hostility to the nobles. The burghers who were members of the seven great Guilds—or Arti Majori—constituted the Popolo Grosso—the fat people—the prosperous, well-to-do commercial men, from whom the merchant princes were to rise. Below them were the members of the fourteen lesser Guilds—the Arti Minori—whose commercial interests were largely dependent on the expenditure of the nobles, who were bitterly jealous of the airs of superiority which the "Majori" assumed towards them, and who were constantly scheming to secure for themselves a greater share in the control of the government.

At the end of the social scale came the working classes—the Ciompi—unorganised, without any share whatever in political power, separated by a sharp line of cleavage from both the Majori and the Minori, quite apart from the rivalries of the nobles and the "Popolani," for they had little to expect from either party. But as their political intelligence advanced, they were determined to secure for themselves such a share in the government as would put them more on an equality with those who indiscriminately oppressed them, those who, whatever their politics, were united in the determination to keep the lower classes down.

It was the presence of these conflicting elements in the State which made constitutional government almost an impossibility in Florence. Where there is discord among the

citizens there cannot be harmony in the State. The conditions afforded the opportunity to an ambitious and crafty political schemer to impose his own personality upon a people wearied by perpetual distractions, to conciliate to himself the goodwill of the masses, while allowing their own rivalries to neutralise the opposition of the classes.

The constitution of 1267 marks a stage in that process of evolution which was to result in the Medician despotism. Succeeding stages become visible in the light of that constitution. The first step was to get rid of the nobles. To this end the government in 1282 was placed entirely in the hands of the Guilds. The Priors of the Arti were to take the place of the twelve Buoniuomini, and, to add dignity to their office, they were to be known as Signori; hence arose the Signoria, with its official residence in the Palazzo Publico, and all the requisite paraphernalia of officers and staff. As no noble would think it compatible with his dignity to be engaged in trade, the effect of these measures was to exclude the nobles altogether from the Signoria: a provision was, however, made which permitted the nobles to enrol themselves upon the Guild registers: as membership did not necessarily imply the active pursuit of the Guild industry, many of the nobility enrolled themselves without hesitation.

The contest between nobles and citizens therefore only assumed larger proportions, and the Guild government proved itself insolent and oppressive. The Signoria attached to itself a Gonfalonier of Justice, who was to have at his disposal 1000 armed men, disposed in twenty companies of fifty men each, who must hold themselves in readiness to obey the summons of the Signoria or Capitano del Popolo. Thus the executive had a force at its back which might be used to secure obedience to just authority, or abused by employing it to force arbitrary and oppressive enactments down the throats of the people. The abuse at this time was more conspicuous than the use. The city was in a deplorable condition. Outrages were occurring every day; life and property were everywhere insecure. These were the circumstances which in 1293 produced the "Ordinances of Justice," with which the name of Giano della Bella is

conspicuously associated. The chief clause in the Ordinances enacted that a noble must be *bonâ fide* engaged in the trade of the Guild of which he was a member : in other words, the nobles must cease to be nobles, and become citizens, or else be entirely excluded from the service of the State.*

Provision was also made in the Ordinances for the prompt and vigorous punishment of any noble found guilty of the murder or ill-treatment of the common people : the Guild organisation of the city was further strengthened by the definite recognition of the twenty-one Guilds—seven of the greater arts and fourteen of the lesser—and the regulation of their precedence one over the other.

The strength which Florence derived from the restoration of order and strong government was not destined to be long maintained. What precise political principles underlay the faction fights between the Neri and Bianchi—the Black and White Guelphs—is a question not easy to determine. "It ofttimes happened," says Macchiavelli, "when one of the parties in the State gained the upper hand, it split in two." This is what happened in 1300, when the Black and White feud was imported, like some malignant disease, into Florentine politics. The chroniclers, Dino Compagni and Giovanni Villani, give in detail the story of its origin and the narrative of events, but are silent as to the deeper issues which gave life and sustenance to the contest. Perhaps the fact that the vanquished Whites eventually identified themselves with the old Ghibellines is an indication that they had shown themselves mistrustful of the growth of the Florentine democracy, while the Blacks were on the whole its supporters. But the adhesion of Dante to the Whites, his refusal to identify himself with his fellow exiles when they coalesced with the Ghibellines, and the fact that Corso Donato, the Black leader, married the daughter of one of the foremost among the Ghibelline chieftains, tend to baffle any attempt scientifically to analyse the inner meaning of this disastrous conflict.

* It is notable that among the few recorded acts of Dante's political life in Florence is his protest against the severity of this enactment, a protest made in 1295 by the poet in his capacity of member of the Consiglio del Commune.

Its significance in the development of the Florentine State lies in the fact that it emphasises the impotence of the people to govern themselves as an independent Republic. Florence, to save herself from herself, was compelled to commit herself to the protection and government of foreign Princes, who, though they might plunder her, yet afforded a guarantee against those incessant internal distractions which paralysed her beneficent activities. For a period of years the constitution was virtually suspended while Robert the Wise, King of Naples, and afterwards his son, Charles of Calabria, ruled as Lords Paramount in Florence. The death of Charles in 1328, and of the great enemy against whom Florence had been long contending, Castruccio Castracane of Lucca, afforded a brief breathing space in which the experiment of self-government could once more be tried.

It was determined on this occasion to simplify the constitution by abolishing the old elaborate apparatus of Councils attached to each section of the executive. In their place two Councils were established: the Consiglio del Popolo, of 300, under the presidency of the Capitano, and the Consiglio del Commune, of 250, under the presidency of the Podestà. The former retained the characteristic of the old Councils of the Capitano in being confined exclusively to representatives of the people, while nobles and people sat together in the Consiglio del Commune.

Changes of great future importance were also made in the manner of choosing the incoming Signoria. It had been the practice for the outgoing Signoria to nominate its successors. For this method was substituted the "Squittino," or scrutiny, which meant that the names of all those who were eligible for office, for the next three, four, or five years, were put into a box, and as occasion required a sufficient number of names were impartially drawn out to fill up the vacant offices. The system, which in theory had much to recommend it, in practice opened the door to grave abuses, and became an important instrument for forging a despotism over the State. For it was not difficult so to manipulate the names as to ensure that none should find entrance into

the boxes which were not favourable to the government, and to arrange the drawing of the names out of the bag in such a way that those only would come out who would prove the submissive tools of the party in power. Further developments soon followed which tended in the same direction. The government assumed the power to exclude its opponents from public life for a period, or for ever, by issuing its "admonition" against such persons as it deemed guilty of civil or criminal offences. The non-payment of taxes, for example, was rightly regarded as disqualifying the delinquent for public office; but when taxation itself was used as an instrument of oppression, when a particular individual might be subjected to any monstrous tax which it might please his political opponents to impose, the system of admonitions might easily develop into an engine of private vengeance and public tyranny by which despotism could first establish itself and then render opposition to it impossible.

Associated with these schemes were the "Parlamento," the "Balìa," and the "Accopiatori."

The Parlamento was a gathering of all citizens who chose to obey the summons of the great bell of Florence to appear in the piazza of the Signoria. To the multitude thus assembled the government could state its proposals, and, if accepted, they at once, by the exercise of the sovereignty of the people, assumed the force of law. The Parlamento was not a new device contrived in the fourteenth century; it goes back to the beginnings of Florentine history. In theory at any rate the sovereignty of the people had always been an accepted principle in Florence. What was new was the manner in which the Parlamento was engineered to suit the purposes of a party. When a Parlamento was called the piazza was held in force by armed men, and soldiers controlled the avenues which led to it. A government with astute agents and a military force always has the mob at its beck and call. Thus the Florentine Parlamento degenerated into a mere semblance of popular sovereignty. Of all the engines of tyranny, the ugliest and most repulsive are those that masquerade in the garments of liberty.

The proposals of the government to the Parlamento were as a rule limited to the one suggestion that a Balìa should be appointed. The Balìa was a select committee, nominated by the government and confirmed by the Parlamento, which was to act as a commission of reform. Under the sanction of public authority it could carry into effect whatever measures the government had previously agreed upon. The Balìa, however, usually delegated at any rate a portion of its authority to "Accopiatori," whose special function was to nominate the persons eligible for public office and to control the electoral boxes. As these accopiatori frequently retained power for years, long outlasting the Balìa which had appointed them, it followed that the public offices were mortgaged beforehand, for a term of years, to those who would prove the obedient creatures of their masters. It was not the Medici who forged these weapons of despotism for Florence; they were manufactured long before the Medici rose to consideration in the State, but, being forged, they were ready for use, and the Medici understood, perhaps better than any others, how most effectively to use them.

Florence now became involved in wars, of which the main object was the possession of Lucca: her want of success compelled her once more to look abroad for the leadership and enterprise which had proved so lacking at home. She appointed Walter of Brienne, Duke of Athens, generalissimo of her forces, and soon accepted him as her sovereign lord. The Duke, who is represented by contemporary chroniclers and by Macchiavelli as an utterly worthless character, relied upon the support of the lower classes in the State, and they acclaimed him as their Prince for life. Once invested with sovereign power, he did not fail frightfully to abuse it. His unmeasured violence alienated in twelve months all classes in the State. A general rising against him, in which the Medici family took a prominent part, was organised for St. Anne's Day (July 26, 1343). The government of the Duke was overthrown and he himself was ignominiously expelled. St. Anne's Day has been ever since a red-letter day in the Florentine calendar. It is from this time that St. Anne

begins to appear conspicuously in Florentine art as the protecting saint of the Florentine Republic.

Immediately upon the expulsion of the Duke of Athens the constitution was remodelled, this time in the interests of the nobles. No sooner was this done than "the people began to regret that for one tyrant put down there had sprung up a hundred." Now was fought a final battle, within the walls, between the Grandi and the Popolo, and it is notable that in the quarter of S. Giovanni it was the Medici who began the attack on behalf of the people. The victory of the people was complete. Whereas after past contests the nobles had succeeded in reasserting themselves, now they were crushed for ever. The long struggle of centuries reaches its culmination in the streets of Florence in the autumn of 1343. The political centre of gravity is shifted, and the triumphant people are for the future engaged in furious rivalries between their own contending sections.

Yet another revision of the constitution followed from the victory of the popular party. Eight Priors were to constitute the Signoria, of whom two, if not three, were to be taken from the Lesser Guilds. Twelve Buoniuomini elected for three months acted as counsellors to the Signoria, and sixteen Gonfaloniers of the Companies, holding office for four months, were made responsible mainly for the military organisation of the State. The two Grand Councils of 1328 were retained, together with their presiding officers, the Capitano and the Podestà. The chief power, however, was in the hands of the Parte Guelfa, which once more began to exercise a despotism analogous to that of the Duke of Athens. No efforts were for long capable of suppressing a tyranny in Florence; and those exertions which had been directed against the government of the Duke were, in the course of a few years, concentrated against the autocracy of the Parte Guelfa.

Scarcely was the political power of the nobles extinguished when the city was rent by a new feud. The Albizzi family, which had come to Florence from Arezzo, and had risen by trade and business ability to affluence and position, found political and commercial rivals in the family of the Ricci. Each was identified with the *popolo grosso* and repre-

sented the interests of the rich burghers of the Greater Guilds, but each being bent upon its own sovereignty, the Albizzi associated themselves with the Parte Guelfa in order to attain their ends, while the Ricci courted the support of the Lesser Arts. That condition, in fact, was never known in Florence "when none were for a party but all were for the State." In one of the many speeches which Macchiavelli, in his History of Florence, puts into the mouths of some nameless Florentine citizens—speeches which add so much literary adornment to that work, at the expense, it is to be feared, of historical fidelity—he doubtless expresses his own sentiments when the speaker is represented as saying: "Our laws, statutes, and civil ordinances are not, nor have they ever been, established for the benefit of men in a state of freedom, but according to the wish of the faction which has been uppermost at the time. Hence it follows that when one party is expelled, or one faction extinguished, another immediately arises; for in a city that is governed by parties rather than by laws, as soon as one becomes dominant, it must of necessity soon divide against itself, for the private methods originally adopted for its defence will now no longer serve to keep it united."

The situation became still further complicated by a war against the Pope, Gregory XI. The anti-Italian French policy of the Avignon Popes had roused against them strong Italian antipathies, and Florence, notwithstanding her Guelphic proclivities, was at heart essentially Italian. The Parte Guelfa, however, was naturally indisposed to a war which seemed to involve a contradiction of its own principles. War, however, began, and it was determined by the Signoria to entrust the conduct of it to the "Otto di Guerra," a committee of eight, specially appointed for the purpose. The city therefore now became divided between the supporters of the Signory and the Eight upon the one hand, and those of the Parte Guelfa on the other. The latter could command such aid as the nobility were still capable of giving, and the support of the *popolo grosso* and the Albizzi; on the side of the Signory were ranged the lower orders, the Eight, and the influence of the Ricci, Alberti, and Medici families.

The most prominent representative of the Medici family at this time was Salvestro, who was Gonfalonier of Justice in 1370, and again held that office, despite the efforts of the Albizzi, in 1378. He set himself to curb the power of the Parte Guelfa, especially the abuse of the system of "admonitions" by which in a great measure that power was exercised. Thwarted in his efforts by the "Colleges"—that is, by the twelve Buoniuomini and the sixteen Gonfaloniers of the Companies—Salvestro appealed to the people. "Let no one," says Macchiavelli, "when raising popular commotions, imagine he can afterwards control them at his pleasure, or restrain the people from the commission of acts of violence. Salvestro intended to enact his law and compose the city, but it happened otherwise." The lower orders, seething with discontent, conscious of their wrongs, and mindful of their opportunity, now broke loose from all bonds. The revolt of the Ciompi in 1378 anticipated in its purposes and in its ferocity the almost contemporary rising of the Peasants in England. There is the same cry against the well-to-do: the same assertion of the natural equality of all men, the same demand for higher wages and better conditions of labour. It mattered little to the masses whether nobles or *popolo grosso* got the upper hand. Whoever was victorious, they were equally oppressed, and now they turned on their oppressors. Bursting into the palace of the Signory, the Ciompi made themselves masters of it, and appointed one of their own number, Michele di Lando, chief magistrate of the city. Michele—a street in Florence still bears his name—was a man of remarkable character. His appearance upon his first entrance on the stage of public life was unpromising. Barefoot, with scarcely any clothes upon him, and with the rabble at his heels, this unkempt and ferocious woolcomber seemed to afford no prospect of statesmanship or moderation in the conduct of affairs. But opportunity and responsibility combined to convince his fellow citizens of how much worth may lie concealed beneath a rough exterior, how much political capacity may reside in the humblest of the people. He showed himself resolute in quelling disturbance from

whatever quarter it might arise; indeed, the resentments which he aroused were chiefly on the part of those who thought him too moderate in the constitutional changes which he introduced. Under Michele di Lando the citizens were classified in three divisions—the Greater Guilds, the Lesser Guilds, and the working classes, who were now organised in three new Guilds. The Signoria was to be composed of Guild members in the proportions of two from the Greater Arts, two from the Lesser, and four from the newly formed Trade Unions. Having completed these changes, and having pacified the insurrection, Michele himself seems to have almost entirely withdrawn himself from the stage of political affairs.

But the settlement which he had effected was destined to be of short duration. Discontent and faction on all sides raised their heads. The excluded nobility were chafing against their exclusion; the new aristocracy of the Greater Guilds were jealous of the Lesser, which were now in a position of equal political authority. The minor Guilds were jealous alike of those above them and those below, while the masses were intent on maintaining and increasing the share of power which they had won. "Thus sometimes," to quote Macchiavelli again, "the nobles of the people took arms, sometimes the major and sometimes the minor trades, and the lowest of the people; and it often happened that in different parts of the city all were at once in insurrection."

The result was the fall of the new government in 1381, and the resumption of power by the burgher aristocracy of the Greater Guilds. This practically meant an oligarchy in the hands of the Albizzi family. Maso degli Albizzi, its representative, brought about the abolition of the new Trade Unions, reduced the political power of the Lesser Arts, and placed a crushing preponderance of political authority in the hands of the seven great Guilds. Some years later (1393) an attempt was made to induce the Medici to take up the popular cause against the Albizzi. A deputation of the Lesser Guilds, and of the lower classes, waited upon Vieri dei Medici, who was now the chief representative of the family, to implore him to assume the direction of the

State. Moved either by prudence or disinclination, Vieri refused their request, and the contest between the two families of Albizzi and Medici was postponed for a generation.

The action of the Medici in the troubled times of the Ciompi revolt and its sequel is significant. It was Salvestro dei Medici who in 1378 called forth the tempest, but in appealing from the Colleges to the Council of the Commune he seems to have had little, if any, idea that he was opening the flood-gates to an infuriated populace. Doubtless he welcomed the overthrow of the party to which he was in political antagonism, and cared little by whose hands it was overthrown, but he by no means identified himself with mob violence: it is indeed certain that by a section of the mob he was regarded as far too moderate. If he made no attempt to restrain the people, he equally made no attempt to inflame them, nor to profit personally by their action. Indeed, on leaving office he does not appear again in public life, and in 1388 he died. But there can be no doubt that Salvestro deepened the impression that the lower classes, in the time of need, would find in the House of Medici friends and supporters. The creation of such an impression without giving, by definite action, any very tangible grounds for it, is altogether characteristic of Medician methods. It is difficult to see with what justice Salvestro and Vieri are regarded as deep political schemers, planning the ruin of the Republic for their own benefit, only waiting till the pear should be ripe. Vieri seems to have been a prudent, modest, and unassuming man. But in less than sixty years from the Ciompi revolt the Medici were at the head of the State, and the action of Salvestro undoubtedly paved the way for the despotism of the family, and suggested the lines on which its despotism should be conducted.

For the present, however, the Albizzi controlled the sources of power. Their government was that of an oligarchy, resting in the main upon the support of the commercial aristocracy. The government of the Medici which superseded it was also an oligarchy, but it rested in no small degree upon the support of the lower classes. Each government

displays the tendencies inherent in an oligarchy, of which the most notable is the tendency to split from within. The oligarchs begin to quarrel among themselves; counsel is divided and policy doubtful; at last they fall before those who have been on the watch to seize their position. The history of Florence during the first thirty years of the fifteenth century is the history of the almost silent, but none the less deadly, rivalry of the two families—the Albizzi distinguished by the dash and daring of their policy, by the brilliance of their representatives, the reckless self-confidence which was generated by their success; the Medici watchful and retiring, patient of injuries but never for a moment forgetful, slowly and stealthily undermining, by the arts of wealth and popularity, the structure of political power which their rivals had so elaborately reared.

The rule of the Albizzi in many respects marks a golden age in Florence. Territories were acquired—such as Pisa—which the Republic for the sake of its commercial interests could scarcely do without. The city grew in dignity and external splendour: a new epoch in Art and Letters began; the luxuries and amenities of civic life reached a point never hitherto attained. But old evils had not yet worked themselves out, and already new ones began to appear. It was the Albizzi who set the example, which the Medici were not slow to follow, of using taxation as an instrument for the suppression of their political opponents: complaints were loud, even during the period of their ascendency, against the unfair incidence of taxation to the detriment of the poorer classes. The Albizzi met opposition by vigorous proscription, resorting to exile and "admonitions" whenever individuals showed themselves too formidable.

But it was their foreign policy which prepared the way for the crisis which eventually overthrew them. Florence found herself constantly involved in wars which may have been necessary, but of which the expense was more sensibly felt than the necessity. War with Gian Galeazzo Visconti could scarcely be avoided if the ambition of the Visconti to be master and King of Italy was to be checked, but it was a war not very gloriously conducted by Florence, and the death

of Galeazzo was certainly fortunate for her. War with Ladislas of Naples did little to thwart his schemes of ambition. Indeed, it seeemed that it was only his timely death which saved Florence from being annexed to his dominions. "Thus," says Macchiavelli rather unkindly, "death has always been more favourable to the Florentines than any other friend, and more powerful to save them than their own valour." War at a later period with Filipo Maria Visconti resulted in a disastrous defeat for Florence at Zagonara in 1424. War with Lucca, a few years later, was violently opposed, and Rinaldo Albizzi had great difficulty in getting his own way. By conducting it in person he brought upon himself personally the odium which follows military failure and incapacity: when a treaty with Lucca on the basis of the *status quo ante* had to be patched up in 1433 every one felt that a crisis had arisen. Against the Albizzi there stood Cosimo dei Medici ready to assert the claims of his party and family against the ruling House: the Albizzi felt that the time had come when they must destroy or be destroyed.

CHAPTER I

RISE OF THE MEDICI ASCENDENCY TO THE DEATH OF COSIMO

Giovanni dei Medici, great-grandfather of Lorenzo the Magnificent—Giovanni's relations with the Albizzi—Cosimo dei Medici—Rivalries between Cosimo and the Albizzi—Banishment of Cosimo—His recall; fall of the Albizzi—Supremacy of Cosimo—Character of his ascendency—His methods of government—His foreign policy—The Milanese alliance—Abortive opposition to Cosimo, 1455—Luca Pitti—*Coup d'etat* of 1458—Death of Cosimo, 1464.

IN the later years of the fourteenth century the political influence of the House of Medici had been identified with that branch of it from which Salvestro and Vieri were sprung. They, and theirs, were regarded by the Albizzi as their most dangerous rivals, and in the proscriptions by which, from time to time, the Albizzi sought to strengthen their power, the Medici of Salvestro's and Vieri's line suffered severely.

Another branch of the family, which was represented in Salvestro's days by Averardo Bicci dei Medici, seems to have kept itself aloof from the strife of factions. When political honours and employment came in their way they accepted them, but Averardo Bicci himself was a man more occupied in building up a great commercial business, as trader and banker, than in the strife of parties in the political arena. Thus he and his family escaped notice at a time when the hand of the Albizzi was heavy upon other branches of the Medici House, the ruling oligarchy only awaking to the surprised consciousness of the existence of a competitor when Giovanni dei Medici, Averardo's son, was already one of the most influential men in Florence.

In Giovanni, as he is represented to us through the chronicles and histories, we are able to detect most of the essential

traits of the Medici character. As a private man his aptitude for commerce was extraordinary. He amassed enormous wealth, and controlled to so large an extent the money market of Italy that he was able to effect a financial crisis in almost any quarter where it suited him to operate. The ramifications of his banking business extended far beyond the limits of Italy; to Constantinople and the Levant in the east; to France and England in the north and west. In Florence almost every citizen of importance was his client, and of many of them he was a creditor, while his generosity to the lower classes, whether prompted only by his natural munificence or by nicely calculated political design, gave him a popularity and an influence which could be used on occasion for political purposes. While thus laying the foundations for the ascendency of his House, he was himself a man of singular prudence, distinguished by the moderation of his views, by his conservative tendencies, and by his apparent desire to keep himself outside the contentions which distracted the city as the power of the Albizzi began to wane. By the Albizzi he was regarded as harmless; as a man who, though not perhaps very well disposed to the ruling oligarchy, was yet intent upon his own affairs, willing to serve the State if called upon to represent it, but not setting himself to seek office nor to use office as a means of disturbing the government. He might even be made to serve a purpose useful to the prevailing faction itself. There were malcontents within the ranks of the oligarchy, and they might be brought to heel if it could be shown that they could be dispensed with. Thus when Giovanni became Gonfalonier of Justice in 1421 it was with the consent of the party in power, and in spite of the warnings and remonstrances of Niccolo da Uzzano, who was supposed to exercise an influence in the government not inferior to that of Rinaldo degli Albizzi himself. But his protest was of no avail, for his associates were jealous of Uzzano's reputation, and desirous to exalt some person through whom he might be humbled.

It was the foreign policy of the Albizzi which brought Giovanni prominently forward as a political opponent. He

disapproved of the war undertaken against Filipo Maria Visconti, but if there was to be war, he thought it should be defensive, not offensive in character. When the ill success of the war placed the Albizzi in desperate straits, Giovanni showed himself hostile to the oppressive taxation to which the people were subjected. He refused to lend himself to Rinaldo's project of reducing the political influence of the Lesser Arts in order to enhance still further the ascendency of the Grandi. After the disastrous defeat of the Florentines at Zagonara the influence of Giovanni increased, for the defeat seemed to be the result of a policy which he had opposed. Moreover, his adhesion to a plan of taxation, by which every one was called upon to contribute to the revenue at a fixed rate per cent., stamped him in the opinion of the masses as their friend, as one who maintained and advanced the reputation of the Medici House as the champions of the people. When it was sought to make the new scheme retrospective—for thus, it was urged, it could be shown that heavy arrears of taxation could be proved against the Grandi—Giovanni gave fresh proofs of his moderation and good sense, declaring, according to Macchiavelli, that it was not well to go into things so long past unless to learn something for present guidance: that if in former times the taxation had been unjust, "we ought to be thankful that now we have discovered a means of making it equitable —for he that is content with a moderate victory is always most successful; those who would do more than conquer, commonly lose." There is the trite, epigrammatic touch here which reminds us of some of Cosimo's recorded sayings, leading us to believe that the words may actually have been spoken by Giovanni.

Notwithstanding the appeals of his sons, Cosimo and Lorenzo, to take a more decided line, and put himself at the head of a movement against the government, Giovanni refused to take the advantages which his position offered. If the speech which he made to his sons upon his deathbed is authentic, he seems to have desired that they too should follow his example. "I die content, for I leave you rich and well, and so placed that if you follow the course that

I have followed, you will live in Florence respected and in favour with all men. I am cheered by the thought that I have never wilfully offended any, but have sought to do good to all. In State affairs, if you would live in safety, take that share which the laws and your fellow citizens shall think good to bestow upon you; for what occasions hatred is not that which is given to an individual, but that which an individual has determined to take possession of. Although among so many enemies, and surrounded by so many conflicting interests, I have not only maintained my reputation, but increased it. If you pursue the same course, the same good fortune will attend you."

Cosimo dei Medici, Giovanni's eldest surviving son, was forty years old at the time of his father's death in 1429. He was a man well versed in public affairs, and thoroughly understood how to conduct the vast private interests which were now committed to his hands. In character and methods he bears a close resemblance to his father, but his ambitions were wider. Not circumstances only but inclination urged him to come forward and contend with the falling oligarchy for the possession of Florence. The Medici were the traditional supporters of the populace against the privileged class, and Cosimo was the recognised head of the Medici, the natural leader of all who were opposed to the government. Opportunity for active opposition was not long wanting. In 1430 Rinaldo degli Albizzi plunged Florence into a new war, this time against Lucca, which for years had been a peculiar object of Florentine ambition. The enterprise, however, was recognised as hazardous; it would cost immense sums, involving still heavier taxation upon a people already heavily taxed. A strong anti-war party arose, and there were divided counsels even among the leaders of the ruling faction. Niccolo da Uzzano himself was one of the most forcible opponents of an adventure which he regarded as being as unjust as it was impolitic.

Cosimo, on the other hand, seems to have favoured the war. Macchiavelli's statement to this effect is precise, but Rinaldo degli Albizzi has left it on record that Cosimo only advocated war because he foresaw the issue, and looked

upon war as the most likely means of trapping his rival into his toils. This, however, is to attribute to Cosimo a sagacity and cunning of which even he was scarcely capable. It is the kind of accusation which it is easy to make after the event, but such nice calculations before the event are scarcely credible. What is certain is that Cosimo altogether disapproved of the administration of the war, and that he and his party used the fact that Rinaldo himself was the Florentine Commissary to bring personal accusations against the conduct of the campaign.

How far Rinaldo was himself responsible for the incompetence and corruption which characterised the war with Lucca is open to doubt. But as Commissary his efforts were unproductive of success, and he found himself charged with peculation, if not with actual treachery. He was aware that the partisans of the Medici were the source from which these charges arose, and in an evil moment of natural indignation he hurried without leave from his camp to Florence, in order to vindicate his reputation and strengthen the tottering fortunes of his government. He proposed that strong measures should be taken against Cosimo and his party, but was unable to induce Niccolo da Uzzano to support these designs. On the death of Uzzano, Rinaldo felt more free to act, and the war being ended by a treaty which reflected in its terms the unsatisfactory conduct of the enterprise, he felt that no time must be lost. Having secured the co-operation of the Gonfalonier, Bernardo Guadagni, whose term of office was to begin on September 1, 1433, Cosimo was summoned to attend before the Signoria.

In spite of warnings he determined to obey the summons, and found himself a prisoner. He owed his life at this crisis to his own judicious use of lavish bribes—though he marvelled that he was able to accomplish so much by what seemed to him a trifling expenditure—and to the dissensions which existed among his enemies. Albizzi and his more resolute supporters were for Cosimo's death ; others were in favour of banishment ; others refused to commit themselves to any opinion. Moderate counsels eventually prevailed :

Rinaldo had to be content with a sentence of banishment which condemned Cosimo to ten years' exile at Padua, his brother Lorenzo to five years' exile at Venice, and the chief partisans of the Medici were in varying degrees to share the punishment of their leaders.

It was, however, only when Cosimo was gone that Florence realised that she had lost an integral element of herself. Cosimo had struck his roots so broadly throughout the City-State that, on his departure, she seemed to wither and decline. "He took a part of Florence with him." Rinaldo, already disgusted by the half-measures which had been adopted, began to make preparations against the reaction which he saw to be inevitable. He reverted to the old proposals that the political influence of the Lesser Arts and lower classes should be diminished, and that power should be concentrated solely in the hands of the Grandi. This policy did not commend itself to all his friends, while it roused against him the bitter enmity of the lower orders, whose hearts turned to Cosimo as their natural defender. An alliance between Florence and Venice against Milan only resulted in further military disasters. In August 1434 the trend of public feeling was made manifest by the election of a Gonfalonier and Signory who were declared and unanimous supporters of the Medician party. The time had come for Rinaldo either to accept his own total ruin or to seek to retrieve his position by an appeal to force. He summoned his friends to rally round him in arms: he was himself prepared to make a dash upon the Palazzo, but Palla Strozzi and Giovanni Guicciardini, on whom Rinaldo specially relied, proved cold or faint-hearted: the Signoria plucked up courage, and Rinaldo weakly abandoned arms for negotiations.

At this time Pope Eugenius IV. was enjoying the hospitality of Florence—that wandering and perturbed spirit for which Rome so seldom afforded a secure resting-place. He offered his services at this juncture as a mediator between the contending parties, and Rinaldo consented to discuss terms with Eugenius in his Papal quarters in Santa Maria Novella. But while they were discussing in Santa Maria,

in the Signoria they were acting. A "Parlamento" having been hastily gathered in the Piazza, the Signory received authority to appoint a Balìa, which unanimously determined that Cosimo should be recalled and that his place as an exile should be taken by Rinaldo degli Albizzi. The Pope could only condole with Rinaldo upon the harshness of Fortune. He advised him to be patient; to wait for some favourable turn. Rinaldo's reply shows the bitterness of a man who has been duped. "The distrust of those who should have trusted me, the trust which I have placed in you, these have been my ruin; but I myself am most to blame in that I supposed that you, who could not maintain yourself in your own city, could maintain me in mine."

Thus Rinaldo degli Albizzi vanishes from the Florentine stage. A man of aspiring spirit and daring resolution, the fascination of his character still impresses itself upon us through the mists of centuries and the dusty records of his day; but he was a man unable to infuse into his own partisans his own boldness and an unquestioning loyalty, and so, when Fortune proved fickle, he could rely only upon himself. Aiming at a despotism, he had been successful only in establishing an oligarchy, which collapsed under the pressure of its own divided counsels.

The victorious Signoria took instant measures for the recall of Cosimo and his friends, anticipating their action by a drastic policy directed against the defeated party. When Cosimo returned he found that his enemies had been already dealt with. Seventy of Rinaldo's principal adherents shared the fate of their leader; there was little left in the way of reprisals and proscriptions for the Medici to do. Cosimo was a man not naturally disposed to violence, nor fond of bloodshed for its own sake, but he was not one who ever shrank from violent methods when they seemed necessary. He was now quite determined not to be sent forth once more upon his travels, but to make his ascendency absolute and final. He proceeded therefore against his fallen rivals with relentless vigour. He knew how to act upon a conviction, which Rinaldo had only expressed, when

he said that great offenders ought either to be left untouched or utterly destroyed.

The offending Gonfalonier, Guadagni, under whom Cosimo had been banished, was executed. The unfortunate Albizzi were harried from place to place, the conditions of exile being made as bitter for them as possible. These harsh measures can scarcely be urged in judgment against Cosimo, for they were in the spirit of the times, and Florence had been long accustomed to drastic action in a time of political crisis.

Compared with the tortures, murders, secret assassinations, which were the political weapons in common use at Milan, Naples, or Venice, Cosimo's procedure may be looked upon as mild, but to suppose him incapable of cruelty and ruthlessness is to mistake his character. He did not need a Macchiavelli to teach him that a Prince should know how to use cruelty as well as kindness, but that cruelty, rightly used, is used not for the sake of cruelty, but for the sake of those advantages which cannot be had without it.

With the return of Cosimo in 1434 the despotism of the House of Medici over Florence was an accomplished fact. It remained, unimpaired and scarcely seriously challenged, until the expulsion of Piero dei Medici in 1494.

Sixty years tenure of the first position in the State through four successive generations is a political phenomenon in Florence of the first significance. Why did the Medici prevail? On what foundations was their supremacy reared? Their supremacy was reared upon political method, upon the power of wealth, and most of all upon a community of sympathy, which was not forced or artificial, between the tastes and habits of the Medici and all the strongest instincts and ideals of the Florentine people.

These principles apply to the government of Cosimo even more definitely and consistently than to that of Lorenzo. As a political engineer, the grandfather may take precedence over the grandson by right of originality and first discovery. The originality of Cosimo, however, does not consist in the invention of political methods hitherto unknown. It was his distinction to employ old methods in a new way, so as

to make them effective not only for personal but for public ends. The Medician government, while securing the ascendency of a family, at the same time remedied some fatal flaws which had long been conspicuous in the constitutional system of Florence. It provided an executive authority in the State which was independent of the constant changes in *personnel* which the system involved, and so established a government with which other governments could deal, and afforded a guarantee of permanence and continuity in the domestic and foreign policy of the State. Thus, if there was loss to Florence from the despotism of a family, there was also much gain. Her whole history had conclusively shown that to enjoy liberty she needed a master, and in the master hand of the Medici she flourished as never before. The weakness of the situation lay in its want of definition. The Medici had to act as kings while pretending not to be so, a position that required such delicate handling that only the most consummate statecraft and tact could maintain it and make it tolerable.

As we trace the evolution of Florentine politics we arrive at last through successive stages of development and reaction at the ascendency of the Medici. It follows as an inevitable consequence of the conditions, and it gives to Florence the government which she needed and deserved. But it has special and peculiar characteristics of its own, of such a kind that the more the Medician supremacy is examined and understood the more the difficulty is felt of expressing its precise nature by a word or phrase. It is convenient to call it a despotism, for in a sense it was so, and yet Cosimo's most intimate associates would have been surprised at the assertion that the State was under the control of a one-man government. It was in a sense the government of a party, as was the government of the Albizzi, but had it been so described in Cosimo's presence he would have smiled and been silent. It was not the government of a faction, for all, or almost all, sections of the State could regard it as their own, yet the avenues to power were in the hands of a clique, and none but members of the ring exercised any actual control over affairs.

If Cosimo was a despot, it was only because he was indispensable. Whatever efforts were made after 1434 to loosen his hold and diminish his authority only resulted in making him stronger than before. His opponents were undone by the very success of their opposition. If they chafed under Cosimo, without him they were immediately reduced to impotence and despair. His wealth, and the uses to which he put it, gave to him personally a power of control over individuals and foreign governments against which it was useless to contend.

But Cosimo was content with the possession of this irresistible influence. He had no desire to stand forth declared as the single and unquestioned autocrat. He was quite satisfied to work through agents and to allow them a certain latitude which almost deceived them into the belief that they were partners with him on equal terms. The government was in the hands of Cosimo's party, but the man who worked the party machine was Cosimo himself.

Neither was it altogether the government of a faction. This had been the curse of all the previous revolutions in the State which had resulted in imposing successive tyrannies upon it. The ascendency of the Parte Guelfa or of the people, or of the Albizzi, had meant the suppression of everybody else. Cosimo's government was a government for all who would consent to live peaceably under it. He himself had roots among the old nobility, and by relaxing the rigour, at any rate in the case of some noble families, of the restrictive laws against them, he could claim credit for moderation while taking care that the opportunity for exercising political power should never come their way.

Of all the merchant princes of Florence, Cosimo was the foremost both by virtue of the range of his commercial transactions and the wealth which accrued from them. Thus he was specially fitted to represent the interests of the Greater Guilds. But the Lesser Arts and the lower classes looked to him as their natural and traditional champion. It was from the ranks of these lower classes that he drew some of his most important and influential henchmen.

Thus all sections, in a greater or less degree, could regard Cosimo as their friend and could look upon his government as exercised on their behalf. It was in a measure "national"; in its universality we find its distinction, and some measure of its stability and success.

To a government so nondescript as that of Cosimo three safeguards were essential. First, to exclude absolutely from the Florentine domain all those of any influence who were likely to oppose it; then to secure complete control over all appointments to office; lastly, to wield all the powers of taxation in such a way as to bring the pressure of the taxes individually to bear upon such persons as might be inclined to be refractory. With these safeguards in his hands Cosimo could afford to live much in the background, to pose as the benevolent bourgeois only anxious to place his poor services, if required, at the disposal of the State; to express unbounded respect for Gonfaloniers, Signoria, and Councils, seeing that all alike were his creatures, who owed their official existence entirely to his consent and goodwill.

Towards his vanquished rivals Cosimo showed himself stern and unrelenting. Apologists urge that the wholesale proscription of the Albizzi was not his work, and it is true that the Signoria which recalled him in 1434 at the same time issued its decrees of exile against the fallen party. But it was with Cosimo's consent, if not at his instigation, that the conditions of their banishment were made intolerable for them; that the sentences were renewed upon their expiration, and that the exiles, and all who belonged to them, were eventually driven to despair. It is quite possible that Cosimo was governed here as much by policy as by the spirit of vindictiveness. Florence did undoubtedly need repose from the strife of parties. To exclude the rival party absolutely from its confines, to leave it without hope, was perhaps the best way to secure repose. But from being merely exiles these men were driven into being rebels. They stirred up war against the State, enlisted the efforts of Visconti on their behalf, and it was good fortune rather than good judgment which brought about

their overthrow at Anghiari (1440), a defeat which finally ruined all their chances of success.

The power of Cosimo was regularised by a Balìa which, upon his return from exile, proceeded to fill the boxes which contained the names of those who were successively to fill the public offices with the names of those only who were known to be Medici partisans. To prevent the possibility of accidents, the names, when occasion required, were not to be drawn by lot, but to be selected by a committee acting in Cosimo's interest. Every five years, until 1455, a Balìa, appointed for the purpose, confirmed Cosimo's powers, and took the necessary measures to render official opposition impossible.

Having thus gained the magistracies, it only remained to secure complete control over taxation. Under the Medici a suspect did not find himself confronted by the dagger of an assassin, but by the demand note of the tax-collector.

The ordinance of 1427 which was passed after the Florentine defeat at Zagonara had for its avowed object the equalisation of the incidence of taxation. It sought to put a stop to the use of the taxes as an instrument of political oppression. To this end it was enacted that every one was to pay a fixed rate per cent. upon his property of whatever kind; that every three years a new valuation should be made and the results accurately tabled in the public registers. Under Cosimo this system fell into abeyance. The triennial valuation was neglected, and the government kept the right of assessment in its own hands. Thus by lightening the taxes for some, by paying them for others out of his private purse, by imposing on doubtful friends or declared enemies a crushing and intolerable burden, Cosimo made himself the master of all. "The Medici," says Guicciardini, "never allowed a fixed method and legal distribution of the taxes, but always reserved to themselves the power of bearing heavily on individuals according to their pleasure . . . they made use of the taxes to win the people over, while they set themselves up as lords of all."

Securely entrenched behind the magistracies and the taxes, Cosimo had little to fear from opposition, and could look on with equanimity as events pursued their course. But his career was not altogether untroubled. He had occasionally to remind his own most prominent partisans that they must accept the situation as he defined it, and that any attempt to follow an independent course could only result in their discomfiture.

After Cosimo, the most prominent man in the city was Neri Capponi. Apart from the reputation which descended to him from his father, Gino, the conqueror of Pisa, Neri himself was a distinguished soldier, who supplied the military buttress which was needed for the edifice of the Medici power. He commanded the Florentine forces at Anghiari, and by his victory there over the Condottiere, Nicolo Piccinino, and the Albizzi rebels, he had materially contributed to the consolidation of Cosimo's government. His intimate friend and most trusted captain was Baldaccio d'Anghiari, a soldier of fortune who had served with much distinction in the war against Filipo Maria Visconti. One day Baldaccio was summoned to the Palazzo by the Gonfalonier under pretext of consulting him on matters connected with his command, but on his arrival he was seized, treacherously murdered, and his body was thrown from the Palace windows into the Piazza below. The motives for this crime are obscure; the complicity of Cosimo in the deed has not been proved. Macchiavelli describes it as a private act of vengeance on the part of Orlandini, the Gonfalonier, but the circumstance was generally regarded as an indication of the long arm of Cosimo, as designed to convey to Neri Capponi a somewhat gruesome hint that he must confine himself rigidly within his own sphere of action.

In the domain of foreign policy it required all Cosimo's authority and powers of persuasion to reconcile the people to some failures, such as another unsuccessful war for the acquisition of Lucca, and to a cardinal departure from all Florentine precedent in an alliance with Milan. From 1450 the Milanese alliance became the leading principle

of Medician diplomacy; it was maintained as strenuously by Piero dei Medici and Lorenzo as by Cosimo, who initiated it.

For years past Florence had been continually engaged in armed opposition to the Visconti, and these hostilities involved a tolerably constant alliance with Venice, whose territories were even more seriously threatened by the Visconti power. In 1447 Filipo Maria Visconti died. Milan declared itself a republic, but it was obvious that without strong external support this infant republic could not sustain itself against the machinations of Francesco Sforza. Milan naturally looked to her sister republic of Florence to provide the support which was needed, and public feeling in the city set strongly in favour of supplying it. Cosimo thought otherwise. He was convinced that Milan was unfit for republican institutions, and far too weak to defend them. Unless Milan was in the hands of a strong and formidable ruler, the State would inevitably become absorbed by Venice, who would thus consolidate all northern Italy under her sway and completely control all the means of communication by land between the rest of Italy and the outside world. The true policy of Florence, therefore, Cosimo urged, was to assist Sforza to instal himself as Duke of Milan. Owing his position to Florentine support, his authority would rest upon Florence and he would be in a measure dependent on her. Florence and Milan in conjunction could effectually check that policy of selfish aggrandisement which Venice was supposed invariably to pursue, while Naples, notwithstanding some claim to Milan which the Aragonese House could put forward under the terms of Filipo Visconti's will, was far too much concerned with Aragonese and Angevin rivalries to take a prominent part in general Italian politics. Thus Florence and Milan, in alliance, would hold the balance of power in Italy, for the Papacy was still distracted, and a combination of Naples, Venice, and the Papacy would scarcely be a match for Florence and Milan if they stood together.

These arguments prevailed, and the foundation-stone of

Medician foreign policy was firmly laid by Cosimo. But it was a policy which cannot be said at any time to have roused enthusiasm in Florence. A vigorous effort was made in 1466, upon the death of Francesco Sforza, to break an alliance which had never been popular, and a certain restiveness against Cosimo which is observable in 1455 may be in part explained by the dissatisfaction which the Milanese alliance had created.

Cosimo's rule had now extended, uninterruptedly and on the whole smoothly, over a period of twenty-one years. Italy was at last at peace, for the Venetians determined to reconcile themselves, at any rate for a time, to Sforza's possession of Milan: René of Anjou had shown himself so incapable in prosecuting his claims on Naples that the Florentines concluded that he was scarcely worth supporting. A peace concluded at Lodi in 1454 between Milan and Venice soon developed into a general peace, and, as a pledge of amity and reconciliation, Francesco Sforza gave his daughter Ippolita in marriage to the Duke of Calabria, the grandson of Alfonso of Naples. It was indeed time that Italy should compose her internal dissensions and unite against a common danger. In 1453 the Turkish Sultan, Mohammed II., had captured Constantinople; the Turks were at the gate of Western Europe. There was a vague sense throughout Christendom that a time of crisis had arisen, but in Italy, as in Europe, there was no sense of the necessity of united effort. The Italian States were more interested in their own affairs than in the distant prospect of a remote danger. Each pursued its own course, regardless of the advent of the Turks, except in so far as they constituted a new piece which might be played in the complex game of Italian diplomacy.

In Florence in 1455 some of the principal adherents of Cosimo tardily recognised that they were being reduced to impotence. Thinking to establish an oligarchy in which political power would be shared among the oligarchs, they discovered that they had set up the rule of a single person by whose authority everything was done. They insisted that the necessity no longer existed for government

by Balìas periodically appointed. They desired to re-establish the old system by which the magistracies were filled by lot and not by selection; they demanded that the registers on which the taxes were based should be revised in the spirit of the law of 1427. Cosimo did not think it worth while to oppose them, for, the boxes being filled exclusively with the names of his supporters, it made little difference to him whether they were chosen by lot or selection; while any revision of the taxation registers was likely, as he knew, to bear with special severity on the very men who advocated a re-assessment. Scarcely were the changes made when the authors of them realised their mistakes. Their share of political power diminished while their assessments considerably increased. There was no one to whom they could look to save them from themselves, except Cosimo. In 1458 he was urged by the very men who had sought to limit his power to reassert it in its original form. They suggested a Parlamento, a Balìa, and all the apparatus by which Florence was wont to cloak force under constitutional forms. Cosimo refused. He had gone about, says Macchiavelli, as if he did not observe that anything had happened, and expressed surprise that he should now be asked to sanction measures which were only justified by special circumstances of crisis. He was, however, very far from blind to the situation. He knew that there was need for action if his ascendency was to be preserved, but he preferred to use a cat's-paw to do what was necessary, while he himself remained in the background. In Luca Pitti he had always had in reserve the man who was required for any emergency such as that which had arisen.

The name of Luca Pitti has become almost a household word, even though only a few have any knowledge of the man. He was the originator of the Pitti Palace, that stately building in Oltrarno whose galleries form the delight of every lover of Art. He was a man of great wealth and wide business connections, and thus his interests were similar to those of Cosimo. He loved popularity and the exercise of power, but his sense of his own importance was such that it could scarcely occur to his mind that his position

in the State was secondary. He would scarcely attempt to be Cosimo's rival, because he failed to recognise that any one could be a rival to him. He was thus a convenient agent for Cosimo, who could employ him to do work which he did not care to do himself. Luca Pitti would find his reward in living broadly in the public eye and concentrating attention upon himself. Cosimo would be satisfied to have the work done, and rather preferred to be behind the scenes so long as he could pull the strings. In 1458 some changes seemed to Cosimo to be certainly desirable. The constitutional party which hankered after the system of 1427 had grown too powerful, and must be taught a lesson. The lower classes were presuming upon the indulgence which had been shown to them. Some of the principal adherents of the Medici party were suspected of enriching themselves at the public expense. A *coup d'état* might prove useful all round.

On July 1, 1458, Luca Pitti entered upon office as Gonfalonier. His first act was to endeavour to persuade the Signoria and the Colleges to go back on the reforms of 1455. He proposed that the boxes which had then been filled with the names of those eligible for office should be disregarded, and that the offices should be filled by selection instead of by lot. His efforts at persuasion proving unsuccessful, he determined to call a Parlamento, in order to secure from the popular voice the authority which he required. The Parlamento of 1458 is a fair example of the methods of procedure usual on such occasions. Foreign mercenaries overawed the city from outside. A little army of over 6000 men held the Piazza of the Signory. The Medici partisans in arms blocked all the approaches. Under such conditions of choice Luca Pitti submitted his proposals to the assembled citizens. With one accord they shouted assent, and the proceedings were over.

The Balìa to which the public had delegated its authority had time and a fair field before it. Its tenure of power was for six months, and thus the revolution was secure at any rate for a season. The changes which it effected were considerable, and they profoundly influenced the

whole future régime of the Medici. The boxes were filled with sufficient names to last for five years. Accopiàtori were to select the members of the Signoria for seven years. A Committee of Eight, which in the past, like the Ten of War, had occasionally been appointed to assist the government, was now crystallised into a permanent Commission of "the Eight of Watch and Ward," whose functions were to preside at elections, and take cognisance of offences done against the State. In honour of the greatness of the occasions the Priors of the Signory were no longer to be known as Priors of the Arts, but as Priors of Liberty, while the Gonfalonier's position as chief magistrate was emphasised by assigning to him a central place among his colleagues instead of a place to the side of them as heretofore.

In addition, a new Council of The Hundred was established which in later days superseded the two Councils of the People and of the Commune. This Council was composed of suitable persons selected by all those who had held the office of Gonfalonier since Cosimo's return in 1434. It was thus entirely in the interest of the ruling body, and only served to throw a covering of constitutional forms around the naked autocracy which was supreme.

The work was clinched by the banishment of a number of persons who were on various counts disagreeable to the government. Some of these were corrupt tax-gatherers who deserved their fate, but in the majority of cases the fault of the delinquents lay only in their objections to autocratic control.

During his remaining years the power of Cosimo was not again questioned. He himself retired still further into the background, leaving the active management of affairs in the hands of those whom he could trust. At the time of the *coup d'état* he was nearly seventy years of age, and was a martyr to gout. In 1464 he died, and was hailed by his admiring fellow countrymen as "Pater Patriæ."

Brogi

PORTRAIT OF COSIMO DEI MEDICI

DETAIL FROM BENOZZO GOZZOLI'S 'ADORATION OF THE MAGI,' PALAZZO RICCARDI, FLORENCE

CHAPTER II

COSIMO DEI MEDICI AND THE HUMANISTIC REVIVAL

Incongruities of Cosimo's character—Character of the Florentines—Sympathy of Florence with Humanism—Effects of commerce on national character—Spiritual life and aspirations of Cosimo—Cosimo and the cult of Plato—Florence and the Revival of Learning—Francesco Petrarch—Revival of Greek—Meanings and implications of Humanism—Recovery of ancient MSS.—Professors of Greek in Florence—Foundation of academies—Humanism in relation to Christianity—Harmony between Cosimo and Florentine ideals—Cosimo as a collector of books—Efforts to reconcile Platonism and Christianity—Gemisthos Plethon—Ambrogio Traversari.

IF Cosimo's government and political method are the natural sequence of the complexities and incongruities inherent in the constitutional conditions, the man himself, in an even greater degree, represents the complexities and incongruities which are inherent in the nature of man. The world has not yet decided how far the code of morals which should govern private life is applicable to the necessities of politics and diplomacy. In Cosimo's day the distinction between the two spheres of action was clearly defined and taken for granted. The Prince, as a Prince, must not hesitate to do all those things which were necessary to maintain his position. As a private man he might be what he liked. Cosimo's character as a private man is not undeserving of the encomiums it has received. Macchiavelli can by no means be accused of undue partiality for the Medici, but he says of Cosimo that he not only surpassed all his contemporaries in wealth and authority, but also in prudence and generosity. "He was generous to his friends, kind to the poor, comprehensive in discourse, cautious in advice, grave and witty in his speech. . . . If, in relating Cosimo's actions, I have rather followed the style of princely biographies than that of sober history, it

need not furnish occasion for surprise; for of so extraordinary an individual I was compelled to speak with unusual praise."

Even as a statesman and politician Cosimo might easily have been far worse than he was. Judged by the spirit of his age and by the standard afforded by contemporary rulers, he was in advance of public opinion rather than behind it. The dagger of taxation was certainly more respectable, for constant use, than the dagger of the assassin. A cold and calculating self-interest, which does what is necessary and no more, is almost a virtue compared with the wild, sullen, soulless excesses which mark the public life of a Ferrante of Naples or a Galeazzo Maria Sforza of Milan. Yet it is hard to reconcile Cosimo's political method with spiritual aspirations and a genuine sense of religion, though not more hard than it is to-day to reconcile some of the canons of commerce with the canons of strict rectitude and private honour. To deny spirituality to Cosimo would be to misunderstand him altogether. It was a part of the versatility of the Medici character—a versatility especially conspicuous in Lorenzo—to be genuinely affected by apparently the most contradictory impulses, and frankly to exhibit all the gradations which in each of us connect together the elements of the savage and the saint. It is this frank exhibition of incongruities which gives to the Medici character its peculiar fascination. To deny the incongruities, to assert that all that was bad in them represents them as they really were, while all that appears good in them was an effect of artifice and hypocrisy, is a confession that a complex character is beyond the reach of our understanding.

The true secret of the Medici influence over Florence is not to be discovered in their political method alone. It lies rather in the perfect harmony which in all things existed between them and the aims, ideas, and aspirations of the Florentine people. The evil and the good in them corresponded to the mixed elements of the Florentine character. If their political method was unscrupulous and corrupt, yet it was only a more scientific manifestation of methods

which had been long in use, methods which were regarded as inevitable, and which were thoroughly understood. Other and purer methods must have proved ineffectual for the accomplishment of any purpose at all, because they would have been out of touch with experience and practice. Corruption in political institutions does not imply the general corruption of the people who live under them. Modern America, Walpole's England, Medician Florence, are examples that a nation may be sound, though some features of its government, viewed in the abstract, may seem to be rotten. In Florence the currents of national life flowed on undisturbed by the storms and vicissitudes of political rivalries, and that national life was strenuous, commodious, and aspiring. No mistake can be greater than to regard the Florentines of this epoch as a frivolous, fickle people, ready to surrender their dear inheritance of liberty to the man who would give them festivals and entertainments; thoughtless of life's problems so long as they could enjoy the carnal and material pleasures which life could afford. The city which had produced Dante did not in two hundred years become utterly unworthy of her greatest son. The Florentines were a people in whom human nature manifested itself in all its many and varied aspects; qualities in them which debased them to the level of the beasts are found in close association with qualities which drew them near to the nature of the gods. On the whole, they were a sober, striving, industrious race of citizens, engaged from day to day in the work of the day, but with interests not wholly concentrated on the struggle for material subsistence. They had a passion for their city, a sense of their citizenship, a love for what was beautiful, and a critical sense which enabled them to distinguish between false beauty and true; they had virtues, in fact, which cover much that was degrading and redeem much that was imperfect. Nor is it too much to say that they were on the whole a God-fearing people. At a time when ceremonial observances had almost usurped the place of a religious life, it is astonishing to find in the best thought of Florence at this epoch so deep a sense of the mystery of

life, so general a perception of the insufficiency of mere convention to satisfy the inmost cravings of the heart. While careful of observances, they were conscious that these in themselves were not enough, and the susceptibility of the Florentines to fall under the spell of deeply religious natures, such as St. Antoninus and Savonarola, is an indication that they realised their own shortcomings and had an instinct for loftier standards than those which they had actually attained. No ruler could have been acceptable to Florence who was totally lacking in a sense of the inner and higher life.

The pre-eminence of Florence at this time in philosophy and scholarship is not without connection with the deeper side of the Florentine character. Just as the profound erudition of Dante, and the wide range of his philosophical speculations, were applied by him to the noblest purposes of spiritual life, so the Florentines, in the days of the Medici, regarded the philosophical Renaissance, not as an end in itself, but as a means to a more perfect understanding of the relation between God and man. The study of Plato, the revision of mediæval views on Aristotle in the light of the authentic text, were more enthusiastically pursued at Florence than elsewhere, and, side by side with the abstract passion for antiquity, there is to be found the constant concrete object of effecting a philosophical reconciliation between the teaching and ideals of Paganism and Christianity.

It was, however, in the domain of Art that, in the fifteenth century, Florence could claim a supremacy in Italy which was unquestioned. The municipal patriotism of the people had long found expression in beautifying the city by noble public buildings and princely private houses. Architecture called in the services of sculpture to give finish and decoration to its creations; the spacious walls of churches and palaces gave scope for the work of the fresco painters. The wealth of Florence brought with it a standard of comfort, a luxury, and a sense of refinement which called into activity the artistic energies of the workers in gold, silver, tapestry, and brocade; indeed, there was

no department of life in which Art did not have its recognised and appointed place. All the city looked on at the efforts of its artists with the keenest appreciation and with a critical judgment. The inspiration to great work came only indirectly from the encouragement of patrons: their fount and origin were to be found in the national life. Such a city and such a people could not have been wholly given up to corruption. Splendid impulses cannot spring from a soil that is sour and defiled. Only that man or that family could truly represent Florence who shared her enthusiasms and was in perfect sympathy with the intellectual and artistic currents of her life.

But before all things Florence was essentially a commercial city. It was its wealth, and the consequences which follow from wealth, which determined the bent of its intellectual and artistic activities. It was the oil of commerce which kept the lamp of culture burning. Thus a statesman in charge of the interests of Florence must direct his domestic and foreign policy to advancing her commercial welfare. He must be able to preserve order and peace within her territories, and without; he must be alive to every opportunity of acquiring points of vantage, and extending the facilities for easy communication with the world at large.

If, however, great wealth derived from commerce is capable of bringing to a nation great advantages, it will also impart to the people certain characteristics which are neither amiable nor admirable. It is liable to produce a commercial standard of honour which is quite incompatible with an evangelical standard of conduct. The business of life will largely consist in besting a competitor and ousting rivals from the field. The chivalric qualities of honesty. loyalty, and good faith will tend to fall into the background, Ease and leisure breed luxury, which chiefly seeks full scope for its enjoyment, and insidiously undermines the qualities of grit, self-sacrifice, and humility of spirit, which are the foundation-stones of lofty character. The Florentines did not wholly escape from the snares which beset the feet of a wealthy commercial people. The gradations

in the social scale revealed from time to time, though unfrequently, an embittered antagonism between capital and labour. The lower classes sought relief from the monotony of their daily toil in sensation and in unwholesome amusement during their hours of leisure. Shows and spectacles devised for their entertainment would not be without effect in extending the popularity and consolidating the influence of an ambitious ruler. Such a ruler indeed, if he was to succeed, must be a man of many parts. He must have assimilated to himself all the elements which made up in combination the Florentine character. The more he was himself the microcosm of the State, the more surely, almost unconsciously, he would direct it to the service of his personal ends.

The edifice of personal rule in Florence must therefore rest upon sympathy with the many-sided activities, interests, prejudices, and weaknesses of the Florentine people. This sympathy must not be the spurious product of calculated artifice, but a genuine and native instinct of the heart. No ruler could have succeeded had he set himself to exploit the characteristics of the Florentine people for his own benefit. He would have been instantly detected as an impostor. The man who sought to rule in Florence must be a representative and not a tyrant: his ascendency must be the natural and spontaneous expression of the fact that he embodied, in a fuller degree than any other man, the genius of the people. And, above all, he must possess in ample measure the saving grace of tact. He must know how to conceal from a people jealous of their liberties the fact that they were under a master; to disguise personal rule under the appearance of free institutions. Any ostentatious exhibition of regal splendours or authority would have been fatal to the exercise of power. To the outward view he must be simply the leading citizen in a free city, and the test of his kingcraft lay in the skill with which he succeeded in maintaining the illusion of liberty in conjunction with the practical exercise of personal sovereignty.

Such being the conditions under which alone a personal

government could be established in Florence, it remains to see how far the character of Cosimo dei Medici answered to the conditions.

The spiritual life of Cosimo is not to be gauged merely by the number of churches and religious houses which he built and endowed. The amount which he expended on such external manifestations of his piety was enormous, and in accordance with the spirit of his times he believed that, by such expenditure, he could do something to square his account with God. Lorenzo, in his *Ricordi* states that between 1434 and 1471, the sum expended in public buildings, works of benevolence, and contributions to the public funds amounted to 663,755 fiorini, or over £330,000. This represents about three and a half millions sterling of money of to-day. "Though many may think it better to have some of this in hand," says Lorenzo artlessly, "I consider such an expense to be a great honour to our position. The money is well placed, and I am quite content."

But Cosimo never deluded himself by the supposition that lavish contributions could satisfy all the requirements of his religious life. He recognised that, however much he might do for God by charity and church building, it was but an insignificant return for what God had done for him. "He had never been able," he said, "to lay out so much in the service of God as to find the balance in his own favour." Though the spiritual life of Cosimo finds external reflection in the Church of S. Lorenzo, the Convent of S. Marco, and his hospital for pilgrims at Jerusalem, its inner depths are revealed in those intervals of retirement, when he withdrew himself from the demands of politics and commerce to meditate and be still, and to enjoy the conversation of the keenest thinkers of his age. At such times this shrewd, hard, somewhat cynical man of affairs became the humble searcher into the truth of things and into the mystery of the world. It was in the study of Plato that he found the fullest satisfaction for this side of his nature. Though his own knowledge of Greek did not permit him to read Plato in the original, he engaged Marsilio Ficino to make translations, and it was in the conceptions

which he derived from Plato rather than from orthodox sources that he found the fullest consolation for the sorrows which he was called upon to endure. Of these sorrows, the most bitter was the death of his son Giovanni at the age of twenty-two. The Pope, Pius II., sent to Cosimo a letter of condolence, to which he replied in a letter which is extant. "We," he says, "as you so wisely and religiously write, we know nothing. Yet, as to my son Giovanni, I have never thought anything ill done, since he has passed, not from life, but from death to life. For this that we call life is really death. That is true life which is eternal." *

Though the sentiment to which Cosimo here gives expression may be derived from his Platonic studies, there is the touch of nature in it which makes it akin to every age: Cosimo dei Medici and Shelley meet on common ground.

> Dust to the dust! but the pure spirit shall flow
> Back to the burning fountain whence it came,
> A portion of the Eternal, which must glow
> Through time and change, unquenchably the same.
>
> . . . .
>
> Peace, peace! he is not dead, he does not sleep—
> He hath awakened from the dream of life—
> 'Tis we, who, lost in stormy visions, keep
> With phantoms an unprofitable strife.
>
> *Adonais*, 38, 39.

Though Cosimo was no hypocrite, yet he was not unconscious of a certain antagonism between his actions as a politician and his aspirations as a private individual. He half recognised that he was trying to lead two lives, one of which was incompatible with the other, but he excused himself on the ground that a statesman is irresistibly compelled by circumstances to many courses which no man in a private station could honestly adopt, and therefore it was necessary that as far as possible these evil deeds should be expiated by works of piety.

Thus, as we regard the spiritual aspect of Cosimo's character, we are not presented with a picture of the perfect man. There is in him much inconsistency and contradiction. For this very reason he was intelligible to his

* See the expression of the same sentiment in Lorenzo's "Commentary" p. 386 of this book.

compatriots, while impressing them as being above, rather than below, the standard of their own spiritual aspirations.

The cult of Plato, which had in Cosimo an enthusiastic votary, arose as a consequence of the revival of ancient learning, in which Florence from the first had led the way. The spirit of the ancient world, contained within its literature, its art, and its ruins, had ceased to operate upon the mediæval mind. The Latin language, though in a debased form, survived the collapse of the Roman Empire, and, in Italy at any rate, some knowledge of the works of the principal poets and historians and orators of classical Rome long continued to linger after Rome had fallen. But the ancient Latin authors were read, not in order to obtain light from the civilisation and culture of the past, nor with any idea of assimilating that culture to the conditions of the present. They were read only in relation to mediævalism; as affording illustrations and allegories of mediæval modes of thought. The spirit of antiquity awoke again in Francesco Petrarca of Arezzo, who only failed to be a Florentine because he was a citizen of the world. He felt instinctively that within the literature of ancient Rome was to be found the talisman which would lead his own world to the enjoyment of all the arts, refinements, and graces of life; that in the knowledge of the past lay the hope of the future. He saw that the fame of Virgil or Cicero must be undying, and thought, by modelling himself on them, to secure his own immortality. To recover the purity of the Latin tongue, to cleanse it of barbarisms, to make the old world live again in the heart and thought of man, became with Petrarch a passion. Not content with greedily absorbing whatever of Latin literature still survived, he explored the dusty recesses of monastic libraries for long-forgotten manuscripts of Latin writers. Thus he recovered much of the Latin classics of which the world for centuries had been in ignorance. Whatever he found, he copied, sometimes with his own hand, and thus secured it for ever. Medals, inscriptions, ancient ruins, everything, however apparently insignificant, which could throw a gleam of light upon antiquity seemed

to him of importance. He pursued his self-imposed tasks not in the spirit of an antiquarian, but rather of a prophet, who saw the vision of a nobler, better world resulting from the recovered knowledge of the world which had passed away. The fascination of his personality, the magnetism of his enthusiasm, attracted to him a band of devoted disciples, who carried forward the work in the spirit of the master, knowing no rest until every discoverable scrap of Latin literature which still survived was permanently rescued from oblivion.

But Petrarch had not been long engaged in his work for the revival of antiquity before he discovered that behind the literature and civilisation of Rome, there was a still more potent influence for culture in the literature and civilisation of Greece. A sure instinct rather than personal knowledge led him to divine all that was contained for the future in the restoration of Greek form and Hellenic thought. Under Petrarch's influence the Florentine, Giovanni Boccaccio, set himself to do for the Greeks what his master had done for the Latins. Greek scholars from Byzantium were induced to visit Italy, and before the end of the fourteenth century Manuel Chrysoloras was established in Florence, where his lectures on the language, literature, and philosophy of Greece attracted an enthusiastic following. Greek scholarship from this time became the passport to high office, wealth, and consideration. Kings, princes, and rich merchants vied with one another in collecting manuscripts from every quarter. The most acceptable present which Cosimo dei Medici could make to Alfonso of Naples was a copy of Livy's History, while the reputed bones of a classic author began to assume a sanctity almost superior to that possessed by the relics of orthodox saints. Of four Florentine Chancellors between 1427 and 1465, three—Leonardo Bruni Aretino, Carlo Marsuppini, and Poggio Bracciolini—stand successively at the head of the scholarship of their day. The appearance of the great Humanist, Gianozzo Manetti, as Florentine representative before King Alfonso, impressed the monarch so profoundly that " he sat motionless, like a brazen statue,

VMANA.COSA.E.LHAVER.
COMPASSIONE.AGLAFFLICTI.
ecome che adciaſcuna pſõa ſtia bene:adcoloro
maſſimamente è richeſto : liquali gia hanno
diconforto hauuto miſtieri.& hãnolo trouato
inalcuno,fra iquali ſe alcuno mai nhebbe:ogli
fù caro o gia nericiuette piaciere:Io ſono uno
di quelli,peio che dala mia prima giouanezza
in ſino adqueſto tempo: oltra modo eſſendo ſtato acceſo da altiſſimo
& nobile amore fuorſe piu aſſai chelamia baſſa cõditione nõ parebbe,
narrandolo io ſirichiedeſſe:quãtunque appo coloro,che diſcreti er..no
& ala cui notizia peruenne. Io nefuſſi lodato & damolto piu reputato:
Non dimeno,miſù egli digrandiſſima faticha aſſoffrire : certe non
per crudeltà dela donna amata : ma perſuperchio amore nela mente
conciepto dapocho regolato appetito.ilqual,percio aniuno regolato,o
cõueneuole termine milaſcia cõtento ſtare piu dinoia, che dibiſogno
nõ era.ſpeſſe uolte ſentire miſaceua . Nelaqual noia,tãto refriggierio
miporſero ipiacieuoli ragionamenti daleuno amico.& le dilecteuoli
ſue conſolationi,che io porto fermiſſima oppinione per quello eſſere
aduenuto, che non ſia morto. Ma ſicome adcolui piacque, ilquale
eſſendo egli infinito,diede perlegge inconmutabile adtutte lecoſe
mondane hauere fine : Ilmio amore oltre adognaltro feruẽte, è ilquale
niuna forza diproponimento o diconſeglio,o diuergogna euidente,o
pericolo che ſeguire ne poteſſe haueua poſſuto ne rõpere, nepieghare
per ſemedeſimo improceſſo ditempo ſidiminuì inguiſa,cheſolo diſe
nela mẽte mia alpreſente ma laſciato quelpiacere,che uſato diporgiere
adchi troppo nõ ſimetteſſe ne ſuoi piu cupi pelaghi nauicãdo: perche
doue faticoſo eſſere ſoleua ogni aſſanno, toglendomi dilecteuole mi
ſento eſſere rimaſu: Ma quantuque ceſſata ſia lapena,non percio e
lamemoria fuggita debeneficii gia riceiuoti,datimi dacholoro : da-
quali perbeniuolenza daloro adme portata erano graui lemie fatiche-
nepaſſerando mai ſicomio credo ſenon permorte: Et percio,chela
gratitudine ſecũdo chio credo fra laltre uirtu e ſõmamẽte dacõmẽdar,
et ilcontrario dabiaſimare per non parer ĩgrato,p mecho ſteſſo,ppoſtò
di non uoler inquel pocho che per me ſipuo incambio dicio,cheio
ricieuetti hora che libero dire mipoſſo:& ſe nõ acoloro cheme aiuta-
rono : Aiquali per aduentura perlor ſenno o per laloro buona uenuta

FIRST PAGE OF BOCCACCIO'S DECAMERON

PUBLISHED BY VALDARFER, 1471

From the only perfect copy, preserved in the Ryland's Library, Manchester
Most of the copies of this edition are supposed to have perished in Savonarola's bonfire of the "Vanities," 1497

and did not even brush away a fly that had settled upon his nose at the beginning of the oration."

Thus the revival of classical learning assumes various phases. Successive stages of its evolution develop and modify at each stage its scope and purpose. There is first of all the sense of antiquity, and all that it stood for in relation to the modern world. There is the recognition that * " there had been a time when men had used all their faculties of mind and imagination without fear or reproof; not restricted to certain paths or bound by formulas, but freely seeking for knowledge in every field of speculation, and for beauty in all the realms of fancy. . . . The Pagan view was now once more proclaimed that man was made, not only to toil and suffer, but to enjoy. . . . It was thus that Humanism first appeared, bringing a claim for the mental freedom of man, and for the full development of his being." Throughout the stages of the revival this influence was more or less constant. A scholarly knowledge of the works of classical writers was sought, not so much as an end in itself, but as a means whereby to re-invest the present with all the graces, refinements, and intellectual freedom which had characterised the civilisations of the past. The aim of Humanism was to break the fetters which mediæval authority and convention had imposed upon the mind of man, and the most potent instrument of emancipation was to be found in the recovery of the classical point of view.

But the recovery of the point of view could only be effected by the rediscovery of the works of classical writers. This involved a two-fold process. It was necessary that the extant works should be re-read and assimilated in the light of the new inspiration, and it was necessary that all that was lost and forgotten should be diligently sought and made available for the intellectual service of man. Thus it was, as a result of the first process, that Virgil, Ovid, Cicero, and others, whose works, or parts of them, had always survived, now began to be read as literature. The search for allegorical meanings began to give way to an intellectual

* Sir R. C. Jebb in the Cambridge Modern History, vol. i. ch. xvi.

appreciation of the subject-matter, and an artistic appreciation of literary form. In Italy especially there was the realisation that what was in truth the native language of the country found in the classical Latin writers its most complete and its purest form, and there followed the passion to restore that language to all its original purity and force.

The second process resulted in the appearance of scholar-collectors, who ransacked every obscure recess where classical manuscripts were likely to lurk. Hundreds of works were discovered of which the world had long ceased to have any knowledge; fresh and abundant stores were provided on which the new inspiration could feed and flourish. Among the most ardent of the collectors were Poggio Bracciolini and Francesco Filelfo. The former is distinguished for the surprising number of Latin classics which his indefatigable researches restored to the world of scholarship. To him we owe, amongst many others, the "Institutions" of Quintilian in their entirety, Cicero's "Pro Cæcina," Silius Italicus and Lucretius, and twelve plays of Plautus. Filelfo's enthusiasm directed him to search for Greek manuscripts in Constantinople itself, and his marriage to the daughter of John Chrysoloras, brother of the famous Florentine teacher, doubtless gave him facilities in his explorations of which he took full advantage. Poggio and Filelfo are only representative of many others—Aurispa, Guarino, Niccolo di Niccoli—who were engaged in the same work. Though much still remained to be gleaned after them, yet by 1450 almost the full range of classical literature was open to the investigations of scholars.

Mere collection, however, could be of little general value unless accompanied by adequate instruction; nor could instruction be adequate until the critical faculty had assumed power enough to temper indiscriminate enthusiasm. The accumulation of books in a library does not necessarily imply a capacity to discriminate between the literary values of the books themselves. The period of instruction was necessarily concurrent with the period of accumulation and enthusiasm. The period of scientific criticism was a later development, which, after producing splendid results, even-

tually vapoured out in dilettanteism, in a meaningless passion for form, after the spirit, which gives life to forms, had departed. With this latest phase of the revival we are not however here concerned. The phases of instruction and criticism, in their relation to Florence and Cosimo dei Medici, are notable in the one case for the endowment of professorships, in the other for the foundation of academies.

In both of these movements Florence led the way. From the time when Manuel Chrysoloras established himself in Florence, and taught Greek there, to the time of Angelo Poliziano, eminent Humanists were never lacking in Florence to expound the works of the classical writers, and stimulate enthusiasm for classical learning.

At first the supply of native scholars of the Greek language and texts was not sufficient to meet the demand. It was necessary to import eminent Greeks from Constantinople to fill what may be called the Chair of Greek in Florence and other centres of Humanism. They could only be attracted by the promise of large emoluments, and by the prospect of the esteem and consideration in which they would be held. Some great and wealthy patron became therefore almost a necessity, if the Humanistic movement was to flourish in any given locality. Thus in the earlier stages of the revival we see a succession of wandering scholars—of whom the number was largely increased after the fall of Constantinople—moving from one centre, where their stock of classical texts had been exhausted, to another; everywhere received with honour, and in the enjoyment of princely salaries as long as they could be induced to stay. To the political rivalries of the Italian States may be added their rivalry for the possession of some elegant Humanist, whose presence would give peculiar distinction to that State which was fortunate enough to secure him.

But the popular methods of exposition which were suitable to a lecture room and a miscellaneous audience were soon found inadequate to the needs of the small residuum of serious scholars. Something else was needed if the highest requirements of scholarship, criticism, and intellectual aspiration were to be satisfied. The foundation of academies

answered to the need. An academy meant the concourse of a few select, sympathetic souls, who met together from time to time to give free play to the critical faculty or to the intellectual fantasy; to probe deeper than was possible in a lecture room the problems of scholarship, philosophy, and life suggested by the study of the ancient authors.

In such symposia every question came under review. Questions of character and conduct, of the philosophical basis of the Christian faith, of the possible reconciliation of Pagan with Christian modes of thought, questions of classical archæology and literary form—all were discussed in the free spirit of intellectual emancipation born of the Revival of Learning; and perhaps, as in Florence, an academy would maintain the cult of some great Pagan demi-god, such as Plato, and would celebrate him with external ceremonial as well as with inward communings. The lamp before his bust would never be suffered to burn low; his birthday would be a festal day, an annual season for special homage and devotion.

The inevitable tendency of such a movement as the Revival of Learning was to exalt the Pagan ideal of life, and to lead men to follow it whithersoever it led. But it was a movement which was not consciously, or necessarily, anti-Christian: most certainly it was not anti-ecclesiastical. The most prominent Humanists of their day, Thomas of Sarzana and Æneas Sylvius Piccolomini, became successively Popes Nicolas V. and Pius II., nor in the cultivation of ancient learning could they see anything at variance with the profession and practice of the Christian faith. The Revival of Learning in fact affected individuals individually, but from the aggregate of individuals we can deduce two tendencies, which sometimes unite in the same person, though in the main they are fairly distinct. The one finds in antiquity and in classical scholarship a powerful incentive to break loose from Christian and mediæval thought and life; the other leads men to use the new learning in the interests of Christian scholarship and for the establishment of the faith and ecclesiastical discipline. Though it is misleading sharply to discriminate between the Christian and the

Pagan Renaissance, especially when dealing with the period of its origins, yet one and the same movement was eventually to produce a school of pure Pagans, such as those who would not read St. Paul's Epistles in the original for fear of spoiling the purity of their style, and a school of Christian scholars, such as Erasmus, who devoted all the resources of their learning to purify the text of the Testaments, the Apocryphal Books, and the writings of the Greek and Latin Fathers, and to place Christianity on a sounder foundation of truth.

All the characteristics of the Revival of Learning are visible in operation during the age of Cosimo dei Medici. He understood, sympathised with, and gave encouragement to all. Apart from his patriotic desire to see his native city at the head of every movement which could dignify and exalt it, he was himself genuinely inspired by the passion for antiquity. He personally felt the need of that larger, freer intellectual life which at that time could only find its sustenance in the productions of the ancient world. The instinct for Plato, which led him, though ignorant of Greek, to absorb all that was possible of the Platonic teaching through the medium of expositions and translations, was not a fashionable affectation. It shows him in complete accord with the Humanistic spirit, and bent upon perfecting the development of his own intellectual life. He established Marsilio Ficino, the most celebrated Platonist of his age, in the immediate neighbourhood of his own villa at Careggi: he commissioned him to translate the available works of Plato, and provided the means by which Ficino was able to devote his whole life to Platonic study. Though the teaching and point of view of Ficino were still largely coloured by mediæval mysticism and allegory, and though he was lacking in the faculty of criticism and insight into the Greek mind, yet the impulse which he gave to Greek studies in Florence was enormous, and the reciprocal influence of Ficino on Cosimo and of Cosimo upon Ficino, can scarcely be exaggerated. "For Melchisedec," says Ficino, "that great high priest, had but one father and one mother. I, the least of priests, have had two fathers,* Ficino the medico and Cosmo dei Medici.

* Ficino was the son of a physician.

Of the one I was born; of the other I have been born again." In a letter to Lorenzo, written shortly after Cosimo's death, Ficino bears eloquent testimony to his patron's ardour for what he understood to be the philosophy of Plato: "I had, for more than twelve years, philosophic conversation with Cosimo, and he was as acute in disputation as he was wise and vigorous in action. I owe Plato much; to Cosimo I owe no less. He showed me in practice those virtues which Plato presented to my mind. After he had occupied himself with philosophy all his life, and in the midst of the gravest matters, he, following the example of Solon, devoted himself more than ever to it in the days when he was passing from darkness into light. For as you know, who were present shortly before his departure, he still read with me Plato's book on 'the Highest Good,' as though he would in reality now go to enjoy that good which he had tasted in conversation." It is easy to see from what sources Lorenzo himself derived the opinion attributed to him by Valori, "that without the Platonic doctrine it was not possible to be a worthy citizen, nor easy to follow the Christian doctrine."

The same instinct for antiquity which inspired Cosimo as a philosopher inspired him as a collector of books. The collector's passion for the mere accumulation of precious things was not without its influence upon him, but that which in books was most precious to Cosimo was the wisdom which they contained. There was not about him a tinge of that selfishness, that joy in exclusive possession, which so often accompanies the expenditure of the wealthy virtuoso. He made magnificent collections, and he distributed them magnificently. During his exile in Venice he founded there the library of S. Giorgio Maggiore. When that famous collector and most representative Humanist, Niccolo di Niccoli of Florence, had ruined himself in the purchase of manuscripts, Cosimo gave instructions that all Niccolo's pecuniary demands were to be met without question by the Medici Bank. Niccoli at his death bequeathed 800 manuscripts to Cosimo and other trustees; and of these 400 were sent by Cosimo to enrich the library of the Medici Convent of S. Marco. He commissioned the Florentine bookseller,

Vespasiano da Bisticci, to employ copyists whose productions were presented to the monastery at Fiesole which Cosimo had built, and his private collection still remained a splendid one.

But Cosimo was not contented merely to collect books. He was anxious to secure for Florence the most competent instruction in humane letters. To some of the most prominent Humanistic teachers he was bound by close ties of personal friendship—to Poggio for example. It was by Cosimo's efforts that Florence secured the services of John Argyropoulos, who held the chair of Greek there for fifteen years (1456–1471). The poor and obscure scholar, Thomas of Sarzana, found a kindly patron in Cosimo, who employed him to catalogue the books in the S. Marco library. Pope Nicolas V. the most splendid of Renaissance Pontiffs, never forgot the debt which, as humble Thomas of Sarzana, he owed to his early patron. Cosimo employed in his own service, and as tutors to his sons, the learned Enoch of Ascoli, and Christoforo Landino, the editor of Dante. He was, as has been seen, the intellectual father of Marsilio Ficino. At a time when the Revival of Learning was in its peripatetic stage it was a service of the first importance to attach by permanent ties to Florence the most eminent men in the world of scholarship, and even from passing strangers Cosimo was quick to extract everything which they could give. It was from the visit of the Greek, Gemisthos Plethon, that he derived the idea of founding the Florentine Academy in the interests of philosophy and Platonic studies. Plethon, whose reputation as a Greek scholar and expositor of Plato exceeded that of all other men, came to Florence in 1438 in the train of the Greek Emperor, John Palæologus. His services were required at the Council which Pope Eugenius IV. had summoned to Florence in order to effect, if possible, a reconciliation between the doctrinal differences which separated the Eastern and Western branches of the Catholic Church. Plethon's great age—he had himself been the teacher of Manuel Chrysoloras—his venerable appearance, his reputation for profound learning, made him a conspicuous and interesting figure in the retinue of the

Eastern Emperor. Here was the genius of Greece embodied, and inspiration could be drawn as if from its very source. The lively fresco of Benozzo Gozzoli in the Medici Palace in the Via Larga enables us to form an idea of the appearance of the strange guests to whom Florence now gave welcome, and of the keen interest which everything about them inspired. Cosimo was strongly attracted to Gemisthos Plethon and his oracular and authoritative disquisitions on the Platonic system. A fantastical reconciliation between Paganism and Christianity, which the philosopher embodied in a treatise, made him all the more interesting. Cosimo determined to pursue the matter further, and laid the foundation of the Florentine Academy, which was to reach its greatest height of fame in the days of Lorenzo the Magnificent.

No less genuine was the interest shown by the Medici in the labours of those scholars who devoted all the energies of their scholarship to the service of orthodox Christianity. Of these the most representative in Cosimo's day was Fra Ambrogio Traversari, who acquired a sound knowledge of Greek, perhaps as a pupil of Manuel Chrysoloras, and was reckoned the most accomplished Latinist in Florence. Becoming at an early age a brother of the Camalduïese Order, he established in the Convent dei Angioli almost an academy of his own. There were wont to congregate all who were most intent on liberal studies in Florence. Cosimo and his brother Lorenzo were constant visitors, delighting in the theological and philosophical conferences which Ambrogio conducted. He employed his knowledge of Greek chiefly in translating the Greek Fathers of the Church—St. Chrysostom's Homilies on St. Paul, Dionysius the Areopagite, and many others. When Cosimo asked him to translate for his benefit "The Lives of the Philosophers," by Diogenes Läertius, the friar could not refuse his generous benefactor, but he bitterly deplored the loss of time upon a task which would withdraw him from the proper sphere of his labours, and doubted whether the lives of Pagan sages were a fit subject to occupy the attention of a Christian monk.

Thus there was no aspect of the Revival of Learning which was unfamiliar to Cosimo, no side of it, nor stage of it, with which he was not personally concerned. "If," says Burckhardt, "we seek to analyse the charm which the Medici of the fifteenth century, especially Cosimo and Lorenzo the Magnificent, exercised over Florence and all their contemporaries, we shall find that it lay less in their political capacity than in their leadership of the culture of the age. . . . To Cosimo belongs the special glory of recognising in the Platonic philosophy the fairest flowers in the ancient world of thought, of inspiring his friends with the same belief, and thus of fostering within Humanistic circles themselves another and a higher resuscitation of antiquity."

CHAPTER III

RULE OF PIERO DEI MEDICI—EARLY YEARS OF LORENZO

Lorenzo's birth and parentage—Lucrezia Tornabuoni—Lorenzo's education—Educational system of Vittorino da Feltre—Lorenzo's character and appearance—Early initiation into public life—The Medici and the Triple Alliance—Crisis caused by the death of Francesco Sforza, 1466—The Pitti conspiracy—Luca Pitti—Diotisalvi Neroni—Niccolo Soderini—Agnolo Acciaiuoli—Lorenzo secures support of Ferrante of Naples—The conspirators secure the aid of foreign Powers—Lorenzo and the conspiracy—Collapse of the conspiracy—Its effect on the Medici power.

"I FIND," says Lorenzo dei Medici in his *Ricordi*, or brief notes upon events of importance which had happened in his family, "by the books of our father Piero, that I was born on the first day of January, 1448." Lorenzo, however, was not, according to the old reckoning of the calendar, a new year child, for the year was timed to begin on March 25. According to the new style, Lorenzo was born on January 1, 1449. His father, Piero dei Medici, was the elder of Cosimo's two legitimate children, and he was in his thirty-third year at the time of the birth of his eldest son. Though Piero was not unaccustomed to public affairs, yet persistent ill-health had prevented him from taking that prominent position in the State which, as Cosimo's eldest son and representative, was naturally his. "Piero il Gottoso," the name by which he was commonly known, sufficiently indicates the nature of the malady which was the bane of his life. Cosimo, in choosing a wife for his son, had not looked beyond the limits of the city of Florence. Sharing and respecting the prejudices of the people against splendid external alliances, he married Piero to Maria Lucrezia di Francesco Tornabuoni, of the once noble House of Tornaquinci. The Tornaquinci, however, in the fourteenth century had abandoned their nobility and their name, and

as Tornabuoni had descended into the ranks of the Florentine burghers.

Of all the direct influences which moulded the character of the young Lorenzo, none was more important nor more permanent than the influence of his mother. Though the reputed portrait of her by Botticelli—now at Berlin—is neither a portrait of Lucrezia nor a work by Botticelli, one still pictures her as a woman of great attraction and quiet charm, with grave and steadfast eyes, and ample folds of braided hair. Her outward beauties of face and form were the reflection of the inward graces of her character, which was grave, dignified, and simple. Her intellectual attainments conspicuously distinguished her even in that age of highly cultivated and gifted women, and she possessed in no ordinary degree the faculty of inspiration by which she drew forth from others, more richly endowed than herself, the best that was within them. As a good wife and mother she devoted herself to her husband, her children, and her household, but the daily round of domestic cares and social duties was not allowed wholly to absorb her life. She was keenly alive to the intellectual and literary influences which were in motion around her, and was herself considered in her day as a poet of no mean order. Her lyric poems in the vernacular are still spoken of with admiration, but such poetic fame as still remains to her rests chiefly on her poetical renderings of stories from the Apocrypha and the sacred legends. In *ottava rima* she composed the Life of St. John the Baptist and the Story of Judith, and in *terza rima* the Story of Esther, the Life of Tobit, and also a Life of the Virgin Mary. The example and encouragement of his mother must necessarily have exercised an important influence upon the poetical efforts of her son Lorenzo. It was she doubtless who stimulated his enthusiasm for the Tuscan, as opposed to the Latin, language, as being fully adequate to the expression of the highest poetic feeling.

Lucrezia's poetry is mainly inspired by her religious sense. She was a woman of genuine and unaffected piety, which was inward and individual, not to be satisfied merely by formal and external observances. That vein of genuine

pietistic emotionalism which cannot be ignored in Lorenzo was, as has been seen, in the Medici character, but it was further developed and intensified in him through his mother.

Poetry and piety, however, were not associated in Lucrezia with mawkishness and incapacity for practical affairs. She was, on the contrary, distinguished by her strong common sense and wide interests. Thus it was that when Lorenzo had grown to man's estate and had assumed the burden of government, Lucrezia remained his constant companion and most confidential adviser. The close and unbroken sympathy which existed between mother and son forms one of the most pleasing traits in the character of each.

The education of Lorenzo, and of his younger brother Giuliano, born in 1453, was the equal concern of his parents and of his grandfather Cosimo. The old man, after the death of his son Giovanni and his infant son, had now no longer any one to care for except Piero and his children. The Medici Palace in the Via Larga had indeed become, as Cosimo sadly complained, too large a house for so small a family. There was consolation, however, in providing and superintending the education of the grandchildren on whom the hopes of the family rested. They must be equipped at every point for the career which the future held in store for them.

The most enlightened exposition of the general principles of education which was at the time available was to be found in the precepts and the practice of Vittorino da Feltre of Mantua. Foremost among the scholars and Humanists of his day, he differs from the majority of his brethren in that he sought to rest his immortality not upon his individual achievement, but upon the services which he was able to render, through education, to humanity. Nearly five hundred years ago he recognised, more clearly perhaps than we recognise to-day, that the full and perfected man can only be produced by the full and perfect development of all sides of man's nature. Man to him was a compound of the spiritual, the physical, and the intellectual. To develop exclusively the spiritual nature of man was to turn him into an ascetic and so render him useless for the service

of humanity. To develop exclusively his intellectual nature was to turn him into a prig, and so to make him not merely useless, but at the same time insufferable. To care only for his physical nature was to glorify man as an animal, and to ignore the finer qualities which differentiate man from the beasts that perish. In his school at Mantua Vittorino provided a system of education which was equally to be at the command of the rich who could pay for it, and for the poor who could not. On the intellectual side it embraced the highest possible training in liberal studies, in science, mathematics and general culture. On the physical side much attention was given to what we now call "physical training"—to gymnastics, riding, fencing, dancing, and other exercises, by which the bodily graces of man can be brought to their highest perfection. But all that Vittorino did was done in no spirit of paganism or revolt against orthodox religion, but "for the love of God," in whose honour, and for whose glory, the perfecting of man, God's noblest work, was sought.

Vittorino died in 1446, but his memory lived after him, and the principles of education which he had elaborated became a standard for the times to come. Cosimo dei Medici must have been well acquainted with his aims and method. The education of Lorenzo and Giuliano was conducted on Vittorino's lines. The superintendence of their studies was entrusted to tutors who were among the most eminent scholars of the day—Gentile di Becchi of Urbino, afterwards Bishop of Arezzo, Christoforo Landino, Marsilio Ficino, and John Argyropoulos. In bodily exercises both the young men excelled, Lorenzo in particular acquiring early a passion for horses, and a capacity to sit a horse, which remained with him through life. From the first Lorenzo gave evidence of surprising versatility and powers of mind. Enthusiastic biographers speak of his quickness of intellect as being something "almost divine," and he did indeed give ample proofs that there was scarcely a department of knowledge to which he was a stranger, scarcely a subject in which he was not interested. To a thorough grounding in Latin and Greek, he added an appre-

ciation of Dante which he doubtless derived from Landino. In philosophy he acquired everything which Ficino had to teach, and outstripped his master in the range and breadth of his philosophic speculations. But it was Ficino who fitted him to receive those wider impressions which he owed to his familiar intercourse with Poliziano and Pico della Mirandola. At a time when the scientific method had not yet been evolved, when the study of the sciences was clouded by lingering mediæval superstitions, Lorenzo had nevertheless learned to discard superstitions, to question old authority, to set on one side, as old wives' tales, the fables of astrology and magic, and in medical science to see, in the works of Galen, the most promising starting-point for new and improved methods.

At an early age he acquired some right to the title of Magnificent by which he is known. We find him indeed addressed as "Magnifico" during his father's lifetime. Though the title was not uncommon, for it was constantly used as an expression of courtesy to eminent men, yet in the case of Lorenzo it had a distinctive appropriateness, for he was accustomed to do magnificent things in a magnificent way. Valori's story about the horse which was sent him from Sicily is a case in point. Lorenzo acknowledged the present by sending gifts in return whose value three or four times exceeded that of the horse. Being reproved by his tutor for such lavish acknowledgments, he replied that there was nothing so glorious or so royal as to outdo all men in generosity. In his *Ricordi* he very simply and naïvely gives us an instance of the same thing. Having been sent to Milan in 1469 to represent his father at the christening of the infant son of Galeazzo Maria Sforza, "I gave to the Duchess a gold collar with a large diamond which cost 3000 ducats. Whence it followed that the aforesaid Lord desired that I should stand godfather to all his other children." The splendour of Lorenzo's tournaments will be a subject of special reference later.

Thus Lorenzo grew to manhood, and from contemporary accounts we are able to form a fairly accurate picture of him in our minds, and to realise certain individual pecu-

Brogi

LORENZO THE MAGNIFICENT

FROM THE PAINTING BY GIORGIO VASARI

Uffizi Gallery, Florence

liarities which help to make him human and vivid. "Lorenzo," says Valori, who was one of his intimates, "was a man rather above middle height, broad in the shoulders, with a body solid and robust. In agility he was second to none, and though in exterior bodily gifts Nature had proved herself a stepmother to him, yet in inward qualities of the mind she had indeed shown herself a benignant mother. He had an olive complexion, and though his features were deficient in beauty, yet there was a dignity about him which compelled the respect of the beholder. His sight was weak, and his nose stunted (*depresso*), and he was entirely without the sense of smell. This, however, did not trouble him: on the contrary, he was accustomed to say that he was much indebted to Nature, seeing that there are many more things which offend the sense of smell than things which give pleasure to it." This view was not only philosophical, but in Florence in the fifteenth century it was also probably correct.

The well-known portrait of Lorenzo by Giorgio Vasari, though not contemporary, corresponds fairly accurately with this picture of him which Valori executed in words. His features and general appearance are also made familiar by numerous medals which in his own day were struck in his honour. Pages of such medals are reproduced in Littá's "Genealogies of Illustrious Italian Families." The idea is presented to us of a man somewhat large-built, loosely proportioned, with irregular features. That he was ugly in a marked degree cannot be questioned. All the masculine beauty of the family was monopolised by Giuliano. But Lorenzo possessed that peculiar charm which so often goes with pronounced ugliness. His geniality, his skill in knightly exercises, a bright and fascinating manner, and a power over men which comes unconsciously from sympathy and a desire to understand them, more than redeemed an unprepossessing exterior. The easy graces of his temperament were at the same time accompanied, as Valori remarks, by a dignity which compelled respect. Familiar as he was, he was not one with whom anybody could take a liberty. Interested in everything, he gave free rein to his many-sided

and apparently contradictory nature, following it whithersoever it should lead him, and sometimes it exalted him to the heights, and sometimes it debased him to the depths.

Lorenzo's natural precocity was sharpened by accidental circumstances. His grandfather was an old man, and though Head of the State, desirous in his later years of keeping in the background. His father was a confirmed invalid. Thus it fell to Lorenzo, at an early age, to act as the representative of the family. Ceremonial visits, embassies to various Courts, gave him an ease, a familiarity with the world and with men, which, in a mere boy, were extraordinary. His tutor, Gentile di Becchi, tells us of a visit of ceremony which, when little more than a child, he paid on behalf of the family to Duke John of Anjou, who was in Florence prosecuting his father's, King René's, claims to the throne of Naples. "Having assumed," says Gentile, "a French costume, the boy made so charming an appearance that we were immediately surrounded by an immense concourse which followed us to the King's son. The Duke received him as if he were some little Frenchman newly arrived from France, but his gravity belied his costume." In 1465, shortly after Cosimo's death, Lorenzo was despatched by his father to Pisa to give an official welcome to Don Federigo of Aragon. Federigo was travelling northward from Naples as escort to the fair Hippolita Sforza, whose marriage with Alfonso of Calabria, Federigo's brother and Ferrante's heir, was to cement the newly formed alliance between Milan and Naples. It was on this occasion that Lorenzo formed a close and lasting friendship with the young Neapolitan Prince. He certainly commended himself very favourably to Hippolita also, for at a later date we find her writing charming letters to him, and using the privilege of intimacy to borrow money from him with a confidence and candour which are quite engaging.

The splendour and assiduity which Lorenzo was encouraged by his father to display in the matter of the Sforza-Aragonese marriage were prompted not by the passion for ostentation, but by shrewd, cool and calculating policy. Piero dei Medici, notwithstanding his feeble health, was as

keenly alive as Cosimo had been to the requirements and interests of Florence in her relations with external powers, nor was he less active in advancing them. The Triple Alliance between Milan, Naples and Florence was the keystone of Piero's foreign policy. By it alone he thought the peace of Italy could be maintained. The task of maintaining it was difficult and delicate, for he had to reconcile his own people to an alliance with the Aragonese, which was opposed to their tradition and their sentiment; to reconcile them to an alliance with Sforza who bore the appearance of a despot tyrannising over a State which but for him might have been free; and he had to compose the jealousies and differences which existed between Sforza and Ferrante, differences which were constantly threatening the disruption of the artificial alliance which held them together. Every effort, therefore, which Piero could put forth was exerted to keep Naples and Milan on good terms, and, being unable to act personally, he relied upon the tact, obedience and good sense of his eldest son to smooth over difficulties, and keep everybody in good temper. Thus under the guise of ceremonial visits, brilliant entertainments, and affable small-talk, Lorenzo was, in fact, engaged in matters of delicate diplomacy and high politics. His missions to Milan and to Venice in 1465 had their definite political purpose apart from Piero's desire that his son should gain experience in affairs and knowledge of the world. The splendid reception given by Piero, in the name of the State, to Hippolita and her escort, as she made her way to Naples, set the crown upon the efforts of the son to bring to fulfilment the policy of his father. Florence was thus definitely committed to the Triple Alliance; the Medici stood out before all men as its authors and supporters; and Hippolita was half-way on her journey to her Neapolitan home.

In 1466 Lorenzo was despatched by his father to Rome, where the primary purposes of his visit had before long to be subordinated to the one great question—the maintenance of the Triple Alliance. Ostensibly Lorenzo went to Rome upon private business connected with the commercial affairs of the Medici firm. His maternal uncle, Giovanni Torna-

buoni, was manager of the Medici bank in Rome, and was well versed in all the life of the place. It was essential to the family position in Florence that it should have influential backing in Rome, and Cosimo's relations with the Papacy had always been cordial. He was the first to contemplate the possibility of a Cardinalate for one of his own family, a possibility which in later days Lorenzo was to realise. It was well, on every ground of private and public affairs, that the rising hope of the House of Medici should know his way about in Rome, and should add to his experiences gained in the north some acquaintance with the intricacies of the Papal Curia.

It was while Lorenzo was thus engaged in Rome that an Italian crisis was precipitated by the death of Francesco Sforza, Duke of Milan. What would happen now to the Triple Alliance? Would the dynasty of a condottiere adventurer be recognised by the other Powers now that its founder was dead? Would Florence continue to maintain relations which by many were regarded as of a personal rather than of a political character? Francesco Sforza and the House of Sforza were very different things. What would be the effect of Francesco's death upon Ferrante's policy? Would France prosecute its Orleanist claims upon the Duchy? These were questions of immediate moment, and Piero saw that not an instant must be lost in solving them, if the peace of Italy was to be preserved. He at once declared himself in favour of Galeazzo Maria, Francesco's eldest son, and endeavoured to secure the recognition of the new Duke by the other Powers. His letters, written to Lorenzo at Rome, give evidence of the anxiety with which he regarded the situation, and of his confidence in his son as one who would be able to influence the Papal policy in favour of the Sforza dynasty. Pope Paul II., though he was a Venetian, was not disposed to lend himself to large schemes of Venetian aggression. Venice herself was too much pressed by the Turks in her Levantine possessions to be able to prosecute big schemes in Lombardy with any chance of success. Louis XI. of France was at enmity with the House of Orleans, and altogether indisposed to aid

it in making good its claims on Milan. Galeazzo Maria himself, at the moment of his father's death, was assisting Louis with Milanese troops against the Duke of Burgundy. All the circumstances, therefore, seemed favourable to the maintenance of the *status quo*, especially as Ferrante saw in the accession of Galeazzo Maria to Milan all the guarantees for which he had looked when negotiating his alliance with the dukedom of Francesco. Ferrante, therefore, had no immediate object to serve by refusing to recognise Galeazzo as Duke.

In Italy generally the crisis which threatened to follow Francesco Sforza's death was of short duration; everything remained as it was. In Florence, however, it gave rise to events which seriously threatened the Medici ascendency, events which called for the exercise of all the qualities of tact and statecraft with which Piero and Lorenzo were endowed.

The dissensions which arose in Florence upon the question of the renewal of the Milanese alliance were the symptom rather than the cause of a serious schism which had arisen, since the death of Cosimo, within the inner Medician ring. In the last years of Cosimo himself his power had been exercised indirectly, and from the background: to outward appearance Luca Pitti was the most prominent representative of the party. Among the adherents of Cosimo there were many who regarded him as only *primus inter pares*, and these resented the idea that Florence was under the government of a single man. Men who had chafed under the ascendency of Cosimo were still less likely to admit the claims of Piero to uncontrolled power. Cosimo was a man of immense force of character, with an influence based upon half a century of experience and active service. Piero was an invalid who lived much in retirement, who had taken little part in affairs, and who had the reputation of being weak and inefficient. The death of Cosimo therefore afforded an opportunity for a change. While the general system represented by the Medician oligarchy was to remain, another set of actors was to come forward to play the principal parts. Naturally Luca Pitti thought himself eminently qualified for the chief *rôle*. Others,

though scarcely of this opinion, yet saw that nothing could be done except in conjunction with Luca. Thus an ill-assorted association of Medician malcontents was got together, of which the members were distrustful of one another and animated by differing motives; yet they were obliged to act together under penalty of not acting at all. Of this association the leading members were Luca Pitti, Diotisalvi Neroni, Niccolo Soderini and Agnolo Acciaiuoli.

The character of Luca Pitti has been indicated in a previous chapter. He was a man with no fixed or decided views beyond the conviction that if any one was to be supreme in the State it must be himself. He was to prove the evil genius of the movement, for he would not act vigorously himself nor allow others to do so. His fate was to be the most bitter which such a man could be called upon to endure, for after abandoning his associates, he was a witness of their punishment, while he himself was ignored as scarcely worth powder and shot.

Diotisalvi Neroni had been one of Cosimo's most intimate and trusted advisers. To him, more than to any other, Cosimo had entrusted the fortunes of his son and of his House. Piero leaned upon him and regarded his advice as thoroughly trustworthy. It was upon Neroni's recommendation that Piero determined, on his father's death, to call in the debts due to his firm, with the result that many business houses were paralysed for want of credit, private persons also being seriously embarrassed. Piero's desire to take stock, and see exactly where he stood financially is intelligible, and Neroni may have been perfectly honest in the advice which he gave. But the result of it was seriously to shake the popularity of the Medici. Thus in view of his subsequent conduct it is not surprising that Neroni should have been credited with Mephistophelean designs. His motives throughout the whole affair are obscure, but his action is clear. He allied himself with Luca Pitti and was the moving spirit in the events which followed.

Niccolo Soderini was a visionary constitutionalist who dreamed of the good old days when Florence was, in his

imagination, indeed a Republic, wherein all duly qualified citizens were equals in the conduct of the government. He set before himself no sordid personal ends, but was influenced only by sentiment and public spirit, but he was a man who thought revolutions could be effected by public meetings and fine speeches, and was altogether out of place when drastic action was called for. His brother, Tommaso Soderini, laughed at him and his designs. Through good report and ill Tommaso remained steadfast as the devoted and most influential adherent of the Medici ascendency.

Agnolo Acciaiuoli had suffered much for the Medici in the far-off days of Cosimo's exile. The proofs he had then given of his attachment remained unquestioned till nearly the end of Cosimo's rule when personal causes produced an estrangement. Macchiavelli says that Agnolo was angry with Cosimo because his son Raffaelo Acciaiuoli had been compelled to restore the large dowry he had received from his wife Alessandra dei Bardi in consequence of his ill-treatment of her. It was thought that he attributed to Cosimo the failure of another son to secure the Archbishopric of Pisa, and was further annoyed by the marriage of Nannina dei Medici, Cosimo's granddaughter, to Bernardo Rucellai instead of to a member of his own family. Whatever the precise reasons, they must be mainly attributed to personal pique. He was not regarded by his fellow conspirators as altogether safe, nor was he entrusted by them with the full extent of their designs.

The Pitti, or Neroni, Conspiracy went through the various stages common in past times to such enterprises. There was first the attempt to proceed by constitutional means to a revision of the Constitution ; then the appeal to force and assassination, and lastly, when punishment in the form of proscription and banishment had fallen upon the exiles, there was the endeavour to recover all that had been lost by the assistance of foreign arms. With each of these stages Lorenzo was directly or indirectly connected. Indeed the Pitti conspiracy may be regarded as his first initiation into the intricacies and dangers of Florentine domestic statecraft.

After some preliminary mutterings the storm gathered

when, on the death of Francesco Sforza, his son, Galeazzo Maria, sought from the Signoria a continuance of the Florentine-Milanese alliance, and a loan of ready money. Piero had no hesitations, for to him the close association between Florence and the Sforzas was the best guarantee for the peace of Italy. But his opponents were averse from renewing an engagement which from the first had been a departure from traditional policy, an engagement which might quite correctly be viewed as a personal relation between Florence and Francesco. They were disinclined to give any money, and on general grounds were opposed to an arrangement which was undoubtedly useful to the Medici as a support to their power, but for that very reason objectionable to those who wanted to overthrow it. The antagonism of interests took shape in the parties of the Mountain and the Plain, so called from Luca Pitti's house being on the slope of S. Giorgio, while the Medici Palace in the Via Larga lay on the level of the river. The strength of the two factions was fairly equal, and foreign Powers were doubtful on which horse to put their money. It was essential that Ferrante should be won over to the Medici side, and therefore Piero determined to despatch Lorenzo to Naples. There the young diplomatist gained a brilliant success, and Ferrante's letter to him of Sept. 1466, when the troubles were over, is eloquent testimony to the strong impression made upon the King's mind by Lorenzo's personal fascinations and diplomatic skill. Having made sure of Ferrante, Lorenzo returned to Florence, and was at the Medici villa of Careggi at the moment when the plans of the conspirators had reached the stage of violence and assassination.

The constitutional efforts of the Mountain had failed because there was no unity of purpose among the leaders. Niccolo Soderini had become Gonfalonier and had done nothing but discuss. Whatever he proposed proved to be distasteful to one or other of his associates. Six months later an attempt at an accommodation had only proved that along those lines nothing could be done. It was resolved to appeal for assistance outside, and to accomplish a revolution by the support of foreign arms. Bartolommeo Colleone,

the Venetian Condottiere, was approached: Borso d'Este of Ferrara contributed the aid of his brother Ercole at the head of an armed force. The party within the City was to arm its adherents, and, in conjunction with the Ferranese contingent, overpower the Medici. To clench matters, Piero was to be assassinated. Such was the scheme in outline. But Piero also had his adherents outside. The appeal to foreigners was double-edged, for the Medici could command a far greater measure of sympathy and support from external sources than their opponents. Their influence indeed largely rested upon their foreign relations. The designs of the conspirators, and the hostile movements of Este, became known to Giovanni Bentivoglio of Bologna, who warned Piero of his danger, and thus provided him with a terrible weapon against his adversaries, for he could now accuse them of seeking to disturb the peace of the republic through the agency of foreign armies. Piero determined to lay Bentivoglio's letter before the Signoria, and to counter the hostile preparations of the Mountain by arming his own adherents.

It was on August 23, 1466, that Piero proposed to be carried in his litter to Florence from Careggi. Valori tells the story of Lorenzo's tact and coolness which saved his father's life on this day. The story must be accepted with caution, but there is sufficient contemporary evidence, over and above that of Valori, to justify us in attaching some general credit to it. It appears that Lorenzo had started from Careggi for Florence early in the morning, while Piero was to follow later. As he rode he became conscious of a number of suspicious persons upon the way, and overheard inquiries as to the whereabouts of his father. He promptly sent back a message that Piero would do well to come to Florence by another route. It was thus that Piero escaped an ambush which had been laid for him in the villa of Giovanni Neroni, Archbishop of Florence, Diotisalvi's brother, which he must have passed had he taken the road originally intended.

It is difficult to reconcile all this with the equally well-attested fact that Piero had already received full disclosures as to the designs of his enemies from Niccolo Fedini, a notary in their confidence who betrayed them, and that the road

which Piero was expected to take was neither the nearest nor most natural route from Careggi to Florence. But without the story, it is difficult to account for the hasty flight of the Archbishop, who is only known to have been connected with the conspiracy by his loan of his villa for the purposes of the ambuscade.

It is at any rate certain that in connection with these events Lorenzo did give signal proofs of courage, coolness and tact. Ferrante's letter of Sept. 28 comes close upon the heels of the events themselves, and in it he makes special reference to the "prudence, manliness, and courage with which you have borne yourself in the reconstitution of the government . . . the love which we bear you compels us to pray that you will continue to bring forth such fruits from your worthy exertions as you have already begun to show, so creditable to yourself, so glorious to your Magnificent father, and a source of so much expectation to your City."

In Florence itself the fortunes of the parties swayed for a few hours in equal balance. Piero was accused of employing Milanese auxiliaries to support his cause, but he could clearly show that he was prompted to this course by the intrigues of his opponents with Colleone and with Este. Each side held its adherents under arms, but the conspirators were divided and shrank from giving the word, while Piero, who knew that a Signoria favourable to himself would shortly come into office, had no object in precipitating a contest. For twenty-four hours the parties stood facing one another, and at any moment the City might be in the throes of a sanguinary street battle. But Lorenzo was active not only in preparations, but in negotiations. Luca Pitti, it is said, was tempted by a proposal that Lorenzo should marry his daughter. A hollow reconciliation, which only emphasised the weakness of the conspirators, was patched up. The leaders were received by Piero in his bedroom at Careggi, and from his bed he reproached his old friends and associates for their factiousness and ingratitude. Lorenzo reinforced his father by his own persuasive powers, and the Pitti conspiracy melted away.

The time had now come to take advantage of this abortive revolt in order still further to strengthen the Medici position

and rid the family for ever from those who had been presumptuous enough to question its ascendency. The Signoria of September, which was composed of Medici partisans followed the procedure which was usual on such occasions. A *Parlamento*, assembled in the Piazza of the Signoria, appointed a Balìa with full authority for four months. It decreed that for ten years the public offices should be filled not by lot but by selection: the executive authority of the Podestà was strengthened in the Medici interest, and for ten years the special executive committee of Eight was to be invested with extraordinary powers. In other words all the offices of the State were placed for a long term of years at the disposal of the Medici party.

It now only remained to deal with the heads of the beaten party. Diotisalvi Neroni was banished, never to return, and his brother, the Archbishop, fled to Rome. Niccolo Soderini and his son were banished to Provence for twenty years. Niccolo had anticipated his sentence by a voluntary withdrawal to Venice. Agnolo Acciaiuoli followed his example. Luca Pitti alone remained. It was felt that the worst punishment which could be inflicted in his case would be to ignore him as a man of no importance. He was accordingly ignored. There was no marriage between his daughter and Lorenzo, but the girl was permitted to marry Giovanni Tornabuoni instead. Luca Pitti found himself shunned and ridiculed by all. "His house," says Macchiavelli, "now presented only a vast solitude where previously crowds of citizens had assembled. In the streets, his friends and relatives, instead of accompanying him, were afraid even to salute him . . . the superb edifices which he had begun were abandoned by the builders . . . many who had presented to him articles of value now demanded them back as being only lent, and those who had been wont to extol him as a man of surpassing excellence now termed him violent and ungrateful."

The Medici knew the difference between appearances and realities. By such simple and ingenious methods they gave an example of how bombast and aspiring incapacity can be reduced to their true dimensions.

CHAPTER IV

THE COLLEONIC WAR—LORENZO, POET AND LOVER—LAST DAYS OF PIERO

Despair of the Pitti exiles—The exiles stir up war against Florence—Bartolommeo Colleone—Attitude of Venice—The Colleonic war—Alliances and counter-alliances—Romagna chosen as the seat of war—Dilatory conduct of the war—Combat at Molinella—Dissatisfaction in Florence—Intervention of Louis XI. of France—End of the Colleonic war—Literary work of Lorenzo, 1467–1469—The sonnets and "Commentario"—Biographical interest of the "Commentario"—Lucrezia Donati—Lorenzo's tournament, 1469—Marriage of Lorenzo to Clarice Orsini, December 1468—Lucrezia Tornabuoni on Clarice Orsini—Conclusion of the marriage negotiations—Marriage celebrations—Lorenzo's mission to Milan, 1469—Dissatisfaction of Piero—Florence intervenes on behalf of Roberto Malatesta of Rimini—Death of Piero dei Medici—His character.

THE year 1466 closed upon the complete triumph of the Medici within the State of Florence. Their opponents were in exile, or reduced to impotence: their authority was guaranteed by a favourable Balìa: they had created an impression of moderation in dealing with defeated foes by their subtle treatment of Luca Pitti, and by balancing the severity shown to his associates by the recall from banishment of some of the families who had been exiled long ago. Leniency and moderation were undoubtedly in the character of Piero, and his reply to Agnolo Acciaiuoli, who appealed to him from Siena on the ground of old association and his tried attachment to Cosimo, may have expressed his real sentiments. "It is in my nature," he said, "willingly to forget, in your case, as in any other, injuries and ill-will against myself . . . I still continue to feel, as a private individual, the obligations under which I rest to you; but the Republic cannot, or ought not, lightly to pardon public injuries contrived against itself, nor can I, nor will I, nor ought I to pardon

them." Biographers, Valori and Fabroni, have attributed to Lorenzo some fine sentiments as to the conduct which becomes a victor. "The glory to be derived from pardoning an enemy is no less than that which is gained from conquering him." "He is the true conqueror who does not allow success to inflame his resentment, but rather to assuage it: he is an unjust and unthankful citizen who still has war in his heart even when he has been delivered from war's dangers."

Probably, however, the judgment of a modern biographer is truer to the mark. "The Medici," says Armstrong, "could, in fact, punish more easily than they could pardon." They held firmly to the opinion that that man is least likely to inflict any injury from whom the power to inflict one has been removed. The Neroni conspirators had proved themselves a source of imminent danger, and had come very nigh to success. They had failed, and now, woe to the vanquished!

The exiles themselves were under no illusions. There was only one way by which they could recover their position, and see their homes again, and that was by enlisting on their behalf the help of foreign Princes. It has been seen that in an early stage of their proceedings they were in negotiation with Colleone, and that their *coup d'état* in Florence was to be brought off under cover of Este's troops. They would now approach Colleone again, and see how far the political conditions of Italy could be used to serve their purposes.

Bartolommeo Colleone, whose equestrian statue by Andrea Verrocchio is one of the glories of Venice, was of the old school of condottieri generals whose arms were at the service of the highest bidder. He shared with Federigo of Montefeltro of Urbino the reputation of being at the head of the mercenary business in Italy. Though an old man of seventy-five at this time, he was still sighing for new worlds to conquer. He felt that, at his age, the time was approaching to settle down in some principality which he had carved out of Italy for himself, and to take his place, as Francesco Sforza had done, among the Italian

Princes. Though not attached to any one State by exclusive ties either of service or country, yet he had been so long in the pay of Venice as to be identified with the interests of that Republic, and his birth at Bergamo, in Venetian territory, made him a Venetian by nationality. Restless and ambitious as a young man, but with few years now left to him in which to realise his hopes, Colleone was just the man to catch at a chance, and the Florentine exiles were able to flatter him that it was in their power to offer him such a chance as he was seeking.

Moreover, there was a possibility that in securing Colleone they would secure Venice too. If she would not openly acknowledge her veteran commander as acting on her behalf, she might secretly lend countenance to his enterprise, and gain her own advantage from any success which he might obtain.

Venice, therefore, on all grounds was the most hopeful field for the efforts of the exiles. There, early in 1467, they congregated. They won over Colleone to their views, and he received unofficial but satisfactory assurances that his enterprise would not be unpleasing to the Venetian government.

The game which Venice now set herself to play was thoroughly characteristic of her. She knew that Colleone's adventure must result in general disturbance, and thought it probable that, by lying low, she might make her profit out of it. Something, favourable to Venice, was likely to turn up. Moreover, if things went wrong, she could disavow Colleone, and point to her official adhesion to the Italian League as proof of her good intentions. For Piero dei Medici, in answer to the exiles, had been quick to take advantage of his relations with foreign Powers. The Triple Alliance between Florence, Naples and Milan was renewed under the name of "The League for the Peace of Italy." The other Powers were invited to join, Venice among the number. Venice made no difficulty in the matter, and thus at the moment when Italy was about to be plunged into a general war, all the chief Powers were nominally banded together for the express purpose of maintaining Italian peace.

It was shifty and double-dealing policy such as this which made Venice so generally hated in Italy. She had created for herself such a reputation for cynicism and self-seeking that nobody would believe her to be acting honestly, even if her intentions were in fact honest.

"If," said Galeazzo Maria to the Venetian ambassador, "if you knew how every one is against you, your hair would stand on end. Do you suppose these Italian Powers leagued together really wish each other well? Not at all. What has brought them together is the necessity of protecting themselves against you. You have set everybody by the ears with this Colleone of yours; you will see how far it brings you profit. You will see all leagued against you, not here only, but beyond the mountains."

Galeazzo bluntly expressed the general feeling, though his own policy was at times sufficiently like that of Venice to disqualify him for the part of candid friend. But Venice, if she chose, could urge something in excuse. Why should she care about the States of Italy, when they lifted no finger to help her in her time of need? She had saved Italy by waging war for years single-handed against the Turks. She had been forced to make peace for want of national support, and now she was execrated as a traitor to Italian interests. The fact is, that there was no nationality, and no sense of national patriotism in Italy at this time. Each State played exclusively for its own hand, and the grievance was that Venice played the game rather more astutely than the other players.

Apart from the veiled support of Venice, Colleone could only rely upon the assistance of some of the minor Italian princelets. Este of Ferrara, Alessandro Sforza of Pesaro, brother of Francesco, the Count of Mirandola, the Ordelaffi of Forlì, and, eventually, Astorre Manfredi of Faenza, were his most prominent auxiliaries. Florence, on the other hand, could rely upon Ferrante to support the League with an army; Galeazzo Sforza would send a contingent; the Bentivogli of Bologna were friendly, and there would be the mercenary force raised by the State itself.

The Neapolitan troops were under the command of

Alfonso, Duke of Calabria, Ferrante's son; Galeazzo Maria commanded his Milanese in person, the Florentine army was entrusted to Roberto da Sanseverino. Over the whole force, as Commander-in-Chief, was set Federigo da Montefeltro, Duke of Urbino, whose reputation was equal to that of Colleone himself.

Colleone's plan was to attack Florence by way of Romagna. On every ground Romagna was a convenient seat of war, for it was the No Man's Land of Italy, capable of yielding rich prizes to whoever was skilful enough to win them. The Florentine territories extended to the Romagna frontiers, and several of the actual Romagnol lords had commended themselves to the protection of Florence. She therefore was vulnerable from that quarter. The petty lords of the Romagna loved war, for they found they could get more from the sale of their swords than from their tenants who cultivated their lands. Romagna offered to Colleone the best prospect of that principality on which his heart was set, and Venice, too, had her eye on useful acquisitions in that region. The Pope, as suzerain Lord over Romagna, hoped, whatever happened, that his sovereignty would be more firmly established, and Florence was glad to keep the war away from her own immediate neighbourhood.

In a war where the interests were so numerous and so diverse, and where on each side generals abounded, it was difficult to secure that singleness of purpose and unity of command which are the first essentials to success in a campaign. It was not long before matters began to drag terribly. The Florentines complained that, while they had to contribute heavily to the expenses, nothing was done to give them any return for their expenditure. The Duke of Calabria was dilatory, and when they should have been fighting, his troops ran away. Galeazzo Sforza, too, by his pretensions, ignorance, and impecuniosity, was found by the Duke of Urbino to be much in the way. Acting on the Duke's representations, a diplomatic invitation was given by the Florentines to Galeazzo to come to Florence. It was pointed out to him that Florence could not expect him to make such sacrifices for her as were entailed by the

personal conduct of a campaign; that the affairs of his own Duchy would suffer through his prolonged absence. By these and other artful flatteries he was enticed away, and upon his departure Urbino felt himself more free to act. An affair of outposts at Molinella, July 25, 1467, developed into a general engagement, where Colleone was worsted and driven from the field. The advantage thus gained was not, however, followed up with vigour; the war speedily resumed its dilatory and indecisive character.

Meanwhile at Florence it fell to Lorenzo to represent his father as head of the State, and to take whatever active measures were possible to support the operations at the front. Lorenzo was not a soldier, and had neither taste for, nor knowledge of, the art of war. Moreover, in the critical state of his father's health his place was in the City, not in the camp. He could personally do little but impatiently watch events, make provision for the expenses of the war, reconcile the citizens as best he could to the heavy taxation which it involved, and amuse and detain Galeazzo Sforza, and keep him out of the way. The impression created by Galeazzo upon his entry into Florence was not a favourable one. He rode, it is said, into the City flaunting a wide-open empty purse at his belt, as a hint that he expected Florence to fill it. He was a vain, boasting, ostentatious young man, in whom the savage was strongly developed. His luxury, profligacy, and arrogance combined to shock all the gravity and sense of propriety which were strong in the Florentine character. He himself was lodged and magnificently entertained by the Medici as their private guest, while his suite was furnished by the Signoria with accommodation in Santa Maria Novella. Every one was glad when the affairs of his own Duchy called Galeazzo home to Milan, so lightening the heavy burden which Florence was called upon to bear in the entertainment of foreign Princes. For, in addition to Galeazzo, the Duke of Calabria was constantly in the City or its neighbourhood, and he, wherever he was, expected free entertainment on a magnificent scale. Calabria, indeed, made an impression even more unfavourable than

that created by Galeazzo Sforza, for he was quite as useless for the purposes of the war—he never met the enemy at any time while it lasted—while in him the haughty insolence of Aragon was combined with a sort of sullen pleasure in ferocious cruelty, which roused the deepest and most universal disgust.

In due course, after the battle of Molinella, the troops on each side retired into winter quarters, with a comfortable sense that the campaign had been conducted in the grand style, and that nothing had occurred to prevent the war from being protracted indefinitely. But while nothing was being done in the field of war, diplomacy had not been inactive. A blow fell from beyond the mountains, as Galeazzo Sforza had prophesied, in the shape of a protest by Louis XI. of France against the Venetians and the policy of discord which they were pursuing. The intervention of Louis in the interests of peace, Florence, and the Medici, gave definite and concrete evidence of the reality of that friendship for the Medici House which Louis, in the abstract, had so frequently expressed. Already, in 1465, Louis, by letters patent under the Royal Seal, had authorised the introduction of three golden lilies of France upon an azure field into the Medici coat of arms, in recognition, says Lorenzo, "of the intimate relations between our grandfather and father, and the House of France." Louis always spoke of Lorenzo and Giuliano as his "cousins," and his correspondence with Lorenzo is in terms of intimate familiarity. The traditional policy of Florence, ever since the days of Charles of Anjou, was friendship with France, and that policy was adhered to as closely by the Medici as it was followed subsequently by Savonarola, the bitterest opponent of their House.

The intervention of Louis XI. with a view to ending the war, though not decisive in itself, yet created an atmosphere favourable for negotiations. The representations of Matthias Corvinus of Hungary that such a war was nothing less than a scandal when the successes of the Turks made unity imperative among all Christian powers, were true and well-meant, but not so effective as the conviction which

now began to deepen, that nobody had anything to gain by continuing hostilities. Borso d'Este himself, who was in arms with Colleone, thought the time had come for mediation, and offered himself as a mediator. The Pope, however, considered himself as most suited to act in that capacity. Under the auspices of Paul II. terms were arranged. The treaty provided that "the League for the Peace of Italy" was to be maintained, with Venice a party to it. Colleone was to be despatched against the Turks with an enormous salary and compensation for his expenses incurred in the late war. The sum paid him as compensation was to come out of the pockets of Florence, Naples, and Milan. This stipulation, however, was indignantly repudiated both by Ferrante and Sforza, the protests soon resulting in a revision of the terms. The definitive treaty of April 1468 marked the complete discomfiture of the opponents of the Medici. Everything was to be as it had been before: Colleone was not mentioned, and the treaty contained no stipulation in the interests of the exiles. Thus the Medici triumphed all along the line. Their adversaries had been met at every point: all their schemes, domestic, foreign, constitutional, and revolutionary, had alike completely failed, while for the taxes raised to support the war, Florence, at any rate, had something to show. Piero bought Serrazana and Serrazanello, together with Castel Nuovo, acquisitions which strengthened the communications of Florence with the north, along the west coast road from Pisa to Genoa. These acquisitions, some ten years later, afforded to Lorenzo the rare occasion of conducting in person a military campaign.

The period of the Colleonic War (1467–1469) is made memorable in the life of Lorenzo by the influences of love, poetry and romance which were then operating strongly upon him. His passion found relief in a copious output of sonnets, which were accompanied by a lengthy and elaborate prose commentary, the best thing in vernacular prose which Lorenzo ever did.

The *Commentario* is doubtless suggested by Dante's "Vita

Nuova," and to some extent follows its lines, though there are marked differences in tone, scope, and point of view. The commentary is so little known to English readers, yet is so well worth knowing, that some details in regard to it are likely to be acceptable.

Roscoe, in his "Life of Lorenzo," made some excerpts from the *Commentario* of a purely biographical character, but he included no part of the original among his Appendices. Twenty years after the publication of his book, Roscoe issued a volume of supplementary illustrations, and there he included the first twenty pages of the original, containing all that part of the work in which Lorenzo justifies himself for writing poetry in the vernacular instead of in Latin, and indulges in a disquisition upon love in general, which is deeply coloured throughout by his Platonic studies. But in Aldus' edition of Lorenzo's *Poesie Volgari*, published in Venice in 1554, the *Commentario* extends over ninety-three double pages, of which Roscoe in his "Illustrations Historical and Critical" gives about one-fifth.

It must be confessed that, from a modern point of view, Roscoe has extracted the cream of the production. What follows is for the most part a minute relation of the precise circumstances which gave rise to each sonnet which the author composed. Thus, on a sonnet to the eyes and voice of his mistress, he explains that men often desire what is bad for them, and pray for that which will prove their undoing. To gaze at the sun blinds the eyes to the sight of all things, to strain to catch the music of the spheres is an effort which baffles the human ear: even so, to look at her eyes is as looking at the sun; to hear her voice is as listening to the music of the spheres. There is much of this, and having made my way through it all, I can only express the opinion that Lorenzo's analyses are not more dull than such rhapsodical elaborations in the nature of things must be. But here and there amidst the desert of sentiment there is an oasis of personal and human interest. As an example, he says of the sonnet

> Se tra gli altri sospir ch'escon di fuore
> Del petto,

that it was written at a time when he was persecuted by fortune and by men. Yet to relate one's own misfortunes is to incur the charge of pride and vainglory, for when tranquillity comes, a man is apt to attribute the change to his own virtue rather than to fortune which has changed towards him. Doctors will always make out the disease to be much worse than it really is, for if death supervenes, they can lay the blame on the course of nature, while if the patient recovers, then their own care and skill are only the more clearly demonstrated. "My persecutors were most powerful men of great authority and genius. I was a youth and a private citizen without counsel or aid, save such as the divine clemency showed me from day to day. I was in such a state that death would have been grateful,—then the thought of my lady drew me from the hands of death

> "Quel viso che col vago suo splendore
> Ha già gli spirti e le mie forze estorte
> Più volte dell' avare man di Morte,
> Ancora aiuta l'alma che non muore?"

At another time he draws from Homer the conviction that true happiness is only to be found in the intermixture of evil with good. "For we may read in Homer, that most ancient and excellent poet, how Jove, when he wishes to allot to each man his destiny, places before him two large bowls, one of which is full of evil things alone, in the other, things fortunate and unfortunate are indiscriminately mixed up. When he wishes to allot to any one a caitiff's fate (*cattiva sorte*), he chooses from the bowl which contains ill fortunes alone: but for the happy he chooses from that which contains the mixture, to show that a man cannot be happy unless some element of unhappiness be at the same time present."

In later chapters I propose to treat at some length Lorenzo's position as poet and thinker. It will then be necessary to refer more fully to the *Commentario*.* At the moment it serves to supply those biographical details for the years now under consideration which, without it, would be wanting, details which are doubtless coloured by the deceptive radiance of a poet's or a lover's fancy,

* *Vide* pp. 382 *et seq.*

but which none the less have their kernel of truth, and so serve to shed light on certain sides of Lorenzo's character.

As a preface to his narrative he introduces a philosophic disquisition upon the beginnings and the ends of things. The end of anything must be the beginning of something else. He will not go so far as to say that the end and the beginning are one and the same thing, as Aristotle avers, but only that the end of one thing is the immediate beginning of another. The beginning of the *amorosa vita*, the life of a lover, proceeds from death: Homer, Virgil and Dante make their heroes pass through death to life. "The beginning of the true life"—*della vera vita*, a phrase which marks the connection of his thoughts with the *nuova vita* of Dante—"is the death of the life which is not true." So it was with him, "for there died in Florence a lady for whom all the City grieved; for truly she was adorned with beauty and every natural grace. Among her other excellent gifts she possessed a manner so sweet and attractive that all who were brought into association with her believed themselves to be loved by her; yet none was jealous of her, nor was one jealous of another. Her death aroused universal compassion for her youth and beauty; beauty which in death seemed more radiant than ever before. Every one desired to celebrate her in verse, or else to accuse in prose the greed and bitterness of death. I, among the number, wrote four sonnets, beginning thus: the first,

> O chiara stella

the second,

> Quando il Sol giù dal'oriente scende——

the third,

> Di vita il dolce lume fuggirei
> A quella vita ch' altri morte appella——

the fourth,

> In qual parte andrò io, ch' io non ti trovi
> Trista memoria? in qual oscuro speco
> Fuggirò io che sempre non sii meco
> Trista memoria, ch' al mio mal sol giovi?

"The sonnets which follow these are very different. A new argument will appear common to them all, but one

which will only confirm the principle previously asserted that Death is the fitting beginning of the New Life," for after relating how he mourned over the loss of so beautiful a lady, and was looking around him to see if her equal existed anywhere, "in despair," he says, "I gave in our City a public festival, to which everybody went, and I too, against my will, but led as if by destiny, for from such *fêtes* I had long stood aloof. But soon the spirit of the thing, and past memories, made me act like the rest. Among the ladies there was one of extraordinary beauty, so that if her inward graces were equal to the exterior beauties of her form, she would rival and even excel the dead Lady." He tells how he became acquainted with her, the passion which she inspired in him, the perfect correspondence between her person and her mind. "Her beauty was wonderful. She was of suitable height, and her colouring, though pale, in no way sallow. Her complexion was bright without being ruddy, her appearance grave but not proud, sweet and winsome (*piacevole*) but without levity or any defect. Her eyes were lively but not restless, with no signs of haughtiness or fickleness; her whole body so finely proportioned that there was nothing about her which was rough or unfinished, but always dignity in everything which she did. When walking, or dancing, or engaged in those exercises whereby women are wont to train and display their bodily graces, in short, in every movement, she was elegant and bewitching. Her hands were beautiful beyond any that Nature yet had fashioned. Her voice was most sweet, and her conversation was full of keen and excellent judgment. Her wit was polished and fine but without offence; her abilities were marvellous, but she was entirely without pride or presumption. Moreover she had no trace of that defect which is so common in women, and which renders them insupportable, I mean the affectation of understanding everything, the vice, in fact, of the bluestocking. It would be long to tell of all her perfections—a single sentence will suffice, that nothing could be sought for in a beautiful and gentle lady which was not abundantly to be found in her. The dead lady had shone as a star, but she was

the star of Venus which is eclipsed by the light of the rising sun."

It is thus that Lorenzo celebrates his passion for Lucrezia Donati. Nowhere in his writings has he mentioned her name, but her name is known to us through the tributes of Lorenzo's friends, and from his biographer, Niccolo Valori. To her the batch of sonnets which form the subject-matter of the remainder of the *Commentario* was written. From them we may judge that though Lucrezia existed in the flesh, and was doubtless of admirable beauty, she was yet to Lorenzo the ideal of a poet's fancy rather than a mortal woman: she was, to the young and ardent poet, what Beatrice was to Dante, what Laura was to Petrarch.

It seems that he was first attracted to Lucrezia Donati at a tournament, held in 1467, to celebrate the marriage of his friend, Braccio Martelli. Then Lorenzo won a smile from her lips and a wreath of violets from her hand, and vowed that he himself one day would celebrate a tournament in her honour. Two years later the promise was somewhat strangely kept, for on February 7, 1469, Lorenzo held a tournament in the Piazza of S. Croce to celebrate his betrothal to Clarice Orsini which had been arranged in the previous December. This was the tournament which gave to Luca Pulci the occasion for his *Giostra di Lorenzo de' Medici*, a poem which has its own merits, but which is chiefly memorable as having suggested, if not inspired, the *Giostra di Giuliano de' Medici* by Angelo Poliziano.

Lorenzo in his *Ricordi*, written a few years later, studiously suppresses, if he had not forgotten, all the sentimental emotions which were associated in his mind with this tournament. There is not a word about the lady of his heart, or of the lady of his choice, but a bare record which takes special note of the expense incurred. "To follow the fashion, and do as others do, I arranged a Joust on the Piazza of Santa Croce, with great expense and splendour, in which I find we spent about 10,000 fiorini (£5000), and though I was not very valiant in years or blows, the first prize was awarded to me, to wit a helmet, inlaid with silver, with a figure of Mars as a headpiece."

The poem of Luca Pulci, and a detailed contemporary record of the festivities, enable us vividly to realise the spectacular effects which were produced on the Piazza upon this occasion. The lists were prepared with great magnificence. Eighteen gallant Knights entered as competitors for the prize. Among them was Guglielmo dei Pazzi, Lorenzo's brother-in-law, Francesco Pazzi, and Jacopo Bracciolini. Of these, ten years later, two were to suffer death, and one exile, as the punishment for conspiracy against the Medici power. In the lists were to be seen also Braccio dei Medici, a kinsman of the brothers, Piero Vespucci, and Carlo Borromeo. The poet exhausts his vocabulary in describing the splendour of the dress and accoutrements of the combatants, and the approach of Lorenzo's procession was received with frantic acclamations. As the whole affair was got up for amusement, and not for serious business, it was perhaps suitable that matters of the wardrobe and stage millinery should take precedence over the armed encounters. We can picture to ourselves a glorified scene from a Lord Mayor's Show, or a spectacular effect at a pantomime. First in the procession marched nine trumpeters heralding Lorenzo's approach ; then three pages of whom one bore the banner of red and white, Lorenzo's ensign. Behind the banner came two Squires in full armour, attached to Lorenzo for the occasion by Federigo of Urbino, and Roberto Sanseverino : then twelve noblemen on horseback immediately preceded Giuliano dei Medici. The general scheme of Giuliano's attire, which was estimated to have cost eight thousand ducat (£4000), may be described as silver and pearl. His tabard was of silver brocade, his silk doublet was embroidered in pearls and silver. His black velvet cap was adorned with three feathers worked in gold thread, and set in pearls and rubies. Giuliano was at this time a very handsome, well-grown boy of fifteen, and he must have presented a splendid and engaging appearance.

Five mounted pages, preceding a line of fifers and drummers, prepared the spectators for the vision of Lorenzo himself. He came, mounted on a horse presented by

Ferrante of Naples, richly caparisoned in red and white velvet adorned with pearls. Lorenzo wore a surcoat with puffings of red and white silk at the shoulders, and over the surcoat a broad silk scarf embroidered with roses, some fresh, some withered, with the motto, "*Le temps revient*," picked out upon the scarf in pearls. His black velvet cap was studded with pearls, and from it there sprang a feather of gold thread, spangled with rubies and diamonds, arranged artfully—so as to display to advantage a single pearl of great purity and value. His shield had for its centrepiece the great Medici diamond, "Il Libro," estimated to be worth two thousand fiorini, and on the shield was the fleur-de-lys, the three golden lilies of France upon an azure field, which advertised the favour of Louis XI. towards the House of Medici. Ten mounted cavaliers and sixty-four footmen completed Lorenzo's retinue.

On arrival at the Piazza, Lorenzo dismounted, and changed his silken surcoat for a doublet of Alexandrian velvet, with gold fringes, embroidered with the golden lilies. For his cap he substituted a helmet adorned with three blue feathers, and rode into the lists upon a magnificent charger, a token of the friendship of Borso d'Este of Ferrara. First Carlo Borromeo, then in turn Braccio dei Medici, Carlo da Forme, and Benedetto Salutati felt his prowess, and acknowledged him their conqueror. His feats of arms recall to the poet the deeds of Orlando and Achilles. At the end of the day Lorenzo was escorted from the lists, wearing the silver helmet, with the figure of Mars as a headpiece, which was the prize of victory.

We are not told from whose hands the victor received his guerdon, but it seems to have been generally understood that if Lorenzo was the Mars of the occasion, Lucrezia Donati was the Venus. But just as Mars had his own matrimonial relations which were quite independent of Venus, so Lorenzo's attention was perforce given at this time to his approaching marriage with Clarice Orsini.

The determination to choose a bride for Lorenzo outside the circle of the great Florentine families was a significant

Brogi

PORTRAIT OF LORENZO DEI MEDICI AS A YOUTH

DETAIL FROM BENOZZO GOZZOLI'S "ADORATION OF THE MAGI"

Palazzo Riccardi, Florence

departure from the traditional policy of the family. Piero seems to have felt that a semi-regal House needed semi-regal connections and external supports; that the branches of a Medician dynasty must spread out far and wide.

If a beginning was to be made in dynastic alliances Piero could hardly have done better. The Orsini were one of the oldest, noblest, and most powerful families in Italy. Their influence was almost as great in Naples as in Rome and its neighbourhood. They were a family of soldiers, and could thus do something to supply the Medici with an armed force in case of need. One of them, the Cardinal Latino, was influential in the Papal Curia. As to the disappointment and jealous disgust of the Florentines, that would pass; moreover if a bride had been chosen from among them, the selection could only have pleased one family while offending many. Piero therefore listened gladly to overtures which reached him from the Orsini quarters. In the spring of 1467 Lucrezia, Lorenzo's mother, was in Rome negotiating with the Orsini in conjunction with her brother, Giovanni Tornabuoni, the Medici agent in the Imperial City.

Lucrezia wrote frequent letters to her husband while she was at Rome. From them we can form a picture, by no means unpleasing, of Lorenzo's future wife. "She is," says Lucrezia, "fifteen or sixteen years old, and when I first met her she was dressed in the Roman style, with the handker-

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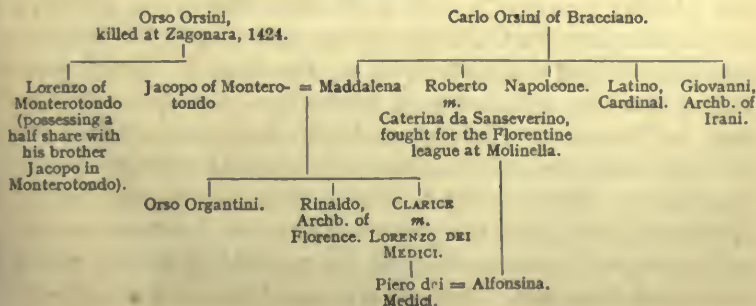
Genealogy of the Orsini, to illustrate Lorenzo's Marriage



chief on her head, and appeared to me very beautiful in this costume, of fair complexion and tall; but as she was veiled, I could not see her very well." A little later Clarice appeared without the handkerchief and without the veil, "and I had an opportunity of looking at her. She is above the middle height, of fair complexion and pleasant manners, and, if less beautiful than our daughters, of great modesty, so that it will be easy to teach her our manners. She is not blonde, for no one is so here, and her thick hair has a reddish tinge. Her face is round in shape, but does not displease me. The neck is beautiful, but rather thin, or, more properly, delicately shaped. She does not bear her head so proudly as our girls do, but inclining a little forward, which I ascribe to the timidity which seems to be a predominant characteristic. On the whole the girl seems to be far above the ordinary type, but she is not to be compared to Maria, Lucrezia, and Bianca." The praise here is certainly somewhat guarded, and Piero does not seem to have been quite satisfied about the personal qualifications of Clarice. In another letter Lucrezia reassures him. "I believe you will be satisfied, when on my return you hear me state my opinions. You say that I express myself coldly: I do so in order to attain the end more certainly, and I believe that there is here no marriageable girl more beautiful than she is."

The great point was that Lorenzo was satisfied. He had already seen Clarice, probably at the time of his embassy to Ferrante of Naples, and perhaps on other occasions. Lucrezia was at ease, because, as she expressly states, "the girl pleases Lorenzo." On both sides there was assiduity in negotiations and arrangements, the length of the proceedings being evidently due to the bride's tender years rather than to reluctance or hesitation on either side. At last, in November 1468, all preliminaries were satisfactorily arranged. On the 27th the Cardinal Latino Orsini wrote a congratulatory family letter to Piero, while Filippo dei Medici, Archbishop of Pisa, the representative of Lorenzo and his father, wrote to announce that the marriage contract was in order and accepted. The dowry was but a small one—six

thousand Roman scudi, or about £3000, but, as the Archbishop remarked, "you do not need the possessions of others, and yours remain to you." The marriage was indeed rather a condescension on the part of the Orsini, who felt that the Medici were sufficiently honoured by the alliance, and could make but small demands in cash. Far otherwise was it, twenty years later, when the son of this marriage, Piero di Lorenzo dei Medici, went to claim another Orsini bride. Then Lorenzo was the first man in Italy. The most exalted families were proud to be connected with one who was only just less than royal, and the dowry which Alfonsina Orsini brought to Piero was at least double that of his mother, and was popularly reported to be five times greater than it was. In December the marriage between Lorenzo and Clarice was celebrated at Rome. In the absence of the bridegroom, Filippo, the Archbishop, acted as proxy. In May the bride began her journey to Florence; on June 4, 1469, the wedding took place in Florence. The entry in Lorenzo's *Ricordi* is rather cold, but exactly expresses the facts. "I, Lorenzo, took Donna Clarice, daughter of Signor Jacopo Orsini to wife, or rather, she was given to me, in December 1468, and the marriage was celebrated in our house on the 4th June, 1469." Lorenzo took his wife, as wives, for dynastic purposes, are wont to be taken, but there are evidences that he soon came to regard her with genuine affection: she became, if not quite the *dimidia pars*,—the half of himself,—at least a considerable part of him, and though she had her own opinions, which were not always his, she proved throughout his life to be a faithful and devoted wife.

Full details of the marriage festivities were recorded at the time by Piero Parenti, a Florentine. Extensive presents in kind—capons, hens, wax, wine, sweetmeats—were sent from all parts of the Florentine territory, and these good things went to supply a banquet to 800 citizens. In the Medici palace the celebrations, except that they were upon a larger scale, followed the custom of Florentine weddings. There was the strict separation of the sexes, and the classification of the guests according to age. The bride's banquet

in the gardens was attended by thirty-six young married women. In the cloisters surrounding the courtyard Lorenzo entertained seventy of the most considerable male guests. Within the house, on the ground floor, thirty-six young people feasted, and here perhaps the sexes were not separated, while on the floor above Lucrezia acted as hostess to forty of the elder married women. The dishes were introduced with much parade of trumpets, stewards, carvers and attendants, but the food itself was simple enough. Soups, meats boiled and roast, cakes, sweetmeats and jellies constituted the bill of fare, with ample supplies of the native wines of Italy. The sweetmeats must have been popular if five thousand pounds weight of them were, as is stated, really consumed. But the banquetings continued for several days, and any well-affected citizen was sure of a seat, if not in the Medici palace, then at Messer Carlo dei Medici's house, or at the house of one of the family. Among the presents of rings, brocade, and silver dishes, the gift of Gentile of Urbino, Lorenzo's tutor has received special notice. It was an exquisitely illuminated office of the Madonna, in letters of gold upon ultramarine, adorned with paintings in miniature, the whole being bound in crystal and silver. The value of it was estimated at 200 fiorini (£100).

Thus with feastings and with music, with dancing and with song, with sham fights and mimic sieges were celebrated the nuptials of Lorenzo and Clarice, and all Florence gathered to wish them happiness and do them honour, though doubtless there were some grumblings that a Medici bride should have been fetched from so far away.

The marriage festivities were scarcely over before Lorenzo was called upon, on behalf of his father, to undertake a foreign mission. On June 20 the infant son of Galeazzo Sforza and Bona of Savoy was born, and Piero was invited to stand sponsor to the child. Piero's interest in the Milanese alliance was too personal and keen to permit him to refuse, but being too ill to go himself the duty was delegated to Lorenzo. Early in July he left Florence for Milan, attended by his brothers-in-law, by the Chancellor, by his *fidus*

Achates, Francesco Nori, and his tutor, Gentile d' Urbino. The letters of Gentile to Clarice enable us to follow the embassy from day to day as the Ambassadors travelled to Milan by way of Lucca and the coast route which ran past Pietra Santa and Sarzana. Everywhere Lorenzo was received with acclamation, and was forcibly compelled to yield up the privacy and retirement which he affected or desired to the clamorous demands of hosts who would take no denial. At Lucca he was dragged from his modest lodging without the walls at "The Crown" to a ceremonial Mass, to a public meeting, and to a banquet. At Pietra Santa the news that he was at "The Bell" brought down upon him a public reception, followed by a supper party under the shade of a green arbour overlooking the sea. From Pietra Santa he journeyed to Sarzana which his father had bought for Florence two years before. There he was able to judge for himself of the commercial and strategical value of the new purchase, and he received an impression of its importance which was materially to influence his policy at a later day. From Sarzana he rode, by way of Pontremoli, to Milan, where on the appointed day he became godfather to the hapless child, Giovanni Galeazzo, on whom Jove bestowed a destiny taken only from the bowl of misfortune.

It was then that the magnificence of Lorenzo's gifts inspired Sforza with the hope that Lorenzo "would stand godfather to all his other children."

We have no direct information about the political effects of Lorenzo's mission, but indirectly we can gather that he talked about political affairs in a way that seemed to the prudent Piero neither wise nor discreet. Piero, writing to his wife from Careggi on July 13, rather peevishly requests her to remonstrate with Lorenzo. "You know," he says, "that I gave him permission to go very unwillingly: tell him to depart in no way from his instructions, and not to indulge in so many fictions. I am quite determined that the goslings shall not lead the geese to the water."

As Lorenzo only announced his arrival at Milan in a letter to Clarice on July 22, and could scarcely have arrived

there at the time when Piero wrote, it is probable that his father took exception not to anything he had done or said at Milan but to his proceedings on the road thither. Perhaps he was a little too expansive in that public speech which he was called upon to make at Lucca, or was not quite diplomatic in his behaviour at Pietra Santa. Though Piero had confessed himself to be "a man without his hands" when Lorenzo was absent from him, yet it is almost gratifying to find that Lorenzo was no paragon who could never make a mistake. The politician who is so cold and clever as to be incapable of occasionally doing a foolish thing lacks one of the elements which makes for political success.

At the time of Lorenzo's return from Milan Piero was obviously sinking. More than ever it was necessary for him to commit affairs of State into the hands of his son. A question of great importance for Florence arose in the autumn, which was not settled till some time after Piero's death. It therefore properly belongs to the period of Lorenzo's government.

On October 9, 1469, Sigismondo Malatesta, Lord of Rimini, died leaving no legitimate successor. The Malatestas held Rimini under the suzerainty of the Pope, and Paul II. thought the time was opportune for resuming the sovereignty over Rimini into his own hands. But his plans were forestalled by Roberto Malatesta, illegitimate son of Sigismondo, who seized the government, and prepared himself to defend it against a Papal attack. The Pope looked to Venice for aid, and concluded an alliance with that Republic. Alessandro Sforza of Pesaro was put at the head of the Papal forces, and a campaign for the possession of Rimini began. Roberto looked around him for allies, and found the Triple Alliance well disposed to thwart any attempts which the Pope or Venice might make to aggrandise themselves in Romagna. Federigo of Urbino, too, was so close a neighbour to Rimini that designs directed against it might easily expand into designs against himself. Accordingly, in answer to the Papal-Venice Alliance, Naples, Florence, Milan and Urbino associated themselves together, and, at the Papal Court, Florence and the Medici were

regarded as the real authors of the league, and the chief contributors of the pecuniary cement by which it was held together. Paul was very angry that his schemes should thus be thwarted, and " even in the Consistory itself," says Fabroni, " he vomited forth contumelies against the Medici brothers." These however were ineffectual to counterbalance the practical consequences of their action. Alessandro Sforza was defeated. The further efforts of the Pope to revenge himself upon Ferrante for the aid which Naples had given to Roberto had to be abandoned, for the news that the Turks had taken Negroponte forced upon Italy the consciousness that she must be at peace within herself, if the common danger was to be averted. In 1470 a general peace, modelled on the Peace of Lodi of 1454, was negotiated, which offered the illusive hope that not only Italy, but all Christendom, would lay aside animosities against Christians, and concentrate in opposition to the infidel invaders.

Florence had only just committed herself to the cause of Roberto Malatesta when Piero dei Medici died on December 3, 1469. " He was," says Lorenzo, " much mourned by all the City, for he was an upright man, of the most perfect kindness. We were besieged by the Princes of Italy, especially the chief ones, with letters and embassies, and condolences upon his death, and they offered their own State for our defence." Macchiavelli's testimony to Piero's character corresponds with that of Lorenzo, when he states that Piero was a man of genuine goodness and virtue, but that his qualities were not, in his lifetime, sufficiently appreciated by his fellow citizens, because, up to the age of forty-eight, he was entirely subordinate to Cosimo, and the few years that remained to him after Cosimo's death were spent in civic discord and continual illness. There is, however, abundance of contemporary evidence to show that the worth of Piero's character was recognised and understood in his own city and in his own day. He exercised upon the foreign policy of the State an influence which was direct, personal and paramount, while in domestic affairs the quality in him

which made the most impression was his moderation. Though the head of his party, he was sincerely desirous for the general good. If he was severe to political opponents who plotted against his power and his life, it can scarcely be said that his severity was in excess of what the occasion demanded. He was not implacable, as Cosimo was, and the story, which rests on fair authority, that he was proposing to recall the exiles who had conspired against him, reflects the general estimate of his character, even if it does not exactly express the facts. Piero's reputation suffered under two disadvantages, one of them affecting him in his own day, and the other in the eyes of posterity. He was so constantly ill that there was a tendency to despise him as being necessarily weak and incompetent, and he had the misfortune to be sandwiched in between a father who completely overshadowed him, and a son whom the world regards as one of the most remarkable men that Italy has produced.

Piero must have been a man of unusual capacity and strength of character, if, with such disadvantages, he has yet managed to impress himself fairly definitely upon the historical imagination.

Like Cosimo, he hated ostentation and display, as being alien from his character and contrary to sound policy. His sons respected his wishes in the matter of his funeral, and in the memorial which they erected to his memory. An urn of red porphyry, designed by Andrea Verrocchio, stands in the old sacristy of San Lorenzo. It bears the inscription, "Patri Patruoque," and is the tribute of Lorenzo and Giuliano to the memory of Cosimo's two sons, Piero their father and Giovanni their uncle. "It would not be possible," says Vasari, "to discover a more perfectly executed work, whether cast or chiselled—evincing as it does, great powers of invention, extraordinary judgment and consummate skill." It is indeed a perfect triumph of simplicity and taste.

CHAPTER V

FIRST YEARS OF LORENZO'S GOVERNMENT, 1469-1472

Lorenzo invited to assume the headship of the State—Position of Giuliano in the Government—Nature of Lorenzo's authority—Anomalies in Lorenzo's position—First actions of Lorenzo as Head of the State—Constitutional machinery of Lorenzo's government—The Bardi conspiracy at Prato—Lorenzo's foreign policy—Galeazzo Sforza of Milan visits Florence—Attitude of Ferrante of Naples—Death of Pope Paul II., 1471—Accession of Pope Sixtus IV.—His character—Relations between Lorenzo and the Pope.

LORENZO, in his *Ricordi*, gives a bald account of the circumstances personal to himself which immediately followed Piero's death. "The second day after, when I, Lorenzo, was very young, to wit twenty-one years of age, there came to our house the principal men of the City, and of the State, to express their grief at what had happened and to comfort me. They requested that I would undertake the care of the City and the State as my father and grandfather had done. To this I unwillingly assented, as not being in accord with my age, and a matter of much care and danger; but I undertook it solely for the preservation of my friends and supporters, since at Florence it is ill living without governmental authority (*a Firenze si può mal vivere senza lo Stato*). This, up to the present time, has succeeded with honour and satisfaction, and to the reputation of all, not as a consequence of my prudence, but by the Grace of God, and through the good dispositions of my ancestors."

In brief personal notices committed to a private diary, Lorenzo was only concerned to record facts which came within his own knowledge and directly affected him. We learn from other sources that the deputation which waited upon him was the result of a meeting of over six hundred

of the most influential citizens, called by Tommaso Soderini to the Convent of S. Antonio upon the day of Piero's funeral. Soderini, in station, influence and fidelity, was the most prominent member of the Medici party. He was Piero's brother-in-law, having married Dianora Tornabuoni, Lucrezia's sister, and therefore uncle by marriage to Lorenzo and Giuliano. In the days of the Neroni conspiracy he had stood firm by the Medici in opposition to his brother Niccolo, and to him Piero, on his deathbed, had committed the care of his sons. His position as the leading spirit in the Medici ring, his long attachment to it, his ripe experience, marked him out as a man who might himself have assumed the headship of the State upon Piero's death. Various motives, however, led him to the conclusion that the general interest would be best served at this crisis by vesting the government in Lorenzo and his brother. As long as there was a natural head of the Medici family, he must be the political head of the Medici party. Moreover, Lorenzo's youth and inexperience would probably cause him to lean exclusively on Soderini, who would thus enjoy the substance of power, free of the ceremonial and other burdens which its exercise involved. Influenced by these motives, and doubtless by a genuine feeling of loyalty to the family, Soderini strongly urged that Lorenzo and Giuliano should be invited to assume the position which Cosimo and Piero had enjoyed. There is no record that his proposition was opposed. It was certainly supported, even by the representatives of Luca Pitti who were present. The absolute necessity that there should be, in the government of Florence, some one person at its head to ensure continuity in its policy, and stability in its relations with foreign powers, was frankly admitted at the meeting. The Ferrarese ambassador, reporting to his Duke on December 4, states that Messer Gianozzo Pitti and Messer Domenico Martelli expressed the opinion that the State must recognise "one lord and superior," who should be of one mind in directing all the affairs of that illustrious Signoria.

The deputation was therefore appointed to wait upon Lorenzo in the manner that he has described.

In this record of events two considerations call for particular remark. First, that in his own note, Lorenzo makes no mention of a divided tenure of power between himself and Giuliano. He says not a word about Giuliano. And yet the report of Soderini's speech, sent off to Ferrara within twenty-four hours of its delivery, makes it clear that some sort of joint tenure was in the mind of the meeting. All the circumstances, however, make it probable that Giuliano's association with his brother was regarded as one of form and courtesy rather than of practical fact, for Giuliano was but sixteen at the time, and for a few years at any rate his active co-operation in the government was not to be looked for. It was the very fact of Giuliano's youth which made a dual control so nominal as not to be dangerous. It was recognised that there was to be one directing mind, and that mind was to be Lorenzo's.

Of greater importance is the fact, so constantly ignored, that the power which Lorenzo now assumed was not usurped, or violently snatched by him. It was deliberately vested in him by the act of the ruling class of the Florentine citizens. The view of Lorenzo as a cold and calculating tyrant, who set himself to destroy the liberties of a free republic, is absurdly at variance with the facts of the situation. Lorenzo was invited to occupy a position analogous to that which the head of the Medici family had occupied for thirty-five years, and his situation practically compelled him to accept the invitation. His wealth, influence, and reputation at home and abroad, forbade him to be a private citizen. But if he was to be a public man he must be first or nowhere. For a Medici indeed it must have been ill-living in Florence without the State behind him, for it must be a Medici or another. If another, then Florence could no longer be any place for a Medici.

Such a government as that to which Lorenzo was called had no fellow in any other European country out of Italy; in Italy, only that of Bologna can be compared with it. The forms of government were strictly and jealously Republican, the predominance of a single person being only recognised under the rose. It was acknowledged that some-

body must be at the head, but the person tolerated in that position must pretend all the time that he was no more than an influential private citizen. The authority that he exercised, whatever it was, was strictly personal: it could not be transmitted by descent: no civil list was voted for its upkeep: no armed force was officially at its disposal either for purposes of defence or for the conduct of its enterprises. It rested on nothing but good-will. It had no direct power to initiate legislation, or to veto legislation to which it objected; yet if the authority of the ruler were repudiated, repudiation meant for him exile certainly, and death possibly. No elaborate etiquette, or system of ceremonial, created around him that atmosphere of divinity that doth hedge a king, and keep him a being apart from the common run of men. A ruler, such as Lorenzo was, had to devise his own sovereignty, and provide his own methods by which it was to be exercised and maintained. Lorenzo is accused of being a skilful manipulator of the political wires, of corrupting the forms of freedom in the interests of despotism, of blinding the people to their actual dependence by the splendour of his circuses and shows. It could not be otherwise, for government in Florence had to be carried on; and the kind of government was that which Florence desired and had deliberately chosen for herself. But, while choosing it, she had neglected to provide the necessary constitutional apparatus to give the forms of legality and public sanction to its exercise. Therefore those forms had to be surreptitiously and unofficially devised. The manipulation of ballot-boxes, of councils, and committees was indeed a sorry and a sordid business, but it compared favourably with the unabashed methods of tyranny which despots elsewhere were accustomed to practise. It was deplorable that the finances of the State should be mixed up with the ventures of a commercial house, but the line between the private person and the public man was so incapable of exact definition that no one could say precisely what part of Lorenzo's expenditure might justly be debited to the public treasury, and what part of it was private and personal to himself. It would of course be absurd to maintain that

Lorenzo never did wrong, and that every detail of his political action was the inevitable consequence of his circumstances. Lorenzo was far too human to be perfect. But no estimate of his sovereignty can be fair which fails to recognise that, from the first, it was imposed upon him, not snatched by lawless and tyrannical hands, and that the anomalous character of that sovereignty compelled the use of anomalous methods, if it was to be profitably and effectively exercised.

Having determined to accept the invitation offered to him, it was of the first importance to take occasion by the hand, and consolidate his authority on the instant of its being conferred upon him:

> Che val signor che obedito non sia
> Da suoi soggetti, e massime allo inizio ?
> Perchè un rettor d'una podasteria
> Ne' primi quattro dì fa il suo ofizio.

(What is that Prince worth who is not obeyed by his own subjects, especially at the beginning. For the ruler of a government must make his position secure within the first four days.)

So wrote Lorenzo, years afterwards, in the morality play —*La Rappresentazione di S. Giovanni e S. Paolo* *—which he composed for the amusement and edification of his children. In these lines, and in the remarks upon the true ends of government, and the true functions of the governor, which are scattered throughout the piece, Lorenzo draws from his own experience, and expresses in abstract terms the political conceptions or ideals by which, in the exercise of his power, he was himself directed.

He at once took steps, under the guidance, and with the assistance of Soderini, to ensure that the whole political business of the State should be referred to him and pass through his hands. If he was to represent the government, and be responsible for its external and internal administration, it was necessary that he should be familiar with every detail, and should have a deciding voice in whatever policy might be proposed. This, however, was not enough. There could be no security as long as it was possible for the executive to be in the hands of men not in sympathy with the

* *Vide* pp. 433 *et seq.*

views of the chief magistrate. A revision of the Constitution was at once set on foot to ensure that no one should hold any office in the State who was not an obedient instrument of the Medici party. And lastly, Lorenzo took steps to counterbalance the influence of powerful party chiefs, such as Soderini, by surrounding himself with advisers who were personally devoted to him, and owing everything to him, in order to avoid the danger of being too much under the influence of a small clique of men to whom he owed everything.

These measures took time, and could not be accomplished all at once, but the tendency of Lorenzo's policy was obvious from the first. "I believe," said the Ferrarese ambassador, "that, if they guide the bark rightly at the beginning, and while they can influence the election of magistrates, they will reach the desired haven, for, as the philosopher says, 'the beginning is more than a half of the whole.'"

The constitutional changes which were accomplished in the early years of Lorenzo's reign had but one object in view: to make the executive in all things the mouthpiece of the will of the ruler. To this end a proposal was made by the Signoria which held office in July 1470, that an Electoral College should be formed consisting of those electors who, since the year 1434, had become qualified to elect. Of these, in 1470, forty were still alive. They, together with five other nominated persons, were to constitute an electoral body of forty-five. From their number five were to be drawn annually, and this committee of five was to be a board of appointment to all magistracies for the year.

The proposal was not well received, for the cloven hoof of despotism was a little too plainly visible to suit the susceptibilities of the people. There was much outcry against "the forty-five tyrants," and the scheme was dropped, but six months later, in January 1471, the power of appointment to magistracies was taken out of the hands of the Council of the Hundred: that power was to reside in the Signoria which should come into office in July, in conjunction with the electors of the current year: their nominations were then to be submitted to the Council of the Hundred which

could confirm them by a bare majority. When the time came, however, it was found possible to go still further. In September 1471 a Balìa was appointed consisting of forty persons, who were empowered to co-opt two hundred more. The operations of this Balìa really decided the forms under which Medician despotism was to be exercised. First it undertook a rigorous scrutiny of the ballot-boxes, so that no name might by any possibility be included whose attachment to the Medici was doubtful. The power of appointment was withdrawn from the Council of the Hundred and vested in the forty individuals who originally composed the Balìa, assisted by fifty others selected by them. But in return, the legislative authority of the Hundred was largely increased, for it was enacted that all public bills which passed the Hundred thereupon became law, irrespective of the sanction of the old popular Councils *del Popolo*, and *del Commune*.

These arrangements were to be in force for a period of five years, but they were renewed at the expiration of the first term, and again in 1481. Thus they constituted the solid foundation on which the ascendency of Lorenzo rested.

In Florence itself, Lorenzo's accession to power was received with general satisfaction. Whatever suspicion or resentment were in the hearts of some stout old Republicans, they found no outward expression. The great body of the citizens was undoubtedly proud of their young and brilliant representative, who seemed to embody all the finest traditions of the Florentine race and character. But there were restless souls outside who saw, in the change of government, an opportunity of avenging old wrongs, and effecting a revolution in the State.

Among those who had been condemned to exile for sharing in the Neroni Conspiracy, was the family of the Nardi. Salvestro and Bernardo Nardi had joined the ranks of Bartolommeo Colleone, and had consequently been declared rebels against the State. Bernardo was a man of restless and aspiring temper, who had already suffered the worst, and consequently had nothing to lose. He thought he saw, in the conditions existing at Prato,

an opportunity for a venture which might be desperate, but which, at any rate, afforded a chance of rousing a general conflagration in Tuscany.

Prato lies about ten miles to the north-west of Florence, midway between that City and Pistoia. It had been purchased by Florence from Queen Giovanna of Naples, in 1350, and since that time had enjoyed its own municipal institutions under the superintendence and control of a governor appointed by the Florentine Signoria. Nardi had connections with Prato, and believed the people to be suffering under a sense of injuries received at the hands of Florence, through her governors. If Prato could be seized by a *coup de main*, and foreign assistance were forthcoming, there was a fair prospect that the town could be made a base for a general movement of insurrection in Tuscany against Florentine domination. Having entered into relations with an influential family in Prato, and having secured, through Diotisalvi Neroni, a doubtful promise of support from Bologna and Ferrara, Bernardo was ready to proceed. He had so skilfully concealed his plans that he had no difficulty, by a ruse, in securing the keys of the Pistoia gate, and in a few moments the Citadel, the governor's palace, the town, and the governor himself were in the hands of the conspirators. It was now, however, that their difficulties began, for the people of Prato utterly failed to understand the meaning of what had taken place, nor did they respond to the cries of Liberty, Freedom, by which Bernardo sought to stir them. The Signoria, consisting of eight principal citizens, met to consider the situation. Bernardo eloquently harangued them, declaring that he had no other object than to deliver Prato from slavery, calling to mind their ancient liberties which they had long ceased to enjoy, and reminding them how glorious it would be to secure at once independence for the City and everlasting fame for themselves.

The Eight, however, were not moved by these exhortations. They drily declared that they were not called upon to express an opinion as to whether Florence was free or not free, but for themselves they desired no other liberty than

that which, under Florence, they already enjoyed. Let Bernardo at once liberate the governor, withdraw his men, and retire as quickly as possible from so mad and wicked an enterprise.

At this juncture Bernardo determined that he would create an impression by hanging the governor from the window of his own palace, and was in the act of doing so when he was induced by the artful persuasions of the captive himself to stay his hand. Cesare Petrucci, Florentine Rector of Prato, now proved himself, not for the last time, to be a man of promptitude and resource. He appears again in a wider sphere, and on a more exalted stage, in Florence in 1478, at the time of the conspiracy of the Pazzi. The same courage and resolution which he exhibited then, he showed now in defence of his own life. He represented to Bernardo that by this execution he would only bring upon himself speedy and certain vengeance, whereas, if he issued his orders through the governor, they would be respected, and his designs carried into effect. Bernardo, whose mind, says Macchiavelli, was not fertile in expedients, saw reason in these arguments. He enjoined Petrucci to address the assembled populace from the palace window, and to urge the people to obey Bernardo in all things.

By this means the governor saved his life, and gained time, which alone was necessary to defeat Bernardo's plans. The citizens, having recovered from their surprise, rallied under the leadership of a Florentine, Giorgio Ginori, a knight of Rhodes, and before assistance could arrive from Florence, the insurrection was at an end. There the Signoria had taken prompt measures. Roberto da San Severino had been placed in command of an adequate force with full instructions for the restoration of order, but he had scarcely moved out beyond the City gates when he was informed that Bernardo was a prisoner, the governor restored, and that order once more prevailed at Prato. Bernardo was executed, and no effort was spared to stamp out in the neighbourhood of Prato whatever seeds of rebellion his enterprise had sown.

The Nardi insurrection of 1470 is the last flicker of the old spirit of disaffection against the Medici which had produced the Neronic conspiracy three years before. It only served to demonstrate the weakness of their antagonists, and how barren of effective support the irreconcilables were. Lorenzo derived nothing but benefit from an abortive attempt to dislodge him before he was fairly in the saddle, while the fact that the danger might have been a very real one gave colourable excuse for arbitrary measures within the City and outside it.

Lorenzo's government enjoyed the advantage of being established and consolidated during one of the rare intervals when general peace prevailed in Italy. This happy state of things cannot be credited to his account, for it was due to the sense of weariness which prolonged and ineffective war produces, and to the necessity for union in the face of Turkish success. But in his first years of power Lorenzo was much occupied in negotiations with the various Italian governments with a view to making permanent the conditions of peace which at the moment existed. True to the policy of his father and grandfather, he determined in every way to strengthen the triple alliance between Florence, Milan, and Naples. Though willing to be a party to a general Italian league, a scheme on which Paul II. was now much set, yet his adhesion to such a league must be without prejudice to the special ties which bound Florence to Naples and Milan. As long as Venice remained ambitious of further self-aggrandisement, and as long as the Papal policy was subject to constant shifts and variations, no great confidence could be placed in a league to which they were parties. Thus, when Galeazzo Sforza took exception to some of the terms of the proposed general treaty, Lorenzo gave instructions to the Florentine ambassador not to sign it on behalf of Florence, although the Signoria had already signified its intention to ratify it. To keep on good terms with Sforza was, in Lorenzo's opinion, of far greater importance than to be pledged to a general engagement which depended too much on the notorious caprices of some of the contracting parties.

It was in pursuit of this policy that, in the early spring of 1471, Lorenzo magnificently entertained the Duke of Milan in his own house in the Via Larga. Galeazzo Sforza was accompanied by his wife, Bona of Savoy, and the splendour of their train exceeded anything which had hitherto been seen in Italy. A hundred knights in armour and five hundred foot soldiers formed their personal guard. Grooms and kitchen-boys glittered in cloth of silver, velvet or silk, and the costumes of courtiers, chamberlains, and ladies-in-waiting were in an ascending scale of unparalleled magnificence. The long procession, with its two thousand horses, many of them richly caparisoned in gold brocade and embroidery, with its two hundred sumpter-mules, its huntsmen, with their dogs and falcons, its trumpeters, fifers and merry-andrews, might almost have been designed from Benozzo Gozzoli's fresco in Lorenzo's own chapel.

The suite was entertained at the public cost by the Signoria, but the Duke and Duchess were Lorenzo's personal guests, for it had long been a matter of course that the Medici palace should receive the most illustrious visitors to the City. There Galeazzo spent much time in examining the treasures of art and of antiquity which Lorenzo and his ancestors had collected. He marvelled much at their rarity and beauty, and had the good taste to confess that his own splendours were of small account when compared with the richness of Lorenzo's collections.

It was the season of Lent, but yet, as Macchiavelli observes, the Milanese, without respect for either God or His Church, ate animal food daily. The City, however, in honour of the occasion, thought it appropriate to present three mystery plays for the entertainment of the Duke in three principal churches. In San Felice, the Annunciation was dramatically displayed ; in the Carmine, the Ascension ; and in Santo Spirito, the Descent of the Holy Spirit. This last performance was attended by disaster, for some of the woodwork in the church became ignited. The flames spread throughout the interior, and, though Macchiavelli exaggerates when he says the church was completely destroyed, very serious damage was done. The Duke headed the

list of subscribers to the restoration fund with a contribution of two thousand fiorini d'oro (£1000), but the good citizens of Florence thought the occurrence of evil omen. They looked askance upon the barbaric luxury and godless ways of their Milanese guests, and were of opinion that the disaster at Santo Spirito was a token of Divine displeasure.

But, in the round of banquets, spectacles, and entertainments, Sforza by no means forgot the political purposes of his visit. Apart from conversations with Lorenzo, he had more than one formal interview with the Signoria, and the alliance between the two States was confirmed and established upon the strongest footing. Valori remarks that a happy combination was now effected between the wealth and ready money of Florence and the superfluous soldiers that Milan was capable of supplying. Men and money together constitute the sinews of war: each could provide what the other wanted: so Milan and Florence in conjunction could not only resist whoever might desire to offend them, but would be able to dictate terms to the whole of Italy.

Politically, however, the visit of Galeazzo Sforza was not an unmixed success. It did not tend to make the Milanese alliance more popular with the people of Florence, who remained cold to all the spectacular splendours which he presented to them. Still more important was the suspicious attitude of Ferrante of Naples.

Lorenzo seems a little to have lost sight of the fact that the policy of his family was based upon a triple, not a dual alliance. Not that he ignored Ferrante, or showed himself indifferent to his friendship. His relations with the Duke of Calabria and Federigo of Aragon continued to be intimate, and the correspondence between Lorenzo and the Neapolitan Court was constant, ranging over every variety of public and personal topics. But he created the impression that the influence of Sforza was the political force which chiefly swayed him, and Sforza himself was undoubtedly anxious to make Lorenzo as far as possible dependent solely upon himself. He tried for example, to commit Florence to an attack upon the Appiani of

Piombino, well knowing that such an enterprise would be most unpleasing to Ferrante.

Piombino was a small independent territory in the possession of the Appiani family. It forms a little peninsula abutting on the northern coast of the island of Elba. The safe harbourage which it afforded to vessels of war, and its strategical position, had already attracted the attention of Alfonso of Naples, Ferrante's predecessor, who declared that that one of the Italian Powers which obtained Piombino could readily secure the mastery over all the rest. It was likely, therefore, that Ferrante would take amiss any attempt on Lorenzo's part to secure to Florence so desirable an acquisition. Lorenzo himself soon discovered that he had made a mistake and withdrew from the enterprise. The matter, indeed, would scarcely be worth notice except as a straw shows the direction of the wind. The estrangement between Ferrante and Lorenzo which brought the latter to the verge of ruin at the time of the conspiracy of the Pazzi, was the result of the cumulative effect of a number of small misunderstandings, not singly of much importance, but each tending to produce the impression on Ferrante that Lorenzo valued his Milanese connection more highly than his alliance with Naples. Lorenzo, in fact, during the first ten years of his ascendency, made not a few political and diplomatic mistakes, but he was one who could profit by experience, and the faults of his early period were fully corrected in the years which followed.

The death of Paul II. in July 1471 had important consequences for the Triple Alliance. The relations between that Pontiff and Ferrante had never been cordial, and latterly had been strained almost to the breaking-point. The accession of a new Pope entirely changed the situation. The questions in dispute between the suzerain and his kingly vassal were satisfactorily adjusted, and a close political and family connection soon sprang up between Ferrante and the Pope. If Lorenzo at any time should have troubles with the Papacy, it was not improbable that Ferrante would be found acting against him, a condition of things which in a few years actually arose. But

at the moment the political sky was bright, and the communications between Lorenzo and the Neapolitan Court were of the most cordial and intimate character.

The Pope who was elected to succeed Paul II. took the name of Sixtus IV. Francesco of Savona was of obscure origin; even his family name is not known. At an early age he was committed to the care of the Franciscans, who undertook his education, and he soon displayed considerable aptitude in theology and philosophy. He became attached to the Piedmontese family of Rovere, and from them acquired a name. His reputation for scholarship led to invitations to him from the chief Italian Universities to lecture on the subjects which he had made his own. At Pavia he had among his audience Cardinal Bessarion, greatest among Byzantine Platonists, and the two scholars were soon on terms of intimate familiarity. He rose to the position of General of the Franciscan Order, was made a Cardinal by Paul II., and rose to the Papacy at the age of fifty-seven, largely by virtue of his reputation as a man of character who had proved himself zealous in the cause of learning, theology, and ecclesiastical reform.

Such was the career of a Pontiff whose quiet and respectable antecedents entirely belied the character of his Pontificate. It is not necessary to believe the scandalous accusations which a prejudiced chronicler has brought against his private life. *Nemo repente turpissimus fit.* But the public actions of Sixtus are sufficient to show that his elevation to the highest position in Christendom was productive of extraordinary and deplorable effects upon his temper and character. A certain wild savagery about everything which he did seems to argue that irresponsible power unhinged to some extent the faculties of his mind. It is only charitable, in the case of Sixtus, to hope that he was not quite sane. His nepotism was more profligate and unblushing than any that the world up to that time had seen. The objects of his affection, Piero and Girolamo Riario, were Italian *bravi*,—desperadoes of the very worst type, whose excesses brought scandal upon the Papal Chair. His passion for discord was such that it was

Brogi

POPE SIXTUS IV

DETAIL FROM THE PAINTING BY MELOZZO DA FORLI

In the Pinacoteca Vaticana, Rome

commonly said that his death was due to the restoration of Italian peace, and he set a precedent for the conduct of the Holy See which his successor, Alexander VI., was too ready to adopt. "Sixtus," says Macchiavelli, "was the first to show how far a Pope might go, and how much those things which hitherto had been regarded as sinful, lost their iniquity when done by a Pontiff." He became in a few years Lorenzo's implacable foe, and his hatred was destined to carry him to lengths which implicated him in atrocious schemes of assassination, and seriously compromised not only the man, but his sacred office.

All this, however, was in the future. The accession of Sixtus gave good hopes to Italy, and to all Christendom, that a man of piety and learning now sat upon the Chair of St. Peter. Florence determined to despatch an embassy to congratulate him, and at the head of it went Lorenzo. He was received with every token of cordiality and esteem. The Pope gratified Lorenzo's passion for antiques and works of art by presenting him with the marble busts of Augustus and Agrippa, "and besides I carried off our engraved chalcedony vase, with many other medals and cameos which I bought, the chalcedony vase being among them." Lorenzo was able to turn the visit to account in many ways. Sixtus knew nothing about art, and looked upon the objects of *virtu*, which Paul II. had got together with so much discrimination and connoisseurship, as so many gewgaws to be turned as speedily as possible into cash. Giovanni Tornabuoni was instructed to make a bargain with the Pope, and some of Paul's finest specimens made their way into Lorenzo's cabinets. Sixtus also made the Medici his bankers, and all the vast funds of the Roman See passed through the hands of Giovanni Tornabuoni, Lorenzo's agent and manager in Rome. The alum mines at Tolfa, which had been recently discovered, were leased to the Medici for a heavy annual payment, and thus the practical monopoly of alum passed into their hands. Lorenzo, indeed, was the recipient of so many private and commercial favours that he thought the occasion favourable to sound the Pope upon a project which had long been

entertained by Cosimo, the granting of a Cardinalate to a prominent member of the Medici family. It was suggested to Sixtus that the honour might suitably be conferred on Lorenzo's brother, Giuliano. In making this proposal, it is possible that, apart from the social and political advantage which would accrue to the family from the possession of a seat in the Sacred College, Lorenzo was influenced by the desire to bring to an end that partnership in the government of Florence which, if it should ever assume a practical form, might some day prove a source of embarrassment. Sixtus showed himself at any rate not unwilling to listen to the proposal, and Lorenzo left Rome fully satisfied with the advantageous results which had followed from his mission.

He was scarcely home again when trouble arose from an unexpected quarter. Early in 1472 an insurrection broke out in Volterra which threatened to develop into a general state of war in Italy. The history of this rebellion, and of the manner in which it was suppressed, opens up a chapter in Lorenzo's career which is ambiguous and perplexing. The incident, of no great importance in itself, has a bearing upon Lorenzo's character and reputation which magnifies it out of all proportion to its immediate influence upon the course of events.

CHAPTER VI

THE INSURRECTION OF VOLTERRA *

Geographical and political position of Volterra—Discovery of alum mines near Volterra—Lorenzo's alleged partnership in the alum Company —Dispute between the company and the citizens—View of Florence in regard to the dispute—Disturbances in Volterra—Attitude of Florence—Lorenzo insists on prompt intervention—Conduct of the war against Volterra—Sack of Volterra—Personal action of Lorenzo towards the ruined city.

IN the well known, but probably fictitious story of the interview between Savonarola and Lorenzo upon his deathbed, it is related that the dying man unburdened himself to the Friar, declaring that in these last hours three

* The original and strictly contemporary authorities on the insurrection of Volterra are:

"Antonii Hyvani Sarazanensis Commentariolus de bello Volterrano, 1472," in Muratori, vol. xxiii.

The anonymous "Cronachetta Volterrana," in Archivio Storico Italiano, vol. iii. (appendix).

The "Chronicle" of Raffaelle Maffei of Volterra.

"Ricordi" of Zaccharia Zucchi: extracts dealing with the Volterra question in Fabroni (appendices).

Allegretto Allegretti, "Diario Sanese" in Muratori, vol. xxiii.

Later authorities:

Macchiavelli, "History of Florence."

Fr. Guicciardini, " "

Scipio Ammirato, " "

Modern or comparatively modern authorities:

Fabroni, Roscoe, Von Reumont, Armstrong.

The difficulty of arriving at definite conclusions arises from the fact that the authorities which are strictly contemporary are not free from the suspicion of prejudice and party feeling. Antonio Hyvano, for instance, who was Chancellor of Volterra at the time, and an eye-witness, wrote his narrative at Florence, and, according to Muratori, wrote it to order.

Raffaelli Maffei, on the other hand, was bitterly antagonistic to Florence and to Lorenzo. One of the Maffei was chosen to act as Lorenzo's assassin by the Pazzi conspirators.

Zaccharia Zucchi's casual statement that Lorenzo was a partner in

sins oppressed his conscience, of which one was the sack of Volterra.

If it be a legend, the legend has its historical value, for it indicates the extent to which the sack of Volterra, twenty years before, had impressed itself upon the public mind. The questions which present themselves are simple ones. Was Lorenzo responsible for the sack of Volterra? Was the incident in itself of so disgraceful a character as to leave upon his mind a lasting sense of shame and sorrow?

The town of Volterra, situated on a lofty eminence 1900 feet above the sea, lies midway between Piombino and Florence, thirty miles to the south-west of the latter city. Like Prato, Volterra was commended to Florence, being governed by a Florentine prefect who was changed every six months. His duty was to guard the town, to punish delinquents, and to be present at public discussions, but otherwise Volterra enjoyed self-government under her own elected magistrates, the suzerainty of Florence being only recognised through the prefect, and the payment of an annual tribute.

The Volterrans had proved themselves from early times to be a turbulent and high-spirited people, torn by internal feuds, and threatened by external foes. Moved, in 1361, by sheer weariness of never-ending discords, they, to defend themselves against themselves, voluntarily commended themselves to Florence. Having done so they constantly chafed at the restraints thus imposed upon them, and as constantly broke out into rebellion. The rising in 1472 was the fifth attempt, in little more than a hundred years, on the part of the Volterrans to assert their independence of a yoke which they had imposed upon themselves. It was not unnatural therefore that the Florentines should have thought that the time was opportune to put an end, once

the alum firm is not supported by any other authority, but in view of the Medici monopoly of alum, the statement is not improbable.

Allegretto Allegretti is impartial, but he says little about Lorenzo's share in the matter.

Personally, I do not know any good reasons for doubting that Antonio Hyvano's narrative in the main represents the facts, and my account is largely based upon it. The "Cronachetta Volterrana" in the main supports him.

and for all, to a long-continued state of turbulence and disaffection. Volterra had proved herself incapable of independence. If she must be dependent, Florence, owing to the geographical position of the town, could not afford that any other Power than herself should exercise authority there.

A few miles to the south of Volterra lies the hill of Castelnuovo, in which deposits of alum had long been known to exist. The alum mines had indeed from time to time been worked, though without any great commercial success. The mines lay neglected, and they brought in no profit to any one. In 1471 a certain Benuccio Capaccio of Siena requested from the public authorities of Volterra a faculty to mine alum in their territories. He proposed to form a company, and to pay an annual rental to the town in return for the concession. The Signoria and the Colleges met to consider the proposal, to which only a slight opposition was offered. The company was accordingly floated, some of the members being Florentines, some Sienese, and two were Volterrans, Benedicto Riccobaldi and Paolo Inghirami.

Our estimate of the proceedings which follow, and of the case as a whole, must be governed by the initial question—Was Lorenzo one of the Florentine partners in this Company? If he was, then any personal action that he might take laid him under suspicion of directing public policy in the interest of his private commercial advantage. If he was not, then his policy, even if mistaken, cannot be said to have been prompted by motives of self-interest.

Zaccharia Zucchi, who was, however, a Volterran, states that Lorenzo was a partner, and Guicciardini, though not precise in his particulars, states that Lorenzo had a personal interest in the mines. In view of the fact that alum was practically a Medici monopoly, and that Lorenzo had just entered into an expensive agreement with the Pope as to the working of the alum mines at Tolfa, it is certainly not unlikely that he would secure a controlling influence over mines which were close at hand, and which might, if uncontrolled by him, open up alum to trade competition. But, on the other hand, his name does not appear upon the list of shareholders; Antonio Hyvano, and the "Cronachetta

Volterrana" are in agreement in exonerating Lorenzo from the charge of self-interest, and the venture itself did not prove commercially sound. The mines soon proved not to be worth the cost of working. Lorenzo may have been shrewd enough to keep out of a concern which he knew would soon cease to be profitable.

Where the evidence is thus conflicting it is impossible to feel any certainty, but the weight and quality of the evidence in Lorenzo's favour seems to be at least equal to that of any that can be urged against him.

No sooner was the concession granted than the Volterrans began to exclaim against the alienation of valuble public property from the municipality into the hands of private persons. Forgetful of the fact that the public had hitherto got nothing from the mines, whereas now an annual rental was being paid to the State, they cried out that the concession was illegal, that it had been obtained under false pretences, and that Inghirami and the rest were bent upon enriching themselves at the expense of the public revenues.

The company, in order to avoid disturbance and ill-feeling, offered to pay a higher rent, and a committee was appointed to consider this proposal which eventually reported in a sense adverse to the *concessionnaires*. Whereupon they determined to refer the matter to Florence. But before anything could be done there the popular leaders in Volterra stirred up the common people to take affairs into their own hands. The alum mines were declared to be the property of the town ; armed peasants descended upon the mines, and the Company's workmen were driven away. The result was a fresh appeal to the suzerain authority of Florence.

At this juncture, we are told, the general state of unrest was further intensified by the appearance of a comet, which struck the beholders with horror, for it was the most certain indication of calamities in store. The Volterran astrologers prophesied evil things.

In Florence the affair was looked upon seriously as touching the sovereign authority of the Republic over its dependency. Her imperial rights must first of all be enforced and recognised, and these rights, it was asserted, included the

possession of whatever nature or man had concealed within Volterran soil, such as treasure, statues, mineral deposits, as soon as such might be discovered. The mines therefore were restored to the concessionaires, and a Florentine commissioner was despatched to see that the decision of the Signoria was respected.

At Volterra in the meantime successive Florentine prefects were not inactive. One of these prefects despatched four of the principal agitators to Florence as pledges for the good behaviour of the town, and his successor sent several more. Inghirami and Riccobaldi, the Volterran partners in the Company, also made their way to Florence and clamoured loudly for the full recognition of their rights. As long as Inghirami remained in Florence a truculent attitude towards his fellow citizens was safe enough, but upon his return to Volterra he was an object of general hatred. To secure himself he employed a band of armed men as a bodyguard; whereupon the Volterrans accused him of a plot against their liberties. The atmosphere in fact was full of suspicions, and eventually a rumour reached Inghirami that there was a plot to assassinate him as he left the Church of the Virgin. He therefore sought protection in the palace of the Prefect, who, seeing that matters were rapidly becoming dangerous, made an appeal to the citizens to rally to the support of his authority. But the opponents of Inghirami and the Company were in no mood for compromise. The old turbulent spirit of Volterra was now aflame. The time seemed to be favourable for repudiating altogether the suzerainty of Florence, and hoisting the banner of independence. A furious encounter in the streets between the revolters and the adherents of the Company ended in the complete discomfiture of the latter. The victors appealed to the peasants, provided them with arms, and promised them remission of their debts if they would rally to the cause of rebellion. The Prefect was thoroughly intimidated, and eventually offered to give up Inghirami if security were given for the safety of his life. The Volterran Signoria summoned the Prefect to appear before them to discuss the situation, an invitation which he thought it prudent to

accept. During his absence the Palace of the Prefect was rushed by the mob. Inghirami was discovered in hiding, and smoked out "by an admixture of fire, smoke and sulphur." His dead body was thrown from the Palace windows into the square below.

Some of his adherents were more fortunate. One, Bartolommeo Minuccio, effected his escape in disguise. Giovanni Inghirami, Paolo's brother, sought refuge on the tower of the Palace, where he was a mark for the arrows of the rioters below. On securing guarantees that his life would be spared he capitulated, descending from the tower by a rope, only to be immediately handed over to the safe custody of the City marshal. Blasio Liscio hid himself in the recesses of a chimney, where he made a vow that, if he escaped, he would go on pilgrimage to the shrine of Our Lady of Loretto. Fortune favoured him and the vow was duly redeemed. The alum mines were once more resumed into the hands of the municipality, and a Committee of Ten, with plenary powers, was appointed to secure the rights of the town from further infringement.

These details give an idea of the lengths to which insurrection had gone in Volterra before Florence took action. The news produced a profound agitation in Florence. Her honour as well as her authority were compromised if cold-blooded murder of citizens under Florentine protection were to go unpunished. Popular indignation was high against Volterra, to be still further intensified by the arrival of a deputation from the Committee of Ten charged to convey to the Signoria the terms which Volterra was prepared to accept. If Florence would excuse the murders which had been committed, on the ground that the victims were Volterrans, and not Florentines; if the hostages were restored, and the alum mines recognised as municipal property, then Volterra would resume her allegiance, and things should be as they were. Such proposals seemed to the Signoria to add insolence to rebellion, but the attitude of Volterra was so formidable, her position was so impregnable, and her appeal for foreign aid was so likely to be successful, that it was resolved to proceed with caution.

Antonio Ridolfi was despatched to the town on a mission of conciliation, but the Volterrans would listen to nothing as long as their hostages were retained in Florence. Ridolfi returned to Florence having effected nothing, and Piero Malgonella was appointed Prefect with full powers.

In the meantime in Florence grave differences of opinion existed as to the proper course to pursue. The real danger lay not so much in the revolt itself as in the amount of external support which Volterra might succeed in obtaining. Would the Triple Alliance stand the strain of the temptation now offered to Milan, or to Naples, or to the Pope, or to all of them together, to aggrandise themselves at the expense of a neighbour ? Italian alliances, with whatever asseverations of eternal friendship they might be cemented, were apt to last so long as was convenient and no longer.

Tommasso Soderini was all for caution. "Better," he said, "a lean peace than a fat victory." Was it wise or reasonable to kindle a flame which might burn up their own dwelling ? He recommended that the submission of Volterra should be accepted on whatever terms it was offered.

It was at this point that Lorenzo came prominently and personally forward upon the scene. He strongly opposed the opinion of Soderini. Volterra was in open revolt against the authority of Florence and was intriguing with foreign Powers. This therefore was not a time for weakness or hesitation. The merits of the original dispute had sunk into a secondary place. The paramount duty of the moment was to take effective measures to assert the supremacy of the suzerain State over a rebellious dependency, lest, by the example of Volterra, other dependencies should be led to rebel. The Volterrans must first of all give in their unconditional surrender ; if they refused, it must be extorted from them by force of arms. As to Soderini's fears from the action of foreign Powers, the bold course must be the safe one ; the surest guarantee against their hostility was to show that Florence was strong, and could protect her own just rights.

These arguments prevailed and Florence prepared for war. The responsibility for the war unquestionably lies

with Lorenzo. But for him a compromise would have been effected on the terms proposed by Soderini. The occasion therefore is notable, apart from the military consequences which followed, in that it marks the point when Lorenzo definitely stood forth as master, and finally shook himself free from the leading-strings by which Soderini and the older Medician adherents had sought to guide him. *

When once war was declared, Florence determined to neglect no means to bring it to a prompt and successful issue. The usual Ten of War became the Twenty of War, and of these Lorenzo was one. An army of about 5500 men was assembled under the command of Federigo of Urbino. From the State dowry fund 100,000 fiorini d'oro (£50,000)

* The narrative of Hyvano presents the facts in another light. He brings Lorenzo on the scene earlier, and declares that he summoned the Volterran hostages to the Sacristy of Santa Reparata and there addressed them in conciliatory terms, pointing out that Volterra had nothing but servitude to expect from any other foreign Power, but that Florence had always permitted to her the enjoyment of local self-government. On Lorenzo's porposal Jacopo Acconcio, one of the Volterran Ten, came to Florence, where he was informed that the hostages would be released, and that no penalties would be exacted if Volterra would formally appoint ambassadors and despatch them to Florence to acknowledge their faults and openly to ask pardon for them. Two individuals, the names not being specified, would be exempted from this indemnity. Acconcio's report only increased suspicion at Volterra, whereupon four of the hostages offered to go on parole to explain at home exactly what the Florentine proposals were. In the meantime at Volterra things were going from bad to worse. Help was sought from Ferrante, Venice, Piombino and Siena. The town fell much into the hands of a certain Gigantino, a poverty-stricken and impudent tavern keeper of low extraction. One of the exiles of the Neroni conspiracy, Geri, a Florentine, did what he could to fan the flame of sedition. A general assembly of the people was called by the Priors, when Gabrielo Riccobaldi ventured to point out that Florence had won the day against all the power of Filippo Maria Visconti and Alfonso I. of Naples. What chance, therefore, would Volterra have against her? Riccobaldi was threatened with death if he used such arguments. A hearing was refused to the four hostages from Florence, who threw in their lot with their fellow citizens, broke their parole, and refused to return. Letters were intercepted which showed that the hostages still remaining in Florence were being urged to seek means of escape. Whereupon they were put under close guard in the Palazzo Publico, and war was declared by Florence against Volterra.

Hyvano says nothing about the opposition between Soderini and Lorenzo. He represents the declaration of war as the direct consequence of the contumacy of the Volterrans, in spite of Lorenzo's conciliatory assurances. As I cannot find any support for this part of Hyvano's Commentary, and as some of the statements contained in it are at variance with other accounts, I do not incorporate them into my relation.

were borrowed for expenses, and two Florentine commissaries, Buongianni Gianfigliazzi and Jacopo Guicciardini, were appointed to act with Federigo. Galeazzo Sforza, far from assisting the Volterrans, sent 600 men to act against them, and other overtures to foreign Powers only resulted in some slight assistance being sent to them from Piombino and Siena.

Deprived of effective external support, the hope of Volterra lay in the strong natural position of the place. But Federigo, acting with promptitude and resolution, brought up his forces to the front and captured a commanding position from which he could bombard the town. Within, everything was in a state of panic and confusion. Divided counsels, jealousies among the leaders, distrust on the part of the people, gave rise to shifting measures, and to occasional outbreaks of ferocious savagery on the part of the mob. The troops were without pay; desertions were constant, and the generals commanded no confidence. It seemed likely that the mob would soon gain the upper hand, when a general massacre of the principal citizens was to be expected. In the circumstances the Signory of Volterra resolved to treat with Federigo, but while negotiations were in progress a certain Volterran Constable, named Il Venezio, who was on guard upon the walls, admitted the Milanese troops through a breach in the immediate neighbourhood of the Church of S. Andrea, and in the course of the night of June 17, the whole of Federigo's army made its way into the town.

The troops soon showed a disposition to get out of hand. The Milanese auxiliaries, under the guidance of Il Venezio, proceeded to sack the town, and Urbino's men could not be restrained from following suit. The Duke himself appears to have done everything possible to save the city and its inhabitants from plunder and outrage. He issued a proclamation that every soldier found within the city after nightfall should be put to death. He seized Il Venezio the ringleader, and had him hanged there and then. But all his efforts were insufficient to prevent Volterra from falling into the hands of a brutal undisciplined soldiery, who

inflicted unspeakable horrors upon the inhabitants and brought devastation upon the town. An earthquake, or more probably a landslip caused by heavy rains, added to the miseries of the situation, though Nature could do but little to increase the desolation created by the hand of man. Yet the Volterrans must have been a light-hearted people. Even in the midst of such widespread ruin, and so much personal suffering, they could not refrain, says Hyvano, from laughing at an old man, Jacopo Bardino, wise in council, who had kept himself aloof from the contending factions. Bardino, amid the universal wreck, was heard loudly complaining that he had lost his hens and his little waterpots.

The Florentines were determined to reap the full advantages of their victory. A new and commanding fortress was built upon the ruins of the Church of S. Pietro and the bishop's Palace. The privileges of self-government were taken away from Volterra; the ringleaders in the disturbance were banished; the mines were restored to the Company, and all mineral rights in the Volterran territory were definitely resumed by Florence. Care was taken that Volterra should not have a chance of revolting again. This done, Lorenzo could afford to exhibit his private feeling in regard to the incidents which had attended the capture of Volterra. Money was at once sent from Florence to the ruined city to meet the immediate necessities of the population. Two thousand fiorini d'oro were contributed in the name of the Signoria. Lorenzo himself went to Volterra, not to glory in its devastation, but to administer succour and consolation to the distressed. Though he was personally free from the smallest responsibility for the actual sack of Volterra, and for the atrocities which had there been done, yet the war policy was in a very direct way his policy, and indirectly this slur upon the good name of Florence had come as a consequence of it. He may well have felt therefore that it became him to do what he could to repair the evil which had been done, to mitigate the impression of wanton cruelty which had been created in the public mind, and to clear his own mind of any qualms which the effects of his public policy may have produced in him. If the

sack of Volterra continued to Lorenzo's dying day to lie heavy upon his conscience,—a very doubtful assumption,—the fact seems only to indicate a conscientious sensitiveness far more delicate and susceptible than is to be found in any ruler in Europe in that day.

Biographers are commonly reputed to be hero-worshippers, and indeed there must be a tendency, under the attraction of the personality of the individual whom the biographer has set himself to reconstruct, to adopt the most charitable view of his actions. But in these days, when history has taken her place among the sciences, when nothing is allowed to pass which has not the authority of a credible document behind it, the cry is all for impartiality. But impartiality itself may take upon itself the form of partiality, inasmuch as the bare record derived from documents may often give a barren and misleading view of events from the fact that motives have been left out of consideration. The statement that all history is psychology is only an epigrammatic exaggeration of a truth which the historian must not ignore —that the actions of men must be judged in the light afforded by their general character.

Thus in criticising the action of Lorenzo towards Volterra, a biographer, so sane, sober and fair-minded as is Von Reumont, seems to have confused two issues. Because Lorenzo was responsible for the war, therefore he was responsible for the operations of that war. The sack of Volterra lies at his door because he advocated measures of stringency against her. It is the case of Warren Hastings and the Rohillas over again.

But from the circumstances of the case there is at least much to be said in favour of the policy for which Lorenzo argued, and for which he was responsible. It is no reflection on his private character that he should have entertained the opinion that the supreme authority of Florence must be vindicated. The position of her other dependencies, the attitude of Foreign powers, the situation of Florence herself, all alike confirmed him in this opinion, and it is as likely to have been right as wrong. But to hold this opinion does not imply that he approved of ruthless and barbarous outrage

done upon a captured city, or that he was in any way a consenting party to such excesses. Psychology suggests the question—Was Lorenzo the kind of man to sanction and take delight in such deeds as were enacted in Volterra upon the night of its capture?

If it can be shown that his public policy was dictated by private, personal and sordid ends, that he made war upon Volterra because of a question of alum in which he was commercially interested, there may be a doubt about the answer. It is however extremely doubtful if he was connected with the alum Company: it is certain that his whole career was conspicuously free from those brutalities which commonly marked the rulers of his day, nor is it denied that he did what he could individually to alleviate the sufferings which his general had been unable to prevent. It is true that the Duke of Urbino was flattered and rewarded, and that Lorenzo, in common with all Florence, rejoiced over his victory. But Urbino was honoured for taking a rebellious town; not for sacking it, an outrage which occurred in spite of him, and one which was as uncongenial to all we know of him as it was uncongenial to Lorenzo himself.

Volterrans themselves were scarcely in a position to discriminate. It was enough for them that pitiless ruin had been brought upon them as a consequence of a policy which was peculiarly Lorenzo's. It was in human nature that they should hold him responsible, and that he should have been pursued with unrelenting enmity by individual Volterrans. The case is complicated, and authorities speak with an uncertain voice, but on a review of all the circumstances we are justified in regarding with grave doubts the story that upon his deathbed Lorenzo declared to Savonarola that the Sack of Volterra was one of the three sins which lay most heavily upon his conscience.

CHAPTER VII

EVENTS LEADING UP TO THE PAZZI CONSPIRACY

Lorenzo's relations with Foreign powers—Louis XI. of France—Lorenzo negotiates a Franco-Neapolitan marriage—Pope Sixtus IV.—State of rest in the affairs of Italy—Beginnings of the alienation of the Pope from Lorenzo—Papal policy in Romagna—The Pope and Ferrante of Naples—Florence draws towards Venice—Sixtus IV. and his nephews—The Pope detaches the Duke of Urbino from Florence—Question of Imola—Sixtus IV. transfers his account from the Medici to the Pazzi bank—The Pope, Lorenzo, and Città di Castello—Salviati appointed Archbishop of Pisa—Opposition of Lorenzo to Salviati—Lorenzo and Carlo Fortebraccio—Resentment of Sixtus IV. against Lorenzo—Venice takes the place of Naples in the Triple Alliance—Assassination of Galeazzo Maria Sforza—Far-reaching consequences of Sforza's death—Distractions in the government of Milan—Attitude of Lorenzo towards the situation in Milan—Ludovico Sforza assumes the government of Milan.

IN Lorenzo's Italy the Volterran episode aroused only a passing interest. It was a rain-cloud in a summer sky, which passed and was forgotten. None, unless he were a Volterran, dreamed that Lorenzo had permanently sullied his reputation by his action in the matter. On the contrary, he was thought to have done well, and his reputation and credit seemed to gain enhancement every day. From his extensive correspondence with foreign Princes, and the manifold and strange favours which they asked of him, we are able to gain a clear idea of the extent of the consideration in which he was everywhere held, of the intimacy, on terms of complete equality which existed between him and his fellow sovereigns in Italy, and even beyond the mountains.

His relations with Galeazzo Maria Sforza have been noted in connection with Sforza's visit to Florence in 1471, but they were maintained by constant letters which passed between them, written in a strain of close and friendly familiarity.

With the Neapolitan Court Lorenzo was in constant communication. The letters which passed between Lorenzo and the Duke of Calabria and his brother, Federigo of Aragon, were the outward tokens of their private friendship, but Ferrante's official despatches were scarcely less warm and intimate. When Lorenzo received, and splendidly entertained, Ferrante's daughter, Leonora, being on her way to Ferrara in 1473 to become the bride of Ercole d'Este, the King writes: "We must express our unbounded gratitude for this, and though the love we bore you seemed as if it could be little if at all increased, we assure you it has been increased in such a manner that we shall ever be under an obligation to you. We shall endeavour in time to prove our gratitude for the pleasure you have given us." The Duchess of Calabria, Lorenzo's old friend, Hippolita Sforza, finds herself in 1474 greatly embarrassed for the want of 2000 ducats, applies to him for the loan of that sum on the security of her jewellery, and vows, on the faith of a loyal lady, that the loan shall be punctually repaid. Federigo of Urbino, the Gonzaghi of Mantua, the Estes of Ferrara, the King of England, Edward IV., the King of Aragon, all address themselves to Lorenzo, for, as Ferrante said in a letter of 1476, "if we wish to obtain any kind of favour from the Illustrious Republic, we desire no other mediator or representative than your Magnificence, for your great authority is known to us, and we have had experience how readily you fulfil our wishes."

But the most striking proof of the estimation in which Lorenzo was held abroad is to be found in the letter addressed to him by Louis XI. of France on June 19, 1473, and in the correspondence to which that letter gave rise.

After expressing the pleasure with which he has recently heard that everything is going well with Lorenzo, Louis opens out to him a project of the very first political significance, and begs his good offices in forwarding and negotiating it. Louis has heard that Ferrante is proposing to marry his eldest daughter to the Duke of Savoy. How much better it would be if he were to marry her to the Dauphin. This would put a check upon the Angevin

claims in Naples, would result in a close offensive and defensive alliance between Naples and France, and would be of service to Louis in his quarrel with the King of Aragon. The King refrains from mentioning that point which probably he had most in mind, that the proposed alliance would detach Ferrante from the Duke of Burgundy, who was Louis's most formidable opponent. In diplomacy it is often wise to be silent on the subject of the particular advantage which it is sought to secure.

The purpose of the King of France in writing to Lorenzo was not merely to give him confidential information, but to enlist his good offices in negotiating the matter with Ferrante. He leaves it to Lorenzo to arrange the amount of the dowry, and begs him to send to the French Court a special ambassador commissioned to deal with the King personally, and with the King alone. Such an ambassador must be careful to have no conferences "with the magnates and Princes of the blood." It would be useful to Louis to have such a man about him, not merely in relation to this particular matter, but in order to expedite the numerous other affairs which might from time to time arise between him and Lorenzo. And, lastly, would Lorenzo send him a dog: one would be sufficient if it were a fine big one. He has heard of Lorenzo's dogs, and would be glad of one to keep constantly about him.

The familiar terms of this letter, and the importance of its substance, must have been highly flattering to Lorenzo. He lost no time in executing the King's commission.

Agostino Biliotti was despatched to Naples bearing a copy of Louis's letter, together with letters from Lorenzo in which he urged the King's proposals upon Ferrante. On August 9 the latter despatched his reply from Castel Nuovo. He begins with warm compliments and assurances to Lorenzo. He feels much honoured by the French King's proposals. But it is quite impossible to accept them, for he is already under obligations to the King of Aragon and to the Duke of Burgundy, which he cannot in honour forego. If Louis would live in peace with Aragon and

Burgundy, things would be different, but till that happy consummation is arrived at, the claims of honour are more to Ferrante than life itself.

Perhaps this Pecksniffian strain was as suitable as any other to apply to fantastic propositions which can have had but little meaning or sincerity behind them. But we are only concerned with the policy of Louis and Ferrante in so far as Lorenzo was associated with it. The interest of the correspondence lies for us in the light which it throws upon Lorenzo's standing in the eyes of foreign potentates, and in the fact that it indicates that he had not sought in vain to base his own position upon an intimate understanding with the French King.

With the Pope, too, everything was going well for Lorenzo. It was true that Giuliano had not yet got his Cardinal's hat, but when Sixtus IV. made his first creation of Cardinals on December 15, 1471, only two hats were given, and these only to members of the Pope's immediate family, Pietro Riario and Giuliano della Rovere. There was no need, therefore, for Lorenzo to be disquieted. But, as the months went by, he thought it well to remind the Pope of the hopes which, when in Rome, he had been permitted to cherish. In a letter of November 21, 1472, he addresses the Pope as "most blessed and holy father" and begs him to add this favour, the greatest and most inextinguishable of all, to the many other obligations already received from him—"and at your feet, I commend with all humility myself and my affairs."

The Pope addressed his reply to the Signoria in gracious terms. He acknowledged the justice of the claim of Florence to a seat in the College, regretted the inevitable delay, and bade the Signoria to rest assured that at the next creation, when the just demands of others were being satisfied, "we shall have regard to your Republic also, especially if it approves of our choice."

It was certainly disturbing that a second creation of Cardinals should have been made on May 7, 1473, without any Medici being included in the number, but there were undoubted difficulties. Giuliano was a layman; he was

not yet twenty, and Lorenzo could have no just cause of complaint if he were kept waiting a little longer.

Thus at the beginning of 1474 Lorenzo's sky was quite unclouded. His own position was established and recognised in Florence and outside. He was on good terms with everybody, and Italy was at peace. "There are no politics here," writes one of his correspondents to Ercole d'Este; "the only news is that Lorenzo has lost two falcons." In this year he received a visit of ceremony from the grave, long-bearded, and unpretentious King Christian of Denmark. The simplicity of his retinue and of his manners contrasted with the barbaric profusion which had marked the visit of Galeazzo of Milan. The sight which pleased Christian most in Florence was the collection of Greek manuscripts, including the manuscripts of the Gospels, which had been brought to Florence from Constantinople. "These," said the old King, "are the true treasures of Princes."

It was at this time that Lorenzo was much occupied with poetry, philosophy, and schemes of education, nor was he neglectful of the popular demand for amusement. In 1475 Giuliano's tournament rivalled the splendours of that given by his brother some years before, but of all its splendours the greatest was Poliziano's poem of *La Giostra*, which influenced profoundly the poetry and art of the Renaissance. A few months later Lorenzo was at Pisa, residing there, in his house in the town, for a considerable period, while he supervised the reconstruction of the University of Pisa. These peaceful and intellectual activities will be treated in detail in subsequent chapters, which will present Lorenzo as a man of thought. Here, where we are concerned with him as a man of action, they are mentioned with a view to their chronological connection with events in Lorenzo's career, and as indications of the quiet political waters in which his bark was now sailing.

But, though he knew it not, the great crisis of Lorenzo's life was approaching with footsteps which, if slow, were certain. The Pazzi conspiracy of 1478 was not a bolt from

the blue. It was the culmination of a series of circumstances which, operating over several years, resulted in the complete estrangement of Lorenzo from the Pope, from Ferrante of Naples, and from some of his own prominent adherents in Florence.

A number of particular causes can be shown to have contributed to the alienation of Sixtus IV. from Lorenzo. But all these can be reduced to one general and governing cause—the opposition between the political interests of Florence and the political designs of the Supreme Pontiff.

Sixtus had not long been Pope when he discovered that, if the Papacy was to be respected, it must strike out a new line for itself. It must attract attention through the personality of its head, and must know how to inspire fear if it would command obedience. It must have agents personally devoted to its interests, and these were scarcely to be found outside the circle of the Pope's immediate family. To exalt his own family, to carve out principalities for Riarios and Roveres from those territories which nominally at least were under the suzerainty of the Papal See, became the dominating passion of Sixtus's life. He may have deluded himself at the outset that he was actuated only by the laudable desire of vindicating the rights of the Church over her own. It was not long, however, before the private interests of his family gained entire possession of him, and the whole public policy of the Holy See was frankly directed by the dictates of private and personal ambition.

The district of Romagna naturally suggested itself as the most suitable to serve the purposes of the new policy. There the Papal claims to suzerainty were definite and could most easily be enforced. But the territories of Florence extended to the frontiers of Romagna, and even beyond them, for several of the petty lords of the Romagna had commended themselves to Florence, and lived under her protection. It was impossible that Florence could regard without apprehension the extension of the territorial influence of the Pope towards her own borders. The designs of Sixtus, therefore, must inevitably bring him

into conflict with the leading principles of Florentine statesmanship.

Sixtus, moreover, was not slow to realise that his chances of success in Romagna would be increased if he were on good terms with Naples. Previous Popes had constantly found themselves thwarted by the action of the Neapolitan sovereigns. The question of the Papal suzerainty over Naples, of the tribute which was to be paid in recognition of it, had long kept Naples and the Papacy in a state of agitation and warfare. Sixtus determined to put an end to this state of things by getting Ferrante on his side. He agreed that the Papal suzerainty would be adequately recognised by an annual gift from Ferrante of two white horses. In every way Sixtus strove to detach the King from the Triple Alliance and to attach him firmly to himself. It was impossible for Florence to look on unmoved while the delicate balance of power in Italy was thus being thrown out of gear. She must take steps to redress it by substituting Venice for Naples in the Triple Alliance. Thus the ultimate result of the Papal policy was that the three northern powers, Venice, Milan, and Florence stood out in hardly concealed antagonism to the designs of Naples and the Papacy. Wherever he turned Sixtus found opposition, and in every case it was found that this opposition was engineered in Florence. Lorenzo stood out before the world as the representative of Florence, and upon Lorenzo personally the hatred of Sixtus in the end came to be concentrated.

It was therefore as the consequence of general principles rather than of particular incidents that the estrangement between Lorenzo and his former friends, Sixtus and Ferrante, came about. But each particular incident, as it arose, would have a cumulative force finally gathering sufficient volume to drive the Pope to violent action. The storm was gathering during the years 1474–1478, and eventually burst upon Lorenzo's head in the form of the Pazzi conspiracy.

During the first few years of the Pontificate of Sixtus he was content that the policy of the Papacy should run on the old lines. He busied himself with crusading projects ;

despatched embassies to various European sovereigns in the hope of stimulating their zeal, and soon contemplated a General Council, whereby Christendom might show itself unanimous in prosecuting a Holy War against the Turks. He thus, as Creighton says, showed himself ready "to give a fair trial to the old political traditions of the Papacy before entering upon a new sphere of action. He paused to justify in his own eyes the transition from a Franciscan reformer to an Italian prince." There was nothing to prevent the Franciscan reformer being on good terms with Lorenzo, but as soon as the Italian prince, filled to the full with the Italian spirit, and bent upon displaying his prowess upon the arena of Italian politics, disclosed himself in the person of the Supreme Pontiff, he became a secular rival, like any other. If his secular projects clashed with those of Lorenzo, friendly relations between Florence and the Papacy became at once impossible.

Sixtus soon discovered that nothing in the way of co-operation and support was to be expected from Christendom. The Papacy could exercise no influence on the old lines. It must therefore try what could be done on new lines. Sixtus determined that he would impress himself on the imagination of Italy in a manner that Italy could understand. A Pope with all the sanctities of his office hanging around him, backed by the secure possession of a strong territorial sovereignty, would be in a position to command respect, not in Italy only, but in Christendom at large.

The agents of his new policy were ready to his hand. Papal nephews abounded, and through them he determined to act. Already in 1471 he had elevated two of them to the Cardinalate, Pietro Riario, son of his sister Iolanda, and Giuliano della Rovere, son of his brother Raffaelle. On Pietro Riario he let loose all the passion and extravagance of his affections. This hitherto obscure young man of five-and-twenty, suddenly found himself in the possession of enormous revenues derived from abbeys, patriarchates, bishoprics, and archbishoprics. Entirely deficient in the strength of character which would have assisted him to support this sudden freak of fortune, Pietro's

Brogi

PIETRO AND GIROLAMO RIARIO

DETAIL FROM THE PAINTING BY MELOZZO DA FORLI

head was turned; his luxury, profusion and profligacy became a public scandal in Rome and throughout Italy. Pietro's wild excesses were not, however, a matter of political importance until they became associated with the Pope's political schemes. But in the summer of 1473 it fell to him to entertain Leonora of Aragon, Ferrante's daughter, and Pietro's banquet, given in her honour, has become historical. By such means the Pope signified his departure from the Neapolitan policy of his predecessors, and his resolution to bind Naples and the Papacy together by close ties of political and private friendship.

Fresh evidence of this policy was given when the Pope married his nephew, Leonardo della Rovere, to another of Ferrante's illegitimate daughters. Thus early it should have been clear to Lorenzo that the Pope was designing to undermine the Triple Alliance, and that Papal assurances of goodwill must be received with caution.

Lorenzo, however, offered no objections when, on the death of Giovanni Neroni, the Archbishopric of Florence was added to the number of Pietro's preferments. The new Archbishop was received in Florence with acclamations and festivities. Thence he made his way to Milan, where he held close conference with Galeazzo Sforza. They seem to have concocted between them magnificent schemes, that Galeazzo should become King of Lombardy and Pietro Pope, but these schemes, and any alarms Lorenzo might have felt in regard to them, were summarily ended by the death of Pietro in 1474.

The Pope for a time was inconsolable, but he remembered that Pietro had a brother, Girolamo Riario, and upon him Sixtus now lavished all, and more than all, the affection which he had felt for Pietro. Girolamo was not an ecclesiastic, nor was it possible to launch him upon the seas of ecclesiastical wealth. Through Girolamo it was now possible for the Pope to begin to lay the foundations of a secular sovereignty in Italy, and to establish his family in the position of Italian Princes.

In 1474 a step in this direction was taken which was destined to have important consequences in the future.

Another Rovere nephew, Giovanni, was married to the daughter of Federigo of Urbino. In course of time the Duchy of Urbino descended to Francesco Maria della Rovere, the son of this marriage.

Of more immediate importance was the influence of the marriage upon Federigo of Urbino himself. It has been seen that he had constantly acted as generalissimo of the armies of Florence. In the Colleonic War, in the affairs of Rimini and Volterra, Urbino had commanded the Florentine troops, and was generally regarded as permanently attached to the fortunes of the Republic. Sixtus determined to detach him from this connection, and in a little while Urbino is to be found in command of the Papal armies in opposition to the Florentine troops which had so often served under his banner.

For Girolamo in the meantime a beginning was made by the acquisition of Imola. This was the transaction which first brought Sixtus and Lorenzo into direct antagonism, for Florence had a very strong desire to secure Imola for herself. Its position, beyond the Apennine Chain, not very far from the Adriatic coast, made it a very desirable station for the conduct of Florentine trade with the East, while, in the hands of an unfriendly power, Imola might be used as a formidable obstacle to the commercial interests of Florence. Continuous feuds in the Manfredi family, who had long ruled in Imola, resulted, in 1473, in the territory passing into the hands of the Duke of Milan, and from him the Florentines tried to purchase it. But the Pope was beforehand with them. His objections to the extension of Florentine interests in Romagna were as strong, and as valid, as the objections which Florence entertained against the extension of Papal interests in that quarter. The mission of Pietro Riario to Milan was doubtless connected with the Pope's projects upon Imola, projects for which he had already secured the sanction of Ferrante of Naples. It was eventually arranged, much to the chagrin of Florence, that the Pope should buy Imola for 40,000 ducats, that it should be handed over in sovereignty to Girolamo Riario, and that he should marry

Caterina Sforza, an illegitimate daughter of Galeazzo Maria.

This arrangement hit Florence severely. Imola was lost to her. The Pope had established his secular power in close proximity to her borders, and her friendship for Sforza, which had entailed much sacrifice, had proved insufficient to induce Galeazzo to accede to her wishes, or to prevent him from showing favour to the wishes of the Pope. The alliance between Girolamo and Caterina was of bad omen.

It is therefore not surprising that Lorenzo should have put forth his utmost endeavours to thwart the arrangement which had been made. It might still be possible to raise such financial obstacles that the Pope would not be able to find the purchase-money for Imola. The Pope's funds were in the hands of the Medici bank at Rome, and thus difficulties could be put in the way when so large a lump sum was required. At this juncture the rival bankers, the Pazzi, came forward, and undertook to negotiate the business. Sixtus transferred his account from the Medici to the Pazzi bank, and began to regard Lorenzo with feelings of violent animosity. Thus the case of Imola has a double bearing on the Pazzi conspiracy. It marks the beginnings of personal rivalry between the Pazzi and the Medici, and also the beginnings of hostility between Lorenzo and the Pope.

The difficulties with Sixtus were intensified by the suspicion that Girolamo Riario would not be contented by the acquisition of Imola, but that his eyes were fixed upon the lordship over Forli and Faenza also. If his schemes should be realised, the position of Florence in the Romagna would be seriously compromised; in any event it was necessary to oppose, whenever possible, the further extension of direct Papal influence in that region and elsewhere. An opportunity offered when Sixtus determined to intervene in the affairs of Città di Castello.

This town lay on the frontiers of Tuscany and Umbria, in close proximity to the Florentine outpost, Borgo San Sepolcro. The lordship over Città di Castello was in the hands of Niccolo Vitelli; but the Vitelli had for some years

been confronted with formidable rivals in the Giustini family. The broils between the two families had led to constant agitation and violence in the town, and when at last Niccolo Vitelli gained the upper hand, Lorenzo Giustini carried his complaints and his claims to the Pope. Sixtus could put forward plausible excuses drawn from the past history of the town to justify his interference. He could represent his intervention as being in the interests of law, order, and good government. But Città di Castello would also be a useful addition to Girolamo's possessions, and the Pope was suspected of the intention to hand the place over to him. Florence at any rate was seriously alarmed for Borgo San Sepolcro, and as the Pope prosecuted his enterprise against Niccolo Vitelli with vigour, Florence organised a force of 6000 men to safeguard her interests in that neighbourhood. The Pope took this demonstration as directed against himself, and accused the Signoria of levying troops for the purpose of supporting Vitelli against his lawful suzerain. It was a further grievance that when Vitelli was at length compelled to surrender, he was able to secure such terms that it was said that the conquered, not the conquerors, had dictated them. None the less, Niccolo was compelled to leave Città di Castello, being then hospitably received by Florence and allowed to find a safe retreat within her territories. It was in vain for Lorenzo to protest to Sixtus that all that had been done was in protection of the legitimate interests of Florence; that he reckoned the goodwill of the Pope among his most precious treasures which he had no desire to lose "for the sake of Messer Niccolo or any one else." Sixtus remained convinced that Florence had done everything in her power to thwart him, and Florence on her part, says Valori, began to look askance on Papal schemes, to withdraw from the Pope the honours which were his due, and to exclude him from all her secrets.

An opportunity soon presented itself to Sixtus to mark his displeasure in a manner peculiarly galling to Lorenzo. In 1474 Filippo dei Medici, Archbishop of Pisa, died, and the Pope conferred the vacant see upon Francesco Salviati.

For reasons not known Lorenzo regarded this man as unsuitable to hold ecclesiastical authority within the territories of Florence. Only a few months earlier he had successfully thwarted Salviati's ambition to become Archbishop of Florence, the see being secured on the death of Pietro Riario, by Lorenzo's brother-in-law, Rinaldo Orsini. In the case of the Archbishopric of Pisa, Lorenzo was not so fortunate. Salviati secured the appointment in the face of an assurance that the Pope had previously given, through Cardinal Jacopo Ticino, that no Bishop or Archbishop should be instituted to any see within the territories of the Republic unless he had been nominated and found fit by the supreme magistracy. It was probably on the strength of this assurance that Lorenzo, though unable to prevent Salviati's appointment, nevertheless was able to withhold from him possession of the Archbishopric for a period of three years. Salviati remained in Rome, seething with indignation, and glad, when the time arrived, to embrace any schemes which offered him a prospect of securing vengeance for his wrongs.

Yet a further cause of complaint was Lorenzo's action, or reputed action, in the matter of Carlo Fortebraccio. This man was a somewhat eccentric condottiere in the pay of Venice, who conceived that through his father, Braccio the Great, he had claims upon the lordship of Perugia. In 1477 he determined to prosecute these claims, and raised a private expedition for the purpose. The Pope subsequently accused Lorenzo of having aided and abetted Carlo in this freebooting enterprise, but the truth seems to be that Carlo's failure before Perugia was chiefly due to the action of Florence, who urgently counselled him to withdraw. Carlo, however, was determined not to go back empty-handed. He made an aggressive descent upon the territories of Siena, whose inveterate enmity to Florence made her at all times ready to believe that any designs against her were prompted from that quarter. Siena appealed against Fortebraccio's raid to the Pope and to Ferrante, at the same time making strong representations to Florence that she should call the freebooter

off. Florence retorted that Fortebraccio's enterprises were no affair of hers, and that she was in no way responsible for them, and was most anxious that he should desist from them.

The affair now took a very serious turn which threatened to disturb the general peace of Italy. The Pope was thoroughly roused by Fortebraccio's audacity, was convinced that Florence was his accomplice, and shrewdly suspected that, behind the scenes, Venice was pulling the strings and seeking to pick up an advantage from any successes which Carlo might gain. An opportunity was offered to Sixtus to try the effect of his own diplomatic arrangements, and to give proof to the northern powers that his alliance with Ferrante and Urbino was a factor with which they must reckon. He put an army into the field against Fortebraccio commanded by Federigo of Urbino, and Ferrante sent Neapolitan troops to support him. Urbino laid siege to the Castle of Montone, near Perugia, which in a month was compelled to surrender. It seemed as if a state of war would soon become general between the chief Italian powers. At this juncture, Florence, by urgent representations, induced Fortebraccio to withdraw, and revert to his old position in the service of Venice. He complained loudly against the Florentines, and declared that, by their unwillingness to support him, they had deprived him of glory, and themselves of a most valuable acquisition. The Sienese, on the other hand, were bitterly indignant against Florence, believing that Fortebraccio's unprovoked attack could only have been made on the strength of covert assurances of Florentine cooperation and goodwill. They were not in the least grateful to Florence for having obliged Carlo to retire, for, says Macchiavelli, "they considered themselves under no obligation to those who had delivered them from an evil to which they had first exposed them."

The Florentines, then, were in bad odour all round, and Von Reumont thinks that they had only their own duplicity to thank for it. It is difficult to know what were exactly the facts in the case. If we are to believe the Florentines, they were not only totally innocent of con-

niving at Fortebraccio's raid, but it was entirely through them that he had twice been induced to stay his hand, first from Perugia, and then from Siena. The Pope and the Sienese were equally convinced that Florence was at the bottom of the whole affair; and in the Brief of Sixtus, issued in June 1478, after the Pazzi Conspiracy—a Brief in which he pronounces an interdict against Florence, and summarises all his many griefs against Lorenzo—the charge that Lorenzo had endangered the peace of Italy by his encouragement of Fortebraccio, comes second on the list. The Sienese are prejudiced witnesses, and their charges against Florence are balanced by the conviction of Carlo that he only failed because Florence would not help him. The passion and fury of the Pope against Lorenzo, after the Pazzi conspiracy, amounted almost to a maniacal obsession, which certainly discounts the value of his assertions. On the other hand, the suspicions against Florence were almost universal, and the fact that Venice was ready to testify to her integrity only tended to deepen them. Falstaff needs a better security than Bardolph. Venice was herself so much an adept at fishing in troubled waters that fellow feeling for an imitator might in this case have made her kind.

Leaving the question of the actual guilt or innocence of Florence in doubt, this much at any rate is certain, that, with or without just cause, the antagonism of the Pope to Lorenzo was intensified by the incidents which attended the raids of Carlo Fortebraccio.

Concurrently with the course of events in Romagna and in Umbria, the Pope was drawing closer the ties between himself and Ferrante. It was undoubtedly Ferrante's first interest to be on good terms with his suzerain. His own tenure of Naples was precarious. Powerful and discontented barons were ever watchful for an opportunity to rise against him, and abundant opportunities had been offered to them by the constant struggle between the Neapolitan Kings and the Holy See. To end that struggle, and settle the question of tribute on nominal terms, were advantages so great that Ferrante cannot be blamed for

attaching himself to Sixtus at the expense of his alliance with Lorenzo. Of course it was necessary to find pretexts, and they were not difficult to find. Lorenzo was allowing himself to fall too exclusively under the influence of Galeazzo Sforza. Their dual alliance was tending to crowd Ferrante out of the Triple Alliance. Lorenzo was making overtures to Venice, and friendship for Venice could not exist side by side with loyalty to the interests of Naples. Lorenzo was trying, at Piombino and in Romagna, to upset the balance of power which he professed himself so anxious to preserve. Lorenzo might have retorted that in proportion as Ferrante drew away from him, it was necessary to be prepared with alternative arrangements. It is difficult to decide what was cause and what was effect. But it may be admitted that, in the exuberance of youth and the confidence of power, Lorenzo was trying to do too much. He was not yet by any means the consummate statesman, but was learning by experience, in this stage of his career, those lessons in statecraft which in a later period he practised with so much facility and success.

At the same time, as he watched the growing friendship between Ferrante and the Pope, it became obvious to him that, if the balance of the Italian States—the cardinal point in Medici policy—was to be maintained, he must look about him to find an alliance which would counterbalance the possible defection of Naples. Venice was ready to fill the vacant place. In September 1474, the Triple Allaince between Florence, Milan, and Venice was proclaimed, for purposes of common defence. In order to show that the new league had no aggressive intentions, but was only anxious for the public peace, room was left for the Pope and Ferrante to join the combination if they cared to do so. Their reply, however, was formally to ratify their own alliance. The foes of the one were to be the foes of the other, and their association was for mutual protection and support. Ferrante, early in 1475, paid a State visit to Rome, where he was splendidly received by the Pope, and lodged in the Vatican.

But though the fact that there were two Leagues facing

one another in Italy was ominous; though the opportunity of consolidating these Leagues into one had been declined, yet there was no declaration of hostilities, the relations between Ferrante and Lorenzo still remaining of a most cordial character. So long as no war broke out there was no occasion for any coldness. When in 1477 Ferrante determined to marry again, Lorenzo received, and splendidly entertained, at Pisa, the Duke of Calabria, who was on his way to fetch the bride. Outwardly, the political sky was fair everywhere in Italy: but an event had already occurred, at the end of the year 1476, which led the Pope, when he heard of it to exclaim, "To-day the peace of Italy is dead." On St. Stephen's Day, December 26, Galeazzo Maria Sforza was assassinated in the Church of St. Stephen at Milan.

The event made a tremendous appeal to the Italian imagination, and revived the fashion in dramatic assassinations. Among the pupils of Cola Montano, the most distinguished Humanist in Milan, were three young Milanese noblemen, Giovanni Andrea Lampugnani, Carlo Visconti, and Girolamo Olgiati. From their tutor they learned much of the virtues of a republican government, and were fortified in hatred of despots and love of liberty by copious examples drawn from the ancient world of Sparta, Athens, and Rome. Montano does not seem to have refrained from pointing his remarks by direct allusions to the existing government in Milan. "He discussed with them," says Macchiavelli, "the faults of their Prince; the wretched state of his subjects, and so worked upon their minds as to induce them to bind themselves by oath to destroy the Duke as soon as they were old enough to make the attempt." Montano is scathingly dismissed by Armstrong as "one of the cowardly literary agitators who never dare face the deeds to which they drive their scholars." Under the spell of his glowing periods, assassination took the appearance of antique virtue. Immortal glory was to be won by following in the steps of Harmodius and Aristogeiton.

If it be possible for the conduct of a tyrant to justify tyrannicide, Galeazzo had gone to lengths of public and

private immorality such as made him worthy of his fate. He is an example of the man of the Renaissance who combined some taste and love of learning with odious vices and eccentric cruelty. Corio, in his "History of Milan," cites examples of his revolting lusts, and of his ferocious and sanguinary nature. Each of Montano's young pupils, according to Macchiavelli, had his own private wrongs to avenge: and, in the case of Carlo Visconti it was the honour of his own sister which he was called upon to vindicate. Having decided that the deed should be done, they determined, by careful preparation, to do it successfully. They met frequently, and rehearsed the murder by assuming in turn different attitudes, and striking each other with sheathed daggers, their blows being regulated by the position of the one who acted the part of victim. Much consideration was given to the question of time and place. To assassinate the Duke privately would be to rob the deed of half its effect, and, moreover, would be difficult, for he was carefully guarded. Some public festival, or ceremonial occasion, when crowds would be gathered together, and when sympathisers would be at hand, seemed to offer the most favourable and dramatic opportunity. It was the custom of the Duke, on St. Stephen's Day, to go in great solemnity to the Church dedicated to the Saint. On that day, therefore, the opportunity should be seized. The three conspirators, having urged upon their friends to be at hand, but without disclosing their project, betook themselves to the Church. Having heard Mass together, they gathered before a statue of St. Ambrose, and invoked the patron saint of their City and its liberties to witness the purity of their motives, and to give favourable assistance to their enterprise. They then took up their positions at the entrance to the Church.

In the meantime, according to the accounts of contemporaries who loved to colour events with a touch of the miraculous, Galeazzo was haunted by strange omens of his approaching death. It was, indeed, not unnatural, when the deed was done, that people should have had in mind the death of Cæsar. It is related that the Duke,

having put on a cuirass, in a fatal moment took it off again for some trifling cause: that he proposed not to go to the church but to hear Mass in his private chapel: that, in the absence of a priest, he changed his mind, but before setting forth, called his little children to him, and embraced them with unusual warmth. As he approached the entrance Lampugnani and Olgiati advanced towards him as if to clear the way for him, and the former, falling on his knee before the Duke, under pretence of presenting a petition, struck him two blows in front, quickly followed by similar blows from the dagger of Olgiati. The Duke staggered forward, affording an opportunity to Visconti to stab him from behind in the shoulder and the spine. The Duke fell ejaculating the name of the Virgin. Great confusion immediately arose, but the thing had been done so suddenly and so rapidly that few knew what had actually taken place. No cries of Liberty, Republic, were raised. The assassination fell flat, and the assassins sought their own safety by mingling with the crowd within the church. Lampugnani, however, had been recognised by one of the Duke's attendants. Seeking to save himself among the women, he stumbled over their voluminous trains and was cut down. Visconti escaped for the moment, but soon shared the fate of his companion. Girolamo Olgiati passed quietly out of the church, and made his way home, where through the good offices of his mother he lay concealed for two days. Bitterly disappointed that no general rising on behalf of freedom had followed the Duke's assassination, he sought greater safety in flight, was discovered and handed over to justice. He found consolation for his tortures in the recollection of his deed. In the agonies of death he maintained his fortitude by the reflection that though death is bitter, fame is everlasting, and that the memory of his act would remain for ever. (*Mors acerba, fama perpetua, stabit vetus memoria facti.*)

Throughout Italy the feeling was entertained, and commonly expressed, that the assassins of Galeazzo Maria had done a glorious thing. They had signalised in a striking way their own individuality and this was of more con-

sequence than the death of a despot. Italy lived under despots, and could not do without them, but was none the less glad when any one of them came to a violent end. The political consequences of the murder lay hidden in the future, and there were few who cared to trouble about them. The Pope was shrewd enough to see that "the peace of Italy was dead," but neither he, nor any other, could foresee that from that day dates the decay of Italian independence. Galeazzo's successor was destined to call the French into Italy in order to preserve his own doubtful sovereignty in Milan, and with the advent of the French the days of Italian independence were numbered.

But Lorenzo fully realised that for him a serious crisis had arisen. He had lost an ally who was strong and firmly established, while conditions had arisen which would throw the government of Milan for a time at any rate into the melting-pot.

Galeazzo Maria left behind him a son seven years old, and a band of turbulent and ambitious brothers. The widowed Duchess, Bona of Savoy, immediately took steps to secure the Regency on behalf of her son Giovanni, but, in face of the intrigues of her brothers-in-law, her task was difficult, for they were determined that the Regency should be in the hands of one of themselves. Whichever party triumphed in the end, Milan must endure for several years the weakness and the risks involved in the government of a minor. Milan, instead of being, as hitherto, the support on which Lorenzo could chiefly rely, was now likely, whatever government ultimately prevailed there, to need from Lorenzo all the support which he could afford her.

Lorenzo therefore had carefully to consider his proper line of action. In any event a close friendship with Milan must be maintained, for that was the keystone of Medici foreign policy. The best course was to be prepared for anything which might happen; to support the government of the Duchess, seeing that it was established, and at the same time to keep as far as possible on good terms with the brothers, in case they might at any time prevail. Such a policy exposed Lorenzo to the charge of double-dealing,

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GALEAZZO MARIA SFORZA

FROM THE PAINTING BY ANTONIO DEL POLLAIUOLO

Uffizi Gallery, Florence

and was certainly liable to be misunderstood. A year or two later the Duke of Urbino roundly accused Lorenzo of neither desiring nor seeking the peace and safety of Milan, and expressed his agreement with the opinion which had been expressed that Lorenzo "had sinned against the Holy Ghost and doubted the mercy of God."

These, however, were the exaggerated statements of political prejudice, and they show no comprehension of Lorenzo's difficulties. At a time of confusion, when the foundations of his traditional policy were in danger of being uprooted, he had to do the best he could for himself, and no course seemed to offer better prospects than to be prepared for any event in Milan.

Immediately on receipt of the news of the Duke's assassination Lorenzo despatched Luigi Guicciardini to Milan, soon to be followed by Tommasso Soderini, in order to convey his assurances of support to the Duchess, and to maintain the good relations between the two governments. Much was to be hoped from the fact that Cecco Simoneta, the chief minister of the late Duke, had firmly attached himself to the side of the Duchess-Regent. So long as he remained in power, there was a guarantee for the continuity of Milanese policy, and a formidable obstacle opposed to the ambitions of the Sforza brothers. Two of them, Sforza, Duke of Bari, and Ludovico, known as Il Moro, had been banished by Galeazzo to France. They now returned and were joined by two other brothers, Ottaviano, and Ascanio, a churchman, subsequently one of the most influential members of the College of Cardinals.

Simoneta endeavoured to conciliate them by offices, dignities and wealth, but they soon took advantage of a revolt in Genoa against the authority of Milan to show their hand. Holding high commands in the Milanese army which was operating in Genoa, they stirred up sedition among the soldiers, sought to win the army to their side, and organised a rising in Milan. These intrigues were discovered, and Ottaviano, seeking refuge in flight, was drowned in the waters of the Adda. The other three were sent into exile.

To Ludovico Pisa was allotted as his place of banishment, and he was thus in the territories of Florence. There Lorenzo extended to him every kindness and consideration, treatment which Ludovico did not forget in the days of his power, when Lorenzo needed assistance from him. Sforza, Duke of Bari, found his way to Naples, where he exerted himself to stir up Ferrante against the Duchess-Regent. Ascanio betook himself to Perugia. The state of general war in Italy which followed as a consequence of the Pazzi Conspiracy, provided the brothers with fresh opportunities of prosecuting their ambitions. By the death of the Duke of Bari, however, Ludovico was left the sole secular representative of the pretensions of the brothers. In an evil moment, yielding to the persuasions of the Duke of Ferrara, the Duchess-Regent made overtures of reconciliation to Ludovico and Ascanio. They were accepted, and the result corresponded with the anticipations of Simoneta, who warned the Duchess that Ludovico's recall could only mean "that from you will be taken all influence and reputation, and from me, life." In September 1479 Ludovico Sforza entered Milan, and from this moment, under the pretence of acting for his nephew, he became for all practical purposes, the reigning Duke.

Such were the political results which followed directly in Milan from the assassination of Galeazzo Maria. In Florence, little more than a year later, a scheme of assassination on a more extensive and even more dramatic scale was brought to a head. From it Lorenzo barely escaped with his life, and his brother Giuliano fell, murdered even before the horns of the altar.

CHAPTER VIII

THE PAZZI CONSPIRACY*—THE PLOT, AND THE MAN WHO HATCHED IT

The Pazzi family—Causes of their animosity against Lorenzo—Political grievances—Private grievances—The Borromeo inheritance—Girolamo Riario thinks himself thwarted by Lorenzo—Girolamo approaches Francesco di Pazzi—Salviati, Archbishop of Pisa—Jacopo di Pazzi—His original attitude towards the conspiracy—Services of Battista di Montesecco enlisted—Interview between Girolamo and Montesecco—Montesecco engaged to secure foreign aid—Montesecco's interview with Lorenzo—Interview with Jacopo di Pazzi—Montesecco relates the story of his interview with the Pope—Jacopo joins the conspiracy—Extent to which the Pope was implicated in the conspiracy—Difficulties of the conspirators as to means to accomplish their ends—The conspirators in Rome—Lorenzo invited to Rome—Ringleaders of the conspiracy in Florence—Accomplices.

THE family of Pazzi which gave its name to the remarkable conspiracy of 1478 was of great antiquity, of high estimation in Florence, and closely connected by marriage with Lorenzo and Giuliano dei Medici. One of the great solemnities of Florence, the procession of the Carro dei Pazzi, derived its origin from the tradition that Pazzo dei

* The chief contemporary authorities for the Pazzi conspiracy are:

(1) The Confession of Giovanni Battista di Montesecco, circulated by the Florentine Chancellor, Bartolommeo Scala, in his "Excusatio Fiorentinorum," August 10, 1478.

(2) "Angeli Poliziani conjurationis Pactionae, anni 1478, Commentarium." The edition which I have chiefly used "nunc primum inlustratum cura et studio Joannis Adimari documentis, figuris, notis Neapoli, 1769," contains, in addition to Poliziano's Commentary, every available reference to the conspiracy drawn from contemporary sources, such as despatches from ambassadors, extracts from historians, &c.

(3) The Pope's Brief of Excommunication, dated June 1, 1478.

(4) Reply of the Signoria to the Papal Brief, July 21, 1478—given in Roscoe's supplementary illustrations.

(5) Letter purporting to speak for the Florentine synod, July 23, 1478.

(6) Other letters, by the Pope, Lorenzo, and others, and diplomatic despatches.

(7) Works of contemporary, or quasi-contemporary, historians—Macchiavelli, Valori, Guicciardini, Amirato and others.

Pazzi, at the time of Godfrey de Bouillon's Crusade, brought back from Jerusalem the sacred stone—a fragment of the tomb of Christ—from which, on Easter-eve, the sparks were struck which lighted the Colombina. The Colombina was a firework, shaped like a dove which, when ignited, carried the fire from the stone upon the High Altar of the Duomo to the Pazzi car, which stood, stored with fireworks, upon the Piazza del Duomo, between the Cathedral and the Baptistery. At the touch Florence was bathed in the sacred fire. This august ceremony would alone have made the name of Pazzi a household word in Florence, but later descendants had still further ennobled it. Andrea dei Pazzi was a contemporary of Cosimo dei Medici, the friend and agent of King René of Provence, from whom he received the dignity of knighthood. Under Cosimo's *régime* the family repudiated its nobility and became enrolled among the burghers, thus becoming qualified for political office. Piero dei Pazzi, Andrea's son, yielding to the influence of Niccolo Niccoli, devoted himself to humanistic studies, became the glass of fashion, the darling of Florence. To great accomplishments he added business capacity of a high order. His great wealth enabled him to gratify to the full his tastes as a man of culture and his passion for liberality and magnificence. His friendly relations with the Medici are attested by the marriage of his nephew, Guglielmo, to Bianca, daughter of Piero dei Medici, and sister of Lorenzo. The Pazzi, in fact, were within the inner ring of powerful Medici adherents, and seemed, and indeed for some time were, devoted to the interests of the Medici ascendancy.

The Pazzi and the Medici were, it is true, commercial rivals. At Rome particularly the Pazzi Bank, under the management of Francesco dei Pazzi, was a hot competitor against the Medici Bank under Giovanni Tornabuoni. This competition assumed the form of personal antagonism in 1474 when the Pazzi advanced to the Pope the purchase-money for Imola in the face of Lorenzo's efforts to thwart the Papal policy by raising financial difficulties. The strain doubtless became more acute when Sixtus deprived the

Medici of the advantage of being the Papal bankers, and conferred it upon the Pazzi. But this state of tension reflected certain private and public grievances under which Francesco Pazzi, and possibly other members of the family, believed themselves to be suffering.

The anomalous and undefined position which Lorenzo held in the government of Florence rendered him liable at all times to incur the jealousy and discontent of powerful families, which, though attached generally to the Medician system, yet were of opinion that the system itself implied an oligarchy, and not the supremacy of a single individual. Lorenzo's view on the contrary was that the will of one man must ultimately prevail, and thus all his measures were directed to securing the final voice in the disposition of affairs. Thinking it dangerous to himself and to the State to permit any real authority to remain in the hands of those who were not entirely dependent on himself, it is certainly probable that he sought to depress the political influence of great families which might possibly stand out as rivals for power. Acting on this principle, Lorenzo was careful to prevent any of the great offices of State from falling into the hands of the Pazzi, and therefore, says Macchiavelli, the Pazzi were angry, in that their claims to political distinction, however strong, were invariably set aside, and Lorenzo feared the Pazzi in proportion to the anger which his own conduct had aroused.

Contemporary authorities, however, differ so much in accordance with their private and political prejudices that it is not easy to be sure of the actual facts of the case. Poliziano, in opposition to Macchiavelli, declares that the Pazzi family were universally unpopular by reason of their insolence and avarice, that Jacopo Pazzi, the head of the house, sweated his workpeople and frequently did not pay them at all, and therefore that he was generally hated, nor had he, nor his ancestors, at any time enjoyed any popularity in Florence. If this be true it would scarcely have been worth Lorenzo's while to take any particular care to exclude the family from the exercise of political power.

In the case of Francesco Pazzi, Jacopo's nephew, Poli-

ziano admits that "being a man of great arrogance and pretensions," he never could understand why the Medici were preferred to himself, that he lost no opportunity of traducing them, and that he lived chiefly at Rome because there was no room for him in Florence while the Medici were there.

There can be no reasonable doubt that political motives played some part in producing the animosity of the Pazzi towards the Medici, but private grievances were probably more powerful incentives.

Of these by far the most important was the question of an inheritance of which the Pazzi believed themselves to have been deprived by the direct and interested action of Lorenzo. Macchiavelli has told us that a man is more affected by the loss of his patrimonial estate than by that of his paternal relative. Financial quarrels between people closely related are often the most deadly of all.

Giovanni dei Pazzi, Francesco's brother, was married to Beatrice Borromeo. As her father, Giovanni Borromeo, died leaving no will, his property should have passed to her in accordance with the existing law. Her claims, however, were contested by Borromeo's nephews who were close friends of the Medici. By the action of Lorenzo, as it is said, a retrospective law of intestacy was passed in 1476, under which the claims of females to the property of a father who had died intestate were set aside, the estate passing to male collaterals. Nardi, in his "Storia Fiorentina," comments severely upon the circumstances under which this law was passed, being as he says, "a law made for the occasion, and applying to the past, contrary to custom, and to the just tenor of laws, which should apply to the future." Nardi therefore corroborates Macchiavelli's account of the affair. Guicciardini is equally precise.

Roscoe, however, maintains that the law was passed more than ten years before, in the time of Piero dei Medici, when Lorenzo was absent from Florence, when, moreover, he was not in a position, had he been at home, to exercise any material influence upon legislation. In support of this assertion, Roscoe brings forward a letter written to

Lorenzo by Luigi Pulci on April 22, 1465. In this letter, however, though there is an obscure allusion to the Borromei, there is nothing which can lead us to suppose that Luigi Pulci is referring to any intestacy law which had been passed in opposition to the interests of any member of the family. This letter being the only proof which Roscoe can bring forward in exoneration of Lorenzo, the defence falls to the ground. It was so much in accordance with Lorenzo's policy to intervene in private matters—questions of inheritance, marriage and the like—that his interference in a case of this kind is, on the face of it, probable. Macchiavelli's statement is precise that, not only did the Pazzi recognise the hand of Lorenzo in this act of injustice, but that even Giuliano dei Medici thought his brother was going too far, and expressed his fears that by grasping at too much they might lose all.

Whatever the causes of their enmity, however, it is unlikely that the Pazzi would have carried animosity to the point of conspiracy and assassination unless they had been goaded by a stimulus applied from without.

There can be little doubt that the true villain of the piece was Girolamo Riario, the Pope's nephew. He had already secured the lordship over Imola, and was anxious to extend his sovereignty in the directions of Forli and Faenza. The serious illness of Carlo Manfredi of Faenza seemed to offer favourable opportunities. Manfredi already felt himself to have been grossly injured by Riario in the matter of Imola, of which he had been dispossessed, and his personal interest in keeping Riario out of Faenza harmonised with the public interest of Florence to prevent any further extensions of the Papal Power in Romagna. Riario therefore, identifying Florence with Lorenzo, regarded him as a personal enemy and the chief obstacle in the way of his ambitions. To get rid of the Medici altogether, and effect a complete revolution in the government of Florence, seemed to him the best way of accomplishing his own projects. Being, moreover, well aware of the sentiments of Francesco dei Pazzi towards Lorenzo, Riario saw in him a convenient instrument to serve his purposes.

The various grievances which the Pope had against Lorenzo have already been seen. A revolution in Florence, resulting in the overthrow of the Medici, was a prospect which could not fail to be congenial to him. But how far he would approve of extreme measures involving the violent removal, perhaps the death, of Lorenzo and Giuliano, was another question. Riario felt the necessity of proceeding cautiously.

His first step was to approach Francesco dei Pazzi, who, burning with resentment against Lorenzo, jumped at the opportunity of associating so powerful a man as Riario with his undefined schemes against the Medici ascendency. While Girolamo was in fact using him, it is quite possible that Francesco imagined he was using Girolamo. They determined to work together, each for his own purposes, while pretending to serve a common cause: they were soon deep in schemes by which they might attain their ends.

It was speedily clear that their enterprise must be twofold in its character. They must get rid of the Medici, and thus the assassination of the two brothers was one part of the scheme. But this in itself was not enough. To effect a revolution in the State it was necessary that they should be in a position to support assassination by the assistance of an armed force operating against Florence from without, at the moment when the city was thrown into confusion, was least expecting an attack, and was least prepared to meet it.

This twofold scheme involved a double set of agents, one to organise the murders, the other to muster the foreign levies. Thus it became necessary to seek numerous accomplices. One was ready to hand in Rome in the person of Francesco Salviati, the aggrieved Archbishop of Pisa.

Poliziano's picture of Salviati is a black one. He describes him as a man, "as Gods and men well know," who was ignorant of and despised all law, human and divine; a man of infamous character, stained with every crime, sunk in luxury and profligacy, a gambler and a sycophant, but bold, prompt, cunning and insolent. At an earlier period, however, Poliziano had himself covered Salviati with slavish

adulation, and the opinion which he subsequently entertained of the Archbishop was coloured by the part which Salviati played in the conspiracy.

No sooner was the Archbishop approached than he threw himself eagerly into the schemes of Girolamo and Francesco, and his conduct throughout the business rather bears out the estimate of him which Poliziano has given.

These three held secret interviews in Rome, where they agreed that nothing could be done in the way of assassination without the co-operation of Jacopo dei Pazzi in Florence, nor could anything be done in the way of a revolution without the consent and co-operation of the Pope.

When first the enterprise was broached to Jacopo he gave no encouragement, declaring that nothing but evil to themselves was likely to result. Though by no means friendly to the Medici ascendency, yet he was on good terms with Lorenzo, as is shown by letters, written in 1474, in which Pazzi expresses his indebtedness to Lorenzo for favours received, and his hopes that a good understanding may be maintained between them. There is nothing to show that he was animated by anything like the blind resentment which actuated Francesco. He was, moreover, by this time an old man, and though still a desperate gambler who could not keep his temper when he lost, he wanted to live a quiet life, and was shrewd enough to know that public feeling in Florence would be altogether against any project of removing the Medici brothers. The thing in fact, in his opinion, could not be done, and therefore it should not be attempted. He was averse from the plan even if there were any reasonable chances of success, but in his opinion there were no such chances.

The principals at Rome, therefore, resolved to hasten those proceedings which aimed at the enlistment of foreign levies, believing that, if they could show to Jacopo the certainty of strong military support from outside, he would be convinced that the plan was feasible, and therefore would personally support it.

To this end the conspirators approached Giovanni Battista di Montesecco, a condottiere in the Papal service, who had

had much experience in war; a plain blunt man, who, though he would not shrink from murder if it came in the way of duty, yet had no love of murder for the sake of it: he was by no means a professional cut-throat, but a man of some family and distinction, possessing the military virtues of promptitude, courage, and decision in a marked degree. This at any rate is the impression conveyed by his lengthy and circumstantial "Confession," which is quite an unstudied document, conveying the impression of truth by its simplicity and directness.

The task of sounding Montesecco was undertaken by Francesco Pazzi and the Archbishop. Having heard their proposals he declared that he was in the service of the Pope and Count Girolamo, and therefore was not in a position to give his assistance to any private and unofficial enterprise. The reply was that they were acting in the interest of the Pope and the Count, and they explained to him that the Count's projects were constantly thwarted by Lorenzo's hostility; that as long as Lorenzo lived, Girolamo's government "was not worth a bean." At Montesecco's request they detailed the reasons of this hostility, and in the end the soldier agreed that he would act in the matter in accordance with Girolamo's instructions.

On a later day Montesecco was summoned by the Count into his chamber whither the Archbishop had preceded him. Girolamo asked for his opinion upon the project which the Archbishop had unfolded, but Montesecco refused to give any opinion until he knew the means that they proposed to adopt. Both of them then waxed eloquent upon the malevolence of Lorenzo towards them, upon the many injuries they had received at his hands. Montesecco, however, drew a clear distinction between their grievances and the methods by which they might be redressed. He would say nothing till their plans were definitely laid before him. They then declared that the only means possible were to assassinate Lorenzo and Giuliano, supporting the act of murder by gathering men-at-arms who should secure the city as soon as the deed was done. By these means a successful revolution could be carried out in Florence, and,

to quiet his scruples, Montesecco was assured that the Medici rule was uncongenial; that the Pazzi and the Salviati had such influence and popularity that they could draw half Florence after them, and that Montesecco therefore had no cause to shrink from assisting an enterprise the success of which would be welcomed by the Florentines themselves.

Montesecco knew little about politics, but what he now heard by no means tallied with his previous impressions. He had always understood that Lorenzo had a great following in Florence, and that those who would oppose him were putting their hands to what he called "a big affair."

"My Lords," he said, "look to what you do, for Florence is a big affair."

Upon this, the Count and the Archbishop in turn assured him that he was mistaken. If the Medici were dead, every one in Florence would lift up hands of gratitude to Heaven, for they were held in much ill-will. "We know," said the Archbishop, "the position of affairs in Florence a great deal better than you do: there is no more doubt that the thing will succeed than that we are here. The first essential is to secure Messer Jacopo dei Pazzi who at present is colder than a block of ice: when we have him, the thing is done."

Montesecco's next inquiries were as to the attitude of the Pope. He was primarily the servant of the Pope and would do nothing without full assurances of the Pope's sanction. They declared that the Pope desired this more than any one else: that Lorenzo had incurred the full measure of his ill-will, and that Sixtus moreover would certainly be ready to approve of anything which the Count and the Archbishop desired. They had already spoken to the Pope and made sure of him, but they would go further and arrange an interview, when Montesecco should hear from the Pope's own mouth his views and wishes in regard to the project. With these assurances Montesecco expressed himself content, and pending the promised interview, was prepared to go forward with the scheme for securing the necessary military forces.

Among the mercenary Captains who were at that time in the service, or at the disposal, of Girolamo Riario were

Gian Francesco Gonzaga of Tolentino, Napoleone Orsini, and Lorenzo Giustini of Città di Castello, the rival of the Vitelli, and therefore the natural enemy of Lorenzo dei Medici. It was arranged that Napoleone should march his contingent into Todi and Perugia; Giustini should hold himself in readiness in his own city, and Gian Francesco in the neighbourhood of Imola. Montesecco was commissioned to go into Romagna in order to superintend these dispositions. At the same time he was entrusted by Girolamo with a mission to Lorenzo himself in Florence with the object apparently of putting him completely off his guard by treacherous assurances of the Count's goodwill and affection.

Montesecco gives a particular account of his interview with Lorenzo. He appeared dressed in mourning for the loss of an Orsini relative, and Montesecco was surprised at the warm and friendly expressions which he used in speaking of Riario. No father, no brother could have spoken of him with more affection, "so that I began to wonder, after what I had heard from others, at finding him so well disposed." Lorenzo rode back to town with Montesecco—the interview took place in the villa of Caffagiuolo—engaging him in familiar and friendly conversation. The soldier felt that the job he had undertaken would go much against the grain.

In Florence Montesecco took up his quarters in the Inn della Campagna, and there he had a private interview with Jacopo dei Pazzi. Having read the letters of credit addressed to him by Riario and the Archbishop, Jacopo impatiently declared that he wished to hear no more about the matter. "They are going to break their necks," he said. "I understand our affairs here better than they do. I do not wish to listen to you." At this point Montesecco introduced the name of the Pope, and related what had occurred when he met the Pope in company with Riario and the Archbishop. This part of his relation therefore has a peculiar interest, for it is the chief source from which we can form an opinion as to the Pope's complicity in the details of the conspiracy.

Sixtus assured Montesecco, according to the latter's statement to Jacopo, that it would be agreeable to him that

" this matter of Florence " should be taken speedily in hand, " this matter " having at this point a clear reference to the accomplishment of a revolution in Florence by means of foreign troops. But the Pope would have no assassinations. He did not wish the death of any one. " ' But, said Montesecco, ' this matter, Holy Father, may turn out ill without the death of Lorenzo and Giuliano, and perhaps of others.' His Holiness replied, ' I do not wish the death of any one on any account since it is not in accord with our Office to consent to the death of any one. Though Lorenzo is a villain, and conducts himself ill towards us, yet we do not on any account desire his death, but only a change in the government.' The Count replied, ' All that we can do shall be done that this may not happen : but should it happen, Your Holiness will pardon him who did it ? ' The Pope replied to the Count, ' You are a beast. I tell you I do not desire the death of any one, but only a change in the government. And I say to you, Gian Battista, that I strongly desire that a change should take place in the government of Florence, and that it should be removed from the hands of Lorenzo, who is a villain and a caitiff, who does not esteem us. From the moment that he be out of Florence we could do whatever we wish with that State, and that would be very pleasing to us.' The Count and the Archbishop then said, ' Your Holiness speaks true. Be content therefore that we shall do everything possible to effect this end.' ' I tell you,' replied the Pope, ' I will not have it. Go, and do what you wish, provided there be no killing.' With this we rose up from before his presence, and His Holiness ended by saying that he would be content to give every assistance by way of men-at-arms or otherwise as might be necessary.' The Archbishop thereupon brought the interview to an end by saying, ' Holy Father, be content that we should steer this ship, and that we will steer it well.' And our Lord said, ' I am content.' Thereupon the Count, the Archbishop, and Montesecco withdrew into Riario's private room where details were discussed between them, the conclusion ultimately arrived at being that without the death of Lorenzo and Giuliano the thing could by no means

be done, and "though this would be to do ill, yet great affairs could not be carried out in any other way."

The impression left upon Jacopo dei Pazzi's mind by this narrative was that the enterprise had the Pope's tacit approval, and that by means of foreign troops it might be carried to a successful issue. From an opponent of the scheme Jacopo became an energetic, if tardy supporter. Several authorities agree that this change of view was the consequence of his conviction that the Pope was on the side of the conspiracy. Sixtus was prepared to support it actively with troops, and would turn a blind eye to murder, if murder should be found to be necessary. And this opinion corresponded with the subsequent facts. When assassination had done its work, the Pope, far from repudiating the conspirators, only showed himself indignant against Florence which had punished the assassins.

Every reader of Montesecco's Confession must draw his own conclusion as to the attitude and conduct of Sixtus. Some will find in it convincing proof that the Pope was not only not an accomplice in an assassination, but had expressly forbidden his friends to compromise the good name of the Papacy by an act of murder. Others will find a tacit sanction conveyed under terms of protest and repudiation, Sixtus sufficiently knowing the character of his nephew to be aware that Riario was not the man to stick at trifles. That the Pope covered his tracks, and left a way open subsequently to dissociate himself from the violent courses which were adopted, is undoubtedly true. That he really believed the revolution could take place, and the removal of the Medici brothers from the government be accomplished without bloodshed is to credit Sixtus with more innocence and ignorance of the men and of the times than he can justly claim. The Pope may have imagined that he had saved his face but "a jury, it is to be feared would find Sixtus, in spite of his protestations, guilty as an accessory before the fact." From this sane conclusion of Armstrong it is not easy to find a way of escape.

Montesecco was quite capable of arranging all matters connected with the raising of foreign troops, but for the

work of organising the details of the assassination it was felt that the presence of the Archbishop in Florence was imperatively required. The difficulties to be overcome were serious. Both the brothers must be despatched, for it was useless to kill one without the other; but the opportunities for catching two men unawares are rare, and moreover the double murder required the services of several accomplices. Jacopo dei Pazzi urged that the deed must be done out of doors, and that each must be dealt with separately, though as far as possible simultaneously. There was a scheme afoot for the marriage of Giuliano to a daughter of Appiani of Piombino. One or other of the brothers would be going to Piombino to negotiate the terms, and a favourable chance would thus be offered, but as long as the two young Medici remained together in Florence, in Jacopo's opinion, no success was possible. Francesco on the contrary thought that they might be despatched together if only a time and place were selected when they would be least suspecting danger: in church for instance, or when they were playing cards. All that was needed, he said, was the mind to do the deed.

In any event the first thing to do was to get the Archbishop to Florence, so that he might give good speed to everything, and assist operations by his advice. Montesecco therefore went to Rome, where he related to Riario and the Archbishop all that had occurred. Salviati found the necessary excuse for a visit to Florence in the illness of Carlo Manfredi of Faenza. He could plausibly urge as a pretext that he wished to discuss with Lorenzo the affairs of Faenza in the event of Manfredi's death. Montesecco made his way to Imola to organise the military supports, and to give instructions as to the movements of the mercenaries. This done, he returned to Florence and had another interview with Jacopo and Francesco Pazzi in their villa at Montughi where he urged upon them the need for expedition if the movements of the troops were to coincide with the work which had to be done within the walls of Florence. They declared that their zeal required no spur but rather a bridle, but none the less, being unable at the

moment to devise means to execute their purpose, they recommended that for a time the military movements should be suspended until a favourable opportunity should arise. This was done, and for a time the business was dropped.

The scene now changes again to Rome where, in the early days of 1478, the heads of the conspiracy were gathered together. The Captains of the mercenaries, Montesecco, Riario, Francesco Pazzi, were all there. Riario hit upon the expedient of inviting Lorenzo to Rome in order that he might have the opportunity of discussing with the Pope the various points at issue between Sixtus and himself. "I do not in the least doubt," says Riario in his letter to Lorenzo of January 15, "that the Holy Father will receive you with joy, while I, from the affection which I owe you from our friendly relations together, would behave so as fully to satisfy your Magnificence, and all grievances which may have arisen will disappear."

In the expectation that Lorenzo would accept this friendly invitation, Riario assured Montesecco that the affair was in train. Lorenzo would come at Easter and would not be suffered to return. "Will you kill him?" asked Montesecco. "Assuredly," replied the Count: "I do not wish that anything unpleasant should happen to any one here, but before he departs things must be so arranged that they shall turn out well." "Does our Lord (the Pope) know of this?" "Certainly," he replied. "Diavolo," I said; "it is a great thing that he should have consented." "Do you not know," added the Count, "that he will let us do whatever we wish? It is sufficient that the thing should turn out well."

Lorenzo however did not come to Rome, and it was necessary to fall back upon the original project of bringing the matter to an issue in Florence. Speed was now essential, for so many people had been admitted into the secret that there was danger that the conspiracy would leak out. Montesecco once more made his military arrangements, and the Archbishop in the meantime was active in Florence.

The heads of the conspiracy in Florence itself were seven

in number, reinforced by a few others who took a more or less active part in it. Of the original seven the three most prominent ringleaders were the Archbishop himself, and Jacopo and Francesco Pazzi. With them were associated two more Salviatis—one a brother of the Archbishop, and the other a kinsman. Each of them bore the name of Jacopo. The sixth was Jacopo di Poggio Bracciolini, a son of the famous Humanist who had been so closely attached to the Medici interest, and had received so many obligations from the family. Jacopo Bracciolini himself was a scholar of no mean attainments, remarkable, says Poliziano, for his eloquence and his knowledge of history, but a vain man who had squandered an ample patrimony and was deeply in debt. He had a passion for thinking evil of all men, and the Archbishop found in him a ready tool. The seventh was Bernardo Bandini, a man who, like Poggio, had dissipated his fortune, and had become an adventurer ready to seek his profit from any desperate enterprise. The savage ferocity which he displayed at the moment of action seems to justify the estimate of his general character which Poliziano has given to the world.

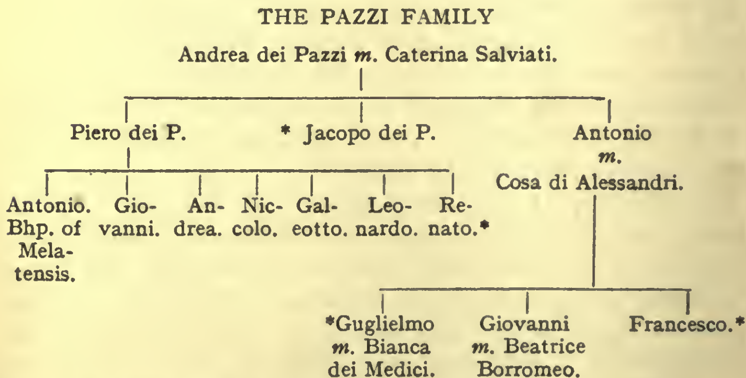
In addition to the seven there was Montesecco, who, having completed his arrangements, was now in Florence, and two priests who associated themselves with the enterprise. Of these Antonio Maffei di Volterra acted a part in this brutal business which may almost be called respectable in that he was a Volterran, and imagined that he had the wrongs of his country to avenge upon Lorenzo. The other, Stefano da Bagnone, was a retainer of Jacopo Pazzi, occupying in his house the position of tutor to Jacopo's natural daughter.

There were two other members of the Pazzi family who shared the punishment which fell upon the house, but whose complicity in the conspiracy was doubtful. Renato dei Pazzi, son of Piero, was a scholar and something of a recluse, who certainly kept himself aloof from any active participation in the plot, though it is possible that he tacitly acquiesced in it.

Guglielmo dei Pazzi was Francesco's brother, and

Lorenzo's brother-in-law. For years he had been intimately associated with the tournaments and festivities in which the Medici delighted, and was generally regarded as one of the family. The position was certainly a painful one which compelled him to take sides against his own family or that of his wife. Poliziano speaks of him as trying to sit on two seats at once. Such an endeavour was not unnatural in the circumstances, and Poliziano's intimate knowledge of the man justifies us in accepting his opinion of Guglielmo's attitude. It is true that a friend and hanger-on of Guglielmo, Napoleone Francesi, was reputed to be among the number of the conspirators, but Poliziano declares that he took not the least part in the business.

THE PAZZI FAMILY



The star marks the four members of the family who were implicated in the conspiracy.

CHAPTER IX

THE PLOT IN EXECUTION

Cardinal Raffaelle Sansoni made a catspaw for the conspirators—The conspiracy culminates on Sunday, April 26, 1478—In the Duomo—Montesecco's place as chief assassin taken by two priests—Lorenzo and Giuliano come to the Duomo—Assassination of Giuliano—Lorenzo is wounded and escapes—Salviati attempts to seize the Palazzo Publico—Jacopo dei Pazzi fails to raise the mob and escapes—Summary vengeance executed on the conspirators—Botticelli's frescoes on the Palazzo Publico—Bandini escapes to Constantinople, but is extradited and executed—Punishment of the Pazzi family—Capture and execution of Jacopo—Montesecco writes a confession and is executed—Release of Raffaelle Sansoni—Retirement of the Foreign troops from before Florence—General grief for Giuliano—His character—Ferocious decree against the name of Pazzi.

EVERYTHING was now ready except a plan of action, but this must speedily be found if the plot was to remain secret. The effort to separate the brothers had failed, so they must be taken together. Francesco Pazzi's suggestion that a banquet, festival, or ecclesiastical solemnity would offer the best opportunity was, for want of a better, the plan which held the field. Such a plan was likely to be materially assisted by the presence in Florence of some distinguished person in whose honour the Medici would exercise their well-known talent for hospitality and splendour. Girolamo Riario determined to make use of his young nephew, Raffaelle Sansoni, for this purpose, a youth of seventeen who had recently been created a Cardinal by his great-uncle, the Pope. The young Cardinal was pursuing his studies at Lorenzo's new Academy at Pisa: from Pisa he was summoned to Florence to be the guest of the Pazzi at their Montughi villa.

Everything turned out according to expectations. Not a whisper of the conspiracy had reached Lorenzo. The letters which came to him from the young Cardinal were

of a most friendly character, and an invitation that he would visit Lorenzo and Giuliano at their Fiesole villa followed in due course.

On the appointed day Lorenzo rode from Florence to Fiesole, accompanied by his son Piero, and by Poliziano, but not by Giuliano. Giulano was ill and compelled to remain at home. The conspirators found their calculations upset once more. But they were immediately prepared with another scheme, exactly the same in character, and only involving a change in venue. The Cardinal, either on his own initiative or instructed by his mentors, expressed a strong desire to see the treasures of the Medici Palace in the Via Larga. He proposed Sunday, April 26, as a suitable day, when he would not only visit the Medici but also celebrate High Mass in the Duomo. This arrangement doubled the chances, for should the conspirators fail at the banquet, they might redeem their failure in the Cathedral.

It was the Sunday before Ascension Day. High Mass was to be celebrated with great solemnity, and splendid preparations had been made at the Medici Palace to do honour to the Cardinal. Invitations to a banquet had been issued to the ambassadors of Naples, Milan, Ferrara, and to a distinguished company. At the last moment Giuliano sent word that he scarcely felt well enough to appear at a banquet, but would not fail to meet his guests in the Cathedral. A hurried conversation among the conspirators resulted in the determination to strike during the Celebration. No moment could be more favourable, for then the brothers, being least likely to suspect danger, could most certainly be taken unawares.

The parts were rapidly allotted. Francesco Pazzi and Bernardo Bandini were to be responsible for Giuliano: the Archbishop with his relatives and Poggio were to seize the Palazzo Publico, and rouse the city as soon as the deed was done. The murder of Lorenzo was entrusted to the professional hands of Montesecco, for this was the most important item on the programme. Here however an obstacle quite unforeseen, and out of all calculation, presented itself. Montesecco flatly refused to do murder in a church. At a

banquet he had no scruples, and though he had no grudge against Lorenzo, yet, as a soldier, Montesecco must obey his superiors: if assassination came within his duties he was prepared to go through with it in the recognised manner. But as a faithful son of the Church he was not prepared to commit sacrilege, nor could any claims of duty impose such a crime upon him.

At this juncture the two priests, Maffei of Volterra and Stefano da Bagnone, stepped into the breach. They offered themselves as Lorenzo's assassins, for, being priests, they were accustomed to churches, and familiarity made them less susceptible to these mysterious influences which a layman might naturally feel. There was no alternative but to accept their offer, for it solved the difficulty as to the church, but while doing so, it created another; for, being priests, Maffei and Stefano were possibly unskilled assassins, as indeed the event proved.

On the Sunday morning the Cardinal Raffaelle rode into Florence and dismounted before the Medici Palace, where everything was in readiness for his reception. He was conducted upstairs to his apartments that he might change his dress and put on his ecclesiastical vestments. At the foot of the staircase Lorenzo received him, and, accompanied by the Archbishop, they proceeded to the Duomo. At the door the Archbishop, who had other work to do, excused himself, and Lorenzo conducted the Cardinal to the choir, where he took his place before the High Altar. Lorenzo joined his friends in the ambulatory, a wide passage leading round the choir, from which it was separated by Ghiberti's wooden screen work. All the conspirators appointed to do the work of assassination were at hand, and there was a very large congregation. Suddenly it was perceived that Giuliano was not present. Francesco Pazzi and Bandini thereupon hastened to the Palace to fetch him, and with some difficulty persuaded him to come with them. He was to all appearances quite unarmed, but the two traitors affectionately passed their arms around him to make sure that he was not wearing a shirt of mail beneath his clothing, one of them jocosely remarking that he seemed to have

grown quite fat during his illness. On arrival at the Cathedral Giuliano made his way into the ambulatory, attended by a servant, the band of conspirators specially attached to him pressing close upon him. He took up his position on the southern side, close to the chapel of the Santa Croce, being separated from his brother by the full width of the choir.

It is not certain what precise signal the assassins had agreed upon for the work to be begun. Some say the bell which rang at the moment when the Host was elevated was the signal. One authority says the Host had already been elevated. Valori and the Florentine Chancellor say that the moment chosen was when the Priest was breaking the Eucharistic wafer, others, when the Priest was himself receiving the elements; Poliziano states that the Priest had already communicated. Whatever may have been the precise moment, when it arrived Bandini drove his dagger with all his force into Giuliano's side with the cry, "Take that, traitor!" The stricken man reeled full against Francesco Pazzi, recovered himself, and staggered a few paces forward. Then he was set upon by Francesco with such fury that the assassin either wounded himself, or was seriously wounded, in the thigh in the *mêlée* which followed. Giuliano fell pierced by nineteen wounds. His servants in horror fled at the first sign of the onset.

On the other side of the choir the two priests were neither so expeditious nor so successful. At the given moment Maffei raised his dagger, and, to steady himself, or make more sure of his aim, placed his hand upon Lorenzo's shoulder. Instantly turning round Lorenzo saw the blow just about to fall upon his throat. With extraordinary promptitude, and with a presence of mind which must have been instinctive, he wound his mantle around his left arm as he lifted it to ward off the stroke, which only inflicted a slight wound in the neck. Drawing his sword he leaped over the wooden screen into the choir, and rushing across it in front of the High Altar, where stood the trembling Cardinal, he made for the door behind it which led into the new Sacristy.

But Bandini and Francesco had seen what had happened. Leaving the mutilated body of Giuliano they dashed into

Brogi

TORSO OF THE FIGURE OF MERCURY

DETAIL FROM BOTTICELLI'S "SPRING"

In the Accademia, Florence

The figure almost certainly represents Giuliano dei Medici

the choir to intercept Lorenzo's flight. By this time however a body of faithful friends had gathered round him, and two of them interposed to protect their patron. Francesco Nori, one of Lorenzo's business agents, and a most faithful friend, was stabbed where he stood. Lorenzo Cavalcanti received a dagger wound in the arm. But the moment's delay had been sufficient. Lorenzo reached the Sacristy. Poliziano and the others slammed its brazen gates in the face of his pursuers, whereupon Francesco and Bandini sought refuge in flight.

Within the Church all was wonder and confusion. Only those who were close to the choir were aware of the true facts. The congregation gathered in the nave imagined that the Dome had fallen in. Amid the general clamour the voice of Guglielmo dei Pazzi could be heard protesting his innocence. In the midst of the tumult the Cardinal was conducted to a place of safety inside the old Sacristy situated on the other side of the Altar.

In the meantime within the new Sacristy, Lorenzo and his little group of followers were in a state of terrible suspense. No one knew that the noise in the Church did not mean that the whole edifice was in the hands of the enemy. Moreover there was the fear that the dagger which had struck Lorenzo was poisoned. Antonio Ridolfi came forward to suck the wound, while Stefano della Stufa climbed up the ladders which led into the organ loft, where from a window he was able to look down into the Church. There he saw the body of Guiliano lying where it had fallen, and was able to satisfy himself that those still in the Church were friends. He returned to find Lorenzo anxiously inquiring as to the fate of his brother, and indignantly protesting against so base and sacrilegious an attack. The Sacristy doors were opened. A friendly wall closed around Lorenzo, and he was conducted in safety to his house, care being taken that he should not pass the spot where Giuliano lay.

An immense crowd gathered immediately around Lorenzo's palace intent on assuring itself that he was safe. Every one had snatched up arms, boys, youths, old men, men sacred and profane, for to defend the Medici seemed to be

defending the public safety. So reports Poliziano, and with all allowances made for his partiality, it is clear that the conspirators soon became convinced that their hopes of support within the city were not to be realised. "Are these," said Montesecco grimly, "the voices of Lorenzo's enemies, who, the conspirators assured us, would immediately take up arms on the first show of resistance to his power?"

But even while Lorenzo, with his neck in bandages, was appearing on a balcony, striving to reassure and pacify the mob, rumours were heard that stirring events were being enacted in the Palazzo Publico, and the excited crowd surged off to the Piazza of the Signoria.

The Archbishop, Salviati, having taken leave of Lorenzo and the Cardinal at the Cathedral doors, collected his subordinates and put himself at the head of some twenty Perugian desperadoes who had been imported into Florence to support the plot. Making his way to the Palazzo Publico, Salviati sent a message to the Gonfalonier, Cesare Petrucci, that he had urgent news to communicate on behalf of the Pope. Petrucci, who was at dinner, gave orders that the Archbishop should be admitted: he was conducted to the reception room, while the Perugians filed into the office of the Florentine Secretary to await Salviati's signal for action. Small bands also occupied other rooms in the Palazzo, the armed forces of the Archbishop being thus split up into what Poliziano calls "several small rivulets." The Archbishop himself awaited the Gonfalonier in the reception room, while his relatives, with Jacopo Poggio and one or two others, remained without. On his arrival Salviati, in tones which he strove to make calm and official, began to explain the pretended business on which he had come, but he was trembling with excitement and his utterances were thick and confused. Petrucci, who was an old hand at revolutions,—he had given proofs of his coolness at Prato some years before,—began to grow suspicious, and called the guard. The Archbishop rushed from the room, calling to his men-at-arms that the moment had now arrived. No support came however, and nothing was heard within the several rooms but wild clamour, and loud hammerings

against the closed doors. Petrucci, on entering office, had fitted the doors of the Palazzo with special catches which made it impossible to open them from inside unless the secret of the mechanism was known. The men-at-arms therefore found themselves prisoners instead of attackers, and the Archbishop was left dependent upon himself and his little band of fellow conspirators, the Salviati and Jacopo Poggio. The latter, making a rush at the Gonfalonier, was seized by the hair and thrown to the ground. Then, loudly calling upon the guard, Petrucci, and the other members of the Signoria, made their way up the staircase to the topmost tower of the Palazzo, snatching up weapons as they went. Petrucci himself, armed with a cooking-spit, courageously held the door of the Tower, until the Signorial Guard, hurrying to his assistance, quickly succeeded in taking the Archbishop and all his followers into safe custody. The mob too had now appeared upon the scene prepared to take an active part in the fearful work of vengeance which followed. The Perugians and the other men-at-arms were cut down where they stood: bleeding heads stuck on lances were soon being carried about the city, and under the windows of the Medici Palace.

In the meantime, Jacopo Pazzi, who had witnessed in the Cathedral the failure of the attempt on Lorenzo, gave way to despair. He beat his head with both his hands and made his way to his own house where he fell upon the ground in a state of abject dejection. But, rousing himself, and feeling that a challenge must be thrown out against Fortune, he gathered round him a few of his personal adherents, and rode to the Piazza of the Signoria, uttering cries of "Liberty! Liberty!" Answering cries of "Palle, Palle! The Medici, The Medici! Down with traitors!" were supported by showers of stones hurled down upon Jacopo and his train from the Tower of the Palazzo. The only hope of safety was in flight, if flight were still possible.

Jacopo, successful in escaping from the mob, returned to his own house, where Francesco dei Pazzi was lying in concealment, his wounded thigh making it impossible for him to move. An hour or two later Jacopo made his way

through the Santa Croce gate, and escaped into the open country.

While these events were in progress, news had reached the Palazzo and the Piazza that Giuliano had been murdered in the Duomo. At once it was determined to execute summary vengeance on those who were already in the hands of justice. A part of the mob hurried to the Pazzi Palace in search of Francesco, who was dragged, naked and bleeding, to the Palazzo. A rope was fixed around the neck of Jacopo Poggio, and he was thrown from one of the windows, his body dangling against the Palace walls at a height above the heads of the crowd. Francesco was next thrown out, and from the same window hung suspended the body of Salviati, Archbishop of Pisa. It was, says Poliziano, a wondrous thing, but known to everybody, that, as he hung, impelled either by chance or rage, he fixed his teeth in Francesco's body, his eyes rolling wide open, in fury and despair. The Archbishop's two relatives were strangled before they were thrown out. It was at this moment that Poliziano, all being quiet in the Via Larga, himself entered the square, and saw the bodies hanging, saw many others foully mutilated, witnessed much horrible jesting on the part of the mob, and many other detestable things.

The impression left upon the public mind by these summary and awful punishments was not one of horror or regret or shame. The terrible vengeance which the people had taken upon traitors seemed to them rather to be worthy of permanent commemoration. In the very year of the conspiracy, the Signoria commissioned Sandro Botticelli to paint upon the façade of the Palazzo a representation of the scene. He executed the task with so much skill and fidelity to truth that the beholder might imagine that he still saw the bodies dangling from the windows, that he was a witness of their last agonies, as they convulsively jerked, with rolling and despairing eyes, above the heads of the yelling and brutal crowd. "The work," says Vasari, who erroneously attributes it to Andrea del Castagno, "was, indeed, a perfect wonder (*uno stupore*). It would not be possible adequately to describe the art and judgment

displayed in these figures, hung up in the strangest attitudes, which were infinitely varied and exceedingly fine." The figures represented were those of Jacopo, Francesco, and Renato dei Pazzi, Salviati and his two kinsmen, Bernardo Bandini, hanging by the neck, and Napoleone Francesi by the foot. Beneath them Lorenzo caused to be inscribed suitable epitaphs, that on Bandini running thus:

> Son Bernardo Bandini, un nuovo Giuda.
> Traditore micidiale a chiesa io fui.
> Ribello per aspettare morte più cruda.*

It was not, however, until the following year that Bandini in his own person expiated his crimes. In the first confusion caused by the murders, he succeeded in making his way into the tower of the Cathedral, where he lay hidden for some time. Choosing a favourable moment, he made his escape, and sought a permanent refuge in Constantinople. The Sultan, Mohammed II., desirous of testifying at the same time his detestation of the crime and his goodwill towards Lorenzo, informed the Signoria of Bandini's presence in the Ottoman Capital. Antonio dei Medici, a distant connection of Lorenzo's, was despatched to Constantinople to convey to the Sultan the thanks of the Republic, and to bring back Bandini in chains. The punishment of the other conspirators who survived the fatal day was much more speedy. The two priests, who had instantly fled upon their failure to kill Lorenzo, sought refuge in the Benedictine Abbey of Florence, where for two days they escaped observation. Then their hiding-place became known, and the mob flocked to the Abbey clamouring for the surrender of the criminals. They were seized, brutally mutilated, and then despatched.

Napoleone Francesi, through the assistance of Piero Vespucci, effected his escape. He was the only one of the

* "I am Bernardo Bandini, another Judas. A murderous traitor in a church was I. A rebel doomed to await a death even more hard"—*i.e.*, harder than the death Bandini had inflicted on Giuliano.

The authority which establishes the claims of Botticelli to be the painter of the façade is that of the Anonimo Gaddiano.

principals who was so fortunate. Punishment indeed fell heavily on many who had taken no part, at least no active part, in the plot. This was especially the case with the members of the Pazzi family. All of them indiscriminately were held in strong suspicion, which was strengthened by their flight, or efforts at concealment. Renato dei Pazzi, with two of his brothers, was taken in the Mugello. Giovanni dei Pazzi was found hidden in a garden adjoining his house. Renato was executed, but the others were condemned to a term of imprisonment. Guglielmo, Lorenzo's brother-in-law, was, on the intercession of his wife, sentenced only to a period of exile.

But the fate which appealed most strongly to the popular imagination was that of Jacopo. He, as has been seen, escaped into the open country and was making his way into Romagna. At the village of Castagno he was recognised and detained. With a knowledge of the fate which awaited him in Florence, he implored his captors to kill him. For reply he was struck down by a violent blow from the hand of a peasant—one Alessandro—making resistance and flight impossible. He was handed over to the Signoria, and hung from the windows of the Palazzo. Before his death, says Poliziano, he made a full confession, not extracted from him by torture, and though so near his death, he retained to the end his furious and rabid disposition, for he died devoting his shade to the powers of evil. It is thus that Poliziano garnishes the squalid and awful tragedy of Jacopo which was yet to follow.

The body of Jacopo had been buried in Santa Croce, but the city being visited by heavy and persistent rains, the people declared that this was the judgment of Heaven upon them for suffering a murderer, such as Jacopo, to rest in sacred soil. The mob disinterred the body and buried it in an apple orchard, but not content, they disinterred it again, and dragged the decomposing fabric of a man through the streets of the city, amusing themselves with horrible and gruesome frolics. They propped the body up against the door of the Pazzi Palace, using the head of the dead man as a knocker. Tired at last of such sport,

the remains were thrown into the Arno. Once more they were dragged ashore and subjected to further indignities, until at last all that was left of what had once been Jacopo dei Pazzi was allowed to float down into the open sea.

A few days elapsed before the capture of the condottiere Montesecco. He was seized, when attempting to fly, upon May 1, and now the Signoria felt that they had all the threads of the conspiracy in their hands. Montesecco was subjected to the most exacting interrogatories, and at last he dictated and signed the confession from which so much of our knowledge of the plot is derived. The value of Montesecco's evidence lay in the light which it threw upon the action of the Roman confederates of the conspirators—of Girolamo Riario and the Pope—and full use was made of his revelations when they were published broadcast through Christendom in answer to the fulminations of Sixtus against Florence. When his confession was signed and duly attested, Montesecco, on May 4, was beheaded in the courtyard of the Podestà's Palace.

The work of vengeance was by no means limited to the chief actors in the plot. In addition to the principals and their men-at-arms, suspicion fell on many others, who to the number of nearly a hundred persons were handed over to execution. Of these, many doubtless were entirely innocent. There was no need for Lorenzo to take any part in this work. Indeed, he strove to restrain the violence of his partisans, declaring that he had more to fear from the zeal of his friends than from the daggers of his assassins.

In one case, however, he insisted on making his influence felt on the side of moderation. The young Cardinal, Raffaelle Sansoni, whom we are justified in regarding as the unconscious tool of desperate men, having been conducted to a place of safety, was put under a strong guard. The populace clamoured for his death, and the guard was as much needed for his protection as to keep him under observation. From April 26 to June 5 the Cardinal remained a prisoner, and during this time urgent representations regarding his safety reached Florence from

Rome, from Naples and from Venice. At last it was determined to set him free, for the Signoria was convinced of his innocence. Before he left Florence he addressed a letter to the Pope from the cloisters of S. Annunciata, in which he declared that the government, and especially Lorenzo, had treated him with the greatest kindness, and he begged Sixtus to withdraw from the position of hostility which he had adopted towards them.

It was said that to his dying day the Cardinal Raffaelle never lost the deathly pallor which the scenes of which he had been a witness on that fatal Sunday had imprinted on his face.

After the first excitement was over Lorenzo, with the practised eye of a statesman, saw that he had nothing to fear in Florence. Scarcely any Florentines had joined a conspiracy which was engineered and conducted from Rome. Far from doing him an injury at home, the abortive attempt upon his life, and the dastardly and sacrilegious murder of his brother, had roused to boiling-point the enthusiasm of the people. Now he was left to rule alone, almost as he would, the acknowledged lord of the city and of the hearts of the people. It was from outside that the danger threatened. Lorenzo marked with concern the support which the conspirators had reckoned upon from foreign troops, nor could he rest until he knew precisely how far the Italian Powers had been consenting parties to the enterprise, nor until every alien mercenary had quitted Florentine territory.

For the moment he had every reason for reassurance and congratulation. That part of the plot which depended upon troops supplied by Lorenzo's external enemies had collapsed as completely as the efforts of the conspirators within the city. It is true that Gian Francesco da Tolentino and Lorenzo Giustini had been faithful to their engagement. The former at the head of a thousand men had advanced from Imola, the latter from Città di Castello. On the morning of the fatal Sunday, both were within a march of Florence, and each began to move upon the city, the one from the Mugello, the other from the neighbourhood of Siena. But at the same time the friends of Lorenzo were

not inactive. Giovanni Bentivoglio marched a force from Bologna into the Mugello to observe the movements of Tolentino, and to intercept any attempt upon Florence. When therefore the news reached them that within the city the plot had failed and that the plotters had been summarily executed, Tollentino and Giustini withdrew their forces and made their way back again whence they came. Though thus relieved from immediate anxiety, Lorenzo took full advantage of the military support supplied by his friend Bentivoglio. Within the city the guards at the gates were doubled, and ample supplies of provisions were stored as a precaution against possible trouble in the future.

In Florence itself the people were torn between two conflicting emotions. They rejoiced abundantly over Lorenzo's safety, but they mourned with no less sincerity the untimely taking off of the gallant Giuliano. Giuliano had endeared himself to all classes by his athletic frame, his handsome face, and his unaffected manners. In appearance he presented a great contrast to his brother, being tall, well set-up, and admirably proportioned. His black hair and eyes, his keen gaze, his olive complexion, and his skill in every form of manly exercise, were known to every one, and in a time of luxury and self-indulgence he was conspicuous for his simplicity and frugality. Nor did he neglect the cultivation of his mind: in art he was a connoisseur, a lover of music and poetry—indeed some poems of his own composition were not altogether without merit. He had filled an anomalous and difficult position in the government with tact and prudence, and was bound to his brother by the closest ties of confidence and affection.

Such is the picture which Poliziano presents of his young pupil and patron in the closing passages of his "Conjuratio Pactionis." Existing portraits of Giuliano tend to confirm Poliziano's accuracy, and the lithe figure of Mercury in Botticelli's "Primavera" is an idealisation of manly beauty derived from Giuliano. Of his mental attainments no one was more qualified to speak than Poliziano, whose testimony to the wonderful devotion of the two brothers is not confined to an obituary eulogy, but had previously been the

subject of an eight-line elegiac epigram. His funeral, upon Ascension Day, was a solemnity in which the whole city took part. The young men, his companions in tournaments and sports, were conspicuous in their mourning and unaffected grief around the grave of one who had no private enemies. His body was laid in the same porphyry sarcophagus which his own filial piety had raised in honour of his father and his uncle, and all Florence long cherished his memory.

Shortly after Giuliano's death Lorenzo was informed that he had left a son. The boy, under the name of Giulio, was taken by Lorenzo into his house and educated with his own children. Giulio adopted an ecclesiastical career; in 1513 he was legitimised by Leo X., and made a Cardinal. Ten years later he became Pope under the title of Clement VII.

The memory of the conspiracy was perpetuated by two further acts, one of a public, the other of a private character. Though the ringleaders were dead, and such of the Pazzi as still survived were in exile, or in close custody in the prisons of Volterra, the Signoria decreed that the very name of the family should be blotted out for ever. It was an offence even to pronounce it: whoever should marry into it was thereby excluded from public office, and wherever its coat-of-arms should be found, it was to be erased. The solemnity of the Carro di Pazzi was to lose its name: the property of the family was confiscated.

This decree, promulgated within a month of the assassination, is an eloquent commentary upon the horror which the deed inspired, but, as it went beyond all reason, it was found impossible to execute it in all its particulars. The Pazzi dolphins survive to this day on buildings which are still in the hands of the family, and the Carro di Pazzi remains a household word in Florence. But the depression and degradation of the House of Pazzi was none the less complete. Socially and politically it was utterly crushed, no single element of power or consideration being left to it which would enable it for generations again to lift up its head.

In striking contrast to this ferocious decree is the action

MEDICI MEDALS, REPRODUCED FROM LITTÀ

1. COSIMO—IN HONOUR OF THE DECREE CONFERRING ON HIM THE TITLE OF "PATER PATRIAE." 16TH MARCH, 1464.
2. LORENZO—PROBABLY TO COMMEMORATE THE PEACE OF 1480
3. LORENZO AND GIULIANO—TO COMMEMORATE THE PAZZI CONSPIRACY
4. LAUR(O) MED(ICEO)—"UT LAURUS SEMPER LAURENTI FAMA VIREBIT"
5. —LORENZO—"OB CIVES SERVATOS."—IN REFERENCE TO THE PAZZI CONSPIRACY, OR WAR.
6. GIULIANO, D. OF NEMOURS. "DUCE VIRTUTE COMITE FORTUNA." 1513. TO CELEBRATE THE RETURN OF GIOVANNI AND GIULIANO, LORENZO'S SONS, TO FLORENCE
7. GIULIANO, D. OF NEMOURS—TO CELEBRATE HIS APPOINTMENT AS CAPTAIN-GENERAL OF THE CHURCH. C(ONSENSU) P(ONTIFICIS)
8. LORENZINO—VIII id. JAN., 1537—TO CELEBRATE THE ASSASSINATION BY LORENZINO OF DUKE ALESSANDRO

of Lorenzo's private friends who desired at once to testify their devotion, and commemorate in permanent form his preservation. Three figures of Lorenzo, modelled in wax, under the superintendence of Verrocchio, were executed in a manner so perfect and natural that Vasari, who appears to have seen them, declares that they no longer seemed to be figures in wax, but living men. One of these represented Lorenzo as he appeared at the window before the anxious crowd with his neck in bandages. This was set up in the convent church of the Nuns of Chiarito in the Via di San Gallo, where it stood before the miraculous crucifix. The second was presented to the Church of S. Annunciata, where it stood " over the small door where the wax lights are sold." In this Lorenzo is dressed in the flowing gown of the Florentine citizen. The third was sent to the Church of Santa Maria degli Angeli at Assisi—in token of the services which Lorenzo had rendered to the township—where it stood before the image of the Madonna. By votive tablets men marked their gratitude to Heaven for Lorenzo's preservation. By summary and barbarous punishments they displayed their horror at so great a crime.

Even in days when assassination was practised as a fine art, in days when men sought eternal renown from some desperate and startling individual deed of villainy, the Pazzi conspirators found scanty apologists. There were few who talked of Brutus, Harmodius, Aristogeiton and the rest as men talked when Galeazzo Sforza was murdered. There was an almost universal sense that the deed of the Pazzi had put them outside the pale of human sympathy, had stamped them as savage beasts rather than as men. This feeling was not produced by the conviction that the conspiracy had no political justification, or that it was dictated by private and personal resentments masquerading in the garments of liberty and republican independence. It was the time and place chosen for the assault, and the innocence of the victim, which, by the violence of their appeal to the imagination, did outrage to the hearts of men. Lorenzo, and Giuliano too, might have been assassinated in a legitimate way, and many would have

applauded the deed. Men could tolerate treachery, and indeed, rather admired it, if it were ingeniously and subtly contrived, but it was not the business of priests to defile the holy place with blood; there could be no excuse for bungling assassins who used the most sacred mysteries as instruments wherewith to desecrate the very horns of the altar.

Abortive conspiracies have always proved the strongest props of tyranny. The Pazzi conspiracy, as Armstrong says, made the fortune of Lorenzo. Before it, his personal government over Florence was strong: after it, it became absolute and unquestioned. It is true that for nearly two years after his escape the waves of Fortune were to roll heavily over him. The malignity of external enemies brought him well-nigh to ruin, but he knew how to make the crisis of his fate the moment of his triumph. When once the storm-clouds passed, the full radiance of the sun of prosperity shone around his head.

CHAPTER X

DIPLOMATIC WAR OF THE PAZZI CONSPIRACY

Reception of the news at Foreign Courts—Rage of Girolamo—Riario and the Pope—Insult to the Florentine ambassador at Rome—Sixtus IV. issues a Brief of Excommunication against Florence—General preparations for hostilities—The "Brief Answer" to a Papal letter—Letter of the Signoria to the Pope—Danger to the Pope from the possible intervention of France—Attitude of Louis XI. towards the Papacy—Louis XI. sends Philip de Commines to Italy—Commines in Florence—Attitude of Lorenzo towards French intervention—Letter to Sixtus purporting to come from the Florentine Synod—Bartolommeo Scala's "Excusatio Fiorentinorum"—Sixtus declares that he is at war only with Lorenzo—Weakness of the Triple Alliance at this juncture—Letter of Sixtus to the Duke of Urbino—Urbino's hostility to Lorenzo—Lorenzo submits his cause to the Florentines—Lorenzo's measures of self-defence.

THE news of the Pazzi conspiracy and of its immediate issue spread with wonderful rapidity throughout the length and breadth of Europe. In little more than forty-eight hours Venice was not only apprised of the course of events, but, through her Doge, had forwarded to the Florentine Signoria a letter of condolence, in which the Doge spoke not for himself alone, but to some extent for Milan also. It seemed as if the two parties to the alliance with Florence were going to stand strongly by her in the event of any further hostile action on the part of the Pope or of Ferrante. In little more than a fortnight the news had reached Louis XI. who wrote to the Signoria, on May 12, expressing his horror at the crime, and his intention of sending a special ambassador to Italy to act with and for Lorenzo in every way possible. England, Hungary, Spain, the Emperor, the Turkish Sultan, were speedily informed, and it was universally felt that out of a personal incident which had occurred in Florence, a crisis had arisen in which all Italy, and perhaps Christendom itself, was deeply involved. Everything depended on the attitude of Sixtus. Would

he accept his failure, and disown the murderous deeds of his agents, or baffled of revolution, would he seek by diplomacy, ecclesiastical weapons, and force of arms to accomplish in the face of day that which treachery and secret assassination had failed to effect ?

As the conspiracy was reaching its climax Girolamo Riario in Rome was in a state of eager expectancy. When he learned the issue he was divided between consternation and fury. The Pope felt himself to be compromised, and, acting upon his first impulse, he wrote to the Signoria in suitable terms, deploring the murder of Giuliano, and lamenting the outrage done to Florence and Lorenzo. This was, however, but a momentary attitude. The influence of his nephew and his own passionate nature soon blinded him to every interest but his own. He saw the ruin of his hopes, the position of Lorenzo still more firmly established, the summary vengeance done by Florence upon the persons of ecclesiastics, and the imprisonment, as he considered it, of a Cardinal Prince of the Church. He determined that, though foiled for the moment, he would prosecute his plans against Florence with all the energy of his fiery temperament, and not shrink before the threats of foreign sovereigns, or the prospect of universal war in Italy, if only in the end he could have his way.

The rage and fury of Riario anticipated and exceeded that of his uncle. Immediately on receipt of the news from Florence, he proceeded with three hundred halberdiers to the house of the Florentine ambassador in Rome, Donato Acciaiuoli. Donato was haled through the streets of Rome, surrounded by men-at-arms, loudly protesting against the enormity of this outrage done upon the inviolable person of an ambassador. He claimed immediate audience with the Pope, whose first intentions were to commit Acciaiuoli to the prisons of S. Angelo, but the protests of the ambassadors of Venice and Milan, who declared that they would stand by their colleague and share his fate, brought Sixtus to reason. He swore that he was not a party to Riario's violence, and dismissed Acciaiuoli to his own residence.

In the meantime the Florentine Signoria had issued orders

to its citizens domiciled in Rome to leave the city and return forthwith to Florence. To prevent such a dislocation of finance and commerce—for the chief bankers and merchants in Rome were Florentines—Sixtus gave orders that they should be imprisoned. But Florence held the Cardinal as a hostage, so the Pope was compelled to give way and liberate his captives. But he did not await the actual release of the Cardinal before showing his hand to Florence and the world. On June 1—the Cardinal did not leave the Palazzo Publico till the 5th—Sixtus published a Bull of Excommunication against Lorenzo, and placed Florence and its dependencies under an Interdict.

It is this document which gives us the clearest idea of the Pope's frame of mind and point of view. It is skilfully contrived, and ingeniously evades the question of Papal responsibility for the crime done by the conspirators in Florence. It opens in uncompromising fashion by a long relation of all the many grievances which the Pope had suffered at the hands of "that son of iniquity and foster-child of perdition, Lorenzo dei Medici, and some other citizens of Florence, his accomplices and abettors."

The cases of Niccolo Vitelli, of Carlo Fortebraccio, of Salviati and his Pisan archbishopric are detailed at length. It is a charge against Lorenzo that "with neck erect and a heart as hard as Pharaoh's," he has prevented travellers, supplies, and pilgrims from coming into Rome. "Wherefore We, following the example of our Saviour, whose property is always to have mercy and to spare" determined to put up with these wrongs and to await Lorenzo's repentance, but the very reverse of what was expected had happened. For Lorenzo, in order to open out a wider sphere for himself, had caused himself to be elected as one of the Eight. Whereupon Lorenzo and his accomplices, "kindled with madness, torn by diabolical suggestions, and led like dogs to savage madness, and, in order that their lusts being at last satisfied, they might the more disgracefully rage against ecclesiastical persons (*Proh dolor et inauditum scelus!*), laid violent hands upon the said Archbishop, detained him prisoner for several hours, hung him on a Sunday from the

windows of the Palazzo, and then cut the rope that his body might fall to the ground. Moreover, they laid violent hands on Raffaelle, Cardinal of S. Giorgio, attacked him in the Duomo where he was officiating on Sunday, kept him in custody, denied him his freedom, and pertinaciously refused to set him at liberty."

This Papal version of the Pazzi conspiracy, which omits everything which it is unpleasant to recall, is more creditable to the Pope's ingenuity than to his veracity. After recapitulating all these atrocities done by Lorenzo and his accomplices, sentence follows in due course. "Lorenzo, the Priors of Liberty, the Gonfalonier, the Eight, are pronounced to be culpable, sacrilegious, excommunicate, anathematised, infamous, unworthy of trust and incapable of making a will: all their property is to revert to the Church, their houses are to be levelled to the ground, that their habitations may be desolate and that none may dwell therein. Let everlasting ruin witness their everlasting disgrace."

Interdict was also pronounced against the city if, within a month, it did not bring the offenders to punishment. It was to be stripped of its Archiepiscopal and Pontifical dignities, and its neighbouring dependencies and dioceses, such as Fiesole and Pistoia, were to share the full severity of the penalties imposed upon Florence.

The promulgation of this sentence was immediately followed by a war of words which was carried on concurrently with active preparations on both sides for war of a sterner kind. On June 13, Florence appointed the Ten of War—Lorenzo being one—to organise the forces of the Republic against impending invasion. An embassy from Ferrante of Naples arrived in Florence, demanding the expulsion of Lorenzo from the State, thus giving clear proof that the King intended to be true to his newly formed alliance with Sixtus. As early as May 12, the Duke of Calabria, Ferrante's son, had reached Rome in order to confer with the Pope as to military preparations. By the beginning of July the Neapolitan troops were in the field, and on the eleventh the Duke of Calabria's army was already

in Florentine territory, encamped in the neighbourhood of Montepulciano. On that day the Duke's trumpeter arrived in Florence, carrying his master's defiance to the Republic, and with it a letter from the Pope, written a few days before, in which the Pontiff's grievances against Florence and Lorenzo were stated anew and in even more forcible terms. This letter, rather than the Papal Bull of June 1, seems to have been the signal for that epistolary retaliation on the part of Florence which does much to redeem the dulness of the military campaign.

The general purport of the Pope's letter can be derived from the "Brief Answer" which was promptly returned.*

"Your Holiness writes to us," say the compilers of this response, "that you are only waging war against our State to free it from a tyrant. We are thankful for your paternal love, and for the consolation your letter affords to this people. It is a people which has ever been on the side of the Church, and has been the first in professions of obedience to your Holiness. It could not therefore without sorrow behold an army of the Shepherd entering its territories (even while the Turk was on the threshold of Italy), ravaging its crops, seizing its towns, and carrying off its maidens and its shrines as booty." With biting irony the writers declare that now they know it is the Pope's love, and not his hatred, which has brought this war upon them, they only grieve that they were not earlier made aware of this. The Pope and Lorenzo are making one and the same demand: the Pope that Lorenzo may be banished; Lorenzo that he may be sent into exile if the interests of the Republic require it. Arms are not required to settle a dispute where both parties are already agreed. All that is asked is that the exile of Lorenzo shall be shown to be for the advantage of the State. To this end let an assessor be appointed to consider and weigh the charges against him, so that in casting out a tyrant neither the Pope nor the Florentines shall prove

* The document, "Pro dominis Responsio brevi," given by Fabroni, bears no date, but from its contents, it can, I think, with reasonable certainty be attributed to the week July 13–20, 1478. It clearly follows the irruption of hostile troops upon Florentine territory.

themselves tyrants. This will be the wise course for the Pope himself to adopt, for he, as well as Lorenzo, labours under suspicion, for since the men who slew Giuliano in a church, and wounded Lorenzo, sit on the seats of the Papacy, there is some ground for the suspicion that this war is undertaken rather to finish the work which was then begun than to liberate the State. In any event there will be no injustice if this proposed course is adopted, and "we, on behalf of our fellow citizens, are as much prepared to yield nothing to injustice as we are prepared to refuse nothing to justice whose ministers here alone we are."

On July 21, perhaps as a consequence of this letter, the Papal Bull of Excommunication and Interdict was enforced in terms of even greater severity, and on the same day the Signoria addressed another letter to the Pope. In this there is no tone of irony but the plainest of plain speaking. The Pope has no right to demand the expulsion of Lorenzo. He puts forward as a pretext for his request that he only desires the good of the Christian religion and the liberty of Florence. But in making such a request, he shows himself a foe to the first of all the liberties of the city—the liberty to manage her own affairs and do as she thinks fit. The Pope avers that Lorenzo is a tyrant, "but we and our people, have proved him to be, and with one voice acclaim him, the defender of our liberties; we are prepared to sacrifice everything for his safety, which is the undoubted guarantee for the safety and liberty of the State. Your charges move our laughter, for you wish us to drive out a man who has in no way degenerated from his illustrious ancestors, Cosimo and Piero, a man who in regard to our liberties has proved their best friend; a man to whom no one of our fellow citizens is to be preferred for true religion, worship of God, charity and piety." Perhaps, the writers continue, the true grounds of the Papal censures may be expressed in very different terms. Perhaps they rest on the fact that Lorenzo preserved the young Cardinal whom he is now accused of attacking and detaining: that when his brother Giuliano fell a victim to assassins, he himself escaped. "Had he permitted himself to be slaughtered by

these most atrocious satellites whom you despatched hither, had we failed to recover our Palazzo Publico, the citadel of our liberties, from the hands of your traitors, had we delivered up ourselves, our magistrates, and our citizens to you to be assassinated, then there would be no cause of contention between us."

And who is the true enemy of the Christian faith? Is it not rather he, who, sitting in the seat of Christ, makes war against Christian men; allies himself with the King of Naples who, if report speaks true, has come to terms with the common enemy of all Christians, and disunites Italy at the moment when the haughty and victorious infidel Turk is knocking at her gates? "But since you have sat in that Holy Seat, it is known to all how your office has been employed. It is too well known who is the real enemy of the public good.

"Put on then a better mind. Remember your office, and the Vicariate of Christ. Remember that the Keys were not given you for such uses. Indeed we fear lest in our own time that saying of the Gospel shall be fulfilled—'He will miserably destroy the wicked, and his vineyard shall another take.'"

The letter ends with the declaration that Florence "will resolutely defend her liberties, trusting in Christ who knows the justice of her cause, and who does not desert those who trust in Him; trusting in her allies who regard her cause as their own; especially trusting in the most Christian King, Louis of France, who has ever been the patron and protector of the Florentine State."

Remarkable as this letter is throughout for the audacity of its language, the real sting of it, for Sixtus, lay in its concluding reference. He was not likely to be much affected by any personal charges brought against his character and conduct. These things were the commonplaces of literary, epistolary, and political controversy, to which Italy had long been accustomed. But the intervention of the King of France on behalf of Florence might prove a serious matter, and it was a fact that Louis was moving. It has been seen that so early as May 12, Louis had written to the Signoria,

and, mindful of the French lilies which the Medici, by his letters patent, bore upon their coat of arms, the King declared that his own honour was as much at stake as that of Florence—that the Medici were his relations, friends and allies, and that the murder of Giuliano, "his cousin," was equivalent to an attempt upon his own person. Lorenzo's reply to this letter is dated June 19, and in it he pathetically declares that, as God is his witness, his only crime against the Pope, of which he is conscious, is that he is still alive; that he did not suffer himself to be massacred. This is his fault, and for this alone he is being exterminated and excommunicated. He writes to Louis as to "a pious father," though well knowing that by no arts of word or deed can he express his sense of the love and benevolence which Louis has shown to so insignificant a servitor (*in humilem servulum*).

Much indeed was to be hoped for from the friendship of the French King. The relations of Louis to the Papacy were strangely independent when viewed in the light of the grovelling superstition of which the King was personally the victim. But Louis drew a clear and sharp line of distinction between the Papacy as a political power bent upon its territorial aggrandisement, and the Pope as spiritual Father of Christendom. Louis was hampered by no sense of inconsistency between opposition to the Pope on his temporal side, and abject submission to his spiritual claims. He respected the office, but that did not necessarily imply respect for the man who held it.

French Kings in the past had put themselves at the head of the Conciliar movement in Christendom. If Sixtus abused his powers Louis might revive the demand for a General Council, and not rest content until he had secured the election of a Pope who was ready to do his bidding. If Lorenzo had not much to expect from the active assistance of French troops, Louis might prove himself a disturbing element calculated to bring the Pope to a more reasonable and conciliatory frame of mind.

The first actions of the King of France corresponded with the vigour and friendliness of his language. He despatched

a special ambassador to Italy whose mission was to support Lorenzo and to threaten the Pope, and he selected for this office Philip de Commines, the lord of Argenton, one of his most trusted and sagacious counsellors. Commines arrived in Italy by the middle of June by way of Turin, where he was received by the Duchess of Savoy, Louis's sister, who promised him the support of three hundred men in his efforts on behalf of Lorenzo. He secured also three hundred men from Milan, and by the end of the month, or the beginning of July, he was in Florence. Having met there with a splendid reception from the city and from Lorenzo, he proceeded to Rome where his coming was anticipated with grave apprehension. Ammanati, Cardinal of Pavia, despatched a warning letter to the Pope in which he assured Sixtus, of his certain knowledge, that Commines was instructed to withdraw the allegiance of France from the Pope, and to appeal to a General Council, unless the censures against Florence were revoked, the conspirators against the Medici punished, and the war abandoned. Commines arrived in Rome about July 11, accompanied by the Florentine commissioner, Guid' Antonio Vespucci. He remained there for nearly a fortnight, but unfortunately in his "Memoirs" he is entirely silent about this visit to Rome, nor does he say a word as to the nature or progress of his negotiations. It is clear that he failed to make any impression on the Pope, who probably was well aware that the King of France was only making a demonstration which he had no intention of following up by force of arms or by ecclesiastical schism. At any rate the war was not stopped, nor were the censures upon Florence removed.

On July 25, Commines was again in Florence where he was treated, he says, with even more civility than before. Presents were showered upon him from all quarters: fifty-five pounds' weight of silver plate from the Signoria, gifts from other sources to the value of four or five hundred ducats, and jewels from Lorenzo to the value of three hundred. In such fashion did Florence show her gratitude for the sympathy of Louis, and her lively expectation of greater benefits to come. Moral support was not without its worth,

but effective material support was still in the future. "The King's favourable inclination towards them," says Commines, "was in some measure serviceable to them, but not so much so as I could have wished, for I had no army with which to reinforce them beyond my own retinue." For the present at any rate Florence would have to depend, in conducting the war, upon herself and her Italian allies.

If Louis had meant serious business there was a method ready to hand by which he could effectually intervene in Italian affairs in the interests not only of Lorenzo, but of himself. This was to revive the Angevin claims to the crown of Naples—claims which by this time had passed from the House of Anjou into the hands of Louis himself. This, however, was a venture to which Louis did not care to commit himself, and it is doubtful if Lorenzo would have consented to call the French definitely into Italy to establish themselves there as an Italian Power. He was willing enough to receive an auxiliary force from France, if it could be had, but a French invasion of Italy was another matter.

Valori in his "Life of Lorenzo" relates some remarks of his hero upon the unity of Italy. "United Italy," he said, "could successfully oppose any attempt upon her from beyond the mountains, but divided against herself she could not endure, but would fall a ready victim to the aggression of an ultramontane Power. For this reason he refused to call in the assistance of the King of France in his war with the Pope, declaring that there was nothing on earth which could justify the adoption of methods, which, while securing his personal safety, might lead to the ruin of Italy. Far better would it be to pray to God that it might never enter the head of the King of France to try an experiment with his forces in Italy, since, against such an attempt there could be no remedy."

Valori probably wrote this passage under the direct influence of Charles VIII.'s Italian expedition of 1494, and we may suspect that he relates what Lorenzo ought to have said rather than what he did say. But it is creditable to Lorenzo that in a time of the most severe stress and personal danger, there is not a whisper that he attempted to rouse

Louis to assert his Neapolitan claims, or that, like Ludovico Moro in later times, he courted an Italian invasion merely to serve his own personal interests.

Just as Commines was returning from Rome to Florence, the Florentine clergy determined to take action on the Pope's attitude towards the city and towards Lorenzo. An extremely lengthy and vituperative document was drawn up on July 23, which purported to embody the views of an ecclesiastical synod which had met "in our Cathedral Church of Santa Reparata." The authenticity of the manifesto, as having in fact emanated from a clerical synod, has been much disputed, for it is full of the language of unmeasured abuse against the Pope, attacking his private character even more vigorously than his public action. But that such a manifesto was drawn up is certain, and the autograph leads to the conclusion that it was the work of Gentile of Urbino, Bishop of Arezzo, Lorenzo's old tutor and close confidant. If it be merely a personal ebullition on the part of Gentile, without any other authority than his own, the document can have little value, but as such a supposition argues a degree of audacity and falsehood on the part of the Bishop which is scarcely credible, it may be assumed that he spoke in the name of some at least of his clerical brethren who may have met informally, not officially as a synod, in the Duomo. The document itself was discovered in the Medici archives, and not among the public records of the city or of the cathedral, and it is to such an extent tainted by suspicion that its content must be received with caution. It is immensely long, occupying thirty pages in Fabroni's Appendices, and it covers the ground already taken up by the Signoria in a rambling style of contumely and abuse which in a measure defeats its own purpose. Sixtus was probably not much disturbed by uncomplimentary epithets and wild personal charges, but the allusion to the Council of Basle, and the possibility that some of the clergy would be found on the side of those who were threatening him with a General Council, must have gone home to the Pope.

Of far greater importance to Sixtus and to the world at large was the official manifesto drawn up for the Signoria

on August 10 by Bartolommeo Scala, the Florentine Chancellor. It is addressed to all whom it may concern, and it puts the case, from a Florentine point of view, ably, temperately and conclusively. Its object is to show the nature of the conspiracy against Florence, the share which the Pope took in it, and to appeal to foreign powers to support the Republic which had been so infamously used and was now so unjustifiably attacked. With these ends in view, Scala embodied in the document almost the full text of Montesecco's confession, from which our detailed knowledge of the engineering of the plot is mainly derived. He then proceeds to a brief narrative of what actually occurred in Florence on April 26. He touches on the fact that the troops sent to support the revolution were mercenaries in the pay of Sixtus. He denies the assertion of the Pope that the Cardinal Raffaelle Riario was attacked, declaring that it was chiefly owing to Lorenzo's efforts that he was preserved safe and inviolate. "And now," says Scala indignantly, "we are put under interdict and separation from the communion of faithful men. That which treachery could not effect is now to be achieved by ecclesiastical censures, and force of arms. War is carried on against us by Sixtus, Pontifex Maximus, and other illustrious persons who guide the rudder of the Church, for no other reason than that we have not allowed ourselves to be slaughtered, and that we have defended our Palazzo, our City, and our liberties, which are dearer to us than life itself. Thus a mighty army, in the service of the High Priest of all Christians, swoops down upon a most religious people, always most observant of respect towards that very Pontiff. It devastates our land; it gives over men and women, and things sacred and profane, to military licence. Good God! How long wilt Thou endure such iniquity? When wilt Thou take pity on Thy labouring flock, and re-establish Thy people? To thee also, to thee we fly, most serene and ever august Emperor. Remember, we pray you, your most faithful City of Florence, and this people ever devoted here to your most sacred Imperial Majesty. In us, unless we deceive ourselves, the whole cause of Christendom is at stake, for as long as Sixtus carries on his wars, it is

beset with manifest peril, while victorious and most powerful enemies insolently rage upon the Italian threshold. Thou also, Louis, unconquerable and most Christian King of France, now must thou rouse thy valour, and succour the affairs of harassed Christians. And if other Princes also and Christian people do not do the same, we are driven to doubt for the state of the Christian world. Come, then! It concerns you all. Rise up now, and undertake a matter which is common to all, and consult in common, together with Christ, our best and greatest Redeemer, who assuredly will not desert His own cause."

The Pope, however, had been careful to spike the heaviest of Scala's rhetorical guns before they were fired. From the first he continued to insist that he had no quarrel with Florence, but only with Lorenzo, and that if Lorenzo were given up, hostilities would immediately cease. The Pope's ally, Ferrante, repeated the tale, and through his ambassadors demanded the explusion of Lorenzo from the State. In the face of the Papal Bull the contention was hard to maintain, for the Papal denunciations were launched not against Lorenzo only, but against the Priors, the Eight —in fact, against all the principal official representatives of the State. War against the government of Florence could be nothing else than war against Florence. The Pope none the less insisted upon his original assertion that his enmity was directed against an individual, and thus the allies of Florence could plausibly excuse themselves on the pretext that they were pledged to assist the State, not to take part in a private quarrel.

This was convenient for a power like Venice which was always glad to shuffle out of engagements not likely to be profitable. It is true that in the first flush of the conspiracy Venice had taken a strong line, and had declared that the Pope's pretence could deceive nobody. "We all know perfectly well that this attack is not only upon Lorenzo, but upon the government of Florence, which it is sought to overthrow together with that of the whole of Italy." But brave words counted for little unless they were backed by solid support, and the amount of such support actually contributed by Venice for the conduct of the campaign

was but small. Nobody, it is true, was deceived by the Pope's sophisms, but they were none the less useful as a cover for apathy and slackness on the part of lukewarm friends of the Republic.

The Pope, moreover, had chosen his moment well, for he was strong in his alliance with Naples just at the time when the Triple Alliance between Florence, Milan, and Venice was weakest for the purposes of joint action. That diplomatic instrument which the Medici had forged with so much patience, care, and labour, proved itself, by the accident of circumstances, to be of least value at a moment of crisis when it was most needed. Various causes rendered Milan incapable of affording any very material assistance to Lorenzo in his time of need. The government of Milan was too weak, and too much occupied at home, to be in a position to send strong forces to assist an ally. The restless Sforza brothers were continually on the watch to take advantage of the Regent and her Minister, Simonetta, while Ferrante still further increased their embarrassments by stirring up an insurrection in Genoa against Milanese supremacy. The Medici had built up their alliance with Milan on the supposition that they were connecting themselves with a strong and established State. It was certainly unlucky for Lorenzo that Milan should be distracted by internal and external troubles at the very moment when he most needed her support. The minor Italian States were only likely to assist Florence just so long as it was their interest to do so, and as for the Ultramontane Powers, little beyond moral and diplomatic assistance was to be expected from them. In the circumstances, it soon became clear that Florence would have to rely mainly upon her own exertions, and a heterogeneous army and a divided command promised ill for any decisive success against a combination so powerful as that of Naples and the Pope.

The Pope's position of material advantage did not, however, blind him to the damaging effect which had been produced by the publication to the world of the letters despatched to him from Florence. He felt it necessary to discount in every possible way the effect of the revelations which they contained. In addition to his Bulls, he wrote,

on July 25, a letter to his Captain-General, the Duke of Urbino, commenting on the personal charges made against himself in the letter of the Signoria despatched on the 21st from Florence. He is far from being frightened, he says, by charges drawn up in disparagement of Christ and His unworthy Vicar: he can only imagine that God has deprived the writers of reason in punishment for their sins. All his hopes are in God, for it is His honour and glory which are at stake. All his intentions are right and just, for he has no quarrel with any one but that ungrateful, excommunicate, and heretic son of iniquity, Lorenzo. He demands justice upon Lorenzo's iniquities from a just God, and from Urbino, who is to regard himself as God's minister, appointed to avenge the injuries which Lorenzo, unjustly and without cause, has done against God and His Church. for his ingratitude has dried up the fountains of infinite forbearance even at their source. The Pope has himself written to France, to Venice, and to others, and his Bull, published to all the world, will have sufficiently justified him. But even should everything go wrong, he will rejoice to die a martyr, and to endure every form of persecution for God and His Church, of which he is the unworthy Head. He ends by suggesting that Urbino himself should write to the King of England—Urbino was a Knight of the Garter, and had influence with Edward IV.—and that Ferrante should write to his friends, especially to the King of France.

Urbino was as ready to support the Pope by his diplomacy as by his military science. A letter * of his, addressed to his agent in Milan, is extant, in which he directed that every effort should be made to detach Milan from the Triple Alliance and to attach her to Naples and the Pope. He

* The Pope's letter to Urbino is an interesting specimen of the language current at the time. Letters and despatches were constantly written in an amalgam of Latin and the vernacular, and the writers slide from one to the other just as the fancy takes them. It was a time of transition, when each language was in common use among educated people. Each was used indifferently, and often both were used together—*e.g.*, Sixtus to Urbino: "La lettera dei Fiorentini fatta con tanto dispregio di Christo e 'l suo indigno Vicario non terruit nos sed fecit nos cogitare che Dio li ha tolta l'intelletto e lo sentimento per punirli dei suoi peccati. Speremo in Dio de cujus honore et gloria agitur, &c."

endeavoured to trade upon the old jealousies between Milan and Venice, pointing out that Lorenzo was a thorough Venetian, and had "thrown himself into the arms of the Venetians." It is in this letter that Urbino states his suspicion that Lorenzo, by his political action "has sinned against the Holy Ghost"—a curious example of the strange manner in which at that time even high-minded and enlightened men, like Urbino, felt no hesitation or scruple in using the holiest mysteries of their religious faith in the service of their secular aims. The touch must have delighted Sixtus, for it showed Urbino to be an apt pupil in the school of Papal diplomacy.

The effort, however, was fruitless. Milan remained true to her engagements, although, as has been seen, her own situation precluded the possibility of much effective assistance to the cause of her Florentine ally.

Lorenzo, on his part, sought the earliest opportunity to make what profit he could out of the Pope's declarations. If the war was indeed a personal matter, then Florence, by engaging in it, and continuing in it, would prove that she identified Lorenzo with herself. It would now be patent to all the world, according to the Pope's contention, that Lorenzo was in fact Florence, and that his ascendency was regarded at home as essential to the preservation and well-being of the State. On the receipt, therefore, of the Papal letter of July 7, Lorenzo called a meeting of the principal citizens, and placed himself absolutely at their disposal. They could immediately purchase peace by consenting to his banishment or death. He, for his part, was ready to endure either, if thereby he could serve his country. If, on the other hand, they thought he could serve it better by remaining alive and in Florence, then his life, his property, and everything which was his, were dedicated to their service. For reply he was assured that all Florence regarded his cause as her own, and in view of the peculiar dangers to which he was exposed a special guard was allotted to him for his personal protection. Giacopo dei Alessandri declared that they were unanimous that under no circumstances must Lorenzo desert them: they

recognised that not their liberty alone, but everything dear and holy to men were in the first instance referable to him Let him take heart, therefore, and be assured of the affection and support of his fellow citizens.

The meeting was called in circumstances which strongly appealed to the emotions of the Florentine people. Lorenzo closed it by a highly emotional reference to his wife and young children. He had already sent them, under the escort of Poliziano, to a safe distance from the seat of danger, but he declared that he had removed them far from the prevailing rage only that any blow in store might fall upon his head alone; yet in defence of Florence he was willing to offer them up also as sweet victims upon the altar of his country's freedom.

Thus enthusiasm was roused to the fever-point, but Lorenzo well knew that enthusiasm is evanescent unless it is supported by hope and definite success. The war had scarcely begun, and every State plunges into war amid the acclamations of the people. It was when the financial pressure of it should begin to be felt, when disaster should come, that danger would begin to threaten the individual for whom it was being waged. Lorenzo, while rejoicing in the confidence and love of his fellow citizens, did not deceive himself that his troubles were over. He knew that the crisis of his fate was yet to come.

The next step was to place the matter of the Papal Interdict before legal experts, and secure their opinion as to whether it was valid and must be observed. It was held that Florence, by appealing to a General Council, had intimated that she disputed the validity of Decrees issued by the existing Pope, and that therefore the celebration of the rites and services of the Church need not be suspended in the Florentine territory. Savonarola, twenty years later, was not without legal precedents to support his own line of action. Having thus neutralised, as far as possible, the effects of the spiritual weapons employed by the Pope, it remained to perfect the preparations in the field, and oppose to the temporal forces at the Pope's command a vigorous and organised resistance.

CHAPTER XI

THE WAR OF THE PAZZI CONSPIRACY

Ferrante decides to support the Pope—The Papal forces take the field—followed by those of Florence—Ercole d'Este made generalissimo of the allied forces supporting Florence—Comparison of the rival forces—Operations of the campaign of 1478—Ferrante creates a diversion in Genoa against Milan—Florentine diplomacy and projects—Action of Louis XI.—Obduracy of the Pope—The Pope, urged by foreign powers, temporises—Failure of the efforts for peace—Guerilla operations of the Sforza brothers—The Campaign of 1479—Malatesta and Fortebraccio defeat the Papal force at La Magione—Duke of Calabria surprises the Florentine Camp at Poggio Imperiale—Calabria besieges Colle—Situation of Florence and Lorenzo at the end of the campaign—Ludovico Sforza gains control over Milan—Lorenzo negotiates with Ludovico Sforza—Lorenzo's project of visiting Naples—Lorenzo leaves Florence for Naples—Reception of Lorenzo by Ferrante—Lorenzo's arguments to Ferrante—Hesitation of Ferrante—Conduct of Lorenzo in Naples—Ferrante comes to terms with Lorenzo—Remaining difficulties ended by the descent of the Turks upon Italy—Lorenzo suspected of calling in the Turks—Florentine embassy of apology to Sixtus IV.—Botticelli's "Pallas and the Centaur."

THE war of recrimination and diplomacy was not allowed to absorb the energies of the combatants to the exclusion of active military measures for the conduct of a campaign. The advantages, however great, which the Pope might hope to gain from memorialising Christendom were small as compared with those to be expected from prompt and vigorous action in the field. Such action, however, was necessarily contingent upon the attitude of Ferrante of Naples. Would he be true to his newly formed alliance with Sixtus, and so justify the Pope's departure from the traditional Papal policy towards Naples? Or would he, ignoring the leniency and spirit of conciliation which Sixtus had exhibited, remain true to the ties of old friendship which had bound him and Lorenzo so closely together?

Ferrante's decision was not for a moment in doubt.

Though there is no evidence to show that he was in any way privy to the conspiracy of the Pazzi, yet he was not a man to be shocked by such an enterprise, or to care very much whether the Pope was an accomplice or not. The only considerations which weighed with him were those of self-interest, and he determined forthwith that more was to be gained by supporting the Pope than by opposing him. He had his own ambitions in Tuscany, which were more likely to be realised if Lorenzo were out of the way. In alliance with the Pope and the Sienese there was a fair chance of being able to use the Sienese territory as a base for operations against Florence and Tuscany, which might result in the re-establishment of the old Neapolitan over-lordship over that region, whereas an alliance with Lorenzo, involving as it did the adhesion of Naples to the Northern League, could only cut the ground from under any schemes of territorial aggrandisement in Italy which Ferrante might entertain.

In little more than a fortnight after the murder of Giuliano, the Duke of Calabria, Ferrante's son, was in Rome, carrying to the Pope assurances of the King's goodwill, and discussing a plan of campaign. In two months' time the Neapolitan forces were not only in readiness, but had actually crossed the Florentine frontier and were encamped a little to the south of the town of Monte Pulciano. They were led by the Duke of Calabria in person, while the command of the Papal troops was entrusted to Federigo of Urbino, who also occupied the position of generalissimo of the combined armies.

Nor was Florence behindhand in counter-preparations. She was able to collect an imposing array of generals whose names sound formidable to-day, but in 1478 most of them had still their reputations to make. At that time there was no individual among them who stood out conspicuous for his proved ability and commanding talent. Niccolo Orsini, Count of Pitigliano and Rodolfo Gonzaga of Mantua were chosen as divisional commanders by the Signoria. Gian Giacopo Trivulzio and Count Alberto Visconti were at the head of the Milanese contingent: Carlo Fortebraccio of Montone, Deifobo of Anguillara, and Galeotto Pico della Mirandola

came in the service of Venice to the help of her ally. But the pressing need was for a Commander-in-chief under whom all these subordinate generals would cheerfully serve, one who could give cohesion to the miscellaneous forces, and unity of purpose to their tactics in the field. The choice of a generalissimo eventually fell on Ercole d'Este, Duke of Ferrara. But, though appointed on August 10, it was not until the end of September that Ercole assumed the command, for the stars had first to be consulted, and it was declared that their combinations would not prove propitious until September 27. In war success or failure frequently depends on the right use of hours and minutes: a delay of seven weeks at the beginning of the campaign, on account of unfavourable astral conjunctions, did not give promise of that vigour and promptitude on the part of Este by which alone success was to be obtained. On other grounds the choice was not altogether a happy one. Ercole d'Este was Ferrante's son-in-law; the Duke of Calabria, his rival in the field, was his brother-in-law. At a time when the family counted for so much in Italy it seemed to the Venetians highly impolitic to appoint to the supreme command a man whose private connections bound him so closely to the enemy. The Venetian protest, however, was disregarded, and upon the propitious day the bâton of command was entrusted to Este by the hand of Lorenzo himself.

The forces which Florence, by strenuous exertion and heavy taxation, was able to put into the field were perhaps numerically a match for the 5000 men under Urbino and Calabria, but, according to Trivulzio, they resembled Falstaff's ragged army rather than an effective and disciplined force. They were ill-equipped, ill-drilled, ill-provisioned. They were deficient in siege-artillery and in engineers: the contractors were corrupt and thought of nothing but lining their own pockets at the expense of the troops: the military operations were continually hampered by the presence of two civilian commissaries who acted in the interests of Florence, while two more represented those of Venice. What rendered these conditions still

more unfavourable was the contrast presented by the appearance of the enemy. Calabria's Neapolitan troops specially impressed De Commines, who, having visited both camps, could only express his astonishment that the Florentines were not utterly ruined in this war. Calabria and Urbino worked well together when engaged in operations in common, while, when acting in isolation, the army of each was subject to a single will, and was not therefore affected by the jealousies and disagreements of rival commanders which wrought such havoc in the opposing camp. The campaign of 1478 extended from the middle of July until November, when the troops on both sides retired into their winter quarters. At its close the Florentines had every reason to feel thankful that they had come through it with so little damage done. The Duke of Calabria, advancing from Monte Pulciano, marched northward, and seemed to threaten Arezzo; but wheeling sharply to the left, he determined to march on Florence under the friendly cover of Siena, seized the towns of Radda and Castellina, and prepared to attack Poggibonsi. A little to the north of that town the Florentines had formed an entrenched camp at Poggio Imperiale, where they were able to make so brave a show that Calabria thought it prudent to make sure of his communications. From Poggibonsi he retraced his steps to the Chiana Valley and laid siege to San Sevino. The apathy and incompetence of Ercole d'Este were proof against all the exhortations of the Signoria and the Florentine Commissaries. Instead of marching to the relief of San Sevino, Este agreed to Calabria's suggestion of a truce for a few days, and, when the truce was ended, San Sevino immediately fell. It was now November, and in accordance with the military custom of the times the armies withdrew into their winter quarters.

While the Duke of Calabria was thus conducting the operations of the main campaign, his father, the King of Naples, was successfully effecting a diversion in another quarter. Genoa had always been restive under the sway of Milan, and now the distractions in the Milanese Government offered a favourable opportunity for revolt. Stimu-

lated by the intrigues of Ferrante, Genoa declared herself a Republic, with the result that the Duchess-Regent of Milan was compelled to withdraw a portion of her troops which were serving in Tuscany in order to reassert her authority over her rebellious vassal. The Sforza brothers and their cousin, Roberto Sanseverino, seized the opportunity to foment trouble and add to the embarrassment of the Regent, who felt the hand of Ferrante behind every difficulty as it arose. It was recognised by the Florentines that little more was to be expected from the active co-operation of Milan, while Venice was at best a lukewarm ally. The campaign of 1478 therefore closed with prospects far darker for Florence than the record of military events would imply. Deprived of effective assistance from her allies, cursed by an incompetent and apathetic commander, hampered by divided counsels and rivalries among her subordinate generals, threatened by disaffection in some of her own dependencies, and by active hostilities on the part of some of her smaller neighbours, Florence could only look forward to the future with gloomy apprehension.

The winter season however afforded an opportunity of effecting by diplomacy what she had failed to accomplish in arms. Special envoys were sent to Venice and to Milan to represent the situation and urge the necessity for greater efforts, if the independence of Florence, and indeed of Italy, was to be preserved. The task of conciliating Lucca and holding that fiery little republic in check was entrusted to Piero Capponi, who barely escaped with his life from the fury of the populace against Florence. There was some talk of reviving the Angevin claims to Naples, and so keeping Ferrante fully employed at home, of a naval expedition against Naples, of an offensive campaign conducted against the Pope in his own territories of Romagna. None of these plans, however, were feasible if Florence was not strongly supported by her allies, and it was soon evident that no such support would be rendered. Venice did not care to commit herself at the moment to a war in Romagna, while the Pope, by calling in the Swiss to ravage the northern territories of Milan, finally put an end to the possibility of aid from that

Map to illustrate
THE CAMPAIGNS OF
1478 & 1479

English Miles
0 5 10 20 30 40 50

10 11 12
44
43

M. Cimone
Pistoia
Prato
FLORENCE
M. Falterona
Lucca
PISA
R. Arno
LEGHORN
Casciano
R. Era
R. Elsa
Poggibonsi
Radda
Castellina
Arezzo
Volterra
Colle
Siena
S. Savino
Cortona
Sinalunga
La Magione
Montepulciano
Perugia
Trasimene
Chiusi
Capraja
ELBA
R. Ombrone
Sovano
Orvieto
L. Bolsena
R. Albegna
R. Tiber
Pianosa
Giglio
M. Argentario
Viterbo
TUSCANY
UMBRIA

quarter. The last hope for Florence lay in the friendship of Louis XI. of France, who, though so far he had given no material support, had from the first espoused the cause of Florence, and had consistently employed all the resources of diplomacy on her behalf. "To-day, as always," writes Lorenzo to Louis in August, "I think I shall need the assistance, favour, and protection of your Majesty, to whom I shall turn in confidence for all that concerns me as to my lord, protector and patron, my hope and my refuge."

Short of military aid Louis had certainly been active on the side of Florence and Lorenzo. He had forbidden the exportation of money to Rome: he constantly held over Sixtus the threat of a General Council, and he tried to frighten Ferrante by talk about the French claims to Naples. In November, when hostilities were suspended, Louis took a definite step towards securing a general peace in Italy. A special embassy was despatched to Rome to urge on Sixtus the imperative necessity of the union of Christendom against the ever-increasing danger from the Turks. Combined resistance was impossible as long as the Pope was the storm-centre of Italy. Let him abandon the war, restore peace to the country, and call a Council for the purpose of uniting all Christian men together against the common foe. Let the questions in dispute between Sixtus and Lorenzo be submitted to investigation and arbitration, and especially let Lorenzo's side of the case be heard. Louis on his part was a faithful son of the Church, who only desired that the Church should do justice, fulfil her mission as the upholder of Christian peace, as the protagonist of war against the infidel. At any rate let active hostilities remain suspended under a flag of truce until the representations of the French King had been reasonably considered.

These proposals, which were skilfully tuned to the notes of moderation and reasonableness, were laid before the Pope in January 1479 by the six French envoys. Sixtus in reply renewed his complaints against Lorenzo, and denied the right of the French King to intervene. He declared that arbitration might rather tend to prolong war than to promote peace where there was no common ground of agreement between

he parties, and that no sufficient reasons existed for ummoning a General Council. There was, he said, one imple road to peace, and that was that Lorenzo should onfess his guilt and submit to the punishment which it nvolved. If Lorenzo would do this, all other points at ssue could promptly be composed.

The demands for peace, however, initiated by Louis were 1ow strongly supported from other quarters. An embassy rom Edward IV. of England arrived in Rome in the early spring with a mission similar in purport to that of France. It was rumoured in Rome that Louis intended to call a Council on his own part if the Pope, within a month, did not show himself amenable to reason. The ambassadors of Florence, Milan, and Venice declared that their States would support a Council so summoned, Venice being foremost in protest against the irreconcilable attitude of the Pope. In the circumstances Sixtus thought it prudent to temporise. A commission of Cardinals was appointed to investigate the whole case. Early in April the Interdict against Florence was suspended, and there was to be a truce to hostilities while these negotiations were in progress. In due course the Papal terms of accommodation were formulated. As soon as they were made known it was obvious that the only intention of Sixtus was to gain time in which to tide over a period of disagreeable pressure. The question of the provocation which Florence had received was ignored. She must acknowledge her sins, her sacrilegious violence against ecclesiastical persons, and must make atonement: Botticelli's pictures upon the Palazzo must be erased: Niccolo Vitelli must be expelled from the territories of Florence: Borgo San Sepolcro and other fortresses on the Romagna frontier must be surrendered to the Pope: Florence must compensate the Pope and his ally for their expenses incurred in the war, and must never again make war upon the territories of the Holy See. Such terms were only drawn up to be rejected. There was only one of them to which Florence would consent, and that was the erasure of the pictures. Everything else was held by Florence to be impossible, and in this opinion her allies concurred.

Sixtus now made another cunning move. He called the ambassadors of Venice, Milan, and Florence to a consultation, and inquired if they would forthwith, upon the conclusion of peace, turn their arms against the Turk. Venice was compelled to declare that having waged war single-handed against the Turks for many years, she had now concluded an agreement with the Sultan, and intended to be true to that agreement. Sixtus would hear no more. The Conference broke up, and the ambassadors withdrew from Rome with solemn protests against the implacability of Sixtus and with appeals to a General Council.

There was now obviously no alternative but to continue the war. Formal hostilities therefore between the armies in the Chiana valley began at the end of April. In another quarter, however, informal military operations had been in progress during the time of truce. The Sforza brothers, the Duke of Bari and Ludovico Il Moro, had taken the field as free lances, as early as the month of February. They sought to gain their own advantage from the troubled times by stirring up insurrections in Milan against the Regent, by stimulating disaffection in adjacent districts, and by attracting public attention to themselves by the dash and daring of their exploits. A demonstration before the town of Pisa, which resulted in the general pillage of the country round, proved to Florence how formidable these irregular guerillas might prove if adequately supported. The Duke of Ferrara was hastily summoned from Poggio Imperiale with a portion of his forces to restore order, and expel the Sforzas from their position.

This operation was scarcely completed when the period of truce expired and the regular campaign of 1479 began between the armies in the Chiana Valley. The main idea of the Florentines in this campaign was to act on the defensive, in such a manner as to protect themselves at all points against the approach of the enemy to the city. But these defensive movements might be assisted by offensive operations upon the enemy's flank and rear, the district around Perugia offering favourable chances for a diversion. Thus in the campaign of 1479 we find two spheres of action, at a

considerable distance one from the other, the one in and about Poggio Imperiale, the other in the neighbourhood of Lake Thrasimene. Apart from military considerations some such plan was rendered imperatively necessary by the inveterate jealousies between the commanders, which now broke out with greater rancour than before. The cause of Florence had been greatly strengthened by the defection of Roberto Malatesta from the Pope's side. As a condottiere general he was regarded as almost the equal of Urbino himself, and his acceptance of a command in the Florentine army was some set-off against the incompetence of the Duke of Ferrara. But Malatesta was at enmity with Costanzo Sforza, who in this campaign accepted the pay of Florence, and the dissensions between them rendered it impossible for them to act together. Carlo Fortebraccio also, whose services were requisitioned from Venice, was the hereditary foe of the Sforzas. Amid all these private enmities there was grave danger that the hostilities of the commanders would prove more formidable to Florence than the operations of the enemy. It was therefore arranged that Malatesta and Fortebraccio should take charge of the contemplated movements in Perugia, while Sforza remained with the defensive forces gathered at Poggio Imperiale.

Before Fortebraccio could revive his family claims upon Perugia he died, but his place was taken by his son Bernardino. A Papal force, under the Prefect of Rome, was despatched to defend Perugia, and to protect the flank of Calabria's army in the Chiana Valley. This force was encountered by Malatesta and Bernardino at La Magione, a little to the east of Lake Thrasimene, where it was completely defeated. The successful generals, however, failed to follow up their success, while the blunderings and quarrels at the front neutralised the advantage which had been gained on the rear. It was indeed a fatal thing for Florence to gain a victory, for at once disputes arose among the conquerors as to the spoils. Plunder was more of an object than politics, and of the plunder each mercenary freebooter was determined to have the lion's share.

Macchiavelli deduces from this war some of his most

cogent examples of the worthlessness of mercenary troops, for it was on such troops that Florence was now solely dependent. One advantage however followed from the quarrels among the leaders. The feud between Ercole d'Este and the Marquis of Mantua reached a point where it became impossible for them to act together.

A fresh outbreak of the Sforza brothers in the neighbourhood of Parma made it necessary for D'Este to march with a portion of his troops to protect the eastern frontier, while the Marquis of Mantua was despatched to co-operate with Malatesta's division. Sigismondo d'Este took his brother's place at Poggio Imperiale, and it was left to him and Costanza Sforza, with reduced forces, to maintain the position against the Duke of Calabria.

The particular quarrels which led to these dispositions originated in a small success gained by the main army over the Sienese town of Casole. The Florentine troops, issuing forth from Poggio Imperiale, stormed the place and took it, but little or no attempt was made to follow up this advantage. The result rather was to make the army over-confident, slack, and careless, at the very moment when the diminution in its strength should have made it most alert. Calabria saw his opportunity for a surprise attack upon the enemies' quarters. Exhibiting for once a genuine military instinct, he concentrated all his available forces at Chiusi, reached Siena by rapid and secret marches, and fell upon the entrenched camp at Poggio Imperiale on September 7. The Florentine army fled in panic, and was only redeemed from utter disgrace by the heroism of Costanzo Sforza who succeeded in rallying a part of the broken forces at Casciano. With these he turned upon his pursuers, made their leader, Giacopo Appiani, his prisoner, and saved the Florentine gonfalon from capture. Calabria thought enough had been done. His momentary flash of inspiration was exhausted. Instead of brushing Costanzo Sforza aside and making straight for Florence, which was but eight miles distant from Casciano, he determined to make everything safe in his rear before advancing further. Accordingly he sat down before the fortified town of Colle.

The siege of Colle proved a protracted undertaking. For two months the town offered a splendid resistance to all Calabria's efforts. The time occupied by the operation was sufficient to deprive Calabria of practically all the advantage he had gained. Florence put herself in a state of defence. Sforza, on the side of Siena, Malatesta, on that of Arezzo, provided for the security of the capital against a surprise. The heroic defence of Colle breathed inspiration into the Florentine cause, while outlying townships, such as San Gemignano, showed a spirit of gallantry and devotion in striking contrast to the apathy and ineptitude which had characterised the operations of the regular forces. When Colle at last fell, on November 14, Calabria was in no position to continue the campaign. He was glad to offer a truce and to retire to Siena where, in winter quarters, he could refresh and recruit his army, while making ready for a new campaign in the Spring.

It was a true instinct which led Lorenzo to propose that the citizenship of Florence should be conferred on the Priors of Colle in recognition of its gallant defence. Had Colle fallen without resistance Lorenzo must almost certainly have fallen with it. In war, time is everything, and Colle provided Lorenzo with time in which to devise and carry into execution a scheme, from which he hoped to gain the peace of Italy and the security of his own government in Florence.

Although at the close of the campaign of 1479 the situation for Florence was improved, it was still almost desperate. The expenses of the war were ruinous and all classes were loud in complaint. However great the devotion of the City to Lorenzo might be when Florence was under the impulse of a cowardly and brutal attack upon his person, yet it was not likely to remain proof against the repeated assertion that all the misery, privation, and suspense which Florence was called upon to endure could be ended in a moment if she would abandon Lorenzo's cause. To organise a new campaign was practically impossible in the existing state of the finances, while even could it be done, the conduct of the previous campaigns offered no promise of ultimate success.

The plague too was raging in the City, and all the enthusiasm inspired by the attempt of the Pazzi had evaporated under the stress of pestilence, famine and disaster. Lorenzo was quick to mark the signs of the times and read his own destruction in the gloomy faces which everywhere surrounded him. He became convinced that only by some dramatic and personal stroke could he retrieve his fortunes, if indeed they were still to be retrieved. He decided to take his fate into his own hands, and win or lose all, by a voluntary surrender of himself into the power of Ferrante, the least implacable of his many foes. He would thus clear himself of the reproach that Florence was being sacrificed to the interests of an individual: he would put to a decisive test the assertions that the war was not being waged against Florence, but against himself. By his own sacrifice Florence would be saved, and in secret he cherished the hope that in sacrifice he would find salvation; that, by the exercise of his own fascinations and diplomatic arts, he could work upon Ferrante to renew his old friendship and alliance, and restore peace to Italy on terms honourable to Florence and to Lorenzo at once.

The secret history of Lorenzo's resolve is now tolerably clear. Among other circumstances, it was dependent upon events which had recently taken place in Milan. There, by a strange turn of fortune, Ludovico Sforza had become practically supreme. His ambitions had been served by the death of his brother, the Duke of Bari, which left Ludovico the sole secular survivor of Francesco Sforza's sons. In the war he had accomplished several brilliant achievements which captivated the imagination of the people of Milan. His latest and most brilliant exploit, the descent of the Cento Croci pass onto Tortona, had so much impressed the Duke of Ferrara, who had been detached from Poggio Imperiale to cope with him, that the Duke became convinced that tranquillity in Milan could never be secured until Ludovico's restless spirit was quieted by his readmission to the privileges and position of a Milanese prince. Ferrara therefore urged upon the Duchess-Regent that she should compose the quarrel with Ludovico and recall him. In spite of the

remonstrances and prophetic warnings of her counsellor, Simonetta, she determined to follow Ferrara's advice. Ludovico's banishment was revoked, and he entered Milan amid the acclamations of the people on September 7. From this moment the authority of the Duchess passed away. Simonetta was dismissed and imprisoned, and Ludovico Sforza, in the name of his nephew, ruled in Milan as its supreme Lord.

A change of such importance in the government of Milan could not fail profoundly to affect the fortunes of Lorenzo. A friendly State which had been too weak and distracted to render him any effectual assistance was now in the hands of no ordinary man, whose friendship or enmity might decide the destiny of Florence and Lorenzo. To secure Ludovico as a friend was Lorenzo's first concern, though the chances of success seemed small. Ludovico had taken an active part in the war against Lorenzo: he was connected with Ferrante through his sister Hippolita: he seemed to have more to gain from an alliance with victorious Naples than with humiliated Florence. But possibly these Neapolitan predilections might prove the very instruments to serve Lorenzo's purpose, if he could himself effect a reconciliation with Ferrante. An alliance to which Milan, Naples and Florence were parties would restore the balance of power in Italy, checkmate the Pope, and make the restoration of general peace inevitable.

From the moment, therefore, of Ludovico's recall, Lorenzo entered into correspondence with him and used every effort to secure his support and goodwill. In a letter of September 17, Ludovico made use of encouraging and polite assurances. Lorenzo might dispose of him, whatever events might arise, and use his resources as his own. Words like these, however, meant little or nothing unless they were accompanied by active support. On September 25 Lorenzo wrote to his ambassador, Girolamo Morelli, at Milan, a letter which shows his clear appreciation of the situation. If the integrity and independence of Florence were regarded by Ludovico as of importance to himself, he must take measures to maintain them or they would be

lost. If any Italian Power were allowed to aggrandise herself at the expense of Florence, Milan would feel the effect, which could not fail to be disastrous. The traditional policy of Ludovico's father was based on the conviction that Milan and Florence must stand or fall together. "Impress this truth on Lord Ludovico, that our position here will be strong or weak at his lordship's will. If he should do nothing, he will give the reins of Italy into the hands of others, while now they are in his own."

In this same letter there is a sentence which has a direct reference to Lorenzo's idea of an accommodation with Ferrante. He tells Morelli that for many months past he has received friendly words from the Duke of Calabria, and much encouragement "to throw myself into the King's arms." From this it would appear that Lorenzo's resolve to go to Naples was no sudden impulse, but a scheme suggested from Naples itself, giving promise of a friendly reception there and of a favourable issue. That this was the true state of the case is made more apparent by a despatch from Morelli to Lorenzo of November 12, which seems to be a reply to Lorenzo's letter of September 25. The ambassador makes known the mind of Ludovico, who was strongly of opinion that Lorenzo should at once come to terms with Ferrante. Reasonable proposals would not be rejected in that quarter, especially if they came speedily. "*Inter os et offam multa accidere possent. Jactet aleam.*" "Between cup and lip many things may happen. Let him throw the die." A few days later Ludovico was even more explicit. He could, he said, be of little material service to Lorenzo: the state of affairs in Milan did not admit of active assistance, but he would willingly use his good offices with the King of Naples, and do his utmost by way of mediation, to effect a reconciliation. Within a few hours of this declaration the Duke of Calabria proposed the truce, and Lorenzo could have little doubt that Ludovico's advice had been given after consultation with Ferrante, and that the King on his part was willing to smooth the path for negotiations.

On November 24 Filipo Strozzi left Florence as a

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LUDOVICO SFORZA IL MORO

FROM THE PAINTING BY LEONARDO DA VINCI

In the Ambrosiana at Milan

special envoy from Lorenzo to Ferrante. On his arrival he delivered his message, which was to the effect that Lorenzo placed himself in the King's hands. He would willingly agree to whatsoever Ferrante should decide upon, provided peace were restored and the Florentine towns which Calabria had taken were given back. To Strozzi's astonishment Ferrante replied that from information he had received he was expecting Lorenzo to arrive in person, and that matters might remain in abeyance until he came. Lorenzo's fixed determination to come himself to Naples was therefore arrived at between the middle and the end of November, and there was a just sufficient understanding with Ferrante beforehand to give assurance that his visit would not be unacceptable, nor his proposals unfavourably prejudged.

One main object with Lorenzo was to make his departure as dramatic as possible, that it might appeal to the emotions of the Florentine people. The impression it was designed to produce on them was that for their sake he was voluntarily surrendering himself into the hands of his implacable foe, being willing to endure banishmnt, imprisonment, death itself, if only he could preserve Florence from impending disasters. Accordingly he made his arrangements with secrecy, and only consulted a very few of his most intimate and prudent friends. Having entrusted the government to Tomaso Soderini, on December 1, 1479, he set out by way of S. Miniato to Pisa, where he proposed to take ship to Naples. On the 5th he received a private letter from the Chancellor, Bartolommeo Scala, who related the impression which his departure had created upon the people. They all applauded him, and believed that his mission would be a success, for they rather remembered the close ties of friendship which had bound Ferrante to Florence in the past than the recent enmity which had resulted in war. In any event, Scala assured Lorenzo, he had done right, for the people were bent on peace, and could endure the miseries of war and taxation no longer. Should he be successful in negotiating an honourable peace, then he would return *totus aureus*—all golden. Every-

body placed the highest hopes in his prudence and authority.

On the 7th, Lorenzo addressed an affecting letter to the Signoria, explaining the grounds of the action on which he had resolved. "I am content," he said, "to take this risk, seeing that it is possible that the only aim of our enemies is my destruction. Just as this war was begun in the blood of my brother and myself, so now, by my means it may be concluded. All I desire is that my life, my death, my prosperity, my misfortunes, may contribute to the welfare of my native land." When this letter, says Valori, was read, it was received with various opinions, but there was not one who could refrain from tears at the thought of Lorenzo thus ready to sacrifice himself for his city and his fellow countrymen.

The Signoria, after due deliberation, approved of Lorenzo's course, and proceeded to regularise his mission by appointing him a special ambassador to the Court of Naples with full powers to negotiate a peace. His official credentials reached him at Pisa before he sailed; indeed, in the early part of January he constantly received from the Ten letters of instruction and recommendation. The common view of Lorenzo as acting in this affair quite independently, and staking all his fortunes on the hazard of a die, requires modification in the light of the despatches, letters, and negotiations which preceded and attended his resolve.

The passage from Pisa to Naples was a favourable one, and Lorenzo drew happy auguries from the condition of the elements. "See," he said, "how Heaven smiles upon our undertaking. Let us pluck up courage, and cast aside all fears." Upon his arrival in the Bay, he found a splendid reception awaiting him. The populace had flocked to the quays to catch a glimpse of the hero who, in the eyes of his admirers, had surpassed all private men by his virtue, dignity, and fortune, and had become the equal of the greatest Kings.

Ferrante had commissioned his son Federigo and his grandson Ferdinand, to receive, on his behalf, his illustrious guest, to whom a palace was assigned as a residence. So favourable was his reception that the Venetians grew

suspicious, and openly declared that the whole affair had been arranged beforehand between Lorenzo and the King; that the appearance of improvisation was only a blind to conceal a secret agreement by which Naples was to be substituted for Venice in the Triple Alliance. This opinion however, went beyond the facts. Lorenzo had still much to do, and deep anxieties to endure, before he could congratulate himself either on his safety or success. Ferrante's mind was by no means made up beforehand, though he was willing to listen to what Lorenzo had to say. The ultimate issue remained for many weeks in doubt. Under a smiling countenance Lorenzo cloaked the heaviness of his heart. By day, and before the eyes of men, says one who was with him, he was all affability and confidence, but at night he lay awake bemoaning with tears his own fate and that of his city.

All Lorenzo's diplomacy was directed to convincing Ferrante that his interests lay in an alliance with Florence rather than with the Pope. Fabroni seems to have invented the elaborate speech in which he makes Lorenzo detail his arguments to Ferrante, but it is not difficult to surmise the line which his arguments must have taken. He would urge the instability of the Papal policy, and the Papal tenure; the nature of the Papal claims to suzerainty over Naples, which had been suspended not by the Papacy as an institution, but by Sixtus as an individual; that Sixtus was already old, and that there was no guarantee for the policy of his successor; that the Pope was the enemy of the peace of Italy at a time when the interests of Naples, of Italy, of all Christendom, were bound up in peace; that Riario's ambition knew no bounds, and that his influence over Sixtus was paramount. Any day the Angevin claims on Naples might be revived and supported by the Pope. No reliance was to be placed on Venice, who would not hesitate to sacrifice Naples if thereby her own ends could be served. Already the relations which existed between Naples and Milan were friendly, and an alliance with Florence would involve an alliance with Milan. Ludovico was interested equally with Ferrante in keeping the French

out of Italy: a combination of the three powers, Naples, Milan, and Florence, would be a sure guarantee for the peace of Italy, and for the security in their respective governments of Medici, Sforza, and Ferrante alike. In no other alliance was such a guarantee and security to be looked for.

Arguments such as these, advanced with all the force, eloquence, and personal fascination which Lorenzo had at command, could not fail powerfully to impress Ferrante. He could scarcely forget the close friendship and genuine admiration which, until quite recently, had bound him to Lorenzo, nor were the intimate relations between Lorenzo and some members of Ferrante's immediate family without their effect.

But all the argument was by no means on Lorenzo's side. There were personal considerations and motives of public policy which told heavily against him. The Duke of Calabria was by no means in favour of an accommodation. He had conducted the war, had captured the Florentine towns, and was strongly disinclined to give them up. He had his own designs on Tuscany, which must come to nothing if Naples and Florence joined in an alliance. Moreover, there were grave dangers in breaking with the Pope, who might, in revenge, revive his own and the Angevin claims in Naples in their most offensive and aggressive form: the prospect of Venice, as a really active enemy, was alarming, and Venice had already begun to show her teeth.

While Ferrante was in this position of doubt and hesitation, he was beset by the ambassadors of all the parties chiefly interested in his decision. The Pope, at the first rumour of a possible accommodation between Lorenzo and Ferrante, took serious alarm, and used every effort to keep the King true to the cause of the Holy See. His ambassadors recapitulated in detail the original objects for which the war had been undertaken. They urged that no change had taken place in the situation, and that not without gross inconsistency could Ferrante now make a friend of the man against whom he had just expended so much blood and treasure. If, however, terms were to be arranged, it was the Pope who

should arrange them. Lorenzo should have come to him, who was the most grievously injured party, and Sixtus insistently demanded that Lorenzo should be sent from Naples to Rome, where, if anywhere, terms of peace could most suitably be made.

An earnest of Ferrante's ultimate decision was given by his flat refusal to accede to this last demand. Whatever happened, he would not send Lorenzo to Rome. But if this decision was encouraging to Lorenzo, other circumstances were in the last degree depressing. He learned that the Genoese had taken advantage of the troubled situation in Florence to make an attack upon Sarzana, his father's recent and most prized acquisition, and had made themselves masters of the place. What rendered the event particularly disquieting was the suspicion that the secret force behind the Genoese was the hand of the Duke of Calabria. If this indeed were so, it was to be feared that Ferrante was playing a double game, amusing Florence with hopes of peace, while he played upon her weakness by seizing her territories. It is little wonder that Lorenzo was sad at nights.

But the more his fortunes trembled in the balance, the more it was necessary for him to put a good face on the situation, and to exercise his own unrivalled qualities of persuasion and charm. In Naples he made himself immensely popular. He was not content to limit his attentions to the royal family and the Court. He identified himself as far as possible with the Neapolitan people. He indulged in lavish expenditure, now making provision for dowering poor girls, now buying out galley slaves from their condition of servitude. Valori says he remembers hearing from Paolo Antonio Soderini what amount Lorenzo actually spent while in Naples, but that he does not dare to write it. The reward came at last. In February matters advanced so far that he was able to count with certainty upon Ferrante. The rough draft of a treaty had been drawn up and agreed upon before the end of the month. Nothing remained but to arrange details and put the treaty into final form. Lorenzo felt that his mission was accomplished, and that his cause

was won. He took ship from Naples to Livorno, thence to Pisa, and by the middle of March was back again in Florence, received by the people as the saviour of his country with the wildest manifestations of delight.

But the terms of the treaty had yet to be made public. When they were known enthusiasm became tempered by some dissatisfaction and complaint. But Florence could not expect—though she did expect it—to wage unsuccessful war without suffering from it. In the circumstances, the terms were not unduly severe.

Florence was to ask the Pope's pardon for her offences. The Pazzi conspirators, who were confined in the prisons of Volterra, were to be released. The expenses incurred by the Duke of Calabria in the war were to be paid, and the fortresses which he had taken were to remain at the discretion of Ferrante, to be given up or retained as he might determine. Florence, however, was to be at liberty to recover Sarzana from the Genoese if she could, and the Princes of Romagna who had espoused the cause of Florence against the Pope were to be guaranteed against the resentment of the Pontiff. Subject to these conditions, a firm alliance was to exist between Florence and Naples, and whoever made war upon one of the allies was to be regarded as the common enemy of both.

But though peace was thus concluded between Florence and Naples, Lorenzo's difficulties had not entirely disappeared. The Pope still remained obdurate, and Venice promptly took the place of Naples in the Papal League. The Duke of Calabria showed no disposition to quit his quarters in Siena; on the contrary, he was suspected of engineering a revolution there with the object of securing for himself the lordship of the city. The captured towns remained in the hands of Naples, and Sarzana in those of the Genoese. Florence seemed to be almost as much threatened by the restoration of peace as she had been during the active operations of war. At this moment a bolt from the blue changed the face of affairs in Italy, and finally rescued Lorenzo from his difficulties A Turkish squadron, having failed in an attack upon Rhodes, resolved

to cover the failure by a descent on the shores of Italy. At the end of July seven thousand Turks, under the command of Keduk Achmet, landed in Apulia, laid siege to Otranto, and took it. The slaughter of the people in the neighbourhood, and the fate of the defenders of Otranto, opened the eyes of Italy to what the Turkish danger really meant. At last it was realised that the Turks were not a diplomatic fiction but a terrible reality; that this was no time for Italians to be fighting against Italians. In little more than a week after the landing of the Turks the Duke of Calabria had quitted Siena, his Tuscan ambitions extinguished for ever. The Pope had no alternative but to forego his rage against Lorenzo, in return for such an apology as Florence chose to give. Ferrante showed himself generous and forbearing as to the restitution of the captured fortresses. He could scarcely act otherwise when barbarian invaders were ravaging his own kingdom. Florence at last enjoyed a peace which was not incompatible with her honour, and all the credit went to Lorenzo, who, at the risk of life and fortune, had watched over and preserved the destinies of the State. From this time, until his death twelve years later, he enjoyed a supremacy which was never seriously questioned, though to the Florentines the despotism of Lorenzo was not a despotism. It was a voluntary surrender of power into the hands of the man, who, at a crisis of their fortunes, had been willing to surrender all on their behalf.

It is not surprising that an event so opportune and propitious to Lorenzo as the Turkish invasion should have been attributed by some to his own machinations. His good relations with the Turkish Sultan had been very recently proved by the surrender of Bernardo Bandini into his hands, an acknowledgment of Lorenzo's influence which had impressed itself on the imagination of Italy. Such an amazing turn of fortune for Lorenzo could scarcely, it was thought, be the result of coincidence. But if Ferrante, who was chiefly affected by the Turkish inroad, had believed in Lorenzo's responsibility for it, it is incredible that the good relations between them would have remained

undisturbed. In the lack of definite evidence it can only be said that it was natural that Lorenzo should have been suspected, but improbable that suspicion was justified by his action.

It only remained to fulfil that clause in the treaty which committed the Florentines to an apology and due submission to the Pope. An imposing embassy of twelve principal citizens was despatched to Rome, though no attention was paid to the Pope's demand that Lorenzo should form one of the ambassadors. At its head was Francesco Soderini, Bishop of Volterra, accompanied among others by Antonio dei Medici, Giovanni Tornabuoni, Luigi Guicciardini and Guidantonio Vespucci. The terms of apology were ingeniously framed. The ambassadors were to admit that the Republic might have committed many errors, both of a public and private nature, of which, owing to his divine wisdom, the Pope had better knowledge than the Republic itself could have. Whatever errors had been done, Florence, through her most illustrious sons, acknowledged them and humbly asked for pardon, at the same time commending the city and its citizens to the future favour and protection of the Pontiff. Not a word was said about the specific causes of the quarrel. The political griefs of Sixtus against Florence were ignored: not a word was said about injuries and violence done upon ecclesiastical persons: no mention was made of an indemnity, nor of any personal humiliation to which Lorenzo was to submit himself. Everything was vague, perfunctory, and almost ironical in the apology actually tendered, but everything was splendid and imposing in the manner in which the tender was made. On December 3, the ambassadors were received by Sixtus before the bronze gates of the central nave of St. Peter's. The Pope was seated upon an extemporised throne gorgeously hung with purple silk, and a great concourse of dignitaries and officials attended him. The ambassadors approached, and falling on their knees acknowledged their offences through the mouth of Luigi Guicciardini, who implored the Pope's forgiveness. The noise made by the crowd of spectators

rendered Guicciardini's remarks inaudible, but as the proceedings were purely formal this was of no consequence. The Pope on his part then spoke a few words of reproof. Then touching each of the ambassadors with a penitent's staff, in token that the interdict was removed and that they were forgiven, the Pope pronounced his blessing; the brazen gates were opened, and high mass was celebrated within the choir to mark the complete reconciliation between the Holy See and its once rebellious, but now repentant, children. The ambassadors, however, were not permitted to depart without an unpleasant reminder that Sixtus expected that their contrition should take a tangible form. Florence must bear her share in the crusade against the Turks, and for this purpose must contribute at her own expense fifteen galleys fully equipped. In the existing state of her finances this was a burden which Florence could ill support. There was, however, consolation in the fact that the condition was one which would take time to fulfil, and between its imposition and its fulfilment many things might happen.

So Florence gave herself up to rejoicing. Strong in her alliance, her lost territories recovered or about to be restored, reconciled to the Church, and in secure possession of her most illustrious son, she soon ceased to remember her former state of humiliation and distress. A prosperous and peaceful epoch seemed now to be before her. Lorenzo, from the scapegoat, was converted into the hero. "All men," says Macchiavelli, "praised him extravagantly, declaring that by his prudence he had recovered in peace all that adverse fortune had taken from them in war; that by his discretion and judgment he had done more than the enemy with all the force of arms which they could command."

A splendid memorial of this great crisis in Lorenzo's life, and of its triumphant issue, was executed by Sandro Botticelli. His picture of Pallas and the Centaur—only recently rescued from obscurity and oblivion—represents the Goddess of Wisdom subjugating by her touch the forces of sedition, anarchy, and war, embodied in the figure of the Centaur. Olive branches are wreathed about her head

and form the embroideries of her closely-fitting tunic. The Medici balls, continually repeated, form the adornments of the skirt, and the listless grasp in which the centaur holds his weapon is in strong contrast to the firm and resolute poise of the great axe-head lance which she controls with such easy grace. In the background the sea and a low range of hills symbolise Lorenzo's journey to Naples, while a single vessel in the middle distance rides at anchor upon untroubled waters, having reached at last the desired haven. No allegory could more fitly or beautifully render the aspect in which Lorenzo presented himself to his friends at the moment when the greatest crisis of his life had passed, and when the greatest period of his career was just about to begin.

CHAPTER XII

NATURE AND BASIS OF LORENZO'S GOVERNMENT

General position of Lorenzo towards the Florentine Constitution—Lorenzo strengthens his personal power—Formation of the Council of Seventy—Functions of the Council of Seventy—Committees within the Council—Machinery for constructing the Council of Seventy—The Consiglio Maggiore—Later modifications of the Council of Seventy—Lorenzo's system of Taxation and Finance—Corruptions of administration—Lorenzo's private use of public funds—Lorenzo's manipulation of the Monte delle Doti—Lorenzo as a man of business—Lorenzo's encouragement of trade and commerce—Affair of the Bartolini Bank—Administration of justice—Private methods of influence and control—Lorenzo's interference in marriages.

ALMOST all the dramatic sensation of Lorenzo's career is crowded into the one brief period which produced the Pazzi Conspiracy and the military, political, and diplomatic crises to which it gave rise. From 1480, when Florence and Lorenzo were reconciled to the Pope and to Ferrante, to 1492, when Lorenzo died, there are few, if any, "great events" to record, though the time is full of events of great importance. To the casual observer Florence seemed to be enjoying that happiness which comes from having no history. The real interest of Lorenzo's life during its last twelve years lies within him rather than in moving incidents with which he was externally associated. The interest is intellectual and spiritual rather than annalistic.

But though this is so, no student of Lorenzo's career can afford to ignore the constitutional and diplomatic problems by which he was continually confronted during the time when his position seemed to be unchallenged, and his personal government most unquestioned and secure. These problems were not separate nor dissociated: they were inextricably intermingled and closely related. In other words Lorenzo's position in Florence and consequently

all his actions, were determined by circumstances which were external and internal. His diplomacy can only be judged in the light of his domestic policy; his domestic policy in the light of his diplomacy.

The purposes of clearness and convenience will, however, best be served by applying this chapter to an exposition and estimate of his government at home, devoting the succeeding chapter to a similar examination of his policy abroad. Such a separatist method has disadvantages, but is not necessarily fatal to a just comprehension of the political unity of Lorenzo's government as a whole.

When we examine the nature and bases of Lorenzo's absolutism we are confronted at the outset with a fact of primary importance, the fact that absolutism, in some form, stood between Florence and destruction. Her previous history has sufficiently disclosed that Florence never was, in any modern sense of the words, either a republic or a democracy; that her people were, and always had been, unfit for that liberty which implies complete self-government; and that, surrounded as she was by grasping and unscrupulous neighbours, her civic independence and territorial power could only be preserved by strong, efficient administration and control. To obtain her ultimate advantages she had involuntarily, and half unconsciously, surrendered from time to time her original ideal of democratic republicanism, and had allowed herself to fall into the power of those whom she deemed most fitted to preserve her. Tyrants, demagogues, oligarchs, families had in the long procession of years, risen up and successively held sway. At last the control of the Medici family was accepted as being on the whole the best suited to her genius and her necessities. Lorenzo was no strong man armed who invaded the chosen home of Liberty in Italy and expelled her by force. He was a man called by circumstances and the people, to occupy the first position in the State, which he must fill or another must have arisen to fill it. The only question was on what terms, and under what conditions, should the man who was called to be monarch over Florence exercise his monarchy. To this question Florence was

never prepared to give a practical and logical answer. She established a monarch on condition that she was allowed to pretend that she enjoyed all the advantages of republican freedom and institutions. She recognised that a one-man rule was essential, but studiously denied to that one man the apparatus of government which his position demanded. The whole condition was one of make-believe and pretence at a time when sincerity and energy were imperatively required. It was not the fault of Lorenzo if he was ever seeking to harmonise the facts of life with the constitutional fictions by which he was continually hampered. It was the fault of Florence that she desired to enjoy concurrently the advantages of monarchy and republicanism, having proved herself unfitted for true republicanism, while making monarchy impossible by insisting upon the retention of the forms and shows of a republican constitution. All the manipulations of the political machine, the wirepullings, the finesse, the corruption, which are laid to Lorenzo's charge were the outcome of the strange and anomalous conditions. No man could have satisfied the prime requirements of Florence except one who was a master in the arts of political manipulation. He must maintain the delusion of freedom while at the same time exercising the powers of an autocrat. He must retain forms of government which were obsolete while adapting his government to the actual conditions of the times. He must at one and the same moment be a monarch and a private person, a citizen and a prince, a burgher-merchant and the chief representative of the State. He must bear the full weight of responsibility, but he must be prepared to find himself without even an office in the government. He must fashion all the political bricks and compact them into a secure edifice of rule, but any demand for constitutional straw might be construed as high treason, as evidence of a fell design to uproot the liberties of his country.

"It is ill living in Florence," said Lorenzo, "without control of the government" (*Senza lo Stato*). He applies the remark not to any man in the abstract but to himself and his family. Circumstances had so fashioned it that

he had to control the government or go under. The law of self-preservation compelled him to preserve not his position as a citizen, but his position as first citizen. If he was not to be first citizen he must yield the place to another better fitted to fill it, and then Florence could no longer be for him. There was no room in Florence for Lorenzo dei Medici as a private person. No other government could be secure as long as he remained a centre around which memory could gather. Therefore he was compelled by the irresistible impulse of facts to seek to consolidate and render effective a position which was as anomalous as it was inevitable; to wield the substance of monarchical power under the outward seeming of republican institutions.

Lorenzo's constitutional departures must be read in the light of these considerations. He was no abstract political thinker who set himself to fashion or modify a constitution in accordance with speculative and theoretical ideas of government. He was a practical man faced by the actualities of an existing situation. The problem for him was to bring a constitution which postulated imaginary conditions into harmony with the real necessities of an existing state of things.

Any measures which he might take would naturally have for their object the strengthening of the position of the responsible head of the State. He was the Head of the State, and therefore it can be argued that his policy was governed by his personal ambition and directed towards the consolidation of his own despotism. The real motives which prompt individual action can seldom be accurately and precisely determined. Moreover man's motives are so mixed and incongruous that it is impossible to assign to any one motive its proper and peculiar weight and value in influencing conduct. It would be absurd to deny that in seeking to strengthen his own power Lorenzo was prompted by personal ambition. But it would be equally absurd to ignore that there were good grounds on which Lorenzo might base the belief that his power, and the stability of Florence, were one; that in serving the interests of his own rule he was best providing for the welfare of the State.

The effects upon Florence of his twelve years of ascen-

dency, the consequences which followed for Italy and Florence alike when his hand was removed from the helm, are indications, if not proofs, that Lorenzo was right in thinking that the peace and security of his State and of his country depended on the degree of influence and authority which he could succeed in securing to himself. At the same time it was necessary studiously to humour the prejudices and delusions of the Florentines as to their constitutional position. A naked and declared despotism would have defeated the object in view. The problem therefore was to establish under existing constitutional forms and safeguards a strong personal government, which should be a guarantee to Florence of her own internal prosperity and welfare, which should safeguard her external interests, which should ensure continuity and consistency of policy amid the constant changes in the *personnel* of her executive officers, and should provide her with a stable and effective representative to take his place on equal terms of diplomacy and ceremonial among the other Prince-governed Italian States.

In 1480 the events of the past two years had impressed upon Lorenzo a deepened sense of the vicissitudes of Fortune, of the necessity of a firmer hold upon the reins of government. He had barely survived an appalling crisis which had well-nigh overwhelmed Florence and himself together. His position, his courage, and his initiative would scarcely have saved him without the accident of the Turkish raid on Otranto. He had not failed to mark the ominous murmurs which rose against himself when Florence was hard pressed, nor was he ignorant of the smothered dissatisfaction which lay beneath the rejoicings which hailed the return of peace. He had no desire to go on his travels again or to find himself at the mercy of a foreign foe or a chance majority. A reorganisation of the government which should secure his own complete control of it was now the first necessity. It seemed to him that this could best be done by retaining for the old Councils all their nominal authority while entrusting all the real power to a body entirely dependent on or devoted to himself.

This body took shape in a Council of Seventy, the members

of which held office for life. It is true that public opinion was at first soothed by assigning a limit of five years to the duration of this Council, but the provision was not intended to be observed and it was inoperative. Of these seventy members thirty were nominated by the existing Signoria, and the first function of the Thirty was to fill up the vacant places by choosing forty persons to complete the Council. Any vacancies which might occur were to be filled up by co-optation on condition that two thirds of the members were present to co-opt, and that the successful candidate or candidates were chosen by a majority of two-thirds of those present. Other stipulations regulating the composition of this Council were—that of the Forty, each member must have reached the age of forty: that no two-members of the same family could be chosen to a seat among the Forty: that if a family was already represented on the Thirty that family could not also be represented on the Forty: that the full Council of Seventy should represent the Greater and the Lesser Arts in the proportions of three-fourths and one-fourth respectively: that the members of the Greater Arts must have qualified for the office of Gonfalonier of Justice, and that no member could vote, though he could sit and speak, until his taxes were paid in full. The Gonfalonier of the Republic was an *ex-officio* member, and any Gonfalonier of Justice might, as a recognition of special ability or service, be added to the Council provided that the conditions as to families were not infringed.

When we pass from the composition to the functions of the Council of Seventy we find that it was, in a word, a permanent executive with far-reaching powers. It controlled appointments to the Signoria, assuming to itself the duty, which heretofore had been exercised by the *Accopiatori*, of supervising the electoral boxes. By this means those alone became eligible for the highest magistracies in the State who were agreeable to the Council of Seventy. Two days before the election to the Signoria took place, the names proposed for the various offices were subjected to a rigid scrutiny, time being thus afforded to get rid of any possible opponent of the party in power. As the complete

Council of Seventy might prove a rather cumbersome instrument for delicate manipulations it was divided into two sections, each of thirty-five members. Each section acted alone, and in turn for twelve months, care being taken that each section should consist of the full complement of thirty-five persons whatever the actual number composing the Council of Seventy might be. Thus from the fact that seventy was the nominal rather than the actual number, a few members might chance to sit continuously instead of biennially.

Not content with controlling the executive government by packing the Signoria with its partisans, the Seventy constructed a paramount inner executive ring composed of its own members. This body took the form of two Committees, the *Otto di Pratica* or the Eight, chosen every six months from the Seventy, who, during their period of office, controlled all foreign affairs, and the *Twelve Procurators of the Commune*, chosen in the same manner and for the same period, to control all home affairs. The members of these Committees were not re-eligible when their six months' term was up; consequently every member of the Seventy in the course of a few years had gained personal and practical experience in the intimate conduct of affairs. The Signoria itself was reduced to the position of executor of the will of the Committees. Every measure of the Signoria must be submitted to the appropriate Committee, which either gave its sanction, or referred the matter to the general body of the Seventy, whose decision was binding on the Signoria. Every act of government, financial, legislative, or diplomatic, must first be approved by a two-thirds majority of the Seventy sitting in conclave, two-thirds of the members at least being present. When so sanctioned, but only then, the measure was allowed to proceed,* on the old accustomed course, through the Signoria, the Colleges, and the successive Councils of the People, the Commune and the Hundred.

The Council of Seventy was not the arbitrary creation of a despotic individual or a servile Signoria. The methods by which it was called into being are almost as significant

* For the old legislative methods, *see pp.* 42, 43 note.

and worthy of attention as the Council itself. A temporary, but very highly elaborated, piece of machinery was erected to construct a governmental system which was destined to outlast Lorenzo. Although the nucleus of the Seventy—the first thirty members—was called into being by the existing Signoria, its authority to act was conferred upon it by a Balìa summoned *ad hoc*. The usual procedure of a Parlamento, however, was not followed on this occasion, popular sanction being supplied by a Bill carried through all its stages in the usual manner. The object of the Bill was to establish a new College, which for the moment should supersede all existing Colleges or Councils; to revise the Constitution; to take charge of the electoral machinery, and to make such positive changes as circumstances seemed to require. The new College was to consist in the first place of thirty members chosen by the Signora. From these thirty a larger and more popular body was to spring, which in a sense would absorb the thirty. But from the fact that they were the first to be chosen, and that from them the larger body sprang, the Thirty constituted an inner ring or Committee, which may almost be dignified by the name of a separate and controlling Council.

The Thirty, in conjunction with the Signoria, were to nominate a Board of two hundred and ten members, each member being over thirty years of age and fully qualified for office. For the purposes of the elections for November 1480, forty-eight persons, elected in that month, were to be associated with the two hundred and ten, the whole body, with the Signoria and the Colleges, constituting a Grand Council, or Consiglio Maggiore,* for the purposes

* Composition of the Consiglio Maggiore:

1	Gonfalonier of the Republic	constituting the Signoria.
8	Priors of Liberty	
12	Buonuomini	constituting the Colleges.
16	Gonfaloniers of Companies	
The 30	originally nominated by the Signoria.	
,, 210	nominated by the 30.	
,; 48	co-opted by the 210 and the 30.	
,, 40	soon added to the original 30.	

Total, 365. These last, the 40 and the 30, survive as the Council of Seventy.

aforesaid. This Grand Council, although recruited by nomination, selection, and office, yet possessed a certain representative character. It probably represented Florence more accurately than the British Parliament represented this country before 1832. The proportion of members to total population was as 1 to 247. The Greater and the Lesser Arts were represented in the usual proportions of three fourths to one fourth; each of the four quarters into which Florence was divided was represented with tolerable equality, and no more than three members of the same family might be chosen on the Two Hundred and Ten and the Thirty. An exception was indeed made in the case of two families which cannot now be identified, no restrictions of age or number were to apply in their particular case. But the general provision as to age, as to families, as to a two-thirds quorum and a two-thirds majority, afforded security against despotic tyranny and dictation, while giving to the deliberations and decisions of this Council a legislative authority which was more than respectable. That it was not necessarily a picked body of Lorenzo's partisans is proved by the fact that Rinuccini, personally ill-disposed to Lorenzo, and a sour critic of the Medician *régime*, was himself a member of the Two Hundred and Ten. If, as is probable, the Council reinforced its deliberations by consultation with prominent citizens outside, its great and permanent work, the formation of the Council of Seventy, may be regarded as an expression of the real and felt needs of Florence, rather than as a slavish abandonment of all liberty into the hands of a single man. This was an age when all the tendencies were in favour of the concentration of power in the hands of an absolute ruler. When we trace the development of these tendencies in England, in France, in Spain, in the Italian despotisms, and in Florence, we may conclude that Florence cut out a road to absolutism by methods which were comparatively moderate and representative. The executive government received a much-needed accession of strength, while the ascendency which the Council of Seventy secured was rather that of a party than of an individual. It remained for the genius of an individual to adapt the

party machinery to his personal ends, a task which Lorenzo could perform, as Armstrong says, because he was an incomparable party chief. Most of all, the revised Constitution, by the principle of life membership of a controlling Senate, gave to Florentine institutions that stability and consistency which was unattainable under a system of capricious Balìas. But while doing so, the Constitution still retained much of its old democratic form. It saved the susceptibilities of the people while rectifying much that had been amiss in the old order of things.

The new experiment was found on the whole to work satisfactorily and for ten years no further changes were made. Then Lorenzo seems to have become suspicious that the operations of so large a body in electoral affairs might result in the return of an unfavourable Signoria. In 1490 the election of the Signoria was once more entrusted to *Accopiatori* appointed for the purpose, and a small Committee of Seventeen, on which Lorenzo had a place, was entrusted with full powers to revise and reform the whole system of elections and finance. It is possible that at this time he thought the occasion favourable for a more definite advance towards a declared and recognised monarchical position. Rumour has it that he proposed to himself to become Gonfalonier for life. Poliziano, on the other hand, definitely states that Lorenzo contemplated retirement from public life in favour of his son Piero. It is unnecessary to lay much stress on unconfirmed reports as to his intentions, but if he had become Gonfalonier for life he would only have anticipated by a few years the actual course of events. Florence was ripe for an officially recognised permanent President or First Consul, as may be seen by the election of Piero Soderini to that office after the fall of Savonarola. Florence was fond of looking to Venice for constitutional models; both the Council of Seventy in 1480 and Savonarola's Grand Council of 1495, were based on Venetian precedents. It would only have been carrying imitation a little further if Lorenzo had become Doge of Florence. Any such plans however, if he entertained them, were cut short by his death in the early part of 1492. Had he lived they might have been realised.

The constitutional basis of his government having been firmly established, Lorenzo applied himself vigorously to questions of taxation and finance. Taxation from Cosimo's time had been the Medici substitute for the dagger. Opponents were crushed out financially where elsewhere they disappeared bodily. Lorenzo retained in his own hands a weapon which was convenient, bloodless, and effective. But it is due to him to say that he made no such cruel and vindictive use of it as Cosimo had made, and that he took some steps to put the general system of taxation upon a fixed and definite basis. His fundamental principle was that taxation should be graduated, and fall mainly on the land. By this means he could relieve trade and commerce of burdens which hampered their expansion, while making the State mainly dependent on revenues which could be easily assessed and collected. He caused a valuation of all land in Florentine territory to be made, and assigned ten per cent. of the total value to the State Exchequer. This amount was raised by a graduated land tax, rising from seven to twenty-two per cent., according to the value of the amount held. The revenue derived from land was supplemented by a graduated poll-tax, the scale of gradation being from 1¼ to 4¼ florins, and, later on, a graduated tax was imposed on movables and earnings.

In the collection of taxes, however, much would depend upon the officials. In a small community of less than a hundred thousand souls, the collectors must have had a more intimate personal knowledge of the means and political opinions of the individual taxpayer than can be possible in large and thickly populated States. The collectors themselves would be amenable to governmental influence, and would therefore be under a strong temptation to gain favour by the discretion which they displayed in dealing out leniency to friends of the administration and severity to those who opposed or failed to support it.

Still, on the whole, Lorenzo's system of finance, on its constructive side, as far as it is based on general principles of taxation, bears favourable comparison with systems in operation elsewhere. It is the working of the system in its details, in relation especially to expenditure rather than

to collection, which lays it open to criticism and censure. He is accused of making money by the sale of State offices, of corrupting government officials, of diverting public funds to his own uses, and, generally, of making little or no distinction between his private resources and the revenues of the State.

The multiplication of small offices at the disposal of the Government was undoubtedly an instrument by which the Medici attached to themselves the services and support of a little army of civil servants. So subtle and easy a method must not be credited to the evil genius of any individual. Everywhere the practice had prevailed for centuries before Lorenzo was born, a practice which continued to prevail for centuries after his death. In England Burke protested against the abuse, and partially reformed it, towards the close of the eighteenth century. In Florence in the fifteenth century the passion for office, which was a peculiar characteristic of the people, practically forced upon any Government the necessity of seeking means to gratify that passion. Unless we are to judge Lorenzo by ideal standards, which have no application to his age, we can scarcely blame him in this matter. But Nardi has a graver and more specific charge to bring against him. "He was accustomed," says Nardi, "to borrow a thousand florins from each of the principal financial Secretaries of the Commune"—in other words, each succeeding Secretary paid a thousand florins for his office—"which sum, as the Secretary was nearing the term of his office, he made good from his successor, from whom in turn Lorenzo borrowed again. There was a secret book containing the details of these transactions, but upon the fall of the Medici in 1494, this book could not be found, and it was believed to have been suppressed by the principal actors in that revolution." The answer to this charge, if indeed there is an answer, is bound up in the further accusation that Lorenzo applied the public funds to his private uses.

The testimony of Nardi, who was an austere Republican, and therefore no friend to the Medician government, is here corroborated by that of Valori, one of Lorenzo's intimate friends, and his warm admirer. "He now began," Nardi

says, speaking of the period around 1480, "to make use of the public funds without any contrariety so as in this way to remedy his own disorders, which were very great through the enormous public and private expenses incurred in past wars." "He had to provide," says Valori, "for his private disorders with public money, not wishing to break faith with those to whom the Medici firms were under obligations."

The line of defence is suggested in both of these statements. Lorenzo's affairs, says Nardi, were in disorder because of the vast expenses incurred in wars. He could not permit, says Valori, the credit of the Medici to fall, How far did the credit of the Medici affect the stability of the State? When we take note of the cosmopolitan character of their banking business; when we remember that half the governments of Europe were their creditors; that there was scarcely a prominent citizen in Florence who was not under obligations to them; that the strings of Florentine diplomacy were in a large measure attached to the private business of an individual, we must admit that Lorenzo had some justification for the belief that the interests of the State were bound up in the interests of his firm. Florence had derived such enormous advantages from the financial pressure which the Medici, as private bankers, had been able to exercise on foreign governments, that it might seem not unreasonable, in times of stress, that Florence, as a government, should pay something for her privileges. The old question—Did Lorenzo rule in the interest of Florence or of himself?—can never definitely be answered. The answer depends as much on the temperament of the questioner as on facts. But if, as is probable, Lorenzo believed that his own interest and that of Florence were one and the same, that no clear line of demarcation could be drawn between them, he could justify himself without recourse to casuistical sophistries. He could sincerely believe that any measures taken for the support of his financial credit were measures which coincided with the public welfare.

The charge must also be examined, if it cannot be met, from another point of view. If, for argument's sake, it be admitted that Lorenzo did not sufficiently discriminate between public and private money, the question remains

—Did Florence at any time during his *régime* make a nicer or more conscientious discrimination? Florence wanted all the luxury and advantage of a monarchy without paying for it, without providing the machinery for its maintenance. In modern monarchies, a Civil List, amply sufficient for the dignity and needs of the monarch, is provided at the expense of the public revenue. In Florence, Lorenzo's anomalous position as a private citizen, somehow invested with the dignity of Head of the State, produced a corresponding financial anomaly. In all State ceremonial he was required to take the lead. He was expected, as a matter of course, to entertain splendidly royal or distinguished visitors who came to Florence for their pleasure or diplomatic business. No allowances from the public funds were made to him for these purposes. It was at his own expense that he was required to perform absolutely necessary public services. When, therefore, he struck a balance between what the State owed to him, and what he owed to the State, it was not unnatural that he should conclude that the debt was not all on one side; that if there was little discrimination on the one part there need not be very much discrimination on the other. The fact is that Lorenzo is so modern, he is so nearly in touch with the thought and standards of to-day that we almost instinctively judge him from the point of view of to-day. We apply to him an ideal of conduct which we should never dream of applying to Tudors, or even to Bourbons. If we find his rule oppressive here, his finance corrupt there, his administration of justice contaminated in this instance, his morals faulty in that, we are apt to feel that he has forfeited his claim to statesmanship and character. Critics of Lorenzo are constantly forgetful of the conditions of government and life which existed in his day. It is the highest testimony to the real greatness of Lorenzo that he should be so judged—that we are not content to palliate in him faults which in other rulers of the time we readily condone. Lorenzo is one of the few men in history for whom the world has never been ready to admit the extenuating plea of circumstances and environment. It is instinctively felt that

he had the higher light, and that where he sinned, he sinned against that light.

It is difficult precisely to determine how Lorenzo's financial operations were regarded by the public in his own day. We have the contemporary testimony of grumblers like Rinuccini, and the almost contemporary opinions of a critic like Guicciardini. The one condemns unreservedly: the other is guarded, but admits that Medician finance contrasted favourably with the methods adopted by Savonarola's Republic.

There can however be no doubt whatever as to the unpopularity which attended Lorenzo's dealings with the Dower Fund. Here he touched Florentine public feeling at its tenderest point. Yet even here the common charge against him bears little resemblance to the facts of the case. Put in simple terms, the charge is that he appropriated to his private use the dowers of Florentine girls. The fact is that he introduced considerable alterations into the system which had hithertog overned the payment of dowries.

The *Monte delle Doti* was a State deposit bank established in 1424, to deal with the problem created by the accumulation of public debt. The creditors of the State were allotted shares in the bank to the extent of their claims, a portion of the shares being regarded as a State Insurance for securing dowries for the sons or daughters of the holders. The scheme met the needs of the time and was extended to any persons who cared to pay the required premium. In 1468 sons were excluded from the benefits of the Fund, which was now reserved for daughters only. The Insurer might put down a lump sum, or, apparently, might pay an annual premium. At the end of a fixed term of years a dowry corresponding to the contribution was paid, or the sum might be left in the hands of the bank at 5 per cent interest. This part of the scheme resembles our own system of Consols. In 1485 a change of system was introduced. Only one-fifth of the total sum due from the bank was to be paid in cash. The remaining four-fifths were to remain in its hands bearing interest at 7 per cent. The Funds, in fact, were made partially irredeemable. In

1491 the rate of interest was, according to Varchi, reduced from 7 per cent. to 3 per cent., an operation resembling the conversion of the National Debt.

The transaction therefore will not bear the construction which has commonly been placed upon it. The dowry Fund was not sacrilegiously invaded for the benefit of Lorenzo's pocket. It was a readjustment by the State in its own interest of the affairs of a State Bank or Insurance Office. The reduction in the rate of interest was an advantage to all who did not hold stock in the Monte, while the conversion of redeemable into partially irredeemable securities enhanced the public credit. But none the less the transaction was financially and socially a mistake. As almost everybody held an insurance in the Monte and counted on full payment after the lapse of a given time, there were few who did not feel a personal sense of having been robbed when only a fifth of their legitimate expectations were realised in cash. The pill was scarcely sugared by the payment of 7 per cent. on the four-fifths of a man's property which, for all practical purposes, had thus been appropriated. Economies at the expense of public content are poor economies. They are luxuries too expensive to be indulged in. More especially was this the case when all the marriageable daughters, and all their fathers, were smarting under a sense of financial injury, while they were looking in vain for eligible marriages which previously could have been effected without difficulty. There is no doubt that marriages were hampered by the operations on the Monte of 1485, and the social and family life of Florence was thus nearly affected.

It is frequently said that Lorenzo, unlike his grandfather, was a bad man of business, and by his extravagance and mismanagement came well-nigh to ruining the princely fabric of commerce which Cosimo had reared. It is added that he eventually abandoned all connection with commercial and banking interests and devoted himself exclusively to agriculture. The statement seems to be originally based on a misconstrued passage in Valori, who says that "at this time (*circa* 1480) he complained of his agents, who in such a time of crisis hampered him. From this time he

conceived a strong objection to mercantile business, declaring that it not only exposed a man to the risks of Fortune, but to the inconstancy and perfidy of agents;" therefore he determined to acquire and work large landed estates. This does not imply that his agricultural operations were carried on to the exclusion of his business as banker and merchant. Valori's statement is simply that he was not always well served by his agents abroad. This is true. The Medici banking houses in Lyons, Bruges, and Rome went through their periods of crisis, but Lorenzo's constant correspondence with his agent, Sassetti, at Lyons, and the revived prosperity of his commercial enterprises there and in Rome, are evidences that his devotion to agriculture did not interfere with his close attention to the commercial sources from whence his revenues were derived. His political duties were so arduous that it is almost incredible that he should have found the time to attend to so many private interests as well, but he was a voracious worker who could crowd into an hour what to most men would have been the business of a day. He possessed, too, the enviable knack of being able to concentrate his whole thought on each successive question presented to him as it came to hand, then to dismiss it wholly from his mind, and with it all thought and all anxiety about material affairs. His business done, he could throw himself, as if without a care, into the pursuit of sport, or philosophy, or literature, or art. His genius ran the whole gamut of human life. In the domain of practical affairs, of physical recreation, or of abstract thought, he was equally at home and equally a master.

Never was Florence so prosperous commercially as in the later years of Lorenzo's *régime*. As peace became more secure, the weight of taxation decreased, until, in 1492, the proceeds of direct taxation were no more than they had been in 1470. In the cloth industry alone, in a single year, 14,000 pieces woven from Spanish wool, and 5000 pieces woven from English wool, were exported and sold for 594,000 gold fiorini. Lorenzo regarded a large export trade as an index of the prosperity of the State. He encouraged in every way the expansion of commercial

enterprise, himself took shares in many concerns, and gave an enormous impetus to the Florentine shipping trade. Whereas heretofore export was a government monopoly, seeing that all exports had to be carried in ships owned by the government, Lorenzo abolished this restriction. He urged upon the great merchants the importance of building their own ships, and trading freely where they liked. State control of such an industry as shipping, in Lorenzo's opinion, only tended to restrict trade and encourage inefficiency. Although we can scarcely credit him with a grasp upon the modern economic doctrine of the balance of exports and imports, yet in the particular case of the woollen and silk trades—the staple industries of Florence—he recognised that they mainly depended on raw material imported from abroad. The working up of the raw material into the finished article, and its re-exportation, provided the Florentines with a considerable portion of their wealth. Under the impulsion of his economic views, Lorenzo made Pisa in a measure a free port, and, by an economic policy based upon the principle of free trade, he enormously extended the commercial activities of the Florentine State. There was no question to which Lorenzo devoted himself more assiduously than to the development of trade. He effected a commercial treaty with Egypt, maintained a close commercial intercourse with the Turks, and sent forth consular agents to distant lands with a commission to protect Florentine trading interests and to report on the best means by which they might be further extended. It will indeed be found that economic rather than political considerations lay at the root of all his efforts for the preservation and extension of Florentine territory. Influence in Romagna was essential if Florence was to have access to the Adriatic. Sarzana and Pietra Santa controlled the main line of communication to the north. Siena barred the convenient approaches to the south. Pisa was the keystone of the prosperity and commercial independence of Florence. Perhaps Lorenzo was scarcely conscious of the real nature of the influences which prompted his political action. The potency of the economic impulse in human affairs is

only now beginning to be realised. But his personal assiduity in seeking by every means to conciliate the susceptibilities of Pisa, to attach her through the heart rather than through compulsion to Florentine control, is significant. He had a house there in which he constantly resided for months together. He sought to dignify and exalt her by reconstructing her University and liberally endowing it from his own and the public funds. It was the special function of one of the Florentine "Consuls of the Sea" to devote his energies to the task of enhancing the commercial activities and prosperity of Pisa.

The keen interest which Lorenzo took in the development of commercial enterprises other than his own has exposed him to some misunderstanding and adverse criticism. Thus he has been accused of embezzling the pay of the soldiers engaged in the war of the Pazzi conspiracy because he was a shareholder in the Bartolini bank, which secured the business of paying the troops on terms of an eight per cent. commission on all the money thus expended. Even in our own days army contractors have been known to charge a hundred per cent. commission on the supply of food to the troops. But in the case in point there is no suspicion of any corrupt practice. No business firm in the world would undertake a war contract for nothing. The charge is therefore narrowed down to a question of the amount of commission charged. When the State funds stood at from 5 to 7 per cent., an eight per cent. commission can, in a private firm, scarcely be regarded as excessive.

It is of course true that Lorenzo's commercial transactions were not carried on in the spirit of pure philanthropy. He did not lend his name to many merchants, and go partners with them in their ventures without any thought of profiting by their success. To suppose this is to demand of Lorenzo a standard of disinterestedness which no one, even to-day, would dream of applying to a man of business. His aim was to encourage the development of trade and commerce, and he was naturally not averse from reaping his own advantage from the success of his policy.

In the administration of justice Lorenzo's government

did not fall below the standard of the times. In moments of strong political excitement, Florence rose up and executed a sort of wild justice of her own, as in the case of the Pazzi conspirators, but in quiet times within the city the governmental writ ran fairly smoothly. An organised police system afforded a guarantee for life and property. Stringent laws governing the operations of trade and commerce were demanded and were enforced. But in the outlying territory justice had to take her chance, and frequently failed to find it. Where the population was wild and lawless, where mountainous regions afforded security to evil-doers, and where the punishment of one involved perhaps a whole family or clan, the government had to execute justice as it could. Political exigencies often overrode the strict requirements of the law. It might be safer to allow a notorious criminal to escape, or even to advance him to a position of responsibility, than by punishment to rouse the whole countryside and excite a movement of disaffection which there was no organised force to suppress. Respect for law and order arises from the fear of punishment rather than from any abstract reverence for law. The administration of justice was effective in Florence because there the machinery existed to enforce the decrees of justice. In the country the machinery was inefficient, and the natural consequences followed.

Although behind constitutional forms, commercial activities, and fiscal systems, the personality of Lorenzo can be felt as a decisive influence, it is in matters more intimately identified with the visible social life of Florence that Lorenzo, as an individual, exhibited the far-reaching sweep of his personal power. The success and permanence of his despotism depended on the man rather than upon institutions. When the man was removed, the system which he stood for speedily collapsed. In the exercise of personal authority he displays the weaknesses of human nature side by side with its great possibilities. By an elaborated system of espionage he made himself acquainted with every fluctuating breath of popular opinion: in his diplomacy he would often employ a secret agent to supervise and report upon the action of the accredited representative

of the government. He took care to advance men devoted to himself, and he chose some of his most confidential servants from the ranks of the lower classes. By this means he elevated to important positions some men of undoubted talent who, without him, might never have had a chance to display it. Others were servile creatures of his own whose chief recommendation was their subservience. Dependent as he ultimately was upon an aristocratic oligarchy, he felt a sense of security in having roots among the plebeians, and he liked to have his finger on the pulse of life, in all its forms, in Florence. It is said that he corrupted the Florentine populace by shows and spectacles, devised with diabolical intent to divert their minds from the spectacle of their own subjection. His devotion to public entertainments on a lavish scale cannot be doubted, but it is as probable that the impulse came as much from his own nature as from political design. He took a genuine delight in tournaments, carnival festivities, in every form of spectacular display. The taste for this kind of thing was in the Florentine blood. Lorenzo was not guilty of any new or corrupting inventions. He gave direction, organisation, and more artistic effect to forms of amusement which, time out of mind, had been part of the national life. That, in doing so, he strengthened his own political influence need not be denied, nor need we suppose that Lorenzo was oblivious of political advantages thus secured; but the student of Lorenzo's character will probably conclude that he would equally have indulged his taste even if nothing but his private enjoyment had been gained by indulging it.

The personal intervention of the ruler in the private affairs of the family is a phenomenon so unfamiliar to English ideas, that we at once associate it with a most odious form of tyranny. We cannot understand how Florence could tolerate Lorenzo's interference in the matter of marriages. Our complete freedom of choice in taking a wife is only limited by legislative enactment in the case of royal personages, and by the Table of Affinities. There we stop, justifying such a limitation by considerations of political and social well-being. Lorenzo went

further, and practically regulated all marriages to which any social or political importance could be attached. In doing so he undoubtedly went beyond public opinion, for many and bitter complaints against him were heard at the time, and have been heard ever since. Taken in conjunction with the obstacles imposed upon marriage by the reorganisation of the Monte delle Doti it is difficult, as Armstrong says, "to ascribe his interference in middle-class matrimony to anything but an abnormal interest in the subject, or a diseased craving for personal influence."

Yet when we consider the peculiar closeness of the family association in Florence, the matter is capable of some explanation. The family was a political and social unit, each member being supposed politically to act with the rest. It would have proved inconvenient, if not dangerous, to permit marriages irrespective of the ties of political party. By exercising a discretion in such matters, Lorenzo might reconcile opponents, and strengthen the ties which already bound supporters to his government.

But though Lorenzo could justify to himself his intervention on grounds of political prudence, such interference as he exercised cannot be commended as sound statesmanship. Marriage was regarded in Florence as so essential that any artificial restrictions imposed upon it seemed to be a crime against society. What Lorenzo had to gain in security was not equivalent to what he stood to lose in public estimation. The very fact that to this day his manipulation of the marriage market is the best known incident of his rule is not due solely to the prejudice and misconception of foreign critics, but can be traced to the antagonism which his action aroused in Florence at the time.

Lorenzo, in seeking to serve party ends in this matter of marriages, probably defeated the purpose which he had in view. But it was scarcely possible for him in any matter to neglect party considerations. For his government was a party government of which he was the head and director. However supreme he might be, he could only exercise his supremacy through the forms of the constitution, and could only retain his position by the goodwill of his supporters. He was not a soldier, the adored chief of a devoted

army, a victorious general who could impose his rule by military force. He knew nothing of the operations of war, and had scarcely a soldier at his disposal. His dependence was upon himself, and upon the elaboration of the party machine. He must make himself acceptable to as many as possible, but those who refused to support him must be rendered powerless to oppose him. He is accused of stifling opposition, and excluding from political power every one who was not an adherent. The charge is not strictly true, as has been seen in the case of Rinuccini, but it fairly represents the facts. It would indeed have been extraordinary had he acted otherwise. Under the system of party the opposition is excluded from place and power. It was so in Florence as it is now in England. But the difference between Florence and England lay in the fact that in Florence the opposition never got a chance unless it could engineer a successful revolution. The party in power was there until another party arose powerful enough to dislodge it, when the new practitioners followed the old methods in their turn. The idea of a continuous constitutional struggle between "His Majesty's Government" and "His Majesty's Opposition," decided periodically by the expression of the people's will, is a modern idea. Lorenzo's rule may rather be compared with the long domination of the Whigs in England in the eighteenth century, or of the Tories in the nineteenth up to the time of the first Reform Bill.

It has been seen that the basis of Lorenzo's supremacy rested first of all upon his own personality: then upon a reorganisation of the government, which secured him against serious opposition: upon his financial credit and control over taxation: upon his sympathy with the commercial needs of Florence: upon his capacity to identify himself with the common life of the people. But to these sources of influence he brought a powerful reinforcement in the personal consideration in which he was held by external rulers, in the pressure which he was able to bring to bear upon the general politics of Italy. Lorenzo as the mediator of Italian peace will form the subject of the succeeding chapter.

CHAPTER XIII

LORENZO AS AN ITALIAN STATESMAN

Lorenzo's Italian policy—His aims: (i.) to recover Sarzana; (ii.) to girdle Florence with small friendly States; (iii.) to maintain the peace of Italy—Difficulties of maintaining a balance of power in Italy—The Turks evacuate Otranto—The Frescobaldi Conspiracy, May 1481—The Conspiracy consolidates Lorenzo's position—Venice declares war on Ferrara: alliances and counter-alliances of the Italian States—Archbishop of Carniola threatens a General Council—Sixtus IV. abandons Venice—Congress of Cremona, February 1483—Venice detaches Ludovico Sforza from the League—Peace of Bagnolo, August 1484—Death of Sixtus IV.—Disappointment of Florence at the terms of the Peace—Election of Innocent VIII. as Pope—Character of Innocent VIII.—Embassy of Piero dei Medici to congratulate the Pope—Lorenzo seeks to regain Sarzana—Capture of Pietra Santa—Lucca demands the cession of Pietra Santa—Beginning of the Barons' War in Naples—Innocent and Ferrante—Ferrante seeks the support of Lorenzo—Lorenzo secures the support of Florence for Ferrante—Confusion created by the Barons' War—Lorenzo influences the Pope to abandon the war with Naples—Innocent makes peace, but Lorenzo is practically ignored—Vigorous prosecution of the Siege of Sarzana—Lorenzo at the siege of Sarzana—Rejoicings in Florence—Boccalino Guzzoni of Osimo, 1486—Lorenzo mediates between the Pope and Boccalino—Marriage of Lorenzo's daughter to the Pope's son, 1487—Assassination of Girolamo Riario, April 1488—Heroism of Caterina Sforza—Alleged complicity of Lorenzo in the murder of Riario—Ottaviano Riario established in the government of Forli—Recovery of Piancaldoli—Disturbances in Faenza—Murder of Galeotto Manfredi by his wife, Francesca Bentivoglio, May 1488—Lorenzo's apprehensions of the hostility of Bologna—Lorenzo establishes the government of the Baglioni in Perugia—Summary and criticism of Lorenzo's Italian policy.

THE part which Lorenzo was called upon to play on the wider fields of Italian politics was conditioned by the immediate and internal needs of Florence, but even more by his instinct for what was necessary if Florence was to maintain her position in Italy as a free and independent State. He was essentially a statesman with broad views and with an outlook upon the future. His action in detail was relative to his policy as a whole: and only as a whole can it be judged at its true value. He

deemed it, for example, of the first importance that Florence should be girded on all sides by a *cordon* of friendly little principalities, or governments, attached to Florence by ties of gratitude and dependence, and acting as buffers against the ambitions of the larger powers. It was, of course, equally essential that Florence should enjoy secure possession over territories which were legitimately her own.

Thus his foreign policy, in 1480, was, in the first instance, dictated by his desire to recover Sarzana, which had been bought and paid for, only to be snatched away during a period of truce. This natural desire to regain his own, whatever might be its precise value, was reinforced by his sense of the importance of Sarzana as controlling Florentine communications with the north. In the hands of Genoa or Milan, Sarzana must be a constant menace to the commerce and political security of Florence. Thus every consideration of policy impelled Lorenzo to undertake its recovery.

On the east and south he equally saw the necessity of establishing outposts of Florentine influence. Ferrara, Bologna, Faenza, Città di Castello, Perugia, Siena, Rimini, were territories to which Florence made no claim, but they were tempting baits to every ambitious Power. It was necessary, in Lorenzo's judgment, to spare no effort to secure them from absorption by any one of the great Italian Powers, and to attach them, by the ties of gratitude and dependence, to the interests of Florence. What seems, therefore, on the face of it, to be continual interference by Lorenzo in affairs which did not concern him, becomes, on a proper view, a fundamental principle of his statesmanship. His diplomatic success in the prosecution of his statesmanship is attested by the skill with which he accomplished his object without fatally embroiling himself with the very Powers whose schemes of aggrandisement he was thwarting.

Indeed, Lorenzo's minor policy towards frontier towns and small outlying principalities was determined by the larger question of his relation to the great Powers of Italy and to Italy itself. His cardinal aim being to preserve the integrity and independence of Florence, he felt that

the best interests of Florence were bound up in the preservation of a general peace in Italy. As a good Florentine, he strove for Italian peace, and, as a good Italian, he strove no less earnestly for this end. The political atmosphere in Italy was electric with the possibilities of future trouble. At any moment she was liable to invasion by barbarians from beyond the Alps, or by infidels from beyond the Adriatic. If Italy was to defend herself from the dangers which threatened from beyond her borders, she must be at peace within herself. The French claims on Milan and Naples were only sleeping. They were, indeed, only half asleep, and might at any moment be awakened to active and vigorous life. If these claims should be pushed to the point of action no man could foretell the issue. It might well be that Italy would become the battle-ground of strangers, and fall a prey to the victor. No less appalling was the prospect of a Turkish invasion.

And yet Lorenzo saw the statesmen of Italy, with these possibilities of ruin before their eyes, coquetting with the danger, and blindly using Turks and French alike as convenient pieces in the game of cut-throat diplomacy and petty intrigue to which all their energies were devoted.

Failing the preservation of Italian peace, Lorenzo must work for the maintenance of a balance of power in Italy. Where each was ambitious, and greedy for the possessions of another, the best hope lay in a system of combination by which all might be held in restraint, by which at least no one Power should be allowed to aggrandise itself at the expense of any of the rest. This policy found definite expression in 1480 in the existence of the Triple Alliance between Florence, Milan, and Naples, to which the counter-league of Venice and the Papacy was a rejoinder.

Lorenzo had learned by dire experience what the enmity of the Papacy was capable of effecting, but none the less the schemes of Sixtus for the aggrandisement of Girolamo Riario in Romagna must be thwarted. Lorenzo's minor policy forced this necessity absolutely upon him. The same experience had taught him how little he could rely on the fidelity of Naples, and yet Ferrante must be preserved

from the Papacy on the one hand and from the French upon the other. The dictates of his larger policy made friendship with Naples essential. Ludovico Sforza was a slippery intriguer, seeking no one's interest but his own, but he must be kept true to Lorenzo's league, or he would assuredly join the other. Venice extended greedy eyes down the whole coast-line of the Adriatic, and Florence, Milan and Naples in combination were scarcely strong enough to restrain her. At the same time, while balancing the ambitions of the rest, Lorenzo had to keep his own eyes open, watching every opportunity for consolidating the territories of Florence, and for taking advantage of the passing moment. He thus exposed himself to the charge of being himself the mischief maker, jeopardising the delicate balance, and the peace, of Italy by his own schemes of territorial expansion.

On every hand Lorenzo's task was difficult and delicate. The diplomatic history of 1480 to 1490 is a record of his efforts, and, on the whole, a record of his success.

Two incidents, the one of Italian, the other of local, importance, tended, at the outset of Lorenzo's new career, to relieve the political tension in Italy, and to fortify his position as Head of the State. The evacuation of Otranto in September 1481, cleared Italy of the Turks: the Frescobaldi conspiracy in Florence in May of the same year resulted in giving to Lorenzo a declared status which enhanced his authority as Mediator of Italian peace.

The disappearance of the Turkish danger, at the moment when it had become most actual and threatening, seemed to the imagination of the time to prove the existence of a special Providence presiding over the destinies of Italy. Having surprised Otranto by an unexpected raid, the Turkish commander determined to make good his advanced position. The weak defences of the place were so strengthened as to make it unassailable. The Turks were in possession of an impregnable base from which to direct, under the security of sea-power, operations at will against the whole peninsula. The Sultan, at the head of large forces, was in movement, intent on consolidating his new position

in the Mediterranean, as a preliminary to following up the success of his army in Italy. But the death of Mahomet II., in May 1481, changed the face of affairs. His two sons, Bajazet and Djem, set up their rival claims to the vacant throne. A civil war between the two competitors concentrated upon internal dissensions all that energy which, under Mahomet II., had been devoted to external expansion. Schemes of further aggrandisement in Italy must for the time be abandoned in favour of vigorous efforts to re-establish the integrity of the Turkish Empire. The Turks recognised that Otranto was an outpost too far removed from the scene of practical politics to be any longer an object of primary consideration.

Thus it was that, in September, Otranto capitulated to the Duke of Calabria, who signalised his success by enlisting many of its infidel defenders in his own ranks.

An opportunity was now offered to the Italian Powers, by uniting in a common effort, to strike a blow against the Turks from which they might never recover, a blow that might free Christendom for long, perhaps for ever, from the Turkish menace. But the Italian Powers lived only for the moment, not for the future, or the ultimate good of the world. In a spirit of childish irresponsibility they assured themselves that in the disappearance of an immediate danger, all dangers had vanished. No longer influenced by Turkish pressure, Italian statesmen only saw, in the altered conditions, a more favourable opportunity for prosecuting their own petty personal schemes. The Pope was more intent on his nephew's principality than upon organising a Crusade. The Turkish occupation of Otranto became a nine days' wonder, and Italian affairs relapsed into their old course of greedy self-seeking and miserable intrigue.

In the same month which saw the death of Mahomet II., (May 1481) a conspiracy was hatched in Florence for the assassination of Lorenzo.

Giovanni Battista Frescobaldi, lately Florentine consul at Constantinople, had given evidences, in that capacity, of peculiar zeal for Lorenzo's interests. He had been much concerned in securing from the Sultan the extradition

of Bandini, who, after the Pazzi conspiracy, had succeeded in escaping the summary vengeance which fell upon his accomplices. In the general execution of his duties in Constantinople, Frescobaldi had shown himself active and capable, but for some reason, probably connected with money which he claimed as his due but which was withheld, he became impressed with a sense of personal grievance against Lorenzo, and looked about him for means to secure revenge.

The plot, in which Girolamo Riario was believed to have a hand, was hatched in Rome, and doubtless represented to some extent the political animosities of some of Lorenzo's public enemies, but its execution was left in the hands of adventurers who had nothing but their own private ends to serve. Amoretto Baldovinetti was a desperado in the service of Riario. Antonio and Francesco Balducci were poor and in debt. They joined the conspiracy, though they gave but a half-hearted adhesion to Frescobaldi's projects. Various schemes were proposed, and the conspirators were for some time in doubt between poison and the dagger. Before they could proceed to the execution of their plans, these were discovered, and they themselves were in close custody. The political significance of the affair lies, not in the attempt, but in the punishment which the Government decided to inflict. The conspirators, on the ground of their intention, were condemned to death, although they had not proceeded to the point of executing their designs. Legally, the conspirators had not actually committed a crime which involved a capital sentence. But the intention to commit such a crime was now declared to be in itself sufficient to justify a charge of high treason against the State. All the plotters, except Francesco Balducci, who escaped, were hanged from the windows of the Palazzo del Capitano, and from henceforth it was established law that any designs against Lorenzo's person, whether successful or not, carried with them the penalties of high treason. Lorenzo's exceptional position in Florence was thus legally and officially recognised. A body-guard was assigned to him by the Signoria, and he stood forth,

before all Italy and the world, as the accredited, and almost princely representative of the Florentine State.

Scarcely had the Turks evacuated Otranto, when the Italian Powers stood confronting one another in active warfare. Venice, always intent upon the extension of her territory, took advantage of a dispute with the Duke of Ferrara, on the subject of her salt monopoly, to declare war upon the Duke. Sixtus IV., equally intent upon the advancement of Girolamo Riario, thought he saw an opportunity, by co-operating with Venice, of gaining some accession of territory for his nephew. Girolamo had already profited by recent distractions in Italy to the extent of becoming master of Forli. Forli, in conjunction with Imola, gave him a substantial base for further operations in Papal Romagna. In September 1481, Girolamo was in Venice, where he was given a reception, which, according to the report of Lorenzo's agent, was more splendid than ever before was given to any one by that Republic. In view of the almost certain understanding existing between Venice and the Papacy, Naples, Milan, and Florence determined to stand together. The smaller Princes of Italy ranged themselves on one side or the other. The Duke of Calabria moved with his forces, which included the Turkish contingent from Otranto, to the support of his brother-in-law, the Duke of Ferrara.

To test the attitude and intentions of the Pope, Calabria demanded a free passage for his army through the Papal territories: when this was refused, all parties knew where they stood. The Neapolitan troops held Rome in a state of siege, while Roberto Malatesta, the Venetian captain-general, was diverted from his attack on Ferrara to go to the assistance of the Pontiff. The troops of Florence, under the command of Costanzo Sforza, operated around Città di Castello, where they succeeded in reinstating in the government of that place Niccolo Vitelli, whom the Pope regarded with peculiar aversion. The Duke of Urbino, with the troops of Milan, endeavoured unsuccessfully to cope with the Venetians in the neighbourhood of Ferrara. Girolamo Riario, utterly devoid of military

Brogi

FEDERIGO DA MONTEFELTRO, DUKE OF URBINO

FROM THE PAINTING BY PIERO DI FRANCESCA

Uffizi Gallery, Florence

capacity, sought only to use each succeeding event to secure his own profit. The whole of Italy was aflame, and each contending Power, regardless of ultimate consequences, seized any means to hand from which advantage was to be gained. Thus Sixtus appealed to France to intervene, and dangled the tempting bait of Naples before the eyes of Louis XI. The old King was too shrewd to be caught by the attractions of Italian adventure, but it was not the fault of Sixtus if the ruin of Italy by the hands of strangers was not accomplished in his own day. The obvious retort to the unpatriotic policy of the Pope was to revive the idea of a General Council. Circumstances had arisen which seemed to offer a fair prospect of thus harassing him.

A certain prelate, Andrea Zuccalmaglio, Archbishop of Carniola, had come to Rome as an emissary from the Emperor Frederick III. His conduct at last aroused the resentment of the Pope, who confined the Archbishop in the Castle of S. Angelo. Upon his release, he betook himself in high dudgeon to Switzerland. At Basle, he assumed the title of Cardinal, declared that he was acting as the accredited agent of the Emperor, and summoned on his own authority a General Council. It is evidence of the electrical conditions prevailing in Italy, that this madcap venture—it is probable that the Archbishop was, as his secretary said, "touched in his brain, and not master of himself" [*cerebro laesus, non sui compos*]—should have been taken seriously. But, from the point of view of the Pope's enemies, something might come of it, absurd as it was. Sixtus undoubtedly was really alarmed. Lorenzo despatched his confidential friend, Bacio Ugolino, to Basle to observe and report upon the situation. Milan sent an envoy, and although it was eventually determined that no political capital could be made out of the schemes of a harebrained and irresponsible Archbishop, yet his fantastic proceedings were not without effect. The mere whisper of a General Council caused the Pope to tremble. With extraordinary celerity Sixtus executed a complete *volte face*. He withdrew from his coalition with Venice, made peace with Naples, joined the League of Florence,

Milan, and Naples, and then proceeded to excommunicate Venice for still continuing a war which Venice had entered upon in conjunction with Sixtus himself.

The Pope's change of policy may seem the more extraordinary in view of the military success which had attended his arms. In August 1482, the Duke of Calabria was totally defeated by Roberto Malatetsa at Campo Morto. The Venetian general, Roberto Sanseverino, had secured so strong a position round Ferrara that Ercole d'Este was only restrained by the urgent remonstrances of Lorenzo's envoy from abandoning his Duchy. Girolamo Riario, it is true, had been thwarted by Lorenzo in his attempts upon Città di Castello and upon Rimini. But, on the whole, things were going well with the Papal cause, and something more than the demonstration of a half-witted priest should have been needed to divert Sixtus from his original purpose.

Other causes, in fact, besides the threat of a Council, operated upon the Pope to induce him to abandon his quondam ally and to join the League of its opponents. Venice was proving too successful. If Ferrara fell, it was extremely unlikely that Venice would relinquish her prize in favour of Riario or any other. The Pope's eyes were at last, by the agency of Giuliano della Rovere,* opened to the fact that, in assisting Venice, he was supporting the very Power from whose passion for territorial aggrandisement he had most to dread. He had no object in assisting Venice other than the enrichment of his nephew. Once convinced that he was only working for the enrichment of Venice herself, Sixtus could use the threat of a General Council a sa convenient pretext for breaking with his ally, and seeking to dictate to her terms of peace.

By the terms of the agreement made by the Pope with

* Valori declares that it was Lorenzo who convinced the Pope that he was only aiding Venice to become the master of Italy. To Lorenzo's representations the Pope is reported to have replied "We have always desired the friendship of Lorenzo on account of his singular virtues, but up to now our destinies have been averse and have separated and disjoined us. Now I shall see that saying verified which says that wisdom conquers the influence and inclination of the stars."

Florence, Milan, and Naples, it was arranged that a Congress should meet at Cremona to discuss and compose all outstanding questions. The Congress met in February 1483, and on the part of Florence, Lorenzo acted as plenipotentiary. There were gathered Ludovico and Ascanio Sforza on behalf of Milan, Riario, and the Cardinal-Legate Gonzaga of Mantua on behalf of the Pope, the Duke of Calabria acting for Naples, together with some minor princes, Giovanni Bentivoglio of Bologna, Ercole d'Este of Ferrara, and Ludovico and Federigo Gonzaga. Lorenzo was seriously warned by Louis XI. of France not to trust himself to the hands of Girolamo Riario. Had he been consulted, wrote the King, he would have advised Lorenzo not to go, but to send a messenger with excuses. "As, however, you have consented to go, I must leave the rest to you, and trust in God that all may go as you wish." In less than a month Lorenzo was back again, having received no hurt.

The business of the Congress resolved itself into a determination to press Venice so hard as to compel her to make peace and enter the General League. Throughout the year 1483 hostilities proceeded with varying fortunes, until at last the pressure of her foes threatened Venice with serious disaster. In her extremity Venice resorted to the old device of endeavouring to revive the French claims to Naples and Milan. To this threat the Allied Powers retorted by threatening Venice with the Turks. Nowhere was there any true sense of Italian patriotism, or any realisation of what calling the foreigner into Italy might involve, except in Lorenzo, and even he would probably have felt no compunction in using the Turks as a stick to beat Venice, if their operations could be confined to the Venetian territories in the Mediterranean.

Lorenzo's way to an Italian peace lay through the conduct of successful war. Venice must be forced into peace through disasters suffered in war. Venice saw a more convenient way in detaching Ludovico Sforza from the League. The relations existing between Ludovico and Lorenzo were by no means cordial, nor was Ludovico the

man to support a cause for a moment longer than his own interests required.

The Venetians represented to Ludovico that by his alliance with Naples he was jeopardising his own position. His ward, Gian Galeazzo Sforza, was now of an age to assume the government of Milan, and was, moreover, betrothed to Calabria's daughter. Was it likely that Calabria would continue zealous in the cause of Ludovico, when by doing so he was injuring the prospects of his future son-in-law? To such representations the Venetians added a powerful argument in the shape of 60,000 ducats, which speedily effected Ludovico's complete conversion. He announced his readiness to negotiate. Without Milan, Naples and Florence would not continue the war. They therefore reluctantly associated themselves with Ludovico's proposals, and in August (8th) 1484 peace was signed at Bagnolo.

Philip de Commines laconically summarises his impressions of the Peace of Bagnolo. "When," he says, "the Venetians were almost conquered, or at least in very low estate, with their treasury exhausted, and several of their towns lost, Ludovico made an honourable and advantageous peace for them, by which all was to be restored to everybody, except the poor Duke of Ferrara, who had begun the war at the instigation of Ludovico and Ferrante, whose daughter the Duke had married. . . . It is reported that Ludovico had 60,000 ducats for his pains. Whether this is true or not I cannot say, but I know the Duke of Ferrara was himself of that opinion."

As the peace of Bagnolo was being signed, the Pope, Sixtus IV., lay upon his death-bed. It was said at the time that he died of it. A pithy epigram expressed the popular estimation of his character.

> Sistere qui nullo potuit cum foedere Sixtus,
> Audito tantum nomine pacis obit.*

"I rather believe, however," says Valori, "that, being an old man of seventy, he succumbed to Nature." Sixtus

* "Sixtus, who could not exist in company with any treaty, died of the mere whisper of the word Peace." The pun on *Sixtus* and *Sistere* does not lend itself very suitably to translation.

died on August 12, 1484, of an attack of gout which overtook him a week before the Peace of Bagnolo was signed. But there can be no doubt that the course of events bitterly chagrined him. He had tried by his own tergiversation to force a peace on Venice, and had failed. When peace was eventually concluded he was not consulted. "You bring," he said to the messengers who brought the news to his dying bed, "a peace full of disgrace and confusion. I can never accept it." The next day he was dead.

Panegyrists of Lorenzo, like Valori and Fabroni, attribute to him an influence in securing the peace of Bagnolo, which facts scarcely seem to warrant. It was the action of Ludovico Sforza which, in spite of Lorenzo, forced on the allies an unacceptable treaty. The Florentines had spent much on the war, and had gained no substantial return. The question, vital to them, of the restoration of Sarzana, was not even mentioned in the terms of the treaty. The attempt to cripple Venice had resulted in Venice regaining everything she had lost, and retaining her original claims on Ferrara in the matter of the salt monopoly. It was rather indirectly than directly that Lorenzo's diplomacy had resulted in advantage to Florence. He had put a spoke in Girolamo Riario's wheel. He had thwarted him in Rimini, Pesaro, and Città di Castello. In the latter place he had secured a predominant influence through the re-establishment of Niccolo Vitelli, and yet had succeeded in reconciling Vitelli to the Pope. He had engineered a revolution in Siena which resulted in the overthrow of the aristocratic anti-Florentine party, and the formation of a democratic government friendly to Florence. But, while these were very definite advantages, the part which Lorenzo actually played in the restoration of Italian peace scarcely entitled him, in 1484, to be regarded, as Fabroni claims, as the arbitrator of Italian affairs. Though Florence had cause to rejoice at the termination of the war, she had little cause to congratulate herself on any specific benefits which she had derived directly from the Peace of Bagnolo itself.

It was perhaps impossible for Lorenzo to make his influence in Italy effectual and paramount as long as

Sixtus IV. lived. Italy scarcely afforded room for the two men to act upon the same stage. The violent and capricious nature of Sixtus, the infatuation which Girolamo Riario exercised upon him, the frank submission of his spiritual functions to his secular and personal ends, made him the storm-centre of Italy, the indeterminate factor in its affairs. Instinctively he recognised in Lorenzo a man formed by the nature of things to be his opponent, and he did not hesitate seriously to compromise his own character in his passionate efforts to remove an obstacle from his path. He failed, and the fact that he failed, in spite of the resources at his command, is strong testimony to Lorenzo's capacity. Foiled in his purpose of destroying him, Sixtus came to regard Lorenzo as a man to be used. More was to be got by being on Lorenzo's side than against him, even if a few grudging concessions were necessary to secure this advantage. Lorenzo cleverly used his opportunity, and obtained all that was possible, though this was not much. With the death of Sixtus the wide field of Papal influence was open to Lorenzo for the exercise of his diplomatic talents. It now became his chief object to work through the Papacy instead of in spite of it or against it.

Lorenzo therefore was keenly interested in the election of Sixtus's successor. He was able to exercise little or no influence in the Conclave. He could only anxiously await the report of his agents at Rome. On August 29, Guidantonio Vespucci was able to inform Lorenzo that on that day the Cardinals had elected as Pope Giovanni Battista Cibò, a Genoese. He was, said Vespucci, a man of humane and kindly disposition, with not much experience of affairs, nor much given to literature, and yet not wholly ignorant. He was a man to be counselled rather than one who could give counsel to others. Next day, Lorenzo's brother-in-law, Raynaldo Orsini, Archbishop of Florence, reported very favourably of the new Pope's disposition towards Florence and towards Lorenzo. A gossipy letter from Luigi Lotti contains information about the election: how Cardinal Borgia was so certain that he would himself be chosen that he had taken the precaution, which proved

superfluous, to add two bastions to his Roman palace, to prevent its being sacked, according to the usual custom, as soon as he became Pope. Lotti was of opinion that the new Pontiff would prove "a good, quiet Pope, and keep clear of all strife." but that this would depend upon the nature of the influences exercised upon him. Lorenzo was doubly reassured when he heard from Pier Filippo Pandolfini, the official ambassador of Florence at Rome, that he had seen the Pope, who desired Lorenzo to know that there never was a Pope so favourable to his House as he, and that he proposed to order his Pontificate in accordance with Lorenzo's recommendation and advice.

The new Pope, who assumed the title of Innocent VIII., owed his election to the fact that he was an easy-living unambitious Prelate, who had not rendered himself conspicuous during his Cardinalate, nor obnoxious to any particular interest or individual. He had been, even in those days, somewhat remarkable for his *amours*, nor had he made any effort to disguise them. It was thought peculiar that he recognised his children, of whom he had a number, as his sons and daughters, instead of veiling his relationship in the euphuism of nephews and nieces. This eccentricity exposed him to some sharp epigrams, but nobody regarded his private life as seriously unfitting him for the highest office in the Church. He had reached the age of fifty-two, and his age, disposition, and previous record seemed to promise a cessation of that policy of turbulence and adventure which had characterised the reign of his predecessor.

In due course, a splendid embassy was despatched from Florence to carry the congratulations of the Republic to the new Pope. Included among the envoys was Piero dei Medici, Lorenzo's eldest son, a youth of fourteen, for whose guidance the careful father drew up elaborate instructions. Piero was to make himself master of all matters of ceremony and etiquette: he must be careful to conduct himself gravely, discreetly, and politely towards his equals in rank. He must not seek to take precedence over any one older than himself, for "though you are my son, you are no other than a citizen of Florence." If opportunity occurred,

Piero was to commend to the favourable notice of the Pope his younger brother, Giovanni, and to assure the Cardinals of Lorenzo's devotion to their interests. In all things he was to be guided by the advice of his uncles, the Archbishop of Florence and Giovanni Tornabuoni. And, finally, "you are to declare to his Holiness my firm resolve not to swerve from his commands, for my natural reverence for the Apostolic See is increased by that which I feel towards the person of the Holy Father, to whom our House has long been under obligations. I have experienced what disadvantages were brought upon me by the loss of the late Pope's favour, although I believe I suffered many persecutions without fault of my own, and more on account of the sins of others, than through any misconduct of my own towards him. But I leave this to the judgment of others. However it may be, my resolution is fixed, not only never to offend his Holiness, but day and night to meditate on what may be plesaing to him."

These instructions are of rather special interest as an indication of Lorenzo's character and political aims. They show that the future of the child, Giovanni, was already very close to his heart, and that a close connection, political and perhaps personal, between the Medici and the Papacy was a project which for the future he would pursue. The care and shrewd wisdom with which the instructions were drawn up anticipate the famous letter to his son, Giovanni, when at last he was invested with the Cardinalate; they show also the close attention to matters of small detail which is a characteristic of all Lorenzo's diplomatic correspondence. We may moreover judge from the instructions that, though Piero was but a boy, his father had a clear insight into his character. If Piero had only grasped the principle underlying his father's hint that, though he was a Medici, he was only a Florentine citizen like the rest, the ignominious fall of the House of Medici in 1494 might have been postponed beyond Piero's lifetime.

The first advantage which Lorenzo proposed to take from the favourable dispositions of Innocent was to push the siege of Sarzana, and, if possible, to secure, from the

fact of the Pope being a Genoese, his friendly mediation with Genoa for the restoration of the place. In connection with the struggle for Sarzana, a new development had recently taken place.

An important convoy of supplies had been despatched from Pisa, under a weak escort, for the use of the Florentine forces engaged around Sarzana. The convoy followed the coast road, through Pietra Santa, a town about twenty miles to the north of Pisa, where it was attacked and its escort routed. The position of Pietra Santa, astride the northern road, made its occupation of even more importance than that of Sarzana, but no pretext had arisen which could justify an attack upon it. That pretext was now supplied by the action of its garrison. An incident so convenient to the requirements of Florence naturally gave rise to the opinion that the tempting convoy, the weak escort, were an ingenious *ruse* on the part of the Florentines, designed, as Macchiavelli says, to tempt the people of Pietra Santa, by the richness of the booty and the absence of risk, to attack. "The plan succeeded according to expectations, for the inhabitants of Pietra Santa, attracted by the rich prize, took possession of it." Ammirato, however, expressly traverses the statement of Macchiavelli, and exonerates Florence from any Macchiavellian intention. Whatever the truth may be, Florence now saw before her the clear duty of punishing Pietra Santa, which was immediately subjected to a vigorous siege. The Florentine Commissaries, Bongianni Gianfigliazzi and Antonio Pucci, spurred on the troops to heroic efforts. Lowborn as he was, such was Pucci's power of rousing enthusiasm, that the mercenaries, to quote a contemporary, would have marched straight to hell in the service of Florence. Lorenzo himself came to the scene of action, and his presence roused in each man the spirit of energy and emulation. The exploits of a certain "valorous and ponderous cavalier," nicknamed El Balotta, or "Boiled Chestnut," aroused Lorenzo's peculiar admiration. Pietra Santa fell, and the heartfelt rejoicings in Florence were only marred by the heavy cost of victory. Malaria had proved an enemy

more deadly than the defenders of the town. Both the gallant commissaries succumbed to it, and their loss was mourned by the whole city. Now, as heretofore, Lorenzo sufficiently vindicated his personal courage by his cheerful presence in the midst of pestilence whose ravages were more to be dreaded than those of war. It was not his business to fight, but to inspire, and where his inspiration could best be applied, there he was found to apply it.

Florence had scarcely realised her enjoyment in her new acquisition when she was embarrassed by a demand from Lucca that Pietra Santa should be handed over to her. It was, said the Lucchese, an outpost of their own, gained by their ancestors and long held by them. The circumstances attending the attack on Pietra Santa did not necessarily justify the retention of the place by Florence, yet to surrender it to Lucca would be to take the bit from the mouth of Lucca and place it in her own. For it was against Lucca in a particular degree that Pietra Santa was a safeguard. That boisterous little republic, which refused to be subdued, which as resolutely refused to be friendly, was effectually bridled as long as Pietra Santa was safe in the hands of Florence. To surrender it on demand would be sheer madness. For the moment the difficulty could be shelved by a temporising policy. When Sarzana fell, then would be the time to deal with the question of the Lunigiana as a whole.

Immediately upon the fall of Pietra Santa, Lorenzo was compelled, by an acute attack of gout, to withdraw to the baths of San Filippo. Vigorous and strongly-knit as was his frame, keen as was his wholesome passion for outdoor exercise, Lorenzo from his boyhood had been a martyr to gout, complicated at times by stomachic disorders. He was continually obliged to retire from the stress of public affairs in order to take the waters at Poretta, Bagno a Morba, Vignone or San Filippo. From them he gained some temporary relief, but before he reached the age of forty his constitution was hopelessly undermined: he was, moreover, far too busy to devote the requisite care to the restoration of his health. He had scarcely now retired

to San Filippo when he was recalled to Florence by the urgency of public affairs. Troubles had arisen from a new quarter, which made the presence of Lorenzo in Florence indispensable if his whole foreign policy was not to suffer shipwreck in the storm to which renewed dissensions between Naples and the Papacy had given rise.

The long contest between rival claimants to the throne of Naples, had given to the Neapolitan Barons a power which was often decisive in the affairs of the kingdom. It had been the consistent policy of Ferrante to depress the power of the Barons, and by a mixture of craft, force, and dissimulation he had so crippled them that they saw themselves in danger of being reduced to impotence. Their natural court of appeal against their king and overlord was the Papacy, which claimed suzerainty over Naples. Already, in the lifetime of Sixtus, the Neapolitan Barons had received encouragement from the Pope and Girolamo Riario to embarrass Ferrante by the assertion of their own rights. The new Pope, Innocent VIII., was much under the influence of Giuliano della Rovere, whose policy was identified with the interests of France. He would have been glad to see the French claims pressed against Ferrante. He was strongly opposed to the lenient action of Sixtus in regard to the tribute due to the Papacy from the King of Naples, and he vigorously urged Innocent to revert to the former conditions. Instead of the yearly tribute of a white palfrey, let Innocent insist upon Ferrante paying the substantial tribute in cash which previous Popes had received in recognition of their sovereignty. Ferrante, moreover, was constantly setting the Church at defiance by taxing the clergy at will, and filling up benefices as he would, without reference to Rome. Let Innocent use the discontent of Ferrante's Barons as a means to assert his own position as Lord paramount over Naples, and to force Ferrante to respect the rights of the Church.

At the same time, the Barons themselves were stirring up Innocent to action. They represented that the tyranny of Ferrante in his government was unbearable. They complained of the insupportable cruelty and arrogance of

his son and heir, the Duke of Calabria, who even now in defiance of law and justice, had seized and imprisoned the Count of Montorio, and had done grievous wrong to other Neapolitan nobles. Innocent was inclined to listen favourably to these demands for his support. He intimated to Ferrante that the annual white palfrey would no longer be received in lieu of the former cash tribute. Moreover, when Aquila and Salerno revolted from Ferrante and set up the standard of the Church, the Pope, far from repudiating their action, approved it, and began active preparations for a war with Naples.

Ferrante was now seriously alarmed. He disclaimed all intention of acting in a manner injurious to the rights of the Papacy or of the Church. He sent his son, the Cardinal of Aragon, to negotiate with Innocent, but the Cardinal had scarcely arrived in Rome when he died. The usual rumours were immediately afloat that he had been poisoned. Ferrante saw that he must be prepared for active hostilities and must seek allies. He turned naturally to Florence and to Milan, co-members with Naples in the Triple Alliance. Giovanni Albino was despatched as his confidential agent to negotiate with Lorenzo and with Ludovico Sforza. "Tell Lorenzo"—so ran Ferrante's instructions—"that we turn to him as to the best friend we have in Italy, one for whom, in case of need, we would risk our State, our children, and our own person. Beg him not to leave us in the lurch."

Lorenzo was placed in a position of painful embarrassment. To oppose Innocent was the very policy which he was genuinely anxious to avoid; yet to permit Ferrante to be overthrown would be tantamount to an invitation to France to possess herself of Naples. "This disturbance," says Valori, "and the beginnings of the ruin of Italy which it involved, powerfully moved Lorenzo's mind, for he saw all Italy once more to be in peril, and his policy of balance rendered of none effect." Nor was Lorenzo ignorant that Ferrante had, in a measure, brought his trouble upon himself. He well knew the character of Calabria, and the severity of Ferrante's rule. In a letter to Albino he says that he is

grieved to hear of the reputation for cruelty borne by the Duke of Calabria, however undeserved it may be. His advice is that taxes which are intolerable to the people should be removed, "for it is better to have one carlino with peace and love, than ten with discontent and anger, for men's minds are more easily won by kindness than severity, a principle which is of universal application." At the same time he assured Ferrante of his support, and undertook to answer for Ludovico also. The King in reply expressed his gratitude, thanked Lorenzo for his good advice, while declaring himself not quite able to understand the grounds on which such counsels were tendered. Lorenzo, however, had got his shot in, and Ferrante was only displaying his usual craft in pretending that it had missed.

Lorenzo, as has been seen, was at the baths when this new trouble arose. In his absence Florence was by no means inclined to commit herself to the support of Ferrante. The Florentines most cordially hated the Duke of Calabria, for his hand had been heavy in the Pazzi war, and, since then, his insolence, arrogance, and bad taste had still further intensified their animosity. Why should Florence be dragged into opposition to the Papacy, of which she was the traditional supporter, on behalf of a dynasty which it had been her tradition to oppose; on behalf of individual Princes for whom she had no affection? Lorenzo at San Filippo was made aware of the current opinion in the City. He hastened home, and made a powerful appeal on behalf of the policy which he deemed essential. He passed over the ominous murmurs that he was always committing Florence to some war or other in which she had no concern except to act as paymaster. He pointed out that what was now at stake was the whole future of Italy and of Florence. In supporting Ferrante, Florence would not be supporting a cause extraneous from her own interests. "Whoever opposes me, whoever he may be, let him be set down as an enemy of his country." Valori, in reporting the speech, says that he founds his report on the notes of one who was actually present, and that such was the force of Lorenzo's arguments and eloquence that he secured

the unanimous adhesion of the Council to his proposals. Ludovico Sforza also was ready with fair promises, if only Florence could be made to bear the brunt of the expenses and the fighting. Lorenzo had to pretend to be satisfied with Ludovico's assurances. He had to keep a brave heart, and put the best face he could upon a gloomy and threatening situation.

All the elements of intrigue, disruption, and confusion were now again let loose in Italy. The Pope looked to Fench intervention as his best weapon against Ferrante. The College of Cardinals was divided between France and Naples, each party using any means to hand to influence the weak Pope in its favour. The Roman Barons, headed by Virginio Orsini, embraced the cause of Ferrante, and welcomed an occasion to reduce Rome to anarchy. Venice, like Ludovico Sforza, wanted to pick up any advantages which were to be dervied from the situation without paying for them. By detaching her general, Roberto Sanseverino, to the Pope's service, Venice stood to gain if the Pope won, but was not seriously committed if he lost. Lorenzo, intent on preserving Naples for Ferrante, was none the less keenly desirous to avoid any definite rupture with the Pope. The Duke of Calabria, in command of the Neapolitan forces, exhibited once again his total lack of military capacity. Early in 1486 he placed his troops in such an unfavourable position that he determined to abandon them, and seek to win, by a personal interview with Lorenzo and Ludovico, the advantages which he had utterly failed to gain in war. Lorenzo roundly declined to see the Duke. Though the ally of Naples, he could scarcely fail to share the general feeling of satisfaction which prevailed in Florence that this man should now himself experience something of the adversity and shame which he had brought upon the city and upon Lorenzo. To all the entreaties of the Duke, the Signoria replied that he could not at the time be received in Florence, but that Piero Capponi would wait on him as Florentine commissioner, to be followed shortly by Pandolfini and Giovanni Serristori, who were empowered to treat with the Duke on all necessary matters.

Lorenzo in the meantime appears to have been in constant communication with Innocent. It is not therefore surprising that he should have incurred the charge of bad faith. But all his interests were bound up in peace. He had not entered upon the war for the sake of war, but to preserve the integrity of Italy, which could best be preserved by an Italian peace. He was not necessarily a traitor to Ferrante because he was constantly urging peace on Innocent. He represented to the Pope that he could scarcely hope to win: he insinuated doubts as to the fidelity of Sanseverino, the Papal commander, and he pointed out that, if the Pope should win, his success would amount to nothing, for the Italian Powers would never permit the Papacy to rule in Naples. In the Consistory, Ascanio Sforza, speaking for his brother Ludovico, backed up these representations. The Vice-Chancellor, Borgia, was on the same side: Giuliano della Rovere was away on a mission, so Innocent for the time was emancipated from his sway. Venice, through fear of French intervention, had now openly espoused Ferrante's cause. Everything contributed to shake the resolution of an irresolute and incapable Pontiff. The Spanish ambassador at Rome seized the psychological moment to offer his mediation, and in August 1486 peace between the Papacy and Naples was signed.

The terms of the peace offered, on paper, the prospect of permanent concord. Ferrante was to acknowledge the Papal suzerainty over Naples, to pay the cash tribute demanded, and to receive into favour such of his revolting Barons as tendered their allegiance to him. But in reality the value of the Treaty was dependent on the good faith of Ferrante in observing the conditions, and on the power of the other contracting parties to enforce them. To Lorenzo and Ludovico was allotted the thankless task of guaranteeing the observance of the conditions. It was not long before Ferrante, with the blandest assurances of obligation and goodwill, gave proof that he proposed to follow his own course as circumstances, not treaties, might dictate it.

Lorenzo was in no mood to interfere. Once again, as in the case of the Ferrara war, he had been the most active worker in the cause of pacification, yet others had entered into his labours and reaped the reward of them. In the final arrangements he had not been consulted; his agent Piero Capponi, had been almost ignored by the contracting parties, and the question of the recovery of Sarzana had not been mentioned. Lorenzo's relations with Ludovico, were moreover at this time far from cordial. It seemed that Milan was merely using Florence for its own advantages, arrogantly pursuing its selfish policy of provincialism, and yet daring to claim a right of supervision over every act which Florence deemed needful on her own behalf. "Milan and the Lord Ludovico," wrote Lorenzo, "seem to forget that this city calls herself a city of freedom. She would be in a sorry plight indeed if she could not send a man on an unofficial mission without taking advice from Milan about it." It was obvious that not much was to be expected from the cordial co-operation of Florence and Milan as guarantors of the Papal-Neapolitan Treaty.

In the meantime, on the side of Sarzana, things looked a little more promising. Though the claims of Florence had been ignored in the Treaty, yet, now that peace was restored, some efforts were made by the Pope, and by others, to bring the weary and protracted struggle to an end. But all efforts to bend the obstinacy of the Genoese proved ineffectual, and Lorenzo, assured of a free hand, and with the support of one or two of the minor principalities such as Piombino, Mirandola, and Faenza, determined that the year 1487 should not pass without bringing the affair to a decisive and final issue. At this point he experienced a stroke of good fortune in the headstrong action of the Genoese troops in Sarzana. A little to the east of the town lay the fortress of Sarzanello, in the hands of the Florentines. It was a strong position, and its occupation gave great advantages to the besiegers in their operations against the town. The Genoese in Sarzana determined, by a sudden rush, to make themselves masters of the place. In March 1487 the attack was delivered. Though the

attacking forces established themselves close under the walls, and employed an elaborate system of mines against the fortress, its Florentine defenders bravely held out, the chief effect of this diversion being to nerve Florence to that decisive effort which the situation demanded. Strong reinforcements were sent out for the defence of Sarzanello, and its Genoese besiegers were driven back. The siege of Sarzana was vigorously pressed.

Early in June Lorenzo himself arrived upon the scene of action, and his presence stimulated the troops to further exertions. A grand attack in force was arranged for the 21st, but the defenders were now reduced to the last extremity. As, on the appointed day, the storming party advanced under the walls of the town, the white flag of surrender was run up upon the walls. After seven years of continued strife, the Florentine lilies waved once more over Sarzana. Lorenzo himself superintended the entry of his troops into the town. He did not want a repetition of the Volterra scandals. The clemency extended to the garrison and the inhabitants was in sharp contrast to the pillage and destruction meted out to the Volterrans. Only a few names were excepted from a general amnesty. Lorenzo had himself learned, and now practised, the lesson which he had sought to teach Ferrante, that "men's minds are more easily influenced and won by kindness than by severity, and this is a principle of universal application."

None of Lorenzo's achievements in the field of action brought him more reputation among his own people than the recovery of Sarzana. It was attributed, in chief measure, to his personal efforts, and he personally reaped the chief reward. In Italy, too, the exploit enhanced his reputation. From henceforth he was felt to be a force to be reckoned with in arms as well as in diplomacy, and the cause of Italian peace was proportionately strengthened. "After this," says Ammirato, "the Republic rested, with great reputation to Lorenzo, from all troubles. The Italian Princes also enjoyed peace, together with Florence, so that, being free from all disturbances without, and everything being quiet at home, Florence altogether gave herself up

to the arts and conveniences of peace, seeking to gather thither men of letters, to accumulate books, to adorn the city, to make the country fruitful: she devoted herself in short to all those arts and pursuits which caused that age to be esteemed happy."

Then dawned that Golden Age which Lorenzo sings and idealises in his *Selve d'amore,* when this earth became a sweet spot, a Paradise below; a time when golden peace held sway, and Saturn's just rule was as yet unimpaired: an age when men were ruled by love, but not by passion, nor were they cursed by jealousies and vain expectations of unprofitable gain, nor by the frenzy of desire to know too much.

Lorenzo, however, was not privileged to enjoy that complete quietude which, in his poetry, he regards as constituting the highest happiness of man. In the midst of the events connected with the closing episodes of the Barons' War and the capture of Sarzana, he was called upon to intervene in an affair with which Florence was very indirectly concerned, but which closely touched Lorenzo's policy in relation to the Papacy. To be on good terms with Innocent, to make the Medician influence paramount over him, and to gain a firm footing for a member of the Medici House in the counsels of the Papacy, were objects on which now Lorenzo was mainly bent.

An opportunity for doing the Pope a service arose in connection with the affairs of the little town of Osimo, situated about ten miles south of Ancona, at the same distance from the Adriatic coast. Osimo was directly subject to Papal sovereignty, but the rule of the Pope was not relished, the inhabitants being ready to seize any favourable chance for revolt. In the spring of 1486, when Innocent was fully occupied with the conduct of the war with Naples, a certain Boccalino Guzzone, a prominent citizen of the place, and possibly the Papal governor, under pretext that sums due to him from the Papacy had not

* For the story of Boccalino of Osimo, *v.* Rosmini, *Vita di Gian Giacopo Trivulzio.* In the second volume there are twenty-five pages of contemporary documents on the Osimo affair.

been paid, rose in rebellion, slew three of the principal adherents of the Pope, and by sheer audacity made himself master of the town.

The Powers leagued against Innocent watched these proceedings with interest, for though Boccalino was nothing but an unscrupulous freebooter, playing for his own hand, he might be used as a convenient tool in the interests of the League. Boccalino, however, had not revolted against the Papacy in order to become the creature of the League. He wanted nothing less than an independent sovereignty over Osimo, and to secure this he was ready to sacrifice every Italian interest. He declared in the name of the people that it would be preferable to accept the rule of the Turks than any longer to be subject to the Papacy. This declaration he followed up in practical fashion by making definite overtures to the Sultan. He instructed his agent to present himself to Bajazet "as his most faithful servant and slave," to assure him that Boccalino himself had no other desire than to be regarded as "the slave and servant of His Majesty"; that, in view of the distracted condition of Italy under the tyranny of despots, the people looked for no other refuge than the Sultan, nor had they any other hope but in him. With the help of a Turkish army of 10,000 men Bajazet could easily make himself master of the March of Ancona, indeed of all Italy. If the assistance demanded were forthcoming, Boccalino would answer for success, upon his own head.

The agent deputed by Boccalino to the Sultan was intercepted on Neapolitan territory, and his despatches were found upon him. Their contents aroused general consternation. Most of the Italian Powers had in their turn coquetted with the Turks, and had not hesitated to threaten a Turkish invasion where the threat seemed likely to serve a purpose. Now they found an obscure individual from the recesses of some remote township presuming to ape their example, not hesitating, for his own petty ends, to bring the whirlwind upon Italy. Boccalino's instructions, to his agent were communicated to Milan, Florence, and the Papacy, and Giuliano della Rovere was promptly

despatched, as Papal Legate, to carry on the siege of Osimo. Later the Pope engaged the future Marshal of France, the Milanese General, Gian Giacopo Trivulzio, to command his forces. Trivulzio pressed the siege, but Ludovico Sforza made things as difficult for him as possible, and at a critical moment the Milanese squadrons deserted.

In the meantime, Lorenzo, who had already made an unsuccessful effort to mediate, was appealed to by Boccalino himself to use his good offices. Gentile, Bishop of Arezzo, Lorenzo's old tutor and confidant, was sent to Osimo. A little later Francesco Gaddi came thither from Florence. The representations of these envoys, coupled with Trivulzio's military preparations, resulted in the capitulation of Osimo on condition of a pardon for its inhabitants. From Osimo the Florentine agent journeyed to Rome, where he was influential in arranging terms of pacification. Boccalino must surrender his claim to the lordship of Osimo, and withdraw altogether from the Papal territories. In return he was to be paid 7000 ducats, and to be allowed to settle down in Florence or where he would. In Florence Boccalino became quite a personage, clamoured loud when his hush-money was not paid, and got it by his clamours. He was offered a position in the Florentine army, and had he known his own good, might have established himself comfortably for life. But he wandered away to Milan, where he soon fell a victim to the wiles of Ludovico Sforza. The charge against Lorenzo, originally brought by Muratori, and accepted as true by Sismondi, that he procured or connived at the murder of Boccalino seems to rest on no contemporary evidence. The commission of gratuitous and needless crimes was not in Lorenzo's nature, nor is it easy to see that there was any sufficient motive in this case impelling him to such action. The whole episode of Boccalino of Osimo would be without importance were it not for the light which it throws upon the disjointed and unnatural conditions prevailing in Italy at the time. The cynical indifference to every instinct of Italian patriotism, the reckless self-seeking which characterised Italy's public men, the military inefficiency which could permit an

adventurer to hold out for more than a year against a combination of Italian Powers, and then get off, scot-free, with 7000 ducats for his pains, are a proof that Italy was rotten through and through. Her ultimate fate at the hands of France and Spain is foreshadowed in the proceedings which centred around the person of Boccalino Guzzone.

Lorenzo's good offices in the affair of Osimo were doubtless rendered the more readily inasmuch as a close family connection was about to bind him nearly to Innocent VIII.

Among the Pope's numerous children, was a son, Franceschetto Cibò, who in 1487 was a man nearing forty, somewhat dull, heavy, and uninteresting, but none the less, as the Pope's son, an eligible *parti*. In the Medici family, as indeed in all Florentine families, marriages were arranged as matters of convenience. Lorenzo was only acting in accordance with prevailing usage when he disposed of his sons and daughters in matrimony with a view to politics or the interests of his House. His second daughter, Maddalena, was still little more than a child, but her tender age was not regarded as an obstacle to her betrothal to Franceschetto. The affair was arranged in Rome by Lanfredini, the Florentine ambassador and Lorenzo's confidential friend, whose diplomacy was so expeditious that before the end of March the marriage contract was drawn up and the betrothal publicly announced. Lorenzo had been careful previously to sound the views of Ferrante and Ludovico, and made it certain that no opposition would come from his allies. Ferrante was assured that in forming this alliance Lorenzo had no intention of loosening the ties which bound him to Naples. "I have never," he said, "been so exclusively or passionately interested in my own private affairs as to forget public honour or what becomes an honest and straightforward man. I believe the King considers me as such, and he may be sure that if the Pope should intend anything that might disturb peace, I should be the first to resist him . . . I think I have with some sacrifice of trouble, care, and money, sufficiently proved my devotion to the King's interests to enable him to be sure that I shall not let slip the substance for the

shadow." Ferrante, on his part, was profuse in his congratulations to Lorenzo on an event "as likely to prove useful to us as to him." Nothing now stood in the way of the marriage except the youthfulness of the bride. In the autumn, however, Maddalena, accompanied by her mother, her brother Piero, her brother-in-law, Jacopo Salviati, and Gentile, Bishop of Arezzo, set out for Rome, where in January 1488 the marriage was solemnised. Lorenzo had some little difficulty in providing the ready money, 4000 ducats, which had been stipulated as Maddalena's dowry. In a familiar letter to Lanfredini he explains that he has "so many holes to fill up" that cash is scarce, a condition with which rich men are constantly familiar. But four thousand ducats, partly paid up, was not the extent of Lorenzo's generosity to his daughter. He bought the county of Anguillara for Franceschetto; in addition, the Pazzi Palace in Florence, the Pazzi Villa at Montughi, together with Lorenzo's own estate at Spedaletto, eventually passed, through his wife, Maddalena, into the hands of the Pope's son. By this alliance the way was made smoother for Lorenzo's darling project—a Cardinal's hat for his son Giovanni.

But in the meantime another scion of the Papacy was exercising the minds of Innocent and Lorenzo. Since the death of Sixtus IV., Girolamo Riario's wings had been clipped. There was no longer any prospect of extending his dominions, but he was clever enough to keep tight hold of what he already possessed. He was favoured by the dissensions which broke out in Italy soon after Innocent's accession, dissensions which prevented the Papacy and Florence alike from taking active measures against him. With Riario money was the prime necessity, for he was not inclined to diminish his scale of expenditure even though he could count no longer on the resources of the Papacy. His hand, therefore, was heavy upon Imola and Forli: his taste for splendour and fine buildings drove him to excessive taxation, and his disposition inclined him to cruelty and despotic sway. In Forli the memory of the dispossessed Ordelaffi still continued to

linger. Everywhere Riario was confronted with disaffection, and that he continued to rule was mainly due to the support of Ludovico Sforza, whose niece, Caterina, he had married. In April 1488 a conspiracy was hatched against him on a scale which admitted of secrecy and despatch. His captain of the guard, Cecco dell' Orso, impelled by his private grievances, associated with himself two accomplices, Ludovico Pansecco and Matteo da Roncho. Being with him in his room, as Riario was looking down out of his window upon the throng in the Piazza below, the conspirators caught him laughing and unawares, riddled him with blows, and threw his body out upon the pavement. Thus this cut-throat adventurer at last met the fate which ten years before he had designed for Lorenzo. As his mangled body lay quivering on the stones, the cry of Liberty was raised. The conspirators incited the people to throw off Riario's yoke. Those who were suspected of being his partisans were struck down as soon as found.

The insurgents gained possession of Caterina Sforza, the wife of the murdered man, and of her three sons; a rush was made for the Castle of Ravaldino which commanded the town. Caterina then showed that dauntless mettle which has gained her immortailty among the Amazons of Italy. Under the pretence that she alone could induce the Castellan to surrender the Citadel without a struggle, she was permitted by the insurgents to pass within the gates, leaving her children as hostages behind her. Once within the fortress, she ran up upon the walls the Sforza banner, and defied the people to do their worst. When threatened with the instant death of her children she replied with a characteristic gesture of defiance that she remained to raise up others in their place. To her own audacity, and the divided counsels of the rebels, she owed the preservation of her sons. She knew that the forces of her friends would soon be hurrying to her support. Milanese troops were quickly on the scene despatched by Ludovico Sforza; Bentivogli of Bologna and Galeotto della Mirandola brought their contingents. Among the rebels discouragement soon succeeded confidence, and the

strength they might have derived from union was sapped by divisions, hesitations, and doubts.*

On all hands it was felt that Lorenzo was the arbiter of a situation which, in some quarters, he was suspected of having provoked. To the Italian mind it seemed only natural and fitting that Lorenzo should secretly have engineered the assassination of Riario, the man who for years had been the enemy of his House, had slain his brother, had devised the murder of Lorenzo himself, and had let loose the avalanche of war and destruction upon Florence. Riario's assassins themselves doubtless reckoned on the countenance of Lorenzo for their deed, not necessarily because he was privy to their designs, but because, in the nature of things, he was, in their opinion, likely to approve it. On April 19, five days after Riario's murder, two of the conspirators, Ludovico Pansecco and Cecco d'Orso, wrote to Lorenzo, giving the reasons which had prompted their action, and congratulating him upon the removal of the man from whom so many injuries had been received. This letter constitutes the sole ground for the charge that Lorenzo was an accomplice before the fact in the assassination of Riario. The tone and tenor of it, however, are against this conclusion. The writers assume his approval

* The story of Caterina and the Castle of Ravaldino, as related in the text, is evidently the story which captivated the imagination of Italy. It is related by Guicciardini in his *Hore di Recreazione*, and by Macchiavelli, who was well acquainted with Caterina Sforza. Guicciardini goes so far as to quote her actual words, when threatened with the death of her children "*E non vi pari egli, stolti, ch'io abbia le forme da farne degl'altri.*"

Count Pasolini, however, in his work on Caterina Sforza, rejects the story as being merely a portion of the romantic legend which grew around Caterina in her lifetime. He brings forward the evidence of eye-witnesses of the proceedings in and around the castle to prove that it was the Castellan, not Caterina, who defied the insurgents, Caterina herself being asleep at the time in a remote room in the Castle.

Pasolini also insists that Lorenzo dei Medici had been for years the moving spirit in all conspiracies and risings against Girolamo Riario, and that he was the true instigator of Riario's assassination. Where, however, Pasolini advances proofs, as against bare assertions, the proofs seem to amount only to this—that everybody supposed, in view of Riario's share in the Pazzi conspiracy, that Lorenzo must necessarily have been behind every movement adverse to him. A belief based on general grounds is not, however, evidence of Lorenzo's individual conduct on a particular occasion.

Alinari

CATERINA SFORZA

FROM THE PAINTING BY MARCO PALMEZZANI

In the Pinacoteca Communale at Forlì

[The background shows a view of the Castle of Ravaldino]

from the nature of the case: there is not a word to indicate that he had previously been consulted, or that there was any collusion between him and them.

Now that the deed was done, the success or failure of the revolution in Forli depended on Lorenzo's action. He was bound to take a course, for the insurgents had made a definite appeal to him, but he felt that his course must be determined by the actual facts of the situation. It was impossible in any event that Forli could fall to Florence. Was it better that the place should be in the hands of a revolutionary government under the nominal control of the Papacy, or that it should still be retained as a small semi-independent principality in the hands of Riario's heir?

The forces of Ludovico Sforza and of Bentivoglio, both of them allies of Florence, were already on the spot in the interest of the young Ottaviano Riario, Girolamo's son. Any intervention in opposition to his succession would mean war with Milan and Bologna. Circumstances left no room for doubt or hesitation. Before the month of April was out, Ottaviano Riario was acknowledged as Prince of Forli and Imola, the government, on behalf of the child, being vested in his mother, Caterina Sforza, as Regent.

Lorenzo, however, seized the opportunity of recovering Piancaldoli, which ten years before Girolamo had filched from Florence under cover of the war between Pope Sixtus and Lorenzo. Florentine forces now occupied the town, and Florence was at last in secure possession of all that the Pazzi War had cost her. The acquisition, however, was greeted by violent protests from Ludovico Sforza, which Lorenzo was strong enough to ignore. They served, however, to show once more that his alliance with Ludovico was grounded on slippery foundations, and that the most insignificant incident might at any time prove fatal to the delicate balance which held the affairs of Italy in equilibrium.

The jealousies and difficulties arising out of events in Forli had scarcely been composed, when a domestic tragedy occurred in Faenza which directly touched Lorenzo's good

relations with Bologna, and indirectly threatened the peace of Italy.

The small principality of Faenza, lying midway between Forli and Imola, was in the hands of the Manfredi family, but Faenza had commended herself to Florence, the government of the Manfredi being exercised under Florentine supervision and control. Galeotto Manfredi, the ruling Prince, was married to Francesca Bentivoglio, a marriage which had been arranged under Lorenzo's good auspices, for he was equally associated with both parties by ties of friendly relationship. The union, after promising well, turned out unhappily. Francesca was jealous and tactless, and Galeotto was too susceptible to the charms of ladies other than his wife. Domestic discord reached the point of a political crisis when Francesca appealed to her father.

In response Giovanni Bentivoglio marched against Faenza, secured possession of Francesca, and carried her home to Bologna. The lady had continually confided to Lorenzo her domestic griefs, and now, as the friend of all parties, he consented, on the representations of Galeotto, to intervene. A reconciliation was patched up, and Francesca returned to Faenza and to her husband. But she had by no means laid aside her resentment. Incited by past memories or fresh outrages, she formed a plan for assassinating Galeotto, which she carried out with diabolical intensity. Under pretence of being ill she summoned him to her room where he was set upon by assassins whom she had concealed beneath her bed. Galeotto defended himself with so much energy and success that the plot was in danger of failure, when Francesca came from her bed to the aid of the murderers, and slew her husband with her own hand.

She then betook herself to the Castle, where she awaited the arrival of her father to her support. The citizens, fearing that Bentivoglio's presence in their city threatened them with the loss of their liberties, rose against him, slew the Milanese General, Bergomino, whose troops had joined the Bolognese, and Bentivoglio himself was made prisoner.

The crisis made some definite action on the part of

Lorenzo inevitable. The responsibilities of Florence towards Faenza were direct, but the good understanding which had always existed between the Medici and the Bentivogli made the situation awkward. Any course of action was almost sure to cause trouble. Lorenzo, however, acted with vigour and decision. He declared for young Astorre Manfredi, son of the murdered Galeotto. His government in Faenza was guaranteed by Florence, and Bentivoglio was kept a prisoner at Modigliana, on Florentine soil, until the excitement in Faenza should have quieted down. Francesca herself was entrusted to the guardianship of her mother at Bologna.

These dispositions were satisfactory as far as they concerned Faenza, but they only gave rise to apprehensions of fresh trouble from Bologna. Bentivoglio had powerful and influential advocates in Ludovico, Ferrante, and others, and the Bolognese themselves threatened hostilities against Florence on behalf of their imprisoned Prince. Lorenzo however, refused to be intimidated. Having taken his course, he resolutely adhered to the cause of young Astorre Manfredi, retaining Bentivoglio a prisoner until affairs in Faenza had quieted down. Then he summoned the prisoner to attend him at Caffagiuolo, and, after a friendly interview, restored Bentivoglio to Bologna. He felt compelled to negative the request that Francesca should be allowed to return to Faenza, but he carried his desire for an accommodation so far as to intercede with the Pope on her behalf. Early in January 1489, Lorenzo informed Lanfredini at Rome that Giovanni Bentivoglio was very insistent that he should use his influence with Innocent to secure absolution for her crime, seeing that Giovanni had an idea of marrying her again, or, failing that, of making her a nun. The atrocious circumstances and nature of her crime do not seem to have seriously prejudiced her in the eyes of Lorenzo, her father, or any one else. Assassination had come to be regarded in Italy as a fine art, and that the successful assassin should be a woman only added romance and artistic finish to the exploit.

In districts less intimately connected with the interests

of Florence than Forli and Faenza, Lorenzo was called upon to exercise his influence. The city of Perugia was nominally under Papal control, but in fact the supremacy was contested between the two families of Oddi and Baglioni. These factions raged so furiously in Perugia that government ceased to exist: all the efforts of the Pope to assert his authority and restore order were ineffectual. Lorenzo looked upon Perugia as of great importance to Florence, and desired to see stable government established there in the hands of some family under obligations to himself. He greatly feared the preponderating influence of either the Papacy or Naples in a town so adjacent to the Florentine frontiers, and hoped, by siding with the Baglioni, to establish a practically independent government holding power by virtue of his own support. Finding the Baglioni already intriguing with the King of Naples, Lorenzo determined to step in and supplant him. Recognising, as he said to Lanfredini, that "the Baglioni would give themselves not merely to the King but to the Devil," he considered that it would be well that they should give themselves to him. Largely by Lorenzo's influence the Oddi were driven into exile, the Baglioni became for the time supreme, the Papal control over Perugia being even more nominal than before.

Lorenzo's whole policy towards Florentine dependencies, and the small outlying communes or principalities, was animated by one fixed principle. His aim was to consolidate the territory which properly belonged to Florence, and to surround that territory in a ring fence of small friendly States more or less under his own immediate influence and control. On this principle he made his great effort for the recovery of Sarzana, and took the opportunity offered for regaining Piancaldoli. Thus he intervened in Faenza, Forli, Città di Castello, Perugia, Siena, Lucca, and sought, as Ludovico Sforza said, "to transform defences made of glass into defences of iron." In pursuing this policy he was beset with difficulties on all sides, and had to pick his path with wary, delicate steps. He had no army, but sought to attach to his own interests the chief

mercenary corps in Italy. His aims were not very intelligently understood even by his own people; consequently he had to educate and persuade the Florentines to a comprehension of their own interests. Wherever he thought it necessary to intervene, he was brought up sharp against the counter-interests of one or other of the major Powers, and had so to steer his course as to gain his ends without fatally damaging his system of inter-State alliances on which the peace of Italy rested. He had to contend with the jealousy and unblushing self-seeking of Ludovico Sforza, with the vacillating, forcible-feeble political efforts of Innocent, with the shifty, treacherous Ferrante, who was never so dangerous as when his professions of friendship were most profuse.

Judged in the light of the difficulties which beset it, Lorenzo's policy may be pronounced a success. He gave to Florence that form of liberty which alone she understood —freedom from outside interferences, freedom to pursue at home her own commercial, social, and artistic bent. While ever intent upon the integrity and honour of his own State, he skilfully saved the susceptibilities of his jealous and touchy allies. More than any other Italian statesman of his day, he looked beyond the immediate and petty interests of the moment to the requirements of Italy as a country. He was an Italian even more than a Florentine statesman, and, as such, he surveyed the field of affairs, Italian, Ultramontane, Florentine, as one field on which he might work to the common welfare of Florence, of Italy, and of the world. It would be absurd to claim for him that he never made mistakes, that he never deviated from the course which he had set, that he never subordinated large public interests to the requirements of personal or provinicial interests. A man so impressionable, so versatile, so human as Lorenzo could scarcely confine himself rigidly within the limits of a fixed idea. His motives cannot be reduced to uniformity, nor his actions harmonised at every point with the single standard of public good. But when we estimate him in relation to his times, to his contemporaries, and to his achievements, Lorenzo stands out as

more truly the representative of what was best in Italian statesmanship than any other. This is no modern discovery, but was recognised at the time by panegyrists, like Valori, by austere republicans, like Nardi, by philosophic historians, like Guicciardini, and even by Macchiavelli. Nardi, perhaps, most forcibly expresses the view of thinking men of the succeeding generation, when he admits that Lorenzo "towards the end of his life left so fixed an opinion of his prudence in the minds of men, that even now it may be believed that, had he lived, those disasters which disturbed Italy almost immediately after his death would not have come to pass." "It must be confessed," says Guicciardini, "that, under Lorenzo, Florence was not free, but never was there a despot more pleasing or better than he. From his inclinations and natural disposition infinite good resulted, as well as some evils which are inherent in any form of despotism. But these evils were not excessive, but limited as far as the necessities of the situation would permit. The inconveniences of his government in relation to liberty of judgment and opinion were very few. To some men, who were kept under, his death was pleasing, but to those who were of the government, it was a source of grief, for they knew not where to look, in the changed conditions, to find a Head who could succeed him."

CHAPTER XIV

LORENZO AND HIS FAMILY

Lorenzo's care for his family—His mother—His wife Clarice—Love for his children—Piero dei Medici—Giuliano, Duke of Nemours—Marriages of his daughters—Giovanni dei Medici (Leo X.)—His ecclesiastical preferments—Giovanni's Cardinalate—Rejoicings in Florence over Giovanni's Cardinalate—Giovanni in Rome—Lorenzo's letter to Giovanni—Lorenzo's difficulties with the Pope and Naples—Strained relations between Innocent and Ferrante—Lorenzo mediates between the Pope and Ferrante—Threatened intervention of France in Naples—Lorenzo's interest in the fortunes of his son-in-law, Franceschetto Cibò—Varied interests of Lorenzo—Savonarola and Lorenzo—Fra Mariano—Flourishing state of Florence in Lorenzo's last years—Troubles in Florence—Embassy from the Soldan of Egypt—Deceptive appearances of security in Italy and Florence—Demoralising influences of wealth and luxury in Florence—General aspect of affairs in 1492—If France came into Italy, Spain was not likely to hold aloof.

AMID all the intricacies of diplomacy, and amid the responsibilities of domestic government, Lorenzo found time to live a full and rounded life. He was one of those who thought that nothing which touched humanity was alien from himself, and he himself may almost be said to have touched humanity at every point. No strict separation can be made between his public and his private life, for many of the joys of the latter were associated with his position as a public man. Yet it may be surmised that he was really happiest, most natural, most himself, in those intervals of leisure from State affairs when he could disport himself with his children or in the chase; when he could try the paces of a new horse, or rejoice in the flight of a favourite falcon. No less was it happiness to him to retire to some secluded haunt, among "the streamlets which from the green hills descend into the Arno," or by the side of Ombrone falling in cascades, where he would meditate a poem, or resolve a problem in philosophy, or, better still, be content merely to be filled with the sweet influences of Nature in

that spirit of wise passiveness which seeks no further end than to enjoy. No less keen was his delight in the society of his friends, who were one in the common tie of devotion and admiration which bound them to Lorenzo, but who otherwise were men with strange diversities of character and intellectual gifts. The bite and sparkle of Pulci's wit called forth from Lorenzo its correspondent repartee. The elegance of Poliziano's scholarship, the charm and grace of his poetry, were matched by the scholarship and poetry of Lorenzo. Marsilio Ficino, Pico della Mirandola, Christoforo Landino were critics, Platonists, philosophers who were thought almost to have scaled the heights to which the human intellect could aspire, but in criticism and philosophy they regarded Lorenzo not only as their equal, but as one to whose inspiration they owed much of what was best in themselves.

No man could vie with him as a connoisseur, and his taste in art was catholic. Paintings, sculptures, bronzes, gems, majolica, books, he collected them all and understood them all. There was nothing in Lorenzo of the vulgar passion for the unappreciative accumulation of expensive and unattainable things. He gathered beautiful things around him because he loved them, not merely because they gratified the sense of exclusive possession. He enjoyed, in a higher degree than most men, the critical feeling for pure beauty, and with it he had the magnetic faculty of drawing out from artists who worked for him the highest beauty of which they were capable. The daily life of a man so versatile, so keenly interested in all things, as was Lorenzo, could have had no monotony. He was able to draw from within himself material which would suffice most men for the purposes of complete existence, and to these resources he added the activities, cares, and joys which came to him from the external world. He lived out to the full each hour of every day in his comparatively brief span of years, and at forty-three he had tasted almost all that life has to give.

It is not, however, the purpose of this chapter to review the many-sided activities of Lorenzo's career. His

intellectual achievements will be treated later. Here we are concerned with the events of his closing years which may appropriately be connected with his life as head of a family.

Care for the interests of the family was the ruling principle in every Florentine household. Much may be said for Armstrong's contention that it was the family, more than the individual, that the Renaissance developed and exalted. All political and social life in Florence centred round the family. There might, or might not, be a strong sense of family affection. There was invariably a strong sense of family honour, and a conviction that the advancement of the family could b[illegible] secured by a close union of all its members. Among the ruling classes in Italy it was in a special degree a principle that the stability of their rule could best be guaranteed by family alliances, and much of Lorenzo's policy was directed to this end.

But to this materialistic view of the political uses to which his children could be put Lorenzo added a genuine, and altogether human, affection for them. The picture of Lorenzo in his home presents him, on the whole, in a very pleasing and engaging light.

Lorenzo's family circle included, until her death in 1473, his grandmother, "The Madonna Contessina," Cosimo's widow, and his mother, Lucrezia Tornabuoni, who remained, till 1482, to be the mainstay and confidante of her illustrious son. Everything which is known of Lucrezia proves her to have been a woman not only of exceptional attainments, but of lofty character and sweet graces of disposition. Much of what was best in Lorenzo came to him from his mother. From her he inherited that irresistible personal charm which was his peculiar gift, and that spirituality which much worldliness and many weaknesses could not entirely overcloud. His passion for poetry, for music, and for beauty in all things, was a debt that he owed chiefly to her, and the intimate relations of confidence and affection which at all times bound mother and son together show an affinity of spirit between them which the stress and exigencies of public life could do nothing to estrange. To

her he was ever her "suavissimus filius," her dearest son. To him she was, as he wrote on the day of her death, "my only refuge amid my many cares and difficulties; the only helper who could aid and counsel me in my many troubles . . . I have not enough strength of mind to bear this calamity with calmness. I pray God to send me composure and comfort, and to grant peace and blessedness to her soul."

It is clear, not only from Lorenzo's words, but from the whole tenor of his married life, that there was no such close confidence and communion between him and his wife, Clarice Orsini, as existed between himself and his mother. The marriage in the first instance was a mere *mariage de convenance*, and it has been seen that, at the time, Lorenzo was deeply under the influence of a romantic passion. But, though no ideal union of kindred souls, the marriage was far from turning out unhappily. Clarice was a good mother. Lorenzo, it must be confessed, was only an indifferent husband. The public opinion of the time sanctioned considerable licence, and in this respect Lorenzo was not superior to his age. Clarice does not appear to have created scenes when Lorenzo's relations with other ladies became too open and notorious, but the sense that she was insufficient for him precluded the possibility of perfect sympathy between them. Intellectually Clarice was not distinguished. She gives the impression of a certain prim sourness of disposition which must at times have been depressing to Lorenzo's mercurial soul. She was lacking in that supreme gift of the Gods—imagination—and was therefore unable to picture to herself the position and point of view of other people. Lorenzo she understood tolerably, and knew something of how he was to be humoured and won, but with others her Orsini pride stood in the way; she thought it scarcely worth her while to conciliate where she could compel. Lorenzo did not show his usual judgment of character in appointing Angelo Poliziano to be the frequent attendant upon his wife. She knew nothing of philosophers and literary men—at all times an *irritabile genus*. Neither Poliziano's views for the education of her children,

nor his easy manners altogether squared with her notions of the fitness of things. Complaints from the lady, protestations from the philosopher, constantly poured in upon Lorenzo, who at last recognised his error. The situation was obviously hopeless when the mother insisted that her son should read the Psalter at the moment when the tutor was proposing that he should read Plato. Poliziano was for a time withdrawn into the retirement of a villa at Fiesole, while the instruction of the young Piero was entrusted to other hands.

The harsh traits of Clarice's character were in part redeemed by not a few sound and excellent qualities. It required no little tact to maintain with dignity and self-respect a position which Lorenzo's own conduct too often made difficult and equivocal. That on the whole his household was unclouded by domestic discords is a testimony to her good nature and to his own powers of conciliation and charm. As a mother she was devoted, if not always quite wise, and the peculiar tenderness of her attachment to her daughter Maddalena, whom Lorenzo describes as her mother's *occhio del capo*—the eye within her head—shows a depth and intensity in her nature which belies some seeming coldness. Lorenzo was not himself ignorant of her real worth. Clarice died on July 30, 1488, and her husband, in a letter to the Pope, mourned her loss in the unaffected accents of genuine sorrow. For nineteen years they had shared life together, and had tasted together of its joys and griefs. A daughter, Luigia, had been taken from him a short time before, and now that her mother had followed her to the tomb, Lorenzo felt that "the limit is passed. I can find no comfort or rest for my deep sorrow. I pray the Lord God to give me peace, and trust that in His Goodness, He will spare me any more such trials as have visited me lately."

Lorenzo's grief for Clarice was doubtless accentuated by the circumstances attending her death. She had been ill for some weeks; and it was obvious that she could not recover, but nobody expected that the end would come so soon. Lorenzo was himself ill, and after some delay

caused by the state of his wife's health, he felt sufficiently reassured to withdraw from Florence for a time to take the medicinal waters at Filetta. Clarice died, in his absence, nine days later. A charge of callousness and indifference has been brought against him in that, at such a time, he should have left his wife alone to die. But it is clear that death came at the last with startling suddenness, cheating the calculations of all who were best qualified to judge of Clarice's condition.

Lorenzo's family consisted of three sons, four daughters, and the young Giulio, his brother Giuliano's son. To all alike he was bound by the tenderest ties of attachment and sympathy. Among his children he threw off all restraint, and one of the most pleasing pictures of him has been unconsciously drawn by Macchiavelli, who notes with surprise that so eminent a man should have condescended to romps in the nursery. "He was frequently seen playing with his children, and sharing in their infantine amusements, so that whoever considers this union in him of gravity and levity will discover qualities combined in him which almost seem contradictory and incompatible." The childish letters which from time to time he received from his eldest son, Piero, are evidence of the terms of playful intimacy on which father and son stood. In days when formality and etiquette were the rules of the household, it is charming to find Lorenzo anticipating those relations of friendship and confidence which only in our own day have begun to be common between parents and children.

As they grew older, he called upon the resources of his own mind to provide them with amusement and edification. For his children he wrote his Morality Play, *S. Giovanni e S. Paolo*, allotting the characters among them, and himself taking a part. He devoted peculiar care to their education, choosing teachers from his own immediate circle of intimate friends. Piero's reports of his progress in Latin and Greek were eagerly looked for and gave the father the keenest pleasure. In the case of children, too, he held by his dictum that more is to be got from love

than from severity. "If the wild beasts love their young," he once wrote, "what should be our indulgence towards our children, and if all who are engaged in the service of the State are dear to us, how dear should be the teacher of our children, for their exertions are not limited by the fleeting moment: their counsels, teaching, and virtue are the foundation of our authority in the family and the State."

The eldest son, Piero, destined to bring to ruin that edifice of power which his ancestors had so carefully reared, grew up into a man endowed with many gifts of understanding. If we could believe the eulogy of Poliziano, we should be justified in regarding him as the epitome of all the excellences of all his ancestors combined. But, in fact, his character was marred by a strain of arrogance, mingled with frivolous irresponsibility, which proved fatal to the interests of his House. Lorenzo marked with growing anxiety the headstrong wilfulness of the youth who was destined to succeed him. Though at times he talked of retiring from public life in favour of his son, and doubtless hoped in all sincerity that a sense of responsibility would temper and restrain the waywardness and passion which he deplored, yet he was conscious that he was leaving one to come after him whose lack of tact, strenuousness, and sympathy made him unfitted to carry on the traditions of his House. Following the example of his own father, Lorenzo strove early to initiate the boy in the arts and practices of public life. Missions of ceremonial, such as the visit to Innocent VIII. at Rome, were followed by missions of State, such as the embassy to Milan on the occasion of Galeazzo Sforza's marriage, but Piero never could learn the first lesson in Statecraft which Lorenzo taught him—that "though you are my son, you are only a simple Florentine citizen like any other," and his failure to grasp this elementary truth was in large part the cause of his ultimate downfall.

Giuliano, Lorenzo's third son, afterwards Duke of Nemours, who sits, and will ever sit, as the sculptured embodiment of the active life in Michelangelo's masterpiece in the

San Lorenzo sacristy, is only an indistinct and childish figure during his father's lifetime. He was, says Fabroni, of weak health, or rather of no health at all, but it would seem that the brightness and gaiety of his disposition triumphed over his bodily frailties. Lorenzo called him "the good boy of the family," and there seems to have been nothing of the petulant sick child about him. Piero charmingly describes his brothers and sisters in one of his letters to his father, managing to hit them off in a few gay sentences. "Giuliano does nothing but laugh all day. Lucrezia sews, sings, and reads: Maddalena goes knocking her head against the walls, but does not hurt herself: Luigia can already say several little sentences: Contessina is making a great noise all over the house." There is no mention of Giovanni, the second son, who was probably away pursuing his studies at Pisa, so for the moment he may be passed over in favour of his sisters of whom Piero has given us a glimpse.

It is no derogation from Lorenzo's parental affections to admit that he regarded his children not only as his children, but as pieces in the political game. Through them he could cement alliances which would strengthen his position both at home and abroad. For Piero he arranged a marriage with a daughter of the Orsini House, thus strengthening with that powerful family the good relations which his own marriage with Clarice Orsini had begun. His daughter Maddalena was used, as has been seen, to associate him still more closely with Pope Innocent. The marriages of his other daughters were designed to serve his ends in Florence rather than the purposes of his foreign policy. Lucrezia, the eldest, was married to Jacopo Salviati, a relative of that Archbishop of Pisa who had been foremost among the engineers of the Pazzi conspiracy. Thus Lorenzo hoped to bury the last enmities aroused by the conspiracy, and to attach the Salviati family to himself. From this union sprang the line of Medician Grand Dukes of Tuscany, headed by Duke Cosimo, Lucrezia's grandson.

Luigia was betrothed to Giovanni dei Medici, a member of the younger branch of the family, in the hope that the

connection between the two branches might become more intimate and friendly, but Luigia died before the marriage could take place. Contessina became the wife of Piero Ridolfi. Thus another of the great Florentine families was attached by close personal ties to the House of Medici.

Of all his children, the one on whom Lorenzo's highest hopes were set was Giovanni, his second son. If Giuliano was the good boy, Giovanni was the wise boy of the family, and Lorenzo's dispositions for the youth's education and career seem to have been based upon a prophetic foresight of the great future which was in store for him. Ever since the days of Cosimo it had been a fixed idea of Medician policy that the family should be represented in the highest councils of the Church, and Giovanni was dedicated to the Cardinalate from his earliest years. Through him Lorenzo sought to make his influence over Innocent VIII. supreme. It would be indeed a proof of the supremacy of that influence if the Pope could be induced to do an unprecedented thing in conferring the red hat upon a mere boy. The Church had come to be regarded as a secular Principality like any other, except that its dignities were not hereditary. To secure those dignities, and the powers which they carried with them, became the passion of every Italian ruler. There was no sense of their spiritual, but only of their temporal, significance. The qualifications of the individual holder were of little importance. The office absorbed the man, and it was the office which was valuable to the political interests of the reigning Houses. The Church was looked upon as a profession, where, if the cards were skilfully played, great prizes from the first were to be won. The inner life of the spirit, which is alone the religious life, was not concerned, except in a formal and perfunctory manner, with the outward organisation of the Church. Lorenzo cannot be accused of irreligion because he sought to obtain in his own interests these secular advantages which the Church, as an Italian principality, put within his grasp. So, too, he saw no impropriety in loading a child in the nursery with rich benefices, Abbacies, Bishoprics, Archbishoprics, and the like. They were, in his view, the

adornments of an ecclesiastical position, the substantial benefits which the profession of Church dignitary offered to those who were powerful enough to secure them. The actual duties which these exalted stations involved would be performed, not by their child-occupants, but by deputies competent to perform them. What matter, then, if the wealth and dignity were enjoyed by those who were marked out to enjoy them? Such reasoning seems specious and sophistical now, but it may be questioned if, in those days, men ever paused to reason upon the matter. The evil was so rooted in the conditions of the time that it was not regarded as an evil. To affect scruples about that which was a matter of course would have seemed ridiculous and eccentric. To throw away advantages, sanctioned by public opinion, for the sake of some unintelligible scruple, would have appeared mere madness in any Italian Prince of that time.

Lorenzo was rather more, not less, scrupulous than his contemporaries in his efforts for his son's preferment. He took most anxious care that Giovanni should be fitted, as far as training and education could fit him, for his high and responsible offices. He was, moreover, laudably solicitous as to the character and qualifications of those who for a time were to act as his son's deputies. He was familiar enough with ecclesiastical scandals to wish to avoid any imputation of scandal in his own family. It did not occur to him that there was any scandal in his son being Abbot of Fonte-Dolce, and Prior of Passignano, before he was eight. At the same age the Archbishopric of Aix was conferred upon Giovanni by Louis XI., but it was unfortunately discovered later that the see was not vacant, the Archbishop being still alive. From King Ferrante Giovanni received the Abbacy of Monte Cassino at the age of eleven, and at about the same time, that of Santa Maria di Miramondo from Ludovico Sforza.

These and many other preferments were, however, only preliminaries to the grand prize which Lorenzo, now that Innocent was Pope, saw to be within his grasp. His heart was set upon a Cardinal's hat, and, before Giovanni was twelve, his father was modelling his policy at Rome with

a view to that object. He urged upon his ambassador, Lanfredini, the necessity of bringing pressure to bear upon Innocent. He wrote to the Pope himself. He exerted all his influence in the College of Cardinals. He was painfully conscious of the necessity of haste, for he was not deceived as to the state of his own health, and Innocent was alarmingly subject to attacks of serious illness. At last, after much hesitation the Pope allowed himself to be persuaded. In March 1489, when Giovanni was not yet fourteen, the boy's name was included in a list of promotions, with the proviso that, under pain of excommunication, the nomination was not to be made public until after a lapse of three years. Nevertheless, Lorenzo heard the news on the day of the appointment, and in Florence the tidings were the signal for general rejoicings. The ambassadors who were in the city crowded to the Palace in the Via Larga to offer their congratulations, for it was generally felt abroad and at home that Lorenzo's consideration had been enormously enhanced. This Cardinalate was a shining proof of his influence over the Pope. The man who had the Pope in his pocket was the man to conciliate and to use.

In the meantime, Giovanni himself was sent to the University of Pisa to fit himself for his high position by the study of law, philosophy, and humane letters. He applied himself strenuously to his studies, and at the University and elsewhere he bore himself with a dignity and decorum which were surprising in a youth of his years. Lorenzo could see no reason why the boy's assumption of his office should be deferred: his impatience was increased a thousandfold when he learned that in the autumn of 1490 the Pope had been seized with a fit of apoplexy, and was lying at the point of death. When at last Innocent became convalescent, he became at the same time annoyed by the constant appeals to reconsider his determination. Lorenzo had to possess his soul in patience until the full three years were out, when, to the very day, the ceremonies of initiation were begun. He was only just in time. Thirty days later Lorenzo himself died; little more than three months elapsed before Innocent followed him to the grave.

Two letters written at the time are of peculiar interest. One from Piero Delfini, General of the Camaldulenses, to a friend is dated March 11, 1492, wherein, "tumultuario stylo ac currente calamo," he gives a lively account of the proceedings in Florence in celebration of Giovanni's Cardinalate. In a sequel he relates the story of Giovanni's journey to Rome and of his reception there. The other letter is from Lorenzo to his son, giving his last admonitions as to the conduct and bearing of the young Cardinal at Rome.

It was at the Abbey Church of Fiesole, on March 9, 1492, that Giovanni was inducted into the Cardinalate by Matteo Bossi the Prior. Shortly after the ceremony, a procession was formed, and, in splendid state, Giovanni was conducted to the city through the Porta San Gallo. There, says Delfini, the whole city, nay the whole territory, was gathered together, as one man, from which it may be judged how earnestly this dignity had been desired for one of the citizens of Florence. The procession first moved to the Annunciata, where Giovanni engaged in prayer, then to the Palazzo Publico, that he might receive the greetings of the Signoria; then to the Medici palace. There Lorenzo was waiting to receive his son, who, to his father's eyes, had "grown and changed since yesterday." It was scarcely possible to move in the neighbourhood of the Via Larga, the crowd being so dense notwithstanding the heavy clouds and continual rain. To-day, says Delfini, (March 11) mass was celebrated in the Cathedral, and it was just as if the Pope himself had been present, so splendidly were all things conducted. The crowd was again enormous: there was such rejoicing, and such a throng, as would lead you to suppose that not one single person had remained at home. "And so I pray that this dignity may be prosperous and happy for him; that he may prove a column of strength to the tottering Church. For his safety you will pray, and will, in my name, command prayers to be offered up for him."

The sequel, written on April 7th, describes in detail the journey to Rome. Delfini tells of all the receptions which Giovanni met with on the way; of his entry into

Rome, and his admission to the Papal presence. He comments on the shocking state of the weather, which seemed to reach a culminating point of atrocity as the company left the Vatican. There were such sheets of rain that everybody was not only wet to the skin, but in danger of being washed away altogether. He is warm in his admiration of Giovanni's conduct and bearing. He can scarcely understand how such a "*puerulus*" could adapt himself so readily, and so becomingly, to the situation. All men marvelled at the maturity of his mind, at the charm of his manners, which impressed everybody favourably.

The letter written by Lorenzo to his son at Rome has been so often quoted that it may seem superfluous to do more than allude to it here. Roscoe gives the original in his Appendices, and translates it in his text. Armstrong finds in it the first draft of the recommendations of Polonius to Laertes, and is almost more amused with its sententiousness than impressed with its wisdom.

But it is a letter so entirely characteristic of Lorenzo that a knowledge of its content is indispensable to a correct view of him. It is, moreover, almost the last important commuuication to which he put his hand. It is his final word on life, and how to live it.

He begins by impressing on Giovanni that he owes this, the greatest dignity which his family has ever enjoyed, to no merit of his own, but to God alone. It behoves him, therefore, to express in all his actions his gratitude to that Divine Power to whose service he had from his earliest years been dedicated. The best thanks which he can render to God are those which take definite form in a saintly, exemplary, and honourable life.

At Rome he must recognise that he is living in the sink of all evils. He must therefore be on his guard against those who would corrupt him, realising that he will be exposed to the jealousies of some, and the vicious example of others; that it is upon himself, rather than upon the example of his colleagues in the Sacred College, that he must depend if he is to escape the many temptations by which he will be beset. He must, however, in his conduct,

practise that supreme virtue which resides in the happy mean. Let there be no affectation of an excess of austerity and seriousness foreign to his real character, for the imputation of hypocrisy is as much ,to be avoided as Scylla and Charybdis.

If only all the Cardinals were good men, then the world would always be blest with good Popes, and all Christendom would prosper. Be therefore such a Cardinal that, if all the others were like you, we might confidently look forward to this universal blessing. In your conversation with the Cardinals, observe a fitting deference and respect, but in all your decisions be governed by your own reason, not impelled by the persuasions of others. For a time, however, it will be better for you rather to listen to others than to speak much yourself.

You are from this day wholly dedicated to the service of God and the Church. You must therefore place the interests of the Church above all earthly things. But even with this reserve, opportunities will not be wanting to you to be of service to this city and to your House. You must be the good sound chain which links the Church and this city together, for the House and the city are one (*la casa ne va colla città*). But it must be a fundamental principle with you that whatever you do, the Church comes first.

In your household and manner of life, you should tune your behaviour by the note of moderation. A good stable, and a well-ordered and refined household are to be preferred before pomp and display. Silk and jewels are only on rare occasions suitable to your position. Much more desirable is the distinction which comes from possessing a few rare antiques and fine books. It is better to be the host than the guest, though here again moderation must be observed. Eat plain food and take plenty of exercise; and do not think that all is done because you have attained a secure position of eminence. Be ever on your guard against being unworthy of it. One rule above all others I recommend to you, and that is, to get up early in the morning, for not only does this practice materially conduce to health, but it simplifies the whole business of the day.

Before you go to bed at night consider well what you have got to do next day, so that nothing can take you unawares. In the Consistory, adapt your remarks, when they are required, to the wishes of His Holiness, seeing that at present you are very young, and have little experience. Do not be importunate in your requests to him, for he is naturally inclined to grant the most to those who are not for ever dinning things into his ears. Take care not to weary him, but when you approach him, let it be with pleasant things, for it is in his nature to be pleased when requests are put before him in a modest and respectful way.

This paraphrase is sufficiently faithful to give an idea of the style and content of Lorenzo's admonitions. The intermixture of worldly wisdom with a genuine sense of what constitutes a high standard of living makes his letter perhaps the most interesting document which Lorenzo ever penned. For there cannot be a doubt that here we have the man himself. There is not a trace of any affectation of virtue which the writer did not himself feel. It is evidently so that Lorenzo himself would have wished to behave had he been in his son's position. It is equally free from any impossible counsels of perfection such as Lorenzo could easily have given. He had his moments of spiritual ecstacy, but he had no desire that his son should attempt to govern his life by the standard of a fleeting moment, but that he should recognise those fixed principles of conduct which could be daily applied, and permanently maintained.

But while Giovanni's Cardinalate was the sign and seal of Lorenzo's successful diplomacy at Rome, he had had a hard and troublous course to run before he reached that goal. His estimate of the Pope's character as sketched in the letter to Giovanni was correct as far as it went, but there were other sides of that character with which Lorenzo was only too familiar.

For the last five years of his life Lorenzo was almost continuously engaged in attempts to keep the peace between the Pope and the King of Naples. As the ally of both Lorenzo was the natural mediator between them, but the

vacillation of Innocent, the faithlessness of Ferrante, made the task of mediation thankless and exasperating. Scarcely had the treaty been signed which closed the Barons' War in 1486, when Ferrante repudiated its terms. In defiance of the Treaty, he dealt with his Barons as he would; he ignored the Pope in the matter of ecclesiatical preferments within his dominions, and kept on offering the white palfrey by way of tribute in lieu of the cash he had undertaken to pay. Even Innocent's phlegmatic temper was at times roused to spasmodic bursts of energy by the King's contemptuous double dealing, and the Pope looked about him for means to bring his vassal to destruction or submission. He had recently experienced, both in the late war, and in the affair of Osimo, some consideration from Venice, and a Venetian-Papal alliance seemed to promise well. Accordingly, on his own initiative, and regardless of the interests of Florence and Milan, the Pope entered into a league with Venice in 1487. In this policy Lorenzo saw the ruin of all his hopes and plans. A general war in Italy became inevitable if the Pope cast in his lot with Venice against Ferrante and his allies. Such a war could scarcely fail to result in foreign intervention, and in any case there was an end of all the hopes for his House which Lorenzo based upon the Papacy. "I can believe anything of this Pope," he exclaimed bitterly to the Ferrarese ambassador. "The States of the Church have always been the ruin of Italy, for their rulers are ignorant of the art of government, and so bring danger on every side." He declared passionately that he still hoped to see the day when the King of France would be Lord over all Italy, "from which you may see," the ambassador wrote to his Prince, "how greatly His Magnificence is put out." He declared that his desire was to bury himself for six months in some retired spot where no breath of Italian politics could reach his ears.

But Lorenzo's practical and resourceful mind soon triumphed over momentary fits of petulant exasperation. He set himself to remedy evils, not to inveigh against the Fates which brought them. He redoubled his efforts to

be of use to the Pope; he played upon the feelings of a fond father by suggesting a brilliant match—the hand of his own daughter—for the Pope's son. He induced the Pope to see that Florence, not Venice, was his best friend. The facile Pontiff was beguiled by these arts, and Florence took the place of Venice in the Papal league.

But these tergiversations on the part of Innocent were no remedy for the evils which threatened from a rupture between Naples and the Papacy. Lorenzo gained enhanced influence as a mediator, but even his influence seemed insufficient to bend the Pope's resolution. A Papal nuncio was despatched to Naples carrying Innocent's ultimatum, but Ferrante only deigned to grant the ambassador a few moments, as the King was mounting his horse to go hunting. Ferrante knew quite well that Innocent had neither the money nor the men required for an effective war; if the Pope was determined to push matters to extremes, so much the worse for him and the better for Ferrante. As to the threat of calling the French into Naples, the King had heard it so often that he had come to despise it.

Innocent, on his part, was at times conscious of his own unpreparedness, and thus we find him, according to his varying moods, torn this way and that, now all energy and resolution, now all hesitation and depression. There were times when the weapons of interdict and excommunication appealed to the Pope as arguments against which Ferrante could not possibly hold out. There were times when he realised that people were no longer frightened by ecclesiastical bogeys, and that interdicts, without force behind them, were only a confession of impotence, while appeals to a General Council against the Papacy were still to be dreaded Trivulzio, who was in Rome after his pacification of Osimo, expressed his opinion of the Pope in vigorous terms. "He is full of greed, cowardice, and baseness, like a common knave: were there not men to inspire him with some spirit he would bolt like a rabbit to its hole, and grovel like any dastard." Trivulzio scarcely understood the Pope's difficulties, but he formed a tolerable estimate of Innocent's character.

Lorenzo in the meantime was bringing all possible friendly pressure to bear upon Innocent and Ferrante alike. He urged on the King the vital importance of being true to his engagements, and impressed upon him that he could not expect support if he were manifestly the aggressor. At the same time, he was against any precipitate action by the Pope, and disapproved of what had already been done. "I fear," he wrote to Lanfredini (Sept. 1488) "that people will think it meal out of my tub, though you know that the Pope has acted not only without me, but against my advice." In a long series of important despatches he put before the Pope exactly what the situation was, and the line of policy which it imperatively prescribed. He must not yield any of his just rights, but he must carefully avoid being the first to have recourse to arms. To just rights, pacifically insisted upon, Ferrante would have to yield, for public opinion in Italy would be against him if he did not. War would settle nothing but the question who was materially the stronger. The Pope might compromise somewhat in the matter of the tribute, and Ferrante would probably respond in his turn to the spirit of compromise. "For we are not in a fit condition for making war. The States of the Church least of all can sustain such a shock." At a later date he instructs Lanfredini to point out that Ferrante was ready and inclined to act on the aggressive, while the Pope was utterly unprepared. "In fact, his affairs are in such disorder that a most disastrous war may arise out of this."

Such a war was, in fact, on the point of arising. Notwithstanding Lorenzo's representations, in June 1489, the Pope appointed Niccolo Orsini, Count of Pittigliano, Captain General of the forces of the Church, and was once more looking to Venice to support him. But now he was anxious that Lorenzo himself should be the intermediary between himself and Venice, a proposal which Lorenzo declined. He scarcely needed the information which afterwards reached him "that

the Venetians detest your name more than Satan detests the Cross." He was convinced that "no real trust is to be placed in those people, and this office of negotiator, which would be a distinction for me, would scarcely answer the purposes of his Holiness." He also knew well "that my Lord Ludovico can be a turncoat upon occasion, and may very likely have private aims" which this quarrel between Naples and the Papacy might serve. Therefore Lorenzo looked upon the scheme of a quadruple alliance against Naples as chimerical. Venice and Milan would only come in to serve their own purposes, and there was the danger of Florence and the Papacy standing alone. He again strongly urged the virtues of compromise, adding a thoroughly Medician touch when he says, "As to spiritual questions at issue an arrangement will be easy, for the King will hardly raise difficulties where nothing but promises are required. When it comes to keeping those promises they must just wink at one another, as all Popes and all Kings have been accustomed to do."

At last, when Italy was on the very verge of war, and Innocent had been worked up by Ferrante to an unwonted pitch of excitement and resolution, matters took a favourable turn. Ferrante's contumacy had been based throughout upon the supposition that the Pope was powerless to injure him. An Italian war could scarcely fail to turn out to his advantage. As to France, she was too much engrossed in her own affairs to revive her Neapolitan claims. But, under the Regency of Anne of Beaujeu, France had become consolidated. The internal troubles caused by the action of the great feudatories of the Crown had been composed: brilliant schemes of foreign enterprise were beginning to dazzle the fancy of the young King, Charles VIII. The proposed marriage between Charles and Anne of Brittany required on both sides a Papal dispensation, and Innocent was only prepared to be complacent in return for definite support. Ferrante at last realised that his position had become serious. He dreaded a French invasion

because it might be fatal to him. Lorenzo dreaded it because it might be fatal to the integrity of Italy. Under the influence of his own fears, and Lorenzo's persistent solicitations, Ferrante at last was induced to listen to reason. In February 1492 Lorenzo's years of effort were crowned by substantial success. Peace was concluded between Naples and the Papacy, cemented by a marriage between Ferrante's grandson, the Marquis of Gerace, and the Pope's granddaughter. The fatal results which none the less followed from Ferrante's duplicity and egotism Lorenzo did not live to see.

In the midst of all his anxious diplomacy as a mediator Lorenzo did not lose sight of his own interests at the Papal Court. Apart from his efforts on behalf of his son Giovanni, he was continually urging upon the Pope the claims of his son-in-law, Franceschetto. The only material advantage, he declared, which a Pope could carry away from his Papacy was the provision which he secured out of it for his own family, and seeing that the average duration of the Pontificate was but ten years, it behoved Innocent to lose no time in establishing his son upon a satisfactory footing. Franceschetto himself was no less insistent, but Innocent was rather slow to move. "Like the ox," said his son, "he needs the goad." The Pope did not add unblushing nepotism to his defects of character, for he seems to have felt genuine scruples of conscience as to using the Papacy for the advancement of his son. The sententious lectures of Lorenzo passed unheeded, and Franceschetto's personal grumblings were equally unsuccessful. He had to be content with his Governorship of Rome, the title of Captain General of the Papal forces, a title disrespectfully characterised by Lorenzo as "mere smoke," and his fief of Anguillara. It was left for Lorenzo himself to provide more permanently and substantially for his daughter's fortunes.

Apart from his interest in Franceschetto's advancement, Lorenzo was not much in sympathy with his son-in-law, who had little sense of his position as a public man. He lounged through life as a spendthrift,

a gambler, a dull, uninteresting person without the gaiety and charm even of his own vices. In the Medici household Franceschetto was bored, and out of his element. He knew nothing about plain living and high thinking, whereas Lorenzo governed his life by these principles. As the representative of the State or as a private host, Lorenzo was splendid and lavish in his hospitality, but as a private person, living the life of the family, he liked simple food and simple ways. The advice which he gave to his son was based on his own experience and practice, that plain dishes, plenty of exercise, and early rising provide some guarantee for a healthy and useful life.

Lorenzo was essentially a busy man, and it was only by close observance of his own rules that he could keep pace with all the interests and all the affairs which claimed his attention, or were dear to his heart. He was an indefatigable correspondent. The twenty-seven letters which he wrote with his own hand on the day of his mother's death are only an example of his epistolatory activities. His private pursuits as *virtuoso*, poet, philosopher, and critic were as near to him as his public duties, and he put his whole heart into everything that he did. The extent of his influence, or at any rate the general belief in it, is attested by the innumerable requests which reached him daily from all sorts and conditions of people. He was the good fairy who, by the passes of his magic wand, could smooth the way to the enjoyment of Cardinalates, Archbishoprics, gems, books, pictures, loans, horses, and every other kind of pleasant things, and he seems to have found time to give ear to everybody. He was, moreover, himself a landowner on a very large scale, and devoted much personal attention to the development and adornment of his estates. And yet he was a man who, without all these extraneous resources, could have drawn the materials for a happy life from within himself. He loved his moments of retirement, when, in the congenial solitude of his own society, or in a small circle of intimate

friends, he could commune with his own soul and probe the hidden mysteries of things. There was not the gulf between him and Savonarola which Savonarola imagined to exist, but the prophet only saw in Lorenzo the public man who had corrupted the public liberties. He knew nothing of Lorenzo the mystic, the poet, the Platonist, nothing, in fact, of that part of Lorenzo's being which was in closest affinity with his own.

It was in 1490 that Savonarola returned to Florence to take up his old position as *lector* in the Dominican and Medician convent of San Marco. The story that he owed his recall to the personal influence of Lorenzo has been discredited, and should be received with caution, but Lorenzo can scarcely have been ignorant of the sensation which the Friar's sermons had created at San Gemignano and elsewhere. It is certainly probable that he liked to feel that so celebrated a preacher was now attached to Florence, and to a convent which was in a special degree associated with the Medici family. But when Savonarola began to preach politics, to claim the gift of prophecy, to become a centre of sensationalism in Florence, there is no doubt that Lorenzo was offended as a political ruler and as a man of taste. As a political ruler he had no mind for politics in the pulpit. It was doubtless with his authority that a deputation of five conspicuous members of the Medici party waited on Savonarola to counsel greater moderation and discretion. As a man of taste, Lorenzo was not attracted by Savonarola's style or methods. He preferred form and elegance to enthusiasm which he thought to be misplaced, and it must be admitted that, when Savonarola was not carried away by enthusiasm, he was dull. "Father," said one of his own admirers to him, "your delivery lacks attraction, especially when one is led daily to make a comparison between you and Fra Mariano."

Fra Mariano da Genazzano, an Augustinian, was Lorenzo's favourite preacher, a man whose character has rather suffered at the hands of Savonarola's pane-

gyrists. Fra Mariano, it is urged, must have been a worldly, smooth, time-serving man, or he would not have opposed Savonarola and been regarded by him as an antagonist. But Poliziano, in one of his letters, draws a vivid and pleasing picture of the man, especially praising him for his morals and his moderation. "I never knew a man," says Poliziano, "at once more attractive and more cautious. He does not repel by immoderate severity, nor deceive by exaggerated indulgence. In the pulpit he is a severe censor, but out of it he indulges in winning and friendly discourse." Not only Poliziano and Lorenzo, but that greatest prodigy of his age, Pico della Mirandola, delighted in his discourse. Lorenzo testified his respect and appreciation for Fra Mariano by building and equipping a convent for him just outside the Porta San Gallo. Fra Mariano and Savonarola may be said to represent respectively the classic and the romantic style of preaching, and Lorenzo would not have been Lorenzo had he not preferred the former.

But the antagonism between the two Friars reached deeper than a mere question of stylistic method. They were the expression of the rivalry existing between two great religious Orders, the Augustinians and the Dominicans—each striving to gain supremacy over the public mind, each standing for different views on doctrine and on life. The influence of this rivalry upon Savonarola's fortunes and ultimate fall has been too much neglected in estimating the causes of his eventual overthrow. From the very beginning of his public career in Florence we find in operation the forces of monastic jealousy and distrust which reached a climax in the challenge and the ordeal, and to these forces, as well as to Papal and political intrigues, the Savonarola tragedy was due.

It is improbable that Lorenzo took any personal interest in the domestic quarrels of the two Orders. His munificence to San Marco shows him no enemy to the Dominicans, and his favours extended to Fra

Mariano reached beyond the recipient to his Order. Lorenzo probably regarded both the monks as good men, but one of them happened to be his friend, while the other assumed a somewhat ungracious attitude of aloofness and reserve. His relations with Fra Mariano were intimate and unrestrained. Savonarola would not allow any relations of civility, far less of friendliness, to exist. Upon appointment as Prior of San Marco (July 1491) he studiously ignored Lorenzo, who was the special patron of the convent, and seemed to think that any courtesy shown would imply that Lorenzo, not God, had made him Prior. Every effort made by Lorenzo to be ordinarily polite was looked on with suspicion, or taken amiss. To some, such conduct is a proof of Savonarola's heroic independence of spirit, which was proof against all the fascinating arts of a despotic and corrupting tyrant. To others, it indicates something a little feminine and small in Savonarola's character which does not dignify, but rather detracts from its quality. That Lorenzo could see beneath a somewhat rough and forbidding surface the purifying fires which burned at the heart of the monk is undoubted. He distrusted him as a prophet, and could not get really to know him as a man, but he recognised in him a good and faithful servant of a Power which was higher than his own, and it was the benediction of the great Dominican which soothed the closing moments of his life.

For Florence the last years of Lorenzo's *régime* mark the culminating-point of her prosperity. Her successful pursuit of material well-being afforded the means and the leisure which the cultivation of the inward life of art, beauty, and refinement require. Trained through long centuries in the traditions of culture, Florence, under Lorenzo, saw the realisation of her ideals. To her, as a centre, all that was best in the world of the spirit seemed naturally to gravitate, and from her, the heat of her own enthusiasms radiated throughout Italy. She had secured stable government without the total

sacrifice of those democratic forms in which she delighted: at the cost of some surrender of liberty within, she enjoyed complete freedom from interference from without. "The city," says Guicciardini, speaking of these years, "was in perfect peace. The citizens in whose hands rested the administration of affairs, held firmly together; the government, carried on and supported by them, was so powerful that no one dared to gainsay it. The people were daily entertained with festivals and novelties; trade and business were at the height of prosperity. Men of talent found their proper place in the great liberality with which the arts and sciences were promoted, and those who practised them were honoured. This city, quiet and peaceful at home, enjoyed also great consideration abroad, because she had a government whose head had full authority; because she had lately extended her dominions, had been mainly instrumental in preserving Ferrara and King Ferrante, because she had complete control over the Pope, and because, in conjunction with Naples and Milan, she in a measure kept all Italy in equilibrium."

There were occasional troubles as a matter of course. It had proved a difficult and anxious task to secure by her diplomacy the advantages which Guicciardini enumerates. At home the wheels of the party government did not always run perfectly smoothly. When Neri Cambi, the Gonfalonier in 1488, ventured, on his own authority, and that of his Signoria, to exclude certain persons from office, it was necessary to cancel the decision, and to degrade the man, lest one day the whole party should be subjected to a like procedure. A reconstitution of the party machine in 1490 removed from the Council of Seventy the duty of superintending elections to the various offices, and bestowed it once more upon a small Committee of *Accopiatori* in which Lorenzo was included. There was some very justifiable grumbling when the Government, having called in the coins, the black *quattrini*, which served as the people's small change, again brought them into circulation,

side by side with the new coins of slightly higher value which had been issued in substitution, at the same time enacting that the State would receive as payment only the new coins. A government which claims to pay in depreciated money, but will only be paid in sound money, cannot complain if it loses thereby some part of its popularity. "No act of Lorenzo's government," says Armstrong, "caused greater dissatisfaction among the people than this paltry swindle." which was so paltry as to be scarcely consistent with Lorenzo's character. The chief sufferers by the fraud were the very people whom Lorenzo has been accused of debauching by spectacles and shows. It would be a curious commentary on human nature if the man, who with one hand lavished money for the entertainment of the masses, should have thought it worth while to filch their petty savings with the other for the sake of the trifling advantage which the public exchequer would derive.

One very innocent spectacle which delighted the Florentines in the autumn of 1487 was the arrival of an embassy from the Sultan of Egypt, bringing strange gifts for the Signoria and rich presents for Lorenzo. Malphet, the principal ambassador, visited the Signoria, preceded by a giraffe and a lion, which were the offerings of his master to the State. The giraffe became at once "the most popular character in Florence," to use Armstrong's phrase, and was so coveted by the Regent of France that she was prepared to grant political favours in return for possessing it. The Via di Leone, behind the Palazzo Vecchio, still celebrates the spot where the lion was first caged, and all Florence rejoiced in this breathing embodiment of the emblem of the State. The gifts to Lorenzo included a beautiful bay horse, long-tailed, long-eared sheep of various colours, of aloe wood as much as a man could carry, eleven horns of civet, and great porcelain vases of exquisite workmanship, the like of which had never before been seen. Every item of the present was minutely described to

Clarice, who was absent in Rome, by Lorenzo's secretary, and Lorenzo himself acknowledged these rare acquisitions by gifts, including a bed, calculated to rouse a corresponding interest and curiosity in Cairo.

What lay behind these offerings was, however, of more importance than the offerings themselves. The Egyptian embassy marked the formal ratification of a commercial treaty between Egypt and Florence by which extensive trade privileges were secured. There was indeed, says Fabroni, no country, and no known continent, into which the goods of Florence did not penetrate; everywhere Florentine agents were active in stimulating old markets, or in the pursuit of new ones.

But though upon the surface Florence appeared to be in the enjoyment of enduring stability and prosperity, signs were not wanting, to the reflective mind, of evil days in store. Savonarola did not need to be a prophet in order to foretell the probability of woes to come. The weakness of Lorenzo's system of government lay in the fact that it afforded no guarantee of permanence. Everything depended so much on his guiding hand that, if it were removed, the ship of State would hardly be saved from destruction. There was no possible successor who could equal him, either in grasp of the complexities of the situation outside, or in management of the delicate machinery by which he maintained his anomalous position at home. It was a case of "after him, the Deluge," and within two years of his death the waters were let loose upon the earth. The Medici system, being based on the unrecognised government of a single person, had no solid foundations to rest upon. In the hands of a weak or incapable representative it must necessarily collapse like a house of sand. Despotism might be the ideal form of government, if only the permanent efficiency of the despot could be ensured. The superiority of a constitutional government over an autocracy does not lie in its perfection, but in the fact that its mistakes can peacefully be rectified, whereas the mistakes of a despot can only be corrected by revolution. For nearly sixty

years the House of Medici had been happy in its representatives, and it had flourished exceedingly. It could not survive for two years in the hands of a reckless and incompetent administrator. Revolution alone could overthrow it, and in the turmoils of revolution it disappeared.

But the hidden dangers which threatened Florence were not those alone which were incidental to a government resting too exclusively upon the personality of an individual. The very prosperity which she enjoyed under Lorenzo was a symptom of a diseased State. The pursuit of wealth, ease, and luxury became the main purpose of life to all classes of the population. That government was considered to be the best which ministered most effectively to material interests, and with the exaltation of material interests public spirit and political ideals declined. That modest standard of comfort which had satisfied their ancestors, no longer was sufficient for the Florentine masses, and the rise in the standard of comfort was coincident with the growth of indifference to every aspect of government other than its economic aspect. A people which is hurrying to be rich, bent exclusively upon the one object is, as Guicciardini remarks, ill fitted to uphold public liberty. "The hunger for riches makes them follow their own private interests without any regard or consideration for the public honour and glory." Not that Florence lost altogether that spirit of sobriety, gravity, and earnestness of which Dante was the highest expression. The renaissance of Dante in the Medician age is itself significant of the sense which still survived that man cannot live by bread alone. The moral and political revival for which Savonarola strove did not derive its impulse merely from the passion and enthusiasm of an individual. Lorenzo and Savonarola each played upon the Florentines as upon an instrument, but while the one was usually content to strike those coarser strings which gave forth the music of the flesh, the other touched the finer chords which responded in music of the spirit. The revolution which resulted in the autocracy of Savonarola is a striking commentary on the weakness inherent in Lorenzo's system. It lacked

stability, and therefore could easily be overthrown: it too much ignored the spiritual element in the people, and therefore could not permanently satisfy them.

But the troubles of the House of Medici lay in the future. At the beginning of 1492, Lorenzo could look around him and feel a sense of satisfaction in the work of his hands. He had secured his dearest object in Giovanni's Cardinalate. At home Florence was prosperous and peaceful. Abroad Lorenzo's alliances were firmer based than at any previous period. The tortuous and intriguing Ludovico Sforza had come to recognise his own interest in more genuine and cordial relations with Florence. The long threatened rupture between the Pope and Ferrante had been averted largely in consequence of Lorenzo's wisdom and patience. The Pope was in the hollow of Lorenzo's hand. In France the Regent was his friend, ready to be guided by his advice, for Lorenzo had most skilfully managed to retain excellent relations with France while thwarting in every way French ambitions in Italy.

It was true that the situation between Milan and Naples was strained almost to the breaking-point. The young Duke Sforza had married Isabella, daughter of Alfonso, the heir to the Neapolitan throne. Though of an age to assume the government of Milan, he was jealously excluded from all power by Ludovico, and there was constant danger that Alfonso would yield to the solicitations of his daughter, and make war upon Ludovico in the interest of his son-in-law. If this happened, Ludovico's obvious retort would be to call the French into Italy in prosecution of their claims on Naples. As a counter-move the House of Orleans might be stimulated to assert its claims upon Milan. If France came into Italy, Spain was not likely to hold aloof. A spirit of patriotism and forbearance was essential if Italy was to be saved from subversion at the hands of the foreigner, but patriotism was a word which had lost its meaning, and forbearance was only known in the guise of personal interest. Italy, in 1492, was trembling on the brink of ruin, but it had been threatened so long that it had ceased to fear, or even to recognise, its peril. Lorenzo

alone among Italian statesmen had directed all his energies to averting the disasters which he saw to be impending, and somewhat improved relations between Naples and Ludovico in 1492 offered hopes that his efforts had not been in vain.

Lorenzo perhaps was happy in the time of his death. His own fortunes were at their height, and a deceptive peace lulled Italy into a sense of security. He did not live long enough to know that the French King had actually formulated his claims to Naples at the Papal Court, and was only awaiting a favourable opportunity to enforce them. At the moment of Lorenzo's death the long-threatened storm was ready to burst upon the land, and even his diplomatic skill could have availed but little to temper or to avert it.

CHAPTER XV

LORENZO'S LAST DAYS—*VENIT SUMMA DIES ET INELUCTABILE TEMPUS*

Crisis in Lorenzo's health, 1492—Poliziano's account of Lorenzo's last illness—Lorenzo's physicians—Savonarola visits Lorenzo on his death-bed—Poliziano's version—Death of Lorenzo, April 8, 1492—Savonarola and Lorenzo; another version—Contemporary accounts, other than Poliziano's—Origins and criticisms of the Savonarola story—Portents which signalised Lorenzo's death—Suicide of Piero Leoni—Lorenzo's funeral and last resting-place—Decree of the Signoria, eulogising Lorenzo and conferring the government on Piero.

LORENZO throughout his life had suffered acutely from gout, which at last seems to have taken possession of his whole system. From his feet it ascended until it affected every part of his body. The various water-cures which from time to time he underwent, while they served to mitigate his pains, produced no radical effect upon the disease itself. During the last year of his life he was ill continually, losing for a time the use of his legs, and being compelled in a large measure to neglect all public business. Early in 1492 his condition became critical, though his occasional rallies deceived his doctors, who insisted that he was not suffering from any mortal disease. Good hopes were entertained of his ultimate recovery, but Lorenzo himself seems to have been under no delusions as to his state. "I entrust my son to you," he said to Filipo Valori, who was accompanying Giovanni to Rome. "As for me, you will see me no more." About two months before death actually occurred his case became complicated by an attack of fever, which, to use Poliziano's phrase, "ate away the whole man," attacking not only "the arteries and veins, but the limbs, intestines, nerves, bones, and marrow." It was during a slight rally between the 12th

and the 21st of March that he wrote his famous letter of advice to his son. It was the last word of a man who had lived his life to one who was just beginning it. On the 21st he was removed from Florence to his villa at Careggi, where his father and grandfather had died. Early in April he totally collapsed ;—" *concidit totus*," says Poliziano. The painful task of telling him that there was no hope for him fell to his sister, Bianca, wife of Guglielmo di Pazzi, who, with his daughter Lucrezia, had accompanied him from Florence to Careggi.

Our detailed knowledge of the last hours of the life of Lorenzo dei Medici is derived from a letter written by Angelo Poliziano to his friend Jacopo Antiquario of Perugia. Poliziano's narrative, though a very studied composition, is of high authority, for the writer was in constant attendance at Lorenzo's bedside, and he speaks of what he actually saw and heard. Except on one point, the visit of Savonarola, the accuracy of Poliziano's relation has not been questioned. Moreover, the writer himself is careful to discriminate between what he himself witnessed, and what he only received from hearsay. It is, therefore, on Poliziano's letter as the chief authority that the following account of Lorenzo's death is based.

As soon as the dying man learned that he was beyond human aid, he centred all his thought upon securing some doctor of the soul to whom he might confess, and from whom he might receive absolution. In the middle of the night, as he was lying quietly meditating, it was announced to him that a priest was in attendance, ready to administer the last sacramental rites. Lorenzo insisted on rising from his bed in spite of all protests. Having been dressed by his attendants, he was supported into the presence of the priest, and at once humbly prostrated himself before the sacred elements. Yielding to the exhortations of the priest he was induced to retire to his bed, and after many protests, consented there to receive the Holy Sacrament, and absolution for his sins. All who had been present then withdrew, with the exception of his son, Piero, to whom, as Poliziano has heard, he addressed these words. " The citizens will doubtless recognise you, my Piero, as

my successor, nor do I doubt that you will obtain the same authority as I myself have exercised. But since the collective State is a body with many heads, remember always to follow that course which appears to be the most honourable, and study rather the good of all than individual and particular interests." He then gave instructions as to his funeral, enjoining on Piero that there should be no ostentation or display, but that he should be buried in a manner suitable to a private citizen.

In the meantime, another physician, Lazaro of Pavia, had arrived from Milan to consult with Pier Leone, Lorenzo's doctor, who had charge of the case. Lazaro prescribed a concoction of crushed pearls and precious gems. As the compound was being prepared, Lorenzo inquired of Poliziano, who was again in the room, what the man was doing. In excited and eager tones he hailed the draught, seizing Poliziano's hands in his own and gazing intently upon the face of his friend. Poliziano, overcome with emotion, turned away his face to hide his tears, and as speedily as possible retired to his own room to give free vent to a sorrow he could no longer restrain. Having recovered some composure, he returned to the bedside of his friend, who asked where Pico della Mirandola was, and why he did not come to see him. Poliziano replied that Pico doubtless feared that his presence at such a time would be burdensome, but that he should be summoned from the city. Upon his arrival Lorenzo greeted Pico warmly, begging him to forgive the trouble which a dying man was causing. In accents becoming every moment more indistinct, he talked on many things to both his friends, pathetically remarking that he would have wished to be spared a little longer that he might complete the library which he had been collecting for Pico's use.

The visit of Pico was immediately succeeded by the arrival of Savonarola. He would scarcely have come had he not been summoned, though there is no authentic record, other than Cinozzi, that a summons had been sent.* The Dominican exhorted the dying man to keep the Faith, to which Lorenzo

* Cinozzi says that Lorenzo "mandò per el detto P. f. Ieronimo," but it is Cinozzi's narrative which is itself under suspicion.

replied that he held it unshaken. He was then bidden, if he lived, to regulate his life as virtuously as possible; if he was called upon to die, to submit to death with an equal mind. "If it is the will of God," replied Lorenzo, "nothing can be pleasanter to me than death." Savonarola was now retiring, when Lorenzo called out, "Alas, Father! your benediction before you go." As the monk prayed with him and exhorted him, Lorenzo responded to the prayers and exhortations, unmoved by the sobs and tears of his friends, which could no longer be restrained. The grief was such that "you might have thought each one of us was doomed to die, except Lorenzo." He alone remained composed, and cheerful, in the complete possession of his faculties, noting at times the assiduity of the doctors who hovered around him "so that they might appear to be doing something," taking the food they offered, and assuring them that it tasted as food usually tastes to a dying man, humouring them rather for the sake of soothing their feelings than from any hope of alleviating his own sufferings.

Feeling death to be rapidly approaching, he called his relatives and friends to his side, embracing them all, and begging forgiveness for any offence or impatience of which in the course of his illness he might have been guilty. This done, he composed himself to die. He desired that the Gospel should be read to him, and as he listened to the story of the last scenes in the life of Christ, he signified by the movement of his lips that he was capable of following it. When, through exhaustion, he could move his lips no longer, he raised his languid eyes from time to time, or worked his fingers as a sign that he was still conscious. At the last, some one brought a silver crucifix and held it close to his face. The dying fires of life flickered for a moment. Lorenzo kissed the crucifix with passion, and as he kissed it again and again, the feeble flame died away and was extinguished.

Another account of Lorenzo's death, differing in some important particulars from that of Poliziano, became current within a few years of the event, though exactly when it became current cannot be accurately determined.

According to Savonarola's biographers, Lorenzo's last hours were spent in an access of terror at the approach of death, of remorse for heinous sins of which he was fully conscious. His thoughts turned to the monk who had so sternly resisted all his blandishments, of whose independence of spirit he had had such convincing proofs. To him he would now pour out his soul and receive absolution from the only honest friar he had known. It is said that Savonarola raised objections, and was at first averse from obeying the call, but upon assurance that his presence was earnestly desired, and that Lorenzo would fulfil any conditions which might be imposed, he agreed to go. He found Lorenzo in acute mental distress, suffering under a general sense of his sins, and of three sins which in a special degree weighed upon his conscience. These were his responsibility for the sack of Volterra, his action in regard to the dowry Fund, and the bloody punishment inflicted on the Pazzi conspirators. As he confessed, the monk repeated the words, "God is gracious, God is merciful." Before granting absolution, Savonarola imposed three conditions—that Lorenzo should repent and have a lively sense of God's mercy: that he should restore, or cause to be restored, all that he had unjustly gained: that he should give back liberty to Florence. To the first two conditions Lorenzo signified his consent. On hearing the third he angrily turned his back upon the Friar without speaking. Savonarola at once retired from the room, leaving Lorenzo unabsolved. After a few hours he died, unshriven, tortured to the last by the horror which comes from a sense of sins unrepented and unforgiven.

Such is the story, which is important enough to entitle it to critical investigation. Though it is possible to reconcile large parts of it with Poliziano's narrative, yet as a whole it throws around Lorenzo's death-bed an atmosphere of which there is not a trace in Poliziano's account. In the one relation the note is that of terror and despair; in the other, of composure, dignity, and assurance of Divine mercy. It is scarcely too much to say that between the two versions Lorenzo's whole character lies at stake.

Lorenzo's death occurred on April 8, 1492. In the chronicle of Bartolommeo Cerretani, which notes events from day to day, under April 7 there is this entry, "About the fifth hour Lorenzo received the Lord's Supper." He adds other details which supplement but do not contradict Poliziano, as, for example, that about the twentieth hour Lorenzo cried out, "I am dying, and there is none to help me": that when attendants hurried to him he begged to be raised a little in his bed: that he swooned away through excess of pain, and that a Camaldulensian friar only gained assurance that he was not dead by taking off his spectacles and holding them to the dying man's mouth.

Within a week of Lorenzo's death, Benedetto Dei described the event to a friend. "He died so nobly, with all the patience, the reverence, the recognition of God, which the best of holy men and a soul divine could show, with words upon his lips so kind that he seemed a new St. Jerome." We do not know where Benedetto got his information, but he relates that account which was current immediately after death took place.

Poliziano's letter to Jacopo Antiquario is dated from Fiesole, May 18, 1492. It was therefore written about six weeks after the event. It elaborates, from the point of view of one who was present, the statements of Benedetto Dei.

Thus from various independent sources of unquestioned authenticity we have, from within a week to six weeks after Lorenzo's death accounts which agree with one another, and not one of them lends the smallest countenance to the sensational narrative of Savonarola's biographers.

The witnesses on the other side are Cinozzi, who professes to have received his version from Fra Silvestro, one of Savonarola's principal lieutenants. Cinozzi's account is followed by the *Biographia Latina* of Savonarola, which cites Fra Silvestro again as its authority and also Fra Domenico, a man even more intimately associated with Savonarola than Silvestro. The same story appears in the biographies of Pico della Mirandola, nephew of Lorenzo's friend, an ardent Savonarolist, and of P. Burlamacchi.

In regard to the biographies of Pico and Burlamacchi,

they have not, in any strict sense, a contemporary authority. We do not know if they are independent of one another, or if Burlamacchi only re-edited Pico's work. Pico was the earlier of the two, and there is no evidence, says Creighton, that he wrote his book before 1520. In any case, it is evident that these writers merely present the story which was current in Savonarolist circles—the story which, in the first instance, came from Cinozzi and the *Biographia Latina*.

The authority on which this story rests is therefore that of Fra Silvestro, and perhaps, in a lesser degree, of Fra Domenico. But it is obvious that their authority in itself cannot weigh against that of Poliziano, for he was present and they were not. But behind them, as the ultimate authority on which they rest, is Savonarola himself, for from him alone could they have obtained the facts. And Savonarola, like Poliziano, was present in Lorenzo's room for some time as he lay dying. The question, therefore, narrows itself down to two points. Are we to believe that his two lieutenants accurately represent Savonarola's version of what occurred? Is the version in itself credible?

It may seem ungenerous to refer to the confessions made, under torture, by Silvestro and Domenico, at the time of Savonarola's fall, but in view of the admissions then made, as to the origin and nature of the Friars' visions—admissions which, from their very unconsciousness of anything like fraud, bear unmistakable marks of truth—it is impossible to regard them as unimpeachable witnesses. Moreover, if we believe them, we must believe at the same time that Savonarola violated the secrets of the confessional, and related to others what had been revealed to him under the most solemn seal of confidence. The more we know of Savonarola, the less likely is it that he could have committed so heinous a breach of professional honour. The Friars' votaries did not see that in exalting Lorenzo's dying agonies of unrepentant remorse they were blackening the character of their own master.*

* Lorenzo's remains rested for a while at S. Marco—Savonarola's Convent—before being interred in S. Lorenzo. Would Savonarola have permitted this if he had just before refused absolution to Lorenzo?

But, apart from the question of its authenticity, the story is not credible in itself. Those who are familiar with death-beds know that mental agonies, and the consciousness of the horrors of death, are extremely rare. At the moment when the claims of religion and the mystery of death are popularly supposed to be most active, as a fact they are most dormant. It is but very seldom that there is any clear intellectual appreciation of the actual conditions. Death when it comes very near is usually without terrors and without remorse. But even if Lorenzo's case be an exception to the general rule the story still remains incredible. It is incredible that amid all the sins of a by no means blameless life Lorenzo should have had upon his conscience only those for which which he was not responsible. The Sack of Volterra was not his doing. The punishment of the Pazzi conspirators, caught redhanded in an atrocious act of assassination, was the work not of Lorenzo, but of the citizens of Florence. His efforts were directed rather to check than to stimulate their fury. There remains only the matter of the dowry money, and it is highly improbable that a conversion of the public funds should have weighed with such intensity upon his soul.

Again, Savonarola's three conditions were either commonplace or impossible. How could the Friar have seriously demanded, or Lorenzo seriously rejected, the condition that he should restore liberty to Florence? What liberty had Lorenzo taken away? What liberty had Florence ever enjoyed? How was it possible, in any case, for Lorenzo on his death-bed to restore it?

A main point in the story is that Savonarola departed leaving Lorenzo unabsolved. But Cerretani and Poliziano are specific in their statements that Lorenzo had received the Viaticum—that is, that he had already confessed and received absolution—before Savonarola's arrival. The contention that he was dissatisfied, and required further confession and absolution at Savonarola's hands is so entirely contrary to the theory and practice of Catholic doctrine that it may be dismissed as involving insurmountable

difficulties. And when, against a doubtful and almost impossible story, we can set the detailed relation of an eye-witness of the incidents which marked Lorenzo's last hours, a relation which is particular on the subject of Savonarola's visit, a relation which, except on the single point of Savonarola's visit, has never been challenged, we are justified in setting aside, as inventions created by the Savonarola legend, the coloured and sensational accounts which the adherents of the Friar in later times handed down.

The fact is that, at the time of Lorenzo's death, Savonarola had not yet become an important person. He became so later, and was especially identified with opposition to the Medici *régime*. What more natural than that ardent partisans should ante-date his influence, and seek to show the man who became the greatest antagonist of the Medician system in the sharpest contrast with its greatest representative?

The death of Lorenzo, according to popular report, was attended by wonders and portents suitable to the occasion:

> When beggars die there are no comets seen.
> The Heavens themselves blaze forth the death of Princes.

Though it was an age of intellectual emancipation, it was equally an age of credulity and superstition. Lorenzo's career would have seemed incomplete and singular if prodigies had not accompanied its untimely close.

Valori is careful to confine himself to those wonders which he himself saw, or which were related to him by persons worthy of credit. Poliziano tells of prodigies which actually occurred, and of others which rested upon popular report.

Three days before Lorenzo's death a woman attending service in Santa Maria Novella suddenly rose from her place, and ran about wildly, crying in awe-inspiring accents, "Alas, citizens! do you not see the raging bull which with flaming horns is casting this mighty temple to the ground?" Marsilio Ficino, whose mind was as receptive to superstition as to Plato, beheld in his garden ghosts of wondrous

stature contending with one another, and heard terrible and confused voices. Fiery lights blazed in the sky over the Villa Careggi, and shot across the space which separates Fiesole from San Lorenzo. A star of unusual brightness illuminated the heavens while Lorenzo lay dying, being extinguished at the moment of his death. The lantern of the Duomo was struck by lightning, and one of the balls upon its summit fell crashing to the earth. The lions in the Via di Leone fought with one another—an unprecedented thing—so that some were killed in their fierce contests. Twin lights flamed over Arezzo, and a she-wolf howled beneath its walls.

It was thus that the event appealed to the imagination of men. They felt that the earth had lost one who was not fashioned in a mould of common clay. All Nature therefore must be in unison in mourning him, who, though one of Nature's products, was as far beyond her normal efforts as these prodigies exceeded her normal operations.

The atmosphere of prodigy and portent which overspread Lorenzo's death was intensified by the tragic fate of Piero Leoni, his friend and domestic physician. Leoni to the last had declared that Lorenzo's illness was not mortal, the fatal issue alone convincing him of his error. His treatment of the case had not been approved by his Milanese colleague, and the event seemed to justify a charge of professional incompetence. He immediately withdrew from Careggi to the villa of Francesco Martelli at San Gervasio, where next morning he was found drowned in a well within the grounds.

A case of temporary insanity ending in suicide was magnified by rumour and suspicion into a murder. It was said that Leoni had poisoned Lorenzo; that Piero dei Medici had had Leoni done to death. Every explanation seemed credible except a simple one, and there were many who reckoned the physician's death among the uncanny portents which signalised the passing of Lorenzo.

Lorenzo's funeral was simple, in accordance with his own instructions. His remains were conveyed to the Convent of San Marco—where, had he died unabsolved,

Savonarola would scarcely have received them—and thence they were carried to the Medici Church of San Lorenzo. There they were deposited in the Old Sacristy, in the same sarcophagus of porphyry which the filial piety of himself and his brother had fashioned for their father and their grandfather. Sixty-seven years later they were removed to the Old Sacristy, and laid in a nameless vault beneath Michelangelo's statue of the Madonna. In 1895, in the presence of the Italian minister of Public Instruction and of Professor Villari, the vault was opened, when the coffins of Giuliano and Lorenzo were found superimposed. Their bones were then transferred to the sarcophagus in which they had originally been placed, and there they now rest.

The unaffected grief of all classes in the State at Lorenzo's loss testified more eloquently than funeral pomp and splendour could do to the place which he had won for himself in the hearts of his countrymen. Three days after his death a unique tribute was offered to his memory. By a decree of the Signoria and the Councils it was decided by a majority of nearly eight to one "that whereas the memory of Lorenzo needs no outward adornments . . . it has been determined to transfer to Piero, the eldest son of the deceased, the heir of his father's dignity, and the successor to his fame, the public honour due to his father and his ancestors." The succession of Piero was to be regarded as "a public testimonial of gratitude to the memory of so great a man, in order that virtue may not be unhonoured among the Florentines, and that in days to come others may be incited to serve the commonwealth with might and wisdom." The preamble of this decree recites the public virtues of Lorenzo. Thus we are able to gather from it those qualities and actions of his which had especially impressed the imagination of his fellow citizens. He is praised because he subordinated personal interest to the advantage of the common weal; because by good laws he secured public order; because he brought to an end a dangerous war, and recovered the places which had been lost to the enemy, but most of all because, "following the rare examples furnished by antiquity, he, for the safety

of the people and for the freedom of the country, gave himself up into the power of his enemies, and, kindled with love for his native land, averted the general danger by drawing it particularly upon himself."

Truth may out even in official eulogies. From this one it is at least clear that a lapse of twelve years had not obliterated the memory of Lorenzo's famous exploit of 1480. The voluntary surrender of himself into the hands of Ferrante proved to be the strongest foundation of his subsequent supremacy. It was Ferrante himself who, in 1492, pronounced Lorenzo's most fitting epitaph. "His life has been long enough for his own deathless fame, but too short for Italy. May God grant, now that he is dead, that men will not attempt that which, while he was alive, they did not dare to do."

CHAPTER XVI

LORENZO IN RELATION TO THE RENAISSANCE IN ITALY

Lorenzo the embodiment of Renaissance tendencies—Renaissance and mediæval ideals contrasted—Impulses which gave force and meaning to the Renaissance—The revival of ancient learning—Lorenzo as a type of some of the best impulses of the Renaissance—Character and quality of his Humanism—Motives of Lorenzo's Humanism—Study of Greek in Florence—Purpose animating Lorenzo as a collector of antiques—Lorenzo as a patron of Literature—The cult of Plato—Landino's "Disputationes Camaldulenses"—Publication of Landino's edition of Dante's "Divine Comedy"—Lorenzo and the University of Pisa—Difficulties with the Pisan Professors—Bartolommeo Sozzini—Lorenzo and the Platonic Academy—Platonic studies of Marsilio Ficino.

IF Lorenzo's activities had been confined to the world of Italian politics and diplomacy he would still stand out among historical personages as a foremost figure. He marks the moment when Florence reached her zenith which was the moment when she was on the eve of political eclipse. According to the view entertained of him, he will by some be regarded as in a large measure the fashioner of her greatness, by others as the architect of her ruin. As an historical problem Lorenzo refuses to be ignored.

But the range and scope of his activities extended far beyond the world of political life. Outside that world, and wholly removed from it, there existed for him another world in which he loved to dwell, secure from material cares, in the full enjoyment of his manifold intellectual interests.

The fascination which he exercised on all who knew him best arose not so much from a sense of his statesmanship, as from a truly marvellous versatility which gave to him a point of contact and a genuine sympathy with men separated from one another by the widest diversity of pursuits, interests, and ideals. At a time when the individual intellect was strongly asserting itself against the restrictions

of convention and authority, Lorenzo, as an intellectual prodigy, seemed to overtop all his contemporaries. In literature, art, scholarship, philosophy, he appeared to his own age as the embodiment of all that was highest in the thought and aspiration of the time, while in the domain of positive personal achievement, his reputation as foremost among the poets and men of letters in Italy was firmly established in his own day. This contemporary estimate of his capacities the progress of the centuries has tended to confirm.

To a man of undoubted genius and catholic taste the intellectual revolution which was in movement around him could not fail to make an irresistible appeal. Almost unconsciously he was caught up and hurried along by the spirit of his times, and the fact that his own intellectual enthusiasm was without the smallest tincture of affectation or pretence stamped him as the most genuine, as he was the most universal representative of that spirit. It is scarcely to use the language of hyperbole to say that the movement which we call the Renaissance was, in the person of Lorenzo dei Medici, embodied in an individual, so fully and completely does he exhibit its many sides, its many interests, and its many contradictions.

The Renaissance is not to be identified with a specific period of time, nor with a specific series of events, nor even with novel ideas upon the functions of art, literature, and learning. The Renaissance stands for an intellectual tendency. It marks a point when a slow and gradual process of mental evolution culminated in a new conception of life. Mediæval dogmatism and ecclesiastical authority had thrown fetters around the mind of man, compelling it to move within a narrow and confined circle of ideas. This sphere, within which man might exercise the faculties of his judgment and his reason, was rigidly prescribed. All the energies of mediæval thinkers were concentrated upon the task, not of enlarging the circle within which their intellect could freely play, but of reducing all knowledge within the restricted limits which authority had imposed. For such a task extraordinary qualities of mind were

required. There is about the mediæval Schoolmen something of the pathos which attaches to a chained giant. Endowed with vast intellectual powers, they were without adequate scope for the full and free exercise of those powers. By a thousand ingenious involutions the Schoolmen turn upon themselves, wind in and out through intricate labyrinths of philosophy and logic, only in the end to reach the prescribed and inevitable goal, the reconciliation of all the problems of life to the restricted preconceptions which mediæval authority had sanctioned.

It is not to disparage the Schoolmen to say that their work was necessarily controlled by the limitations of their times. Among them there were men of the loftiest genius and the most profound erudition. They too had glimpses beyond the boundaries of their intellectual horizon into the new world of fact and speculation which the Renaissance was to disclose in all its fulness to the mind of man. But, terrified by the vision, the Schoolmen shrank back into themselves, leaving, however, a mass of half unconscious suggestions to inspire the researches of a later day.

Thus the spirit which animated the mediæval world was, speaking generally, that of submission to constituted and received authority. The animating spirit of the Renaissance was that of free inquiry. Men revolted against the fetters which mediævalism had imposed upon the free exercise of their intellectual faculties: they claimed the full rights of the individual man, as a rational thinking being, to carry his speculations wheresoever they might lead him. Existing standards of truth were revised in this new spirit of free inquiry. Facts were challenged to justify themselves as facts under the test of experiment and increasing knowledge. Men now dared to say "I do not know" to questions which had been regarded as irrevocably settled, and in saying it, they formulated the fundamental principle of the scientific method on which the advancement of truth depends.

The concrete facts which we associate with the Renaissance Age—the discovery of a new world, the discovery of the laws which govern the solar system of the universe, the

invention of printing, the revived use of the compass, the rediscovery of the scope and purpose of Art, the movement which culminated in the Reformation, the scientific, and pseudo-scientific speculations of Paracelsus, the anatomical investigations of Michelangelo and Vesalius, the discovery of the circulation of the blood by Harvey, the new philosophy of Bacon—these, and many others, are not to be regarded as phenomena appearing in isolation, disconnected from one another. All have their origin in one and the same impulse acting upon the mind of man, the impulse towards free and independent inquiry without regard to the standards and conventions which mediævalism had formulated and imposed.

We must therefore, if we would understand the Renaissance, disentangle it from its accidents. We must recognise it as being in its essence the working within the mind of a new spirit which in due course manifested itself in various forms of definite and concrete achievement.

A striking manifestation of Renaissance energy, and at the same time, its most potent stimulus, was the Revival of Classical Literature. In the study of the great masterpieces of Greece and Rome men were able to recall and realise an existing system of civilisation which had given free and unfettered scope to the development and expression of the human mind. As a result of this freedom the ancient world had produced an Art, a philosophy, an ideal of government, a system of law, a literature, which far surpassed in loftiness of conception, and perfection of execution, the corresponding achievement of succeeding ages. The Pagan world had even evolved a standard of conduct far purer and more lofty than any commonly practised by men under the influence of Christian ideals. Why should not all that was best in the civilisation of the past be assimilated and incorporated into the civilisation of the present? Must there not be some means by which the lofty teachings of Pagan philosophy could be harmonised with the new revelation which Christianity had given to the world? Across the long vista of barren centuries men saw, in the civilisation of the past, their natural heritage from which they had been long excluded; now they resolved to enter in and to enjoy

it. They resolved to build up life afresh, upon a new foundation of beauty, joy, and intellectual emancipation. From the joy of living they had been in a large measure shut out by the ascetic ideal of life which had dominated the middle ages. Now they would enjoy in full measure all the good gifts of that Divine Intelligence which had created a world so full of beauty, which had created man so full of infinite possibilities.

Thus the Revival of ancient learning was much more than the cult of ancient literature. It was the recognition of a new principle by which life was to be governed. It was the adoption of a new attitude towards Man, towards Nature, and towards God.

Lorenzo dei Medici represents, more completely perhaps than any other individual in his own day, these aspirations of the Renaissance Age. He was also in a measure free from some of the abuses which were incident to them. Among the Humanists there were many who forgot the spirit of the new gospel through too rigid an adhesion to the letter of it. A barren and soul-destroying passion for exact scholarship and purity of literary style produced a school of pedantry, imitation, and stylistic affectation which made the new Humanist too often nothing but old Schoolman writ large. The sense of the thing said was lost in the straining after the form in which to say it. Not a word must be admitted into Latin compositions which had not Cicero's authority behind it. St. Paul's epistles must not be read in the original lest the inelegancies of his Greek might prove injurious to the reader's style.* Philology was mistaken for literature, and the teachings of ancient philosophy were lost in an empty enthusiasm for the rhetoric in which they were conveyed.

Lorenzo's Humanism was of a type more robust and practical. Scarcely yielding in elegance of style to the most accomplished Latinist of his day, yet he regarded Latin, as he regarded all language, simply as a medium for the expression of ideas. He was one of the first to appreciate and to

* The authority which attaches this dictum to Cardinal Bembo has been impugned. Prof. Sandys regards it as "an unfounded fabrication." V. "Scottish Historical Review," No. 18, p. 223.

extol the scope and harmony of his native Tuscan, and, with all his passion for antiquity, his own contributions to literature were written almost exclusively in his native tongue. Greek to him was not a mere distinctive accomplishment, but the key to the treasury of ancient thought. He did not read Plato for the purpose of æsthetic gratification, but for what Plato could tell him as to how life should be lived. He loved Plato because, as he was wont to say, "without a knowledge of his teaching it was impossible to be a good citizen, and not easy to follow the Christian doctrine."

Lorenzo's Humanism is refreshing because it was based on the conviction that in the master productions of the past there was much which vitally touched the needs of the present. He read them not as exercises in elegant diction, or as advertisements of his own erudition, but as the works of men, who, being dead, still lived to direct and encourage the pursuit of beauty and truth. In his view philosophy was nothing unless it was "fruit bearing" in its effects upon life, and he was wont, says Fabroni, "to grieve that there were so many at that time who, puffed up by arrogance, thought they knew much because they could repeat by heart a few tags drawn from the old philosophers, not understanding that it is the function of philosophy to examine things, not to weigh words, although elegance in style can do much to adorn philosophy and make it attractive." There is an interesting analogy between the views here attributed to Lorenzo and those which were held and expressed by his friend and fellow scholar, Pico della Mirandola. In a letter to Ermolao Barbaro, Pico, justifying his own absorption in the writings of the Schoolmen, declares that such studies are essential to one who would know the truth of things. He quotes the old adage, "*Sileni Alcibiadis*"—afterwards turned to such excellent account by Erasmus—which teaches that those things are often most precious which in the opinion of fools are of no value. Thus philosophy is to be distinguished from rhetoric, for philosophy is the pursuit of truth, while rhetoric is merely the pursuit of effect. It is for this reason that Plato's republic is administered by philosophers, while rhetoricians are banished from it altogether. "I

confess myself provoked at our modern grammaticasters, men who, if they can trace two words only to their origin fancy that all learning centres in themselves, and affect to speak with contempt of our scholastic moralists."

It was this conviction that all learning is ultimately valuable for its effect upon life which gives to Lorenzo's Humanism that healthiness and virility which were too frequently wanting in the culture of his age.

At all points in Lorenzo's active career we are confronted with the difficulty of determining how far he was influenced by individual and abstract considerations, and how far the question of his position and public policy intruded itself into his actions as a private man. Was it pure enthusiasm for scholarship, or his desire to associate the distinctive glories of Florence with his own name which inspired his effort to attract to Florence all that was best and most distinguished in the culture of the time? There was in Lorenzo such a complete harmony between his private tastes and his sense of what was required by his public station that a precise discrimination becomes impossible. But he could not have been indifferent to the reputation which he and his City would gain in common if Florence were recognised as the focus of intellectual and artistic life in Italy, as the centre from which culture radiated throughout the land.

Whatever may have been the motive, Lorenzo spared no exertions to make Florence in every way the acknowledged capital of the abstract world of ideas. Under his auspices professors of Greek were brought to Florence and publicly taught there. Argyropoulos, Calcondylas, Lascaris, Andronicos of Thessalonica, these, and other Byzantine Greeks, transmitted to Florentine scholars all their own erudition, so that Angelo Poliziano, at the age of sixteen, could translate four books of Homer's "Iliad" into Latin, and earn for himself the title of "Homericus Juvenis." In his preface Poliziano eulogises the position of Florence in relation to Greek studies. "Greek learning, long extinct even in Greece itself, has come to life and lives again in Florence. There Greek literature is taught and learned,

so that Athens, root and branch, has been transported thither, there to make her abode—not Athens in ruins and in the hands of barbarians, but Athens as she was, with her breathing spirit and her very soil."

It was to assist the prosecution of classical studies generally as much as to gratify his personal taste, that Lorenzo made his splendid collections of books, medals, inscriptions, and antiquities. Apart altogether from their artistic and antiquarian value, he valued these acquisitions as aids to a vivid realisation of actual life as it had been lived in the past. He had agents everywhere specially commissioned to secure for him whatever was of interest, and "you would have said they were dogs of the chase, so did they scent out and investigate everything; and anything that was rare, by some means they found it." Some of Poliziano's letters to Lorenzo give a lively account of his book-hunting expeditions on his patron's behalf to Ferrara, Padua, Venice and elsewhere. If a book could not be procured, it could be copied. Lorenzo employed a little army of copyists, and moreover permitted his own books to be copied for the benefit of others, thus enriching his own library, and making it serviceable to the libraries of others. Federigo of Urbino, and Matthias Corvinus, King of Hungary, vied with Lorenzo in their zeal as collectors, and were indebted to him for many a transcript. He sent Giovanni Giocondo to Rome to collect inscriptions among the ruins of the ancient City, a search which was rewarded by no less than two thousand inscriptions. In a letter written from Rome, Giocondo deplores the cynical vandalism which he found rampant there. By a strange paradox, the Romans, in an age of classical enthusiasm, often showed themselves indifferent to the memorials of classical antiquity which still remained among them. "What is in the Flaminian Circus to-day you will find to-morrow on the Tarpeian rock: marbles and bronze tablets are being smashed and left to perish. I have in memory many things which I myself saw, but I pass them over lest I bring tears to my eyes and yours, for you of all men are most observant of antiquity: precious relics so torn up from their very roots that not only is no

bit of them left, but it is not even known where once the were."

It was in the service of Lorenzo that Giovanni Lascaris travelled in the East and recovered two hundred Greek manuscripts, eighty of which up to that time had been unknown. With some of these Lascaris was returning to Florence in 1492, at the moment when Lorenzo's life was fast ebbing. Upon his death-bed Lorenzo lamented that he could not live long enough to see and to enjoy such precious treasures. He was a man who took the cause of learning close to his heart and spared no effort to encourage and advance it. The collections which he formed were cherished by him for the uses to which they could be put. His antiques were arranged in his gardens of San Marco so as to form a school of art for rising genius. His library was at the service of all scholars, and it was his peculiar delight to form libraries for friends, like Pico, or for institutions, like San Marco or the Convent of Fiesole, to which he was bound by family ties. The books which he contributed to San Marco are still distinguishable by the Medici badge of a laurel tree, and by the word "*semper*" stamped upon them.

The patronage which Lorenzo extended to men of letters was marked by the same judicious discrimination which characterised him as a collector. As a patron he made it his special aim never to patronise. Men of genius, he said, required to be humoured, and he regarded it as his function to humour them in such a way as to bring out of them the best effort of which they were capable. From him sprang the inspiration which prompted much of the literary achievement of his day, and from him came the money without which achievement would often have been impossible. When Giovanni Tornabuoni in Rome wrote of Matteo Palmieri's labours in translating Herodotus, Lorenzo regarded it as a privilege to be permitted to assist him. Poliziano's translation of Herodian, of the Pandects, of parts of Galen, were prompted or encouraged by Lorenzo, whose catholicity of taste is shown by the multiplicity and diversity of the tasks which he imposed upon his friend. His remarks upon the

need for a manual of architecture inspired Leo Battista Alberti to produce an extensive work upon the subject, while he was as alive to the claims of natural science as to those of scholarship and the fine Arts. At a time when the path of scientific progress was beset and hampered by every form of superstition and gross credulity, Lorenzo had a vision of the open road beyond, when the science of medicine should be based upon experiment, and the science of astronomy should be purged of astrological quackery. It was in the belief that the primary essential to scientific advance was that men should first of all unlearn before they could begin to learn, that, through Poliziano, he made the work of Galen accessible to the modern world. He thus sent medical science back to its original source and fountain-head. In the same spirit he rallied Ficino upon his naïve belief in the influence of the stars, but the old philosopher was never more than half converted from the error of his ways.

Yet Lorenzo was not himself exempt from the spirit of mysticism which infused so much of the scholarship of the time. The cult of Plato which found outward expression in Platonic banquets on the presumed birthday of the philosopher, in the lamp kept ever burning before his bust, lent itself to extravagancies of fancy which had filtered down from Alexandrian days. The doctrine of Plato that man may attain to ultimate perfection if he will concentrate all his energies on the cultivation of his spiritual nature, that man can only reach the highest level of his possibilities by abstaining altogether from intercourse with worldly things, led to the conclusion that those men who seemed to have attained the highest must necessarily have been the apostles of the contemplative life. Thus there was forced upon much of the work of the great writers of antiquity a mystical and allegorical interpretation which was quite foreign to it. Virgil, for example, throughout the middle ages had been regarded as more a prophet and mystery man than as a poet, and this view of Virgil, as being, like his own Sibyl, something more than human, as a half-inspired seer to whom the vision of a new dispensation had been dimly revealed, persisted to Renaissance times.

Cristoforo Landino, in his *Disputationes Camaldulenses* has given a charming account of a discussion in Lorenzo's presence between many eminent scholars upon the true inwardness of Virgil's poetry. Landino tells how Lorenzo and his brother Giuliano withdrew to the Camaldulensian Convent of the Angeli on the wooded heights of Casentino, in company with Ficino, Alberti, and other scholarly friends. There for a few days they enjoyed the hospitality of the good Abbot Mariotto Allegri. Much of each day was spent beneath the shadow of great trees, where a spring babbled hard by. Lying there, amid such scenes as Virgil loved, and beneath the shade of his spreading beech, it was natural that the poetry of Virgil should suggest itself as a subject for conversation. Leo Battista Alberti took up his parable and contended, from an examination of the Æneid, that Virgil was to be regarded as a philosopher first, and only secondarily as a poet; for beneath the surface of his text, and beyond its obvious sense, there lurked a wealth of allegorical and philosophical meaning from which the initiated could deduce the harmony between the teaching of Virgil and of Plato.

On another day the conversation turned exclusively on Plato, and Alberti, who is made the prolocutor of the assembly, expounded Plato's doctrine of the contemplative life, spent in the pursuit of truth, as being the only true life towards which man should strive. He began by an extravagant eulogy upon Lorenzo, who could scarcely have been twenty at the time, declaring that his virtues were such that they gave evidence of divine rather than of human origin. His prudence and courage were equal to any undertaking however momentous. His moderation was proof against all the intoxications of fortune. Alberti then urged upon Lorenzo the virtue of Plato's teaching, insisting that he who is to rule men must of all others take advantage of opportunities to withdraw from time to time from the active pressure of affairs, and devote himself to quietness, contemplation, and the renewal of his spirit. Carried onward by his enthusiasm, Alberti proceeded to the full length of the Platonic doctrine, and argued that man could

not hope to reach perfection as long as he allowed the things of the world to divert him in any degree from the development of his spiritual and intellectual faculties. At this point Lorenzo interposed with a question. What would happen to communities if all the best men withdrew themselves wholly from the duties of government? Would it not follow that States would have to be ruled by worse men? Alberti somewhat weakly replies that the best men could still assist government by their advice; and so by their counsel, if not by their actions, be of service to the State. Whether the worse men, on whom rested all the responsibility, were likely to be influenced by the best men who studiously held aloof from responsibility, was a question which Alberti conveniently ignored.

Landino's *Disputationes* form one of the most charming contributions to our knowledge of the life and thought of his times. He brings us within the magic circle of Lorenzo and his friends so that we can imagine ourselves to be sharing in their woodland recreations, and listening to their animated discourse. The author invests his distinguished pupil with a living personality as well as with a bright intelligence, and from intimate knowledge of Lorenzo's character anticipates for him an illustrious career.

It is through Cristoforo Landino that we become associated with another manifestation of Lorenzo's intellectual interest. In 1481 there appeared the Florentine *Editio princeps* of Dante's "Divine Comedy," with commentaries by Landino and twenty wood-cut engravings illustrating the Inferno.* Florence had proved somewhat tardy in recognising the transcendent merit of her greatest citizen. Already nine editions of Dante had been issued from the printing presses of other towns before Landino's work appeared. But its appearance marks the full renaissance of Dante. He now took his unchallenged place among the great classics of the world, recognised as being worthy of all the patient study which was being lavished on Plato, or Virgil, or Homer.

Though Landino's work was not dedicated to Lorenzo,

* The Rylands Library at Manchester contains the only copy of Landino's "Dante" which has all the woodcuts.

CANTO PRIMO DELLA PRIMA CANTICA O VERO COMEDIA DEL DIVINO POETA FIORENTINO DANTHE ALEGHIERI : CAPITOLO PRIMO :

EL MEZO DEL CAMINO DI NOSTRA VITA
Mi ritrouai peruna selua obscura
che la diricta uia era smarrita
Et quanto adire quale era e/ cosa dura
esta selua seluaggia et aspra et forte
che nel pensier rinuoua lapaura
Tanto era amara che pocho e piu morte
ma per tractar del ben chio ui trouai
diro dellaltre cose chio uho scorte
I non so ben ridire chomuio uentrai
tantera pien disonno insu quel puncto
che lauerace uia abbandonai
Ma poi chio fui appie dun colle giunto
la oue terminaua quella ualle
che mhauea dipaur elcor compuncto
Guardai inalto et uidi lesue spalle
coperte gia deraggi delpianeta
che mena dricto altrui per ogni calle
Allhor fu lapaura un pocho queta
che nellago del chuor mera durata
lanocte chio passai con tanta pieta

Habbiamo narrato non solamente lauita del poeta et eltitolo dellibro et che cosa sia poeta Ma etiam quanto sia uetusta et anticha quanto nobile et uaria quanto utile et ioconda tal doctrina. Quanto sia efficace a muouere lhumane menti: et quanto dilecti ogni liberale ingegno. Ne giudicammo da tacere quanto in si diuina disciplina sia stata la excellentia dello ingegno del nostro poeta. Inche sisono stato piu breue che forse non si conuerrebbe: consideri chi legge che lanumerosa et quasi infinita copia dellecose delle quali e necessario tractare misforza non uolendo chel uolume cresca sopra modo: a inculcare et inuiluppare piutosto che explicare: et distendere molte cose et maxime quelle lequali quando ben tacessi non pero ne rimarra obscura la expositione del testo. Verremo adunque aquella. Ma perche stimo non esser lectore alcuno ne di si basso ingegno: ne di si pocho giudicio: che hauendo inteso: quanto sia et laprofondita et uarieta della doctrina: et la excellentia et diuinita dello ingegno delnostro toscano: et fiorentino poeta: non si persuada che questo principio delprimo canto debba per sublimita et grandeza esser pari alla stupenda doctrina dellechose che seguitano: pero con ogni industria inuestigheremo che allegoricho senso arechi seco questo mezo delcamino: et che cosa sia selua. Diche ueggio non piccola differentia essere stata tra glinterpreti et expositori diquesta cantica. Impero che alchuni dicono: che il mezo della uita humana e el sonno mossi: credo dalla sententia daristotele dicendo lui nelethica nessuna differentia essere tra felici: et miseri nella meta della uita per che lenocti che sono lameta del tempo conducono sonno: et daquello nasce che ne bene nemale sentir possiamo. Ilperche uogliono questo: che el poeta ponghi el mezo della uita per la nocte: et lanocte pelsonno: ad notare che questo poema non sia altro che una uisione che gliapparue dormendo per laquale hebbe cognitione delle cose dallui descripte in queste tre comedie. Dicono adunque che lui imita Ioanni euangelista el quale dormendo sopra elpecto di christo redemptore hebbe uisione delle chose celeste: oueramente pongon lanocte dimostrando lui hauere cominciato elsuo poema dinocte nella quale raccogliendosi lanimo insemedesimo et absoluendosi et liberandosi da ogni cura meglio intenda. Ma benche tale sententia quadri al poeta: niente dimeno leparole non la dimostrono senon con tanto obscura ambiguita: che non pare degna della elegantia ditanto poeta Prima perche nonseguita che benche nelle reuolutioni deltempo tanto spatio occupin lenocti quanto e di: perquesto dicendo io scripsi dinocte sintenda io scripsi nel mezo della mia eta: perche et nel principio et nelfine della eta humana sono lenocti chome nel mezo et similmente e di. Il perche per lamedesima ragione si potrebbe fare tale interpretatione pel di chome per lanocte. Altri dicono che uolle pelmezo del camino intendere che nelmezo delleta dette principio alsuo poema. Ma non e unamedesima opinione deltermine della nostra eta: per che diuersi scriptori diuersamente sentono. Aristotile nel suo de republica

FIRST PAGE OF CHRISTOFORO LANDINO'S EDITION OF DANTE'S DIVINE COMEDY

FLORENCE, 1481

WITH INITIAL AND DRAWING TO ILLUSTRATE CANTO I

This is the first edition of Dante produced in Florence. The copy, in the Ryland's Library, Manchester, from which this plate is taken, is unique, it being the only copy containing the Twenty *illustrations.*

Full title "Commento di Christophoro Landino Fiorentino sopra la Comedia di Dante Alighieri Poeta Fiorentino per Nicholo di Lorenzo della Magna [*Nikolaus Lorenz dell' Allemagna*] *A Di xxx Dagosto MD.CCCC.LXXXI*

but to Federigo of Urbino, Lorenzo fully shared his master's enthusiasm. In his Commentary upon his own sonnets, when urging the virtues of the language of Tuscany as capable of expressing with dignity and perfection the highest and most complex thought, he cites Dante, Petrarch and Boccaccio "who in their grave and sweetest verses, and in their prose, have given the clearest evidence that every shade of meaning can be expressed in this language." Any reader of the Divine Comedy, he further adds, will find in it the three qualities of style which orators have praised—the humble, the lofty, and the style which is intermediate between them. In Dante alone, are they united. To find them in Greek and Latin writers it is necessary to go not to any one author but to many.

Lorenzo's own poetry frequently follows Dante in form, and though in his *Beoni* he did not abstain from something approaching to a parody of the "Divine Comedy," yet his admiration for Dante, and the influence of Dante upon him, are continually apparent.

In 1476 Lorenzo vainly negotiated with the Venetian government for the restoration of Dante's remains to Florence, nor could it have been without his consent and willing co-operation that, after the appearance of Landino's edition, the Signoria annulled the decrees which had deprived the Poet of his citizenship, and placed his laurel-crowned statue in the Baptistery of S. Giovanni.

Among the many services which Lorenzo rendered to the cause of learning, the reconstitution of the Academy, or University, at Pisa, must take an honoured place, though in this case he was certainly influenced by political motives acting in combination with his zeal for scholarship. The ancient city of Pisa, the key to the Arno, had, after fierce contentions, fallen under the domination of Florence early in the fifteenth century. But the memory of her days of independence continued to survive, and Pisa chafed against the chains which bound her. It seemed impossible for Florence and Pisa to intermingle, for each was separated from the other by barriers of passionate resentment and deep-rooted distrust, which neither time nor diplomacy

could mitigate or heal. In such a case Macchiavelli advised his Prince that the only safe policy was to destroy utterly the subject people, for where liberty has once existed it can never be destroyed: the name of Liberty will still survive its ruin, and for all time prove a rallying cry for those who would restore it. It is instructive to note that nearly forty years before Macchiavelli was born the Florentines practically adopted his policy in their treatment of Pisa. They came to the conclusion, expressed in a despatch to their Commissioner, that "there was but one way effectually to secure the town, and that was to empty it altogether of citizens and peasants." The plan was carried into effect. The commercial prosperity of the city was ruined, and her untilled fields were fruitful only as a source of malarial pestilence.

Lorenzo, upon his accession to power, determined to act towards Pisa in the spirit of his declared conviction that men are more easily influenced and won by kindness than by severity. Recognising, as he did, the economic necessity of Pisa to Florence, he determined, without in any way relaxing his hold, to endeavour by conciliation to win Pisa to a willing allegiance. He himself had a house there and estates in the neighbourhood. He is found continually residing there for months in succession, inspired by the hope that his own personal fascinations and goodwill might effect much towards healing Pisa's wounded spirit. With this object prominently before his mind, Lorenzo in 1472 restored the University of Pisa, and incorporated it with the University of Florence. The same Statutes were to apply to both. They were to be two branches of a common stem, but each with its separate and distinctive functions. The energies of Pisa were to be devoted to the faculty of Law, while at Florence Philosophy and Humane Letters were to be the principal subjects of study.

The scheme encountered obstacles from plague and from war, and in the years which immediately followed its establishment the University of Pisa tended to drift hither and thither. At last University buildings were provided by the munificence of Lorenzo, and an annual endowment

of 6000 florins was provided from the public treasury. Sixtus IV. was induced to sanction a tax upon ecclesiastical revenues for the benefit of the new academy, and pending its collection Lorenzo advanced the money. The chief difficulty was now with the Professors.

The leading jurisconsults of the time appear to have been men as remarkable for the acerbity of their characters as for their legal erudition. Filelfo, Filippo and Lancilotto Tristano, Bartolommeo Sozzini are alike in this, that they were all equally impossible to deal with. Filippo Tristano was continually wandering away and being recovered, but "neither gifts nor kindness could soften or assuage the man's wrath, rashness and inconstancy." But of all the Pisan Professors employed by Lorenzo the most refractory was Bartolommeo Sozzini, whose career illustrates certain characteristics not infrequently found in the Humanists of this age. They have been justly praised as men of great attainments, of deep enthusiasm, while their work as pioneers of scholarship entitles them to the gratitude of posterity. But they were endowed as fully as other men with the frailties of nature, and, to know them as a class, it is necessary to recognise their defects while in no way disparaging their services.

Bartolommeo Sozzini of Siena was about six and thirty at the time of his appointment to a Professorship at Pisa. Already he had built up a reputation throughout Italy as among the most profound and brilliant legists of his time. Lorenzo, "always striving to catch vagabond celebrities wherever he could find them," was successful in securing Sozzini for the chair of Canon and Roman Law at Pisa. He at once became remarkable for the energy which he threw into his lectures, and for the vivacity of his controversial methods. Lorenzo was himself often an interested auditor of the academic encounters between Sozzini and Jason Mainon, an oracle of jurisprudence, of no less renown than Sozzini himself. The Professor did not confine his counsels exclusively to the sphere of academic learning, but showed his practical sense of the limitations of law when he recommended a dagger as the best argument against a dun. He

was indeed a man distinguished by the insolence, rashness, and audacity of his character. He was always flushed with a sense of his own importance, and imagined that his eminence in the world of abstract law ought to secure him immunity from the consequences of unlawful and anti-social actions. Sozzini had only been two years at Pisa when the Signoria complained to Lorenzo of the Professor's insolence to one of their number, but the competition for his services was so keen that much had to be overlooked in order to retain him at Pisa. Venice at last succeeded in tempting him away, and he made preparations to leave, though he had quite recently renewed his agreement with the University for another term of years. Among his preparations was the collection of many valuable books and effects, the property of the University, which Sozzini appropriated and concealed in wine jars. His thefts were detected and he was sent to Florence, where he lay for some time under the death penalty, but was saved by the pleadings of Lorenzo, who urged his extraordinary merits as a scholar in palliation for his delinquencies as a man. He was not only pardoned but restored to the chair of Roman Law at Pisa, where, for an annual salary of a thousand fiorini, he remained for three years. Venice, however, had by no means abandoned the hope of obtaining him : his native Siena, too, was making strenuous efforts to secure him, but at the moment when rival towns were contesting for the honour of his presence, a fresh escapade brought him once more within the meshes of Florentine justice, and he was imprisoned in the Stinche by Lorenzo's orders. From his prison Sozzini put forth a complaint that he, a man so celebrated, should be confined in so vile a place. Lorenzo's reply was addressed to the Professor's philosophy. It is not, said Lorenzo, the place nor the punishment, which makes a man infamous, but the cause which has led to the imposition of such a punishment. The solicitations of the prisoner were reinforced, however, by the intercession of the Pope. Innocent, in a letter to Lorenzo, commended Sozzini to his consideration, with the result that the prisoner was set free. The disgrace which he had suffered seems in

no way to have injured the demand for him. He retired to Siena, though he had promised to go to Venice, and an animated contest, almost leading to hostilities, arose for the possession of him. At last he returned to Pisa, where, after Lorenzo's death and the expulsion of Piero, he stimulated the Pisans to revolt against Florence. Until his death in 1507, he remained the bitter enemy of that family and of that Republic whose chief fault towards him had been that of seeking to rescue him from himself.

Sozzini is but a type of the arrogance, unscrupulousness, and moral obliquity which mingle not infrequently in the Humanists with fine qualities of taste, enthusiasm and learning. But this base alloy was no necessary and inevitable component of the Humanistic character. If there were many like Sozzini there were many like Marsilio Ficino, or Pico della Mirandola, men on whose character scholarship acted as an ennobling and purifying influence. On the whole Humanism was justified of her children. If, instead of exalting the Humanists as heroes, we are content to regard them as men, they will be found not to fall short of other men in the average standard of conduct which they present to the world.

Ficino, Pico, Poliziano were so closely bound to Lorenzo by the ties of intimate friendship that only by far exceeding the limits of my space would it be possible to do justice to their association. Here the name of Marsilio Ficino is introduced only to suggest a further service which Lorenzo rendered to the cause of scholarship and philosophy. Under Ficino's auspices he carried the Platonic Academy of Florence far beyond the point to which his grandfather, Cosimo, had brought it.

The Renaissance was essentially the age of Academies, which were associations of select men who gathered together from time to time to advance in common some special intellectual interest. Sometimes such coteries would arise out of the relations existing between a master and his disciples. The Academy at Rome, for example, under Pomponius Laetus, was such an assembly. Sometimes they would be brought into existence by the initiative and encouragement of a

Prince or patron who sought to use the prevailing passion for culture for the exaltation of his city or of himself. But in the case of Cosimo dei Medici he was undoubtedly animated by a genuine enthusiasm for Plato when he sought to revive, on the banks of the Arno, memories of "those groves of Academe," where Plato first unfolded his message to the world. The Council of Florence, which had met in 1439 to reconcile the differences between the Greek and Latin Churches, stimulated in many minds the desire to find some common ground where Greek and Christian philosophy could unite. Even the little that at the time was known of Plato was sufficient to proclaim the transcendentalism of his dectrine; a further knowledge of his principles seemed likely to show fundamental agreement between the spirit of Plato and of Christ.

To gain this more extended knowledge was the first and most pressing need. In Marsilio Ficino, Cosimo, by a happy intuition, divined a man who could be permanently dedicated to the service of the Platonic doctrine. Though little more than a youth, Ficino was selected by Cosimo to guide the discussions of the Academy. Around him the members gathered as around a master, first learning what it was that Plato had taught, and then discussing the problems of life, and death, and duty in the light of the new teaching. But the master himself, when the Academy was founded, had himself almost everything to learn. Cosimo took Ficino under his charge, established him in a secluded residence near the Medici Villa Careggi, and set him to translate Plato. From time to time results of Ficino's patient industry appeared in the form of a Latin translation of this Dialogue or of that. At last in 1491, twenty-seven years after the death of his first patron, there appeared from the press of Bernardino di Choris of Venice, the first complete printed translation of Plato, from the hand of Marsilio Ficino, with a preface addressed to Lorenzo celebrating the relations of the author with Lorenzo himself, with Piero his father, and with Cosimo.

In the meantime under Lorenzo the Academy had been revived, and its sphere of operations extended. The discus-

Nōnulla Athenagorę de resurrectiōne.
Quotidie Platonis libros recognoscit alicubi/alienis manibus forte contaminatos: distinguitq; in Capita: & longioribus argumentis cōmentariisq; illustrat.

Impressit ex archetypo Antonius Mischominus Florentię Anno Salutis. M.CCCCLXXXIII. Pridie kal. Februarias.

Hunc libellū ego gabriel lunganus de florentia monachus ordis camaldul emi xvj solidis ex pecunijs quas labore meo atq̄ īdustria aquisivj

THE LAST PAGE OF MARSILIO FICINO'S TREATISE "*DE SOLE*"

PUBLISHED BY ANTONIO MISCHOMINI, 1483

The copy in the Ryland's Library, from which this plate is taken, contains at the foot of the last page the following MS. annotation:

"Hunc libellum ego Gabriel Lunganus de Fiorentia monachus ordinis camaldulensium emi XVI solidis ex pecuniis quas labore meo atque industria acquisivi"

This little book I, Gabrielo Lungano of Florence, a monk of the Camaldulensian order, bought for sixteen pence out of money which I have acquired by my own labour and industry

sions would sometimes run over from Plato to the Divine Comedy of Dante, the systematic study of the great poet and philosopher of Italy coming to take its place side by side with that of the philosopher of Greece. Whatever the subject Lorenzo was recognised and acknowledged as a master. Of all the brilliant men who composed the Academy there was not one who excelled him in versatility of talent, and few who were his superiors in accurate scholarship, or in depth and range of thought. Fortunately Lorenzo has left sufficient evidences of his intellectual quality to enable us to judge of him for ourselves. We are not therefore compelled blindly to accept a verdict which we might suspect to be prompted by flattery, or fulsome subservience. Great as were the services which directly and indirectly he rendered to the cause of scholarship and learning, his definite and personal achievement as a man of letters remains to stamp him as perhaps the most commanding and original genius of his age.

CHAPTER XVII

LORENZO AS PROSE WRITER AND POET—THE "COMMENTARIO" SONNETS, AND PASTORALS

Decline of vernacular literature—Survival of the vernacular in the songs of the people—Lorenzo's services to Literature—Revival of the vernacular—Leo Battista Alberti—Lorenzo's defence of the vernacular—Lorenzo's "Commentario"—Lorenzo as a critic of Italian literature—The Sonnets—Origin of the Sonnets—Lorenzo's defence of the Sonnet form—Qualities of Lorenzo's Sonnets—Muratori on Lorenzo's poetry—Lorenzo's poetic versatility—Lorenzo's dangerous facility in versification—The *Selve d'Amore*—Love, Beauty, and My Lady—The *Selve* and Poliziano's *La Giostra*—*Ambra*—*Corinto.*

THE revival of classical learning rudely interrupted that development of vernacular Italian literature which the work of Dante, of Petrarch, and of Boccaccio shows to have been in progress. The best intellect of Italy now became absorbed in the recovery of a past literature, not in the development of a present one. The present, indeed, seemed but poorly furnished either with a language or an inspiration such as could vitalise, much less immortalise, any literary product. It was felt that everything worth saying had already been said by the ancients, and had, moreover, been clothed with such perfections of form and diction, that a vernacular like the Tuscan, which itself was but a dialect, was for any lofty purpose of literature inadequate and unworthy. There was scarcely a self-respecting man of letters, who had a reputation to gain, or to lose, who dreamed of entrusting to the Tuscan vernacular anything but the careless and ephemeral trifles of the moment, which, being of no value, it was of no importance to preserve.

Of the sterility, pedantry, and unprofitable imitation to which this slavery to classical forms gave rise it is not here

necessary to speak. One inevitable result however was in a peculiar degree fatal to Italian literature, depriving it of vitality and putting it out of relation to life. It ceased to draw its strength and virtue from close contact with the spirit and aspirations of the people. A sharp line of cleavage began to separate the *intellectuals* from the public. Scholars became a new aristocracy, with all that contempt which caste feels for the vulgar. Literature became the hall-mark of the few ; it was no longer the highest expression of national tastes and enthusiasms. It became an embellishment to the art of life in proportion as it ceased to be an emanation from the practice of living. A coterie of *virtuosi* monopolised all culture within itself, and felt its chief distinction to consist in its superior exclusiveness and isolation from all contact with the common herd.

The language itself which Dante had moulded, which Petrarch had adorned, became in danger of degenerating into a barbarous amalgam. When men of letters condescended to use the vernacular they did not scruple indiscriminately to interlard it with Latin, until, as we read the letters and despatches of the period, we are almost in doubt whether Italy possessed a distinctive language of her own. Within an exclusive circle, which set the tone of literary elegance and taste, Latin became the native tongue of thought and of expression, while the Tuscan assumed a secondary place. It could not be entirely neglected or abandoned, for Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio had produced acknowledged masterpieces which ranked with the masterpieces of antiquity. They had, however, it was thought, exhausted its possibilities : they had, perhaps, jeopardised their own fame, in that the Divine Comedy, the Sonnets, and the Decameron had not been written in Latin.

In the meantime, however, the national life of the people was in active and continuous movement. Men still lived, and loved, and mourned, and jested. The tragedy and the comedy of existence, its small daily joys and griefs, its aspirations and its failures, called for expression, nor would they be denied. If the giants of literature turned

aside in contempt from the demands of the everyday world as being beneath their notice, smaller men were there ready to answer to the call, and to supply with ballad, story, or hymn the popular demand. A humble literature of the street, homestead, and countryside, unfettered because unnoticed, and rejoicing in its freedom, never ceased to find a lowly inspiration in the dances and delights of the common people.

Whenever a man of genius should arise endowed with the spirit of sympathy and observation, with eyes to see the truth and beauty which lie concealed beneath familiar forms of things, then there would be before him the double task of linking life to literature, and of interpreting the new world revealed in antiquity in the light of the strivings and aspirations of the actual world of his day.

Such a man was Lorenzo dei Medici. The versatility of his genius brought him into touch with life at all points. He was amply, if not richly, endowed with the poetic faculty, and, as a poet, he was able to tune his lyre at will to the deepest note of philosophic speculation, or to the severe melody of the Sonnet, or to the lightest refrain of rustic lovesong or carnival revel.

Lorenzo's services to literature are that he brought poetry once more into touch with the realities of things; that he raised to the dignity of literature the artless compositions of the crowd by incorporating the spirit and kernel of such compositions into masterpieces of his own production; and that he restored the Tuscan language indisputably and permanently to its proper place as a fit medium for all forms of thought, however complex and however lofty.

In his efforts on behalf of the Tuscan vernacular it is probable that Lorenzo was influenced and stimulated by the example and the previous endeavours of Leo Battista Alberti. Alberti, by reason of his age, reputation, and achievement was, in his day, the acknowledged oracle of culture and scholarship in Florence. It has been seen that in the *Disputationes Camaldulenses* the part of Prolocutor in the discussions is assigned to him, and he is represented as

at once the panegyrist and mentor of Lorenzo and Giuliano. The influence of such a man upon the impressionable and receptive mind of such a youth as Lorenzo must have been great, and it is, therefore, no strained supposition to imagine him as instilling into his pupil his own views upon the subject of language.

These views Alberti had already given to the world in his "Treatise on the Family," where, in the preface to the third book, he justifies his use of the vernacular, and prophesies for it a future. Even, he says, if men of learning boast of the authority possessed by the Latin language on the ground that so many learned men have used it, "the like honour will certainly be paid to our language of to-day, if men of culture take the pains to purify and polish it." He saw that if ancient Rome—*antiquo nostro imperio amplissimo*—had her own great destinies to accomplish, so Italy, *Italia nobilissima, capo e arce di tutto l'universo mondo*, had equally her own peculiar mission to fulfil. The Italian must realise his ancient birthright bequeathed to him by the Roman, but he must realise it in his own way, and use it not as a memory but as a possession.

Thus, as early as 1434, if as is probable, Alberti's *Trattato* is of that date, one great Humanist was already protesting against humanistic pedantry and affectation. He stands out as the champion of the *Lingua Toscana*, though his Tuscan is of the schools rather than of life. The seed of a linguistic revival was sown by Alberti; the fruits were gathered by that brilliant galaxy of native Tuscan writers, Lorenzo dei Medici, Macchiavelli, Angelo Poliziano and Guicciardini.

Of these, the first place may be assigned to Lorenzo, inasmuch as, from his position and his example, he was fitted to exercise the most powerful influence. He was not only in himself a man of brilliant attainments, but he had it in his power to set a fashion. Men would, if need be, have written in Chaldaic to please Lorenzo. His advocacy, therefore, of the use of the vernacular assumes an importance over and above its intrinsic value.

In a prose commentary * attached to a sheaf of his own Sonnets, Lorenzo shows an intimate familiarity with, and a virile command over, his own language. The treatise is an ambitious literary effort, consisting as it does of ninety-three double pages of Aldus's type, and containing between forty and fifty thousand words. Had Dante never written the *Vita Nuova* it is improbable that Lorenzo's Commentary would have been composed, for though the scope of it is different from that of Dante's work, though as a spiritual revelation it stands upon a far lower plane, the original suggestive influence of Dante is clearly marked.

Lorenzo begins by explaining why he has the presumption to suppose his own Sonnets are worthy of any illustrative commentary. He thinks such a commentary may be useful to those who care to read his poetry, but, apart from this, he desires to justify himself in the eyes of those who may consider the composition of ephemeral and trifling love poems to be a misuse of that valuable time which, from his position, he owes to public duty: lastly, he wishes to reply to the possible objection that he has written in the vernacular, which, "according to the opinion of some, is not fitted for, nor worthy of, any excellent matter or subject." A thing, however, does not become less worthy by becoming more common: on the contrary, the more universal and communicable anything becomes, the more it approaches to the Platonic conception of "the highest good." Now a thing cannot attain to the highest without reaching the infinite, and nothing can be called infinite but that which is common to all things.

Having thus satisfied the learned taste of the day with a few Platonic tags, Lorenzo proceeds to lay down clearly and concisely the conditions which give dignity and perfection to any idiom or language. They are these (i): That it shall be copious and abundant, and fit adequately to

* The *Commento di Lorenzo dei Medici sopra alcuni de' suoi Sonetti* was first included in an edition of his poems printed by Aldus, 1554. It has not, I believe, been since reprinted in full. Roscoe, in his "Illustrations," prints a small portion of it. All that part of it, however, where Lorenzo discourses on his sonnets in the style of Dante's *Vita Nuova* is still inaccessible to English readers.

express the sense and concept of the mind. Judged thus Greek is a more perfect language than Latin, Latin than Hebrew. (ii) That it shall be sweet and harmonious. (iii) That it shall have been used as a medium for great literature, which he explains as meaning the treatment of "things subtle, grave, and necessary to human life." (iv) That it shall have evolved from a dialect into a language.

These four conditions the Tuscan language has fulfilled. The use of it by Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio is a proof that every shade of meaning can be expressed in this language. In harmony and sweetness Petrarch has shown that it is the equal, if not the superior, of Latin, for Petrarch's Sonnets and Canzoni are superior to anything of the kind by Ovid, Catullus, Propertius or any other Latin writer, while the Sonnets and Canzoni of Dante reach to such heights of gravity, subtlety, and pure beauty that they have no rivals anywhere. As for Boccaccio, his invention, copiousness, and eloquence are beyond compare. The range and diversity of that author's purpose requires a language of extraordinary reach and flexibility. It must be capable of expressing every phase of feeling from exaltation to vulgarity: love, hate, fear, hope, all the emotions which are common to men, have to be rendered through language, not as primary impulses, but complicated with innumerable wiles, and with much perverted ingenuity. In the hands of Boccaccio, Tuscan has stood his severest tests; henceforth, therefore, no one can doubt that no language is fitter for full and complete expression than our own.

Having still further fortified his position by adducing in proof the poetry of Guido Cavalcanti, whose ballads and sonnets show the qualities of gravity and sweetness in perfect accord, Lorenzo sums up his arguments: "Let us conclude, then, that men and practice have been wanting to the language rather than that the language has been wanting to the men and what they had to say. Whatever are, or may seem to be, the proper glories of language, these seem to me to be abundantly present in our own. In view of what has already been written in this language, especially by Dante, it appears to me to be useful and

indeed necessary that his writings should be read; and things shall still be written in this language subtle, and important, and worthy of being read, the more so as at present it is in its infancy. In its youth and adult age it may still take on new perfections, more especially if success and extension attend the government of Florence, as we ought to hope, and for this end every good citizen should strive with all his might."

Lorenzo's detractors will smile at this concluding characteristic touch. If the Italian language is to flourish the rule of the Medici must flourish in Italy. The passage will doubtless bear this free translation, for it assuredly expresses Lorenzo's conviction that his House stood for a great deal more than himself.

That part of the "Commentary" which has been paraphrased or translated above has an interest beyond its special purpose. Lorenzo, the advocate, is revealed as the critic. His love of Italian, and his confidence in its future, is based upon a real and living knowledge of its actual achievements, for it is evident that he had made the work of Dante, Cavalcanti, Petrarch, and Boccaccio a part of his being. His estimate is based on close familiarity and fine judgment. He shows a catholic spirit of appreciation which claims to examine and think for itself, scorning the sickly affectations of those *virtuosi* who could see nothing good except at a distance of a thousand years.

If we exclude his diplomatic despatches and his correspondence the "Commentary" is Lorenzo's sole important contribution to Italian prose literature. It will be convenient, therefore, while treating it in relation to the revival of the language, to consider it as a whole.

Its autobiographical interest has already been noted.* He traces the genesis of his Sonnets from the death of the beautiful lady—probably Simonetta Cattaneo—"for whom all Florence grieved." He, like every one else, felt constrained to celebrate her charms and virtues, or to accuse the greed and bitterness of Death. Thus he composed four sonnets which express, with Petrarchian eloquence

* See pp. 118–122.

Brogi

POSSIBLE PORTRAIT OF SIMONETTA CATTANEO

DETAIL FROM BOTTICELLI'S "VENUS RISING FROM THE SEA"

Uffizi Gallery, Florence

The model for this figure is probably the same as for that of the Central Grace in the same painter's "Spring

Both figures may represent La bella Simonetta

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and in accents of graceful melancholy, the sentiments which he felt to be proper to the occasion. It would be clear, without his subsequent acknowledgment, that he was not moved from the depths of his inward being to these compositions. The requirements of his poetry demand the expression of his grief. It is not his grief which compels the poetic expression of it. But the sonnet*

> O chiara stella, che co'raggi tuoi
> Togli all'altre vicine stelle il lume,

is an example selected almost at random from the collection to serve as an illustration of Lorenzo's feeling and method. Artificial as it is, yet it challenges comparison with kindred outpourings from Keats and Burns. We instinctively feel that productions separated from one

* O chiara stella, che co'raggi tuoi
Togli all'altre vicine stelle il lume,
Perchè splendi assai più del tuo costume ?
Perchè con Febo ancor contender vuoi ?
Forse i begli occhi qual ha tolto a noi
Morte crudel, ch'ormai troppo presume,
Accolti hai in te ; adorna del lor lume
Il suo bel carro a Febo chieder puoi.
Presto, o nuova stella che tu sia [1]
Che di splendor novello adorni il cielo,
Chiamata esaudi, O Nume, i voti nostri.
Leva dello splendor tuo tanta via
Che agli occhi ch' han d'eterno pianto zelo
Senz' altra offension lieta ti mostri.

Translation

Bright shining Star ! Thy radiance in the sky
Dost rob the neighbouring stars of all their light.
Why art thou with unwonted splendour bright ?
Why with great Phœbus dost thou dare to vie ?
Perchance those eyes which Death so cruelly—
Too daring Death—has ravished from our sight,
Have given to thee the glory of that light
Which can the chariot of the Sun defy.
Oh new-created Star, if star thou art,
That Heaven with new-born splendours dost adorn,
I call on thee ! Oh Goddess, quickly hear !
Of thine own glory grant me now a part
To fire these eyes, with endless weeping worn,
With something of thy light that they can bear.

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[1] Variation : o che tu sia.

another by more than three centuries, yet stand together on a common plane of feeling. We are conscious that Lorenzo refuses to be estimated by anything less than an absolute standard of art, and, recognising this, we recognise his claim to a place among the world's poets.

The conceit of this sonnet lies in the fancy that a bright star is shining with an unwonted effulgence. Its light absorbs that of its neighbour stars, and vies with the light of the sun. Is it that it has received into itself the light which once shone in the bright eyes of her whom Death so cruelly has snatched away?

> Presto, o nuova stella, o che tu sia,
> Che di splendor novello adorno il cielo,
> Chiamata esaudi, O Nume, i voti nostri.

We have not here the languorous voluptuousness of Keats' sonnet. There is no image which approaches the solemn splendour of

> The moving waters at their priestlike task
> Of cold ablution round Earth's human shores.

We have not here the pathos and the passion which animates the invocation of Burns:

> Thou lingering star with lessening ray
> That lovest to greet the early morn,
> Again thou usherest in the day
> My Mary from my soul was torn.

But there is grace, delicacy of touch, refinement of fancy. From few sonnets can more be expected or secured.

The death of this beautiful lady, so tunefully lamented, proved however for Lorenzo not the end but the beginning of his *amorosa vita*. Launching forth into an elaborate Platonic disquisition, he modifies the Aristotelian proposition that the end and the beginning are one and the same by the assertion that the end of one thing must be the immediate source of beginning for another. So death, which seems to be the end, is in truth the beginning of a new life. "*Il principio della vita vera è la morte della vita non vera.*" The beginning of the true life is the death of the life that is not true. Thus it was with him; for as he mourned the loss of her whose beauty had added lustre to the stars, he was led by the impulse of his despair to

seek if such another existed anywhere in the world. Destiny led him, like another Romeo, against his will, to a public festival, where he saw that lady of surpassing beauty, with the vision of whom his true life of love began. Lucrezia Donati, for it was she, though Lorenzo nowhere speaks of her by name, inspired every ecstasy, image, and shade of feeling which find expression in the Sonnets which follow. Her angelical vision, he tells us, gave rise in him to such hopes, fears, and hesitations that the intensity of his emotions produced a sort of faintness accompanied by coagulation of the blood.* His swoons and ecstasies, as here detailed, have the true oriental and Shelleyan character. As he looks into her eyes he is blasted with excess of light; as she speaks he believes himself to be listening to the music of the spheres. All these sensations, and many more, he strives to embody in his Sonnets: he relates in detail the particular motive, incident, or occasion which inspires each of them in turn. The style of these commentaries is, here and there, such that they repay the reader for his toil. It may indeed be said with confidence that these prefaces are not more dull than such elaborations must necessarily be. The thread of a love sonnet is, as a rule, too slender to support a lengthy disquisition which shall be interesting, in explanation of its genesis and meaning.

Before touching on the sonnets themselves it will be well to notice that part of the "Commentario" which Lorenzo devotes to criticism of the Sonnet as a form of poetic art. Here, where he is writing as a critic and a craftsman, he shows himself acute and is consistently interesting. He defends the Sonnet as being certainly not inferior to other measures; —indeed, from the excessive difficulty of writing a good sonnet he argues that the Sonnet form may claim superiority to many. Its brevity requires that no single word in it shall be any other than the inevitable word: thus it imposes upon the poet that discipline and restraint which art requires. It is analogous to the epigram, being dependent

* Quando io son la dove sia
Quel angelico, altero e dolce volto,
Il freddo sangue intorno al cor accolto
Lascia senza color la faccia mia.

like the epigram, upon the acumen of its composer and his dexterity in style. It is fitted to express grave and elevated thoughts as well as those which are light and trivial. The essential is that the whole sonnet should be built up on some one acute and graceful conception, being content to illustrate that, fitly, poetically, and without harshness or obscurity. There is, moreover, the question of the rhyme. How many *belle sentenze*, beautiful conceptions, says Lorenzo pathetically, have come to nothing owing to this difficulty of rhyme. Every one who has tried will bear witness to this. A sonneteer it is true, may fashion the sense of his sonnet to fit the rhyme, but there is a vast difference between forcing rhyme into the service of the poet's thought, and accommodating his thought to the exigencies of rhyme. Latin metres are not thus hampered by rhyme: poetry, therefore, in the vernacular is confronted by difficulties which are absent from Latin composition; of all forms in the vernacular that of the sonnet is the most difficult to bring to perfection; therefore it should be esteemed above all others. "From this it is not to be inferred that I think my sonnets have attained to that perfection which belongs properly to such a form of verse. For me, it is sufficient to have made an attempt, and if I have not added to its perfections, or driven the chariot of the sun, yet let it be to me in place of praise that I have been ardent in my endeavours even though my strength has been insufficient for so great an enterprise."

Thus modestly, and on the whole justly, has Lorenzo estimated the value of his work as a sonneteer.

A man who feels as I do that there are scarcely a dozen sonnets in his own language, excluding those by Shakspeare, which it was worth while to have written, is obviously not qualified to pass judgment on a mass of sonnets written over four hundred years ago in Italian. If Dr. Johnson's aphorism be accepted, that sonnets are to poetry what carving heads out of cherry-stones is to art, then the task of criticising Lorenzo's Sonnets becomes superfluous. Yet in justice to this product of his poetic activity, the sonnets must not be dismissed without reference to those qualities

in them which a foreigner can detect, nor without some testimonies from his own countrymen in support of their many excellences.

If Lorenzo has carved heads out of cherry-stones he has the merit of having carved them well. He has the delicacy of touch essential for the filigree effects he aims at. There is scarcely a sonnet which is altogether commonplace, while not infrequently there comes a little flash of inspiration which shines with the unmistakable light of true poetry. He celebrates the eyes of his mistress, her hand, her gait, and mien ; he seeks to exhibit the effects of her charms by the influences which they unconsciously exercise not upon himself alone, but on the fair face of Nature around her. Wherever his lady has turned her eyes, there no other sun is needed, but the earth puts forth her beauties at the bidding of the new Flora, and new flowers of a thousand colours spring up. The fresh purple violets take on a richer hue when her white hand has plucked them. " Her feet have touched the meadows, and left the daisies rosy "—

> —whenever a March wind sighs,
> He sets the jewel-print of your feet
> In violets blue as your eyes—

are images borrowed unconsciously by Tennyson from Laurentian poetry. By images such as these Lorenzo is brought into intimate contact with natural beauty, with the simple charms of flowers and streams. The streams, as they run, softly murmur the name of his mistress ; the clear surfaces of their waters are mirrors of her beauty, but in the midst of poetic affectations he is not unmindful that flowers and streams, the oak tree and the stars, are lovely in and for themselves. He feels within himself their influences, and responds to their appeal. He is indeed a better poet of Nature than of love. Love in Lorenzo's Sonnets is largely conventional. He manipulates the passion for the purposes of his art ; he is not possessed by it to the absorption of his whole being. But the genuine ring of that sonnet is unmistakable in which he leaves to those who love them the delights of pomp and circumstance. For him—

Un verde praticel pien di bei fiori,
Un rivolo, che l'herba intorno bagni
Un'angeletto, che d'Amor si lagni,
Acqueta molto meglio i nostri ardori.

(A meadow green of beauteous flowers full,
A streamlet which the herbage bathes around ;
An angel form, all languishing with love ;—
These better answer to my fond desires.)

He is not indifferent to the " one fair spirit for his minister " —*qualche leggiadra ninfa paurosa*—but she is an adjunct to the landscape. He forgets to feel that without her presence all beauty would be lacking to the world.

With but an imperfect knowledge of Lorenzo's Sonnets I feel it to be perhaps presumption to have said this little about them. But the impressions which I have endeavoured to convey are on the surface of them, and will have been felt by all who have read them. The deliberate judgment of a competent fellow countryman is, however, testimony of weight. In support of whatever admiration I feel I bring forward the treatise, " Of Perfect Poetry," by Muratori. Early in this work (Bk. i. c. 3) the author considers the state of poetry in Italy in the fifteenth century. After citing Benivieni, Poliziano, Boiardo and others as maintaining the reputation of vernacular poetry in their time, he gives the pride of place to Lorenzo. " Especially Lorenzo dei Medici," he says. " Although he does not attain to complete perfection, yet I find in him such noble and beautiful Platonic imagery, and so much poetic taste, that assuredly he surpasses in this respect (*pregio*) many other famous poets of our language. Had his life been prolonged, and had he been less engaged by the cares of his family and of the State I do not hesitate to say that this age also would have had its Petrarch." In the specimens of perfect poetry which Muratori appends to his treatise he places four of Lorenzo's Sonnets side by side with the masterpieces of Dante, Cavalcanti, Petrarch, Tasso, Filicaia and Chiabrera.

The qualities which distinguish Lorenzo's Sonnets are common to his poetry as a whole : neatness in workman-

ship, grace of diction, genuine love of Nature, and a poet's observation of it. But from the Sonnets alone we can derive little conception of the amazing fertility and versatility of his poetic genius. It may almost be said of him: "Nullum fere scribendi genus non tetigit; nihil tetigit quod non ornavit." He experiments with metre, and is not afraid to sound the whole gamut of emotion from the profoundest mysteries of man's spiritual being to the lightest wanton catch for dance or carnival. Whatever the theme there is no sense of the *virtuoso* straining for unfamiliar experiences which he may render precious by his verse. Always there is a genuine ring of sincerity in Lorenzo's poetry, in this sense, that each poem clearly reflects an aspect of the man himself. He surrenders himself to the mood of the moment, is absorbed by it, and gives spontaneous expression to it in some form of literary art. Perhaps he is least original in his Sonnets, Canzoni and Canzonets, for there he had Petrarch most in mind, and theme and treatment were in some measure prescribed. But when his theme is satire, as in some of his *Capitoli*, or philosophy, as in *L'Altercazioni*, or the loves of a rustic swain as in *Nencia*, when he touches the rude elements of drama, as in *I Amori di Venere e di Marte*, or in his morality play of *SS. Giovanni e Paolo*, he is bound by no precedents, but he creates them. He has something to say, and has his own way of saying it regardless of the schools. He sings mostly because he must. There is little evidence of laboured effort. The very ease with which his thoughts adapted themselves to versification was indeed a snare in the path of a man whose aim was a place among great poets. The marvel is that effusions easily thrown off in the scant leisure of a life of incessant political activity should be so good. What a man can do with little trouble he is not apt to do well, but genius could supply for Lorenzo what the most laborious cares may fail to effect for men less richly endowed.

Poliziano in his *Nutricia* has celebrated in a passage, which has the true classical ring, the chief productions of Lorenzo's muse. As he goes through the long catalogue he is filled with amazement, that work of so much variety

and such excellence should be the pastime of a statesman engaged in the anxious conduct of affairs.

> Quodque alii studiumque vocant, durumque laborem,
> Hic tibi ludus erit : Fessus civilibus actis
> Huc is emeritas acuens ad carmina vires,
> Felix ingenio, felix cui pectore tantas
> Instaurare vices, cui fas tam magna capaci
> Alternare animo, et varias tibi nectere curas.*

This is a fine and true tribute to Lorenzo's Muse. Things gay and grave, things sacred and things profane; themes philosophic and themes amorous; satire and lyric song; drama and sonnet; hymns carnal and spiritual; such is the medley of Lorenzo's poetic output. It is the work of a man of undoubted genius, a man interested in everything, fond of experiment, endowed with the eye and ear of a true artist, but possessed of a too fatal facility of expression in metre and in rhyme. Some perverse god had lavished on him the fatal gift of improvisation, and it proved too often an enemy to inspiration. Such was his ease that, after a philosophic discussion in the Academy, he could turn the whole discussion into verse, and found the exercise useful for clearing his ideas and impressing the substance of the debate upon his memory. There is scarcely a poem by Lorenzo where we have not a sense of some fine things finely seen and said, but there is also often a sense of too much said which did not need saying. We are reading the efforts of a verse writer rather than receiving the message of a poet. Had Lorenzo been less fluent his place among the poets would have been higher. From this criticism, however, "*Nencia di Barberino*" must at once be excepted. This is a gem of purest ray, worthy of a place in any poet's crown. But "Nencia" will find her place a little later in this survey of Lorenzo's poetic work.

Some of Lorenzo's most ambitious efforts were expended upon poems, written in *ottava* or *terza rima*, in which the

* "And that which others call toil and severe labour will be a pastime to you, when, weary with cares of State, you tune your genius to song: Happy man, to whom the gods have given the faculty to renovate your heart by such divers interests, to alternate such great themes in your capacious mind, and to bind yourself about with such varied activities."

eclogues of Virgil and the metamorphoses of Ovid lend a colour to much which is individual and original in the poet himself. This group includes the "*Selve d'Amore,*" "*Ambra,*" and some of the *Capitoli*, or eclogues, such as the "*Corinto.*"

The "*Selve d'Amore,*" as the name implies, are scrap-books, or miscellanies, of love. In them, under the pretext of a love passion, the poet expatiates at large upon such images as present themselves to his view. The more important of the two poems which go by the name of "Selve" presents to us a lover who complains of the absence of his mistress. He calls upon her bright eyes, upon his own destiny, upon love, and upon Nature to take pity on his case; soon he pictures to himself her return. At once the whole face of Nature changes; visions of beauty are everywhere which take shape in visible forms of beauty. The dry and empty boughs become clothed with new leaves, the flowers spring up, the birds sing, the bees and ants pursue their busy toils, and the shepherds drive their flocks to their mountain pasturage. Here Lorenzo introduces into the midst of all these conventional prettinesses a genuine poetic touch in the picture of the little lamb trotting in its mother's tracks; of the shepherd who carries a new-born lamb lovingly in his arms, while the faithful dog is escort to them all.

> L'agnel, trottando pur la materna orma
> Segue ; e alcun che pur or ora nacque,
> L'amorevol pastore in braccio porta :
> Il fido cane a tutti fa la scorta.
>
> (The little lamb trots in his mother's tracks,
> Another that is now but newly born
> The tender shepherd carries in his arms.
> The faithful dog is escort to them all.)

At last when all Nature and mythology have felt her benign influences, the loved one herself comes to her lover's home—"Felice casa! benché aliquanto umile." Beauty, grace, and all the virtues now adorn it. All would be well but for the presence in an obscure corner of an old woman,

a malignant goddess with a hundred eyes, a hundred ears. This is Jealousy, the poem proceeding to trace through many stanzas, her origin, lineage and qualities. Born of Chaos, nurtured by Pluto, she makes mortal men feel what pains are endured in the dark, sunless realms below. She feeds on empty shadows and sad thoughts, but she has her uses, in that she provides occasion to Lorenzo for a finished Virgilian portrait. We have, through the medium of verse, just that realisation and personification of an abstract quality which Botticelli renders through painting in his "Calumny of Apelles." But in Lorenzo's poem the portrait does not seem to be truly in the picture. It is not an essential element in the composition, incorporated into its unity, as are the figures in Botticelli's work. It is indeed but one of the scraps in a book of miscellanies, and from it we turn over to another. Through some stanzas which display the ecstasies of the lover, and a fine portrait of Hope to balance that of Jealousy, we are brought by easy stages to a description of the Age of Gold which flourished in the days before Pandora's box was opened.

Lorenzo's picture of The Golden Age strikes the modern reader in the same way as a performance of *Hamlet* impressed Partridge. It seems to be made up of familiar quotations. But though the fancy was old as Virgil and Ovid, Lorenzo, in the modern world, was first in the field. Subsequent writers have owed as much to him as he owed to writers who preceded him. If it was Montaigne who gave to Shakespeare the model for Gonzalo's Utopia in *The Tempest*,* it might well have been from Lorenzo that Montaigne himself borrowed. In that quiet golden time when Saturn reigned with just sway, every desire was held in even balance between satisfaction and restraint; thine and

* Cf. *Tempest*, Act II. s. i. 159:

> All things in common Nature should produce
> Without sweat or endeavour . . .
> but Nature should bring forth
> Of its own kind all foison, all abundance
> To feed my innocent people.
> I would with such perfection govern, Sir
> To excel the golden age.

mine were words unknown. The liberal earth provided all things in common for the service of all without compulsion from spade or plough. Of its own accord sprang up the corn and all the varied fruits; Nature was clothed upon with sweet shrubs and flowers which never had to fear the ravages of hail or sun. The streams, running sweet and clean and joyous, then quenched the modest thirst of man.

In several stanzas the state of things existing in the animal world is then displayed. Lions and tigers bore the outward semblance of such beasts, but were tame as the coneys. The wolf lay down with the sheep, for then he was not fierce nor she timid. Examples are multiplied from every sphere of Nature, and always the images are happy, and the observation sympathetic. But there is too much the sense of reading a rhymed catalogue of the contents of a menagerie. It is distinctly a relief to get away from the animals, which in the golden world cease to be the animals we know, to the contemplation of the state of man under the supposed conditions.

The use of metals was entirely unknown, and so man was free from the greed of gold. Iron was not forged into weapons of war, nor into bits and curbs for the horses. The memory of man was not perpetuated in bronze, nor was there any thirst for mortal glory. No Argos ploughed the sea in fruitless quests, for with the seashore the world was thought to end. Man himself, untouched by envy, hatred, hope or pain, passed his life without passion and without employment, without preferences and without curiosity. These somewhat dubious advantages are imagined by Lorenzo in order to point the contrast between an ideal and an actual state. Then the intellect of man was assimilated to his aspiration, his will to his capacity for understanding. He was content to know from God that which he was able to comprehend, nor was he ever seeking out with useless care the causes of things which Nature has hidden from our view. These golden times have passed. To-day man is cursed with the desire to know too much. There is a happy mean between ignorance and knowledge, but the presump-

tion which is born of intellect forbids us to be satisfied with it. Man now prays Heaven that he may see all things clearly, or else not see at all.

The poem closes with some stanzas of fine rhapsody in which the lover invokes his mistress. If the winged god will only restore her to him, then he will ask no more, nor envy the fabled age of gold, nor Paradise, nor any other thing.

O vaghi occhi amorosi
Che'n questo e'n quel bel viso
Quando mirate fiso
Vedrete mille belezze diverse.

Mentre vi sono ascosi
Questi dua vaghi lumi
Stolto alcun non presumi
Aver veduto la bellezza intera.

Qui è la beltà vera
Tulta accolta in un volto
Quinci l'esempio han tolto
L'altre ch' in varie cose son disperse.

Chi questa belta mira
Di eterno e dolce amor sempre sospira.

Translation

Oh bright, love-laden eyes
That light with love a face divine,
Ye who shall gaze therein shall see
A thousand shapes of beauty shine.

If that the glory shall be hid
Of those twin lamps which shine so bright,
Fool would be he that then should claim
True beauty to have known aright.

Here only is true beauty found,
All wholly blent in one sweet face
For other things of beauty take
Their glory only from her grace.

He who shall once that beauty prove
Must ever sigh for sweet eternal love.

Suddenly, in the midst of his darkness, a radiant vision bursts upon him. It is she!

Ecco il mio Sol vien del monte fuora!

He sees the light which radiates from her, he feels its heat. The light is Beauty; the heat is the heat of Love. His lady comes, attended by Beauty on her right hand, and Love on her left. The three beauteous figures advance, Love, Beauty, and My Lady, like a group of Botticelli's Graces, in rhythmic movement singing together sweet melodies unheard. It is the music of the spheres to which worldly ears are not attuned, but it is caught up in the heart of the lover, and this was the song they sang:

> Qui è la beltà vera,
> Tulta accolta in un volto
> Quinci l'esempio han tolto
> L'altre ch' in varie cose son disperse
> Chi questa belta mira
> Di eterno e dolce amor sempre sospira.

Such is Lorenzo's "*Selve d'Amore.*" Graceful, correct, tinged with imagination, and not without touches of genuine poetic beauty, yet it has too much of the cold precision of an academic exercise. Another poet of Lorenzo's day sang of the Realms of Love.* When we turn from the "*Selve d'Amore*" to Poliziano's "*Giostra*" we have Lorenzo's theme lit up with the warmth and magic radiance of genuine inspiration. It would be unkind to think, with Armstrong, that Poliziano tuned his note to Lorenzo's lyre so that the world at last might hear the full richness of its melody. The *Giostra* is too spontaneous to have been written with a purpose, least of all with a malevolent purpose. But in the fancied realms of Poliziano's imagination there is that which is lacking to Lorenzo's Age of Gold. Under the wand of the magician the hard, glittering, polished outlines become suffused with a sunset glow, and melt into fairyland. For a moment the world of the poet's fancy becomes for us the real world in which we live: it is no longer an impossible world of which we coldly read.

* It is from Poliziano's *La Giostra* that Botticelli received the inspiration for two, if not three, of his greatest works—*The Birth of Venus*, the *Primavera*, and perhaps the *Mars and Venus* in the National Gallery. *The Birth of Venus* must be based on stanzas 100, 101; the *Primavera* on scattered passages throughout the poem. The *Mars and Venus* may be suggested by stanzas 122, 123. I must dismiss the temptation to quote.

Lorenzo's poem "*Ambra*" does not appear in the Aldine edition of his poems published in 1554. The manuscript was disinterred from the Laurentian Library at the instance of Mr. Roscoe, and was first published by him. No question as to its authenticity has, I believe, arisen in the century and more which has elapsed since its publication. The hand that wrote the *Selve d'Amore* seems indeed plainly visible in *Ambra*.* Lorenzo here relates a metamorphosis, after Ovid's manner, in order to give a poetic origin and colour to his villa at Poggio a Caiano, situated on a rocky eminence rising from the waters of the Ombrone River. Ambra is a beauteous nymph loved alike by the shepherd Lauro and the goddess Diana. Her, as she bathed in the clear waters of the stream, the river god Ombrone, son of the Apennines, beheld, and he pursued her. The nymph fled before him, "her fears adding wings to her white feet," until she reached the spot where Ombrone and Arno meet. There Ombrone calls upon his brother Arno to stay her further flight, but the nymph in despair invokes Diana who transforms her into a rock. The poem opens with a description of winter in which the poet expatiates at will. The leafless, birdless trees, save for one secret bird that lurks amid the cypress, the long nights which are each a hundred years to the watcher, but so short to the lover, the long flight of the screaming cranes, the snowy garlands which crown the mountain tops, the howling winds, the floods let loose, all these images, and many another, lead up to the River Ombrone, which, in flood, girds round the rocky eminence of Ambra, converting it into an island. Thus Lorenzo reaches the point and here his mythical fancy can play upon the loves of Ambra and Ombrone. All is finished and graceful, and the flying Dryad becomes a visible thing as she darts from the grasp of the river god leaving a tress of her hair in his hand, as a fish darts from the descending net leaving some scales behind. The stanza which contains

* Mr. Roscoe, in his Illustrations to his "Life of Lorenzo," published in folio, 1822, gives an engraving of the story of Ambra and Ombrone as cut in relief upon an amber flask which belonged to Lorenzo. The suggestion of the poem may have come from this flask. I am glad to be able to reproduce it here.

The Fable of Ambra. as carved on an Amber Fiaschetto.
From the original formerly belonging to Lorenzo de Medici

AMBRA

REPRODUCED FROM ROSCOE'S "SUPPLEMENTARY ILLUSTRATIONS"

the nymph's prayer to Diana, the *Casta Dea*, will illustrate as well as another the form and spirit of the poem:

> Diana bella, questo petto casto
> Non maculò giammai folle disio,
> Guardalo or tu, perch'io Ninfa non basto
> A duo nemici, e l'uno e l'altro Dio.
> Col desio del morir m'è sol rimasto
> Al core il casto amor di Lauro mio;
> Portate, o venti, questa voce estrema
> A Lauro mio, che la mia morte gema.

> (Beauteous Diana! shall it not avail
> That never spot has stained this breast of mine?
> Protect me. I, a Nymph, cannot prevail
> Against two foes, and each of them Divine.
> Now as I die, no fears of death assail
> Save for the love I bear Lorenzo mine.
> Carry, oh winds, to him my latest breath,
> That he a little while shall mourn my death.)

Lorenzo's *Capitolo*, or Eclogue, which may be entitled *Corinto*, sings the shepherd-song of love once more, not in ottava rima as in the *Selve*, but in terza rima. In his pastoral eclogues, and in his *Capitoli* generally, Lorenzo shows an easy facility in manipulating Dante's metre, and even employs it as a medium for satire.

In the opening stanzas of *Corinto* the poet throws around the poem the atmosphere of night, under the full, steely stillness of a brilliant moon. All things on earth were now at rest, save the shepherd Corinto, who, for love of Galatea, chanted his moan among the beech trees. "O Galatea, why do you hold in such despite the shepherd Corinto, who loves you so?" His plaints go all unheard He will therefore give them form, and send them forth, as verses, to the winds that they may carry them to his wayward mistress. So far the poem promises to run on the conventional lines of pastoral rhapsody, but now it takes a happy turn, and becomes an inspiration for many a poet and painter of the future. There is all the delicacy and colour of a Watteau in Corinto's vision of Galatea as she dances in the glade to the tune of his shepherd's pipe, or as, when weary, lying beneath the oak, he pelts her with

flowers of a thousand hues, and crowns her laughing beauty with garlands:

> Quante ghirlande sopra i bei crin d'oro
> Farei miste di frondi e di fioretti!
> Tu vinceresti ogni bellezza loro.
> Il mormorio de' chiari ruscelletti
> Responderebbe alla nostra dolcezza,
> E'l canto di amorosi augelletti.

> (And many a mingled garland would I twine
> Of leaves and flowers to crown thy golden head,
> But all their beauties fain must yield to thine.
> The rivulet murmuring in its crystal bed
> Would answer low to all our sweet delights
> By songs of amorous birds accompanied.)

He pictures her as she bounds along, so swift and light that she can skim the surface of the waters nor wet her feet. He sees her image reflected in the clear fountain, but as he moves to gaze more nearly it is gone. He can see only the image of himself, poor substitute for that of Galatea. Yet it affords a pretext to Corinto to dwell on his own qualities. If not of beauty, they are qualities of strength and manly daring. He does not fear to encounter the bull and take it by its horns, nor to contend with the rabid bear. With a bow in his hand he would not shrink from a contest with Diana herself. With him Galatea shall have flocks and herds, fresh milk and strawberries, and honey made from the labours of countless bees, honey which Olympian ambrosia cannot surpass. Will she not relent? Will she ever join so much cruelty to so much beauty? If it prove so, then Corinto can take but one comfort, that beauty is a thing that fades. Thus Lorenzo reaches the passage * for which, one might almost suppose,

* Mr. Roscoe has translated the passage from Corinto about the roses in his "Illustrations," p. 68. A much more adequate and literal translation has been made by J. A. Symonds, *Renaissance*, Italn. Liter., Pt. I., p. 376. His translation of the stanza which immedately follows runs thus—

> Thus I beheld the roses dawn and die
> And one short hour their loveliness consume.
> But while I watched those languid petals lie
> Colourless on cold earth, I could but think
> How vain a thing is youthful bravery.
> *   *   *   *   *
> Pluck the rose, therefore, maiden, while 'tis May!

Symonds also translates a ballad by Poliziano and compares it with

the whole poem was written, the passage about the roses which bloom only so soon to die:

> Così le vidi nascere e morire
> E passar lor vaghezza in men d'un 'ora.
> Quando languenti e pallide vidi ire
> Le foglie a terra, allor mi venne a mente
> Che vana cosa è il giovenil fiorire.

And from this reflection Corinto draws and points the moral:

> Cogli la rosa, o Ninfa, quando è il tempo.
> Gather the rose, sweet nymph, while yet there is time.

The rose-bloom which falls upon its close, and the insets of poetic painting which we find in Corinto, distinguish

this of Lorenzo. Using Symonds's translation in both cases, I place the few lines in which the theme is in both poems the same opposite one another:

LORENZO. *Capitolo "Corinto"*	POLIZIANO. *Ballata.*
Red and white roses bloomed upon the spray; One opened, leaf by leaf, to greet the morn, Shyly at first, then in sweet disarray; Another, yet a youngling, newly born, Scarce struggled from the bud, and there were some Whose petals closed them from the air forlorn; Another fell, and showered the grass with bloom; (Then as above.)	I went a-roaming, Maidens, one bright day, In a fair garden in mid-month of May. I gazed and gazed. Hard task it were to tell How lovely were the roses in that hour One was but peeping from her verdant shell, And some were faded, some were scarce in flower. * * * * * For when the full rose quits her tender sheath When she is sweetest and most fair to see, Then is the time to place her in thy wreath Before her beauty and her freshness flee. Gather ye therefore roses with great glee, Sweet girls, or e'er their perfume pass away. I went a-roaming, Maidens, one bright day In a fair garden in mid-month of May.

Poliziano, says Symonds, might almost have written his ballad "to show the world the difference between true poetry and what is only very like it."

it favourably from conventional pastoral. It may indeed be doubted if Pope, apart from his Messiah, ever composed a pastoral which is on a level with this of Lorenzo. But it has many touches of conventionality about it. The distressed shepherd apostrophises his wayward Galatea in those strains of elegant fancy which pastoral poetry demands, but which are in demand nowhere else. Lorenzo could not himself have been blind to the artificiality and thinness of this kind of composition, nor to the fact that Virgil had done it once and for all, leaving no further scope for pastoral outside a schoolboy's exercise.

Perhaps it was with some such feeling, and as a parody upon himself, that he wrote his masterpiece, *Nencia da Barberino*.

CHAPTER XVIII

LORENZO AS POET (*continued*)—*NENCIA DA BARBERINO* AND THE *CANTI*

Analysis and criticism of *Nencia da Barbarino*—The *Canzone* on Nencia's death—The *Canti a Ballo*—Connection of the *Canti* with old popular Florentine songs—Moral influences of the *Canti*—The *Canti Carnascialeschi*—Selections from the *Canti a Ballo*—Carnival songs in their relation to carnival celebrations—Il Lasca—The revel of *Bacchus and Ariadne.*

IN *Nencia** we have the old theme presented in a novel dress. A lover celebrates his absent mistress, and laments her coldness, He exhausts all his arts to cajole her to be kind. But the lover, Vallera, is a peasant, whose arts are only those of the peasant, while Nencia is a wayward beauty among the country lasses, who yet knows how to play the part of My Lady Disdain with the best. Lorenzo adapts his language to suit his characters. *Nencia* provides the first example of a poet of acknowledged reputation using the *lingua rustica* as a medium the most proper to express the sentiment of rustic lovers. The high-flown images and elaborate myth which are the conventions of pastoral poetry, in *Nencia* give place to Nature unaffected and unadorned. Lorenzo recognises with amusement that all the world is kin; that greasy shepherds and bedizened, red-cheeked country wenches are distinguished only by externals from the superfine world of culture or of fancy. He writes *Nencia* doubtless as a satire, his first object seeming to be to raise a laugh against people so absurd as his Nencia and Vallera, but it is clear that he ends by

* *Nencia da Barberino*, first published in a collection of *Canzone a Ballo composte dal Magnifico Lorenzo dei Medici e da M. Agnolo Poliziano, ed altri autori insieme con la Nencia da Barberino, e la Beca di Dicomano composte dal medisimo Lorenzo.* Florence, 1st ed. 1562, 2nd ed. "Nuovamente Ricorrette," 1568. The *Beca di Dicomano* is, however, by Luigi Pulci.

falling under the spell of his own creation, and becomes himself half in love with his froward, bright-eyed rustic beauty. He carries her beyond the limits of the piece which bears her name, for in one of the most winning and pathetic of his Canzone a Ballo he tells again her simple charms and mourns her untimely death.

The charm of the *Nencia da Barberino* lies in the admirable adaptation of the language to the character of the rustic lover; in the ingenuity which attributes to him just such images, persuasives, and invocations as he would naturally use; and in the effects of genuine poetry which the author is able to produce by an unaffected simplicity, a simplicity so unstudied that it attains almost to the highest point to which art can aspire—the point where "Art itself is Nature."

Vallera burns with love, and fain must sing of her who wastes his heart away. In beauty she has no equal, and with each glance of her eyes she throws a torch of love at you. Nowhere, in city or in hamlet, has he seen any one who can vie with her. Appropriately, therefore, at this point he devotes a stanza to a catalogue of all the townships and villages he knows.

> But never have I seen a girl so sweet
> Nor one so properly and well set up.
> Her two eyes seem to make it holiday
> Whene'er she lifts them or she looks at you.
> And just between, her shapely nose, as if
> Bored deftly with a little auger, rests.

Her coral lips, her two rows of teeth, whiter than those of any horse, her cheeks which vie with crystal without the aid of paint or patches, pass under review.

> Ed in quel mezzo ell' è come una rosa
> Nel mondo non fu mai si bella cosa.

> (What with them all she's fair as any rose.
> In all the world nothing's so fair as she.)

He indeed may think himself lucky who secures such a prize; he may hold himself consoled for everything, with no desire unfulfilled, who is privileged at last to hold Nencia in his arms.

Morbida e bianca, che pare un sugnaccio.
Piu bianca se' che il fior de la farina.

(She's white and soft just like a skin of lard.
Whiter than is the flour from the corn.)

But though her eyes are so bright she has a heart of flint, and is ever surrounded by a troop of lovers on whom in turn she throws the favour of a glance, so that Vallera's brain reels within his head.

Her appearance when she goes to mass on Sunday morning with her cloak of dommaschino and her bright-coloured petticoat is nothing less than distracting. There is no one to beat her in making things, whether her labours be in the fields or at the spinning-wheel, or in weaving baskets. In short

Ed è piu tenerella che un ghiaccio,
Morbida e dolce, che pare un migliaccio.

(More delicate than ice upon a pool,
With the sweet yielding softness of a pudding.)

Nencia has so bewitched him that he has become good for nothing. He can scarcely wield his mattock, nor swallow a morsel. She has bound him with a hundred withes; he cannot sleep at nights, and makes himself a nuisance to his people. This very night has seemed a thousand years to him, so that long before day he rose, and stood for an hour and a half beneath the portico of the baker's shop to think on Nencia. She has indeed every perfection: she is well-proportioned and he recalls a fresh charm in the dimple on her chin

Che rimbellisce tutta sua figura,

(Which spreads its beauties over all her face,)

but he can think for the moment on no other particular on which he has not already dwelt. He is forced back upon recapitulation:

Credo che la formasse la Natura
Morbida e bianca, tanto appariscente,
Che la trafigge il cuore a molta gente.

(For Nature, I believe, created her
So soft and white, so elegant, that she
Might pierce the heart of every one she meets.)

He has a bunch of holly for her with red berries, just gathered from the tree, but she has become too much of a fine lady to receive it; he can get no answers from her, either good or ill. And yet all yesterday he watched for her, though all in vain. What happiness to see her tending her flocks or descending with her pitcher into the stream! what joy to think of that April when he first fell beneath her charms as he saw her gathering a salad! "O Nenciozza mia. I would go where the cattle drink, to the pool where I might see you as you ford the stream, and there, seated on the ground, await you as you cross. And, Nenciozza mia, I am going on Sunday as far as Florence to sell that bundle of faggots which yesterday I cut while the cattle grazed. I can buy something there for you: face paint, for instance, or a little paper full of bismuth, or a farthing's worth of pins and needles."

The vision of Nencia thus tricked out in all the spoils of the capital suggests to her ardent swain charms and graces in her which so far he has overlooked. He remembers how lightly she dances, skipping like a young goat, revolving smoothly as a mill-wheel, or touching in turn each little shoe with her hand:

Ella è direttamente ballerina,
Ch' ella si lancia come una capretta,
E gira più che ruota di mulina,
E dassi delle man nella scarpetta

(And as a dancer there is none to touch her,
She skips about like any little goat.
The mill-wheel cannot twirl as fast as she,
And with her hand she strikes her little shoe.)

And, in setting to partners,

Ella fa le più belle riverenze
Che 'gnuna cittadina di Firenze.

(She makes a prettier curtsey, too, by far
Than any lady of the City can.)

Why is there not some little defect which it is in Vallera's power to remedy? Just a clasp for her gown, a few hooks or buttons, or a band for her tresses. Does she wish for a coral necklace with a pendant? He will buy it, only she must say if she would like the beads to be large or small. He will do anything for her; throw himself into the Sieve, beat his head against the wall. She has only to put him to the proof, and he will not be found wanting. He has not been blind to the attentions which others have been paying to her. Let her take heed, for he is a formidable person, who will not spare his hand.

But Vallera is evidently as amiable as he is strong, for the thought of rivals only stimulates him to fresh efforts to apprise his Nencia's charms. He is, however, driven to repetition once more: for the moment he can only assert that

> A prettier thing than is my Nencia
> And one more charming could you nowhere find.

He adds, however, as supplementary attractions, that she is "grossoccia," well set-up, and full of fun: she gives new life to every festivity with her song, and leads the dance with a majesty which is all her own. He tries, for a stanza, to match these graces by his own accomplishments, but he is forced back on Nencia, and enlists all his resources of agricultural comparison to paint her worthily:

> Tu se' più bella che Madonna Lapa,
> E se' più bianca ch' una madia vecchia
> Piacimi più ch' a le mosche la sapa,
> E più che fichi fiori alla Forfecchia:
> Tu se' più bella che 'l fior de la rapa,
> E se' più dolce che 'l mel della pecchia
> Vorreiti dare in una gota un bacio,
> Che' saporita più che non è il cacio.

Translation.

> Prettier you are than is Madonna Lapa,
> And whiter far than well-used kneading trough:
> You please me more than wine sauce pleases flies,
> And more by far than young figs please the grub.
> Fairer than flowers of radishes are you;
> Sweeter than honey from the honey bee;
> Would you but kiss me once upon the cheek,
> There'd be more savour in it than in cheese.

For more than half an hour he had waited for her by the ford while her wethers were crossing, but she was not there. "What were you doing, Nencia, that you did not come out?" And now he must go: he hears Mona Masa calling him to bring in the cattle to their stalls. He will go, but he leaves his heart behind with Nencia:

> Nenciozza mia, debe non ti dubitare
> Che l'amor ch' io ti porto si è tale
> Che quando avessi mal, Nenciozza mia,
> Con la mia lingua te lo leveria.
>
> (O Nencia mine, you mustn't ever doubt
> That I have really such a love for you
> That should you ever, Nencia mine, be ill
> With my own tongue I'd lick that ill away.)

But will she not one day go with him to the spot he knows close by, where, screened in a valley from the sun's rays, she may lift her veil that he may see

> Il tuo bel viso tanto bello
> Al qual risponden tutti gli suoi membri
> Sì che a un' angioletta tu m'assembri.
>
> (Her so beauteous face
> To which all else about her so replies
> That she a little angel seems to me.)

He has found a bird's nest in the wood full of little ones, the prettiest little birds you ever saw. He is keeping them for her, and to-morrow he will bring her a pancake; and when she hears his bagpipe, she will know it is Vallera coming, and be able to get her neighbours out of the way. Nencia need not think of him as rough and unshorn. In a silk jerkin and stockings *à la mode* he is much mistaken if she would not take him for a well-to-do citizen. He has a shockhead of hair, it is true, because he can't afford more than a soldino for the barber, but if only he could count upon his reward from Nencia he would have his hair cut much oftener.

Already Vallera has claimed her from her parents, but Beco has put him off and Beca has seemed unwilling. He means to carry off his Nencia some day, oppose him who will, but it is Beca, he knows, who is the real trouble.

Che il diavol se la possa scorticare.

(The Devil strip the hide from off her back !)

This aspiration suggests to him a new vision of his Nencia as she hurries away to the festival, adorned like a pearl, with six rings on her fingers, fresh rouged and painted, and generally arranged to kill. Oh, Nencia, if you only knew the love I bear you, and the sorrow I feel which sets all my teeth on edge ! if you only knew, your heart would chide you ; you would leave all your other followers, and would love your Vallera alone. Yesterday, when you came back from church looking so pretty, you quite dazzled me. And just as you came to that field you tripped up the least little bit, and I was by you in a moment, but you gave me only a sidelong smile and just an arch glance and ran away. Oh, Nencia !

Quando te veggo così colorita
Starei un anno senza manicare
Sol per vederti sempre sì pulita
S'io ti potessi allora favellare
Sarei contento sempre a la mia vita
S'io ti ticassi un miccinin la mano
Mi parre d'esser d'oro a mano a mano.

(When I behold you, Nencia, blushing so
I'd gladly go a year without my food,
Only to see you ever thus bedecked.
Could I but then have had some talk with you
Then I should live contented all my life.
Could I have given your hand one little touch,
It would have seemed a golden touch for me.)

Most girls would think themselves lucky to have a young man passably well set-up (*un damerino si d'assai*), but Nencia reduces Vallera to distraction. He loves her more than the moth loves the candle, more than the toper loves the tavern.

O povero Vallera sventurato !
Ben t'hai perduto il tempo e la fatica.
Soleva de la Nencia essere amato
Ed or m'è diventata gran nemica.

(Luckless Vallera, you have lost your time
Once Nencia loved you, now she is your foe.)

Nencia, you treat me ill, but if I could, without pain, cut myself in two, I would do so, that you might see for yourself if Nencia is not written on my heart. If you were to touch it, it would cry out *Nencia*. Ah, well! I see the cattle by their stalls. I must take care that through my fooling here, none of them are left behind at pasture. I hear Mona Masa calling me. "All right! I'm coming as fast as I can. There's Nanni, now, who wants me to help her mix the must."

The Nencia in the original has, in great part, been made accessible to English readers by Mr. Roscoe, but no English translation of it, as far as I am aware, has been made. I have therefore ventured, in paraphrase and translation, to give a somewhat full rendering, though I am conscious that through dialectical and other difficulties, such a rendering by me can, of necessity, but imperfectly convey the spirit and the naïveté of the composition.*

In a Canzone Lorenzo calls on every tender heart to make lament "for that fair lily which has drooped and withered." The accursed malice of the plague has cut her down. She will sing no more, nor deck herself out. Nencia is dead and has finished her course. She had a hundred adorers, and eyes whose glances caught you in their toils. She had as many little hooks and eyes about her as there are thorns in a blackberry bush. And now her Vallera is as one distraught. The cattle are out in the pastures, and each one of them does as it likes. But sorrowing will not restore her: "so go forth, little ballad, and carry what solace you can to every tender heart."

Nencia is not a mere poetic fiction, an Amaryllis, or a Galatea. She is a reality of flesh and blood, the scornful rustic

* At the time when my study of *Nencia da Barberino* was finished I was ignorant—though it is with shame I make the confession—of Vernon Lee's essay in her *Euphorion*, entitled "The Outdoor Poetry." Several pages of that essay are devoted to *Nencia*, which the author regards as "certainly Lorenzo's masterpiece."

She also dwells much more fully than I have done upon the descriptive introduction with which his *Ambra* begins, and notes its extraordinary power as a realisation of the effects of Nature which he describes. *Ambra* is undoubtedly of greater importance than my brief references to it would imply.

beauty of the farmyard. It was Lorenzo who first added her portrait, drawn from the life, to the gallery of poetic art.

The edition of the *Canzone a Ballo* (which includes *Nencia*, and an imitation by Luigi Pulci entitled *La Beca da Dicomano*) contains 148 lyrical pieces stated on the title-page to be from the hands of Lorenzo, Poliziano, and others The authorship is not distinguished in the case of any one of the poems, and there is thus the possibility of attributing to Lorenzo work which is not his. Some of the *Canzone* were written for the dances and songs of the Florentine girls, many of them being set to music as part songs by Heinrich Isaak. It is, however, difficult to see, in the case of many of them, how they could have served a collective purpose.

Such songs naturally lent themselves to metrical experiment, and in not a few cases the happiest success has been attained. We could wish to be able positively to assign to Lorenzo the dance-song which sings of the shepherdess in such tripping measure that the heart dances to the music of the words. It is to be feared, however, that the witchery of Poliziano too clearly pervades it, though the fear may do an injustice to Lorenzo. The following extract will show the metre, style, and quality of the lyric :

> La pastorella si leva per tempo
> Menando le caprette a pascer fora
> Di fora, fora. La traditora
> Co' suoi bei occhi la m'innamora
> E fa di mezza notte apparir giorno.
>
> * * *
>
> Poi si straccia e si lava il suo bel viso
> La man, la gamba e il suo pulito petto
> Pulito petto. Con gran diletto
> Con bianco aspetto
> Che ride intorno intorno ò le campagne.
>
> E qualche volta canta una canzona,
> Che le peccore ballano e gli agnelletti,
> E gl' agnelletti fanno scambietti,
> Cosi le capre, con gli capretti,
> E tutti fanno a gara, ò le lor danze.
>
> * * *
>
> Poi la sera ritorna alla sua stanza
> Con la vincastra in mano
> Disciuta e scalza, disciuta e scalza
> Ride e saltella per ogni balza;
> Cosi la pastorella si passa il tempo.

Translation.

The shepherd maid gets up betimes
Leading her flocks afield to graze;
Afield to graze. Ah, what a blaze
Fires in my heart from the bewitching gaze
Of those bright eyes which make of midnight day!

* * * * *

She combs her hair and laves her beauteous face,
Her hand, her leg, her bosom smooth and white,
So smooth and white: with what delight
   Her aspect bright.
With smiles irradiates all the country round.

And all the while she sings a little song;
Her flocks and lambkins dance in fellowship.
Merrily playful lambkins skip,
And all the goats and kids together trip
All, all together join the emulous dance.

* * * * *

And then at eventide homeward she comes;
With shepherd's crook lightly she makes her way,
With tumbled frock, barefoot, with tumbled frock,
Laughing she goes, leaping from rock to rock.
'Tis so the shepherd maid beguiles her day.

A criticism of the *Canti a Ballo* which shall be radical and scientific is rendered difficult for want of accurate knowledge of the actual songs of the people on which the *Canti* are based. It may be that, although adaptations, the *Canti* of Lorenzo and Poliziano are so suffused with the art and personality of their authors as to be entitled to the rank of original compositions. Just as the genius of Burns has absorbed into itself all the previous efforts of popular Scotch song-makers, so to the rough and worthless ditties of the mob Poliziano and Lorenzo may have given form, substance, and lyric grace. But from the known character of the commonalty of Florence, from her democratic pursuit and criticism of the fine arts, from the absence of abrupt distinctions between classes, and from the popular religious poetry of the city, we may infer with equal probability that the models upon which Lorenzo and his associates worked were but little inferior to their finished productions. It is unlikely that compositions essentially different in style, content, and metre from those to which the populace was accustomed would at once have superseded in popular favour the old songs which were the expression of the

popular heart. In the absence of proof to the contrary, it may be reasonably maintained that the *Canti a Ballo* only apply rather more art, rather more point, and rather more melody to compositions of which the general tenor was already fixed and stereotyped.

The practical application of these conjectures becomes apparent when we examine the *Canti* from the point of view of metre and of morals. By far the greater proportion of them are written in a short four-line stanza in which the first and fourth lines rhyme, the two intervening lines rhyming with one another, or else the common alternation of first rhyming with third, and second with fourth is adopted, or some variation of these. It is probable that this metre adapted itself more easily to the figure of the dance which was most in favour among the people. Other dance figures required other metres, and so it was rather the dances which decided the form of the *Canti*, than the *Canti* which prescribed the form of the dances.

To what extent these songs are in their metrical arrangement original it is impossible to determine.

Equally impossible is it to determine the precise trend of their moral tendencies. Were they in advance of the moral tone of their models, or were they an artistic crystallisation of the most lascivious proclivities of the vulgar? Was it Lorenzo's deliberate object to use higher forms of art for the purpose of deeper debasement, or was it his aim to improve the popular taste by the refinements of literary artistry? If the *Canti a Ballo*, immoral as many of them are, are yet less gross and carnal than the songs which they superseded, it follows that Lorenzo to that extent is a reformer, not a corrupter of the people.

He is accused roundly of pandering to the worst passions and instincts of the crowd that he might thereby increase his own political influence. "This strange man," says Symonds, "made his very sensuality subserve his statecraft." This may have been so, but it would be difficult to prove the charge. The study of Lorenzo's character seems rather to point to a man whose poetic diversions were not governed by any other principles than the desire

to express himself, and he expressed all sides of his complex nature without reticence and without reserve. The carnal and the spiritual within him were equally himself, and demanded equal expression. When under the sway of the carnal he feels no shame; when under the impulse of the spiritual he feels no unearthly exaltation. Too practical to be absorbed by any abstract ideal, as a poet he misses greatness at almost every point, but, endowed with an infinite capacity to enjoy all things, he can, by his facility, and by his intellect, give distinction to everything which he touches.

But, it may be urged, the tendency of Lorenzo's lascivious verse is not to be judged by the *Canti a Ballo* alone, where, as is possible, he refines upon, rather than debases, the popular poetry of the streets. He must be judged by his *Canti Carnascialeschi*, or Carnival Songs, composed for those carnival festivities of which he was the inventor. Having it in his power, it is said, as the initiator of a new form of amusement, to give to it what tone he chose, he deliberately adopted the tone most calculated to debase and enervate the character. The accusation, in as far as it is directed against the pervading tone of the Carnival Songs, cannot be gainsaid. In them, as in not a few of the *Canti a Ballo*, libidinous innuendo and phallic obscenity seem to supply the purpose for which they were written. It is, however, sufficiently obvious that the taste for this kind of thing was not created by Lorenzo. It would be absurd to imagine the Florentines as models of modesty in their carnival celebrations until Lorenzo debauched them. The fact probably is that no songs composed for the occasion would have stood a chance of popular success unless they had conformed to the popular taste. I would suggest that it is in the *Canti Carnascialeschi* that we approach nearest to the spirit of the street songs in which Florence delighted until the *Canti a Ballo* gave more refinement and polish to her taste. The popular balladmonger must not be too far away from his public if he wishes to remain popular. Lorenzo, in his poetic relaxations, seems sublimely unconscious of a mission. His merit lies in his

spontaneity, in his artless expression of the passing mood. To credit him, in the case of any of his compositions, with a deliberate and designing purpose, either to corrupt or to elevate, is, I think, to misunderstand the man, and to misread his effusions. The charge against Lorenzo is that, endowed with brilliant talents, and with a position of unexampled influence in the State, he prostituted his talents, and used his influence, with cold and Satanic malignity, to debase his people. But the man's nature, and the productions of it, seem to me alike to belie the spirit of unimpassioned calculation which the charge postulates. The great deficiency of Lorenzo's mercurial disposition was that he insufficiently realised the responsibilities which his situation imposed even on his lighter and most unguarded moments. The reproach against him is, I would suggest, not that he inaugurated an epoch of corruption, but that he was content to take things as he found them, seeking only to brighten, with a few added rays of art, conditions which he had it in his power in a measure to ennoble and transform.

Turning from these general considerations to survey the *Canti a Ballo* as a whole, the doubt as to their exact authorship precludes us from assigning with certainty any one of them to Lorenzo. Even the charming Canzonette, *Benvenga Maggio*, is no longer admitted without question to be his. It may even be, as Mr. Symonds points out, that some of the most characteristic of the *Canti* are the genuine old popular songs of Florence, altogether untouched by Medician versifiers, which have by natural right of excellence found their way into the first printed collections of such songs. From immemorial times the youths and maidens of Florence had gone out on May morning to celebrate the dawn, and sing of Primavera and the coming of the God of Love.

> Ben venga Maggio
> E'l gonfalon selvaggio !
> Ma chi è quel che vola ?
> È l'Angiolel d'Amore,
> Che viene a fare honore
> Con voi donzelle al Maggio.

(But who is this in winged flight ?
The Angel bird, the God of Love,
Who comes with you, fair girls, to prove
His homage to the sweet May Day.)

Laughing he comes, with roses and lilies twined around his head

Ben venga il peregrino ;
Amor che ne commandi.
Che al suo amante il crino
Ogni bella ingrillandi
Che le zittelle e grandi
S'innamoran di Maggio.

(Blithe Pilgrim, welcome! Love divine
To Thy commands we bow.
And so let each fair maiden twine
Wreaths for her lover's brow.
Let young and old rejoice to-day
In the sweet influence of May.)

A pretty canzone (No. 98) sings of a fair lady to whom the blackbird sang all night so that she could not sleep. She rose and went into her garden beneath the flowering almond tree. There came the bird from his sheltering tree and perched upon her shoulder. He sang his love into her ear, but all in vain, for the fair one knew not the language of the birds.

Another (No. 120) sings of the shepherdesses of the highlands, and of the simple life which it is their delight to lead. Who are they, so lightsome, fair and glad, who seem like angels though so poorly clad ? They come from the high mountains where they tend their sheep.

Ricchezza non cerciam ne più ventura
Se non be' fiori, e facciam grillandelle.

(We seek no other wealth nor happier lot
Than the fair flowers and garlands green can give.)

Two canzone (Nos. 125, 148) are included in various editions of Angelo Poliziano's "*Poesie*"—one, contrived in a short, lilting measure of irregular rhyme, sings the charms of "La Brunettina mia ;" the other reminds an

unkind mistress that youth soon passes, happiness is short-lived :

Nulla cosa è si fallace
Quanto il tempo giovenile.
Però rendi oggi mai pace
Al tuo servo tanto umile ;
Non suol mai 'n un cor gentile
Com' el tuo, regnare asprezza.

(Alas ! how quickly pass away
Those days of youth we have to live
Grant to thy humble slave to-day
That peace 'tis thine alone to give,
Nor can unkindness long contrive
In heart so sweet as thine to reign.)

From work thus delicate and embroidered, we turn to a Canto (No. 14) chanted by a vendor of cosmetics who invites fair ladies to visit his establishment. He has a stock of excessively fine material for cochineal water, and sweet alum, and alum of the rocks for the complexion. Sublimates and fraxinella, *fior di pietra* and jessamine, orange-flower water and bean flower to beautify the cheeks, as well as water for the same purpose distilled from snails and crabs—all these he has, and—

Chi si lava ben con ella,
La sua faccia fa lustrare.

(Whoever washes well with them
Adds a new lustre to her face.)

As an antidote to the seductions of the lady-beautifier a Canto (No. 15) follows, urging girls to abstain from artificial aids to beauty. In language which is plain to the point of rudeness the poet unconsciously proves that women at all times, and in all ages, have been intrinsically the same :

Voi dovete considerare
Che gli è peccato mortale
À volervi contraffare
Vostra faccia naturale.

(And, ladies, you must well reflect
That this is mortal sin,
To seek unnatural effect
On your own natural skin.)

You think, he says, that you make yourselves more beautiful with all your paints and unguents. You make yourselves

so obnoxious that no one but a fool would come near you. Your silver, sublimates, and lead make you look like piebald dogs. When you go out walking your shoes have heels a span high to make you look taller than you are, and whether it be winter or summer is nothing to you, so long as you are in the fashion.

A metrical variation is introduced into the lyric "Angiola tu mi fai" by adding to each four-line stanza a few lines of chorus with an effect of dancing rhythm which is pleasing:

Angiola tu mi fai
Cantando a te venire,
E bellezza c'hai
Non te le posse dire.
(Chor.) Fior di bontà e d'honestà
Tu se' più bella donna che sia in questa città.

O labro di corallo!
Zucchero di mangiare,
E d'oro e d christallo
Ch' io vorrei baciare
(Chor.) Fior di bontà e d'honestà
Ama chi t'ama, e chi non t'ama, lassa.

(Angel! you compel me singing to come to thee:
I can never tell thee all thy beauty is to me.
Flower of purity and grace!
No lady is so fair as thou in all the place.

O lovely lips coralline! to taste them would be bliss!
All golden and crystalline! How I should love to kiss!
Flower of grace and purity
He only knows of love, who loving, loves but thee.)

The examples chosen to illustrate the *Canti a Ballo* are a proof that they are not all given over to licence and innuendo. Without having made an exact computation, I can state in general terms that half of them are free from prurient suggestion. Of those of which this cannot be said it is very difficult for a foreigner to judge, for the language of innuendo is sometimes veiled even to a native. The reader, however, cannot fail to be struck with the constant repetition of the same set of ideas and images. There is no great fertility of invention, and the sensual appeal is rudimentary. Suited, doubtless, to the rustic tastes of the crowd, these licentious songs soon pall. They ignore so much more than they recognise, and try to make of

animal gratification a source of permanent satisfaction which it is not capable of affording. Even if this chapter were the fit place for perfectly unreserved criticism, I should not, as far as I understand this class of Canti, consider them worthy, on the score of literary merit, of more than passing mention.

Among the *Canti a Ballo* is to be found a mutilated version of the most famous of Lorenzo's Carnival Songs—the chorus and dance of Bacchus and Ariadne. The compiler of the Canti, however, had the complete song at his disposal, for it was printed by Il Lasca in 1559.*

Il Lasca, proprietor of an apothecary's shop in Florence, in the sixteenth century, and himself the author of Carnival Songs, did well to collect all that he could secure of the Carnival Songs of the past, for they throw a light upon the festal life of Florence such as no other source can supply. In his dedication to Duke Francesco dei Medici, Il Lasca declares that Lorenzo was the originator "of this manner of celebrating the festival," and that, in the case of the songs attributed to Lorenzo in his collection, it may be confidently taken that they were his, whereas in the majority of cases the songs have long lost their authors, nor has the most diligent search been able to recover them. We have, therefore, Il Lasca's guarantee that Lorenzo himself composed the "*Trionfo di Bacco e d'Arianna*," and also *Canti* for the olive-oil makers, for the young wives and old husbands, for the gold-thread makers, the pastry-cooks, and a few more.

From Il Lasca himself and from the preface addressed to the reader by the editor of the second edition † of Il Lasca's work, we get some information as to these carnival celebrations. Processions paraded the streets of the city in which elaborately decorated cars formed the principal attraction. On some of the cars masquers represented the legends of old mythology, or some allegorical abstractions such as the Winds, the Planets, the Elements, or Death.

* Tutti i Trionfi, Carri, Mascherate ò canti carnascialeschi andati per Firenze dal tempo dei Magnifico Lorenzo Vecchio dei Medici. In Fiorenza, mdlviiii.

† Published in "Cosmopoli," 1750.

Interspersed among the *Trionfi*, as these allegorical or mythological cars were called, came the *Carri*, bearing representatives of every form of trade, Art, or business, the occupants exhibiting every variety of quaint impersonation. Tortoiseshell cats, Nymphs, Nuns, Jewellers, Tinkers, Frog-catchers, Hermits, Muleteers—these are but a few, selected at random, of the carnival cars. In front of each car moved its own body of attendants, dancing, rejoicing, singing, the songs and dances being suited to the impersonations, and being known respectively as Trionfi, Carri, and Canti. The songs were set originally to three voices, " the first song thus sung being that of the pastry and sweet makers, arranged by a certain Arrigo Tedesco,* at that time master of music at S. Giovanni, and held in the greatest reputation." From this original setting the songs developed into an arrangement for four, eight, twelve and even fifteen voices. The best artists did not think it beneath their dignity to undertake the decoration and scenic arrangement of the cars. At the appointed hour, which was after the midday meal, " they went forth, the celebrations lasting until three or four hours of the night, attended by a very numerous following of masqued men on horseback, richly clad, sometimes exceeding three hundred in number, and as many on foot with blazing torches which made night as brilliant as the day." † "You could not see, nor tell of anything," says Il Lasca, " more pleasant nor more delightful." It is, perhaps, some carnival vision that Titian catches and retains in his " Bacchus and Ariadne," or Guido Reni in his Rospigliosi " Aurora." On through the streets the mad procession makes its way, beneath triumphal arches and the plaudits of thronged balconies and windows. Flowers and sweetmeats fall upon the path. This is the wine of life which intoxicates the blood leaving man defenceless against the Circeian sorceress. The songs ring out in the rich trebles of the women, and

* *I.e.*, Heinrich Isaak, the Bohemian composer, whose influence on secular and religious music in his day is a link in the chain which binds the Renaissance and the Reformation together.

† Symonds, *Renaissance*, vol. iv. p. 388, gives this passage as Il Lasca's. It is from the Preface of the 1750 edition.

the measured cadences of the men, only broken in upon by roars of merriment as the point of some lascivious innuendo is received with rapturous applause. On through the narrow windings of the old city, with fresh spectators blocking every doorway—on across the Porta Sta. Trinità—through Oltrarno to the riverside once more—on over the Ponte Vecchio into the great city square, until at last the cavalcade halts beside Ghiberti's Gates, and beneath the shadows of Brunelleschi's dome. On another day the bells of the Campanile proclaim to a sober and attentive people that there is another life than this. If amid the wild din of carnival revelry they could be heard, the cadence of their chime would seem to blend and keep time with the note of universal orgy which now breaks the stillness of the night with the refrain :

> Quant' è bella giovinezza
> Che si fugge tuttavia :
> Chi vuol' esser lieto, sia,
> Di doman non c'è certezza.
> Quest' è Bacco e Arianna
> Belli, e l'un dell' altro ardenti ;
> Perche 'l tempo fugge e 'nganna,
> Sempre insieme stan contenti.
> Queste Ninfe, e altre genti
> Sono allegre tuttavia :
> Chi vuol esser lieto sia,
> Di doman non c' è certezza.
>
> * * *
>
> Donne e giovanetti Amanti
> Viva Bacco e viva Amore !
> Ciascun suoni, balli e canti,
> Arda di dolcezza il core.
> Non fatica, non dolore,
> Quel che ha esser convien sia.
> Chi vuol esser lieto sia,
> Di doman non c' è certezza
> Quant' è bella giovinezza
> Che si fugge tuttavia.

> * Fair is youth and void of sorrow
> And it hourly flies away,—
> Youths and maids enjoy to-day ;
> Naught ye know about to-morrow.
> This is Bacchus and the bright
> Ariadne, lovers true ;
> They, in flying times despite,
> Each with each find pleasure new.

* Symonds' translation.

These their Nymphs and all their crew
  Keep perpetual holiday.
  Youths and maids, enjoy to-day ;
Naught ye know about to-morrow.

* * *

Ladies and gay lovers young !
  Long live Bacchus, live Desire !
Dance and play, let songs be sung,
  Let sweet love your bosoms fire
In the future come what may !
  Youths and maids enjoy to-day ;
  Naught ye know about to-morrow.
  Fair is youth and void of sorrow,
But it hourly flies away.

There is no other of Lorenzo's Carnival Songs which has the swing and cadence of *Bacchus and Ariadne.* The sentiment reappears, tuned to a more sober note, in his *Trionfo dei sette Pianeti*,* in which the Planets exhort fair ladies to follow the star of Venus :

Horsu seguiam questa stella benigna
  O Donne vaghi, ò Giovinetti addorni ;
Tutti vi chiama la bella Ciprigna
A spender lietamenti i vostri giorni
Senz' aspettar che 'l dolce tempo torni
Che come fugge un tratto, mai non riede.
Il dolce tempo ancor tutti ne invita
Cacciare i pensier tristi, e van dolori ;
Mentre che dura questa breve vita
Ciascun s'allegri, e ciascun s'innamori.

---

* In the anonymous *Canto dei Disamorati* there is a stanza which forms a link in the endless chain from "Varium et mutabile semper Femina," to "Woman, uncertain, coy, and hard to please."

La Donna è varia, e mobil per natura,
Superba, vana e ingrata ;
Poco la vita d'altri ò 'l suo honor cura ;
Quand' è punto infiammata.
Segue chi fuggi, e chi l'ha sempre amata
Ha in odio e lo rifiuta
E con Fortuna muta
Nuovo Amedore, e 'l vecchio lascia a piede.

(Woman has ever been by Nature framed
  Changing, inconstant, thankless, proud and vain.
She, when her passions are at all inflamed
  Recks not of honour nor the lives of men.
Loves him who scorns her, but her faithful swain
    She hates and spurns away—
    Some new love every day
From Fortune's wheel, and let the old love go.)

(Follow the course of that benignant star
  Oh ladies fair, oh youths in glad array ;
For love's sweet goddess calls you from afar
  With joy and gladness to beguile your day :
Nor wait upon the time which fleets away,
Gone in a moment never to return.
  Now the sweet time is here, and bids us all
To drive away sad thoughts, griefs that are vain.
  While this brief life is ours, obey the call
Which bids us to rejoice, and love, and love again.)

Turning over the pages which contain these old Carnival Songs there is the temptation to linger perhaps unduly over compositions which have sunk into almost total oblivion, but which entered into the very heart of the life of their time.

Neither their literary nor their moral value can be ranked as high. Lorenzo's personal contributions to them were perhaps but few ; though the spirit which pervades them all is his. It is the spirit of the "dolce tempo," of the sweet season of youth and carnival joys, a time of emancipation from all responsibilities and all restraint. Enjoy to-day, and when to-morrow comes it will be to-day :

Oggi siam, giovanni e vecchi,
Lieti ognun, femmine e maschi,
Facciam festa tuttavia.
  Chi vuol esser lieto sia
  Di doman non c' è certezza.

(Young and old together playing,
Boys and girls, be blithe as air,
Every sorry thought forswear !
Keep perpetual holiday.
  Youths and maids enjoy to-day ;
  Naught ye know about to-morrow.)

CHAPTER XIX

LORENZO AS POET (*continued*)—SATIRICAL, PHILOSOPHICAL, SACRED AND MISCELLANEOUS POEMS

I Beoni or The Drinkers—Impulses of Lorenzo's religious poetry—*L'Altercazione*—The *Capitoli*—The *Lauds*—*SS. Giovanni e Paolo*—*Amori di Venere e Marte*—The *Caccia col Falcone*—Pico della Mirandola on Lorenzo's poetry—Comparison with Dante and Petrarch—General estimate of Lorenzo as Poet—Importance of Lorenzo's poetry in relation to his character.

THE mood which prompted Lorenzo to write his *Canti* is one that can be understood and realised by the most superficial observer of his character. What freakish twist in him gave rise to "*I Beoni*" it is difficult to divine.

"*I Beoni*," * or the Drinkers, is an unfinished satire in nine Capitoli, and is, says Roscoe, "perhaps the earliest production that properly ranks under this title." The piece is written in Dante's *Terza rima*, nor can there be a doubt that it is intended as a parody upon the *Divine Comedy*. At the same time it is a satire directed against excessive drinking. It thus equally pours ridicule on things in their nature contradictory and opposed—on drinking, and on Dante. Yet Lorenzo was a genuine student, and a declared lover of Dante, "in whose single person," he wrote, "were perfectly assimilated all those qualities of poetry which must be sought for singly in Greek and Latin poets." *I Beoni* therefore as a psychological product is curious and baffling, more interesting perhaps as a problem than as a work of literary art. Possibly it is not consciously animated by any moral purpose whatever, being only the outcome of a cold, cynical, Satanic mood, in which everything would seem detestable if the power to laugh at everything did not still survive. The good, the bad, the debased are alike surveyed

* *Il Simposio, ossiano I Beoni,* first published 1568—to be found in *Poesie del Magnifico Lorenzo dei Medici.* London, 1801.

with a smile of Mephistophelean scorn: Dante and Virgil, Bartolino and Nastagio, are reduced to the common denominator of man's corrupt and mortal nature.

The machinery of the poem is simple. Lorenzo, as he enters Florence one day through the Faenza gate, meets a great throng of people, among whom he recognises his friend Bartolino. He is informed that they are all going to Ponte a Rifrede where Giannesi has just broached a barrel of wine, an event

> che presti facci i lenti piedi.
>
> (Which quickly gives the laggard footsteps wings.)

Lorenzo, with Bartolino as his guide, mingles among the crowd, noting with much sardonic humour the qualities of some individuals composing it. Among the company there are three priests, of whom one, with a fatuous smile and pointed nose,

> Ha fatto anche del ber suo Paradiso.
>
> (Has made of drink the Paradise he loves.)

He meets Adovardo, and hails him, but Adovardo protests that he is Adovardo no longer but simply Thirst, embodied in a human form. This metamorphosis, however, has not deprived Adovardo of his reasoning faculties, for he proceeds to discourse on thirst, as the most singular gift given by God to men. Now says Averardo if drinking abolishes thirst, which is held so sweet a thing, why then drinking must be bad. But it is otherwise. Far from satiating *his* thirst, drinking only the more invigorates it.

> E come Anteo le sue forze riprende
> Cadendo in terra, come si favella
> La sete mia dal ber più sete prende.
>
> (For as Antaeus, so the story goes,
> Renewed his strength by falling on the ground,
> So does my thirst from drink fresh thirst derive.)

The parish-priest, Arlotto, in Capitolo viii., is drawn in an amusing way. He has lost his thirst, but sets off in vigorous search of it, armed with dry meat, a herring, a piece of cheese, and four anchovies tied by a shoelace.

And now the whole company was assembled at midday by the bridge, thick as grass in a meadow. All sorts and conditions of men were there; maimed, halt, men with bloodshot eyes, men with sore legs, men with faces rubicund as the cherubim.* But before the wine begins to flow the satire breaks off abruptly, and Lorenzo apparently never resumed it.

I Beoni was, if Valori is to be believed, a mere improvisation, the creation of a passing mood. It shows humorous observation and touches of keen wit, but they scarcely redeem it from the dulness of bad taste of which a modern reader is chiefly conscious as he reads it.

One passage in the *Beoni* is peculiarly offensive as introducing into the besotted atmosphere of low debauchery and depraved humanity the most solemn and tremendous moment in the history of the Christian world. We may well think that a man is indeed lost to all sense of reverence and the fitness of things who can write of a drunkard:

> Il terzo, che tu vedi, ch'è già quici,
> Pur di teologia ha qualche inizio,
> E dottorossi per mezzo d'amici;
> Ed ha apparato, che 'l maggior supplizio
> Che avesse in terra il nostro Salvatore
> È quando in su la croce e' disse: *Stio.*

Merely to quote the stanzas, which I prefer to leave untranslated, seems an insult to the reader which demands an apology. My apology is that we must try to understand Lorenzo as he was. There must be no turning of tigers into cats. Here is a man who did not shrink from a blasphemy for the sake of a joke, a blasphemy not uttered in private, but given forth to the world in what purported to be a work of imaginative art. The same man was the author of the *Altercazione*, of the *Capitoli*, the *Lauds*, and of the morality play *SS. Giovanni e Paolo*. The inventor of perhaps the most revolting conceit in literature is the man whose last word to the world of letters is the expression of the conviction of his inmost soul, contained in the closing lines of *SS. Giovanni e Paolo*.

* *I visi rossi come cherubini.* Cf. Chaucer, "a fyre-redde, cherubynes face."

Fallace vita! o nostra vana cura!
Lo spirto è già fuor del mio petto spinto.
O Cristo Galileo, tu hai pur vinto!

(How life deceives! how vain are all our cares!
Even now the vital spirit quits my frame.
Oh, Christ of Galilee! Thou hast indeed prevailed.)

For we must recognise the religious, sacred, and philosophical compositions of Lorenzo as being in every sense as much representative of him as his lyrics, pastorals, satires, and lascivious songs. The varying moods of the moment made up the man. It is indeed probable that the mood which led him to philosophic contemplation and genuine religious feeling was more constant in him than any other. Towards the mystery of man, his place and function here, Lorenzo's attitude was one of reverent and, sometimes, impassioned inquiry. No man was more conscious than he of that Divine element which finds its place in man side by side with the element of the ape and tiger. Being conscious of it, he sought to assimilate his own little spark of the godhead with its universal source. Placed in daily relation with the corruptions which stained the official practice and profession of religion, he sometimes could not restrain the note of cynical scorn. Placed as ruler over a people he knew the political value of religion organised as a system of polity, yet he was also able to give to the doctrines of the orthodox and accepted creed a personal intellectual assent. Lorenzo was a Catholic by conviction as well as by policy. It never could have occurred to him to be anything else. But beyond the formal acceptance of a creed and an ecclesiastical system there was the spiritual aspiration of the man which called out for a satisfaction which neither creeds nor systems could wholly give. Lorenzo's religious poetry is the expression of this aspiration and is a measure of his sense of that infinite Mystery which we call Life. It was a mood of deep seriousness which prompted *L'Altercazione* the *Capitoli*, and his sacred *Lauds*.

L'Altercazione is a Platonic dialogue, in six Capitoli; in which three persons take part. Lorenzo himself is the "Narrator and Interlocutor;" the others are the shepherd, Alfeo, and Marsilio Ficino.

Lorenzo represents himself as wearied with civil tempests, and desirous to enjoy that free, placid, and untroubled life which alone constitutes the little of good which life provides. And so—

> Per levar da mia fragil natura
> Mille pensier che fan la mente lassa,
> Lassai 'l bel cerchio delle patrie mura.
>
> (From my enfeebled being to disperse
> Those thousand thoughts that weary out the mind,
> I left the circle of my native walls.)

He comes to a retired and shady recess, where the cool stream bubbles by. There he meets the shepherd, Alfeo, who is astonished that he should have left the splendours of the city, and should be "better-pleased by the rough path." Lorenzo expatiates on the delights of the pastoral life, declaring that true happiness may in such a life best be found. Alfeo dilates upon its hardships; the conclusion being eventually reached that their common discontent is the lot of all. At this moment Marsilio appears. He expresses his surprise at sight of Lorenzo—

> Chi di lasciar tua patria ti consiglia?
> Tu sai che peso alle tue spalle danno,
> Le pubbliche faccende e la famiglia.
>
> (Who is it bids you leave your native town?
> Seeing that upon your shoulders rests the care
> Of all the public and the private weal.)

Lorenzo implores Marsilio to tell them wherein true Felicity consists, and where it may be found. Marsilio consents, and expounds the Platonic doctrine of happiness. It is not to be found in any earthly avocation, for it is not connected with the earth. It consists in the knowledge and contemplation of God. Our mortal vista is so narrow that full knowledge of God is impossible to man, but He must be approached through the combined operations of man's intellect and of man's yearnings. But he who seeks to understand God will never know Him as he will know Him who is merely content to love Him.

L'anima che a conoscer Dio è intenta
In lungo tempo fa poco profitto :
Quella che l'ama, presto assai contenta.

* * * *

Amor ne dà l'eterna nostra pace,
Amor vera salute intera e certa.

(The soul that is intent on knowing God
Profiteth not by long-protracted search,
For he who loves Him soon finds true content.
'Tis Love that gives us our Eternal peace ;
Love our salvation, certain, true, complete.)

The piece closes with a " Prayer to the Eternal Light," that t will illuminate Lorenzo's darkness. Oh true Light! shining and most pure, I pray that my dull vision be purged of darkness and become most clear, that I may see thy pure divine light. Oh sole Strength ! lofty and supernal, stretch out thy supporting hand to my tottering love. Oh sole Fount of Holy Water, quench my thirst, that thirst which much oppresses me. Oh Highest and Eternal Good, wretched is the man, more than the beasts that perish, that wills not to enjoy thy native land. Oh Redeemer of the world ! true refuge and only salvation, who savest all beneath thy government ! Oh Good of Good ! Virtue of every Virtue ! I know that thou hast given me Eternity, that I be not worse than the beasts that perish. Even as our intellect answereth to Thine, and thy Intelligence lights us to lofty and profound things, so Thy life wishes to have its part in ours :

Recrea quos creasti, O Bene amplissimo,
Aiuta noi, perchè di te sol nati
Siam, padre omnipotente e clementissimo.

(O amplest Good ! Thy creatures recreate !
Help us ! From Thee alone we take our being,
Father Omnipotent and most merciful.)

Pity the soul that is within me, the soul that is Thy Daughter, corrupted, sick, far from her celestial home, condemned to exile in this dark and gloomy wood. Raise from my soul whatever disjoins her from Thee, pity her dolorous plaint which wrings her heart for love of her native country.

> Ov' è la patria ivi è vero riposo:
> Ov' è il padre e la patria posa il figlio;
> Qui è Ben sommo, vero e copioso.
>
> (The Fatherland is where true rest doth dwell.
> Father and Fatherland: therein the son
> Can find his peace. There is the Highest Good.)

Therefore from the beginning to my supreme end may my soul live for Thee alone: in Thy Light may it shine, when my day is done. Make us to love Thine infinite Beauty; take away the fears which rack the heart, and Thee, O Highest good, may we enjoy, ever greedy of Thee, ever content with Thee.

Throughout *L'Altercazione* there runs a tone of lofty and sustained eloquence which rises once or twice to true poetry. If it seems more surprisingly tuned to the modern note than is usual with Lorenzo's work, that is because its subject-matter is the universal problem, old, and for ever new. There are stanzas in *L'Altercazione* which Shelley might not have been ashamed to incorporate into *Adonais*. The image of the soul, as the daughter of God, condemned for a time to exile within a mortal prison house, is as finely worked out as in any modern reproduction of the fancy. The charm of the landscape background to what may be called an intellectual vision is not only pleasing in itself but appropriate, contrasting as it does in its quiet beauty with the figure in the foreground of a man gloomy, State-weary, satiated with all that the world has to give, calling out from the troubled deeps of his mind for that peace which love of the highest alone can secure.

In his Capitolo, "*Destati pigro ingegno*," * he communes further with his own heart, calling upon his sluggish mind to rouse itself from that sleep which seems to cover the eyes of the mind as with a veil, so that they cannot see the truth. Awake: my mortal Genius! recognise how every action that you prompt is useless, vain, delusive, from the time that passion has triumphed over reason. Think of the deceiving joys which come from what the world calls Honour, Utility, Pleasure.

* Translated by Roscoe in Pope's couplet.

> Pensa alla dignità del tuo intelletto ;
> Non dato per seguir cosa mortale
> Ma perche havesti il cielo per suo objetto.
>
> (Weigh well the worth of intellectual gifts,
> Not given to pursue the things of earth
> But to attain Heaven as the final goal.)

Recognise what joys and consolations might indeed have been yours if false joys, vain hopes had not deluded you. The winds of vain hope, vain joy, shortlived good, and present evil strike on our frail back and would engulf it.

> Se gratia divina non s'abonda.
>
> (Did Grace Divine not everywhere abound.)

Our desires, the more they have, the more they ask ; and seeing that they have no end they have no peace. Their paths are numberless and lead in different ways, but the path of reason is one only ; thus it is that it is found with so much difficulty. Oh Soul of mine ! Look up to the Sun on high which sheds its bright beams around you. Leave the trodden tracks, and turn your eyes to whatsoever things are eternal and lovely, the more lovely in that they are rare. Follow not false beauty, which obscures the path which leads to the stars. That man is blind indeed who cannot distinguish between the splendour of the sunlight and the false and flickering flame of a torch.

Of like tone are five *Capitoli* first printed in the Aldine edition of 1554, the first being especially noteworthy as a recognition of the orderly Providence of God in the disposition of the universe, and of all the elements and forces contained within it. In a catastrophic and superstitious age, which regarded events as running at all hazards, controlled by malevolent or benignant caprice, it is a notable sign that Lorenzo, in an invocation to God, should hail Him as

> Bellissimo architetto, e il mondo bello
> Fingendo primo ne l'eterna mente,
> Fatt' hai questo à l'imagini di quello ;
> Ciascuna parte perfetta esistente.

Tu gli elementi à proprio loco mandi,
Legandogli con tal proportione,
Che l'un da l'altro non disgiungi o spandi;
Tra 'l foco e' l ghiaccio fai cognatione,
Cosi temperi insieme il molle e'l duro.
Da te fatti contrarii hanno unione.

(Supremest architect, who first didst frame
A vision in thine own eternal mind
Of this fair world, and then didst fashion it
To suit the vision, perfect, every part.
At Thy command the elements perform
Each its allotted task, each bound to each
In harmony and due proportion linked.
Thou didst create both fire and frost akin,
Thou didst attemper rough to smooth, and make
Divine agreement in things contrary.)

Lorenzo's Lauds are probably early productions. His mother was a lover of hymns, and herself composed them. For her, and to please her, we can conceive of Lorenzo composing similar songs in his youthful days. For they were songs, like the Carnival *Canti*, written to be set to music, or else were adapted to existing popular tunes. In the edition of Lorenzo's poetry of 1763 the tunes to which they were sung are stated, and among them most of the favourites appear. The Devil was not to have all the best tunes to himself. In their structure, the Lauds are certainly reminiscent of the carnival songs themselves, and we may suspect that, with these models before him, Savonarola was not called upon to be original in fitting his Piagnone words to Carnascialeschi airs.

Lorenzo's third Laud—*Poich' io gustai, Gesù, la tua dolcezze* (Since, Jesus, I have tasted all Thy sweetness—) gives perhaps the best example of the tone of devotion which pervades them, and of happy phrasing. He sings of His loving kindness, who

Che per dar vita à 'Figli à te dai morte,
E per farmi divin se' fatto umano
Preso hai di servo condizione e sorte,
Perch' io servo non sia, o viva in vano.

(Didst deign to die that we, Thy sons, might live,
To be a man that I might be divine;
Didst not refuse to make Thyself a slave
That I might not be bond, nor live in vain.)

In another Lorenzo chides his malignant and hard heart; "fount of every evil imagining"; in another he exalts the beauty and sweetness of the Virgin. In another God addresses the Sinner, in another the Sinners make their supplication to God. The Lauds present to us a new and a curious aspect of Florentine life and manners as we picture the crowd parading the streets in procession, chanting

> * Ecco 'l Messia,
> Ecco 'l Messia,
> E la madre Maria,

to the tune of *Ben Venga Maggio*, or

> Io son quel misere ingrato
> Peccator, c' è tanto errato.
>
> (A miserable sinner I,
> A thankless wanderer; hear my cry!)

to the strain of Lorenzo's *Cicale*—

> Donne siam, come vedete
> Fanciullette vaghe e liete.
>
> (Ladies are we as you see,
> Fair and joyful girls are we.)

La Rappresentazione di SS. Giovanni e Paolo † is a morality play composed by Lorenzo in the later years of his life for the amusement and edification of his children. It was set to music by Heinrich Isaak. Lorenzo is supposed himself to have played a part in it. He may have doubled the parts of Constantine and Julian, who equally represent the cares of sovereignty, and express views, consonant with what we may suppose to be Lorenzo's views, on the nature and functions of government.

The play is constructed in the form which is common in the Moralities of the period. It is a strange jumble of parts and events, its unity of action being obscured by the multiplication of characters and what seems to be the irrelevance of their remarks. But the central conception which governs

* Laud composed by Lorenzo's mother.

† Not the apostles, S. John and S. Paul, but two saints, bearing their names, martyred in Rome under Julian the Apostate. Various editions of the play were published in Florence and elsewhere before the end of the fifteenth century, but they are not dated.

the piece as a whole finds definite expression in the last line —*O Cristo Galileo, tu hai pur vinto*—(O Christ of Galilee, verily Thou has conquered). The action is governed throughout by the attitude of the characters towards the new religion, which finds a curious representative in Constantine; a convinced opponent, but ultimate Confessor, in Julian the Apostate.

The episodes are:

(*a*) The healing of Costanza, Constantine's daughter, of her leprosy by St. Agnes.

(*b*) The demand by Gallicano, Captain of Constantine's armies, for Costanza's hand in marriage, a demand complicated by Costanza's vows of chastity, and Constantine's fear of giving offence to his Commander-in-Chief by a refusal.

(*c*) The despatch of Gallicano against the Dacians, accompanied by Saint Giovanni and Saint Paolo as hostages for the Emperor's good faith: the Dacian campaign, the rout of the Imperial army, the miraculous restoration of the fight by the intervention of the two saints, and Gallicano's consequent conversion to Christianity.

(*d*) The return of Gallicano, who determines to retire from the world, thus solving the difficulties of Costanza; and the abdication of Constantine in favour of his son.

(*e*) The succession of Constantino: his troubled reign, due as he believes to the toleration of the Christian faith: the deposition of Constantino, and the accession of Julian the Apostate.

(*f*) The persecutions of Julian, in which Saints Paolo and Giovanni fall victims; the supplication of St. Basil to the Virgin: she raises St. Mercurius from the grave to be the instrument of God's judgment upon Julian. The death of Julian at the hand of St. Mercurius, and the Emperor's dying recognition that his death is Heaven's visitation upon him for his enmity to the Christian faith.

The character of Constantine is drawn by Lorenzo with unconscious irony, for the Emperor is made to act, not in accordance with any ideal principles befitting a Christian prince, but as Italian princes of the Renaissance were accus-

tomed to act. Intrigue, perfidy, and double-dealing were the natural resources to which any ruler instinctively turned in a case of difficulty. Thus Constantine is totally unconscious that there is anything questionable in the conduct which he pursues. Yet to flatter Gallicano before his face, and to express lively gratification at the prospect of having him for a son-in-law, seemed to Constantine in no way inconsistent with cursing him behind his back, nor with plans devised, in collusion with his daughter, for sending Gallicano upon a dangerous campaign, from which there were good chances that he would never return. Thus, remarks Constantine naively, Honour and Gallicano will at one and the same time be satisfied, especially Honour—*il qual drieto si tira ogn'altra cosa*—(which takes precedence of every other thing).

Incidentally Costanza, who has contrived this ingenious scheme to get rid of Gallicano, converts his daughters to Christianity, and they consecrate their virgin lives to God.

Yet Constantine is full of excellent sentiments upon the duties and responsibilities of a ruler. A ruler should consult the good of all: if he would correct the faults of others he must first correct his own; as he would wish his people to live so must he live himself—

> Perchè lo esempio al popol molto vale—
> E quel che far il Signor, fanno poi molti,
> Che nel Signor son tutti gli occhi volti.
>
> (For much are subjects by example moved.
> As acts the Ruler, so the many act:
> For on the Ruler all men's eyes are turned.)

The Ruler must know how to hold an even balance: he must disdain at once avarice and luxury; he must be *affabil, dolce e grato*, and the servant of those he serves. How little do his subjects know

> Quanto affanno e doglia
> Dà il regno di che avete tanta voglia.
>
> (What cares and griefs
> Come from that crown which men so much desire.)

There may be a personal touch in a passage which occurs in the episode of the rebellion under Constantine. His brothers are killed while engaged in an endeavour to suppress the troubles, and Constantine is in despair, until a Comforter points out that perhaps it is all for the best. His brothers, had they survived, might have proved a source of danger to him, for—

> . . . . nascer suole
> Discordia tra fratei molte fiate.
> Forse che la Fortuna te gli ha tolti
> Acciocchè in te sol sia quel ch' era in molti.
>
> (For between brothers discords oft arise.
> Perchance the Fate was kind that robbed thee of them,
> Seeing that on thee alone the duty falls
> Which others inconveniently would have shared.)

Was Lorenzo thinking of Giuliano, and of the possibilities which might have arisen had Giuliano not fallen in the Pazzi conspiracy?

Julian the Apostate carries further the views, which it is assumed are Lorenzo's, upon the functions of a Ruler. It is into the mouth of Julian that he puts the opinion that a ruler is useless who cannot, from the very beginning, enforce obedience from his subjects. "For the ruler of a State should know how to establish himself in his office in the first four days of his government."

It is the duty of the Prince, if grain is scarce, to see to it that his subjects do not die of hunger: he must supply the needs of the poor, and not accumulate riches for himself:

> La Signoria, la roba dello Impero
> Già non è sua, anzi del popolo tutto.
> E benchè del Signor paia lo'ntero
> Non è, nè 'l posseder, nè l'usufrutto
> Ma distributore è 'l Signor vero.
>
> (The government, and the imperial sway
> Are not his own by any right divine:
> They are but symbols of the people's will.
> To outward view he is the Lord of all
> Yet he is Lord indeed who is content
> To administer a delegated power,
> Nor claims possession, usufruct, or right.)

Lorenzo has so little of the dramatic faculty that he can infuse no distinctive individuality into any of his characters. They represent different points of view, but that is all. It is for this reason that we can receive the abstract statements and opinions which appear in the piece as representing the sentiments of Lorenzo himself. Judged in this light the *Rappresentazione* becomes to some extent a commentary on Lorenzo's ideals of government. It was so that he himself desired to rule, even though ideals and practice did not always harmonise. It is curious that, at the moment when absolutism was becoming an accomplished fact throughout Western Europe, the underlying sentiment of Lorenzo's morality play and Fortescue's Treatise on the Monarchy in England, should have been, in many particulars, one and the same.

Of interest, too, are some passages in Lorenzo's play which indicate his emancipation from the superstitions of his time. His old tutor, Ficino, had not been able to instil into his pupil his own notions upon astrology, visions and apparitions, and the government of affairs by the conjunction of the stars. When the astrologers report to Julian that the omens are unfavourable, he replies that these astrological predictions are *tutte ciance*, which can scarcely be translated otherwise than "all humbug." "The King and the wise man are above the stars. The favourable moments, the auspicious hours, are those which the happy man chooses for himself." In another passage there is a reference to

> Fallace visione
> Che spesso son del Diavol tentazione,
>
> (Deceiving visions—
> So often but temptations of the Devil—)

a passage which recalls Hamlet and his fears lest that which he has seen may be the Devil.

SS. Giovanni e Paolo is not the only example of dramatic, or semi-dramatic composition from Lorenzo's hand. His fragment, entitled *Amori di Venere e Marte*, introduces the Gods and Goddesses, Venus, Mars, Vulcan, Apollo, as person-

ages who are differentiated by experience rather than by character. Vulcan's complaint that it is not enough that he should have been turned out of Heaven, but that every god conspires to do him an injury, produces the effect of humour that was intended. Venus's invocation to Mars shows her voluptuous passion. Apollo's moralisings stamp him as a prig and a spoilsport; but they are in no proper sense dramatic characters. We know something of them from what they say: we know nothing of them from anything they do.

Lorenzo's breaks new ground in his *Caccia col Falcone.* His own passion for outdoor sports is here brought into association with his facility as a versifier. He tells of a day in the country spent in the sport of falconry. He describes the rising of the day, the east all touched with red, while the mountain tops gleamed all of gold. The hawkers are early astir making preparation against the arrival of their masters. The dogs, each called by his own name, gather to the cry, and soon a brilliant company assembles; the dogs draw the covers—*Tira, buon can, su, tira su, cammina*—the game is put up, the hawks and falcons flash upon their prey; two hawkers have a violent quarrel over the behaviour of their respective birds, but are eventually reconciled. All smacks of health, enjoyment, and the open air. The *Caccia* is the work of a man who might never have seen a despatch box, never known what it was to have an ache in his shoulders, nor ever have had a thought beyond his dogs, his birds and the open country. Whatever be the interest of the moment, to Lorenzo that interest becomes all in all.

Thus from sonnet and canzonet, through pastoral ideal and pastoral rustical, through the lyric melodies of the dance and carnival orgy, through bestial satire and the healthy chant of the open air, we have followed the course of Lorenzo's poetic muse to the solemn heights of philosophic aspiration, and of sacred songs of praise. In this universal chorus of poetic sound perhaps the note that last lingers is the note of the poet of love, a plangent strain of Petrarchian lament:

* Tu hai la vita, e la mia morte in mano,
Vivo contento, s' io ti parlo un poco;
Se non, morte me ancide a mano a mano.
Fa almen, s' io moro, dell' estremo foco
La mia ossa infelice sieno estorte,
E poste in qualche abietto, e picciol loco.
Non vi sia scritto chi della mia morte
Fussi cagion, che ti saría gravezza;
Basta l'urna di fuor stampata porte
" *Troppo in lui amor, troppo in altrui durezza.*"

(My Life, my Death are both in thrall to thee.
'Tis life to speak to thee one little word:
That word denied, Death wounds me fatally.
Then should I die, one boon at least afford;
Rescue my luckless ashes from my pyre;
Let them in some neglected spot be stored:
Nor be it there inscribed by whose desire
I met my death. Bear thou no grief for me.
Enough one line—'tis all my bones require,
" Too much, alas! he loved; alas! too hard was she.")

Contemporary estimates of Lorenzo's qualities as a poet have been regarded merely as expressions of the extravagant partiality of his friends. There is indeed a touch of courtly adulation in Marsilio Ficino's assertion that Lorenzo received "from Pallas his wisdom, from Juno his capacity for rule, and from Venus his graces, his poesy, and his music." The well-known eulogy of Pico della Mirandola is as flattering, and more precise, for Pico compares Lorenzo, as a poet, to Petrarch and Dante, nor does he hesitate to express his own preference for Lorenzo. This dictum has only served to cover its author and Lorenzo equally with ridicule, and to depreciate Pico's taste and Lorenzo's merit. When examined, however, in relation to its context, Pico's verdict is found to be entitled to consideration, even though it be rejected as extravagant. It is contained in a long and elaborate letter written to Lorenzo in acknowledgment of the receipt of some of his poems. Pico declares that he has read them with interest, and thinks that Lorenzo may care to know his deliberate and well-found opinion of them. What he chiefly admires is the grace and rhythm of his style and versification. "Who in reading your poems will not be conscious of the rhythmic dance of the Graces; nor do I know any ancient

* Concluding lines of Lorenzo's *Elegia.*

writer whom *in this kind of eloquence* you have not far surpassed." Pico's comparison therefore is between Lorenzo's work, and work of a similar kind done by Dante and Petrarch; it is essentially a comparison of styles, rather than of poetic substance. He finds in Dante an archaic style, which, judged by any absolute standard, must fail to please. Dante's style is not infrequently "*horridus, asper, et strigosus*," whereas the distinction of Lorenzo's style lies in its grace and melody. Pico is not, he tells us, one of those critics who, in comparing the rival merits of two writers, counts the years which separate them as a convincing proof of superior excellence in the earlier writer. Many critics praise the ancients and declare that they alone are to be read with reverence; but this is because they cannot read the work of contemporaries without envy. Judged solely in relation to an abstract conception of what style should be, the superiority of Lorenzo's over Dante's would be denied by few. When judged in relation to the conditions, the work of Lorenzo has this advantage over Dante that, whereas Dante was professionally a poet and nothing else, Lorenzo is a man immersed in the practical affairs of life. "The one produced his poems in retreat and quietude, in the tranquillity of secluded study. But you have sung to us when most deeply engaged in civil tumults and the din of the senate house, amid the clamours of the forum, the most anxious cares, and the most boisterous tempests. To the one the Muses were the ordinary and chief business of life.* To you they afford but some sportive relaxation from your cares. To the one poetry was in the highest degree a labour. To you when wearied out with labour it has been a solace."

Petrarch, too, must yield to Lorenzo in that he is too much of a colourist in words, who by sheer beauty of word-painting gives a fictitious value to things of little worth. He is at once too sweet, too diffuse, too studied. Lorenzo, on the other hand, has a vivacity and spontaneity which appeal directly to the heart. There is no straining after

* "Illis erant Musae ordinarium negotium et principale: tibi ludus et a curis quaedam relaxatio. Illis summa defatigatio, tibi defatigato otium." Pico to Lorenzo, *Idibus Julii*, 1484. Cf. Poliziano, *ante* p. 392.

effects, nor parade of literary craft. From Petrarch much might be cut away to the improvement of what is left, but in Lorenzo there is nothing redundant. "He who takes aways from you mutilates you: who takes from Petrarch trims and enhances him."

Thus it will be seen that Pico della Mirandola's judgment was something more than a few sentences of random flattery. It was a reasoned opinion, upon a matter of literary artistry and craftsmanship, formed as the result of a critical analysis of the ingredients of the respective styles of Dante, Petrarch and Lorenzo. His taste may be faulty and his reasoning unconvincing, but there is no reason to think that his preference was not sincere, or that it was based only on a superficial knowledge of the artistic merits of the two poets to whom Lorenzo was preferred. The superfine taste of an age devoted to form would naturally and deliberately incline to elegance and polish rather than to depth and intensity. However valueless as criticism, Pico's strictures and panegyrics alike acquire interest when we regard them as a reflection of the spirit of his time.

It is of course obvious that no comparison really lies between Lorenzo and Dante as poets. It is true that both wrote love sonnets, and that Lorenzo's Commentary upon his own Sonnets is an imitation of the form of the "*Vita Nuova.*" But Lorenzo nowhere challenges *The Divine Comedy*, but moves in a poetic orbit infinitely distant from Dante's ethereal course. Lorenzo's whole soul was never surrendered to a great conception, which it was his life-work to reveal to the world. Poetry to him was merely a relaxation from the pressure of material affairs. He wrote poetry, not to secure immortality, but to give pleasure to himself and his immediate circle of friends. These verses of occasion, however, were done so well, his sportive fancy touched so many points of human interest, that Lorenzo takes rank as an Italian poet whose work, within its limits, may challenge comparison with similar work executed by any other. He has a fluent and happy command of a language which he did much to dignify and rescue from neglect and debasement. Gifted with extraordinary versatility

he took an interest in everything, and his facile gift of versification enabled him to express his interests in poetic form. Nothing left him indifferent or untouched; each new fancy, emotion, or experience promptly found an appropriate poetic embodiment in sonnet or satire, in pastoral or lyric-song. Thus his poetry is indeed himself, nor can he be known as he really was only from the study of diplomatic despatches, and official records. *Nencia da Barberino* is as much a part of the man himself as his influence over the government of Florence; indeed we shall the better understand his government if we realise him as the author of *Nencia*. As he was in his poetry so he was in his government, sometimes cold and cynical, sometimes impassioned and impulsive; now gratifying the worst passions of his animal nature, now rising to lofty heights of self-criticism and moral enthusiasm; at one time careless how much he might corrupt, at another time intent on edification and spiritual exaltation. Between these extremes there is a not infrequent mood of plodding industry and mediocre talent which finds expression in his government in humdrum details of administration, in his poetry in imitation, and in the banalities of the conventional versifier. It is perhaps conceivable that in his public life a man can pursue exclusively a policy of cold and crafty calculation, while in his private diversions he can show himself genial, human, and disinterested, but Lorenzo's character, though rare, was none the less transparent. His was no dual personality. He was a stone cut with many facets, essentially one, but catching and flashing back all the light and life which was around him. He stretched out both hands to grasp whatever experience the world had to afford, and gave it again to the world individualised and interpreted in poetic forms of art.

There is only one poem which can be called a masterpiece, and that is *Nencia*. Lorenzo was the first to see the grace, the humour, and the charm which can reside in boorish rustics, and to feel the touch of nature which makes kin the humanity of prince and peasant. He is the discoverer and pioneer in a new territory into which art had not yet pene-

trated, and he occupied it by natural right, not of priority only, but of superior excellence over every other competitor. In the higher realms of imaginative poetry he was outstripped by Poliziano, who instinctively feels the influences of Nature when Lorenzo can seldom do more than observe and note them. In lyrics, excellent as some of Lorenzo's lyrics are, Poliziano again takes the palm, but no contemporary writer aspired to Lorenzo's range, or achieved excellence in so many forms, phases, and moods of poetry. His diction, if it lacks inspiration, is always elegant and refined, and if the cadences fall upon the ear with some sense of monotony and repetition, it is rather in the structure of the language than in Lorenzo's want of command over it that the explanation must be sought. His images presented themselves in clear relief before his own eye, and then he expressed them simply and directly. He seldom sought to deck out poverty of thought and immature conceptions in the garments of trope and rhetoric, but he knew what he felt, and conveyed his feeling in words which adequately represent it. He was sensitive to beauty, and saw it everywhere around him, but he viewed Nature from without, and recorded his impressions rather than gave spontaneous utterance to the passion which consumed him within. We are sometimes conscious of poetic artifice where Lorenzo would have us conscious of the intensity of his emotions.

But in his poetry, as in his public life, Lorenzo suffers from the standard by which he has forced us to estimate him. The critic finds himself continually forgetting that Lorenzo belonged to an age which is very remote. The historian demands of Lorenzo the statesman virtues which statesmen could not, at the time, possess. The critic demands of Lorenzo the poet qualities which would not be looked for in Dryden or Pope. In an epoch which in its literature was imitative and artificial, which made of form and style the supreme tests of merit, it was much that Lorenzo should have exhibited such powers of initiative and originality: that he should have been conscious of the spirit of beauty in the common things of the world around

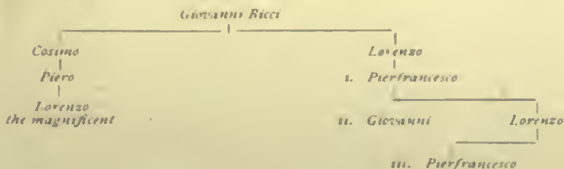
him, and that he should have inspired his contemporaries with his own abounding sense of love and of enjoyment.

Though Lorenzo can make no claim to a place amongst the few great poets of the world, yet he cannot be ignored. He stands out as one who, by his example and his encouragement, did much to purify the Tuscan dialect, and redeem it for the highest uses of artistic expression. Nor can his poetry fail to interest if it be read as the work of a man who has left to the world a poetic record, in graceful and pleasing forms, of his own many-sided and incongruous personality.

PORTRAITS BY LORENZINO LIPPI OF THREE MEMBERS OF THE YOUNGER BRANCH OF THE *MEDICI FAMILY*

UFFIZI GALLERY, FLORENCE

i. Pierfrancesco—kneeling
ii. Giovanni—his son—above
iii. Pierfrancesco—his Grandson—to the left



CHAPTER XX

LIFE AND MANNERS IN LORENZO'S FLORENCE

Character of the Florentines as determined by the conditions of life—Commercial and industrial activities of the city—Lorenzo as a citizen—Standard of education in Florence—Simplicity of private life—Masculine costume in Florence—The condition of women—Woman in the family—Anomalies in the position of the wife—Lorenzo's intrigue with Bartolommea de' Nasi—Female costume—The feminine toilet—Florentine games—Horseracing—The game of Calcio—Love of country life—Lorenzo at his villas.

THE distinction which Lorenzo enjoyed among his fellow citizens corresponded to the superiority which Florence in the fifteenth century could claim over every other Italian State. Though many of the vices which generally prevailed in Italy—vices to which, in a measure, the Renaissance had given birth—were by no means absent from Florence, yet there they flourished in mitigated or more refined forms, while from some of the worst vices of the age Florence was comparatively free. The Florentines were distignuished by a solidity, earnestness, and depth of character which were lacking to the Neapolitans or the Milanese. The exclusive dependence of Florence for her prosperity upon commercial enterprise and industrial activity tended to produce those regular and settled habits of life which are favourable to the development at least of negative, if not of positive, virtues. In a thriving and busy manufacturing town, where every one, whatever his quality, was engaged in some active business, the humdrum affairs of daily life absorbed a great part of those energies which elsewhere were expended in violence and rapine. The accumulation of wealth monopolised the energies of the great industrial captains: the provision

of an adequate livelihood was a task sufficient to occupy the general mass of the people. Though it was possible for a few great families to acquire enormous wealth, yet no sharp line of cleavage can be said to have separated capital and labour. An idle, capitalistic caste existing on the production of exploited labour was practically unknown. Everybody, whether he were millionaire or artisan, was actively employed, while, with a few exceptions, wealth was distributed in such a manner as to produce no sense of glaring inequality in its distribution. Each individual citizen was an integral part in the industrial machine, and had his own economic value. Thus in Florence human life came to be regarded with more respect than elsewhere. In times of political or social agitation it is true that the ferocity which is inherent in the Italian character found full vent in Florence. When the popular fury was aroused the objects of it could expect short shrift. There were times when a horrible access of cannibalistic passion seized upon the mob, as in the days of the Ciompi revolt, and of the Pazzi conspiracy. The final scenes in the life of Savonarola afford sufficient evidence that only a very thin veneer of civilisation and refinement separated the Florentine from the savage. But in quiet times life was more secure in Florence than in Rome or Naples. The dagger of the assassin was not a recognised instrument of diplomacy and statesmanship, and its use, when employed by the Pazzi, was furiously resented. Where, everywhere else in Italy, public opinion was on the side of the murderer, in Florence public opinion was, on the whole, against him. Wild and sanguinary vendettas, pursued with every device of atrocious ingenuity continued to be common in Italy when in Florence they had become rare. The exigencies of a more highly developed social life had tended to teach the Florentine that the security of the individual had a safer guarantee in law than in defiance of it. Putting aside, therefore, as exceptional, the gusty outbreaks of occasional passion, Florence in the days of Lorenzo presented many of the aspects of a modern centre of industry.

The population of the city which in 1300, according to

illani, numbered 90,000, in Lorenzo's time (1478 *circa*) as but a little over 70,000. The Black Death of 1348 had illed off about one half of the inhabitants, and in the entury which followed the rate of increase was slow. In ealth, however, Florence was easily first among the talian cities. Benedetto Dei, in his Chronicle which overs the years of 1470–1492, gives some interesting tatistics as to the flourishing state of Florentine commerce n his day, and he challenges Venice, or any other city, to roduce such proofs of prosperity as Florence could give. " Fiorentia bella," he declares, " had 270 factories of the voollen-guild situated between the Via Maggio in S. Martino nd the Via Pelagio. Florentine stuffs were exported to Rome, Naples, Sicily, to every part of Italy in fact, and to he East. Eighty-three silk factories manufactured silk, cloth, gold brocade, velvet, satin, damask and taffeta. Thirty-three banks conducted the financial affairs of the Republic. There were thirty-two warehouses for the wholesale supply of various kinds of cloth; eighty-four workshops for cabinet-making and inlaid work; forty-four for workers in gold and silver, not including thirty which were exclusively devoted to the manufacture of gold and silver thread and models in wax. Fifty-four workshops were necessary for the supply of worked stone, marbles, intaglios, and reliefs. Sixty-six shops, attached to the Guild of the *Medici e Speziali*, dispensed fancy articles of every description. Hats, paper, cutlery, books, veils, perfumes, tennis bats and masks are but a few of the miscellaneous articles included in the general term " *speziali*," which also covered the hairdressers and barbers. Seventy butchers' shops were required for the needs of the people, as well as eight shops of the " *Pollaiuoli*," or poulterers and game-dealers upon a large scale, who also sold wines of various brands, one white wine in particular being of such excellence that, in Benedetto's opinion, it was capable of waking the dead. The city also could boast of thirty-five Knights of the Golden Spur, knights that is to say, who had won their honours from Popes or Kings in circumstances of peculiar dignity or merit, forming a caste altogether

apart from the *cavalieri di popolo,* whose titles were a recompense for ordinary official services.

In a small community thus actively employed there was not therefore much room for class distinctions. Moreover, the spirit of the people was genuinely democratic, each man mixing with his fellows on terms of easy familiarity which expressed the sense of equality which prevailed. Lorenzo himself was Lorenzo to whoever chose to call him so. Niccolo Grosso, the eccentric blacksmith who raised his work in iron to the dignity of an art—he wrought the *fanali,* or lanterns, of the Palazzo Strozzi—would give no precedence to Lorenzo's orders over those of humbler men. One of Grosso's peculiarities, Vasari * tells us, was that he would never execute any commission until he had received a payment in advance (*sempre voleva l'arra*). Whereupon Lorenzo nicknamed him Caparra, and by this name he became universally known. Desiring to make a present of some of Grosso's ironwork to a distinguished foreigner, Lorenzo went in person to Caparra's workshop to beg him to serve him quickly. The smith's hands were at the time full of work which he had engaged to do for poor people who had already paid him for it. Therefore he was deaf to all Lorenzo's entreaties, saying that he could not oblige him until he had served his poor customers first "for they had come to the shop before him, and that he esteemed their money at the same value as that of Lorenzo."

Where Lorenzo recognised a touch of genius he knew nothing about distinctions of rank or fortune. Artists, he said, are not like other men: "genius has to be humoured." When some one in his presence was commenting adversely on the manners and habits of the great organist, Squarcialupi, Lorenzo rebuked the critic: "If *you* could only know what it is to excel in any of the sciences or arts, and generally in all, you would speak of Squarcialupi with more modesty and more affection." Valori, who tells this story, declares that this was essentially Lorenzo's function as a patron of the arts—not so much to reward genius as to defend genius against the attacks of smaller men.

* Vasari, *Vita del Cronaca.*

Alinari

CAPARRA'S LANTERN

PALAZZO STROZZI, FLORENCE

Lorenzo's urbanity, however, was not reserved exclusively for men of genius or talent or for his friends. The man who led the mad processions of the carnival revellers could scarcely have been haughty and inaccessible towards the public at any time. His affability is so commonly recognised that it has been used as a charge against him. It was but a means, it is said, towards a political end, and that end was tyranny. The fact is that Lorenzo's attitude towards his fellow citizens of whatever degree is only typical of the manners which commonly prevailed. Feudalism as a social force was as lacking in Florence as feudalism was missing from her political organisation.

Nor were such distinctions of wealth or occupation as existed emphasised by the fact that education was the peculiar privilege of the few. If Villani's statement be true that in his time from 8000 to 10,000 children were being educated in the elementary schools of the city, we are justified in assuming that educational facilities had increased rather than diminished in the course of nearly two centuries. Everybody in Florence was educated up to a point, and the intellectual faculties of the people were keen, alert, and to some extent trained. The sense of beauty was a native possession of high and low alike. The eye for form, and line, and texture was not confined to the producers and purchasers of works of high art. Art entered into the life of the people, and displayed itself as much in a street lamp or a kitchen utensil as on the walls of Sta. Maria Novella or the niches of Or San Michele. Every Florentine was instinctively a critic of art, and the artistic Renaissance found the breath of its life in popular appreciation. The legend of Cimabue's Madonna, transported amid the rejoicings of the populace through the Borgo Allegro to its resting-place in Sta. Maria Novella, may be only a legend, but its mere existence as a legend is a commentary upon the widespread influence which art exercised over all ranks of society. Poverty could not complain of lack of opportunity, for the opportunity of rising to the highest ranks in art, scholarship, or literature was open to any one, however poor, who had talent and perseverance.

There was no necessity for any Giotto to be lost among the hill-shepherds. The conditions tended, therefore, to make the democratic spirit real and integral in the Florentine character, to produce easy and equal relations between man and man, whatever artificial separation of position, or means, might exist between them.

Life, too, was led simply by all. The Florentines ate to live. Few of them, if any, lived to eat. We read of magnificent and sumptuous entertainments, and here and there a Florentine of this age would seek to emulate the gastronomic barbarities of a Pietro Riario, but distinction must be made between official entertainments, of which the purpose was to show to strangers the quality of Florentine hospitality, and the accustomed everyday life of the people. None could excel Lorenzo in the magnificence and sumptuousness of the feasts which he gave to ambassadors and princes, but in his own household he practised the simple life on one or two dishes of plain fare. Simplicity being the rule, families were not stirred by the spirit of emulation to outdo their neighbours in extravagance or display. Florentine households were not, as a rule, blessed with a superabundance of wealth, and where there was such wealth there was not the inclination to spend it on the luxuries of the table. What we call good form rather prescribed that where money could be spared it should be devoted to the adornment of the city. The Guilds thought more of their niches in Or San Michele than of municipal banquets, and private persons preferred to employ Masaccio or Ghirlandajo to adorn a chapel than to expend their superfluous wealth on the pleasures of the moment. If Lorenzo ever took a meal with Caparra he probably fared nearly as well as in his own mansion in the Via Larga.

Neither were distinctions of class invidiously emphasised by distinctions of costume. Croakers there were who deplored the good old times which existed, they said, before the Duke of Athens came to corrupt the ancient simplicity of Florentine manners. But a jerkin buckled in at the waist, tightly-fitting hose, a long cloak, and some form of head-dress continued to be the ordinary costume of a Florentine

burgher throughout the fifteenth century. There was not necessarily any marked distinction in dress between the artisan and his employer, between the agricultural labourer, and the owner of the estate on which he laboured.

In Botticelli's picture of the "Adoration of the Magi" (painted for the Lami chapel of Sta. Maria Novella, but now in the Uffizi), which is full of Medician portraits, the artist himself, who stands on the right, is clothed in a long cloak which Dante might have worn, and the spectators, as a body, exhibit no extravagances in the style or fashion of their dress. A distinction must again be drawn between ceremonial occasions and the custom of everyday life. The Florentines had a simple, childish delight in spectacular splendours, and rejoiced in every opportunity offered for its gratification. When Lorenzo organised a show he considered the money well spent which was devoted to magnificent effects of costume and trappings, but we should be wrong to infer from the accounts which we read of his tournaments that he habitually went about in gold and silver brocade. There was, however, no drab uniformity of cut or colour. The doublet and hose, the buskins and the headdress, lent themselves to gay and varied effects of colour, and the more splendid the dye the more expensive was the stuff. Young gallants loved to disport themselves in contrasts of cardinal red, purple, orange, or lavender, but the fashions and tastes of the rich descended by easy stages to the masses, while a man could still pursue his daily course, clad in the sombre cloak affected by his ancestors, without attracting remark by the strangeness of his attire. The Florentine, in fact, in the matter of costume, claimed his freedom as an individual to dress himself in accordance with his taste. There was no conventional standard of characterless monotony in dress to which every one was compelled by public opinion to submit. It was thus possible for luxury and extravagance to assume a thousand forms in the trappings of individual men, but where no special costume was stereotyped, no one in any class of society could be considered odd if in his clothing he did not conform to a pattern.

Before dealing with the question of dress in relation to women, it will be well to consider the general position of women in the Florentine community. "We must," says Burckhardt, "keep before our minds the fact that women stood on a footing of perfect equality with men." This is true in so far as it applies to the general estimation in which women were held, and to the equal opportunities which they, especially if they were married, enjoyed with men for the development of their faculties to the highest possible point. The scheme of education which was deemed proper for men was deemed equally proper for women, the humanistic enthusiasm of the Renaissance extending to the careful training of women in Latin, and even in Greek literature. Women, in fact, were supposed to be fitted to share all the intellectual privileges of men. Not a few of the famous women of this epoch are conspicuous for their virile qualities. Caterina Sforza could sustain the great crisis of her fortunes with manly fortitude and splendid intrepidity, and, though regarded as the "prima donna d'Italia," she is but a type and exemplar of many women of her time. But the general position of women is to be estimated, not in relation to exceptional individuals, but to the life of the family, and here the great distinction meets us between the unmarried girl and the married woman. The unmarried girl, though carefully trained and educated, was kept very much in seclusion, nor did she begin to enjoy the full privileges of her sex until she had come out in the world in the capacity of wife. As such she took her place in the household and in society on an equal footing with her husband, and "strove naturally, no less than the man, after a characteristic and complete individuality." In conversation her opinion was given as freely, and was regarded with as much respect, as that of any man, and in those formal discussions in which the Florentines loved to engage she took her turn with the men as president of debate. She was supposed to be sufficiently conversant with the world not to be shocked when questionable anecdotes and allusions were current, and, from the time of Boccaccio onward, she was capable of contributing her own share to this form of

GIOVANNA DEGLI ALBIZZI

PANEL PORTRAIT BY DOMENICO GHIRLANDAJO

[*Now in the possession of Mr. J. Pierpoint Morgan*]

entertainment. Women certainly could not have been prudes in those days, but there was often, in what would now be considered their immodesty, a frankness and unconsciousness of evil which disarm censure, for there was no consciousness of evil where no evil was felt, intended, or recognised. The sphere of woman was within the family and the social circle, and it was her business to make a part of the life which was around her.

The social and intellectual freedom enjoyed by women does not seem to have proved hostile to the cultivation of domestic virtues. A woman was supposed to be a good housewife, and to understand the management of her children and her servants. In his *Trattato del Governo della Famiglia*, Leo Battista Alberti, using Agnolo Pandolfini as his mouthpiece, insists strongly on the domestic responsibilities which lie upon the mistress of the household. It was one of the first duties of the husband, in a well-regulated family, to train and encourage his wife in all the arts of management and domestic economy. In Lucrezia Tornabuoni, Lorenzo's mother, we see a woman who must have represented almost perfectly the Florentine ideal of what a woman should be. Thoroughly capable in the ordering of her establishment, she was equally capable in the training of her children. Her intellectual gifts enabled her to keep in touch with all the varied interests of her brilliant son, and he found in her his best and most constant adviser even upon political questions. She was not without some literary talent of her own, and her sacred songs are extant to prove the range and depth of her piety. The correspondence between Alessandra Strozzi and her exiled son is a further proof of the close ties of interest and affection which bound mothers and sons together.

But, at the same time, in the society of the Renaissance, the married woman was exposed to peculiar temptations which it was scarcely expected that she would resist. The love intrigues of Italy centre around her rather than around the unmarried girl. It was almost a part of the Italian code of morals that a man should have a mistress as well as a wife. Marriages were so much a matter of convenience,

dowry, or family considerations, that the wife was neither supposed, nor did she expect, to be the exclusive object of her husband's affections. As the head of his household she was to be received without demur when given to him in marriage; she was to be treated by him in his home with all the outward forms of deference and respect. But it was understood that his passion was probably reserved for another. The highest gratifications of physical desire, the loftiest ecstasies of spiritual communion, must find satisfaction in the kindred being of one who was not his wife, but the wife of some other man.

Yet there must be no scandal, or the situation might well prove dangerous. Outraged husbands had little scruple in punishing the proclaimed infidelity of a wife. Offended wives frequently contrived startling schemes of vengeance to redress their wrongs. But beneath the rose much was tolerated as a matter of course, so long as neither husband nor wife was brought to open shame. Thus the woman became the focus of every variety of ingenious intrigue, and in her turn could often show that she too was an adept in the arts of deception. To regard all means as legitimate if only the end was achieved was an ingrained trait of Italian character, and to succeed by the exercise of superior arts of cunning and ingenuity gave to success a special and peculiar zest. The *novellists,* from Boccaccio onwards, are evidence that all classes of society were equally contaminated by the vice of conjugal infidelity. The wives of artisans and peasants were as fair game to their admirers as Bartolommea dei Nasi to Lorenzo dei Medici.

Lorenzo but followed the prevailing fashion in his intrigue with Bartolommea. She was the wife of Donato Benci, a woman, says Guicciardini, who was by no means beautiful, but with a style and grace of her own (*maniera e gentile*). Such was Lorenzo's infatuation that he would ride out under cover of night to her villa, with Luigi della Stufa and his kinsman, Medici "Il Butta," as his companions, and "behaved himself in such a way as would have demeaned any stripling." The lady did not like his friends, so to content her he despatched them on embassies—Luigi to

Brogi

A YOUNG FLORENTINE GIRL

DETAIL FROM DOMENICO GHIRLANDAJO'S FRESCO OF THE "BIRTH OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST"

In Sta Maria Novella, Florence

the Soldan and "Il Butta" to the Grand Turk. His amours did not end with Bartolommea, if Guicciardini is to be believed, for he tells us that Lorenzo was much addicted to illicit loves, which were in some degree responsible for his premature death. Yet Lorenzo was a fond father, and the evidence that he regarded his wife Clarice with affection and respect is too strong to be ignored. The fact is that the peculiarities of Italian social life are scarcely to be comprehended by the Northern mind. The passion of every Italian was to realise himself completely. It was natural to him to seek, where he could find it, for that feminine counterpart of himself who should consummate his perfect self-realisation. Thus a man might be the adorer of two or more women widely differing in character and attractions. In one he might find the complement to his physical nature : in another that perfect communion of soul which could satisfy the highest aspirations of his best self.

In Renaissance Florence, as at all times and in all places, woman laid herself out to attract and captivate. Judging, however, from contemporary portraits, the dominant characteristic of feminine costume was the appearance of simplicity which it presented. This cult of simplicity was not, however, inconsistent with richness and splendour in particular effects. The quality of the brocades, the slashings of the sleeves and bodice, the loopings of the robe beneath the breasts and around the waist, all lent themselves to setting forth the figure to the best and most expensive advantage. But an almost equally effective general impression could be produced by simple materials and an unambitious style. The ladies who represent their period and their class in Ghirlandajo's "Birth of the Virgin" in Sta. Maria Novella, are not indebted for their grace to extravagances of costume. In the so-called Botticelli portrait of La Bella Simonetta in the Pitti the dress is almost aggressive in its plainness. The bodice is cut low upon the shoulders and square across the chest. It is altogether without decorative embroideries, and is simply fastened down the front by plain slashings. It is gathered in at the waist by a band of stuff or silk which conceals

the gathers of the simple skirt, which falls to the feet. The hair falls on each side of the face in masses below the ears, and then is gathered behind the head in a knot, and covered by a sort of hood or cap. Sometimes, as in the portrait of a Medici lady, at Frankfort, a richly-embroidered under-vest, edged with fine lace, and cut square upon the chest, is almost concealed by the equivalent of a modern blouse, full-breasted and full-sleeved. The hair, richly adorned with pearls, and crowned by an aigrette, hangs free, in studied coils, upon the neck and shoulders, except for two long and splendid plaits which are brought forward, one over each shoulder, and arranged and fixed so as to define the line of the blouse as it slopes to meet the vest. The effect of costume in this picture is rich and splendid. Everything has been elaborately studied and is in perfect taste, but the dress itself is quite simple. As at all times, the individuality of the wearer was of more account than what was worn, and in Florence ample scope was allowed for individuality to women as well as to men.

There were other means, apart from clothing, lace, chains, jewels, and the like, by which women sought to charm. The use of cosmetics and false hair was universal. The Apothecaries held equal rank with the Doctors in the major Guild of the "Medici e Speciali," and their shops were full of engaging trifles calculated to please the fancy of the fair sex. There were paints for the face, delicate washes, innumerable perfumes, to which the Italians were passionately attached. A lady's toilet was at least as elaborate as that of Pope's Belinda. First came the process of washing, for it is gratifying to note that the Florentines attached great importance to personal cleanliness, being regarded as the cleanest people in Italy. The first care, on waking, of the shepherdess in Poliziano's lyric is to wash "il suo bel viso, la man, la gamba e il pulito petto." The arrangement of the hair next demanded attention, the most studious arts being employed to secure a pleasing effect of colour and of unstudied simplicity. Assiduous brushings, combings, crimpings, dyeings prepared the way for the intermixture of coils of false hair with the natural product of the head, the ultimate result being

LUDOVICA TORNABUONI

DETAIL FROM DOMENICO GHIRLANDAJO'S FRESCO OF THE "BIRTH OF THE VIRGIN"

Sta Maria Novella, Florence

frequently a single thick plait which hung down behind the back. Or else it was simply parted, and allowed to fall at will over the neck and shoulders, as in Leonardo's Mona Lisa. There was, however, no stereotyped *coiffure*. Each lady arranged her hair as best suited herself.

After the hair came the face, which was treated with various cosmetics, the eyes, the eyelids, the cheeks, the lips, the teeth, having their own appropriate and special embellishment. No sense of shame attached to these applications, for they were not used with a view to correcting the deficiencies of nature, but to supplementing nature by extraneous charms. The paint stood out thick and glistening, being purposely designed to produce effects of form and colour which were not natural. This rage for artificial beauties extended to all classes. Nencia, if only she will be kind to Vallera, shall shine resplendent in bismuth and sublimate of lead like the best lady in the land. There were doubtless many women who refrained from these practices, or who indulged in them only on exceptional occasions, but the literature of the time affords abundant proof of their prevalence, and of the powerlessness of masculine satire effectually to put an end to them.

The full extravagances of meretricious adornments were, however, reserved for some festival or gala day, a horse-race, or a tournament, or a game of "Calcio" in the Piazza of Sta. Croce. The Florentines loved sports and games for their own sake, but also for the opportunities for spectacle and display which they afforded. Then the men would don their most splendid attire, the ladies would apply their most luscious paints, and the prize of victory, to be received from the hands of the fairest of the fair, was contended for amid the plaudits of the assembled city. Ecclesiastical festivals, such as St. John's Day, St. Peter's Day, and certain red-letter days in the history of the republic, afforded occasions for games and sports upon a grand scale. Having devoted the morning to the exercises of religion, the Florentines would in the afternoon indulge their national passion for horse-racing,* known as "Palio,"

* The course extended from the Porta alla Croce, through the city, to the Porta al Prato.

from the piece of brocade given as a prize. The *Via del Corso* still commemorates these contests, which date back to the thirteenth century. There was seldom a race in Lorenzo's time in which a horse of his was not running, for he was unaffectedly an enthusiast for the sport as well as an ardent lover of horses. Even a manuscript or a precious vase could hardly please him more than the receipt of a beautiful horse as a present from some royal or princely friend. His own stud was famed throughout Italy, and a horse from Lorenzo's stables was recognised everywhere as a princely gift. His own special favourite was Morello—a very dark bay Barbary—invincible in the races, and so attached to Lorenzo that, as Poliziano assured Valori, he would, if ill or wearied by the race, refuse food from any hand but that of his master, nor did he ever fail to recognise Lorenzo's approach by shrill neighs of delight.

Or, if there was no racing, there was "Calcio," a game played originally in the neighbourhood of Ognissanti until it was relegated, by the gradual expansion of the city, to the Piazza of Sta. Croce. It was a game played with a ball under rules which sometimes suggest our own Rugby Football, and sometimes tennis. An oblong resembling an immense lawn-tennis court was marked out in the square, one side of it being known as the *muro*, the other as the *fossa*. The players, twenty-seven on each side, stood confronted in positions definitely assigned to them. A line across the centre of the court separated the sides. Fifteen players on each side were posted close to the line, arranged in three divisions, right, left, and centre, there being five players in each division. These were known as the *runners*. Immediately behind them stood five *Sconciatori*, covering the width of the parallelogram, each having his own special territory to guard, and each distinguished by a special name which marked his position. Behind the *Sconciatori* stood the *Datori*, or Servers, in two rows, one behind the other, the first consisting of four *Datori*, the second of three. To each of these his own particular name and sphere of action was assigned. The general arrangement was obviously designed so that each

Alinari

PIERO DEI MEDICI, ELDEST SON OF LORENZO

FROM THE PAINTING BY BRONZINO

Uffizi Gallery, Florence

successive line of players should cover the gaps in the line in front. When all was ready the ball was set in motion, and was apparently kicked or thrown from hand to hand, as occasion might demand, but I have been unable to grasp the precise play of the game. Play was limited to a fixed time, and that side was the winner which most often gained "Caccia," or "Chace," or which had "proved itself superior by reason of faults." The game was evidently a skilful one and very fast. Piero dei Medici, Lorenzo's son, was a noted expert. It aroused unbounded enthusiasm, sometimes attracting, so it is said, as many as 40,000 spectators.*

* In an old print in the British Museum, 1494, reproduced in Edgcumbe Staley's Guilds of Florence, the game is shown as taking place within an oval, not a parallelogram. The particulars which I have given are taken from a copy in the Rylands Library of a book published in Florence in 1688—*Memorie del Calcio Fiorentino, tratta da diverse Scritture, e dedicate all' Altezza Serenissime di Ferdinando, Principe di Toscana, e Violante Beatrice di Baviera.* The book contains the rules of the game and a diagram of the positions, with names of players. "From the 6th day of January, throughout the Carnival, let the time be devoted to the exercises of Calcio. Every day, towards evening, at the sound of trumpets, the players shall take the field." Allessandro Adimari is quoted as the author of a eulogy of the game, entitled *Calliope.* Calcio, he says, is a symbol of life itself: the veritable model of the contrast which all men feel to exist between true and false happiness; for the more a man hits *the globe*, the more is he victor over it. ("The globe" is here used in the double sense of the world, and the calcio ball.) Then follows a sonnet based on this conceit, initiated by two passages of Scripture:

Præterit figura hujus mundi.—1 Cor. vii. 31.
Amicitia hujus mundi inamicitia est Dei.—Jac. iv. 4.

Questo globo, entro informe e bel di fuore,
E del mondo il model voto al contento.
Seguiam tutti un Pallon, ch' è pien di vento,
Da cui si tragge sol polve e sudore.
Ecco uno avido il cerca, altri l'attende,
Un lo spinge, un l'inalza, altri l'atterra.
Poscia offeso è quei più che più lo prende.
Oh Giuoco, orma del verò, ognun fa guerra
Con quest' orbe mortal, ma chi l'intende
Li dà de' calci, e via lo caccia in terra.

(This sphere, formless within, so beautiful without, is the model of the world.
We all follow a ball which is full of wind, and dust and sweat is our only reward.
Lo! here a greedy one who seeks it, others await it. One kicks it about, another raises it aloft, others strike it to earth. The more he takes hold of it, the more a man is injured.
Oh game, which art the symbol of truth. Every one makes war with this mortal globe of ours, but he who understands it gives it kicks, and straightway *chaces* it to earth.)

Another favourite game, of which I have not yet bee
fortunate enough to secure any full particulars, was "Maglio.
The Via del Maglio still testifies to its popularity. Th
principle of it appears to have been similar to that of Calcic
but the ball was propelled, not by the hand or foot of th
player, but with a wooden hammer weighted with iron
Hockey, perhaps, is the English game which most resemble
it, though there may have been in the game a strok
analogous to the drive in golf.

Such were the sports which, interspersed with tourna
ments, mummings, masquerades, and mystery plays, be
guiled the inhabitants of the city in their hours of leisure
But whatever the attractions of the town, the charms o
country life were fully appreciated. It was the custom o
those who could afford the luxury to spend much of thei
time at their country villas. It is a proof of the security
for life and property which existed in the fifteenth century
that so many of the richest citizens of Florence could ventur
to sink large sums of money in building splendid villas, som
of them in the heart of the country, leaving them and thei
rich contents comparatively unprotected during a grea
portion of the year. Nor did the owners apparently antici
pate any accidents from the violence of footpads and brigand
while making their way to and fro between the villa and th
city. All the guarantees required for a refined, commo
dious, and varied life were enjoyed by the Florentines in th
times of the Medici. Thus there sprang up, on the road
leading to Prato, in and about Fiesole, in the valleys of th
Greve and the Ema, country houses adorning the most
picturesque situations, built and equipped in a style o
modern elegance and comfort. There the jaded man o
business could find relaxation, and profit also, in the cultiva
tion of his fields and garden, in looking after his farm, hi
fish-ponds and his game preserves. There he could enjoy th
pleasures of hawking, the country sport which of all other
exercised the greatest fascination at this time. There, too
the lover of Nature could content himself with the con
templation of all her varied beauties, in the sound of th
running stream, in the ever-changing colour of the foliage

in the song of birds and in the opening bud. For, since the time of Petrarch, the feeling for Nature had been continually growing. The literature of the time gives evidence that there was a real and genuine appreciation of simple beauty. The affectation of emotions not felt is incident to a condition of society in which conventionality decrees that certain emotions shall be felt. In Florence the leaders of fashion and of opinion were themselves the men most susceptible to the influences of Nature and to the delights of rural life. There was no call upon them to affect an enthusiasm which they did not feel, for no one was thought the worse of who did not feel it. The various influences which gave rise to this love of life in the country are summarised by Alberti, who, in his Treatise on the Family, makes Pandolfini say: "The villa is always true and kind: if you dwell in it at the right time of the year and with love, it will not only satisfy you, but add reward to reward. In spring the green trees and the song of birds will make you joyful and hopeful; in autumn a moderate exertion will bring forth fruit a hundred-fold: all through the year melancholy will be banished from you."

However numerous and diverse the attractions of country life, Lorenzo felt the influences of them all. Just as a permanent existence away from the busy world of affairs would have been intolerable to him, so at times his whole nature craved for retirement and complete change of pursuits. He loved the country as a lover of beauty, and found in it a principal source of his poetic inspiration. He loved the relaxation which country sports afforded, and was as enthusiastic for his dogs, his horses, and his falcons as for his vases, manuscripts, and antiques. He loved building, and his villas gave him an excuse to gratify his constructive tastes. But perhaps he loved agriculture, farming, and the laying out of his estates as much as all these things. For commerce he had small liking and perhaps but little aptitude, but his interest in the land was unbounded, and he showed remarkable capacity in working and developing it to the best advantage. He was never tired of accumulating landed estates, and then setting about to improve them. He was

learned in drainage, breeds of stock, tree-planting and landscape gardening. He procured from Sicily a breed of golden pheasants for his estate at Poggio a Cajano, where also he bred large quantities of silkworms for commercial purposes. He was interested in pigs, importing a specially fine breed of these animals from Calabria, as well as rabbits from Spain. His cows were noted throughout the country, and they were highly valued by the people, for Lorenzo was able to give to Florence a native cheese which supplanted the imported Lombard cheese which alone had been available until his day. All the interests which absorb the country gentleman and large landed proprietor of to-day were strong in Lorenzo, but, unlike many country squires, he was interested in everything else as well. To-day it is a deer-hunt, or a hawking party ; to-morrow a stroll beneath the spreading trees in deep Platonic converse with Ficino, Poliziano, and Pico della Mirandola. Now he retires to some secluded glen, where the inspiration of the spot finds expression in a sonnet or canzone ; now he is deeply engaged with bailiffs and land stewards, discussing breeds, improvements, fertilisers, and the price of sheep. And in the evenings it is his delight to play with the children, or to talk with Piero, when he has grown up, about his stables and his stud, or to examine some new treasure of art which has reached him as a present from Ferrante or Ludovico Sforza, or to pore over some precious manuscript which Lascaris has brought home from the East.

Unburdened for a brief interval from the cares of state, and the sorry business of political wire-pulling, Lorenzo might well feel sometimes that this was the life which alone was worth living. Doubtless he was sincere at the moment when he said that it was his purpose to retire from public life, and to devolve upon Piero the cares of government.

Such thoughts, however, were but the impulses of the fleeting hour. Before him, across the valley, wrapped in the folds of Arno, lay the city which had him in thrall. He must control it, or lose all that life had to give. Let him to-day indulge his day-dream, for to-morrow the stern business of the workaday world must shatter the illusive fabric of his dreams.

CHAPTER XXI

EPILOGUE

STATE OF FLORENCE AND ITALY AFTER THE DEATH OF LORENZO

Calamities of Italy and of the House of Medici following Lorenzo's death —Could he have averted them ?—French claims to Milan and Naples—Charles VIII. of France—Charles VIII. incited to invade Italy—Rule of Piero dei Medici in Florence—Piero reverses Lorenzo's foreign policy —Piero seeks to propitiate Charles VIII.—Florence repudiates Piero's terms : expulsion of the Medici—Charles VIII. at Pisa and at Florence—Treaty between Charles and Florence—Charles VIII. occupies Naples—Intervention of Ferdinand of Aragon—Italian League against the French : retreat of Charles from Naples—Louis XII. prosecutes his claim to Milan, and to Naples—Partition Treaty of Granada between Louis and Ferdinand —Dual occupation of Naples by Louis and Ferdinand—Disputes between France and Aragon in Naples—The Spaniards expel the French from Naples—Death of Piero dei Medici at the Garigliano—Changes in the Papacy : accession of Julius II., 1503—Julius II. aims at the expulsion of the French from Milan—Battle of Ravenna : death of Gaston de Foix—The French withdraw from Milan—Florence and her French alliance—Julius II. determines to re-establish the Medici in Florence—The Medici restored by the aid of a Spanish army, 1512—Giovanni and Giuliano dei Medici—Rapid changes of personality in the Medici Government—Florence ready to rise against her Medici rulers—Italy in relation to the European situation in 1525—Charles V., the Emperor, defeats Francis I. at Pavia—The Imperial troops march on Rome—Reconciliation between the Emperor and Pope Clement VII.—Siege and fall of Florence—Could Lorenzo have saved Italy ?—Some contemporary judgments—The true causes of Italy's subjection to the foreigner.

THE contrast between the golden days of the House of Medici under its most brilliant representative and the disaster and ruin which so speedily overwhelmed it after Lorenzo's death affords a text for the moralist upon the mutability of human affairs. But it was not the fortunes of the House of Medici alone which suffered eclipse when Lorenzo's hand ceased to guide them. He had not been dead three years before the storms and tempest which long had threatened Italy burst in full force upon her, and the Italy that had been, ceased to be. She became the prey

of the invader, and foreign barbarians disputed for her spoils. Florence herself was caught up in the whirl and turmoil of the tremendous forces, now let loose, which she was powerless to control, and after many vicissitudes and much heroic struggle, at last sank exhausted into the grip of a despotism imposed upon her from without.

The history of Italy and of Florence in the years which followed the death of Lorenzo would lie altogether outside the scope and purpose of this volume were it not for the reflections which that history suggests upon the character and aims of Lorenzo's government. Had he lived, could he have averted the catastrophe? If he could not altogether have averted it, could he have controlled it, or at least directed it into less devastating channels? These are questions which naturally arise out of any investigation of Lorenzo's government, influence, and policy; questions which can only be approached in the light of some knowledge of the course of events which followed after his death.

In the Introductory chapters of this book I endeavoured to make clear the nature of the claims of France upon Milan, and also upon Naples, and the effect which those claims necessarily exercised upon the internal policy of Italy. Since the death of the Count of Maine the claim to Naples had become vested directly in the French crown, represented at this time, 1492, by King Charles VIII. The claim to Milan was asserted by the House of Orleans, represented by Louis, Duke of Orleans, a distant cousin of Charles, a Prince with fair prospects of succeeding to the French throne. It was significant that in 1491 Charles VIII. and the Duke of Orleans were reconciled, after an estrangement which had kept the latter a prisoner for several years.

At the time of his father's death and his own accession Charles VIII. was a boy of thirteen. For several years the country was administered on his behalf with great prudence and discretion by his sister, Anne of Beaujeu. Troubles in Brittany, and the general conditions prevailing in the realm, kept her away from any schemes of adventure in Italy, but by 1491 Brittany was pacified, Charles had assumed into his own hands the reins of government, and was burning

ing to signalise his reign by some brilliant achievement. Incentives were not wanting to induce him to turn his eyes to Naples where he might not only gain a crown, but unseat a Pope, and pave the way for a new Crusade.

It has been seen that the prospect of a French invasion of Italy had been for years made use of by Italian statesmen as a piece to play in the game of politics and diplomacy. At this moment, 1492, from four separate quarters, the French King was being urged by Italians to undertake an Italian expedition. Ferrante's revolted barons had naturally looked to France to support them against a king whom with some justice they could represent as a tyrant and a usurper. Venice, engaged almost single-handed in a contest with the rest of the Italian Powers, saw in a French invasion an instrument to serve her purpose. Ludovico Sforza supposed that by allying himself with France, and by supporting the designs of Charles upon Naples, he could divert the French attack from his own dominions. Cardinal della Rovere in his hatred of the new pope, Alexander VI., looked to Charles to call a General Council, depose Alexander, and place the Church and the Papacy upon a sound foundation. Moved by influences so many and so varied, Charles made his preparations, cleared his ground for action, and in January 1494 dismissed the Neapolitan ambassadors from his Court.

The Italian expedition of Charles VIII. in 1494 found Italy in no position to resist it. "Charles," as Macchiavelli said, "conquered Italy with a piece of chalk." * The balance of power in the Peninsula which Lorenzo had so delicately poised and adjusted had almost lost its equilibrium before his death. Upon the succession of his son, Piero, it fell altogether out of gear.

Piero was a man, not without intellectual attainments, but with little of the grasp and command over public affairs which his father had possessed. He was never really liked in Florence, where he was regarded by the citizens, jealous

* *I.e.*, it was only necessary to mark out with a piece of chalk the quarters which Charles proposed to occupy in the Italian cities through which he passed.

of the purity of their race, as only half a Medici, and scarcely half a Florentine. He was so closely connected, through his mother Clarice, and his wife Alfonsina, with the Orsini family that he was believed to be swayed by them rather than by the interests of Florence. He bore himself with all the pride and arrogance of a Roman noble rather than with the decorum prompted by the sense that he was, as Lorenzo reminded him, "but a simple Florentine citizen like any other." His brawls and excesses shocked the Florentine sense of propriety. Armstrong bluntly characterises him as "a brutal athlete, who, in Guicciardini's phrase, had found himself at the death of a man or two by night."

Piero however was not without a policy, for which, though it ended in disaster, something may be said. The aim of Lorenzo, it has been seen, was to cultivate the best relations with France while straining every nerve to keep the French out of Italy. Now the French were coming. Lorenzo's policy had broken down. Would it not be better therefore so to adjust the Florentine alliances that Florence might be closely joined with those Italian Powers who could most effectually resist the French invasion? To maintain the alliance with Milan was tantamount to sharing with Milan the responsibility for calling in the French. To break with Milan and join Naples seemed to offer some guarantee of effective resistance to them. Piero's policy is intelligible even if it was mistaken; even if it was entered upon under the impulsion of his Orsini relatives rather than of his reasoned consideration for the best interests of the State.

Thus when Charles descended upon Italy he found Florence closely allied to the very enemy he had come to overthrow. He found his path blocked by the hostility of that State on whose friendship all the precedents of the past had entitled him to count. It was necessary, before he could continue his advance, to lay formal siege to the Florentine fortress of Sarzana.

At this point Piero lost his nerve. Believing resistance to Charles to be impossible, he resolved to revert to the traditional policy of his House, and to seek to reconcile himself to Charles by the most abject submission. On his

own initiative, while the siege of Sarzana was in progress, he hurried to the camp of the French King, and there he surrendered into the hands of Charles, not Sarzana only, but Pietra Santa, Pisa, and Leghorn. Florence, in indignation, repudiated Piero's action. On his return to the city he was refused admission to the Palace of the Signoria, the citizens revolted against his government, and he, together with his brother the Cardinal, sought their safety in flight.

Thus on November 9, 1494, were the Medici expelled from that city which they had controlled for sixty years. The mistakes and folly of one man had overthrown that elaborate structure which four generations of his ancestors had so elaborately reared. But none of them had had to face an irresistible foreign invasion. In justice to Piero it must be admitted that he had to confront a situation which might have baffled the political genius of Lorenzo or of Cosimo.

On the day that Piero fled from Florence Charles VIII. was at Pisa. There he was welcomed as the Deliverer who had come to rescue Pisa from its Florentine chains, and to restore its cherished, unforgotten freedom. Encouraged by the vague assurances of the French King the Pisans proclaimed their independence, and shook off the yoke of Florence under which they had chafed for nearly a century. For fifteen years the Pisans maintained the struggle against all the efforts and resources which Florence could command against her. At last in 1509 Pisa was compelled to own herself conquered and to submit.

Charles, in the meantime, having left a small garrison behind him in Pisa, moved on towards Florence where he arrived on November 17. He had already been hailed by Savonarola as the one sent by God to effect the regeneration of Italy, and this view of himself, as one commissioned from on high to accomplish the purposes of a Divine Providence, impressed itself equally upon the political and religious sense of Charles. But whereas Savonarola insisted that Florence was the chosen City of God, and therefore was exempt from the chastisement which Charles was appointed to inflict upon Italy, Charles was determined that Florence should pay heavily for his protection. He must retain in his own hands her

fortresses and dependencies which Piero had surrendered, and must receive in addition a large sum of money. The stormy negotiations which followed gave occasion to Piero Capponi to immortalise himself as a Florentine patriot, but in spite of his threat that the city would ring her bells at the first sound of the French trumpets, Charles got almost all that he had asked for. Florence had to be content that he left her free to work out her own future. The King did not insist on the restoration of the Medici, nor did he officially identify himself with the revolt of Pisa, but he insisted on the money and the fortresses. A treaty was arranged and signed, and, on November 30, Charles marched from Florence towards Rome.

The subsequent effects upon Florence of the French expedition are involved in the general confusion to which that expedition gave rise. Charles VIII. opened the flood-gates and at once the waters were poured forth upon the land. The day of her visitation had now come. The country which for centuries had been the battle-ground of rival states and factions became for more than thirty years the battle-ground of alien nations. The sack of Rome in 1527, followed by the establishment of the despotism of Medician Grand Dukes over Tuscany, marks the climax of that Italian tragedy which opened with the French expedition of 1494.

Having concluded an arrangement with Pope Alexander VI., Charles quitted Rome on January 28, 1495, in order to carry out his primary object—the acquisition of the crown of Naples. Already the King of Naples, Alfonso II., who as Duke of Calabria had played so large a part on the Italian stage in Lorenzo's days—had abdicated his throne in favour of his son Ferrantino. The change however could not obliterate the memory of Alfonso's ferocities and crimes. The Neapolitan fortresses which did not tamely surrender were taken by assault. Ferrantino, without the whole-hearted support of his subjects and the great barons of the realm, was powerless to resist. On February 22, Charles rode into Naples as a conqueror, and the crown won two hundred and thirty years before by Charles of Anjou was

once again in the possession of a representative of his House.

The success of Charles however was short-lived. He had gained Naples almost without a blow, and almost without a blow he lost it. Ferdinand of Aragon had marked with alarm the triumphant progress of the French. Allied by ties of kinship to the Aragonese dynasty in Naples, Ferdinand had none the less permitted Charles VIII. to purchase his neutrality in respect of French projects in Italy, but when Charles was once fairly on the march for Naples, Ferdinand determined to intervene, alleging as a pretext the burdensome conditions which Charles had imposed on the Holy See. None knew so well as the most Catholic King how to cloak any breach of faith in the garments of piety. He placed an army on the Liri River to observe Charles, while he despatched Gonzalo de Cordova to Sicily that he might be conveniently posted to intervene on the mainland.

In the meantime difficulties from other quarters were accumulating upon the head of Charles. He saw the prospect of his communications being cut and his line of retreat endangered by a League of the Italian Powers against him, headed by the Pope and engineered by Ludovico Sforza. To this league all the Italian States, except Florence, were parties. Charles saw that no time was to be lost if he was to effect his own return to France. Leaving one half of his army to secure his new conquest, he set forth from Naples with the rest on May 21, 1495. At Fornovo, about 15 miles to the south-west of Parma, almost at the junction of the Taro and Ceno Rivers, he encountered the army of the League and defeated it. After three months sojourn at Asti Charles recrossed the Alps, with nothing but barren glory to recompense him for the toils and expenses of his expedition.

For the departure of Charles from Naples had been the signal for an immediate rising of the Neapolitans against the French garrison. Ferrantino issued from his retreat at Ischia, and, aided by Gonzalo, quickly secured the surrender of the French commander, Montpensier. Seventeen months after the triumphal entry of Charles VIII. into Naples not a trace

of his brief sovereignty remained save the slaughter and desolation which followed in his train.

The death of Charles VIII. in 1498 placed the crown of France on the head of the Duke of Orleans who ascended the throne as Louis XII. His Italian interests were doubly strong, for not only did he inherit the claims of the French crown to Naples, but he himself, as the representative of the Orleans House, stood for the claims of that House to the Duchy of Milan. Louis XII. now determined to enforce these latter claims against Ludovico Sforza, and accommodated his international diplomacy to the requirements of a Milanese expedition. Venice joined with Louis in a partition treaty by which the domains of Ludovico were to be shared between her and France. Ludovico fled, was restored, but was finally overwhelmed at Novara. He was himself taken, and for the rest of his life this brilliant schemer expiated his countless intrigues and treacheries in a French prison.

Louis XII. was now free to prosecute once more the claims of France to Naples. The difficulties of the enterprise, in face of the rival claims and strategical advantages of Ferdinand of Aragon, were, however, so apparent that the French King resolved, by sacrificing a part of his Neapolitan dominions, to make his tenure of the rest secure. In November 1500, the Treaty of Grenada, between Louis XII. and Ferdinand, provided for a joint expedition for the conquest of Naples, and for the partition of the kingdom between the contracting powers. The new King, Federigo, (for Ferrantino had died in 1496) was in no position to withstand the attack of France and Aragon in combination. The siege and capture of Capua, which was sacked with merciless ferocity, was a warning of the fate which awaited resistance. Naples submitted to her invaders, and France and Aragon proceeded to consolidate their power in their respective portions of the kingdom.

A dual occupation is always apt to be dangerous unless a precise understanding has first been arrived at as to the exact limits of the sphere of each contracting party. The Treaty of Granada provided in a general way that France

was to have Naples and the adjacent territory while Aragon was to rule in Apulia and Calabria. What was Apulia? Did it include the Capitanata? And was the Basilicata, interposed between Apulia and Calabria, to be reckoned as included in those Provinces, or as a part of the French domain? The Treaty left these questions undecided. Ambiguities took the place of certainty on points of vital importance, if permanent agreement and friendly relations were to exist between two jealous Powers established side by side in a newly conquered country. Troubles in regard to the disputed territories immediately arose, and these troubles soon deepened into active and declared hostilities. Within a few months of their joint conquest France and Aragon were flying at one another's throats for exclusive possession.

The fortunes of Aragon were sustained in the Neapolitan territory by Gonzalo de Cordova who routed the inefficient French generals opposed to him at Cerignola. Louis XII. planned a great campaign which was to retrieve his fortunes in Naples, but his army, as it advanced, was caught on the Garigliano by Gonzalo who completely defeated it. The battle was in a true sense decisive, for in the red waters of the Garigliano were swept away for ever the long-drawn hopes of French dominion in Naples.

In the same waters perished at the same time Piero dei Medici, the author of the ruin which had overtaken the splendid edifice of power which his father, Lorenzo, had so laboriously raised. He had accompanied the French advance, and had borne his part in the battle. Carried away in the confusion of defeat, Piero sought to secure his safety by crossing the Garigliano in an open boat, but in mid-stream the boat was swamped and Piero was drowned (1503). He left one son, Lorenzo, a boy of eleven at the time of his father's death, destined at a later date to represent the new-gained supremacy of his family over Florence, and it is his brooding image, carved by the hand of Michelangelo, which sits, as the personification of the mysteries and vast solitudes of thought, amid the sombre glories of the Sacristy of San Lorenzo.

While the final contest between France and Spain for the possession of Naples was in progress the Papacy had twice changed hands. The death of Alexander VI. in August 1503, was followed by the election of Francesco Piccolomini as Pope with the title of Pius III. In less than four weeks the new Pope died, and was succeeded by Cardinal Giuliano della Rovere, who ascended the Pontifical throne as Julius II. The accession of Julius marked a change in the character, and perhaps in the aims, of the Papacy. To recover the States of the Church, not for his family but for the Holy See, became the consuming object of his ambition. Master of his own, he would thus be in a situation to proceed further, and to consolidate his position as an Italian sovereign by the expulsion of all foreigners from Italy. Skilfully taking advantage of the jealousies and apprehensions which Venice, by her grasping spirit of self-aggrandisement, had gathered around herself, Julius formed the League of Cambray against Venice, and under cover of it pursued with resistless energy and impulsive ardour the first of his great designs. Having used the French to secure his own immediate ends, Julius, having attained them, threw over his instruments, effected a peace with Venice, and inaugurated a Holy League for the purpose of driving the French out of Italy. To this Holy League the Pope secured the adhesion of England, Spain and Venice. Henry VIII. was to attack France near at home, while the allied forces in Italy, under the command of the Spaniard, Ramon de Cardona, were to operate against the French forces in that country.

The brilliant and meteoric genius of the young general, Gaston de Foix, has thrown a glory around the last efforts of France to retain her position in Northern Italy. By a series of brilliant movements he forced De Cardona to take position at Ravenna (April 11, 1512) where the French gained a complete victory over the combined Italian and Spanish forces. The rash impetuosity of the youthful commander in following up the pursuit resulted for the French in a greater disaster than would have been their defeat in the battle.

Gaston was killed, and with his loss, and that of his immediate subordinates, Allègre and Lautrec, the command devolved upon La Palisse, who was incompetent to follow up victory, to enforce discipline, or to initiate a policy. At the moment when Julius supposed that all was lost, he was, in fact, within reach of his goal. The subsequent operations of the French were aimless and desultory, and by the summer of 1512 they had withdrawn beyond the Alps.

Among the fugitives from the field of Ravenna was Giovanni dei Medici, the Cardinal who had been deputed by Julius to act as his legate with the allied forces. He was taken prisoner, but succeeded later in effecting his escape, and so was ready to play his part in the movement against Florence upon which Julius was now bent.

Through good and evil report Florence had remained firm in her alliance with France. The Republic, whether guided by the counsels of Savonarola, or of Piero Soderini, was constant in the belief that the cause of France was the cause of Florence. Since Savonarola's death in 1498, the forms of republican government which he had advocated, had been on the whole maintained, but for greater security, and to ensure continuity in policy and diplomacy, Piero Soderini had been appointed Gonfalonier for his life. Thus Soderini and the French alliance stood between Florence and the restoration of the Medici.

At the time therefore when the French abandoned Italy, Florence stood in isolation, and Soderini was weak. The opportunity for forcing Florence to take her proper place among the Italian States in opposition to the foreigner, and to punish her for the part which she had played towards foreign invasion since 1494, when she expelled the Medici and welcomed Charles VIII., impressed Julius as too good to be lost. To him the best guarantee for the future seemed to rest upon the restoration of the Medici *régime*.

Accordingly, a detachment of Ramon de Cardona's army moved towards Florence in August 1512. The Cardinal, Giovanni, and his brother Giuliano, were with the Spanish general, ready to profit at the moment by any

military or diplomatic success. The Florentines, challenged to dismiss Soderini and to admit the Medici, gallantly declared their resolution to maintain the existing order. Whereupon de Cardona laid siege to Prato, and sacked it with every accompaniment of horror and barbarity on August 29. It was thus that the sons of Lorenzo at last secured their readmission, as the ruling family, into the city which Cosimo and Lorenzo had made indeed "the fifth element," the centre and focus of Italian life. But they entered, not accompanied by the acclamations of their fellow citizens, welcoming in their return the revival of the Golden Age. The cries which seemed to greet them were but the ghostly echo of the shrieks and groans of the victims of the sack of Prato still ringing horribly in their ears.

The ruling spirit in the new order of things at Florence was the Cardinal Giovanni dei Medici. It was under his auspices that the Republican constitution was displaced to make way for the old familiar Medician arrangements which established despotism under popular forms.

The character of Giuliano was mild and complacent, and he was content to be a figure-head under the guidance and control of his astute and intriguing brother. Scarcely, however, were the Medici fixed in the saddle before the Papacy was again vacant. In February 1513, Julius II. died, and Giovanni dei Medici was elected Pope in his place, with the title of Leo X. His elevation necessitated rearrangements in the government of Florence. Giuliano was withdrawn, the control being placed in the hands of the young Lorenzo, whose position was before long enhanced by the acquisition of the Duchy of Urbino. The Rovere family, which had held Urbino in the interests of Julius, now gave way to Lorenzo, Duke of Urbino, who held it in the interest of the Medici Pope. In 1519, Lorenzo died, having bequeathed to futurity a daughter, for ever notorious as Catherine dei Medici of France. Upon his death the administration of Florence was conducted by Cardinal Giulio, the illegitimate son of Giuliano, the great Lorenzo's brother who had fallen a victim of the Pazzi

conspiracy. Once more, however, a Papal vacancy disturbed the situation in Florence. In 1523, on the death of Pope Adrian VI., who had succeeded Leo X. two years before, Giulio dei Medici became Pope and assumed the name of Clement VII. Two Medici bastards were now imposed upon Florence, Hippolito, the reputed son of Giuliano, and Alessandro, reputed son of Lorenzo. To such base-born representatives the elder branch of the House of Medici had at last fallen, but the spirit of the family was not, however, yet dead.

Clarice, daughter of Piero, wife of Filippo Strozzi, found in the republican aspirations and in the generous soul of her husband an instrument ready to be used for overthrowing a despotism which shamed her family and degraded the State, while the younger branch of the family now possessed in Giovanni dei Medici "of the Black Bands" a representative fitted alike by fame and talents to assert his claims against bastard interlopers.

Thus, on the accession of Clement VII., the situation in Florence foreboded revolutionary changes. The atmosphere was indeed electrical throughout Christendom. Germany was aflame with the fire kindled by Luther. In England Henry VIII. was already beginning to regard the loss of so many of his children as the judgment of God upon his guilty marriage with his brother's wife. Francis I. of France had already sought to retrieve the position of France in Lombardy, and was preparing for a final effort. The Emperor, Charles V., strong in the possession of the Empire, of Spain, and of the Spanish Kingdom of Naples, was indispensable to the Papacy in its struggle with Luther and his princely supporters in Germany. This was the moment, incautiously chosen by Clement to break away from his league with Charles, and to throw in his fortunes with Francis I. At the fatal battle of Pavia, 1525, the forces of France were routed by the Imperial troops, and Francis I. himself became the prisoner of Charles V. But the motley army of the Emperor, under the Constable Bourbon, was thoroughly out of hand. Mutinies for arrears of pay, or at least for a small instalment, were

constant. At Rome there was a perfidious Pope and unlimited wealth, and the cry arose "To Rome!" There followed, in 1527, the Sack of Rome by the troops of Bourbon, the Pope being reduced to the position of a prisoner in the Castle of S. Angelo.

The Pope's extremity seemed to Florence to be her opportunity. While the Imperial forces were revelling in the blood and plunder of Rome, Florence threw off the bastard yoke of the Medici princelets, and once more declared herself a Republic. The reconciliation between Pope and Emperor was bought, as a part of the price, by the final destruction of the liberties of Florence. The Imperial army laid siege to Florence in October 1529, in obedience to the terms arranged between Clement and Charles. For more than ten months the siege was sustained with heroic energies by the Florentine people. Michelangelo, from his work in planning fortifications and organising resistance, could snatch only brief intervals for the sculptures in San Lorenzo on which he imprinted all the turmoil of his mighty soul. At last, in August 1530, betrayed by their own general, the Florentines capitulated to the Imperial troops, and the spirit of her liberty took wing and vanished away. The rule of Alessandro—Hippolito was dead, murdered, it was thought by Alessandro himself—was reimposed upon the State, and his position was recognised by the title of Duke of Florence. When, in 1537, Alessandro was assassinated by his kinsman Lorenzino, Cosimo, son of Giovanni of the Black Bands, representing the younger line of the House of Medici, became lord of Florence, only to absorb her in a brief period into the Grand Duchy of Tuscany, with himself as first Grand Duke.

Such were the vicissitudes which followed for Italy and for Florence within the brief period of less than half a century which followed the death of Lorenzo the Magnificent. Could he, had his life been prolonged, have stayed the tempest and controlled the storm? Doubtless the memory of his greatness cast a glamour around his name, and gave rise to a Laurentian legend in which Lorenzo loomed large as a great compelling figure who, but for his

premature death, might have saved Italy and Florence alike.

The contrast between what had been, and what was, sufficed in itself to suggest that the ruin of Italy was in some way linked with the loss of Lorenzo's controlling hand. "Such an opinion of his prudence," says Nardi, "did he leave upon the minds of men, that one may even now believe that, had he lived, those troubles which after his death threw Italy into confusion would not have arisen." "While he lived," says Valori, "Italy was quiet and tranquil, and after his death was all in confusion and perturbation, as if her security depended upon Lorenzo's life." A century after his death, Trojano Boccalini, writing, under the guise of allegory, upon the state of Europe in his time, imagines the great Powers of Europe agreeing to take measures to secure the general tranquillity by weighing each other, curtailing where one was found to be too strong, adding where another was found to be too weak, with a view to striking a just and even balance. "On this occasion many men of distinguished genius were proposed for the honourable office of weighing those different States, but it appeared that for upwards of a hundred years that office had been filled by the great family of Medici, and especially by the great Lorenzo. So, by the common consent of all, that office was bestowed upon him."

But these flattering judgments are based upon the attraction exercised by a great personality rather than upon a severe and scientific estimate of the position as it was. Even admitting, though the admission is based only on surmise, that the prolongation of Lorenzo's life might have maintained a mitigating and assuaging influence upon the rush of events, yet those events themselves would have happened without regard to Lorenzo's existence. The plans of Charles VIII. for an invasion of Naples were in movement before Lorenzo died, and were matured without reference to Lorenzo or to Florence. The shadow of Neapolitan resentment rested upon Ludovico Sforza as the natural result of his own conduct, and Lorenzo could have done little to disperse it. It is improbable

that in the face of the French invasion Lorenzo woul
have shown the vacillation and craven spirit displaye
by his son Piero, but he could not have checked it, no
averted the consequences, so full of moment for Italy an
for Florence, which followed from it. The corruption
Italy, the utter want of a national and patriotic spirit i
its rulers, the enervating influences of luxury which ha
brought about the decline of the military spirit, whi
leaving Italy the prey of greedy, soulless mercenaries, we
evils rooted in the heart of things, sins which called alou
for that punishment which the exertions of no individu
could have had power to avert. "If the salt have lo
his savour wherewith shall it be salted?"

It is to the credit of Lorenzo that, with his hand up
the flood-gates, and with many temptations to open ther
he should yet have kept them closed; that he should hav
used his friendship with France to keep Italy free fro
the foot of the stranger rather than to invite her inte
vention; that he should have devoted his political life
the maintenance of such a balance among the conflicti
States of Italy as would best secure the common safety
them all: in fact that while he lived Italy was for t
Italians.

No figure in her history has quite his fascinations. H
virtues trod hard upon the heels of his vices, and his vic
however great, were seldom contemptible. "Good a
evil lie close together," says Lord Acton. "Seek
artistic unity in character." In Lorenzo Nature display
herself in all her mixed elements of glory and decay. "Wh
a piece of work is a man! how noble in reason! how
finite in faculty! in form and moving how express a
admirable,"—and yet "quintessence of dust that deligh
us not!"

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