

Chapter LXX: Final Settlement Of The Ecclesiastical State.--Part II.

Never perhaps has the energy and effect of a single mind been more remarkably felt than in the sudden, though transient, reformation of Rome by the tribune Rienzi. A den of robbers was converted to the discipline of a camp or convent: patient to hear, swift to redress, inexorable to punish, his tribunal was always accessible to the poor and stranger; nor could birth, or dignity, or the immunities of the church, protect the offender or his accomplices. The privileged houses, the private sanctuaries in Rome, on which no officer of justice would presume to trespass, were abolished; and he applied the timber and iron of their barricades in the fortifications of the Capitol. The venerable father of the Colonna was exposed in his own palace to the double shame of being desirous, and of being unable, to protect a criminal. A mule, with a jar of oil, had been stolen near Capranica; and the lord of the Ursini family was condemned to restore the damage, and to discharge a fine of four hundred florins for his negligence in guarding the highways. Nor were the persons of the barons more inviolate than their lands or houses; and, either from accident or design, the same impartial rigor was exercised against the heads of the adverse factions. Peter Agapet Colonna, who had himself been senator of Rome, was arrested in the street for injury or debt; and justice was appeased by the tardy execution of Martin Ursini, who, among his various acts of violence and rapine, had pillaged a shipwrecked vessel at the mouth of the Tyber. [28] His name, the purple of two cardinals, his uncles, a recent marriage, and a mortal disease were disregarded by the inflexible tribune, who had

chosen his victim. The public officers dragged him from his palace and nuptial bed: his trial was short and satisfactory: the bell of the Capitol convened the people: stripped of his mantle, on his knees, with his hands bound behind his back, he heard the sentence of death; and after a brief confession, Ursini was led away to the gallows. After such an example, none who were conscious of guilt could hope for impunity, and the flight of the wicked, the licentious, and the idle, soon purified the city and territory of Rome. In this time (says the historian,) the woods began to rejoice that they were no longer infested with robbers; the oxen began to plough; the pilgrims visited the sanctuaries; the roads and inns were replenished with travellers; trade, plenty, and good faith, were restored in the markets; and a purse of gold might be exposed without danger in the midst of the highway. As soon as the life and property of the subject are secure, the labors and rewards of industry spontaneously revive: Rome was still the metropolis of the Christian world; and the fame and fortunes of the tribune were diffused in every country by the strangers who had enjoyed the blessings of his government.

[Footnote 28: Fortioccia, l. ii. c. 11. From the account of this shipwreck, we learn some circumstances of the trade and navigation of the age. 1. The ship was built and freighted at Naples for the ports of Marseilles and Avignon. 2. The sailors were of Naples and the Isle of naria less skilful than those of Sicily and Genoa. 3. The navigation from Marseilles was a coasting voyage to the mouth of the Tyber, where they took shelter in a storm; but, instead of finding the current,

unfortunately ran on a shoal: the vessel was stranded, the mariners escaped. 4. The cargo, which was pillaged, consisted of the revenue of Provence for the royal treasury, many bags of pepper and cinnamon, and bales of French cloth, to the value of 20,000 florins; a rich prize.]

The deliverance of his country inspired Rienzi with a vast, and perhaps visionary, idea of uniting Italy in a great federative republic, of which Rome should be the ancient and lawful head, and the free cities and princes the members and associates. His pen was not less eloquent than his tongue; and his numerous epistles were delivered to swift and trusty messengers. On foot, with a white wand in their hand, they traversed the forests and mountains; enjoyed, in the most hostile states, the sacred security of ambassadors; and reported, in the style of flattery or truth, that the highways along their passage were lined with kneeling multitudes, who implored Heaven for the success of their undertaking. Could passion have listened to reason; could private interest have yielded to the public welfare; the supreme tribunal and confederate union of the Italian republic might have healed their intestine discord, and closed the Alps against the Barbarians of the North. But the propitious season had elapsed; and if Venice, Florence, Sienna, Perugia, and many inferior cities offered their lives and fortunes to the good estate, the tyrants of Lombardy and Tuscany must despise, or hate, the plebeian author of a free constitution. From them, however, and from every part of Italy, the tribune received the most friendly and respectful answers: they were followed by the ambassadors of the princes and republics; and in this foreign conflux, on all the

occasions of pleasure or business, the low born notary could assume the familiar or majestic courtesy of a sovereign. [29] The most glorious circumstance of his reign was an appeal to his justice from Lewis, king of Hungary, who complained, that his brother and her husband had been perfidiously strangled by Jane, queen of Naples: [30] her guilt or innocence was pleaded in a solemn trial at Rome; but after hearing the advocates, [31] the tribune adjourned this weighty and invidious cause, which was soon determined by the sword of the Hungarian. Beyond the Alps, more especially at Avignon, the revolution was the theme of curiosity, wonder, and applause. [311] Petrarch had been the private friend, perhaps the secret counsellor, of Rienzi: his writings breathe the most ardent spirit of patriotism and joy; and all respect for the pope, all gratitude for the Colonna, was lost in the superior duties of a Roman citizen. The poet-laureate of the Capitol maintains the act, applauds the hero, and mingles with some apprehension and advice, the most lofty hopes of the permanent and rising greatness of the republic.

[32]

[Footnote 29: It was thus that Oliver Cromwell's old acquaintance, who remembered his vulgar and ungracious entrance into the House of Commons, were astonished at the ease and majesty of the protector on his throne, (See Harris's Life of Cromwell, p. 27--34, from Clarendon Warwick, Whitelocke, Waller, &c.) The consciousness of merit and power will sometimes elevate the manners to the station.]

[Footnote 30: See the causes, circumstances, and effects of the death of

Andrew in Giannone, (tom. iii. l. xxiii. p. 220--229,) and the Life of Petrarch (Mémoires, tom. ii. p. 143--148, 245--250, 375--379, notes, p. 21--37.) The abbé de Sade wishes to extenuate her guilt.]

[Footnote 31: The advocate who pleaded against Jane could add nothing to the logical force and brevity of his master's epistle. Johanna! *inordinata vita præcedens, retentio potestatis in regno, neglecta vindicta, vir alter susceptus, et excusatio subsequens, necis viri tui te probant fuisse participem et consortem.* Jane of Naples, and Mary of Scotland, have a singular conformity.]

[Footnote 311]: In his letter to the archbishop of Prague, Rienzi thus describes the effect of his elevation on Italy and on the world: "Did I not restore real peace among the cities which were distracted by factions? did I not cause all the citizens, exiled by party violence, with their wretched wives and children, to be readmitted? had I not begun to extinguish the factious names (*scismatica nomina*) of Guelf and Ghibelline, for which countless thousands had perished body and soul, under the eyes of their pastors, by the reduction of the city of Rome and all Italy into one amicable, peaceful, holy, and united confederacy? the consecrated standards and banners having been by me collected and blended together, and, in witness to our holy association and perfect union, offered up in the presence of the ambassadors of all the cities of Italy, on the day of the assumption of our Blessed Lady." p. xlvi.

----In the *Libellus ad Cæsarem*: "I received the homage and submission of all the sovereigns of Apulia, the barons and counts, and almost all the

people of Italy. I was honored by solemn embassies and letters by the emperor of Constantinople and the king of England. The queen of Naples submitted herself and her kingdom to the protection of the tribune. The king of Hungary, by two solemn embassies, brought his cause against his queen and his nobles before my tribunal; and I venture to say further, that the fame of the tribune alarmed the soldan of Babylon. When the Christian pilgrims to the sepulchre of our Lord related to the Christian and Jewish inhabitants of Jerusalem all the yet unheard-of and wonderful circumstances of the reformation in Rome, both Jews and Christians celebrated the event with unusual festivities. When the soldan inquired the cause of these rejoicings, and received this intelligence about Rome, he ordered all the havens and cities on the coast to be fortified, and put in a state of defence," p. xxxv.--M. 1845.]

[Footnote 32: See the *Epistola Hortatoria de Capessenda Republica*, from Petrarch to Nicholas Rienzi, (Opp. p. 535--540,) and the vth eclogue or pastoral, a perpetual and obscure allegory.]

While Petrarch indulged these prophetic visions, the Roman hero was fast declining from the meridian of fame and power; and the people, who had gazed with astonishment on the ascending meteor, began to mark the irregularity of its course, and the vicissitudes of light and obscurity. More eloquent than judicious, more enterprising than resolute, the faculties of Rienzi were not balanced by cool and commanding reason: he magnified in a tenfold proportion the objects of hope and fear; and prudence, which could not have erected, did not presume to fortify,

his throne. In the blaze of prosperity, his virtues were insensibly tinctured with the adjacent vices; justice with cruelty, cruelty, liberality with profusion, and the desire of fame with puerile and ostentatious vanity. [32] He might have learned, that the ancient tribunes, so strong and sacred in the public opinion, were not distinguished in style, habit, or appearance, from an ordinary plebeian; [33] and that as often as they visited the city on foot, a single viator, or beadle, attended the exercise of their office. The Gracchi would have frowned or smiled, could they have read the sonorous titles and epithets of their successor, "Nicholas, severe and merciful; deliverer of Rome; defender of Italy; [34] friend of mankind, and of liberty, peace, and justice; tribune august:" his theatrical pageants had prepared the revolution; but Rienzi abused, in luxury and pride, the political maxim of speaking to the eyes, as well as the understanding, of the multitude. From nature he had received the gift of a handsome person, [35] till it was swelled and disfigured by intemperance: and his propensity to laughter was corrected in the magistrate by the affectation of gravity and sternness. He was clothed, at least on public occasions, in a party-colored robe of velvet or satin, lined with fur, and embroidered with gold: the rod of justice, which he carried in his hand, was a sceptre of polished steel, crowned with a globe and cross of gold, and enclosing a small fragment of the true and holy wood. In his civil and religious processions through the city, he rode on a white steed, the symbol of royalty: the great banner of the republic, a sun with a circle of stars, a dove with an olive branch, was displayed over his head; a shower of gold and silver was scattered among the populace, fifty guards

with halberds encompassed his person; a troop of horse preceded his march; and their tymbals and trumpets were of massy silver.

[Footnote 321: An illustrious female writer has drawn, with a single stroke, the character of Rienzi, Crescentius, and Arnold of Brescia, the fond restorers of Roman liberty: 'Qui ont pris les souvenirs pour les espérances.' Corinne, tom. i. p. 159. "Could Tacitus have excelled this?" Hallam, vol i p. 418.--M.]

[Footnote 33: In his Roman Questions, Plutarch (Opuscul. tom. i. p. 505, 506, edit. Græc. Hen. Steph.) states, on the most constitutional principles, the simple greatness of the tribunes, who were not properly magistrates, but a check on magistracy. It was their duty and interest ομοιουσqai schmati, kai stolh kai diaithtoiV epitugcanousi tvn politvn.... katapateisqai dei (a saying of C. Curio) kai mh semnon einai th oyei mhde dusprosodon... osw de mallon ektapeinoutai tv swmati, tosoutw mallon auxetai th dunamei, &c. Rienzi, and Petrarch himself, were incapable perhaps of reading a Greek philosopher; but they might have imbibed the same modest doctrines from their favorite Latins, Livy and Valerius Maximus.]

[Footnote 34: I could not express in English the forcible, though barbarous, title of Zelator Italiae, which Rienzi assumed.]

[Footnote 35: Era bell' homo, (l. ii. c. 1. p. 399.) It is remarkable, that the riso sarcastico of the Bracciano edition is wanting in the

Roman MS., from which Muratori has given the text. In his second reign, when he is painted almost as a monster, Rienzi travea una ventresca tonna trionfale, a modo de uno Abbate Asiano, or Asinino, (l. iii. c. 18, p. 523.)]

The ambition of the honors of chivalry [36] betrayed the meanness of his birth, and degraded the importance of his office; and the equestrian tribune was not less odious to the nobles, whom he adopted, than to the plebeians, whom he deserted. All that yet remained of treasure, or luxury, or art, was exhausted on that solemn day. Rienzi led the procession from the Capitol to the Lateran; the tediousness of the way was relieved with decorations and games; the ecclesiastical, civil, and military orders marched under their various banners; the Roman ladies attended his wife; and the ambassadors of Italy might loudly applaud or secretly deride the novelty of the pomp. In the evening, which they had reached the church and palace of Constantine, he thanked and dismissed the numerous assembly, with an invitation to the festival of the ensuing day. From the hands of a venerable knight he received the order of the Holy Ghost; the purification of the bath was a previous ceremony; but in no step of his life did Rienzi excite such scandal and censure as by the profane use of the porphyry vase, in which Constantine (a foolish legend) had been healed of his leprosy by Pope Sylvester. [37] With equal presumption the tribune watched or reposed within the consecrated precincts of the baptistery; and the failure of his state-bed was interpreted as an omen of his approaching downfall. At the hour of worship, he showed himself to the returning crowds in a majestic

attitude, with a robe of purple, his sword, and gilt spurs; but the holy rites were soon interrupted by his levity and insolence. Rising from his throne, and advancing towards the congregation, he proclaimed in a loud voice: "We summon to our tribunal Pope Clement: and command him to reside in his diocese of Rome: we also summon the sacred college of cardinals. [38] We again summon the two pretenders, Charles of Bohemia and Lewis of Bavaria, who style themselves emperors: we likewise summon all the electors of Germany, to inform us on what pretence they have usurped the inalienable right of the Roman people, the ancient and lawful sovereigns of the empire." [39] Unsheathing his maiden sword, he thrice brandished it to the three parts of the world, and thrice repeated the extravagant declaration, "And this too is mine!" The pope's vicar, the bishop of Orvieto, attempted to check this career of folly; but his feeble protest was silenced by martial music; and instead of withdrawing from the assembly, he consented to dine with his brother tribune, at a table which had hitherto been reserved for the supreme pontiff. A banquet, such as the Cæsars had given, was prepared for the Romans. The apartments, porticos, and courts of the Lateran were spread with innumerable tables for either sex, and every condition; a stream of wine flowed from the nostrils of Constantine's brazen horse; no complaint, except of the scarcity of water, could be heard; and the licentiousness of the multitude was curbed by discipline and fear. A subsequent day was appointed for the coronation of Rienzi; [40] seven crowns of different leaves or metals were successively placed on his head by the most eminent of the Roman clergy; they represented the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost; and he still professed to imitate the example

of the ancient tribunes. [401] These extraordinary spectacles might deceive or flatter the people; and their own vanity was gratified in the vanity of their leader. But in his private life he soon deviated from the strict rule of frugality and abstinence; and the plebeians, who were awed by the splendor of the nobles, were provoked by the luxury of their equal. His wife, his son, his uncle, (a barber in name and profession,) exposed the contrast of vulgar manners and princely expense; and without acquiring the majesty, Rienzi degenerated into the vices, of a king.

[Footnote 36: Strange as it may seem, this festival was not without a precedent. In the year 1327, two barons, a Colonna and an Ursini, the usual balance, were created knights by the Roman people: their bath was of rose-water, their beds were decked with royal magnificence, and they were served at St. Maria of Araceli in the Capitol, by the twenty-eight buoni huomini. They afterwards received from Robert, king of Naples, the sword of chivalry, (Hist. Rom. l. i. c. 2, p. 259.)]

[Footnote 37: All parties believed in the leprosy and bath of Constantine (Petrarch. Epist. Famil. vi. 2,) and Rienzi justified his own conduct by observing to the court of Avignon, that a vase which had been used by a Pagan could not be profaned by a pious Christian. Yet this crime is specified in the bull of excommunication, (Hocsemius, apud du Cerçeau, p. 189, 190.)]

[Footnote 38: This verbal summons of Pope Clement VI., which rests on the authority of the Roman historian and a Vatican MS., is disputed by

the biographer of Petrarch, (tom. ii. not. p. 70--76), with arguments rather of decency than of weight. The court of Avignon might not choose to agitate this delicate question.]

[Footnote 39: The summons of the two rival emperors, a monument of freedom and folly, is extant in Hocsemius, (Cerçeau, p. 163--166.)]

[Footnote 40: It is singular, that the Roman historian should have overlooked this sevenfold coronation, which is sufficiently proved by internal evidence, and the testimony of Hocsemius, and even of Rienzi, (Cercean p. 167--170, 229.)]

[Footnote 401: It was on this occasion that he made the profane comparison between himself and our Lord; and the striking circumstance took place which he relates in his letter to the archbishop of Prague. In the midst of all the wild and joyous exultation of the people, one of his most zealous supporters, a monk, who was in high repute for his sanctity, stood apart in a corner of the church and wept bitterly! A domestic chaplain of Rienzi's inquired the cause of his grief. "Now," replied the man of God, "is thy master cast down from heaven--never saw I man so proud. By the aid of the Holy Ghost he has driven the tyrants from the city without drawing a sword; the cities and the sovereigns of Italy have submitted to his power. Why is he so arrogant and ungrateful towards the Most High? Why does he seek earthly and transitory rewards for his labors, and in his wanton speech liken himself to the Creator? Tell thy master that he can only atone for this offence by tears of

penitence." In the evening the chaplain communicated this solemn rebuke to the tribune: it appalled him for the time, but was soon forgotten in the tumult and hurry of business.--M. 1845.]

A simple citizen describes with pity, or perhaps with pleasure, the humiliation of the barons of Rome. "Bareheaded, their hands crossed on their breast, they stood with downcast looks in the presence of the tribune; and they trembled, good God, how they trembled!" [41] As long as the yoke of Rienzi was that of justice and their country, their conscience forced them to esteem the man, whom pride and interest provoked them to hate: his extravagant conduct soon fortified their hatred by contempt; and they conceived the hope of subverting a power which was no longer so deeply rooted in the public confidence. The old animosity of the Colonna and Ursini was suspended for a moment by their common disgrace: they associated their wishes, and perhaps their designs; an assassin was seized and tortured; he accused the nobles; and as soon as Rienzi deserved the fate, he adopted the suspicions and maxims, of a tyrant. On the same day, under various pretences, he invited to the Capitol his principal enemies, among whom were five members of the Ursini and three of the Colonna name. But instead of a council or a banquet, they found themselves prisoners under the sword of despotism or justice; and the consciousness of innocence or guilt might inspire them with equal apprehensions of danger. At the sound of the great bell the people assembled; they were arraigned for a conspiracy against the tribune's life; and though some might sympathize in their distress, not a hand, nor a voice, was raised to rescue the first of the

nobility from their impending doom. Their apparent boldness was prompted by despair; they passed in separate chambers a sleepless and painful night; and the venerable hero, Stephen Colonna, striking against the door of his prison, repeatedly urged his guards to deliver him by a speedy death from such ignominious servitude. In the morning they understood their sentence from the visit of a confessor and the tolling of the bell. The great hall of the Capitol had been decorated for the bloody scene with red and white hangings: the countenance of the tribune was dark and severe; the swords of the executioners were unsheathed; and the barons were interrupted in their dying speeches by the sound of trumpets. But in this decisive moment, Rienzi was not less anxious or apprehensive than his captives: he dreaded the splendor of their names, their surviving kinsmen, the inconstancy of the people the reproaches of the world, and, after rashly offering a mortal injury, he vainly presumed that, if he could forgive, he might himself be forgiven. His elaborate oration was that of a Christian and a suppliant; and, as the humble minister of the commons, he entreated his masters to pardon these noble criminals, for whose repentance and future service he pledged his faith and authority. "If you are spared," said the tribune, "by the mercy of the Romans, will you not promise to support the good estate with your lives and fortunes?" Astonished by this marvellous clemency, the barons bowed their heads; and while they devoutly repeated the oath of allegiance, might whisper a secret, and more sincere, assurance of revenge. A priest, in the name of the people, pronounced their absolution: they received the communion with the tribune, assisted at the banquet, followed the procession; and, after every spiritual and

temporal sign of reconciliation, were dismissed in safety to their respective homes, with the new honors and titles of generals, consuls, and patricians. [42]

[Footnote 41: Puoi se faceva stare denante a se, mentre sedeva, li baroni tutti in piedi ritti co le vraccia piecate, e co li capucci tratti. Deh como stavano paurosi! (Hist. Rom. l. ii. c. 20, p. 439.) He saw them, and we see them.]

[Footnote 42: The original letter, in which Rienzi justifies his treatment of the Colonna, (Hocsemius, apud du Cerçeau, p. 222--229,) displays, in genuine colors, the mixture of the knave and the madman.]

During some weeks they were checked by the memory of their danger, rather than of their deliverance, till the most powerful of the Ursini, escaping with the Colonna from the city, erected at Marino the standard of rebellion. The fortifications of the castle were instantly restored; the vassals attended their lord; the outlaws armed against the magistrate; the flocks and herds, the harvests and vineyards, from Marino to the gates of Rome, were swept away or destroyed; and the people arraigned Rienzi as the author of the calamities which his government had taught them to forget. In the camp, Rienzi appeared to less advantage than in the rostrum; and he neglected the progress of the rebel barons till their numbers were strong, and their castles impregnable. From the pages of Livy he had not imbibed the art, or even the courage, of a general: an army of twenty thousand Romans returned

without honor or effect from the attack of Marino; and his vengeance was amused by painting his enemies, their heads downwards, and drowning two dogs (at least they should have been bears) as the representatives of the Ursini. The belief of his incapacity encouraged their operations: they were invited by their secret adherents; and the barons attempted, with four thousand foot, and sixteen hundred horse, to enter Rome by force or surprise. The city was prepared for their reception; the alarm-bell rung all night; the gates were strictly guarded, or insolently open; and after some hesitation they sounded a retreat. The two first divisions had passed along the walls, but the prospect of a free entrance tempted the headstrong valor of the nobles in the rear; and after a successful skirmish, they were overthrown and massacred without quarter by the crowds of the Roman people. Stephen Colonna the younger, the noble spirit to whom Petrarch ascribed the restoration of Italy, was preceded or accompanied in death by his son John, a gallant youth, by his brother Peter, who might regret the ease and honors of the church, by a nephew of legitimate birth, and by two bastards of the Colonna race; and the number of seven, the seven crowns, as Rienzi styled them, of the Holy Ghost, was completed by the agony of the deplorable parent, and the veteran chief, who had survived the hope and fortune of his house. The vision and prophecies of St. Martin and Pope Boniface had been used by the tribune to animate his troops: [43] he displayed, at least in the pursuit, the spirit of a hero; but he forgot the maxims of the ancient Romans, who abhorred the triumphs of civil war. The conqueror ascended the Capitol; deposited his crown and sceptre on the altar; and boasted, with some truth, that he had cut off an ear,

which neither pope nor emperor had been able to amputate. [44] His base and implacable revenge denied the honors of burial; and the bodies of the Colonna, which he threatened to expose with those of the vilest malefactors, were secretly interred by the holy virgins of their name and family. [45] The people sympathized in their grief, repented of their own fury, and detested the indecent joy of Rienzi, who visited the spot where these illustrious victims had fallen. It was on that fatal spot that he conferred on his son the honor of knighthood: and the ceremony was accomplished by a slight blow from each of the horsemen of the guard, and by a ridiculous and inhuman ablution from a pool of water, which was yet polluted with patrician blood. [46]

[Footnote 43: Rienzi, in the above-mentioned letter, ascribes to St. Martin the tribune, Boniface VIII. the enemy of Colonna, himself, and the Roman people, the glory of the day, which Villani likewise (l. 12, c. 104) describes as a regular battle. The disorderly skirmish, the flight of the Romans, and the cowardice of Rienzi, are painted in the simple and minute narrative of Fortifiocca, or the anonymous citizen, (l. i. c. 34--37.)]

[Footnote 44: In describing the fall of the Colonna, I speak only of the family of Stephen the elder, who is often confounded by the P. du Cerçeau with his son. That family was extinguished, but the house has been perpetuated in the collateral branches, of which I have not a very accurate knowledge. *Circumspice (says Petrarch) familiæ tuæ statum, Columnniensium domos: solito pauciores habeat columnas. Quid ad rem*

modo fundamentum stabile, solidumque permaneat.]

[Footnote 45: The convent of St. Silvester was founded, endowed, and protected by the Colonna cardinals, for the daughters of the family who embraced a monastic life, and who, in the year 1318, were twelve in number. The others were allowed to marry with their kinsmen in the fourth degree, and the dispensation was justified by the small number and close alliances of the noble families of Rome, (Mémoires sur Pétrarque, tom. i. p. 110, tom. ii. p. 401.)]

[Footnote 46: Petrarch wrote a stiff and pedantic letter of consolation, (Fam. 1. vii. epist. 13, p. 682, 683.) The friend was lost in the patriot. *Nulla toto orbe principum familia carior; carior tamen respublica, carior Roma, carior Italia.*

----Je rends graces aux Dieux de n'être pas Romain.]

A short delay would have saved the Colonna, the delay of a single month, which elapsed between the triumph and the exile of Rienzi. In the pride of victory, he forfeited what yet remained of his civil virtues, without acquiring the fame of military prowess. A free and vigorous opposition was formed in the city; and when the tribune proposed in the public council [47] to impose a new tax, and to regulate the government of Perugia, thirty-nine members voted against his measures; repelled the injurious charge of treachery and corruption; and urged him to prove, by their forcible exclusion, that if the populace adhered to his cause, it was already disclaimed by the most respectable citizens. The pope and

the sacred college had never been dazzled by his specious professions; they were justly offended by the insolence of his conduct; a cardinal legate was sent to Italy, and after some fruitless treaty, and two personal interviews, he fulminated a bull of excommunication, in which the tribune is degraded from his office, and branded with the guilt of rebellion, sacrilege, and heresy. [48] The surviving barons of Rome were now humbled to a sense of allegiance; their interest and revenge engaged them in the service of the church; but as the fate of the Colonna was before their eyes, they abandoned to a private adventurer the peril and glory of the revolution. John Pepin, count of Minorbino, [49] in the kingdom of Naples, had been condemned for his crimes, or his riches, to perpetual imprisonment; and Petrarch, by soliciting his release, indirectly contributed to the ruin of his friend. At the head of one hundred and fifty soldiers, the count of Minorbino introduced himself into Rome; barricaded the quarter of the Colonna: and found the enterprise as easy as it had seemed impossible. From the first alarm, the bell of the Capitol incessantly tolled; but, instead of repairing to the well-known sound, the people were silent and inactive; and the pusillanimous Rienzi, deploring their ingratitude with sighs and tears, abdicated the government and palace of the republic.

[Footnote 47: This council and opposition is obscurely mentioned by Pollistore, a contemporary writer, who has preserved some curious and original facts, (*Rer. Italicarum*, tom. xxv. c. 31, p. 798--804.)]

[Footnote 48: The briefs and bulls of Clement VI. against Rienzi are

translated by the P. du Cerçeau, (p. 196, 232,) from the Ecclesiastical Annals of Odericus Raynaldus, (A.D. 1347, No. 15, 17, 21, &c.) who found them in the archives of the Vatican.]

[Footnote 49: Matteo Villani describes the origin, character, and death of this count of Minorbino, a man da natura inconstante e senza fede, whose grandfather, a crafty notary, was enriched and ennobled by the spoils of the Saracens of Nocera, (l. vii. c. 102, 103.) See his imprisonment, and the efforts of Petrarch, (tom. ii. p. 149--151.)]