

## BOOK II

### CHAPTER I

The custom of ancient republics to plant colonies, and the advantage of it--Increased population tends to make countries more healthy--Origin of Florence--Aggrandizement of Florence--Origin of the name of Florence--Destruction of Florence by Totila--The Florentines take Fiesole--The first division in Florence, and the cause of it--Buondelmonti--Buondelmonti slain--Guelphs and Ghibellines in Florence--Guelphic families--Ghibelline families--The two factions come to terms.

Among the great and wonderful institutions of the republics and principalities of antiquity that have now gone into disuse, was that by means of which towns and cities were from time to time established; and there is nothing more worthy the attention of a great prince, or of a well-regulated republic, or that confers so many advantages upon a province, as the settlement of new places, where men are drawn together for mutual accommodation and defense. This may easily be done, by sending people to reside in recently acquired or uninhabited countries. Besides causing the establishment of new cities, these removals render a conquered country more secure, and keep the inhabitants of a province

properly distributed. Thus, deriving the greatest attainable comfort, the inhabitants increase rapidly, are more prompt to attack others, and defend themselves with greater assurance. This custom, by the unwise practice of princes and republics, having gone into desuetude, the ruin and weakness of territories has followed; for this ordination is that by which alone empires are made secure, and countries become populated. Safety is the result of it; because the colony which a prince establishes in a newly acquired country, is like a fortress and a guard, to keep the inhabitants in fidelity and obedience. Neither can a province be wholly occupied and preserve a proper distribution of its inhabitants without this regulation; for all districts are not equally healthy, and hence some will abound to overflowing, while others are void; and if there be no method of withdrawing them from places in which they increase too rapidly, and planting them where they are too few the country would soon be wasted; for one part would become a desert, and the other a dense and wretched population. And, as nature cannot repair this disorder, it is necessary that industry should effect it, for unhealthy localities become wholesome when a numerous population is brought into them. With cultivation the earth becomes fruitful, and the air is purified with fires--remedies which nature cannot provide. The city of Venice proves the correctness of these remarks. Being placed in a marshy and unwholesome situation, it became healthy only by the number of industrious individuals who were drawn together. Pisa, too, on account of its unwholesome air, was never filled with inhabitants, till the Saracens, having destroyed Genoa and rendered her rivers unnavigable, caused the Genoese to migrate thither in vast numbers, and

thus render her populous and powerful. Where the use of colonies is not adopted, conquered countries are held with great difficulty; districts once uninhabited still remain so, and those which populate quickly are not relieved. Hence it is that many places of the world, and particularly in Italy, in comparison of ancient times, have become deserts. This has wholly arisen and proceeded from the negligence of princes, who have lost all appetite for true glory, and of republics which no longer possess institutions that deserve praise. In ancient times, by means of colonies, new cities frequently arose, and those already begun were enlarged, as was the case with Florence, which had its beginning from Fiesole, and its increase from colonies.

It is exceedingly probable, as Dante and Giovanni Villani show, that the city of Fiesole, being situate upon the summit of the mountain, in order that her markets might be more frequented, and afford greater accommodation for those who brought merchandise, would appoint the place in which to hold them, not upon the hill, but in the plain, between the foot of the mountain and the river Arno. I imagine these markets to have occasioned the first erections that were made in those places, and to have induced merchants to wish for commodious warehouses for the reception of their goods, and which, in time, became substantial buildings. And afterward, when the Romans, having conquered the Carthaginians, rendered Italy secure from foreign invasion, these buildings would greatly increase; for men never endure inconveniences unless some powerful necessity compels them. Thus, although the fear of war induces a willingness to occupy places strong and difficult of

access, as soon as the cause of alarm is removed, men gladly resort to more convenient and easily attainable localities. Hence, the security to which the reputation of the Roman republic gave birth, caused the inhabitants, having begun in the manner described, to increase so much as to form a town, this was at first called the Villa Arnina. After this occurred the civil wars between Marius and Sylla; then those of Cæsar, and Pompey; and next those of the murderers of Cæsar, and the parties who undertook to avenge his death. Therefore, first by Sylla, and afterward by the three Roman citizens, who, having avenged the death of Cæsar, divided the empire among themselves, colonies were sent to Fiesole, which, either in part or in whole, fixed their habitations in the plain, near to the then rising town. By this increase, the place became so filled with dwellings, that it might with propriety be enumerated among the cities of Italy.

There are various opinions concerning the derivation of the word Florentia. Some suppose it to come from Florinus, one of the principal persons of the colony; others think it was originally not Florentia, but Fluentia, and suppose the word derived from fluente, or flowing of the Arno; and in support of their opinion, adduce a passage from Pliny, who says, "the Fluentini are near the flowing of the Arno." This, however, may be incorrect, for Pliny speaks of the locality of the Florentini, not of the name by which they were known. And it seems as if the word Fluentini were a corruption, because Frontinus and Cornelius Tacitus, who wrote at nearly the same period as Pliny, call them Florentia and Florentini; for, in the time of Tiberius, they were governed like

the other cities of Italy. Besides, Cornelius refers to the coming of ambassadors from the Florentines, to beg of the emperor that the waters of the Chiane might not be allowed to overflow their country; and it is not at all reasonable that the city should have two names at the same time. Therefore I think that, however derived, the name was always Florentia, and that whatever the origin might be, it occurred under the Roman empire, and began to be noticed by writers in the times of the first emperors.

When the Roman empire was afflicted by the barbarians, Florence was destroyed by Totila, king of the Ostrogoths; and after a period of two hundred and fifty years, rebuilt by Charlemagne; from whose time, till the year 1215, she participated in the fortune of the rest of Italy; and, during this period, first the descendants of Charles, then the Berengarii, and lastly the German emperors, governed her, as in our general treatise we have shown. Nor could the Florentines, during those ages, increase in numbers, or effect anything worthy of memory, on account of the influence of those to whom they were subject. Nevertheless, in the year 1010, upon the feast of St. Romolo, a solemn day with the Fiesolani, they took and destroyed Fiesole, which must have been performed either with the consent of the emperors, or during the interim from the death of one to the creation of his successor, when all assumed a larger share of liberty. But then the pontiffs acquired greater influence, and the authority of the German emperors was in its wane, all the places of Italy governed themselves with less respect for the prince; so that, in the time of Henry III. the mind of the country

was divided between the emperor and the church. However, the Florentines kept themselves united until the year 1215, rendering obedience to the ruling power, and anxious only to preserve their own safety. But, as the diseases which attack our bodies are more dangerous and mortal in proportion as they are delayed, so Florence, though late to take part in the sects of Italy, was afterward the more afflicted by them. The cause of her first division is well known, having been recorded by Dante and many other writers; I shall, however, briefly notice it.

Among the most powerful families of Florence were the Buondelmonti and the Uberti; next to these were the Amidei and the Donati. Of the Donati family there was a rich widow who had a daughter of exquisite beauty, for whom, in her own mind, she had fixed upon Buondelmonti, a young gentleman, the head of the Buondelmonti family, as her husband; but either from negligence, or, because she thought it might be accomplished at any time, she had not made known her intention, when it happened that the cavalier betrothed himself to a maiden of the Amidei family. This grieved the Donati widow exceedingly; but she hoped, with her daughter's beauty, to disturb the arrangement before the celebration of the marriage; and from an upper apartment, seeing Buondelmonti approach her house alone, she descended, and as he was passing she said to him, "I am glad to learn you have chosen a wife, although I had reserved my daughter for you;" and, pushing the door open, presented her to his view. The cavalier, seeing the beauty of the girl, which was very uncommon, and considering the nobility of her blood, and her portion not being inferior to that of the lady whom he had chosen, became inflamed

with such an ardent desire to possess her, that, not thinking of the promise given, or the injury he committed in breaking it, or of the evils which his breach of faith might bring upon himself, said, "Since you have reserved her for me, I should be very ungrateful indeed to refuse her, being yet at liberty to choose;" and without any delay married her. As soon as the fact became known, the Amidei and the Uberti, whose families were allied, were filled with rage, and having assembled with many others, connections of the parties, they concluded that the injury could not be tolerated without disgrace, and that the only vengeance proportionate to the enormity of the offence would be to put Buondelmonti to death. And although some took into consideration the evils that might ensue upon it, Mosca Lamberti said, that those who talk of many things effect nothing, using that trite and common adage, *Cosa fatta capo ha*. Thereupon, they appointed to the execution of the murder Mosca himself, Stiatti Uberti, Lambertuccio Amidei, and Oderigo Fifanti, who, on the morning of Easter day, concealed themselves in a house of the Amidei, situate between the old bridge and St. Stephen's, and as Buondelmonti was passing upon a white horse, thinking it as easy a matter to forget an injury as reject an alliance, he was attacked by them at the foot of the bridge, and slain close by a statue of Mars. This murder divided the whole city; one party espousing the cause of the Buondelmonti, the other that of the Uberti; and as these families possessed men and means of defense, they contended with each other for many years, without one being able to destroy the other.

Florence continued in these troubles till the time of Frederick II.,

who, being king of Naples, endeavored to strengthen himself against the church; and, to give greater stability to his power in Tuscany, favored the Uberti and their followers, who, with his assistance, expelled the Buondelmonti; thus our city, as all the rest of Italy had long time been, became divided into Guelphs and Ghibellines; and as it will not be superfluous, I shall record the names of the families which took part with each faction. Those who adopted the cause of the Guelphs were the Buondelmonti, Nerli, Rossi, Frescobaldi, Mozzi, Bardi, Pulci, Gherardini, Foraboschi, Bagnesi, Guidalotti, Sacchetti, Manieri, Lucardesi, Chiaramontesi, Compiobbesi, Cavalcanti, Giandonati, Gianfigliuzzi, Scali, Gualterotti, Importuni, Bostichi, Tornaquinci, Vecchietti, Tosinghi, Arrigucci, Agli, Sizi, Adimari, Visdomini, Donati, Passi, della Bella, Ardinghi, Tedaldi, Cerchi. Of the Ghibelline faction were the Uberti, Manelli, Ubriachi, Fifanti, Amidei, Infangati, Malespini, Scolari, Guidi, Galli, Cappelletti, Lamberti, Soldanieri, Cipriani, Toschi, Amieri, Palermini, Migliorelli, Pigli, Barucci, Cattani, Agolanti, Brunelleschi, Caponsacchi, Elisei, Abati, Tidalchini, Giuochi, and Galigai. Besides the noble families on each side above enumerated, each party was joined by many of the higher ranks of the people, so that the whole city was corrupted with this division. The Guelphs being expelled, took refuge in the Upper Val d'Arno, where part of their castles and strongholds were situated, and where they strengthened and fortified themselves against the attacks of their enemies. But, upon the death of Frederick, the most unbiased men, and those who had the greatest authority with the people, considered that it would be better to effect the reunion of the city, than, by keeping her



divided, cause her ruin. They therefore induced the Guelphs to forget their injuries and return, and the Ghibellines to lay aside their jealousies and receive them with cordiality.

## CHAPTER II

New form of government in Florence--Military establishments--The greatness of Florence--Movements of the Ghibellines--Ghibellines driven out of the city--Guelphs routed by the forces of the king of Naples--Florence in the power of the king of Naples--Project of the Ghibellines to destroy Florence opposed by Farinata degli Uberti--Adventures of the Guelphs of Florence--The pope gives his standard to the Guelphs--Fears of the Ghibellines and their preparations for the defense of their power--Establishment of trades' companies, and their authority--Count Guido Novello expelled--He goes to Prato--The Guelphs restored to the city--The Ghibellines quit Florence--The Florentines reform the government in favor of the Guelphs--The pope endeavors to restore the Ghibellines and excommunicates Florence--Pope Nicholas III. endeavors to abate the power of Charles king of Naples.

Being united, the Florentines thought the time favorable for the ordination of a free government, and that it would be desirable to provide their means of defense before the new emperor should acquire strength. They therefore divided the city into six parts, and elected twelve citizens, two for each sixth, to govern the whole. These were called Anziani, and were elected annually. To remove the cause of those enmities which had been observed to arise from judicial decisions, they provided two judges from some other state,--one called captain of the people, the other podesta, or provost,--whose duty it was to decide in cases, whether civil or criminal, which occurred among the people. And

as order cannot be preserved without a sufficient force for the defense of it, they appointed twenty banners in the city, and seventy-six in the country, upon the rolls of which the names of all the youth were armed; and it was ordered that everyone should appear armed, under his banner, whenever summoned, whether by the captain of the people or the Anziani. They had ensigns according to the kind of arms they used, the bowmen being under one ensign, and the swordsmen, or those who carried a target, under another; and every year, upon the day of Pentecost, ensigns were given with great pomp to the new men, and new leaders were appointed for the whole establishment. To give importance to their armies, and to serve as a point of refuge for those who were exhausted in the fight, and from which, having become refreshed, they might again make head against the enemy, they provided a large car, drawn by two oxen, covered with red cloth, upon which was an ensign of white and red. When they intended to assemble the army, this car was brought into the New Market, and delivered with pomp to the heads of the people. To give solemnity to their enterprises, they had a bell called Martinella, which was rung during a whole month before the forces left the city, in order that the enemy might have time to provide for his defense; so great was the virtue then existing among men, and with so much generosity of mind were they governed, that as it is now considered a brave and prudent act to assail an unprovided enemy, in those days it would have been thought disgraceful, and productive only of a fallacious advantage. This bell was also taken with the army, and served to regulate the keeping and relief of guard, and other matters necessary in the practice of war.

With these ordinations, civil and military, the Florentines established their liberty. Nor is it possible to imagine the power and authority Florence in a short time acquired. She became not only the head of Tuscany, but was enumerated among the first cities of Italy, and would have attained greatness of the most exalted kind, had she not been afflicted with the continual divisions of her citizens. They remained under the this government ten years, during which time they compelled the people of Pistoria, Arezzo, and Sienna, to enter into league with them; and returning with the army from Sienna, they took Volterra, destroyed some castles, and led the inhabitants to Florence. All these enterprises were effected by the advice of the Guelphs, who were much more powerful than the Ghibellines, for the latter were hated by the people as well on account of their haughty bearing while in power, during the time of Frederick, as because the church party was in more favor than that of the emperor; for with the aid of the church they hoped to preserve their liberty, but, with the emperor, they were apprehensive of losing it.

The Ghibellines, in the meantime, finding themselves divested of authority, could not rest, but watched for an occasion of repossessing the government; and they thought the favorable moment come, when they found that Manfred, son of Frederick, had made himself sovereign of Naples, and reduced the power of the church. They, therefore, secretly communicated with him, to resume the management of the state, but could not prevent their proceedings from coming to the knowledge of the Anziani, who immediately summoned the Uberti to appear before them; but

instead of obeying, they took arms and fortified themselves in their houses. The people, enraged at this, armed themselves, and with the assistance of the Guelphs, compelled them to quit the city, and, with the whole Ghibelline party, withdraw to Sienna. They then asked assistance of Manfred king of Naples, and by the able conduct of Farinata degli Uberti, the Guelphs were routed by the king's forces upon the river Arbia, with so great slaughter, that those who escaped, thinking Florence lost, did not return thither, but sought refuge at Lucca.

Manfred sent the Count Giordano, a man of considerable reputation in arms, to command his forces. He after the victory, went with the Ghibellines to Florence, and reduced the city entirely to the king's authority, annulling the magistracies and every other institution that retained any appearance of freedom. This injury, committed with little prudence, excited the ardent animosity of the people, and their enmity against the Ghibellines, whose ruin it eventually caused, was increased to the highest pitch. The necessities of the kingdom compelling the Count Giordano to return to Naples, he left at Florence as regal vicar the Count Guido Novallo, lord of Casentino, who called a council of Ghibellines at Empoli. There it was concluded, with only one dissenting voice, that in order to preserve their power in Tuscany, it would be necessary to destroy Florence, as the only means of compelling the Guelphs to withdraw their support from the party of the church. To this so cruel a sentence, given against such a noble city, there was not a citizen who offered any opposition, except Farinata degli Uberti, who

openly defended her, saying he had not encountered so many dangers and difficulties, but in the hope of returning to his country; that he still wished for what he had so earnestly sought, nor would he refuse the blessing which fortune now presented, even though by using it, he were to become as much an enemy of those who thought otherwise, as he had been of the Guelphs; and that no one need be afraid the city would occasion the ruin of their country, for he hoped that the valor which had expelled the Guelphs, would be sufficient to defend her. Farinata was a man of undaunted resolution, and excelled greatly in military affairs: being the head of the Ghibelline party, and in high estimation with Manfred, his authority put a stop to the discussion, and induced the rest to think of some other means of preserving their power.

The Lucchese being threatened with the anger of the count, for affording refuge to the Guelphs after the battle of the Arbia, could allow them to remain no longer; so leaving Lucca, they went to Bologna, from whence they were called by the Guelphs of Parma against the Ghibellines of that city, where, having overcome the enemy, the possessions of the latter were assigned to them; so that having increased in honors and riches, and learning that Pope Clement had invited Charles of Anjou to take the kingdom from Manfred, they sent ambassadors to the pope to offer him their services. His holiness not only received them as friends, but gave them a standard upon which his insignia were wrought. It was ever after borne by the Guelphs in battle, and is still used at Florence. Charles having taken the kingdom from Manfred, and slain him, to which success the Guelphs of Florence had contributed, their party became more

powerful, and that of the Ghibellines proportionately weaker. In consequence of this, those who with Count Novello governed the city, thought it would be advisable to attach to themselves, with some concession, the people whom they had previously aggravated with every species of injury; but these remedies which, if applied before the necessity came would have been beneficial, being offered when they were no longer considered favors, not only failed of producing any beneficial results to the donors, but hastened their ruin. Thinking, however, to win them to their interests, they restored some of the honors of which they had deprived them. They elected thirty-six citizens from the higher rank of the people, to whom, with two cavaliers, knights or gentlemen, brought from Bologna, the reformation of the government of the city was confided. As soon as they met, they classed the whole of the people according to their arts or trades, and over each art appointed a magistrate, whose duty was to distribute justice to those placed under him. They gave to each company or trade a banner, under which every man was expected to appear armed, whenever the city required it. These arts were at first twelve, seven major and five minor. The minor arts were afterward increased to fourteen, so that the whole made, as at present, twenty-one. The thirty-six reformers also effected other changes for the common good.

Count Guido proposed to lay a tax upon the citizens for the support of the soldiery; but during the discussion found so much difficulty, that he did not dare to use force to obtain it; and thinking he had now lost the government, called together the leaders of the Ghibellines, and they

determined to wrest from the people those powers which they had with so little prudence conceded. When they thought they had sufficient force, the thirty-six being assembled, they caused a tumult to be raised, which so alarmed them that they retired to their houses, when suddenly the banners of the Arts were unfurled, and many armed men drawn to them. These, learning that Count Guido and his followers were at St. John's, moved toward the Holy Trinity, and chose Giovanni Soldanieri for their leader. The count, on the other hand, being informed where the people were assembled, proceeded in that direction; nor did the people shun the fight, for, meeting their enemies where now stands the residence of the Tornaquinci, they put the count to flight, with the loss of many of his followers. Terrified with this result, he was afraid his enemies would attack him in the night, and that his own party, finding themselves beaten, would murder him. This impression took such hold of his mind that, without attempting any other remedy, he sought his safety rather in flight than in combat, and, contrary to the advice of the rectors, went with all his people to Prato. But, on finding himself in a place of safety, his fears fled; perceiving his error he wished to correct it, and on the following day, as soon as light appeared, he returned with his people to Florence, to enter the city by force which he had abandoned in cowardice. But his design did not succeed; for the people, who had had difficulty in expelling him, kept him out with facility; so that with grief and shame he went to the Casentino, and the Ghibellines withdrew to their villas.

The people being victorious, by the advice of those who loved the good



of the republic, determined to reunite the city, and recall all the citizens as well Guelph as Ghibelline, who yet remained without. The Guelphs returned, after having been expelled six years; the recent offences of the Ghibellines were forgiven, and themselves restored to their country. They were, however, most cordially hated, both by the people and the Guelphs, for the latter could not forget their exile, and the former but too well remembered their tyranny when they were in power; the result was, that the minds of neither party became settled.

While affairs were in this state at Florence, a report prevailed that Corradino, nephew of Manfred, was coming with a force from Germany, for the conquest of Naples; this gave the Ghibellines hope of recovering power, and the Guelphs, considering how they should provide for their security, requested assistance from Charles for their defense, in case of the passage of Corradino. The coming of the forces of Charles rendered the Guelphs insolent, and so alarmed the Ghibellines that they fled the city, without being driven out, two days before the arrival of the troops.

The Ghibellines having departed, the Florentines reorganized the government of the city, and elected twelve men who, as the supreme power, were to hold their magistracy two months, and were not called Anziani or "ancients," but Buono Uomini or "good men." They also formed a council of eighty citizens, which they called the Credenza. Besides these, from each sixth, thirty citizens were chosen, who, with the Credenza and the twelve Buono Uomini, were called the General Council.

They also appointed another council of one hundred and twenty citizens, elected from the people and the nobility, to which all those things were finally referred that had undergone the consideration of the other councils, and which distributed the offices of the republic. Having formed this government, they strengthened the Guelphic party by appointing its friends to the principal offices of state, and a variety of other measures, that they might be enabled to defend themselves against the Ghibellines, whose property they divided into three parts, one of which was applied to the public use, another to the Capitani, and the third was assigned to the Guelphs, in satisfaction of the injuries they had received. The pope, too, in order to keep Tuscany in the Guelphic interest, made Charles imperial vicar over the province. While the Florentines, by virtue of the new government, preserved their influence at home by laws, and abroad with arms, the pope died, and after a dispute, which continued two years, Gregory X. was elected, being then in Syria, where he had long lived; but not having witnessed the working of parties, he did not estimate them in the manner his predecessors had done, and passing through Florence on his way to France, he thought it would be the office of a good pastor to unite the city, and so far succeeded that the Florentines consented to receive the Syndics of the Ghibellines in Florence to consider the terms of their recall. They effected an agreement, but the Ghibellines without were so terrified that they did not venture to return. The pope laid the whole blame upon the city, and being enraged excommunicated her, in which state of contumacy she remained as long as the pontiff lived; but was reblessed by his successor Innocent V.

The pontificate was afterward occupied by Nicholas III. of the Orsini family. It has to be remarked that it was invariably the custom of the popes to be jealous of those whose power in Italy had become great, even when its growth had been occasioned by the favors of the church; and as they always endeavored to destroy it, frequent troubles and changes were the result. Their fear of a powerful person caused them to increase the influence of one previously weak; his becoming great caused him also to be feared, and his being feared made them seek the means of destroying him. This mode of thinking and operation occasioned the kingdom of Naples to be taken from Manfred and given to Charles, but as soon as the latter became powerful his ruin was resolved upon. Actuated by these motives, Nicholas III. contrived that, with the influence of the emperor, the government of Tuscany should be taken from Charles, and Latino his legate was therefore sent into the province in the name of the empire.

## CHAPTER III

Changes in Florence--The Ghibellines recalled--New form of government in Florence--The Signory created--Victory over the Aretins--The Gonfalonier of Justice created--Ubaldo Ruffoli the first Gonfalonier--Giano della Bella--New reform by his advice--Giano della Bella becomes a voluntary exile--Dissensions between the people and the nobility--The tumults composed--Reform of Government--Public buildings--The prosperous state of the city.

Florence was at this time in a very unhappy condition; for the great Guelphic families had become insolent, and set aside the authority of the magistrates; so that murders and other atrocities were daily committed, and the perpetrators escaped unpunished, under the protection of one or other of the nobility. The leaders of the people, in order to restrain this insolence, determined to recall those who had been expelled, and thus gave the legate an opportunity of uniting the city. The Ghibellines returned, and, instead of twelve governors, fourteen were appointed, seven for each party, who held their office one year, and were to be chosen by the pope. The Florentines lived under this government two years, till the pontificate of Martin, who restored to Charles all the authority which had been taken from him by Nicholas, so that parties were again active in Tuscany; for the Florentines took arms against the emperor's governor, and to deprive the Ghibellines of power, and restrain the nobility, established a new form of government. This was in the year 1282, and the companies of the Arts, since magistrates

had been appointed and colors given to them, had acquired so great influence, that of their own authority they ordered that, instead of fourteen citizens, three should be appointed and called Priors, to hold the government of the republic two months, and chosen from either the people or the nobility. After the expiration of the first magistracy they were augmented to six, that one might be chosen from each sixth of the city, and this number was preserved till the year 1342, when the city was divided into quarters, and the Priors became eight, although upon some occasions during the interim they were twelve.

This government, as will be seen hereafter, occasioned the ruin of the nobility; for the people by various causes excluded them from all participation in it, and then trampled upon them without respect. The nobles at first, owing to their divisions among themselves, made no opposition; and each being anxious to rob the other of influence in the state, they lost it altogether. To this government a palace was given, in which they were to reside constantly, and all requisite officers were appointed; it having been previously the custom of councils and magistrates to assemble in churches. At first they were only called Priors, but to increase their distinction the word signori, or lords, was soon afterward adopted. The Florentines remained for some time in domestic quiet, during which they made war with the Aretins for having expelled the Guelphs, and obtained a complete victory over them at Campaldino. The city being increased in riches and population, it was found expedient to extend the walls, the circle of which was enlarged to the extent it at present remains, although its diameter was previously

only the space between the old bridge and the church of St. Lorenzo.

Wars abroad and peace within the city had caused the Guelph and Ghibelline factions to become almost extinct; and the only party feeling which seemed occasionally to glow, was that which naturally exists in all cities between the higher classes and the people; for the latter, wishing to live in conformity with the laws, and the former to be themselves the rulers of the people, it was not possible for them to abide in perfect amity together. This ungenial disposition, while their fear of the Ghibellines kept them in order, did not discover itself, but no sooner were they subdued than it broke forth, and not a day passed without some of the populace being injured, while the laws were insufficient to procure redress, for every noble with his relations and friends defended himself against the forces of the Priors and the Capitano. To remedy this evil, the leaders of the Arts' companies ordered that every Signory at the time of entering upon the duties of office should appoint a Gonfalonier of Justice, chosen from the people, and place a thousand armed men at his disposal divided into twenty companies of fifty men each, and that he, with his gonfalon or banner and his forces, should be ready to enforce the execution of the laws whenever called upon, either by the Signors themselves or the Capitano. The first elected to this high office was Ubaldo Ruffoli. This man unfurled his gonfalon, and destroyed the houses of the Galletti, on account of a member of that family having slain one of the Florentine people in France. The violent animosities among the nobility enabled the companies of the Arts to establish this law with facility; and the

former no sooner saw the provision which had been made against them than they felt the acrimonious spirit with which it was enforced. At first it impressed them with greater terror, but they soon after returned to their accustomed insolence, for one or more of their body always making part of the Signory, gave them opportunities of impeding the Gonfalonier, so that he could not perform the duties of his office. Besides this, the accuser always required a witness of the injury he had received, and no one dared to give evidence against the nobility. Thus in a short time Florence again fell into the same disorders as before, and the tyranny exercised against the people was as great as ever; for the decisions of justice were either prevented or delayed, and sentences were not carried into execution.

In this unhappy state, the people not knowing what to do, Giano della Bella, of a very noble family, and a lover of liberty, encouraged the heads of the Arts to reform the constitution of the city; and by his advice it was ordered that the Gonfalonier should reside with the Priors, and have four thousand men at his command. They deprived the nobility of the right to sit in the Signory. They condemned the associates of a criminal to the same penalty as himself, and ordered that public report should be taken as evidence. By these laws, which were called the ordinations of justice, the people acquired great influence, and Giano della Bella not a small share of trouble; for he was thoroughly hated by the great, as the destroyer of their power, while the opulent among the people envied him, for they thought he possessed too great authority. This became very evident upon the first

occasion that presented itself.

It happened that a man from the class of the people was killed in a riot, in which several of the nobility had taken a part, and among the rest Corso Donati, to whom, as the most forward of the party, the death was attributed. He was, therefore, taken by the captain of the people, and whether he was really innocent of the crime or the Capitano was afraid of condemning him, he was acquitted. This acquittal displeased the people so much, that, seizing their arms, they ran to the house of Giano della Bella, to beg that he would compel the execution of those laws which he had himself made. Giano, who wished Corso to be punished, did not insist upon their laying down their arms, as many were of opinion he ought to have done, but advised them to go to the Signory, complain of the fact, and beg that they would take it into consideration. The people, full of wrath, thinking themselves insulted by the Capitano and abandoned by Giano della Bella, instead of going to the Signory went to the palace of the Capitano, of which they made themselves masters, and plundered it.

This outrage displeased the whole city, and those who wished the ruin of Giano laid the entire blame upon him; and as in the succeeding Signory there was an enemy of his, he was accused to the Capitano as the originator of the riot. While the case was being tried, the people took arms, and, proceeding to his house, offered to defend him against the Signory and his enemies. Giano, however, did not wish to put this burst of popular favor to the proof, or trust his life to the magistrates, for



he feared the malignity of the latter and the instability of the former; so, in order to remove an occasion for his enemies to injure him, or his friends to offend the laws, he determined to withdraw, deliver his countrymen from the fear they had of him, and, leaving the city which at his own charge and peril he had delivered from the servitude of the great, become a voluntary exile.

After the departure of Giano della Bella the nobility began to entertain hopes of recovering their authority; and judging their misfortune to have arisen from their divisions, they sent two of their body to the Signory, which they thought was favorable to them, to beg they would be pleased to moderate the severity of the laws made against them. As soon as their demand became known, the minds of the people were much excited; for they were afraid the Signors would submit to them; and so, between the desire of the nobility and the jealousy of the people, arms were resorted to. The nobility were drawn together in three places: near the church of St. John, in the New Market, and in the Piazza of the Mozzi, under three leaders, Forese Adimari, Vanni de Mozzi, and Geri Spini. The people assembled in immense numbers, under their ensigns, before the palace of the Signory, which at that time was situated near St. Procolo; and, as they suspected the integrity of the Signory, they added six citizens to their number to take part in the management of affairs.

While both parties were preparing for the fight, some individuals, as well of the people as of the nobility, accompanied by a few priests of respectable character, mingled among them for the purpose of effecting

a pacification, reminding the nobility that their loss of power, and the laws which were made against them, had been occasioned by their haughty conduct, and the mischievous tendency of their proceedings; that resorting to arms to recover by force what they had lost by illiberal measures and disunion, would tend to the destruction of their country and increase the difficulties of their own position; that they should bear in mind that the people, both in riches, numbers, and hatred, were far stronger than they; and that their nobility, on account of which they assumed to be above others, did not contribute to win battles, and would be found, when they came to arms, to be but an empty name, and insufficient to defend them against so many. On the other hand, they reminded the people that it is not prudent to wish always to have the last blow; that it is an injudicious step to drive men to desperation, for he who is without hope is also without fear; that they ought not to forget that in the wars the nobility had always done honor to the country, and therefore it was neither wise nor just to pursue them with so much bitterness; and that although the nobility could bear with patience the loss of the supreme magistracy, they could not endure that, by the existing laws, it should be in the power of everyone to drive them from their country; and, therefore, it would be well to qualify these laws, and, in furtherance of so good a result, be better to lay down their arms than, trusting to numbers, try the fortune of a battle; for it is often seen that the many are overcome by the few. Variety of opinion was found among the people; many wished to decide the question by arms at once, for they were assured it would have to be done some time, and that it would be better to do so then than delay till

the enemy had acquired greater strength; and that if they thought a mitigation of the laws would satisfy them, that then they would be glad to comply, but that the pride of the nobility was so great they would not submit unless they were compelled. To many others, who were more peaceable and better disposed, it appeared a less evil to qualify the laws a little than to come to battle; and their opinion prevailing, it was provided that no accusation against the nobility could be received unless supported with sufficient testimony.

Although arms were laid aside, both parties remained full of suspicion, and each fortified itself with men and places of strength. The people reorganized the government, and lessened the number of its officers, to which measure they were induced by finding that the Signors appointed from the families, of which the following were the heads, had been favorable to the nobility, viz.: the Mancini, Magalotti, Altoviti, Peruzzi, and Cerretani. Having settled the government, for the greater magnificence and security of the Signory, they laid the foundation of their palace; and to make space for the piazza, removed the houses that had belonged to the Uberti; they also at the same period commenced the public prisons. These buildings were completed in a few years; nor did our city ever enjoy a greater state of prosperity than in those times: filled with men of great wealth and reputation; possessing within her walls 30,000 men capable of bearing arms, and in the country 70,000, while the whole of Tuscany, either as subjects or friends, owed obedience to Florence. And although there might be some indignation and jealousy between the nobility and the people, they did not produce any

evil effect, but all lived together in unity and peace. And if this peace had not been disturbed by internal enmities there would have been no cause of apprehension whatever, for the city had nothing to fear either from the empire or from those citizens whom political reasons kept from their homes, and was in condition to meet all the states of Italy with her own forces. The evil, however, which external powers could not effect, was brought about by those within.

## CHAPTER IV

The Cerchi and the Donati--Origin of the Bianca and Nera factions in Pistoia--They come to Florence--Open enmity of the Donati and the Cerchi--Their first conflict--The Cerchi head the Bianca faction--The Donati take part with the Nera--The pope's legate at Florence increases the confusion with an interdict--New affray between the Cerchi and the Donati--The Donati and others of the Nera faction banished by the advice of Dante Alighieri--Charles of Valois sent by the pope to Florence--The Florentines suspect him--Corso Donati and the rest of the Nera party return to Florence--Veri Cerchi flies--The pope's legate again in Florence--The city again interdicted--New disturbances--The Bianchi banished--Dante banished--Corso Donati excites fresh troubles--The pope's legate endeavors to restore the emigrants but does not succeed--Great fire in Florence.

The Cerchi and the Donati were, for riches, nobility, and the number and influence of their followers, perhaps the two most distinguished families in Florence. Being neighbors, both in the city and the country, there had arisen between them some slight displeasure, which, however, had not occasioned an open quarrel, and perhaps never would have produced any serious effect if the malignant humors had not been increased by new causes. Among the first families of Pistoia was the Cancellieri. It happened that Lore, son of Gulielmo, and Geri, son of Bertacca, both of this family, playing together, and coming to words, Geri was slightly wounded by Lore. This displeased Gulielmo; and,

designing by a suitable apology to remove all cause of further animosity, he ordered his son to go to the house of the father of the youth whom he had wounded and ask pardon. Lore obeyed his father; but this act of virtue failed to soften the cruel mind of Bertacca, and having caused Lore to be seized, in order to add the greatest indignity to his brutal act, he ordered his servants to chop off the youth's hand upon a block used for cutting meat upon, and then said to him, "Go to thy father, and tell him that sword wounds are cured with iron and not with words."

The unfeeling barbarity of this act so greatly exasperated Gulielmo that he ordered his people to take arms for his revenge. Bertacca prepared for his defense, and not only that family, but the whole city of Pistoia, became divided. And as the Cancellieri were descended from a Cancelliere who had had two wives, of whom one was called Bianca (white), one party was named by those who were descended from her BIANCA; and the other, by way of greater distinction, was called NERA (black). Much and long-continued strife took place between the two, attended with the death of many men and the destruction of much property; and not being able to effect a union among themselves, but weary of the evil, and anxious either to bring it to an end, or, by engaging others in their quarrel, increase it, they came to Florence, where the Neri, on account of their familiarity with the Donati, were favored by Corso, the head of that family; and on this account the Bianchi, that they might have a powerful head to defend them against the Donati, had recourse to Veri de Cerchi, a man in no respect inferior to

Corso.

This quarrel, and the parties in it, brought from Pistoia, increased the old animosity between the Cerchi and the Donati, and it was already so manifest, that the Priors and all well-disposed men were in hourly apprehension of its breaking out, and causing a division of the whole city. They therefore applied to the pontiff, praying that he would interpose his authority between these turbulent parties, and provide the remedy which they found themselves unable to furnish. The pope sent for Veri, and charged him to make peace with the Donati, at which Veri exhibited great astonishment, saying that he had no enmity against them, and that as pacification presupposes war, he did not know, there being no war between them, how peacemaking could be necessary. Veri having returned from Rome without anything being effected, the rage of the parties increased to such a degree, that any trivial accident seemed sufficient to make it burst forth, as indeed presently happened.

It was in the month of May, during which, and upon holidays, it is the custom of Florence to hold festivals and public rejoicings throughout the city. Some youths of the Donati family, with their friends, upon horseback, were standing near the church of the Holy Trinity to look at a party of ladies who were dancing; thither also came some of the Cerchi, like the Donati, accompanied with many of the nobility, and, not knowing that the Donati were before them, pushed their horses and jostled them; thereupon the Donati, thinking themselves insulted, drew their swords, nor were the Cerchi at all backward to do the same, and

not till after the interchange of many wounds, they separated. This disturbance was the beginning of great evils; for the whole city became divided, the people as well as the nobility, and the parties took the names of the Bianchi and the Neri. The Cerchi were at the head of the Bianchi faction, to which adhered the Adimari, the Abati, a part of the Tosinghi, of the Bardi, of the Rossi, of the Frescobaldi, of the Nerli, and of the Manelli; all the Mozzi, the Scali, Gherardini, Cavalcanti, Malespini, Bostichi, Giandonati, Vecchietti, and Arrigucci. To these were joined many families of the people, and all the Ghibellines then in Florence, so that their great numbers gave them almost the entire government of the city.

The Donati, at the head of whom was Corso, joined the Nera party, to which also adhered those members of the above-named families who did not take part with the Bianchi; and besides these, the whole of the Pazzi, the Bisdomini, Manieri, Bagnesi, Tornaquinci, Spini, Buondelmonti, Gianfigliuzzi, and the Brunelleschi. Nor did the evil confine itself to the city alone, for the whole country was divided upon it, so that the Captains of the Six Parts, and whoever were attached to the Guelphic party or the well-being of the republic, were very much afraid that this new division would occasion the destruction of the city, and give new life to the Ghibelline faction. They, therefore, sent again to Pope Boniface, desiring that, unless he wished that city which had always been the shield of the church should either be ruined or become Ghibelline, he would consider some means for her relief. The pontiff thereupon sent to Florence, as his legate, Cardinal Matteo



d'Acquasparta, a Portuguese, who, finding the Bianchi, as the most powerful, the least in fear, not quite submissive to him, he interdicted the city, and left it in anger, so that greater confusion now prevailed than had done previously to his coming.

The minds of men being in great excitement, it happened that at a funeral which many of the Donati and the Cerchi attended, they first came to words and then to arms, from which, however, nothing but merely tumult resulted at the moment. However, having each retired to their houses, the Cerchi determined to attack the Donati, but, by the valor of Corso, they were repulsed and great numbers of them wounded. The city was in arms. The laws and the Signory were set at nought by the rage of the nobility, and the best and wisest citizens were full of apprehension. The Donati and their followers, being the least powerful, were in the greatest fear, and to provide for their safety they called together Corso, the Captains of the Parts, and the other leaders of the Neri, and resolved to apply to the pope to appoint some personage of royal blood, that he might reform Florence; thinking by this means to overcome the Bianchi. Their meeting and determination became known to the Priors, and the adverse party represented it as a conspiracy against the liberties of the republic. Both parties being in arms, the Signory, one of whom at that time was the poet Dante, took courage, and from his advice and prudence, caused the people to rise for the preservation of order, and being joined by many from the country, they compelled the leaders of both parties to lay aside their arms, and banished Corso, with many of the Neri. And as an evidence of the impartiality of their

motives, they also banished many of the Bianchi, who, however, soon afterward, under pretense of some justifiable cause, returned.

Corso and his friends, thinking the pope favorable to their party, went to Rome and laid their grievances before him, having previously forwarded a statement of them in writing. Charles of Valois, brother of the king of France, was then at the papal court, having been called into Italy by the king of Naples, to go over into Sicily. The pope, therefore, at the earnest prayers of the banished Florentines, consented to send Charles to Florence, till the season suitable for his going to Sicily should arrive. He therefore came, and although the Bianchi, who then governed, were very apprehensive, still, as the head of the Guelphs, and appointed by the pope, they did not dare to oppose him, and in order to secure his friendship, they gave him authority to dispose of the city as he thought proper.

Thus authorized, Charles armed all his friends and followers, which step gave the people so strong a suspicion that he designed to rob them of their liberty, that each took arms, and kept at his own house, in order to be ready, if Charles should make any such attempt. The Cerchi and the leaders of the Bianchi faction had acquired universal hatred by having, while at the head of the republic, conducted themselves with unbecoming pride; and this induced Corso and the banished of the Neri party to return to Florence, knowing well that Charles and the Captains of the Parts were favorable to them. And while the citizens, for fear of Charles, kept themselves in arms, Corso, with all the banished, and

followed by many others, entered Florence without the least impediment. And although Veri de Cerchi was advised to oppose him, he refused to do so, saying that he wished the people of Florence, against whom he came, should punish him. However, the contrary happened, for he was welcomed, not punished by them; and it behooved Veri to save himself by flight.

Corso, having forced the Pinti Gate, assembled his party at San Pietro Maggiore, near his own house, where, having drawn together a great number of friends and people desirous of change, he set at liberty all who had been imprisoned for offenses, whether against the state or against individuals. He compelled the existing Signory to withdraw privately to their own houses, elected a new one from the people of the Neri party, and for five days plundered the leaders of the Bianchi. The Cerchi, and the other heads of their faction, finding Charles opposed to them, withdrew from the city, and retired to their strongholds. And although at first they would not listen to the advice of the pope, they were now compelled to turn to him for assistance, declaring that instead of uniting the city, Charles had caused greater disunion than before. The pope again sent Matteo d'Acquasparta, his legate, who made peace between the Cerchi and the Donati, and strengthened it with marriages and new betrothals. But wishing that the Bianchi should participate in the employments of the government, to which the Neri who were then at the head of it would not consent, he withdrew, with no more satisfaction nor less enraged than on the former occasion, and left the city interdicted for disobedience.

Both parties remained in Florence, and equally discontented; the Neri from seeing their enemies at hand, and apprehending the loss of their power, and the Bianchi from finding themselves without either honor or authority; and to these natural causes of animosity new injuries were added. Niccolo de' Cerchi, with many of his friends, went to his estates, and being arrived at the bridge of Affrico, was attacked by Simone, son of Corso Donati. The contest was obstinate, and one each side had a sorrowful conclusion; for Niccolo was slain, and Simone was so severely wounded that he died on the following night.

This event again disturbed the entire city; and although the Neri were most to blame, they were defended by those who were at the head of affairs; and before sentence was delivered, a conspiracy of the Bianchi with Piero Ferrante, one of the barons who had accompanied Charles, was discovered, by whose assistance they sought to be replaced in the government. The matter became known from letters addressed to him by the Cerchi, although some were of opinion that they were not genuine, but written and pretended to be found, by the Donati, to abate the infamy which their party had acquired by the death of Niccolo. The whole of the Cerchi were, however, banished,--with their followers of the Bianchi party, of whom was Dante the poet,--their property confiscated, and their houses pulled down. They sought refuge, with a great number of Ghibellines who had joined them, in many places, seeking fresh fortunes in new undertakings. Charles, having effected the purpose of his coming, left the city, and returned to the pope to pursue his enterprise against Sicily, in which he was neither wiser nor more fortunate than he had

been at Florence; so that with disgrace and the loss of many of his followers, he withdrew to France.

After the departure of Charles, Florence remained quiet. Corso alone was restless, thinking he did not possess that sort of authority in the city which was due to his rank; for the government being in the hands of the people, he saw the offices of the republic administered by many inferior to himself. Moved by passions of this kind, he endeavored, under the pretense of an honorable design, to justify his own dishonorable purposes, and accused many citizens who had the management of the public money, of applying it to their private uses, and recommended that they should be brought to justice and punished. This opinion was adopted by many who had the same views as himself; and many in ignorance joined them, thinking Corso actuated only by pure patriotism. On the other hand, the accused citizens, enjoying the popular favor, defended themselves, and this difference arose to such a height, that, after civil means, they had recourse to arms. Of the one party were Corso and Lottieri, bishop of Florence, with many of the nobility and some of the people; on the other side were the Signory, with the greater part of the people; so that skirmishes took place in many parts of the city. The Signory, seeing their danger great, sent for aid to the Lucchese, and presently all the people of Lucca were in Florence. With their assistance the disturbances were settled for the moment, and the people retained the government and their liberty, without attempting by any other means to punish the movers of the disorder.

The pope had heard of the tumults at Florence, and sent his legate, Niccolo da Prato, to settle them, who, being in high reputation both for his quality, learning, and mode of life, presently acquired so much of the people's confidence, that authority was given him to establish such a government as he should think proper. As he was of Ghibelline origin, he determined to recall the banished; but designing first to gain the affections of the lower orders, he renewed the ancient companies of the people, which increased the popular power and reduced that of the nobility. The legate, thinking the multitude on his side, now endeavored to recall the banished, and, after attempting in many ways, none of which succeeded, he fell so completely under the suspicion of the government, that he was compelled to quit the city, and returned to the pope in great wrath, leaving Florence full of confusion and suffering under an interdict. Neither was the city disturbed with one division alone, but by many; first the enmity between the people and the nobility, then that of the Ghibellines and the Guelphs, and lastly, of the Bianchi and the Neri. All the citizens were, therefore, in arms, for many were dissatisfied with the departure of the legate, and wished for the return of the banished. The first who set this disturbance on foot were the Medici and the Guinigi, who, with the legate, had discovered themselves in favor of the rebels; and thus skirmishes took place in many parts of the city.

In addition to these evils a fire occurred, which first broke out at the garden of St. Michael, in the houses of the Abati; it thence extended to those of the Capoinsacchi, and consumed them, with those of the Macci,

Amieri, Toschi, Cipriani, Lamberti, Cavalcanti, and the whole of the New Market; from thence it spread to the gate of St. Maria, and burned it to the ground; turning from the old bridge, it destroyed the houses of the Gherardini, Pulci, Amidei, and Lucardesi, and with these so many others that the number amounted to seventeen hundred. It was the opinion of many that this fire occurred by accident during the heat of the disturbances. Others affirm that it was begun willfully by Neri Abati, prior of St. Pietro Scarragio, a dissolute character, fond of mischief, who, seeing the people occupied with the combat, took the opportunity of committing a wicked act, for which the citizens, being thus employed, could offer no remedy. And to insure his success, he set fire to the house of his own brotherhood, where he had the best opportunity of doing it. This was in the year 1304, Florence being afflicted both with fire and the sword. Corso Donati alone remained unarmed in so many tumults; for he thought he would more easily become the arbitrator between the contending parties when, weary of strife, they should be inclined to accommodation. They laid down their arms, however, rather from satiety of evil than from any desire of union; and the only consequence was, that the banished were not recalled, and the party which favored them remained inferior.

## CHAPTER V

The emigrants attempt to re-enter Florence, but are not allowed to do so--The companies of the people restored--Restless conduct of Corso Donati--The ruin of Corso Donati--Corso Donati accused and condemned--Riot at the house of Corso--Death of Corso--His character--Fruitless attempt of the Emperor Henry against the Florentines--The emigrants are restored to the city--The citizens place themselves under the king of Naples for five years--War with Ugucione della Faggiuola--The Florentines routed--Florence withdraws herself from subjection to King Robert, and expels the Count Novello--Lando d'Agobbio--His tyranny--His departure.

The legate being returned to Rome, and hearing of the new disturbance which had occurred, persuaded the pope that if he wished to unite the Florentines, it would be necessary to have twelve of the first citizens appear before him, and having thus removed the principal causes of disunion, he might easily put a stop to it. The pontiff took this advice, and the citizens, among whom was Corso Donati, obeyed the summons. These having left the city, the legate told the exiles that now, when the city was deprived of her leaders, was the time for them to return. They, therefore, having assembled, came to Florence, and entering by a part of the wall not yet completed, proceeded to the piazza of St. Giovanni. It is worthy of remark, that those who, a short time previously, when they came unarmed and begged to be restored to their country, had fought for their return, now, when they saw them in



arms and resolved to enter by force, took arms to oppose them (so much more was the common good esteemed than private friendship), and being joined by the rest of the citizens, compelled them to return to the places whence they had come. They failed in their undertaking by having left part of their force at Lastra, and by not having waited the arrival of Tolosetto Uberti, who had to come from Pistoia with three hundred horse; for they thought celerity rather than numbers would give them the victory; and it often happens, in similar enterprises, that delay robs us of the occasion, and too great anxiety to be forward prevents us of the power, or makes us act before we are properly prepared.

The banished having retired, Florence again returned to her old divisions; and in order to deprive the Cavalcanti of their authority, the people took from them the Stinche, a castle situated in the Val di Greve, and anciently belonging to the family. And as those who were taken in it were the first who were put into the new prisons, the latter were, and still continue, named after it,--the Stinche. The leaders of the republic also re-established the companies of the people, and gave them the ensigns that were first used by the companies of the Arts; the heads of which were called Gonfaloniers of the companies and colleagues of the Signory; and ordered, that when any disturbance arose they should assist the Signory with arms, and in peace with counsel. To the two ancient rectors they added an executor, or sheriff, who, with the Gonfaloniers, was to aid in repressing the insolence of the nobility.

In the meantime the pope died. Corso, with the other citizens, returned

from Rome; and all would have been well if his restless mind had not occasioned new troubles. It was his common practice to be of a contrary opinion to the most powerful men in the city; and whatever he saw the people inclined to do, he exercised his utmost influence to effect, in order to attach them to himself; so that he was a leader in all differences, at the head of every new scheme, and whoever wished to obtain anything extraordinary had recourse to him. This conduct caused him to be hated by many of the highest distinction; and their hatred increased to such a degree that the Neri faction to which he belonged, became completely divided; for Corso, to attain his ends, had availed himself of private force and authority, and of the enemies of the state. But so great was the influence attached to his person, that everyone feared him. Nevertheless, in order to strip him of the popular favor (which by this means may easily be done), a report was set on foot that he intended to make himself prince of the city; and to the design his conduct gave great appearance of probability, for his way of living quite exceeded all civil bounds; and the opinion gained further strength, upon his taking to wife a daughter of Ugucione della Faggiuola, head of the Ghibelline and Bianchi faction, and one of the most powerful men in Tuscany.

When this marriage became known it gave courage to his adversaries, and they took arms against him; for the same reason the people ceased to defend him, and the greater part of them joined the ranks of his enemies, the leaders of whom were Rosso della Tosa, Pazino dei Pazzi, Geri Spini, and Berto Brunelleschi. These, with their followers, and the

greater part of the people, assembled before the palace of the Signory, by whose command a charge was made before Piero Branca, captain of the people, against Corso, of intending, with the aid of Ugucione, to usurp the government. He was then summoned, and for disobedience, declared a rebel; nor did two hours pass over between the accusation and the sentence. The judgment being given, the Signory, with the companies of the people under their ensigns, went in search of him, who, although seeing himself abandoned by many of his followers, aware of the sentence against him, the power of the Signory, and the multitude of his enemies, remained undaunted, and fortified his houses, in the hope of defending them till Ugucione, for whom he had sent, should come to his Relief. His residences, and the streets approaching them, were barricaded and taken possession of by his partisans, who defended them so bravely that the enemy, although in great numbers, could not force them, and the battle became one of the hottest, with wounds and death on all sides. But the people, finding they could not drive them from their ground, took possession of the adjoining houses, and by unobserved passages obtained entry. Corso, thus finding himself surrounded by his foes, no longer retaining any hope of assistance from Ugucione, and without a chance of victory, thought only of effecting his personal safety, and with Gherardo Bordoni, and some of his bravest and most trusted friends, fought a passage through the thickest of their enemies, and effected their escape from the city by the Gate of the Cross. They were, however, pursued by vast numbers, and Gherardo was slain upon the bridge of Affrico by Boccaccio Cavicciulli. Corso was overtaken and made prisoner by a party of Catalan horse, in the service of the Signory, at

Rovezzano. But when approaching Florence, that he might avoid being seen and torn to pieces by his victorious enemies, he allowed himself to fall from horseback, and being down, one of those who conducted him cut his throat. The body was found by the monks of San Salvi, and buried without any ceremony due to his rank. Such was the end of Corso, to whom his country and the Neri faction were indebted for much both of good and evil; and if he had possessed a cooler spirit he would have left behind him a more happy memory. Nevertheless, he deserves to be enumerated among the most distinguished men our city has produced. True it is, that his restless conduct made both his country and his party forgetful of their obligation to him. The same cause also produced his miserable end, and brought many troubles upon both his friends and his country. Ugucione, coming to the assistance of his relative, learned at Remoli that Corso had been overcome by the people, and finding that he could not render him any assistance, in order to avoid bringing evil upon himself without occasion, he returned home.

After the death of Corso, which occurred in the year 1308, the disturbances were appeased, and the people lived quietly till it was reported that the Emperor Henry was coming into Italy, and with him all the Florentine emigrants, to whom he had promised restoration to their country. The leaders of the government thought, that in order to lessen the number of their enemies, it would be well to recall, of their own will, all who had been expelled, excepting such as the law had expressly forbidden to return. Of the number not admitted, were the greater part of the Ghibellines, and some of those of the Bianchi faction, among whom

were Dante Alighieri, the sons of Veri de' Cerchi and of Giano della Bella. Besides this they sent for aid to Robert, king of Naples, and not being able to obtain it of him as friends, they gave their city to him for five years, that he might defend them as his own people. The emperor entered Italy by the way of Pisa, and proceeded by the marshes to Rome, where he was crowned in the year 1312. Then, having determined to subdue the Florentines, he approached their city by the way of Perugia and Arezzo, and halted with his army at the monastery of San Salvi, about a mile from Florence, where he remained fifty days without effecting anything. Despairing of success against Florence, he returned to Pisa, where he entered into an agreement with Frederick, king of Sicily, to undertake the conquest of Naples, and proceeded with his people accordingly; but while filled with the hope of victory, and carrying dismay into the heart of King Robert, having reached Buonconvento, he died.

Shortly after this, Ugucione della Faggiuola, having by means of the Ghibelline party become lord of Pisa and of Lucca, caused, with the assistance of these cities, very serious annoyance to the neighbouring places. In order to effect their relief the Florentines requested King Robert would allow his brother Piero to take the command of their armies. On the other hand, Ugucione continued to increase his power; and either by force or fraud obtained possession of many castles in the Val d'Arno and the Val di Nievole; and having besieged Monte Catini, the Florentines found it would be necessary to send to its relief, that they might not see him burn and destroy their whole territory. Having

drawn together a large army, they entered the Val di Nievole where they came up with Uguccone, and were routed after a severe battle in which Piero the king's brother and 2,000 men were slain; but the body of the Prince was never found. Neither was the victory a joyful one to Uguccone; for one of his sons, and many of the leaders of his army, fell in the strife.

The Florentines after this defeat fortified their territory, and King Robert sent them, for commander of their forces, the Count d'Andria, usually called Count Novello, by whose deportment, or because it is natural to the Florentines to find every state tedious, the city, notwithstanding the war with Uguccone, became divided into friends and enemies of the king. Simon della Tosa, the Magalotti, and certain others of the people who had attained greater influence in the government than the rest, were leaders of the party against the king. By these means messengers were sent to France, and afterward into Germany, to solicit leaders and forces that they might drive out the count, whom the king had appointed governor; but they failed of obtaining any. Nevertheless they did not abandon their undertaking, but still desirous of one whom they might worship, after an unavailing search in France and Germany, they discovered him at Agobbio, and having expelled the Count Novello, caused Lando d'Agobbio to be brought into the city as Bargello (sheriff), and gave him the most unlimited power of the citizens. This man was cruel and rapacious; and going through the country accompanied with an armed force, he put many to death at the mere instigation of those who had endowed him with authority. His insolence rose to such a height,

that he stamped base metal with the impression used upon the money of the state, and no one had sufficient courage to oppose him, so powerful had he become by the discords of Florence. Great, certainly, but unhappy city! which neither the memory of past divisions, the fear of her enemies, nor a king's authority, could unite for her own advantage; so that she found herself in a state of the utmost wretchedness, harassed without by Uguccione, and plundered within by Lando d'Agobbio.

The friends of the king and those who opposed Lando and his followers, were either of noble families or the highest of the people, and all Guelphs; but their adversaries being in power they could not discover their minds without incurring the greatest danger. Being, however, determined to deliver themselves from such disgraceful tyranny, they secretly wrote to King Robert, requesting him to appoint for his vicar in Florence Count Guido da Battifolle. The king complied; and the opposite party, although the Signory were opposed to the king, on account of the good quality of the count, did not dare to resist him. Still his authority was not great, because the Signory and Gonfaloniers of the companies were in favor of Lando and his party.

During these troubles, the daughter of King Albert of Bohemia passed through Florence, in search of her husband, Charles, the son of King Robert, and was received with the greatest respect by the friends of the king, who complained to her of the unhappy state of the city, and of the tyranny of Lando and his partisans; so that through her influence and the exertions of the king's friends, the citizens were again united, and

before her departure, Lando was stripped of all authority and send back to Agobbio, laden with blood and plunder. In reforming the government, the sovereignty of the city was continued to the king for another three years, and as there were then in office seven Signors of the party of Lando, six more were appointed of the king's friends, and some magistracies were composed of thirteen Signors; but not long afterward the number was reduced to seven according to ancient custom.



## CHAPTER VI

War with Castruccio--Castruccio marches against Prato and retires without making any attempt--The emigrants not being allowed to return, endeavor to enter the city by force, and are repulsed--Change in the mode of electing the great officers of state--The Squittini established--The Florentines under Raymond of Cardona are routed by Castruccio at Altopascio--Treacherous designs of Raymond--The Florentines give the sovereignty of the city to Charles duke of Cambria, who appoints the duke of Athens for his vicar--The duke of Calabria comes to Florence--The Emperor Louis of Bavaria visits Italy--The excitement he produces--Death of Castruccio and of Charles duke of Calabria--Reform of government.

About the same time, Ugucione lost the sovereignty of Lucca and of Pisa, and Castruccio Castracani, a citizen of Lucca, became lord of them, who, being a young man, bold and fierce, and fortunate in his enterprises, in a short time became the head of the Ghibellines in Tuscany. On this account the discords among the Florentines were laid aside for some years, at first to abate the increasing power of Castruccio, and afterward to unite their means for mutual defense against him. And in order to give increased strength and efficacy to their counsels, the Signory appointed twelve citizens whom they called Buonomini, or good men, without whose advice and consent nothing of any importance could be carried into effect. The conclusion of the sovereignty of King Robert being come, the citizens took the government

into their own hands, reappointed the usual rectors and magistracies, and were kept united by the dread of Castruccio, who, after many efforts against the lords of Lunigiano, attacked Prato, to the relief of which the Florentines having resolved to go, shut up their shops and houses, and proceeded thither in a body, amounting to twenty thousand foot and one thousand five hundred horse. And in order to reduce the number of Castruccio's friends and augment their own, the Signory declared that every rebel of the Guelphic party who should come to the relief of Prato would be restored to his country; they thus increased their army with an addition of four thousand men. This great force being quickly brought to Prato, alarmed Castruccio so much, that without trying the fortune of battle, he retired toward Lucca. Upon this, disturbances arose in the Florentine camp between the nobility and the people, the latter of whom wished to pursue the foe and destroy him; the former were for returning home, saying they had done enough for Prato in hazarding the safety of Florence on its account, which they did not regret under the circumstances, but now, that necessity no longer existing, the propriety of further risk ceased also, as there was little to be gained and much to lose. Not being able to agree, the question was referred to the Signory, among whom the difference of opinion was equally great; and as the matter spread throughout the city, the people drew together, and used such threatening language against the nobility that they, being apprehensive for their safety, yielded; but the resolution being adopted too late, and by many unwillingly, gave the enemy time to withdraw in safety to Lucca.

This unfortunate circumstance made the people so indignant against the great that the Signory refused to perform the promise made to the exiles, and the latter, anticipating the fact, determined to be beforehand, and were at the gates of Florence to gain admittance into the city before the rest of the forces; but their design did not take effect, for their purpose being foreseen, they were repulsed by those who had remained at home. They then endeavored to acquire by entreaty what they had failed to obtain by force; and sent eight men as ambassadors to the Signory, to remind them of the promise given, and of the dangers they had undergone, in hope of the reward which had been held out to them. And although the nobility, who felt the obligation on account of their having particularly undertaken to fulfill the promise for which the Signory had bound themselves, used their utmost exertion in favor of the exiles, so great was the anger of the multitude on account of their only partial success against Castruccio, that they could not obtain their admission. This occasioned cost and dishonor to the city; for many of the nobility, taking offense at this proceeding, endeavored to obtain by arms that which had been refused to their prayers, and agreed with the exiles that they should come armed to the city, and that those within would arm themselves in their defense. But the affair was discovered before the appointed day arrived, so that those without found the city in arms, and prepared to resist them. So completely subdued were those within, that none dared to take arms; and thus the undertaking was abandoned, without any advantage having been obtained by the party. After the departure of the exiles it was determined to punish those who had been instrumental in bringing them

to the city; but, although everyone knew who were the delinquents, none ventured to name and still less to accuse them. It was, therefore, resolved that in order to come at the truth, everyone should write the names of those he believed to be guilty, and present the writing secretly to the Capitano. By this means, Amerigo Donati, Teghiao, Frescobaldi, and Lotteringo Gherardini were accused; but, the judges being more favorably disposed to them than, perhaps, their misdeeds deserved, each escaped by paying a fine.

The tumults which arose in Florence from the coming of the rebels to the gates, showed that one leader was insufficient for the companies of the people; they, therefore, determined that in future each should have three or four; and to every Gonfalonier two or three Pennonieri (pennon bearers) were added, so that if the whole body were not drawn out, a part might operate under one of them. And as happens in republics, after any disturbance, some old laws are annulled and others renewed, so on this occasion, as it had been previously customary to appoint the Signory for a time only, the then existing Signors and the Colleagues, feeling themselves possessed of sufficient power, assumed the authority to fix upon the Signors that would have to sit during the next forty months, by putting their names into a bag or purse, and drawing them every two months. But, before the expiration of the forty months, many citizens were jealous that their names had not been deposited among the rest, and a new emborsation was made. From this beginning arose the custom of emborsing or enclosing the names of all who should take office in any of the magistracies for a long time to come, as well those whose

offices employed them within the city as those abroad, though previously the councils of the retiring magistrates had elected those who were to succeed them. These emborsations were afterward called Squittini, or pollings,--and it was thought they would prevent much trouble to the city, and remove the cause of those tumults which every three, or at most five, years, took place upon the creation of magistrates, from the number of candidates for office. And not being able to adopt a better expedient, they made use of this, but did not observe the defects which lay concealed under such a trivial accommodation.

In 1325, Castruccio, having taken possession of Pistoia, became so powerful that the Florentines, fearing his greatness, resolved, before he should get himself firmly seated in his new conquest, to attack him and withdraw it from his authority. Of their citizens and friends they mustered an army amounting to 20,000 foot and 3,000 horse, and with this body encamped before Altopascio, with the intention of taking the place and thus preventing it from relieving Pistoia. Being successful in the first part of their design, they marched toward Lucca, and laid the country waste in their progress; but from the little prudence and less integrity of their leader, Ramondo di Cardona, they made but small progress; for he, having observed them upon former occasions very prodigal of their liberty, placing it sometimes in the hands of a king, at others in those of a legate, or persons of even inferior quality, thought, if he could bring them into some difficulty, it might easily happen that they would make him their prince. Nor did he fail frequently to mention these matters, and required to have that authority in the

city which had been given him over the army, endeavoring to show that otherwise he could not enforce the obedience requisite to a leader. As the Florentines did not consent to this, he wasted time, and allowed Castruccio to obtain the assistance which the Visconti and other tyrants of Lombardy had promised him, and thus become very strong. Ramondo, having willfully let the opportunity of victory pass away, now found himself unable to escape; for Castruccio coming up with him at Altopascio, a great battle ensued in which many citizens were slain and taken prisoners, and among the former fell Ramondo, who received from fortune that reward of bad faith and mischievous counsels which he had richly deserved from the Florentines. The injury they suffered from Castruccio, after the battle, in plunder, prisoners, destruction, and burning of property, is quite indescribable; for, without any opposition, during many months, he led his predatory forces wherever he thought proper, and it seemed sufficient to the Florentines if, after such a terrible event, they could save their city.

Still they were not so absolutely cast down as to prevent them from raising great sums of money, hiring troops, and sending to their friends for assistance; but all they could do was insufficient to restrain such a powerful enemy; so that they were obliged to offer the sovereignty to Charles duke of Calabria, son of King Robert, if they could induce him to come to their defense; for these princes, being accustomed to rule Florence, preferred her obedience to her friendship. But Charles, being engaged in the wars of Sicily, and therefore unable to undertake the sovereignty of the city, sent in his stead Walter, by birth a Frenchman,

and duke of Athens. He, as viceroy, took possession of the city, and appointed the magistracies according to his own pleasure; but his mode of proceeding was quite correct, and so completely contrary to his real nature, that everyone respected him.

The affairs of Sicily being composed, Charles came to Florence with a thousand horse. He made his entry into the city in July, 1326, and his coming prevented further pillage of the Florentine territory by Castruccio. However, the influence which they acquired without the city was lost within her walls, and the evils which they did not suffer from their enemies were brought upon them by their friends; for the Signory could not do anything without the consent of the duke of Calabria, who, in the course of one year, drew from the people 400,000 florins, although by the agreement entered into with him, the sum was not to exceed 200,000; so great were the burdens with which either himself or his father constantly oppressed them.

To these troubles were added new jealousies and new enemies; for the Ghibellines of Lombardy became so alarmed upon the arrival of Charles in Tuscany, that Galeazzo Visconti and the other Lombard tyrants, by money and promises, induced Louis of Bavaria, who had lately been elected emperor contrary to the wish of the pope, to come into Italy. After passing through Lombardy he entered Tuscany, and with the assistance of Castruccio, made himself master of Pisa, from whence, having been pacified with sums of money, he directed his course towards Rome. This caused the duke of Calabria to be apprehensive for the safety of Naples;

he therefore left Florence, and appointed as his viceroy Filippo da Saggineto.

After the departure of the emperor, Castruccio made himself master of Pisa, but the Florentines, by a treaty with Pistoia, withdrew her from obedience to him. Castruccio then besieged Pistoia, and persevered with so much vigor and resolution, that although the Florentines often attempted to relieve her, by attacking first his army and then his country, they were unable either by force or policy to remove him; so anxious was he to punish the Pistoiesi and subdue the Florentines. At length the people of Pistoia were compelled to receive him for their sovereign; but this event, although greatly to his glory, proved but little to his advantage, for upon his return to Lucca he died. And as one event either of good or evil seldom comes alone, at Naples also died Charles duke of Calabria and lord of Florence, so that in a short time, beyond the expectation of their most sanguine hopes, the Florentines found themselves delivered from the domination of the one and the fear of the other. Being again free, they set about the reformation of the city, annulled all the old councils, and created two new ones, the one composed of 300 citizens from the class of the people, the other of 250 from the nobility and the people.

The first was called the Council of the People, the other the Council of the Commune.



## CHAPTER VII

The Emperor at Rome--The Florentines refuse to purchase Lucca, and repent of it--Enterprises of the Florentines--Conspiracy of the Bardi and the Frescobaldi--The conspiracy discovered and checked--Maffeo da Marradi appeases the tumult--Lucca is purchased by the Florentines and taken by the Pisans--The duke of Athens at Florence--The nobility determine to make him prince of the city.

The emperor, being arrived at Rome, created an anti-pope, did many things in opposition to the church, and attempted many others, but without effect, so that at last he retired with disgrace, and went to Pisa, where, either because they were not paid, or from disaffection, about 800 German horse mutinied, and fortified themselves at Montechiaro upon the Ceruglio; and when the emperor had left Pisa to go into Lombardy, they took possession of Lucca and drove out Francesco Castracani, whom he had left there. Designing to turn their conquest to account, they offered it to the Florentines for 80,000 florins, which, by the advice of Simone della Tosa, was refused. This resolution, if they had remained in it, would have been of the greatest utility to the Florentines; but as they shortly afterward changed their minds, it became most pernicious; for although at the time they might have obtained peaceful possession of her for a small sum and would not, they afterward wished to have her and could not, even for a much larger amount; which caused many and most hurtful changes to take place in Florence. Lucca, being refused by the Florentines, was purchased by

Gherardino Spinoli, a Genoese, for 30,000 florins. And as men are often less anxious to take what is in their power than desirous of that which they cannot attain, as soon as the purchase of Gherardino became known, and for how small a sum it had been bought, the people of Florence were seized with an extreme desire to have it, blaming themselves and those by whose advice they had been induced to reject the offer made to them. And in order to obtain by force what they had refused to purchase, they sent troops to plunder and overrun the country of the Lucchese.

About this time the emperor left Italy. The anti-pope, by means of the Pisans, became a prisoner in France; and the Florentines from the death of Castruccio, which occurred in 1328, remained in domestic peace till 1340, and gave their undivided attention to external affairs, while many wars were carried on in Lombardy, occasioned by the coming of John king of Bohemia, and in Tuscany, on account of Lucca. During this period Florence was ornamented with many new buildings, and by the advice of Giotto, the most distinguished painter of his time, they built the tower of Santa Reparata. Besides this, the waters of the Arno having, in 1333, risen twelve feet above their ordinary level, destroyed some of the bridges and many buildings, all which were restored with great care and expense.

In the year 1340, new sources of disagreement arose. The great had two ways of increasing or preserving their power; the one, so to restrain the emborsation of magistrates, that the lot always fell upon themselves or their friends; the other, that having the election of the rectors,

they were always favorable to their party. This second mode they considered of so great importance, that the ordinary rectors not being sufficient for them, they on some occasions elected a third, and at this time they had made an extraordinary appointment, under the title of captain of the guard, of Jacopo Gabrielli of Agobbio, and endowed him with unlimited authority over the citizens. This man, under the sanction of those who governed, committed constant outrages; and among those whom he injured were Piero de' Bardi and Bardo Frescobaldi. These being of the nobility, and naturally proud, could not endure that a stranger, supported by a few powerful men, should without cause injure them with impunity, and consequently entered into a conspiracy against him and those by whom he was supported. They were joined by many noble families, and some of the people, who were offended with the tyranny of those in power. Their plan was, that each should bring into his house a number of armed men, and on the morning after the day of All Saints, when almost all would be in the temples praying for their dead, they should take arms, kill the Capitano and those who were at the head of affairs, and then, with a new Signory and new ordinances, reform the government.

But, as the more a dangerous business is considered, the less willingly it is undertaken, it commonly happens, when there is any time allowed between the determining upon a perilous enterprise and its execution, that the conspiracy by one means or another becomes known. Andrea de' Bardi was one of the conspirators, and upon reconsideration of the matter, the fear of the punishment operated more powerfully upon him than the desire of revenge, and he disclosed the affair to Jacopo

Alberti, his brother-in-law. Jacopo acquainted the Priors, and they informed the government. And as the danger was near, All Saints' day being just at hand, many citizens met together in the palace; and thinking their peril increased by delay, they insisted that the Signory should order the alarm to be rung, and called the people together in arms. Taldo Valori was at this time Gonfalonier, and Francesco Salviati one of the Signory, who, being relatives of the Bardi, were unwilling to summon the people with the bell, alleging as a reason that it is by no means well to assemble them in arms upon every slight occasion, for power put into the hands of an unrestrained multitude was never beneficial; that it is an easy matter to excite them to violence, but a difficult thing to restrain them; and that, therefore, it would be taking a more prudent course if they were to inquire into the truth of the affair, and punish the delinquents by the civil authority, than to attempt, upon a simple information, to correct it by such a tumultuous means, and thus hazard the safety of the city. None would listen to these remarks; the Signory were assailed with insolent behavior and indecent expressions, and compelled to sound the alarm, upon which the people presently assembled in arms. On the other hand, the Bardi and the Frescobaldi, finding themselves discovered, that they might conquer with glory or die without shame, armed themselves, in the hope that they would be able to defend that part of the city beyond the river, where their houses were situated; and they fortified the bridge in expectation of assistance, which they expected from the nobles and their friends in the country. Their design was frustrated by the people who, in common with themselves, occupied this part of the city; for these took arms

in favor of the Signory, so that, seeing themselves thus circumstanced, they abandoned the bridges, and betook themselves to the street in which the Bardi resided, as being a stronger situation than any other; and this they defended with great bravery.

Jacopo d'Agobbio, knowing the whole conspiracy was directed against himself, in fear of death, terrified and vanquished, kept himself surrounded with forces near the palace of the Signory; but the other rectors, who were much less blamable, discovered greater courage, and especially the podesta or provost, whose name was Maffeo da Marradi. He presented himself among the combatants without any fear, and passing the bridge of the Rubaconte amid the swords of the Bardi, made a sign that he wished to speak to them. Upon this, their reverence for the man, his noble demeanor, and the excellent qualities he was known to possess, caused an immediate cessation of the combat, and induced them to listen to him patiently. He very gravely, but without the use of any bitter or aggravating expressions, blamed their conspiracy, showed the danger they would incur if they still contended against the popular feeling, gave them reason to hope their complaints would be heard and mercifully considered, and promised that he himself would use his endeavors in their behalf. He then returned to the Signory, and implored them to spare the blood of the citizens, showing the impropriety of judging them unheard, and at length induced them to consent that the Bardi and the Frescobaldi, with their friends, should leave the city, and without impediment be allowed to retire to their castles. Upon their departure the people being again disarmed, the Signory proceeded against those

only of the Bardi and Frescobaldi families who had taken arms. To lessen their power, they bought of the Bardi the castle of Mangona and that of Vernia; and enacted a law which provided that no citizen should be allowed to possess a castle or fortified place within twenty miles of Florence.

After a few months, Stiatta Frescobaldi was beheaded, and many of his family banished. Those who governed, not satisfied with having subdued the Bardi and the Frescobaldi, as is most commonly the case, the more authority they possessed the worse use they made of it and the more insolent they became. As they had hitherto had one captain of the guard who afflicted the city, they now appointed another for the country, with unlimited authority, to the end that those whom they suspected might abide neither within nor without. And they excited them to such excesses against the whole of the nobility, that these were driven to desperation, and ready to sell both themselves and the city to obtain revenge. The occasion at length came, and they did not fail to use it.

The troubles of Tuscany and Lombardy had brought the city of Lucca under the rule of Mastino della Scala, lord of Verona, who, though bound by contract to assign her to the Florentines, had refused to do so; for, being lord of Parma, he thought he should be able to retain her, and did not trouble himself about his breach of faith. Upon this the Florentines joined the Venetians, and with their assistance brought Mastino to the brink of ruin. They did not, however, derive any benefit from this beyond the slight satisfaction of having conquered him; for the

Venetians, like all who enter into league with less powerful states than themselves, having acquired Trevigi and Vicenza, made peace with Mastino without the least regard for the Florentines. Shortly after this, the Visconti, lords of Milan, having taken Parma from Mastino, he found himself unable to retain Lucca, and therefore determined to sell it. The competitors for the purchase were the Florentines and the Pisans; and in the course of the treaty the Pisans, finding that the Florentines, being the richer people, were about to obtain it, had recourse to arms, and, with the assistance of the Visconti, marched against Lucca. The Florentines did not, on that account, withdraw from the purchase, but having agreed upon the terms with Mastino, paid part of the money, gave security for the remainder, and sent Naddo Rucellai, Giovanni di Bernadino de' Medici, and Rosso di Ricciardo de' Ricci, to take possession, who entered Lucca by force, and Mastino's people delivered the city to them. Nevertheless, the Pisans continued the siege, and the Florentines used their utmost endeavors to relieve her; but after a long war, loss of money, and accumulation of disgrace, they were compelled to retire, and the Pisans became lords of Lucca.

The loss of this city, as in like cases commonly happens, exasperated the people of Florence against the members of the government; at every street corner and public place they were openly censured, and the entire misfortune was laid to the charge of their greediness and mismanagement. At the beginning of the war, twenty citizens had been appointed to undertake the direction of it, who appointed Malatesta da Rimini to the command of the forces. He having exhibited little zeal and less

prudence, they requested assistance from Robert king of Naples, and he sent them Walter duke of Athens, who, as Providence would have it, to bring about the approaching evils, arrived at Florence just at the moment when the undertaking against Lucca had entirely failed. Upon this the Twenty, seeing the anger of the people, thought to inspire them with fresh hopes by the appointment of a new leader, and thus remove, or at least abate, the causes of calumny against themselves. As there was much to be feared, and that the duke of Athens might have greater authority to defend them, they first chose him for their coadjutor, and then appointed him to the command of the army. The nobility, who were discontented from the causes above mentioned, having many of them been acquainted with Walter, when upon a former occasion he had governed Florence for the duke of Calabria, thought they had now an opportunity, though with the ruin of the city, of subduing their enemies; for there was no means of prevailing against those who had oppressed them but of submitting to the authority of a prince who, being acquainted with the worth of one party and the insolence of the other, would restrain the latter and reward the former. To this they added a hope of the benefits they might derive from him when he had acquired the principality by their means. They, therefore, took several occasions of being with him secretly, and entreated he would take the command wholly upon himself, offering him the utmost assistance in their power. To their influence and entreaty were also added those of some families of the people; these were the Peruzzi, Acciajuoli, Antellesi, and Buonaccorsi, who, being overwhelmed with debts, and without means of their own, wished for those of others to liquidate them, and, by the slavery of their country,



to deliver themselves from their servitude to their creditors. These demonstrations excited the ambitious mind of the duke to greater desire of dominion, and in order to gain himself the reputation of strict equity and justice, and thus increase his favor with the plebeians, he prosecuted those who had conducted the war against Lucca, condemned many to pay fines, others to exile, and put to death Giovanni de' Medici, Naddo Rucellai, and Guglielmo Altoviti.

## CHAPTER VIII

The Duke of Athens requires to be made prince of Florence--The Signory address the duke upon the subject--The plebeians proclaim him prince of Florence for life--Tyrannical proceedings of the duke--The city disgusted with him--Conspiracies against the duke--The duke discovers the conspiracies, and becomes terrified--The city rises against him--He is besieged in the palace--Measures adopted by the citizens for reform of the government--The duke is compelled to withdraw from the city--Miserable deaths of Guglielmo da Scesi and his son--Departure of the duke of Athens--His character.

These executions greatly terrified the middle class of citizens, but gave satisfaction to the great and to the plebeians;--to the latter, because it is their nature to delight in evil; and to the former, by thus seeing themselves avenged of the many wrongs they had suffered from the people. When the duke passed along the streets he was hailed with loud cheers, the boldness of his proceedings was praised, and both parties joined in open entreaties that he would search out the faults of the citizens, and punish them.

The office of the Twenty began to fall into disuse, while the power of the duke became great, and the influence of fear excessive; so that everyone, in order to appear friendly to him, caused his arms to be painted over their houses, and the name alone was all he needed to be absolutely prince. Thinking himself upon such a footing that he might

safely attempt anything, he gave the Signory to understand that he judged it necessary for the good of the city, that the sovereignty should be freely given to him, and that as the rest of the citizens were willing that it should be so, he desired they would also consent. The Signory, notwithstanding many had foreseen the ruin of their country, were much disturbed at this demand; and although they were aware of the dangerous position in which they stood, that they might not be wanting in their duty, resolutely refused to comply. The duke had, in order to assume a greater appearance of religion and humanity, chosen for his residence the convent of the Minor Canons of St. Croce, and in order to carry his evil designs into effect, proclaimed that all the people should, on the following morning, present themselves before him in the piazza of the convent. This command alarmed the Signory much more than his discourse to them had done, and they consulted with those citizens whom they thought most attached to their country and to liberty; but they could not devise any better plan, knowing the power of which the duke was possessed, than to endeavor by entreaty to induce him either to forego his design or to make his government less intolerable. A party of them was, therefore, appointed to wait upon him, one of whom addressed him in the following manner:--

"We appear before you, my lord, induced first by the demand which you have made, and then by the orders you have given for a meeting of the people; for it appears to us very clearly, that it is your intention to effect by extraordinary means the design from which we have hitherto withheld our consent. It is not, however, our intention to oppose you

with force, but only to show what a heavy charge you take upon yourself, and the dangerous course you adopt; to the end that you may remember our advice and that of those who, not by consideration of what is beneficial for you, but for the gratification of their own unreasonable wishes, have advised you differently. You are endeavoring to reduce to slavery a city that has always existed in freedom; for the authority which we have at times conceded to the kings of Naples was companionship and not servitude. Have you considered the mighty things which the name of liberty implies to such a city as this, and how delightful it is to those who hear it? It has a power which nothing can subdue, time cannot wear away, nor can any degree of merit in a prince countervail the loss of it. Consider, my lord, how great the force must be that can keep a city like this in subjection, no foreign aid would enable you to do it; neither can you confide in those at home; for they who are at present your friends, and advise you to adopt the course you now pursue, as soon as with your assistance they have overcome their enemies, will at once turn their thoughts toward effecting your destruction, and then take the government upon themselves. The plebeians, in whom you confide, will change upon any accident, however trivial; so that in a very short time you may expect to see the whole city opposed to you, which will produce both their ruin and your own. Nor will you be able to find any remedy for this; for princes who have but few enemies may make their government very secure by the death or banishment of those who are opposed to them; but when the hatred is universal, no security whatever can be found, for you cannot tell from what direction the evil may commence; and he who has to apprehend every man his enemy cannot make himself assured of

anyone. And if you should attempt to secure a friend or two, you would only increase the dangers of your situation; for the hatred of the rest would be increased by your success, and they would become more resolutely disposed to vengeance.

"That time can neither destroy nor abate the desire for freedom is most certain; for it has been often observed, that those have reassumed their liberty who in their own persons had never tasted of its charms, and love it only from remembrance of what they have heard their fathers relate; and, therefore, when recovered, have preserved it with indomitable resolution and at every hazard. And even when their fathers could not remember it, the public buildings, the halls of the magistracy, and the insignia of free institutions, remind them of it; and these things cannot fail to be known and greatly desired by every class of citizens.

"What is it you imagine you can do, that would be an equivalent for the sweets of liberty, or make men lose the desire of their present conditions? No; if you were to join the whole of Tuscany to the Florentine rule, if you were to return to the city daily in triumph over her enemies, what could it avail? The glory would not be ours, but yours. We should not acquire fellow-citizens, but partakers of our bondage, who would serve to sink us still deeper in ignominy. And if your conduct were in every respect upright, your demeanor amiable, and your judgments equitable, all these would be insufficient to make you beloved. If you imagine otherwise, you deceive yourself; for, to one

accustomed to the enjoyment of liberty, the slightest chains feel heavy, and every tie upon his free soul oppresses him. Besides, it is impossible to find a violent people associated with a good prince, for of necessity they must soon become alike, or their difference produce the ruin of one of them. You may, therefore, be assured, that you will either have to hold this city by force, to effect which, guards, castles, and external aid have oft been found insufficient, or be content with the authority we have conferred; and this we would advise, reminding you that no dominion can be durable to which the governed do not consent; and we have no wish to lead you, blinded by ambition, to such a point that, unable either to stand or advance, you must, to the great injury of both, of necessity fall."

This discourse did not in the slightest degree soften the obdurate mind of the duke, who replied that it was not his intention to rob the city of her liberty, but to restore it to her; for those cities alone are in slavery that are disunited, while the united are free. As Florence, by her factions and ambition, had deprived herself of liberty, he should restore, not take it from her; and as he had been induced to take this charge upon himself, not from his own ambition, but at the entreaty of a great number of citizens, they would do well to be satisfied with that which produced contentment among the rest. With regard to the danger he might incur, he thought nothing of it; for it was not the part of a good man to avoid doing good from his apprehension of evil, and it was the part of a coward to shun a glorious undertaking because some uncertainty attended the success of the attempt; and he knew he should so

conduct himself, that they would soon see they had entertained great apprehensions and been in little danger.

The Signory then agreed, finding they could not do better, that on the following morning the people should be assembled in their accustomed place of meeting, and with their consent the Signory should confer upon the duke the sovereignty of the city for one year, on the same conditions as it had been intrusted to the duke of Calabria. It was upon the 8th of November, 1342, when the duke, accompanied by Giovanni della Tosa and all his confederates, with many other citizens, came to the piazza or court of the palace, and having, with the Signory mounted upon the ringhiera, or rostrum (as the Florentines call those steps which lead to the palace), the agreement which had been entered into between the Signory and himself was read. When they had come to the passage which gave the government to him for one year, the people shouted, "FOR LIFE." Upon this, Francesco Rustichelli, one of the Signory, arose to speak, and endeavored to abate the tumult and procure a hearing; but the mob, with their hootings, prevented him from being heard by anyone; so that with the consent of the people the duke was elected, not for one year merely, but for life. He was then borne through the piazza by the crowd, shouting his name as they proceeded.

It is the custom that he who is appointed to the guard of the palace shall, in the absence of the Signory, remain locked within. This office was at that time held by Rinieri di Giotto, who, bribed by the friends of the duke, without waiting for any force, admitted him immediately.

The Signory, terrified and dishonored, retired to their own houses; the palace was plundered by the followers of the duke, the Gonfalon of the people torn to pieces, and the arms of the duke placed over the palace. All this happened to the indescribable sorrow of good men, though to the satisfaction of those who, either from ignorance or malignity, were consenting parties.

The duke, having acquired the sovereignty of the city, in order to strip those of all authority who had been defenders of her liberty, forbade the Signory to assemble in the palace, and appointed a private dwelling for their use. He took their colors from the Gonfaloniers of the companies of the people; abolished the ordinances made for the restraint of the great; set at liberty those who were imprisoned; recalled the Bardi and the Frescobaldi from exile, and forbade everyone from carrying arms about his person. In order the better to defend himself against those within the city, he made friends of all he could around it, and therefore conferred great benefits upon the Aretini and other subjects of the Florentines. He made peace with the Pisans, although raised to power in order that he might carry on war against them; ceased paying interest to those merchants who, during the war against Lucca, had lent money to the republic; increased the old taxes, levied new ones, and took from the Signory all authority. His rectors were Baglione da Perugia and Guglielmo da Scesi, who, with Cerrettieri Bisdomini, were the persons with whom he consulted on public affairs. He imposed burdensome taxes upon the citizens; his decisions between contending parties were unjust; and that precision and humanity which he had at



first assumed, became cruelty and pride; so that many of the greatest citizens and noblest people were, either by fines, death, or some new invention, grievously oppressed. And in completing the same bad system, both without the city and within, he appointed six rectors for the country, who beat and plundered the inhabitants. He suspected the great, although he had been benefited by them, and had restored many to their country; for he felt assured that the generous minds of the nobility would not allow them, from any motives, to submit contentedly to his authority. He also began to confer benefits and advantages upon the lowest orders, thinking that with their assistance, and the arms of foreigners, he would be able to preserve the tyranny. The month of May, during which feasts are held, being come, he caused many companies to be formed of the plebeians and very lowest of the people, and to these, dignified with splendid titles, he gave colors and money; and while one party went in bacchanalian procession through the city, others were stationed in different parts of it, to receive them as guests. As the report of the duke's authority spread abroad, many of French origin came to him, for all of whom he found offices and emoluments, as if they had been the most trustworthy of men; so that in a short time Florence became not only subject to French dominion, but adopted their dress and manners; for men and women, without regard to propriety or sense of shame, imitated them. But that which disgusted the people most completely was the violence which, without any distinction of quality or rank, he and his followers committed upon the women.

The people were filled with indignation, seeing the majesty of the state

overturned, its ordinances annihilated, its laws annulled, and every decent regulation set at naught; for men unaccustomed to royal pomp could not endure to see this man surrounded with his armed satellites on foot and on horseback; and having now a closer view of their disgrace, they were compelled to honor him whom they in the highest degree hated. To this hatred, was added the terror occasioned by the continual imposition of new taxes and frequent shedding of blood, with which he impoverished and consumed the city.

The duke was not unaware of these impressions existing strongly in the people's minds, nor was he without fear of the consequences; but still pretended to think himself beloved; and when Matteo di Morozzo, either to acquire his favor or to free himself from danger, gave information that the family of the Medici and some others had entered into a conspiracy against him he not only did not inquire into the matter, but caused the informer to be put to a cruel death. This mode of proceeding restrained those who were disposed to acquaint him of his danger and gave additional courage to such as sought his ruin. Bertone Cini, having ventured to speak against the taxes with which the people were loaded, had his tongue cut out with such barbarous cruelty as to cause his death. This shocking act increased the people's rage, and their hatred of the duke; for those who were accustomed to discourse and to act upon every occasion with the greatest boldness, could not endure to live with their hands tied and forbidden to speak.

This oppression increased to such a degree, that not merely the

Florentines, who though unable to preserve their liberty cannot endure slavery, but the most servile people on earth would have been roused to attempt the recovery of freedom; and consequently many citizens of all ranks resolved either to deliver themselves from this odious tyranny or die in the attempt. Three distinct conspiracies were formed; one of the great; another of the people, and the third of the working classes; each of which, besides the general causes which operated upon the whole, were excited by some other particular grievance. The great found themselves deprived of all participation in the government; the people had lost the power they possessed, and the artificers saw themselves deficient in the usual remuneration of their labor.

Agnolo Acciajuoli was at this time archbishop of Florence, and by his discourses had formerly greatly favored the duke, and procured him many followers among the higher class of the people. But when he found himself lord of the city, and became acquainted with his tyrannical mode of proceeding, it appeared to him that he had misled his countrymen; and to correct the evil he had done, he saw no other course, but to attempt the cure by the means which had caused it. He therefore became the leader of the first and most powerful conspiracy, and was joined by the Bardi, Rossi, Frescobaldi, Scali Altoviti, Magalotti, Strozzi, and Mancini. Of the second, the principals were Manno and Corso Donati, and with them the Pazzi, Cavicciulli, Cerchi, and Albizzi. Of the third the first was Antonio Adimari, and with him the Medici, Bordini, Rucellai, and Aldobrandini. It was the intention of these last, to slay him in the house of the Albizzi, whither he was expected to go on St. John's day,

to see the horses run, but he not having gone, their design did not succeed. They then resolved to attack him as he rode through the city; but they found this would be very difficult; for he was always accompanied with a considerable armed force, and never took the same road twice together, so that they had no certainty of where to find him. They had a design of slaying him in the council, although they knew that if he were dead, they would be at the mercy of his followers.

While these matters were being considered by the conspirators, Antonio Adimari, in expectation of getting assistance from them, disclosed the affair to some Siennese, his friends, naming certain of the conspirators, and assuring them that the whole city was ready to rise at once. One of them communicated the matter to Francesco Brunelleschi, not with a design to injure the plot, but in the hope that he would join them. Francesco, either from personal fear, or private hatred of some one, revealed the whole to the duke; whereupon, Pagolo del Masecha and Simon da Monterappoli were taken, who acquainted him with the number and quality of the conspirators. This terrified him, and he was advised to request their presence rather than to take them prisoners, for if they fled, he might without disgrace, secure himself by banishment of the rest. He therefore sent for Antonio Adimari, who, confiding in his companions, appeared immediately, and was detained. Francesco Brunelleschi and Ugucione Buondelmonti advised the duke to take as many of the conspirators prisoners as he could, and put them to death; but he, thinking his strength unequal to his foes, did not adopt this course, but took another, which, had it succeeded, would have freed him

from his enemies and increased his power. It was the custom of the duke to call the citizens together upon some occasions and advise with them. He therefore having first sent to collect forces from without, made a list of three hundred citizens, and gave it to his messengers, with orders to assemble them under the pretense of public business; and having drawn them together, it was his intention either to put them to death or imprison them.

The capture of Antonio Adimari and the sending for forces, which could not be kept secret, alarmed the citizens, and more particularly those who were in the plot, so that the boldest of them refused to attend, and as each had read the list, they sought each other, and resolved to rise at once and die like men, with arms in their hands, rather than be led like calves to the slaughter. In a very short time the chief conspirators became known to each other, and resolved that the next day, which was the 26th July, 1343, they would raise a disturbance in the Old Market place, then arm themselves and call the people to freedom.

The next morning being come, at nine o'clock, according to agreement, they took arms, and at the call of liberty assembled, each party in its own district, under the ensigns and with the arms of the people, which had been secretly provided by the conspirators. All the heads of families, as well of the nobility as of the people, met together, and swore to stand in each other's defense, and effect the death of the duke; except some of the Buondelmonti and of the Cavalcanti, with those four families of the people which had taken so conspicuous a part in

making him sovereign, and the butchers, with others, the lowest of the plebeians, who met armed in the piazza in his favor.

The duke immediately fortified the place, and ordered those of his people who were lodged in different parts of the city to mount upon horseback and join those in the court; but, on their way thither, many were attacked and slain. However, about three hundred horse assembled, and the duke was in doubt whether he should come forth and meet the enemy, or defend himself within. On the other hand, the Medici, Cavicciulli, Rucellai, and other families who had been most injured by him, fearful that if he came forth, many of those who had taken arms against him would discover themselves his partisans, in order to deprive him of the occasion of attacking them and increasing the number of his friends, took the lead and assailed the palace. Upon this, those families of the people who had declared for the duke, seeing themselves boldly attacked, changed their minds, and all took part with the citizens, except Ugucione Buondelmonti, who retired into the palace, and Giannozzo Cavalcanti, who having withdrawn with some of his followers to the new market, mounted upon a bench, and begged that those who were going in arms to the piazza, would take the part of the duke. In order to terrify them, he exaggerated the number of his people and threatened all with death who should obstinately persevere in their undertaking against their sovereign. But not finding any one either to follow him, or to chastise his insolence, and seeing his labor fruitless, he withdrew to his own house.

In the meantime, the contest in the piazza between the people and the forces of the duke was very great; but although the place served them for defense, they were overcome, some yielding to the enemy, and others, quitting their horses, fled within the walls. While this was going on, Corso and Amerigo Donati, with a part of the people, broke open the stinche, or prisons; burnt the papers of the provost and of the public chamber; pillaged the houses of the rectors, and slew all who had held offices under the duke whom they could find. The duke, finding the piazza in possession of his enemies, the city opposed to him, and without any hope of assistance, endeavored by an act of clemency to recover the favor of the people. Having caused those whom he had made prisoners to be brought before him, with amiable and kindly expressions he set them at liberty, and made Antonio Adimari a knight, although quite against his will. He caused his own arms to be taken down, and those of the people to be replaced over the palace; but these things coming out of season, and forced by his necessities, did him little good. He remained, notwithstanding all he did, besieged in the palace, and saw that having aimed at too much he had lost all, and would most likely, after a few days, die either of hunger, or by the weapons of his enemies. The citizens assembled in the church of Santa Reparata, to form the new government, and appointed fourteen citizens, half from the nobility and half from the people, who, with the archbishop, were invested with full authority to remodel the state of Florence. They also elected six others to take upon them the duties of provost, till he who should be finally chosen took office, the duties of which were usually performed by a subject of some neighboring state.

Many had come to Florence in defense of the people; among whom were a party from Sienna, with six ambassadors, men of high consideration in their own country. These endeavored to bring the people and the duke to terms; but the former refused to listen to any whatever, unless Guglielmo da Scesi and his son, with Cerrettieri Bisdolini, were first given up to them. The duke would not consent to this; but being threatened by those who were shut up with him, he was forced to comply. The rage of men is certainly always found greater, and their revenge more furious upon the recovery of liberty, than when it has only been defended. Guglielmo and his son were placed among the thousands of their enemies, and the latter was not yet eighteen years old; neither his beauty, his innocence, nor his youth, could save him from the fury of the multitude; but both were instantly slain. Those who could not wound them while alive, wounded them after they were dead; and not satisfied with tearing them to pieces, they hewed their bodies with swords, tore them with their hands, and even with their teeth. And that every sense might be satiated with vengeance, having first heard their moans, seen their wounds, and touched their lacerated bodies, they wished even the stomach to be satisfied, that having glutted the external senses, the one within might also have its share. This rabid fury, however hurtful to the father and son, was favorable to Cerrettieri; for the multitude, wearied with their cruelty toward the former, quite forgot him, so that he, not being asked for, remained in the palace, and during night was conveyed safely away by his friends.



The rage of the multitude being appeased by their blood, an agreement was made that the duke and his people, with whatever belonged to him, should quit the city in safety; that he should renounce all claim, of whatever kind, upon Florence, and that upon his arrival in the Casentino he should ratify his renunciation. On the sixth of August he set out, accompanied by many citizens, and having arrived at the Casentino he ratified the agreement, although unwillingly, and would not have kept his word if Count Simon had not threatened to take him back to Florence. This duke, as his proceedings testified, was cruel and avaricious, difficult to speak with, and haughty in reply. He desired the service of men, not the cultivation of their better feelings, and strove rather to inspire them with fear than love. Nor was his person less despicable than his manners; he was short, his complexion was black, and he had a long, thin beard. He was thus in every respect contemptible; and at the end of ten months, his misconduct deprived him of the sovereignty which the evil counsel of others had given him.

## CHAPTER IX

Many cities and territories, subject to the Florentines, rebel--Prudent conduct adopted upon this occasion--The city is divided into quarters--Disputes between the nobility and the people--The bishop endeavors to reconcile them, but does not succeed--The government reformed by the people--Riot of Andrea Strozzi--Serious disagreements between the nobility and the people--They come to arms, and the nobility are subdued--The plague in Florence of which Boccaccio speaks.

These events taking place in the city, induced all the dependencies of the Florentine state to throw off their yoke; so that Arezzo, Castiglione, Pistoia, Volterra, Colle, and San Gemignano rebelled. Thus Florence found herself deprived of both her tyrant and her dominions at the same moment, and in recovering her liberty, taught her subjects how they might become free. The duke being expelled and the territories lost, the fourteen citizens and the bishop thought it would be better to act kindly toward their subjects in peace, than to make them enemies by war, and to show a desire that their subjects should be free as well as themselves. They therefore sent ambassadors to the people of Arezzo, to renounce all dominion over that city, and to enter into a treaty with them; to the end that as they could not retain them as subjects, they might make use of them as friends. They also, in the best manner they were able, agreed with the other places that they should retain their freedom, and that, being free, they might mutually assist each other in the preservation of their liberties. This prudent course was attended

with a most favorable result; for Arezzo, not many years afterward, returned to the Florentine rule, and the other places, in the course of a few months, returned to their former obedience. Thus it frequently occurs that we sooner attain our ends by a seeming indifferent to them, than by more obstinate pursuit.

Having settled external affairs, they now turned to the consideration of those within the city; and after some altercation between the nobility and the people, it was arranged that the nobility should form one-third of the Signory and fill one-half of the other offices. The city was, as we have before shown, divided into sixths; and hence there would be six signors, one for each sixth, except when, from some more than ordinary cause, there had been twelve or thirteen created; but when this had occurred they were again soon reduced to six. It now seemed desirable to make an alteration in this respect, as well because the sixths were not properly divided, as that, wishing to give their proportion to the great, it became desirable to increase the number. They therefore divided the city into quarters, and for each created three signors. They abolished the office of Gonfalonier of Justice, and also the Gonfaloniers of the companies of the people; and instead of the twelve Buonomini, or good men, created eight counsellors, four from each party. The government having been established in this manner, the city might have been in repose if the great had been content to live in that moderation which civil society requires. But they produced a contrary result, for those out of office would not conduct themselves as citizens, and those who were in government wished to be lords, so that

every day furnished some new instance of their insolence and pride. These things were very grievous to the people, and they began to regret that for one tyrant put down, there had sprung up a thousand. The arrogance of one party and the anger of the other rose to such a degree, that the heads of the people complained to the bishop of the improper conduct of the nobility, and what unfit associates they had become for the people; and begged he would endeavor to induce them to be content with their share of administration in the other offices, and leave the magistracy of the Signory wholly to themselves.

The bishop was naturally a well-meaning man, but his want of firmness rendered him easily influenced. Hence, at the instance of his associates, he at first favored the duke of Athens, and afterward, by the advice of other citizens, conspired against him. At the reformation of the government, he had favored the nobility, and now he appeared to incline toward the people, moved by the reasons which they had advanced. Thinking to find in others the same instability of purpose, he endeavored to effect an amicable arrangement. With this design he called together the fourteen who were yet in office, and in the best terms he could imagine advised them to give up the Signory to the people, in order to secure the peace of the city; and assured them that if they refused, ruin would most probably be the result.

This discourse excited the anger of the nobility to the highest pitch, and Ridolfo de' Bardi reproved him in unmeasured terms as a man of little faith; reminding him of his friendship for the duke, to prove the

duplicity of his present conduct, and saying, that in driving him away he had acted the part of a traitor. He concluded by telling him, that the honors they had acquired at their own peril, they would at their own peril defend. They then left the bishop, and in great wrath, informed their associates in the government, and all the families of the nobility, of what had been done. The people also expressed their thoughts to each other, and as the nobility made preparations for the defense of their signors, they determined not to wait till they had perfected their arrangements; and therefore, being armed, hastened to the palace, shouting, as they went along, that the nobility must give up their share in the government.

The uproar and excitement were astonishing. The Signors of the nobility found themselves abandoned; for their friends, seeing all the people in arms, did not dare to rise in their defense, but each kept within his own house. The Signors of the people endeavored to abate the excitement of the multitude, by affirming their associates to be good and moderate men; but, not succeeding in their attempt, to avoid a greater evil, sent them home to their houses, whither they were with difficulty conducted. The nobility having left the palace, the office of the four councillors was taken from their party, and conferred upon twelve of the people. To the eight signors who remained, a Gonfalonier of Justice was added, and sixteen Gonfaloniers of the companies of the people; and the council was so reformed, that the government remained wholly in the hands of the popular party.

At the time these events took place there was a great scarcity in the city, and discontent prevailed both among the highest and the lowest classes; in the latter for want of food, and in the former from having lost their power in the state. This circumstance induced Andrea Strozzi to think of making himself sovereign of the city. Selling his corn at a lower price than others did, a great many people flocked to his house; emboldened by the sight of these, he one morning mounted his horse, and, followed by a considerable number, called the people to arms, and in a short time drew together about 4,000 men, with whom he proceeded to the Signory, and demanded that the gates of the palace should be opened. But the signors, by threats and the force which they retained in the palace, drove them from the court; and then by proclamation so terrified them, that they gradually dropped off and returned to their homes, and Andrea, finding himself alone, with some difficulty escaped falling into the hands of the magistrates.

This event, although an act of great temerity, and attended with the result that usually follows such attempts, raised a hope in the minds of the nobility of overcoming the people, seeing that the lowest of the plebeians were at enmity with them. And to profit by this circumstance, they resolved to arm themselves, and with justifiable force recover those rights of which they had been unjustly deprived. Their minds acquired such an assurance of success, that they openly provided themselves with arms, fortified their houses, and even sent to their friends in Lombardy for assistance. The people and the Signory made preparation for their defense, and requested aid from Perugia and

Sienna, so that the city was filled with the armed followers of either party. The nobility on this side of the Arno divided themselves into three parts; the one occupied the houses of the Cavicciulli, near the church of St. John; another, the houses of the Pazzi and the Donati, near the great church of St. Peter; and the third those of the Cavalcanti in the New Market. Those beyond the river fortified the bridges and the streets in which their houses stood; the Nerli defended the bridge of the Carraja; the Frescobaldi and the Manelli, the church of the Holy Trinity; and the Rossi and the Bardi, the bridge of the Rubaconte and the Old Bridge. The people were drawn together under the Gonfalon of justice and the ensigns of the companies of the artisans.

Both sides being thus arranged in order of battle, the people thought it imprudent to defer the contest, and the attack was commenced by the Medici and the Rondinelli, who assailed the Cavicciulli, where the houses of the latter open upon the piazza of St. John. Here both parties contended with great obstinacy, and were mutually wounded, from the towers by stones and other missiles, and from below by arrows. They fought for three hours; but the forces of the people continuing to increase, and the Cavicciulli finding themselves overcome by numbers, and hopeless of other assistance, submitted themselves to the people, who saved their houses and property; and having disarmed them, ordered them to disperse among their relatives and friends, and remain unarmed. Being victorious in the first attack, they easily overpowered the Pazzi and the Donati, whose numbers were less than those they had subdued; so that there only remained on this side of the Arno, the Cavalcanti, who

were strong both in respect of the post they had chosen and in their followers. Nevertheless, seeing all the Gonfalons against them, and that the others had been overcome by three Gonfalons alone, they yielded without offering much resistance. Three parts of the city were now in the hands of the people, and only one in possession of the nobility; but this was the strongest, as well on account of those who held it, as from its situation, being defended by the Arno; hence it was first necessary to force the bridges. The Old Bridge was first assailed and offered a brave resistance; for the towers were armed, the streets barricaded, and the barricades defended by the most resolute men; so that the people were repulsed with great loss. Finding their labor at this point fruitless, they endeavored to force the Rubaconte Bridge, but no better success resulting, they left four Gonfalons in charge of the two bridges, and with the others attacked the bridge of the Carraja. Here, although the Nerli defended themselves like brave men, they could not resist the fury of the people; for this bridge, having no towers, was weaker than the others, and was attacked by the Capponi, and many families of the people who lived in that vicinity. Being thus assailed on all sides, they abandoned the barricades and gave way to the people, who then overcame the Rossi and the Frescobaldi; for all those beyond the Arno took part with the conquerors.

There was now no resistance made except by the Bardi, who remained undaunted, notwithstanding the failure of their friends, the union of the people against them, and the little chance of success which they seemed to have. They resolved to die fighting, and rather see their



houses burned and plundered, than submit to the power of their enemies. They defended themselves with such obstinacy, that many fruitless attempts were made to overcome them, both at the Old Bridge and the Rubaconte; but their foes were always repulsed with loss. There had in former times been a street which led between the houses of the Pitti, from the Roman road to the walls upon Mount St. George. By this way the people sent six Gonfalons, with orders to assail their houses from behind. This attack overcame the resolution of the Bardi, and decided the day in favor of the people; for when those who defended the barricades in the street learned that their houses were being plundered, they left the principal fight and hastened to their defense. This caused the Old Bridge to be lost; the Bardi fled in all directions and were received into the houses of the Quaratesi, Panzanesi, and Mozzi. The people, especially the lower classes, greedy for spoil, sacked and destroyed their houses, and pulled down and burned their towers and palaces with such outrageous fury, that the most cruel enemy of the Florentine name would have been ashamed of taking part in such wanton destruction.

The nobility being thus overcome, the people reformed the government; and as they were of three kinds, the higher, the middle, and the lower class, it was ordered that the first should appoint two signors; the two latter three each, and that the Gonfalonier should be chosen alternately from either party. Besides this, all the regulations for the restraint of the nobility were renewed; and in order to weaken them still more, many were reduced to the grade of the people. The ruin of the nobility

was so complete, and depressed them so much, that they never afterward ventured to take arms for the recovery of their power, but soon became humbled and abject in the extreme. And thus Florence lost the generosity of her character and her distinction in arms.

After these events the city remained in peace till the year 1353. In the course of this period occurred the memorable plague, described with so much eloquence by Giovanni Boccaccio, and by which Florence lost 96,000 souls. In 1348, began the first war with the Visconti, occasioned by the archbishop, then prince of Milan; and when this was concluded, dissensions again arose in the city; for although the nobility were destroyed, fortune did not fail to cause new divisions and new troubles.