

BOOK III

CHAPTER I

Reflections upon the domestic discords of republics--A parallel between the discords of Rome and those of Florence--Enmities between the families of the Ricci and the Albizzi--Uguccione de' Ricci causes the laws against the Ghibellines to be renewed in order to injure the Albizzi--Piero degli Albizzi derives advantage from it--Origin of admonitions and the troubles which result from them--Uguccione de' Ricci moderates their injustice--Difficulties increase--A meeting of the citizens--They address the Signory--The Signory attempt to remedy the evils.

Those serious, though natural enmities, which occur between the popular classes and the nobility, arising from the desire of the latter to command, and the disinclination of the former to obey, are the causes of most of the troubles which take place in cities; and from this diversity of purpose, all the other evils which disturb republics derive their origin. This kept Rome disunited; and this, if it be allowable to compare small things with great, held Florence in disunion; although in each city it produced a different result; for animosities were only beginning with the people and nobility of Rome contended, while ours were brought to a conclusion by the contentions of our citizens. A new

law settled the disputes of Rome; those of Florence were only terminated by the death and banishment of many of her best people. Those of Rome increased her military virtue, while that of Florence was quite extinguished by her divisions. The quarrels of Rome established different ranks of society, those of Florence abolished the distinctions which had previously existed. This diversity of effects must have been occasioned by the different purposes which the two people had in view. While the people of Rome endeavored to associate with the nobility in the supreme honors, those of Florence strove to exclude the nobility from all participation in them: as the desire of the Roman people was more reasonable, no particular offense was given to the nobility; they therefore consented to it without having recourse to arms; so that, after some disputes concerning particular points, both parties agreed to the enactment of a law which, while it satisfied the people, preserved the nobility in the enjoyment of their dignity.

On the other hand, the demands of the people of Florence being insolent and unjust, the nobility, became desperate, prepared for their defense with their utmost energy, and thus bloodshed and the exile of citizens followed. The laws which were afterward made, did not provide for the common good, but were framed wholly in favor of the conquerors. This too, must be observed, that from the acquisition of power, made by the people of Rome, their minds were very much improved; for all the offices of state being attainable as well by the people as the nobility, the peculiar excellencies of the latter exercised a most beneficial influence upon the former; and as the city increased in virtue she

attained a more exalted greatness.

But in Florence, the people being conquerors, the nobility were deprived of all participation in the government; and in order to regain a portion of it, it became necessary for them not only to seem like the people, but to be like them in behavior, mind, and mode of living. Hence arose those changes in armorial bearings, and in the titles of families, which the nobility adopted, in order that they might seem to be of the people; military virtue and generosity of feeling became extinguished in them; the people not possessing these qualities, they could not appreciate them, and Florence became by degrees more and more depressed and humiliated. The virtue of the Roman nobility degenerating into pride, the citizens soon found that the business of the state could not be carried on without a prince. Florence had now come to such a point, that with a comprehensive mind at the head of affairs she would easily have been made to take any form that he might have been disposed to give her; as may be partly observed by a perusal of the preceding book.

Having given an account of the origin of Florence, the commencement of her liberty, with the causes of her divisions, and shown how the factions of the nobility and the people ceased with the tyranny of the duke of Athens, and the ruin of the former, we have now to speak of the animosities between the citizens and the plebeians and the various circumstances which they produced.

The nobility being overcome, and the war with the archbishop of Milan

concluded, there did not appear any cause of dissension in Florence. But the evil fortune of the city, and the defective nature of her laws, gave rise to enmities between the family of the Albizzi and that of the Ricci, which divided her citizens as completely as those of the Buondelmonti and the Uberti, or the Donati and the Cerchi had formerly done. The pontiffs, who at this time resided in France, and the emperors, who abode in Germany, in order to maintain their influence in Italy, sent among us multitudes of soldiers of many countries, as English, Dutch, and Bretons. As these, upon the conclusion of a war, were thrown out of pay, though still in the country, they, under the standard of some soldier of fortune, plundered such people as were least prepared to defend themselves. In the year 1353 one of these companies came into Tuscany under the command of Monsignor Reale, of Provence, and his approach terrified all the cities of Italy. The Florentines not only provided themselves forces, but many citizens, among whom were the Albizzi and the Ricci, armed themselves in their own defense. These families were at the time full of hatred against each other, and each thought to obtain the sovereignty of the republic by overcoming his enemy. They had not yet proceeded to open violence, but only contended in the magistracies and councils. The city being all in arms, a quarrel arose in the Old Market place, and, as it frequently happens in similar cases, a great number of people were drawn together. The disturbance spreading, it was told the Ricci that the Albizzi had assailed their partisans, and to the Albizzi that the Ricci were in quest of them. Upon this the whole city arose, and it was all the magistrates could do to restrain these families, and prevent the actual occurrence of a disaster

which, without being the fault of either of them, had been willfully though falsely reported as having already taken place. This apparently trifling circumstance served to inflame the minds of the parties, and make each the more resolved to increase the number of their followers. And as the citizens, since the ruin of the nobility, were on such an equality that the magistrates were more respected now than they had previously been, they designed to proceed toward the suppression of this disorder with civil authority alone.

We have before related, that after the victory of Charles I. the government was formed of the Guelphic party, and that it thus acquired great authority over the Ghibellines. But time, a variety of circumstances, and new divisions had so contributed to sink this party feeling into oblivion, that many of Ghibelline descent now filled the highest offices. Observing this, Uguccone, the head of the family of the Ricci, contrived that the law against the Ghibellines should be again brought into operation; many imagining the Albizzi to be of that faction, they having arisen in Arezzo, and come long ago to Florence. Uguccone by this means hoped to deprive the Albizzi of participation in the government, for all of Ghibelline blood who were found to hold offices, would be condemned in the penalties which this law provided. The design of Uguccone was discovered to Piero son of Filippo degli Albizzi, and he resolved to favor it: for he saw that to oppose it would at once declare him a Ghibelline; and thus the law which was renewed by the ambition of the Ricci for his destruction, instead of robbing Piero degli Albizzi of reputation, contributed to increase his influence,

although it laid the foundation of many evils. Nor is it possible for a republic to enact a law more pernicious than one relating to matters which have long transpired. Piero having favored this law, which had been contrived by his enemies for his stumbling-block, it became the stepping-stone to his greatness; for, making himself the leader of this new order of things, his authority went on increasing, and he was in greater favor with the Guelphs than any other man.

As there could not be found a magistrate willing to search out who were Ghibellines, and as this renewed enactment against them was therefore of small value, it was provided that authority should be given to the Capitani to find out who were of this faction; and, having discovered, to signify and ADMONISH them that they were not to take upon themselves any office of government; to which ADMONITIONS, if they were disobedient, they became condemned in the penalties. Hence, all those who in Florence are deprived of the power to hold offices are called ammoniti, or ADMONISHED.

The Capitani in time acquiring greater audacity, admonished not only those to whom the admonition was applicable, but any others at the suggestion of their own avarice or ambition; and from 1356, when this law was made, to 1366, there had been admonished above 200 citizens. The Captains of the Parts and the sect of the Guelphs were thus become powerful; for every one honored them for fear of being admonished; and most particularly the leaders, who were Piero degli Albizzi, Lapo da Castiglionchio, and Carlo Strozzi. This insolent mode of proceeding was

offensive to many; but none felt so particularly injured with it as the Ricci; for they knew themselves to have occasioned it, they saw it involved the ruin of the republic, and their enemies, the Albizzi, contrary to their intention, became great in consequence.

On this account Ugucione de' Ricci, being one of the Signory, resolved to put an end to the evil which he and his friends had originated, and with a new law provided that to the six Captains of Parts an additional three should be appointed, of whom two should be chosen from the companies of minor artificers, and that before any party could be declared Ghibelline, the declaration of the Capitani must be confirmed by twenty-four Guelphic citizens, appointed for the purpose. This provision tempered for a time the power of the Capitani, so that the admonitions were greatly diminished, if not wholly laid aside. Still the parties of the Albizzi and the Ricci were continually on the alert to oppose each other's laws, deliberations, and enterprises, not from a conviction of their inexpediency, but from a hatred of their promoters.

In such distractions the time passed from 1366 to 1371, when the Guelphs again regained the ascendant. There was in the family of the Buondelmonti a gentleman named Benchi, who, as an acknowledgment of his merit in a war against the Pisans, though one of the nobility, had been admitted among the people, and thus became eligible to office among the Signory; but when about to take his seat with them, a law was made that no nobleman who had become of the popular class should be allowed to assume that office. This gave great offense to Benchi, who, in union

with Piero degli Albizzi, determined to depress the less powerful of the popular party with ADMONITIONS, and obtain the government for themselves. By the interest which Benchi possessed with the ancient nobility, and that of Piero with most of the influential citizens, the Guelphic party resumed their ascendancy, and by new reforms among the PARTS, so remodeled the administration as to be able to dispose of the offices of the captains and the twenty-four citizens at pleasure. They then returned to the ADMONITIONS with greater audacity than ever, and the house of the Albizzi became powerful as the head of this faction.

On the other hand, the Ricci made the most strenuous exertions against their designs; so that anxiety universally prevailed, and ruin was apprehended alike from both parties. In consequence of this a great number of citizens, out of love to their country, assembled in the church of St. Piero Scarraggio, and after a long consideration of the existing disorders, presented themselves before the Signors, whom one of the principal among them addressed in the following terms:--

"Many of us, magnificent Signors! were afraid of meeting even for consideration of public business, without being publicly called together, lest we should be noted as presumptuous or condemned as ambitious. But seeing that so many citizens daily assemble in the lodges and halls of the palace, not for any public utility, but only for the gratification of their own ambition, we have thought that as those who assemble for the ruin of the republic are fearless, so still less ought they to be apprehensive who meet together only for its advantage; nor

ought we to be anxious respecting the opinion they may form of our assembling, since they are so utterly indifferent to the opinion of others. Our affection for our country, magnificent Signors! caused us to assemble first, and now brings us before you, to speak of grievances already great and daily increasing in our republic, and to offer our assistance for their removal: and we doubt not that, though a difficult undertaking, it will still be attended with success, if you will lay aside all private regards, and authoritatively use the public force.

"The common corruption of all the cities of Italy, magnificent Signors! has infested and still vitiates your own; for when this province had shaken off the imperial yoke, her cities not being subject to any powerful influence that might restrain them, administered affairs, not as free men do, but as a factious populace; and hence have arisen all the other evils and disorders that have appeared. In the first place, there cannot be found among the citizens either unity or friendship, except with those whose common guilt, either against their country or against private individuals, is a bond of union. And as the knowledge of religion and the fear of God seem to be alike extinct, oaths and promises have lost their validity, and are kept as long as it is found expedient; they are adopted only as a means of deception, and he is most applauded and respected whose cunning is most efficient and secure. On this account bad men are received with the approbation due to virtue, and good ones are regarded only in the light of fools.

"And certainly in the cities of Italy all that is corruptible and

corrupting is assembled. The young are idle, the old lascivious, and each sex and every age abounds with debasing habits, which the good laws, by misapplication, have lost the power to correct. Hence arises the avarice so observable among the citizens, and that greediness, not for true glory, but for unworthy honors; from which follow hatred, animosities, quarrels, and factions; resulting in deaths, banishments, affliction to all good men, and the advancement of the most unprincipled; for the good, confiding in their innocence, seek neither safety nor advancement by illegal methods as the wicked do, and thus unhonored and undefended they sink into oblivion.

"From proceedings such as these, arise at once the attachment for and influence of parties; bad men follow them through ambition and avarice, and necessity compels the good to pursue the same course. And most lamentable is it to observe how the leaders and movers of parties sanctify their base designs with words that are all piety and virtue; they have the name of liberty constantly in their mouths, though their actions prove them her greatest enemies. The reward which they desire from victory is not the glory of having given liberty to the city, but the satisfaction of having vanquished others, and of making themselves rulers; and to attain their end, there is nothing too unjust, too cruel, too avaricious for them to attempt. Thus laws and ordinances, peace, wars, and treaties are adopted and pursued, not for the public good, not for the common glory of the state, but for the convenience or advantage of a few individuals.

"And if other cities abound in these disorders, ours is more than any infected with them; for her laws, statutes, and civil ordinances are not, nor have they ever been, established for the benefit of men in a state of freedom, but according to the wish of the faction that has been uppermost at the time. Hence it follows that, when one party is expelled, or faction extinguished, another immediately arises; for, in a city that is governed by parties rather than by laws, as soon as one becomes dominant and unopposed, it must of necessity soon divide against itself; for the private methods at first adapted for its defense will now no longer keep it united. The truth of this, both the ancient and modern dissensions of our city prove. Everyone thought that when the Ghibellines were destroyed, the Guelphs would long continue happy and honored; yet after a short time they divided into the Bianchi and Neri, the black faction and the white. When the Bianchi were overcome, the city was not long free from factions; for either, in favor of the emigrants, or on account of the animosity between the nobility and the people, we were still constantly at war. And as if resolved to give up to others, what in mutual harmony we either would not or were unable to retain, we confided the care of our precious liberty first to King Robert, then to his brother, next to his son, and at last to the duke of Athens. Still we have never in any condition found repose, but seem like men who can neither agree to live in freedom nor be content with slavery. Nor did we hesitate (so greatly does the nature of our ordinances dispose us to division), while yet under allegiance to the king, to substitute for his majesty, one of the vilest of men born at Agobbio.

"For the credit of the city, the name of the duke of Athens ought to be consigned to oblivion. His cruel and tyrannical disposition, however, might have taught us wisdom and instructed us how to live; but no sooner was he expelled than we handled our arms, and fought with more hatred, and greater fury than we had ever done on any former occasion; so that the ancient nobility were vanquished the city was left at the disposal of the people. It was generally supposed that no further occasion of quarrel or of party animosity could arise, since those whose pride and insupportable ambition had been regarded as the causes of them were depressed; however, experience proves how liable human judgment is to error, and what false impressions men imbibe, even in regard to the things that most intimately concern them; for we find the pride and ambition of the nobility are not extinct, but only transferred from them to the people who at this moment, according to the usual practice of ambitious men, are endeavoring to render themselves masters of the republic; and knowing they have no chance of success but what is offered by discord, they have again divided the city, and the names of Guelph and Ghibelline, which were beginning to be forgotten (and it would have been well if they had never been heard among us), are repeated anew in our ears.

"It seems almost necessarily ordained, in order that in human affairs there may be nothing either settled or permanent, that in all republics there are what may be called fatal families, born for the ruin of their country. Of this kind of pest our city has produced a more copious brood

than any other; for not one but many have disturbed and harassed her: first the Buondelmonti and the Uberti; then the Donati and the Cerchi; and now, oh ridiculous! oh disgraceful thought! the Ricci and the Albizzi have caused a division of her citizens.

"We have not dwelt upon our corrupt habits or our old and continual dissensions to occasion you alarm, but to remind you of their causes; to show that as you doubtless are aware of them, we also keep them in view, and to remind you that their results ought not to make you diffident of your power to repress the disorders of the present time. The ancient families possessed so much influence, and were held in such high esteem, that civil force was insufficient to restrain them; but now, when the empire has lost its ascendancy, the pope is no longer formidable, and the whole of Italy is reduced to a state of the most complete equality, there can be no difficulty. Our republic might more especially than any other (although at first our former practices seem to present a reason to the contrary), not only keep itself united but be improved by good laws and civil regulations, if you, the Signory, would once resolve to undertake the matter; and to this we, induced by no other motive than the love of our country, would most strongly urge you. It is true the corruption of the country is great, and much discretion will be requisite to correct it; but do not impute the past disorders to the nature of the men, but to the times, which, being changed, give reasonable ground to hope that, with better government, our city will be attended with better fortune; for the malignity of the people will be overcome by restraining the ambition and annulling the ordinances of

those who have encouraged faction, and adopting in their stead only such principles as are conformable to true civil liberty. And be assured, that these desirable ends will be more certainly attained by the benign influence of the laws, than by a delay which will compel the people to effect them by force and arms."

The Signory, induced by the necessity of the case, of which they were previously aware, and further encouraged by the advice of those who now addressed them, gave authority to fifty-six citizens to provide for the safety of the republic. It is usually found that most men are better adapted to pursue a good course already begun, than to discover one applicable to immediate circumstances. These citizens thought rather of extinguishing existing factions than of preventing the formation of new ones, and effected neither of these objects. The facilities for the establishment of new parties were not removed; and out of those which they guarded against, another more powerful arose, which brought the republic into still greater danger. They, however, deprived three of the family of the Albizzi, and three of that of the Ricci, of all the offices of government, except those of the Guelphic party, for three years; and among the deprived were Piero degli Albizzi and Ugucione de' Ricci. They forbade the citizens to assemble in the palace, except during the sittings of the Signory. They provided that if any one were beaten, or possession of his property detained from him, he might bring his case before the council and denounce the offender, even if he were one of the nobility; and that if it were proved, the accused should be subject to the usual penalties. This provision abated the boldness of

the Ricci, and increased that of the Albizzi; since, although it applied equally to both, the Ricci suffered from it by far the most; for if Piero was excluded from the palace of the Signory, the chamber of the Guelphs, in which he possessed the greatest authority, remained open to him; and if he and his followers had previously been ready to ADMONISH, they became after this injury, doubly so. To this pre-disposition for evil, new excitements were added.

CHAPTER II

The war of the Florentines against the pope's legate, and the causes of it--League against the pope--The censures of the pope disregarded in Florence--The city is divided into two factions, the one the Capitani di Parte, the other of the eight commissioners of the war--Measures adopted by the Guelphic party against their adversaries--The Guelphs endeavor to prevent Salvestro de Medici from being chosen Gonfalonier--Salvestro de Medici Gonfalonier--His law against the nobility, and in favor of the Ammoniti--The Collegi disapprove of the law--Salvestro addresses the council in its favor--The law is passed--Disturbances in Florence.

The papal chair was occupied by Gregory XI. He, like his predecessors, residing at Avignon, governed Italy by legates, who, proud and avaricious, oppressed many of the cities. One of these legates, then at Bologna, taking advantage of a great scarcity of food at Florence, endeavored to render himself master of Tuscany, and not only withheld provisions from the Florentines, but in order to frustrate their hopes of the future harvest, upon the approach of spring, attacked them with a large army, trusting that being famished and unarmed, he should find them an easy conquest. He might perhaps have been successful, had not his forces been mercenary and faithless, and, therefore, induced to abandon the enterprise for the sum of 130,000 florins, which the Florentines paid them. People may go to war when they will, but cannot always withdraw when they like. This contest, commenced by the ambition of the legate, was sustained by the resentment of the Florentines,

who, entering into a league with Bernabo of Milan, and with the cities hostile to the church, appointed eight citizens for the administration of it, giving them authority to act without appeal, and to expend whatever sums they might judge expedient, without rendering an account of the outlay.

This war against the pontiff, although Ugucione was now dead, reanimated those who had followed the party of the Ricci, who, in opposition to the Albizzi, had always favored Bernabo and opposed the church, and this, the rather, because the eight commissioners of war were all enemies of the Guelphs. This occasioned Piero degli Albizzi, Lapo da Castiglionchio, Carlo Strozzi, and others, to unite themselves more closely in opposition to their adversaries. The eight carried on the war, and the others admonished during three years, when the death of the pontiff put an end to the hostilities, which had been carried on with so much ability, and with such entire satisfaction to the people, that at the end of each year the eight were continued in office, and were called Santi, or holy, although they had set ecclesiastical censures at defiance, plundered the churches of their property, and compelled the priests to perform divine service. So much did citizens at that time prefer the good of their country to their ghostly consolations, and thus showed the church, that if as her friends they had defended, they could as enemies depress her; for the whole of Romagna, the Marches, and Perugia were excited to rebellion.

Yet while this war was carried on against the pope, they were unable to

defend themselves against the captains of the parts and their faction; for the insolence of the Guelphs against the eight attained such a pitch, that they could not restrain themselves from abusive behavior, not merely against some of the most distinguished citizens, but even against the eight themselves; and the captains of the parts conducted themselves with such arrogance, that they were feared more than the Signory. Those who had business with them treated them with greater reverence, and their court was held in higher estimation: so that no ambassador came to Florence, without commission to the captains.

Pope Gregory being dead, and the city freed from external war; there still prevailed great confusion within; for the audacity of the Guelphs was insupportable, and as no available mode of subduing them presented itself, it was thought that recourse must be had to arms, to determine which party was the strongest. With the Guelphs were all the ancient nobility, and the greater part of the most popular leaders, of which number, as already remarked, were Lapo, Piero, and Carlo. On the other side, were all the lower orders, the leaders of whom were the eight commissioners of war, Giorgio Scali and Tommaso Strozzi, and with them the Ricci, Alberti, and Medici. The rest of the multitude, as most commonly happens, joined the discontented party.

It appeared to the heads of the Guelphic faction that their enemies would be greatly strengthened, and themselves in considerable danger in case a hostile Signory should resolve on their subjugation. Desirous, therefore, of being prepared against this calamity, the leaders of the

party assembled to take into consideration the state of the city and that of their own friends in particular, and found the ammoniti so numerous and so great a difficulty, that the whole city was excited against them on this account. They could not devise any other remedy than, that as their enemies had deprived them of all the offices of honor, they should banish their opponents from the city, take possession of the palace of the Signory, and bring over the whole state to their own party; in imitation of the Guelphs of former times, who found no safety in the city, till they had driven all their adversaries out of it. They were unanimous upon the main point, but did not agree upon the time of carrying it into execution. It was in the month of April, in the year 1378, when Lapo, thinking delay inadvisable, expressed his opinion, that procrastination was in the highest degree perilous to themselves; as in the next Signory, Salvestro de' Medici would very probably be elected Gonfalonier, and they all knew he was opposed to their party. Piero degli Albizzi, on the other hand, thought it better to defer, since they would require forces, which could not be assembled without exciting observation, and if they were discovered, they would incur great risk. He thereupon judged it preferable to wait till the approaching feast of St. John on which, being the most solemn festival of the city, vast multitudes would be assembled, among whom they might conceal whatever numbers they pleased. To obviate their fears of Salvestro, he was to be ADMONISHED, and if this did not appear likely to be effectual, they would "ADMONISH" one of the Colleague of his quarter, and upon redrawing, as the ballot-boxes would be nearly empty, chance would very likely occasion that either he or some associate of his

would be drawn, and he would thus be rendered incapable of sitting as Gonfalonier. They therefore came to the conclusion proposed by Piero, though Lapo consented reluctantly, considering the delay dangerous, and that, as no opportunity can be in all respects suitable, he who waits for the concurrence of every advantage, either never makes an attempt, or, if induced to do so, is most frequently foiled. They "admonished" the Colleague, but did not prevent the appointment of Salvestro, for the design was discovered by the Eight, who took care to render all attempts upon the drawing futile.

Salvestro Alammano de' Medici was therefore drawn Gonfalonier, and, being one of the noblest popular families, he could not endure that the people should be oppressed by a few powerful persons. Having resolved to put an end to their insolence, and perceiving the middle classes favorably disposed, and many of the highest of the people on his side, he communicated his design to Benedetto Alberti, Tommaso Strozzi, and Georgio Scali, who all promised their assistance. They, therefore, secretly draw up a law which had for its object to revive the restrictions upon the nobility, to retrench the authority of the Capitani di Parte, and recall the ammoniti to their dignity. In order to attempt and obtain their ends, at one and the same time, having to consult, first the Colleagues and then the Councils, Salvestro being Provost (which office for the time makes its possessor almost prince of the city), he called together the Colleagues and the Council on the same morning, and the Colleagues being apart, he proposed the law prepared by himself and his friends, which, being a novelty, encountered in their

small number so much opposition, that he was unable to have it passed.

Salvestro, seeing his first attempt likely to fail, pretended to leave the room for a private reason, and, without being perceived, went immediately to the Council, and taking a lofty position from which he could be both seen and heard, said:--"That considering himself invested with the office of Gonfalonier, not so much to preside in private cases (for which proper judges were appointed, who have their regular sittings), as to guard the state, correct the insolence of the powerful, and ameliorate those laws by the influence of which the republic was being ruined, he had carefully attended to both these duties, and to his utmost ability provided for them, but found the perversity of some so much opposed to his just designs as to deprive him of all opportunity of doing good, and them not only of the means of assisting him with their counsel, but even hearing him. Therefore finding he no longer contributed either to the benefit of the republic or of the people generally, he could not perceive any reason for his longer holding the magistracy, of which he was either undeserving, or others thought him so, and would therefore retire to his house, that the people might appoint another in his stead, who would either have greater virtue or better fortune than himself." And having said this, he left the room as if to return home.

Those of the council who were in the secret, and others desirous of novelty, raised a tumult, at which the Signory and the Colleagues came together, and finding the Gonfalonier leaving them, entreatingly and

authoritatively detained him, and obliged him to return to the council room, which was now full of confusion. Many of the noble citizens were threatened in opprobrious language; and an artificer seized Carlo Strozzi by the throat, and would undoubtedly have murdered him, but was with difficulty prevented by those around. He who made the greatest disturbance, and incited the city to violence, was Benedetto degli Alberti, who, from a window of the palace, loudly called the people to arms; and presently the courtyards were filled with armed men, and the Colleagues granted to threats, what they had refused to entreaty. The Capitani di Parte had at the same time drawn together a great number of citizens to their hall to consult upon the means of defending themselves against the orders of the Signors, but when they heard the tumult that was raised, and were informed of the course the Councils had adopted, each took refuge in his own house.

Let no one, when raising popular commotions, imagine he can afterward control them at his pleasure, or restrain them from proceeding to the commission of violence. Salvestro intended to enact his law, and compose the city; but it happened otherwise; for the feelings of all had become so excited, that they shut up the shops; the citizens fortified themselves in their houses; many conveyed their valuable property into the churches and monasteries, and everyone seemed to apprehend something terrible at hand. The companies of the Arts met, and each appointed an additional officer or Syndic; upon which the Priors summoned their Colleagues and these Syndics, and consulted a whole day how the city might be appeased with satisfaction to the different parties; but much

difference of opinion prevailed, and no conclusion was come to. On the following day the Arts brought forth their banners, which the Signory understanding, and being apprehensive of evil, called the Council together to consider what course to adopt. But scarcely were they met, when the uproar recommenced, and soon the ensigns of the Arts, surrounded by vast numbers of armed men, occupied the courts. Upon this the Council, to give the Arts and the people hope of redress, and free themselves as much as possible from the charge of causing the mischief, gave a general power, which in Florence is called Balia, to the Signors, the Colleagues, the Eight, the Capitani di Parte, and to the Syndics of the Arts, to reform the government of the city, for the common benefit of all. While this was being arranged, a few of the ensigns of the Arts and some of the mob, desirous of avenging themselves for the recent injuries they had received from the Guelphs, separated themselves from the rest, and sacked and burnt the house of Lapo da Castiglionchio, who, when he learned the proceedings of the Signory against the Guelphs, and saw the people in arms, having no other resource but concealment or flight, first took refuge in Santa Croce, and afterward, being disguised as a monk, fled into the Casentino, where he was often heard to blame himself for having consented to wait till St. John's day, before they had made themselves sure of the government. Piero degli Albizzi and Carlo Strozzi hid themselves upon the first outbreak of the tumult, trusting that when it was over, by the interest of their numerous friends and relations, they might remain safely in Florence.

The house of Lapo being burnt, as mischief begins with difficulty but easily increases, many other houses, either through public hatred, or private malice, shared the same fate; and the rioters, that they might have companions more eager than themselves to assist them in their work of plunder, broke open the public prisons, and then sacked the monastery of the Agnoli and the convent of S. Spirito, whither many citizens had taken their most valuable goods for safety. Nor would the public chambers have escaped these destroyers' hands, except out of reverence for one of the Signors, who on horseback, and followed by many citizens in arms, opposed the rage of the mob.

CHAPTER III

Contrary measures adopted by the magistrates to effect a pacification--Luigi Guicciardini the Gonfalonier entreats the magistrates of the Arts to endeavor to pacify the people--Serious riot caused by the plebeians--The woolen Art--The plebeians assemble--The speech of a seditious plebeian--Their resolution thereupon--The Signory discover the designs of the plebeians--Measures adopted to counteract them.

This popular fury being abated by the authority of the Signors and the approach of night, on the following day, the Balia relieved the admonished, on condition that they should not for three years be capable of holding any magistracy. They annulled the laws made by the Guelphs to the prejudice of the citizens; declared Lapo da Castiglionchio and his companions, rebels, and with them many others, who were the objects of universal detestation. After these resolutions, the new Signory were drawn for, and Luigi Guicciardini appointed Gonfalonier, which gave hope that the tumults would soon be appeased; for everyone thought them to be peaceable men and lovers of order. Still the shops were not opened, nor did the citizens lay down their arms, but continued to patrol the city in great numbers; so that the Signory did not assume the magistracy with the usual pomp, but merely assembled within the palace, omitting all ceremony.

This Signory, considering nothing more advisable in the beginning of

their magistracy than to restore peace, caused a relinquishment of arms; ordered the shops to be opened, and the strangers who had been called to their aid, to return to their homes. They appointed guards in many parts of the city, so that if the admonished would only have remained quiet, order would soon have been re-established. But they were not satisfied to wait three years for the recovery of their honours; so that to gratify them the Arts again met, and demanded of the Signory, that for the benefit and quiet of the city, they would ordain that no citizens should at any time, whether Signor, Colleague, Capitano di Parte, or Consul of any art whatever, be admonished as a Ghibelline; and further, that new ballots of the Guelphic party should be made, and the old ones burned. These demands were at once acceded to, not only by the Signors, but by all the Councils; and thus it was hoped the tumults newly excited would be settled.

But since men are not satisfied with recovering what is their own, but wish to possess the property of others and to revenge themselves, those who were in hopes of benefiting by these disorders persuaded the artificers that they would never be safe, if several of their enemies were not expelled from the city or destroyed. This terrible doctrine coming to the knowledge of the Signory, they caused the magistrates of the Arts and their Syndics to be brought before them, and Luigi Guicciardini, the Gonfalonier, addressed them in the following words: "If these Signors, and I with them, had not long been acquainted with the fate of this city, that as soon as external wars have ceased the internal commence, we should have been more surprised, and our

displeasure would have been greater. But as evils to which we are accustomed are less annoying, we have endured past disturbances patiently, they having arisen for the most part without our fault; and we hoped that, like former troubles, they would soon have an end, after the many and great concessions we had made at your suggestion. But finding that you are yet unsettled, that you contemplate the commission of new crimes against your fellow-citizens, and are desirous of making new exiles, our displeasure increases in proportion to your misconduct. And certainly, could we have believed that during our magistracy the city was to be ruined, whether with or without your concurrence, we should certainly, either by flight or exile, have avoided these horrors. But trusting that we had to do with those who possessed some feelings of humanity and some love of their country, we willingly accepted the magistracy, thinking that by our gentleness we should overcome your ambition. But we perceive from experience that the more humble our behavior, the more concessions we make, the prouder you become, and the more exorbitant are your demands. And though we speak thus, it is not in order to offend, but to amend you. Let others tell you pleasing tales, our design is to communicate only what is for your good. Now we would ask you, and have you answer on your honor, What is there yet ungranted, that you can, with any appearance of propriety, require? You wished to have authority taken from the Capitani di Parte; and it is done. You wished that the ballotings should be burned, and a reformation of them take place; and we consent. You desired that the admonished should be restored to their honours; and it is permitted. At your entreaty we have pardoned those who have burned down houses and plundered churches;

many honorable citizens have been exiled to please you; and at your suggestion new restraints have been laid upon the Great. When will there be an end of your demands? and how long will you continue to abuse our liberality? Do you not observe with how much more moderation we bear defeat than you your victory? To what end will your divisions bring our city? Have you forgotten that when disunited Castruccio, a low citizen of Lucca, subdued her? or that a duke of Athens, your hired captain did so too? But when the citizens were united in her defense, an archbishop of Milan and a pope were unable to subdue it, and, after many years of war, were compelled to retire with disgrace.

"Then why would you, by your discords, reduce to slavery in a time of peace, that city, which so many powerful enemies have left free, even in war? What can you expect from your disunion but subjugation? or from the property of which you already have plundered, or may yet plunder us, but poverty? for this property is the means by which we furnish occupation for the whole city, and if you take it from us, our means of finding that occupation is withdrawn. Besides, those who take it will have difficulty in preserving what is dishonestly acquired, and thus poverty and destitution are brought upon the city. Now, I, and these Signors command, and if it were consistent with propriety, we would entreat that you allow your minds to be calmed; be content, rest satisfied with the provisions that have been made for you; and if you should be found to need anything further, make your request with decency and order, and not with tumult; for when your demands are reasonable they will always be complied with, and you will not give occasion to evil designing men

to ruin your country and cast the blame upon yourselves." These words conveying nothing but the truth, produced a suitable effect upon the minds of the citizens, who thanking the Gonfalonier for having acted toward them the part of a king Signor, and toward the city that of a good citizen, offered their obedience in whatever might be committed to them. And the Signors, to prove the sincerity of their intentions, appointed two citizens for each of the superior magistracies, who, with Syndics of the arts, were to consider what could be done to restore quite, and report their resolutions to the Signors.

While these things were in progress, a disturbance arose, much more injurious to the republic than anything that had hitherto occurred. The greatest part of the fires and robberies which took place on the previous days were perpetrated by the very lowest of the people; and those who had been the most audacious, were afraid that when the greater differences were composed, they would be punished for the crimes they had committed; and that as usual, they would be abandoned by those who had instigated them to the commission of crime. To this may be added, the hatred of the lower orders toward the rich citizens and the principals of the arts, because they did not think themselves remunerated for their labor in a manner equal to their merits. For in the time of Charles I., when the city was divided into arts, a head or governor was appointed to each, and it was provided that the individuals of each art, should be judged in civil matters by their own superiors. These arts, as we have before observed, were at first twelve; in the course of time they were increased to twenty-one, and attained so much

power, that in a few years they grasped the entire government of the city; and as some were in greater esteem than others, they were divided into MAJOR and MINOR; seven were called "major," and fourteen, the "minor arts." From this division, and from other causes which we have narrated above, arose the arrogance of the Capitani di Parte; for those citizens who had formerly been Guelphs, and had the constant disposal of that magistracy, favored the followers of the major and persecuted the minor arts and their patrons; and hence arose the many commotions already mentioned. When the companies of the arts were first organized, many of those trades, followed by the lowest of the people and the plebeians, were not incorporated, but were ranged under those arts most nearly allied to them; and, hence, when they were not properly remunerated for their labor, or their masters oppressed them, they had no one of whom to seek redress, except the magistrate of the art to which theirs was subject; and of him they did not think justice always attainable. Of the arts, that which had always had, and now has, the greatest number of these subordinates, is the woolen; which being both then, and still, the most powerful body, and first in authority, supports the greater part of the plebeians and lowest of the people.

The lower classes, then, the subordinates not only of the woolen, but also of the other arts, were discontented, from the causes just mentioned; and their apprehension of punishment for the burnings and robberies they had committed, did not tend to compose them. Meetings took place in different parts during the night, to talk over the past, and to communicate the danger in which they were, when one of the most

daring and experienced, in order to animate the rest, spoke thus:

"If the question now were, whether we should take up arms, rob and burn the houses of the citizens, and plunder churches, I am one of those who would think it worthy of further consideration, and should, perhaps, prefer poverty and safety to the dangerous pursuit of an uncertain good. But as we have already armed, and many offenses have been committed, it appears to me that we have to consider how to lay them aside, and secure ourselves from the consequences of what is already done. I certainly think, that if nothing else could teach us, necessity might. You see the whole city full of complaint and indignation against us; the citizens are closely united, and the signors are constantly with the magistrates. You may be sure they are contriving something against us; they are arranging some new plan to subdue us. We ought therefore to keep two things in view, and have two points to consider; the one is, to escape with impunity for what has been done during the last few days, and the other, to live in greater comfort and security for the time to come. We must, therefore, I think, in order to be pardoned for our faults, commit new ones; redoubling the mischief, and multiplying fires and robberies; and in doing this, endeavor to have as many companions as we can; for when many are in fault, few are punished; small crimes are chastised, but great and serious ones rewarded. When many suffer, few seek vengeance; for general evils are endured more patiently than private ones. To increase the number of misdeeds will, therefore, make forgiveness more easily attainable, and will open the way to secure what we require for our own liberty. And it appears evident that the gain is

certain; for our opponents are disunited and rich; their disunion will give us the victory, and their riches, when they have become ours, will support us. Be not deceived about that antiquity of blood by which they exalt themselves above us; for all men having had one common origin, are all equally ancient, and nature has made us all after one fashion. Strip us naked, and we shall all be found alike. Dress us in their clothing, and they in ours, we shall appear noble, they ignoble--for poverty and riches make all the difference. It grieves me much to think that some of you are sorry inwardly for what is done, and resolve to abstain from anything more of the kind. Certainly, if it be so, you are not the men I took you for; because neither shame nor conscience ought to have any influence with you. Conquerors, by what means soever, are never considered aught but glorious. We have no business to think about conscience; for when, like us, men have to fear hunger, and imprisonment, or death, the fear of hell neither can nor ought to have any influence upon them. If you only notice human proceedings, you may observe that all who attain great power and riches, make use of either force or fraud; and what they have acquired either by deceit or violence, in order to conceal the disgraceful methods of attainment, they endeavor to sanctify with the false title of honest gains. Those who either from imprudence or want of sagacity avoid doing so, are always overwhelmed with servitude and poverty; for faithful servants are always servants, and honest men are always poor; nor do any ever escape from servitude but the bold and faithless, or from poverty, but the rapacious and fraudulent. God and nature have thrown all human fortunes into the midst of mankind; and they are thus attainable rather by rapine

than by industry, by wicked actions rather than by good. Hence it is that men feed upon each other, and those who cannot defend themselves must be worried. Therefore we must use force when the opportunity offers; and fortune cannot present us one more favorable than the present, when the citizens are still disunited, the Signory doubtful, and the magistrates terrified; for we may easily conquer them before they can come to any settled arrangement. By this means we shall either obtain the entire government of the city, or so large a share of it, as to be forgiven past errors, and have sufficient authority to threaten the city with a renewal of them at some future time. I confess this course is bold and dangerous, but when necessity presses, audacity becomes prudence, and in great affairs the brave never think of dangers. The enterprises that are begun with hazard always have a reward at last; and no one ever escaped from embarrassment without some peril. Besides, it is easy to see from all their preparations of prisons, racks, and instruments of death, that there is more danger in inaction than in endeavoring to secure ourselves; for in the first case the evils are certain, in the latter doubtful. How often have I heard you complain of the avarice of your superiors and the injustice of your magistrates. Now then is the time, not only to liberate yourself from them, but to become so much superior, that they will have more causes of grief and fear from you, than you from them. The opportunity presented by circumstances passes away, and when gone, it will be vain to think it can be recalled. You see the preparations of our enemies; let us anticipate them; and those who are first in arms will certainly be victors, to the ruin of their enemies and their own exaltation; and thus honors will accrue to

many of us and security to all." These arguments greatly inflamed minds already disposed to mischief, so that they determined to take up arms as soon as they had acquired a sufficient number of associates, and bound themselves by oath to mutual defense, in case any of them were subdued by the civil power.

While they were arranging to take possession of the republic, their design became known to the Signory, who, having taken a man named Simone, learned from him the particulars of the conspiracy, and that the outbreak was to take place on the following day. Finding the danger so pressing, they called together the colleagues and those citizens who with the syndics of the arts were endeavoring to effect the union of the city. It was then evening, and they advised the signors to assemble the consuls of the trades, who proposed that whatever armed force was in Florence should be collected, and with the Gonfaloniers of the people and their companies, meet under arms in the piazza next morning. It happened that while Simone was being tortured, a man named Niccolo da San Friano was regulating the palace clock, and becoming acquainted with what was going on, returned home and spread the report of it in his neighborhood, so that presently the piazza of St. Spirito was occupied by above a thousand men. This soon became known to the other conspirators, and San Pietro Maggiore and St. Lorenzo, their places of assembly, were presently full of them, all under arms.

CHAPTER IV

Proceedings of the plebeians--The demand they make of the Signory--They insist that the Signory leave the palace--The Signory leave the palace--Michael di Lando Gonfalonier--Complaints and movements of the plebeians against Michael di Lando--Michael di Lando proceeds against the plebeians and reduces them to order--Character of Michael di Lando.

At daybreak on the 21st of July, there did not appear in the piazza above eighty men in arms friendly to the Signory, and not one of the Gonfaloniers; for knowing the whole city to be in a state of insurrection they were afraid to leave their homes. The first body of plebeians that made its appearance was that which had assembled at San Pietro Maggiore; but the armed force did not venture to attack them. Then came the other multitudes, and finding no opposition, they loudly demanded their prisoners from the Signory; and being resolved to have them by force if they were not yielded to their threats, they burned the house of Luigi Guicciardini; and the Signory, for fear of greater mischief, set them at liberty. With this addition to their strength they took the Gonfalon of Justice from the bearer, and under the shadow of authority which it gave them, burned the houses of many citizens, selecting those whose owners had publicly or privately excited their hatred. Many citizens, to avenge themselves for private injuries, conducted them to the houses of their enemies; for it was quite sufficient to insure its destruction, if a single voice from the mob called out, "To the house of such a one," or if he who bore the Gonfalon

took the road toward it. All the documents belonging to the woolen trade were burned, and after the commission of much violence, by way of associating it with something laudable, Salvestro de Medici and sixty-three other citizens were made knights, among whom were Benedetto and Antonio degli Alberti, Tommaso Strozzi and others similarly their friends; though many received the honor against their wills. It was a remarkable peculiarity of the riots, that many who had their houses burned, were on the same day, and by the same party made knights; so close were the kindness and the injury together. This circumstance occurred to Luigi Guicciardini, Gonfalonier of Justice.

In this tremendous uproar, the Signory, finding themselves abandoned by their armed force, by the leaders of the arts, and by the Gonfaloniers, became dismayed; for none had come to their assistance in obedience to orders; and of the sixteen Gonfalons, the ensign of the Golden Lion and of the Vaio, under Giovenco della Stufa and Giovanni Cambi alone appeared; and these, not being joined by any other, soon withdrew. Of the citizens, on the other hand, some, seeing the fury of this unreasonable multitude and the palace abandoned, remained within doors; others followed the armed mob, in the hope that by being among them, they might more easily protect their own houses or those of their friends. The power of the plebeians was thus increased and that of the Signory weakened. The tumult continued all day, and at night the rioters halted near the palace of Stefano, behind the church of St. Barnabas. Their number exceeded six thousand, and before daybreak they obtained by threats the ensigns of the trades, with which and the Gonfalon of

Justice, when morning came, they proceeded to the palace of the provost, who refusing to surrender it to them, they took possession of it by force.

The Signory, desirous of a compromise, since they could not restrain them by force, appointed four of the Colleagues to proceed to the palace of the provost, and endeavor to learn what was their intention. They found that the leaders of the plebeians, with the Syndics of the trades and some citizens, had resolved to signify their wishes to the Signory. They therefore returned with four deputies of the plebeians, who demanded that the woolen trade should not be allowed to have a foreign judge; that there should be formed three new companies of the arts; namely, one for the wool combers and dyers, one for the barbers, doublet-makers, tailors, and such like, and the third for the lowest class of people. They required that the three new arts should furnish two Signors; the fourteen minor arts, three; and that the Signory should provide a suitable place of assembly for them. They also made it a condition that no member of these companies should be expected during two years to pay any debt that amounted to less than fifty ducats; that the bank should take no interest on loans already contracted, and that only the principal sum should be demanded; that the condemned and the banished should be forgiven, and the admonished should be restored to participation in the honors of government. Besides these, many other articles were stipulated in favor of their friends, and a requisition made that many of their enemies should be exiled and admonished. These demands, though grievous and dishonorable to the republic, were for fear

of further violence granted, by the joint deliberation of the Signors, Colleagues, and Council of the people. But in order to give it full effect, it was requisite that the Council of the Commune should also give its consent; and, as they could not assemble two councils during the same day it was necessary to defer it till the morrow. However the trades appeared content, the plebeians satisfied; and both promised, that these laws being confirmed, every disturbance should cease.

On the following morning, while the Council of the Commune were in consultation, the impatient and volatile multitude entered the piazza, under their respective ensigns, with loud and fearful shouts, which struck terror into all the Council and Signory; and Guerrente Marignolli, one of the latter, influenced more by fear than anything else, under pretense of guarding the lower doors, left the chamber and fled to his house. He was unable to conceal himself from the multitude, who, however, took no notice, except that, upon seeing him, they insisted that all the Signors should quit the palace, and declared that if they refused to comply, their houses should be burned and their families put to death.

The law had now been passed; the Signors were in their own apartments; the Council had descended from the chamber, and without leaving the palace, hopeless of saving the city, they remained in the lodges and courts below, overwhelmed with grief at seeing such depravity in the multitude, and such perversity or fear in those who might either have restrained or suppressed them. The Signory, too, were dismayed and

fearful for the safety of their country, finding themselves abandoned by one of their associates, and without any aid or even advice; when, at this moment of uncertainty as to what was about to happen, or what would be best to be done, Tommaso Strozzi and Benedetto Alberti, either from motives of ambition (being desirous of remaining masters of the palace), or because they thought it the most advisable step, persuaded them to give way to the popular impulse, and withdraw privately to their homes. This advice, given by those who had been the leaders of the tumult, although the others yielded, filled Alamanno Acciajuoli and Niccolo del Bene, two of the Signors, with anger; and, reassuming a little vigor, they said, that if the others would withdraw they could not help it, but they would remain as long as they continued in office, if they did not in the meantime lose their lives. These dissensions redoubled the fears of the Signory and the rage of the people, so that the Gonfalonier, disposed rather to conclude his magistracy in dishonor than in danger, recommended himself to the care of Tommaso Strozzi, who withdrew him from the palace and conducted him to his house. The other Signors were, one after another, conveyed in the same manner, so that Alamanno and Niccolo, not to appear more valiant than wise, seeing themselves left alone, also retired, and the palace fell into the hands of the plebeians and the Eight Commissioners of War, who had not yet laid down their authority.

When the plebeians entered the palace, the standard of the Gonfalonier of Justice was in the hands of Michael di Lando, a wool comber. This man, barefoot, with scarcely anything upon him, and the rabble at his

heels, ascended the staircase, and, having entered the audience chamber of the Signory, he stopped, and turning to the multitude said, "You see this palace is now yours, and the city is in your power; what do you think ought to be done?" To which they replied, they would have him for their Gonfalonier and lord; and that he should govern them and the city as he thought best. Michael accepted the command; and, as he was a cool and sagacious man, more favored by nature than by fortune, he resolved to compose the tumult, and restore peace to the city. To occupy the minds of the people, and give himself time to make some arrangement, he ordered that one Nuto, who had been appointed bargello, or sheriff, by Lapo da Castiglionchio, should be sought. The greater part of his followers went to execute this commission; and, to commence with justice the government he had acquired by favor, he commanded that no one should either burn or steal anything; while, to strike terror into all, he caused a gallows to be erected in the court of the palace. He began the reform of government by deposing the Syndics of the trades, and appointing new ones; he deprived the Signory and the Colleagues of their magistracy, and burned the balloting purses containing the names of those eligible to office under the former government.

In the meantime, Ser Nuto, being brought by the mob into the court, was suspended from the gallows by one foot; and those around having torn him to pieces, in little more than a moment nothing remained of him but the foot by which he had been tied.

The Eight Commissioners of War, on the other hand, thinking themselves,

after the departure of the Signors, left sole masters of the city, had already formed a new Signory; but Michael, on hearing this, sent them an order to quit the palace immediately; for he wished to show that he could govern Florence without their assistance. He then assembled the Syndics of the trades, and created as a Signory, four from the lowest plebeians; two from the major, and two from the minor trades. Besides this, he made a new selection of names for the balloting purses, and divided the state into three parts; one composed of the new trades, another of the minor, and the third of the major trades. He gave to Salvestro de' Medici the revenue of the shops upon the Old Bridge; for himself he took the provostry of Empoli, and conferred benefits upon many other citizens, friends of the plebeians; not so much for the purpose of rewarding their labors, as that they might serve to screen him from envy.

It seemed to the plebeians that Michael, in his reformation of the state, had too much favored the higher ranks of the people, and that themselves had not a sufficient share in the government to enable them to preserve it; and hence, prompted by their usual audacity, they again took arms, and coming tumultuously into the court of the palace, each body under their particular ensigns, insisted that the Signory should immediately descend and consider new means for advancing their well-being and security. Michael, observing their arrogance, was unwilling to provoke them, but without further yielding to their request, blamed the manner in which it was made, advised them to lay down their arms, and promised that then would be conceded to them, what

otherwise, for the dignity of the state, must of necessity be withheld. The multitude, enraged at this reply, withdrew to Santa Maria Novella, where they appointed eight leaders for their party, with officers, and other regulations to ensure influence and respect; so that the city possessed two governments, and was under the direction of two distinct powers. These new leaders determined that Eight, elected from their trades, should constantly reside in the palace with the Signory, and that whatever the Signory should determine must be confirmed by them before it became law. They took from Salvestro de' Medici and Michael di Lando the whole of what their former decrees had granted them, and distributed to many of their party offices and emoluments to enable them to support their dignity. These resolutions being passed, to render them valid they sent two of their body to the Signory, to insist on their being confirmed by the Council, with an intimation, that if not granted they would be vindicated by force. This deputation, with amazing audacity and surpassing presumption, explained their commission to the Signory, upbraided the Gonfalonier with the dignity they had conferred upon him, the honor they had done him, and with the ingratitude and want of respect he had shown toward them. Coming to threats toward the end of their discourse, Michael could not endure their arrogance, and sensible rather of the dignity of the office he held than of the meanness of his origin, determined by extraordinary means to punish such extraordinary insolence, and drawing the sword with which he was girt, seriously wounded, and cause them to be seized and imprisoned.

When the fact became known, the multitude were filled with rage, and

thinking that by their arms they might ensure what without them they had failed to effect, they seized their weapons and with the utmost fury resolved to force the Signory to consent to their wishes. Michael, suspecting what would happen, determined to be prepared, for he knew his credit rather required him to be first to the attack than to wait the approach of the enemy, or, like his predecessors, dishonor both the palace and himself by flight. He therefore drew together a good number of citizens (for many began to see their error), mounted on horseback, and followed by crowds of armed men, proceeded to Santa Maria Novella, to encounter his adversaries. The plebeians, who as before observed were influenced by a similar desire, had set out about the same time as Michael, and it happened that as each took a different route, they did not meet in their way, and Michael, upon his return, found the piazza in their possession. The contest was now for the palace, and joining in the fight, he soon vanquished them, drove part of them out of the city, and compelled the rest to throw down their arms and escape or conceal themselves, as well as they could. Having thus gained the victory, the tumults were composed, solely by the talents of the Gonfalonier, who in courage, prudence, and generosity surpassed every other citizen of his time, and deserves to be enumerated among the glorious few who have greatly benefited their country; for had he possessed either malice or ambition, the republic would have been completely ruined, and the city must have fallen under greater tyranny than that of the duke of Athens. But his goodness never allowed a thought to enter his mind opposed to the universal welfare: his prudence enabled him to conduct affairs in such a manner, that a great majority of his own faction reposed the most

entire confidence in him; and he kept the rest in awe by the influence of his authority. These qualities subdued the plebeians, and opened the eyes of the superior artificers, who considered how great must be the folly of those, who having overcome the pride of the nobility, could endure to submit to the nauseous rule of the rabble.

CHAPTER V

New regulations for the elections of the Signory--Confusion in the City--Piero degli Albizzi and other citizens condemned to death--The Florentines alarmed by the approach of Charles of Durazzo--The measures adopted in consequence thereof--Insolent Conduct of Giorgio Scali--Benedetto Alberti--Giorgio Scali beheaded.

By the time Michael di Lando had subdued the plebeians, the new Signory was drawn, and among those who composed it, were two persons of such base and mean condition, that the desire increased in the minds of the people to be freed from the ignominy into which they had fallen; and when, upon the first of September, the new Signory entered office and the retiring members were still in the palace, the piazza being full of armed men, a tumultuous cry arose from the midst of them, that none of the lowest of the people should hold office among the Signory. The obnoxious two were withdrawn accordingly. The name of one was Il Tira, of the other Baroccio, and in their stead were elected Giorgio Scali and Francesco di Michele. The company of the lowest trade was also dissolved, and its members deprived of office, except Michael di Lando, Lorenzo di Puccio and a few others of better quality. The honors of government were divided into two parts, one of which was assigned to the superior trades, the other to the inferior; except that the latter were to furnish five Signors, and the former only four. The Gonfalonier was to be chosen alternately from each.

The government thus composed, restored peace to the city for the time; but though the republic was rescued from the power of the lowest plebeians, the inferior trades were still more influential than the nobles of the people, who, however, were obliged to submit for the gratification of the trades, of whose favor they wished to deprive the plebeians. The new establishment was supported by all who wished the continued subjugation of those who, under the name of the Guelphic party, had practiced such excessive violence against the citizens. And as among others, thus disposed, were Giorgio Scali, Benedetto Alberti, Salvestro di Medici, and Tommaso Strozzi, these four almost became princes of the city. This state of the public mind strengthened the divisions already commenced between the nobles of the people, and the minor artificers, by the ambition of the Ricci and the Albizzi; from which, as at different times very serious effects arose, and as they will hereafter be frequently mentioned, we shall call the former the popular party, the latter the plebeian. This condition of things continued three years, during which many were exiled and put to death; for the government lived in constant apprehension, knowing that both within and without the city many were dissatisfied with them. Those within, either attempted or were suspected of attempting every day some new project against them; and those without, being under no restraint, were continually, by means of some prince or republic, spreading reports tending to increase the disaffection.

Gianozzo da Salerno was at this time in Bologna. He held a command under Charles of Durazzo, a descendant of the kings of Naples, who, designing

to undertake the conquest of the dominions of Queen Giovanna, retained his captain in that city, with the concurrence of Pope Urban, who was at enmity with the queen. Many Florentine emigrants were also at Bologna, in close correspondence with him and Charles. This caused the rulers in Florence to live in continual alarm, and induced them to lend a willing ear to any calumnies against the suspected. While in this disturbed state of feeling, it was disclosed to the government that Gianozzo da Salerno was about to march to Florence with the emigrants, and that great numbers of those within were to rise in arms, and deliver the city to him. Upon this information many were accused, the principal of whom were Piero degli Albizzi and Carlo Strozzi: and after these Cipriano Mangione, Jacopo Sacchetti, Donato Barbadori, Filippo Strozzi, and Giovanni Anselmi, the whole of whom, except Carlo Strozzi who fled, were made prisoners; and the Signory, to prevent any one from taking arms in their favor, appointed Tommaso Strozzi and Benedetto Alberti with a strong armed force, to guard the city. The arrested citizens were examined, and although nothing was elicited against them sufficient to induce the Capitano to find them guilty, their enemies excited the minds of the populace to such a degree of outrageous and overwhelming fury against them, that they were condemned to death, as it were, by force. Nor was the greatness of his family, or his former reputation of any service to Piero degli Albizzi, who had once been, of all the citizens, the man most feared and honored. Some one, either as a friend to render him wise in his prosperity, or an enemy to threaten him with the fickleness of fortune, had upon the occasion of his making a feast for many citizens, sent him a silver bowl full of sweetmeats, among which

a large nail was found, and being seen by many present, was taken for a hint to him to fix the wheel of fortune, which, having conveyed him to the top, must if the rotation continued, also bring him to the bottom. This interpretation was verified, first by his ruin, and afterward by his death.

After this execution the city was full of consternation, for both victors and vanquished were alike in fear; but the worst effects arose from the apprehensions of those possessing the management of affairs; for every accident, however trivial, caused them to commit fresh outrages, either by condemnations, admonitions, or banishment of citizens; to which must be added, as scarcely less pernicious, the frequent new laws and regulations which were made for defense of the government, all of which were put in execution to the injury of those opposed to their faction. They appointed forty-six persons, who, with the Signory, were to purge the republic of all suspected by the government. They admonished thirty-nine citizens, ennobled many of the people, and degraded many nobles to the popular rank. To strengthen themselves against external foes, they took into their pay John Hawkwood, an Englishman of great military reputation, who had long served the pope and others in Italy. Their fears from without were increased by a report that several bodies of men were being assembled by Charles of Durazzo for the conquest of Naples, and many Florentine emigrants were said to have joined him. Against these dangers, in addition to the forces which had been raised, large sums of money were provided; and Charles, having arrived at Arezzo, obtained from the

Florentines 40,000 ducats, and promised he would not molest them. His enterprise was immediately prosecuted, and having occupied the kingdom of Naples, he sent Queen Giovanna a prisoner into Hungary. This victory renewed the fears of those who managed the affairs of Florence, for they could not persuade themselves that their money would have a greater influence on the king's mind than the friendship which his house had long retained for the Guelphs, whom they so grievously oppressed.

This suspicion increasing, multiplied oppressions; which again, instead of diminishing the suspicion, augmented it; so that most men lived in the utmost discontent. To this the insolence of Giorgio Scali and Tommaso Strozzi (who by their popular influence overawed the magistrates) also contributed, for the rulers were apprehensive that by the power these men possessed with the plebeians they could set them at defiance; and hence it is evident that not only to good men, but even to the seditious, this government appeared tyrannical and violent. To put a period to the outrageous conduct of Giorgio, it happened that a servant of his accused Giovanni di Cambio of practices against the state, but the Capitano declared him innocent. Upon this, the judge determined to punish the accuser with the same penalties that the accused would have incurred had he been guilty, but Giorgio Scali, unable to save him either by his authority or entreaties, obtained the assistance of Tommaso Strozzi, and with a multitude of armed men, set the informer at liberty and plundered the palace of the Capitano, who was obliged to save himself by flight. This act excited such great and universal animosity against him, that his enemies began to hope they would be able

to effect his ruin, and also to rescue the city from the power of the plebeians, who for three years had held her under their arrogant control.

To the realization of this design the Capitano greatly contributed, for the tumult having subsided, he presented himself before the signors, and said "He had cheerfully undertaken the office to which they had appointed him, for he thought he should serve upright men who would take arms for the defense of justice, and not impede its progress. But now that he had seen and had experience of the proceedings of the city, and the manner in which affairs were conducted, that dignity which he had voluntarily assumed with the hope of acquiring honor and emolument, he now more willingly resigned, to escape from the losses and danger to which he found himself exposed." The complaint of the Capitano was heard with the utmost attention by the Signory, who promising to remunerate him for the injury he had suffered and provide for his future security, he was satisfied. Some of them then obtained an interview with certain citizens who were thought to be lovers of the common good, and least suspected by the state; and in conjunction with these, it was concluded that the present was a favorable opportunity for rescuing the city from Giorgio and the plebeians, the last outrage he had committed having completely alienated the great body of the people from him. They judged it best to profit by the occasion before the excitement had abated, for they knew that the favor of the mob is often gained or lost by the most trifling circumstance; and more certainly to insure success, they determined, if possible, to obtain the concurrence of Benedetto Alberti,

for without it they considered their enterprise to be dangerous.

Benedetto was one of the richest citizens, a man of unassuming manners, an ardent lover of the liberties of his country, and one to whom tyrannical measures were in the highest degree offensive; so that he was easily induced to concur in their views and consent to Giorgio's ruin.

His enmity against the nobles of the people and the Guelphs, and his friendship for the plebeians, were caused by the insolence and tyrannical proceedings of the former; but finding that the plebeians had soon become quite as insolent, he quickly separated himself from them; and the injuries committed by them against the citizens were done wholly without his consent. So that the same motives which made him join the plebeians induced him to leave them.

Having gained Benedetto and the leaders of the trades to their side, they provided themselves with arms and made Giorgio prisoner. Tommaso fled. The next day Giorgio was beheaded; which struck so great a terror into his party, that none ventured to express the slightest disapprobation, but each seemed anxious to be foremost in defense of the measure. On being led to execution, in the presence of that people who only a short time before had idolized him, Giorgio complained of his hard fortune, and the malignity of those citizens who, having done him an undeserved injury, had compelled him to honor and support a mob, possessing neither faith nor gratitude. Observing Benedetto Alberti among those who had armed themselves for the preservation of order, he said, "Do you, too, consent, Benedetto, that this injury shall be done

to me? Were I in your place and you in mine, I would take care that no one should injure you. I tell you, however, this day is the end of my troubles and the beginning of yours." He then blamed himself for having confided too much in a people who may be excited and inflamed by every word, motion, and breath of suspicion. With these complaints he died in the midst of his armed enemies, delighted at his fall. Some of his most intimate associates were also put to death, and their bodies dragged about by the mob.

CHAPTER VI

Confusion and riots in the city--Reform of government in opposition to the plebeians--Injuries done to those who favored the plebeians--Michael di Lando banished--Benedetto Alberti hated by the Signory--Fears excited by the coming of Louis of Anjou--The Florentines purchase Arezzo--Benedetto Alberti becomes suspected and is banished--His discourse upon leaving the city--Other citizens banished and admonished--War with Giovanni Galeazzo, duke of Milan.

The death of Giorgio caused very great excitement; many took arms at the execution in favor of the Signory and the Capitano; and many others, either for ambition or as a means for their own safety, did the same. The city was full of conflicting parties, who each had a particular end in view, and wished to carry it into effect before they disarmed. The ancient nobility, called the GREAT, could not bear to be deprived of public honors; for the recovery of which they used their utmost exertions, and earnestly desired that authority might be restored to the Capitani di Parte. The nobles of the people and the major trades were discontented at the share the minor trades and lowest of the people possessed in the government; while the minor trades were desirous of increasing their influence, and the lowest people were apprehensive of losing the companies of their trades and the authority which these conferred.

Such opposing views occasioned Florence, during a year, to be disturbed

by many riots. Sometimes the nobles of the people took arms; sometimes the major and sometimes the minor trades and the lowest of the people; and it often happened that, though in different parts, all were at once in insurrection. Hence many conflicts took place between the different parties or with the forces of the palace; for the Signory sometimes yielding, and at other times resisting, adopted such remedies as they could for these numerous evils. At length, after two assemblies of the people, and many Balias appointed for the reformation of the city; after much toil, labor, and imminent danger, a government was appointed, by which all who had been banished since Salvestro de' Medici was Gonfalonier were restored. They who had acquired distinctions or emoluments by the Balia of 1378 were deprived of them. The honors of government were restored to the Guelphic party; the two new Companies of the Trades were dissolved, and all who had been subject to them assigned to their former companies. The minor trades were not allowed to elect the Gonfalonier of Justice, their share of honors was reduced from a half to a third; and those of the highest rank were withdrawn from them altogether. Thus the nobles of the people and the Guelphs repossessed themselves of the government, which was lost by the plebeians after it had been in their possession from 1378 to 1381, when these changes took place.

The new establishment was not less injurious to the citizens, or less troublesome at its commencement than that of the plebeians had been; for many of the nobles of the people, who had distinguished themselves as defenders of the plebeians, were banished, with a great number of the

leaders of the latter, among whom was Michael di Lando; nor could all the benefits conferred upon the city by his authority, when in danger from the lawless mob, save him from the rabid fury of the party that was now in power. His good offices evidently excited little gratitude in his countrymen. The neglect of their benefactors is an error into which princes and republics frequently fall; and hence mankind, alarmed by such examples, as soon as they begin to perceive the ingratitude of their rulers, set themselves against them.

As these banishments and executions had always been offensive to Benedetto Alberti, they continued to disgust him, and he censured them both publicly and privately. The leaders of the government began to fear him, for they considered him one of the most earnest friends of the plebeians, and thought he had not consented to the death of Giorgio Scali from disapprobation of his proceeding, but that he might be left himself without a rival in the government. His discourse and his conduct alike served to increase their suspicions, so that all the ruling party had their eyes upon him, and eagerly sought an opportunity of crushing him.

During this state of things, external affairs were not of serious importance, for some which ensued were productive of apprehension rather than of injury. At this time Louis of Anjou came into Italy, to recover the kingdom of Naples for Queen Giovanna, and drive out Charles of Durazzo. His coming terrified the Florentines; for Charles, according to the custom of old friends, demanded their assistance, and Louis,

like those who seek new alliances, required their neutrality. The Florentines, that they might seem to comply with the request of Louis, and at the same time assist Charles, discharged from their service Sir John Hawkwood, and transferred him to that of Pope Urban, who was friendly to Charles; but this deceit was at once detected, and Louis considered himself greatly injured by the Florentines. While the war was carried on between Louis and Charles in Puglia, new forces were sent from France in aid of Louis, and on arriving in Tuscany, were by the emigrants of Arezzo conducted to that city, and took it from those who held possession for Charles. And when they were about to change the government of Florence, as they had already done that of Arezzo, Louis died, and the order of things in Puglia and in Tuscany was changed accordingly; for Charles secured the kingdom, which had been all but lost, and the Florentines, who were apprehensive for their own city, purchased Arezzo from those who held it for Louis. Charles, having secured Puglia, went to take possession of Hungary, to which he was heir, leaving, with his wife, his children Ladislaus and Giovanna, who were yet infants. He took possession of Hungary, but was soon after slain there.

As great rejoicings were made in Florence on account of this acquisition as ever took place in any city for a real victory, which served to exhibit the public and private wealth of the people, many families endeavoring to vie with the state itself in displays of magnificence. The Alberti surpassed all others; the tournaments and exhibitions made by them were rather suitable for a sovereign prince than for any private

individuals. These things increased the envy with which the family was regarded, and being joined with suspicions which the state entertained of Benedetto, were the causes of his ruin. The rulers could not endure him, for it appeared as if, at any moment, something might occur, which, with the favor of his friends, would enable him to recover his authority, and drive them out of the city. While in this state of suspicion and jealousy, it happened that while he was Gonfalonier of the Companies, his son-in-law, Filippo Magalotti, was drawn Gonfalonier of Justice; and this circumstance increased the fears of the government, for they thought it would strengthen Benedetto's influence, and place the state in the greater peril. Anxious to provide a remedy, without creating much disturbance, they induced Bese Magalotti, his relative and enemy, to signify to the Signory that Filippo, not having attained the age required for the exercise of that office, neither could nor ought to hold it.

The question was examined by the signors, and part of them out of hatred, others in order to avoid disunion among themselves, declared Filippo ineligible to the dignity, and in his stead was drawn Bardo Mancini, who was quite opposed to the plebeian interests, and an inveterate foe of Benedetto. This man, having entered upon the duties of his office, created a Balia for the reformation of the state, which banished Benedetto Alberti and admonished all the rest of his family except Antonio. Before his departure, Benedetto called them together, and observing their melancholy demeanor, said, "You see, my fathers, and you the elders of our house, how fortune has ruined me and threatened

you. I am not surprised at this, neither ought you to be so, for it always happens thus to those who among a multitude of the wicked, wish to act rightly, and endeavor to sustain, what the many seek to destroy. The love of my country made me take part with Salvestro de Medici and afterward separated me from Giorgio Scali. The same cause compelled me to detest those who now govern, who having none to punish them, will allow no one to reprove their misdeeds. I am content that my banishment should deliver them from the fears they entertain, not of me only, but of all who they think perceives or is acquainted with their tyrannical and wicked proceedings; and they have aimed their first blow at me, in order the more easily to oppress you. I do not grieve on my own account; for those honors which my country bestowed upon me while free, she cannot in her slavery take from me; and the recollection of my past life will always give me greater pleasure than the pain imparted by the sorrows of exile. I deeply regret that my country is left a prey to the greediness and pride of the few who keep her in subjection. I grieve for you; for I fear that the evils which this day cease to affect me, and commence with you, will pursue you with even greater malevolence than they have me. Comfort, then, each other; resolve to bear up against every misfortune, and conduct yourselves in such a manner, that when disasters befall you (and there will be many), every one may know they have come upon you undeservedly." Not to give a worse impression of his virtue abroad than he had done at home, he made a journey to the sepulcher of Christ, and while upon his return, died at Rhodes. His remains were brought to Florence, and interred with all possible honors, by those who had persecuted him, when alive, with every species of

calumny and injustice.

The family of the Alberti was not the only injured party during these troubles of the city; for many others were banished and admonished. Of the former were Piero Benini, Matteo Alderotti, Giovanni and Francesco del Bene, Giovanni Benci, Andrea Adimari, and with them many members of the minor trades. Of the admonished were the Covini, Benini, Rinucci, Formiconi, Corbizzi, Manelli, and Alderotti. It was customary to create the Balia for a limited time; and when the citizens elected had effected the purpose of their appointment, they resigned the office from motives of good feeling and decency, although the time allowed might not have expired. In conformity with this laudable practice, the Balia of that period, supposing they had accomplished all that was expected of them, wished to retire; but when the multitude were acquainted with their intention, they ran armed to the palace, and insisted, that before resigning their power, many other persons should be banished and admonished. This greatly displeased the signors; but without disclosing the extent of their displeasure, they contrived to amuse the multitude with promises, till they had assembled a sufficient body of armed men, and then took such measures, that fear induced the people to lay aside the weapons which madness had led them to take up. Nevertheless, in some degree to gratify the fury of the mob, and to reduce the authority of the plebeian trades, it was provided, that as the latter had previously possessed a third of the honors, they should in future have only a fourth. That there might always be two of the signors particularly devoted to the government, they gave authority to the Gonfalonier of

Justice, and four others, to form a ballot-purse of select citizens, from which, in every Signory, two should be drawn.

This government from its establishment in 1381, till the alterations now made, had continued six years; and the internal peace of the city remained undisturbed until 1393. During this time, Giovanni Galeazzo Visconti, usually called the Count of Virtú, imprisoned his uncle Bernabo, and thus became sovereign of the whole of Lombardy. As he had become duke of Milan by fraud, he designed to make himself king of Italy by force. In 1391 he commenced a spirited attack upon the Florentines; but such various changes occurred in the course of the war, that he was frequently in greater danger than the Florentines themselves, who, though they made a brave and admirable defense, for a republic, must have been ruined, if he had survived. As it was, the result was attended with infinitely less evil than their fears of so powerful an enemy had led them to apprehend; for the duke having taken Bologna, Pisa, Perugia, and Sienna, and prepared a diadem with which to be crowned king of Italy at Florence, died before he had tasted the fruit of his victories, or the Florentines began to feel the effect of their disasters.

CHAPTER VII

Maso degli Albizzi--His violence excites the anger of the people--They have recourse to Veri de' Medici--The modesty of Veri--He refuses to assume the dignity of prince, and appeases the people--Discourse of Veri to the Signory--The banished Florentines endeavor to return--They secretly enter the city and raise a tumult--Some of them slain, others taken to the church of St. Reparata--A conspiracy of exiles supported by the duke of Milan--The conspiracy discovered and the parties punished--Various enterprises of the Florentines--Taking of Pisa--War with the king of Naples--Acquisition of Cortona.

During the war with the duke of Milan the office of Gonfalonier of Justice fell to Maso degli Albizzi, who by the death of Piero in 1379, had become the inveterate enemy of the Alberti: and as party feeling is incapable either of repose or abatement, he determined, notwithstanding Benedetto had died in exile, that before the expiration of his magistracy, he would revenge himself on the remainder of that family. He seized the opportunity afforded by a person, who on being examined respecting correspondence maintained with the rebels, accused Andrea and Alberto degli Alberti of such practices. They were immediately arrested, which so greatly excited the people, that the Signory, having provided themselves with an armed force, called the citizens to a general assembly or parliament, and appointed a Balìa, by whose authority many were banished, and a new ballot for the offices of government was made. Among the banished were nearly all the Alberti; many members of the

trades were admonished, and some put to death. Stung by these numerous injuries, the trades and the lowest of the people rose in arms, considering themselves despoiled both of honor and life. One body of them assembled in the piazza; another ran to the house of Veri de' Medici, who, after the death of Salvestro, was head of the family. The Signory, in order to appease those who came to the piazza or court of the palace, gave them for leaders, with the ensigns of the Guelphs and of the people in their hands, Rinaldo Gianfigliuzzi, and Donato Acciajuoli, both men of the popular class, and more attached to the interests of the plebeians than any other. Those who went to the house of Veri de' Medici, begged that he would be pleased to undertake the government, and free them from the tyranny of those citizens who were destroying the peace and safety of the commonwealth.

It is agreed by all who have written concerning the events of this period, that if Veri had had more ambition than integrity he might without any impediment have become prince of the city; for the unfeeling treatment which, whether right or wrong, had been inflicted upon the trades and their friends, had so excited the minds of men to vengeance, that all they required was some one to be their leader. Nor were there wanting those who could inform him of the state of public feeling; for Antonio de' Medici with whom he had for some time been upon terms of most intimate friendship, endeavored to persuade him to undertake the government of the republic. To this Veri replied: "Thy menaces when thou wert my enemy, never alarmed me; nor shall thy counsel, now when thou art my friend, do me any harm." Then, turning toward the multitude,

he bade them be of good cheer; for he would be their defender, if they would allow themselves to be advised by him. He then went, accompanied by a great number of citizens, to the piazza, and proceeded directly to the audience chamber of the Signory, whom he addressed to this effect: That he could not regret having lived so as to gain the love of the Florentines; but he was sorry they had formed an opinion of him which his past life had not warranted; for never having done anything that could be construed as either factious or ambitious, he could not imagine how it had happened, that they should think him willing to stir up strife as a discontented person, or usurp the government of his country like an ambitious one. He therefore begged that the infatuation of the multitude might not injure him in their estimation; for, to the utmost of his power, their authority should be restored. He then recommended them to use good fortune with moderation; for it would be much better to enjoy an imperfect victory with safety to the city, than a complete one at her ruin. The Signory applauded Veri's conduct; begged he would endeavor to prevent recourse to arms, and promised that what he and the other citizens might deem most advisable should be done. Veri then returned to the piazza, where the people who had followed him were joined by those led by Donato and Rinaldo, and informed the united companies that he had found the Signory most kindly disposed toward them; that many things had been taken into consideration, which the shortness of time, and the absence of the magistrates, rendered incapable of being finished. He therefore begged they would lay down their arms and obey the Signory; assuring them that humility would prevail rather than pride, entreaties rather than threats; and if

they would take his advice, their privileges and security would remain unimpaired. He thus induced them to return peaceably to their homes.

The disturbance having subsided, the Signory armed the piazza, enrolled 2,000 of the most trusty citizens, who were divided equally by Gonfalons, and ordered to be in readiness to give their assistance whenever required; and they forbade the use of arms to all who were not thus enrolled. Having adopted these precautionary measures, they banished and put to death many of those members of the trades who had shown the greatest audacity in the late riots; and to invest the office of Gonfalonier of Justice with more authoritative majesty, they ordered that no one should be eligible to it, under forty-five years of age.

Many other provisions for the defense of the state were made, which appeared intolerable to those against whom they were directed, and were odious even to the friends of the Signory themselves, for they could not believe a government to be either good or secure, which needed so much violence for its defense, a violence excessively offensive, not only to those of the Alberti who remained in the city, and to the Medici, who felt themselves injured by these proceedings, but also to many others.

The first who attempted resistance was Donato, the son of Jacopo Acciajuoli, who thought of great authority, and the superior rather than the equal of Maso degli Albizzi (who on account of the events which took place while he was Gonfalonier of Justice, was almost at the head of the republic), could not enjoy repose amid such general discontent, or, like many others, convert social evils to his own private advantage, and therefore resolved to attempt the restoration of the exiles to their

country, or at least their offices to the admonished. He went from one to another, disseminating his views, showing that the people would not be satisfied, or the ferment of parties subside, without the changes he proposed; and declared that if he were in the Signory, he would soon carry them into effect. In human affairs, delay causes tedium, and haste danger. To avoid what was tedious, Donato Acciajuoli resolved to attempt what involved danger. Michele Acciajuoli his relative, and Niccolo Ricoveri his friend, were of the Signory. This seemed to Donato a conjuncture of circumstances too favorable to be lost, and he requested they would propose a law to the councils, which would include the restoration of the citizens. They, at his entreaty, spoke about the matter to their associates, who replied, that it was improper to attempt any innovation in which the advantage was doubtful and the danger certain. Upon this, Donato, having in vain tried all other means he could think of, excited with anger, gave them to understand that since they would not allow the city to be governed with peaceful measures, he would try what could be done with arms. These words gave so great offense, that being communicated to the heads of the government, Donato was summoned, and having appeared, the truth was proven by those to whom he had intrusted the message, and he was banished to Barletta. Alamanno and Antonio de' Medici were also banished, and all those of that family, who were descended from Alamanno, with many who, although of the inferior artificers, possessed influence with the plebeians. These events took place two years after the reform of government effected by Maso degli Albizzi.

At this time many discontented citizens were at home, and others banished in the adjoining states. Of the latter there lived at Bologna Picchio Cavicciulli, Tommaso de' Ricci, Antonio de' Medici, Benedetto degli Spini, Antonio Girolami, Cristofano di Carlone, and two others of the lowest order, all bold young men, and resolved upon returning to their country at any hazard. These were secretly told by Pigiello and Baroccio Cavicciulli, who, being admonished, lived in Florence, that if they came to the city they should be concealed in their house; from which they might afterward issue, slay Maso degli Albizzi, and call the people to arms, who, full of discontent, would willingly arise, particularly as they would be supported by the Ricci, Adimari, Medici, Manelli, and many other families. Excited with these hopes, on the fourth of August, 1397, they came to Florence, and having entered unobserved according to their arrangement, they sent one of their party to watch Maso, designing with his death to raise the people. Maso was observed to leave his house and proceed to that of an apothecary, near the church of San Pietro Maggiore, which he entered. The man who went to watch him ran to give information to the other conspirators, who took their arms and hastened to the house of the apothecary, but found that Maso had gone. However, undaunted with the failure of their first attempt, they proceeded to the Old Market, where they slew one of the adverse party, and with loud cries of "people, arms, liberty, and death to the tyrants," directed their course toward the New Market, and at the end of the Calimala slew another. Pursuing their course with the same cries, and finding no one join them in arms, they stopped at the Loggia Nighittosa, where, from an elevated situation, being surrounded with

a great multitude, assembled to look on rather than assist them, they exhorted the men to take arms and deliver themselves from the slavery which weighed so heavily upon them; declaring that the complaints of the discontented in the city, rather than their own grievances, had induced them to attempt their deliverance. They had heard that many prayed to God for an opportunity of avenging themselves, and vowed they would use it whenever they found anyone to conduct them; but now, when the favorable circumstances occurred, and they found those who were ready to lead them, they stared at each other like men stupefied, and would wait till those who were endeavoring to recover for them their liberty were slain, and their own chains more strongly riveted upon them; they wondered that those who were wont to take arms upon slight occasions, remained unmoved under the pressure of so many and so great evils; and that they could willingly suffer such numbers of their fellow-citizens to be banished, so many admonished, when it was in their power to restore the banished to their country, and the admonished to the honors of the state. These words, although full of truth, produced no effect upon those to whom they were addressed; for they were either restrained by their fears, or, on account of the two murders which had been committed, disgusted with the parties. Thus the movers of the tumult, finding that neither words or deeds had force sufficient to stir anyone, saw, when too late, how dangerous a thing it is to attempt to set a people free who are resolved to be slaves; and, despairing of success, they withdrew to the temple of Santa Reparata, where, not to save their lives, but to defer the moment of their deaths, they shut themselves up. Upon the first rumor of the affair, the Signory being in fear, armed and

secured the palace; but when the facts of the case were understood, the parties known, and whither they had betaken themselves, their fears subsided, and they sent the Capitano with a sufficient body of armed men to secure them. The gates of the temple were forced without much trouble; part of the conspirators were slain defending themselves; the remainder were made prisoners and examined, but none were found implicated in the affair except Baroccio and Pigiello Cavicciulli, who were put to death with them.

Shortly after this event, another occurred of greater importance. The Florentines were, as we have before remarked, at war with the duke of Milan, who, finding that with merely open force he could not overcome them, had recourse to secret practices, and with the assistance of the exiles of whom Lombardy was full, he formed a plot to which many in the city were accessory. It was resolved by the conspirators that most of the emigrants, capable of bearing arms, should set out from the places nearest Florence, enter the city by the river Arno, and with their friends hasten to the residences of the chiefs of the government; and having slain them, reform the republic according to their own will. Of the conspirators within the city, was one of the Ricci named Samminiato; and as it often happens in treacherous practices, few are insufficient to effect the purpose of the plot, and among many secrecy cannot be preserved, so while Samminiato was in quest of associates, he found an accuser. He confided the affair to Salvestro Cavicciulli, whose wrongs and those of his friends were thought sufficient to make him faithful; but he, more influenced by immediate fear than the hope of future

vengeance, discovered the whole affair to the Signory, who, having caused Samminiato to be taken, compelled him to tell all the particulars of the matter. However, none of the conspirators were taken, except Tommaso Davizi, who, coming from Bologna, and unaware of what had occurred at Florence, was seized immediately upon his arrival. All the others had fled immediately upon the apprehension of Samminiato.

Samminiato and Tommaso having been punished according to their deserts, a Balìa was formed of many citizens, which sought the delinquents, and took measures for the security of the state. They declared six of the family of the Ricci rebels; also, six of the Alberti; two of the Medici; three of the Scali; two of the Strozzi; Bindo Altoviti, Bernado Adimari, and many others of inferior quality. They admonished all the family of the Alberti, the Ricci, and the Medici for ten years, except a few individuals. Among the Alberti, not admonished, was Antonio, who was thought to be quiet and peaceable. It happened, however, before all suspicion of the conspiracy had ceased, a monk was taken who had been observed during its progress to pass frequently between Bologna and Florence. He confessed that he had often carried letters to Antonio, who was immediately seized, and, though he denied all knowledge of the matter from the first, the monk's accusation prevailed, and he was fined in a considerable sum of money, and banished a distance of three hundred miles from Florence. That the Alberti might not constantly place the city in jeopardy, every member of the family was banished whose age exceeded fifteen years.

These events took place in the year 1400, and two years afterward, died Giovanni Galeazzo, duke of Milan, whose death as we have said above, put an end to the war, which had then continued twelve years. At this time, the government having gained greater strength, and being without enemies external or internal, undertook the conquest of Pisa, and having gloriously completed it, the peace of the city remained undisturbed from 1400 to 1433, except that in 1412, the Alberti, having crossed the boundary they were forbidden to pass, a Balìa was formed which with new provisions fortified the state and punished the offenders with heavy fines. During this period also, the Florentines made war with Ladislaus, king of Naples, who finding himself in great danger ceded to them the city of Cortona of which he was master; but soon afterward, recovering his power, he renewed the war, which became far more disastrous to the Florentines than before; and had it not, in 1414, been terminated by his death, as that of Lombardy had been by the death of the duke of Milan, he, like the duke, would have brought Florence into great danger of losing her liberty. Nor was the war with the king concluded with less good fortune than the former; for when he had taken Rome, Sienna, the whole of La Marca and Romagna, and had only Florence itself to vanquish, he died. Thus death has always been more favorable to the Florentines than any other friend, and more potent to save them than their own valor. From the time of the king's decease, peace was preserved both at home and abroad for eight years, at the end of which, with the wars of Filippo, duke of Milan, the spirit of faction again broke out, and was only appeased by the ruin of that government which continued from 1381 to 1434, had conducted with great glory so many enterprises; acquired

Arezzo, Pisa, Cortona, Leghorn, and Monte Pulciano; and would have accomplished more if the citizens had lived in unity, and had not revived former factions; as in the following book will be particularly shown.