

## BOOK VI

### CHAPTER I

Reflections on the object of war and the use of victory--Niccolo reinforces his army--The duke of Milan endeavors to recover the services of Count Francesco Sforza--Suspensions of the Venetians--They acquire Ravenna--The Florentines purchase the Borgo San Sepolcro of the pope--Piccinino makes an excursion during the winter--The count besieged in his camp before Martinengo--The insolence of Niccolo Piccinino--The duke in revenge makes peace with the league--Sforza assisted by the Florentines.

Those who make war have always and very naturally designed to enrich themselves and impoverish the enemy; neither is victory sought or conquest desirable, except to strengthen themselves and weaken the enemy. Hence it follows, that those who are impoverished by victory or debilitated by conquest, must either have gone beyond, or fallen short of, the end for which wars are made. A republic or a prince is enriched by the victories he obtains, when the enemy is crushed and possession is retained of the plunder and ransom. Victory is injurious when the foe escapes, or when the soldiers appropriate the booty and ransom. In such a case, losses are unfortunate, and conquests still more so; for the vanquished suffers the injuries inflicted by the enemy, and the victor

those occasioned by his friends, which being less justifiable, must cause the greater pain, particularly from a consideration of his being thus compelled to oppress his people by an increased burden of taxation. A ruler possessing any degree of humanity, cannot rejoice in a victory that afflicts his subjects. The victories of the ancient and well organized republics, enabled them to fill their treasuries with gold and silver won from their enemies, to distribute gratuities to the people, reduce taxation, and by games and solemn festivals, disseminate universal joy. But the victories obtained in the times of which we speak, first emptied the treasury, and then impoverished the people, without giving the victorious party security from the enemy. This arose entirely from the disorders inherent in their mode of warfare; for the vanquished soldiery, divesting themselves of their accoutrements, and being neither slain nor detained prisoners, only deferred a renewed attack on the conqueror, till their leader had furnished them with arms and horses. Besides this, both ransom and booty being appropriated by the troops, the victorious princes could not make use of them for raising fresh forces, but were compelled to draw the necessary means from their subjects' purses, and this was the only result of victory experienced by the people, except that it diminished the ruler's reluctance to such a course, and made him less particular about his mode of oppressing them. To such a state had the practice of war been brought by the sort of soldiery then on foot, that the victor and the vanquished, when desirous of their services, alike needed fresh supplies of money; for the one had to re-equip them, and the other to bribe them; the vanquished could not fight without being remounted, and the

conquerors would not take the field without a new gratuity. Hence it followed, that the one derived little advantage from the victory, and the other was the less injured by defeat; for the routed party had to be re-equipped, and the victorious could not pursue his advantage.

From this disorderly and perverse method of procedure, it arose, that before Niccolo's defeat became known throughout Italy, he had again reorganized his forces, and harassed the enemy with greater vigor than before. Hence, also, it happened, that after his disaster at Tenna, he so soon occupied Verona: that being deprived of his army at Verona, he was shortly able to appear with a large force in Tuscany; that being completely defeated at Anghiari, before he reached Tuscany, he was more powerful in the field than ever. He was thus enabled to give the duke of Milan hopes of defending Lombardy, which by his absence appeared to be lost; for while Niccolo spread consternation throughout Tuscany, disasters in the former province so alarmed the duke, that he was afraid his utter ruin would ensue before Niccolo, whom he had recalled, could come to his relief, and check the impetuous progress of the count. Under these impressions, the duke, to insure by policy that success which he could not command by arms, had recourse to remedies, which on similar occasions had frequently served his turn. He sent Niccolo da Esti, prince of Ferrara, to the count who was then at Peschiera, to persuade him, "That this war was not to his advantage; for if the duke became so ruined as to be unable to maintain his position among the states of Italy, the count would be the first to suffer; for he would cease to be of importance either with the Venetians or the Florentines; and to

prove the sincerity of his wish for peace, he offered to fulfill the engagement he had entered into with regard to his daughter, and send her to Ferrara; so that as soon as peace was established, the union might take place." The count replied, "That if the duke really wished for peace, he might easily be gratified, as the Florentines and the Venetians were equally anxious for it. True, it was, he could with difficulty credit him, knowing that he had never made peace but from necessity, and when this no longer pressed him, again desired war. Neither could he give credence to what he had said concerning the marriage, having been so repeatedly deceived; yet when peace was concluded, he would take the advice of his friends upon that subject."

The Venetians, who were sometimes needlessly jealous of their soldiery, became greatly alarmed at these proceedings; and not without reason. The count was aware of this, and wishing to remove their apprehensions, pursued the war with unusual vigor; but his mind had become so unsettled by ambition, and the Venetians' by jealousy, that little further progress was made during the remainder of the summer, and upon the return of Niccolo into Lombardy, winter having already commenced, the armies withdrew into quarters, the count to Verona, the Florentine forces to Tuscany, the duke's to Cremona, and those of the pope to Romagna. The latter, after having been victorious at Anghiari, made an unsuccessful attack upon Furli and Bologna, with a view to wrest them from Niccolo Piccinino; but they were gallantly defended by his son Francesco. However, the arrival of the papal forces so alarmed the people of Ravenna with the fear of becoming subject to the church, that,

by consent of Ostasio di Polenta their lord, they placed themselves under the power of the Venetians; who, in return for the territory, and that Ostasio might never retake by force what he had imprudently given them, sent him and his son to Candia, where they died. In the course of these affairs, the pope, notwithstanding the victory at Anghiari, became so in want of money, that he sold the fortress of Borgo San Sepolcro to the Florentines for 25,000 ducats.

Affairs being thus situated, each party supposed winter would protect them from the evils of war, and thought no more of peace. This was particularly the case with the duke, who, being rendered doubly secure by the season and by the presence of Niccolo, broke off all attempts to effect a reconciliation with the count, reorganized Niccolo's forces, and made every requisite preparation for the future struggle. The count being informed of this, went to Venice to consult with the senate on the course to be pursued during the next year. Niccolo, on the other hand, being quite prepared, and seeing the enemy unprovided, did not await the return of spring, but crossed the Adda during severe weather, occupied the whole Brescian territory, except Oddula and Acri, and made prisoners two thousand horse belonging to Francesco's forces, who had no apprehension of an attack. But the greatest source of anxiety to the count, and alarm to the Venetians, was the desertion of his service by Ciarpellone, one of his principal officers. Francesco, on learning these matters, immediately left Venice, and, arriving at Brescia, found that Niccolo, after doing all the mischief he could, had retired to his quarters; and therefore, finding the war concluded for the present was

not disposed to rekindle it, but rather to use the opportunity afforded by the season and his enemies, of reorganizing his forces, so as to be able, when spring arrived, to avenge himself for his former injuries. To this end he induced the Venetians to recall the forces they had in Tuscany, in the Florentine service, and to order that to succeed Gattamelata, who was dead, Micheletto Attendulo should take the command.

On the approach of spring, Niccolo Piccinino was the first to take the field, and encamped before Cignano, a fortress twelve miles from Brescia; the count marched to its relief, and the war between them was conducted in the usual manner. The count, apprehensive for the city of Bergamo, besieged Martinengo, a castle so situated that the possession of it would enable him to relieve the former, which was closely pressed by Niccolo, who, having foreseen that the enemy could impede him only from the direction of Martinengo, had put the castle into a complete state of defense, so that the count was obliged to lend his whole force to the siege. Upon this, Niccolo placed his troops in a situation calculated to intercept the count's provisions, and fortified himself with trenches and bastions in such a manner that he could not be attacked without the most manifest hazard to his assailant. Hence the besiegers were more distressed than the people of Martinengo whom they besieged. The count could not hold his position for want of food, nor quit it without imminent danger; so that the duke's victory appeared certain, and defeat equally inevitable to the count and the Venetians.

But fortune, never destitute of means to assist her favorites, or to

injure others, caused the hope of victory to operate so powerfully upon Niccolo Piccinino, and made him assume such a tone of unbounded insolence, that, losing all respect for himself and the duke, he sent him word that, having served under his ensign for so long, without obtaining sufficient land to serve him for a grave, he wished to know from himself what was to be the reward of his labors; for it was in his power to make him master of Lombardy, and place all his enemies in his power; and, as a certain victory ought to be attended by a sure remuneration, he desired the duke to concede to him the city of Piacenza, that when weary with his lengthened services he might at last betake himself to repose. Nor did he hesitate, in conclusion, to threaten, if his request were not granted, to abandon the enterprise. This injurious and most insolent mode of proceeding highly offended the duke, and, on further consideration, he determined rather to let the expedition altogether fail, than consent to his general's demand. Thus, what all the dangers he had incurred, and the threats of his enemies, could not draw from him, the insolent behavior of his friends made him willing to propose. He resolved to come to terms with the count, and sent Antonio Guido Buono, of Tortona, to offer his daughter and conditions of peace, which were accepted with great pleasure by the count, and also by the colleagues as far as themselves were concerned. The terms being secretly arranged, the duke sent to command Niccolo to make a truce with the count for one year; intimating, that being exhausted with the expense, he could not forego a certain peace for a doubtful victory. Niccolo was utterly astonished at this resolution, and could not imagine what had induced the duke to lose such a glorious

opportunity; nor could he surmise that, to avoid rewarding his friends, he would save his enemies, and therefore to the utmost of his power he opposed this resolution; and the duke was obliged, in order to induce his compliance, to threaten that if he did not obey he would give him up to his soldiers and his enemies. Niccolo submitted, with the feelings of one compelled to leave country and friends, complaining of his hard fate, that fortune and the duke were robbing him of the victory over his enemies. The truce being arranged, the marriage of the duke's daughter, Bianca, to the count was solemnized, the duke giving Cremona for her portion. This being over, peace was concluded in November, 1441, at which Francesco Barbadico and Pagolo Trono were present for the Venetians, and for the Florentines Agnolo Acciajuoli. Peschiera, Asola, and Lonato, castles in the Mantuan territory, were assigned to the Venetians.

The war in Lombardy was concluded; but the dissensions in the kingdom of Naples continued, and the inability to compose them occasioned the resumption of those arms which had been so recently laid aside. Alfonso, of Aragon, had, during these wars, taken from René the whole kingdom except Naples; so that, thinking he had the victory in his power, he resolved during the siege of Naples to take Benevento, and his other possessions in that neighborhood, from the count; and thought he might easily accomplish this while the latter was engaged in the wars of Lombardy. Having heard of the conclusion of peace, Alfonso feared the count would not only come for the purpose of recovering his territories, but also to favor René; and René himself had hope of his assistance for

the same reason. The latter, therefore, sent to the count, begging he would come to the relief of a friend, and avenge himself of an enemy. On the other hand, Alfonso entreated Filippo, for the sake of the friendship which subsisted between them, to find the count some other occupation, that, being engaged in greater affairs, he might not have an opportunity of interfering between them. Filippo complied with this request, without seeming to be aware that he violated the peace recently made, so greatly to his disadvantage. He therefore signified to pope Eugenius, that the present was a favorable opportunity for recovering the territories which the count had taken from the church; and, that he might be in a condition to use it, offered him the services of Niccolo Piccinino, and engaged to pay him during the war; who, since the peace of Lombardy, had remained with his forces in Romagna. Eugenius eagerly took the advice, induced by his hatred of the count, and his desire to recover his lost possessions; feeling assured that, although on a former occasion he had been duped by Niccolo, it would be improper, now that the duke interfered, to suspect any deceit; and, joining his forces to those of Niccolo, he assailed La Marca. The count, astonished at such an unexpected attack, assembled his troops, and went to meet the enemy. In the meantime, King Alfonso took possession of Naples, so that the whole kingdom, except Castelnuova, was in his power. Leaving a strong guard at Castelnuova René set out and came to Florence, where he was most honorably received; and having remained a few days, finding he could not continue the war, he withdrew to Marseilles.

In the meantime, Alfonso took Castelnuova, and the count found himself

assailed in the Marca Inferiore, both by the pope and Niccolo. He applied to the Venetians and the Florentines for assistance, in men and money, assuring them that if they did not determine to restrain the pope and king, during his life, they would soon afterward find their very existence endangered, for both would join Filippo and divide Italy among them. The Florentines and Venetians hesitated for a time, both to consider the propriety of drawing upon themselves the enmity of the pope and the king, and because they were then engaged in the affairs of the Bolognese. Annibale Bentivoglio had driven Francesco Piccinino from Bologna, and for defense against the duke, who favored Francesco, he demanded and received assistance of the Venetians and Florentines; so that, being occupied with these matters they could not resolve to assist the count, but Annibale, having routed Francesco Piccinino, and those affairs seeming to be settled, they resolved to support him. Designing however to make sure of the duke, they offered to renew the league with him, to which he was not averse; for, although he consented that war should be made against the count, while King René was in arms, yet finding him now conquered, and deprived of the whole kingdom, he was not willing that the count should be despoiled of his territories; and therefore, not only consented that assistance should be given him, but wrote to Alfonso to be good enough to retire to his kingdom, and discontinue hostilities against the count; and although reluctantly, yet in acknowledgment of his obligations to the duke, Alfonso determined to satisfy him, and withdrew with his forces beyond the Tronto.

## CHAPTER II

Discords of Florence--Jealousy excited against Neri di Gino Capponi--Baldaccio d'Anghiari murdered--Reform of government in favor of the Medici--Enterprises of Sforza and Piccinino--Death of Niccolo Piccinino--End of the war--Disturbances in Bologna--Annibale Bentivoglio slain by Battista Canneschi, and the latter by the people--Santi, supposed to be the son of Ercole Bentivoglio, is called to govern the city of Bologna--Discourse of Cosmo de' Medici to him--Perfidious designs of the duke of Milan against Sforza--General war in Italy--Losses of the duke of Milan--The duke has recourse to the count, who makes peace with him--Offers of the duke and the Venetians to the count--The Venetians furtively deprive the count of Cremona.

While the affairs of Romagna proceeded thus, the city of Florence was not tranquil. Among the citizens of highest reputation in the government, was Neri di Gino Capponi, of whose influence Cosmo de' Medici had more apprehension than any other; for to the great authority which he possessed in the city was added his influence with the soldiery. Having been often leader of the Florentine forces he had won their affection by his courage and talents; and the remembrance of his own and his father's victories (the latter having taken Pisa, and he himself having overcome Niccolo Piccinino at Anghiari) caused him to be beloved by many, and feared by those who were averse to having associates in the government. Among the leaders of the Florentine army was Baldaccio d'Anghiari, an excellent soldier, for in those times there

was not one in Italy who surpassed him in vigor either of body or mind; and possessing so much influence with the infantry, whose leader he had always been, many thought they would follow him wherever he chose to lead them. Baldaccio was the intimate friend of Neri, who loved him for his talents, of which he had been a constant witness. This excited great suspicion in the other citizens, who, thinking it alike dangerous either to discharge or retain him in their service, determined to destroy him, and fortune seemed to favor their design. Bartolommeo Orlandini was Gonfalonier of Justice; the same person who was sent to the defense of Marradi, when Niccolo Piccinino came into Tuscany, as we have related above, and so basely abandoned the pass, which by its nature was almost impregnable. So flagrant an instance of cowardice was very offensive to Baldaccio, who, on many occasions, both by words and letters, had contributed to make the disgraceful fact known to all. The shame and vexation of Bartolommeo were extreme, so that of all things he wished to avenge himself, thinking, with the death of his accuser, to efface the stain upon his character.

This feeling of Bartolommeo Orlandini was known to other citizens, so that they easily persuaded him to put Baldaccio to death, and at one avenge himself, and deliver his country from a man whom they must either retain at great peril, or discharge to their greater confusion.

Bartolommeo having therefore resolved to murder him, concealed in his own apartment at the palace several young men, all armed; and Baldaccio, entering the piazza, whither it was his daily custom to come, to confer with the magistrates concerning his command, the Gonfalonier sent for

him, and he, without any suspicion, obeyed. Meeting him in the corridor, which leads to the chambers of the Signory, they took a few turns together discoursing of his office, when being close to the door of the apartments in which the assassins were concealed, Bartolommeo gave them the signal, upon which they rushed out, and finding Baldaccio alone and unarmed, they slew him, and threw the body out of the window which looks from the palace toward the dogano, or customhouse. It was thence carried into the piazza, where the head being severed, it remained the whole day exposed to the gaze of the people. Baldaccio was married, and had only one child, a boy, who survived him but a short time; and his wife, Annalena, thus deprived of both husband and offspring, rejected every proposal for a second union. She converted her house into a monastery, to which she withdrew, and, being joined by many noble ladies, lived in holy seclusion to the end of her days. The convent she founded, and which is named from her, preserves her story in perpetual remembrance.

This circumstance served to weaken Neri's power, and made him lose both influence and friends. Nor did this satisfy the citizens who held the reins of government; for it being ten years since their acquisition of power, and the authority of the Balia expired, many began to exhibit more boldness, both in words and deeds, than seemed consistent with their safety; and the leaders of the party judged, that if they wished to preserve their influence, some means must be adopted to increase it. To this end, in 1444 the councils created a new Balia, which reformed the government, gave authority to a limited number to create the Signory, re-established the Chancery of Reformations, depriving Filippo

Peruzzi of his office of president in it, and appointing another wholly under their influence. They prolonged the term of exile to those who were banished; put Giovanni di Simone Vespucci in prison; deprived the Accoppiatori of their enemies of the honors of government, and with them the sons of Piero Baroncelli, the whole of the Seragli, Bartolommeo Fortini, Francesco Castellani, and many others. By these means they strengthened their authority and influence, and humbled their enemies, or those whom they suspected of being so.

Having thus recovered and confirmed their government, they then turned their attention to external affairs. As observed above, Niccolo Piccinino was abandoned by King Alfonso, and the count having been aggrandized by the assistance of the Florentines, attacked and routed him near Fermo, where, after losing nearly the whole of his troops, Niccolo fled to Montecchio, which he fortified in such a manner that in a short time he had again assembled so large an army as enabled him to make head against the count; particularly as the season was now come for them to withdraw into quarters. His principal endeavor during the winter was to collect troops, and in this he was assisted both by the pope and Alfonso; so that, upon the approach of spring, both leaders took the field, and Niccolo, being the strongest, reduced the count to extreme necessity, and would have conquered him if the duke had not contrived to frustrate his designs. Filippo sent to beg he would come to him with all speed, for he wished to have a personal interview, that he might communicate matters of the highest importance. Niccolo, anxious to hear them, abandoned a certain victory for a very doubtful advantage; and

leaving his son Francesco to command the army, hastened to Milan. The count being informed of the circumstance, would not let slip the opportunity of fighting in the absence of Niccolo; and, coming to an engagement near the castle of Monte Loro, routed the father's forces and took the son prisoner. Niccolo having arrived at Milan saw that the duke had duped him, and learning the defeat of his army and the capture of his son, he died of grief in 1445, at the age of sixty-four, having been a brave rather than a fortunate leader. He left two sons, Francesco and Jacopo, who, possessing less talent than their father, were still more unfortunate; so that the arms of the family became almost annihilated, while those of Sforza, being favored by fortune, attained augmented glory. The pope, seeing Niccolo's army defeated and himself dead, having little hope of assistance from Aragon, sought peace with the count, and, by the intervention of the Florentines, succeeded. Of La Marca, the pope only retained Osimo, Fabriano, and Recanati; all the rest remained in the count's possession.

Peace being restored to La Marca, the whole of Italy would have obtained repose had it not been disturbed by the Bolognese. There were in Bologna two very powerful families, the Canneschi and the Bentivogli. Of the latter, Annibale was the head; of the former, Battista, who, as a means of confirming their mutual confidence, had contracted family alliances; but among men who have the same objects of ambition in view, it is easy to form connections, but difficult to establish friendship. The Bolognese were in a league with the Venetians and Florentines, which had been effected by the influence of Annibale, after they had driven

out Francesco Piccinino; and Battista, knowing how earnestly the duke desired to have the city favorable to him, proposed to assassinate Annibale, and put Bologna into his power. This being agreed upon, on the twenty-fifth of June, 1445, he attacked Annibale with his men, and slew him: and then, with shouts of "the duke, the duke," rode through the city. The Venetian and Florentine commissaries were in Bologna at the time, and at first kept themselves within doors; but finding that the people, instead of favoring the murderers, assembled in the piazza, armed in great numbers, mourning the death of Annibale, they joined them; and, assembling what forces they could, attacked the Canneschi, soon overpowered them, slew part, and drove the remainder out of the city. Battista, unable to effect his escape, or his enemies his capture, took refuge in a vault of his house, used for storing grain. The friends of the Bentivogli, having sought him all day, and knowing he had not left the city, so terrified his servants, that one of them, a groom, disclosed the place of his concealment, and being drawn forth in complete armor he was slain, his body dragged about the streets, and afterward burned. Thus the duke's authority was sufficient to prompt the enterprise, but his force was not at hand to support it.

The tumults being settled by the death of Battista, and the flight of the Canneschi, Bologna still remained in the greatest confusion. There not being one of the house of Bentivogli of age to govern, Annibale having left but one son whose name was Giovanni, only six years old, it was apprehended that disunion would ensue among the Bentivogli, and cause the return of the Cannecshi, and the ruin both of their own

country and party. While in this state of apprehension, Francesco, sometime Count di Poppi, being at Bologna, informed the rulers of the city, that if they wished to be governed by one of the blood of Annibale, he could tell them of one; and related that about twenty years ago, Ercole, cousin of Annibale, being at Poppi, became acquainted with a girl of the castle, of whom was born a son named Santi, whom Ercole, on many occasions acknowledged to be his own, nor could he deny it, for whoever knew him and saw the boy, could not fail to observe the strongest resemblance. The citizens gave credit to the tale, and immediately sent to Florence to see the young man, and procure of Cosmo and Neri permission to return with him to Bologna. The reputed father of Santi was dead, and he lived under the protection of his uncle, whose name was Antonio da Cascese. Antonio was rich, childless, and a friend of Neri, to whom the matter becoming known, he thought it ought neither to be despised nor too hastily accepted; and that it would be best for Santi and those who had been sent from Bologna, to confer in the presence of Cosmo. They were accordingly introduced, and Santi was not merely honored but adored by them, so greatly were they influenced by the spirit of party. However, nothing was done at the time, except that Cosmo, taking Santi apart, spoke to him thus: "No one can better advise you in this matter than yourself; for you have to take that course to which your own mind prompts you. If you be the son of Ercole Bentivoglio, you will naturally aspire to those pursuits which are proper to your family and worthy of your father; but if you be the son of Agnolo da Cascese, you will remain in Florence, and basely spend the remainder of your days in some branch of the woolen trade." These words

greatly influenced the youth, who, though he had at first almost refused to adopt such a course, said, he would submit himself wholly to what Cosmo and Neri should determine. They, assenting to the request of the Bolognese, provided suitable apparel, horses, and servants; and in a few days he was escorted by a numerous cavalcade to Bologna, where the guardianship of Annibale's son and of the city were placed in his hands. He conducted himself so prudently, that although all his ancestors had been slain by their enemies, he lived in peace and died respected by everyone.

After the death of Niccolo Piccinino and the peace of La Marca, Filippo wishing to procure a leader of his forces, secretly negotiated with Ciarpellone, one of the principal captains of Count Francesco, and arrangements having been made, Ciarpellone asked permission to go to Milan to take possession of certain castles which had been given him by Filippo during the late wars. The count suspecting what was in progress, in order to prevent the duke from accommodating himself at his expense, caused Ciarpellone to be arrested, and soon afterward put to death; alleging that he had been detected plotting against him. Filippo was highly annoyed and indignant, which the Venetians and the Florentines were glad to observe, for their greatest fear was, that the duke and the count should become friends.

The duke's anger caused the renewal of war in La Marca. Gismondo Malatesti, lord of Rimino, being son-in-law of the count, expected to obtain Pesaro; but the count, having obtained possession, gave it to

his brother, Alessandro. Gismondo, offended at this, was still further exasperated at finding that Federigo di Montefeltro, his enemy, by the count's assistance, gained possession of Urbino. He therefore joined the duke, and solicited the pope and the king to make war against the count, who, to give Gismondo a taste of the war he so much desired, resolved to take the initiative, and attacked him immediately. Thus Romagna and La Marca were again in complete confusion, for Filippo, the king, and the pope, sent powerful assistance to Gismondo, while the Florentines and Venetians supplied the count with money, though not with men. Nor was Filippo satisfied with the war in Romagna, but also desired to take Cremona and Pontremoli from the count; but Pontremoli was defended by the Florentines, and Cremona by the Venetians. Thus the war was renewed in Lombardy, and after several engagements in the Cremonese, Francesco Piccinino, the leader of the duke's forces, was routed at Casale, by Micheletto and the Venetian troops. This victory gave the Venetians hope of obtaining the duke's dominions. They sent a commissary to Cremona, attacked the Ghiaradadda, and took the whole of it, except Crema. Then crossing the Adda, they overran the country as far as Milan. Upon this the duke had recourse to Alfonso, and entreated his assistance, pointing out the danger his kingdom would incur if Lombardy were to fall into the hands of the Venetians. Alfonso promised to send him troops, but apprised him of the difficulties which would attend their passage, without the permission of the count.

Filippo, driven to extremity, then had recourse to Francesco, and begged he would not abandon his father-in-law, now that he had become old and

blind. The count was offended with the duke for making war against him; but he was jealous of the increasing greatness of the Venetians, and he himself began to be in want of money, for the League supplied him sparingly. The Florentines, being no longer in fear of the duke, ceased to stand in need of the count, and the Venetians desired his ruin; for they thought Lombardy could not be taken from him except by this means; yet while Filippo sought to gain him over, and offered him the entire command of his forces, on condition that he should restore La Marca to the pope and quit the Venetian alliance, ambassadors were sent to him by that republic, promising him Milan, if they took it, and the perpetual command of their forces, if he would push the war in La Marca, and prevent Alfonso from sending troops into Lombardy. The offers of the Venetians were great, as also were their claims upon him, having begun the war in order to save him from losing Cremona; while the injuries received from the duke were fresh in his memory, and his promises had lost all influence, still the count hesitated; for on the one hand, were to be considered his obligations to the League, his pledged faith, their recent services, and his hopes of the future, all which had their influence on him; on the other, were the entreaties of his father-in-law, and above all, the bane which he feared would be concealed under the specious offers of the Venetians, for he doubted not, that both with regard to Milan and their other promises, if they were victorious, he would be at their mercy, to which no prudent men would ever submit if he could avoid it. These difficulties in the way of his forming a determination, were obviated by the ambition of the Venetians, who, seeing a chance of occupying Cremona, from secret

intelligence with that city, under a different pretext, sent troops into its neighborhood; but the affair was discovered by those who commanded Cremona for the count, and measures were adopted which prevented its success. Thus without obtaining Cremona, they lost the count's friendship, who, now being free from all other considerations, joined the duke.

### CHAPTER III

Death of Filippo Visconti, duke of Milan--The Milanese appoint Sforza their captain--Milan becomes a republic--The pope endeavors to restore peace to Italy--The Venetians oppose this design--Alfonso attacks the Florentines--The neighborhood of Piombino becomes the principal theater of war--Scarcity in the Florentine camp--Disorders occur in the Neapolitan and Florentine armies--Alfonso sues for peace and is compelled to retreat--Pavia surrenders to the count--Displeasure of the Milanese--The count besieges Caravaggio--The Venetians endeavor to relieve the place--They are routed by the count before Caravaggio.

Pope Eugenius being dead, was succeeded by Nicholas V. The count had his whole army at Cotignola, ready to pass into Lombardy, when intelligence was brought him of the death of Filippo, which happened on the last day of August, 1447. This event greatly afflicted him, for he doubted whether his troops were in readiness, on account of their arrears of pay; he feared the Venetians, who were his armed enemies, he having recently forsaken them and taken part with the duke; he was in apprehension from Alfonso, his inveterate foe; he had no hope from the pontiff or the Florentines; for the latter were allies of the Venetians, and he had seized the territories of the former. However, he resolved to face his fortune and be guided by circumstances; for it often happens, that when engaged in business valuable ideas are suggested, which in a state of inaction would never have occurred. He had great hopes, that if the Milanese were disposed to defend themselves against the ambition of

the Venetians, they could make use of no other power but his. Therefore, he proceeded confidently into the Bolognese territory, thence to Modena and Reggio, halted with his forces upon the Lenza, and sent to offer his services at Milan. On the death of the duke, part of the Milanese were inclined to establish a republic; others wished to choose a prince, and of these, one part favored the count, and another Alfonso. However, the majority being in favor of freedom, they prevailed over the rest, and organized a republic, to which many cities of the Duchy refused obedience; for they, too, desired to live in the enjoyment of their liberty, and even those who did not embrace such views, refused to submit to the sovereignty of the Milanese. Lodi and Piacenza surrendered themselves to the Venetians; Pavia and Parma became free. This confused state of things being known to the count, he proceeded to Cremona, where his ambassadors and those of the Milanese arranged for him to command the forces of the new republic, with the same remuneration he had received from the duke at the time of his decease. To this they added the possession of Brescia, until Verona was recovered, when he should have that city and restore Brescia to the Milanese.

Before the duke's death, Pope Nicholas, after his assumption of the pontificate, sought to restore peace among the princes of Italy, and with this object endeavored, in conjunction with the ambassadors sent by the Florentines to congratulate him on his accession, to appoint a diet at Ferrara to attempt either the arrangement of a long truce, or the establishment of peace. A congress was accordingly held in that city, of the pope's legate and the Venetian, ducal, and Florentine

representatives. King Alfonso had no envoy there. He was at Tivoli with a great body of horse and foot, and favorable to the duke; both having resolved, that having gained the count over to their side, they would openly attack the Florentines and Venetians, and till the arrival of the count in Lombardy, take part in the treaty for peace at Ferrara, at which, though the king did not appear, he engaged to concur in whatever course the duke should adopt. The conference lasted several days, and after many debates, resolved on either a truce for five years, or a permanent peace, whichever the duke should approve; and the ducal ambassadors, having returned to Milan to learn his decision, found him dead. Notwithstanding this, the Milanese were disposed to adopt the resolutions of the assembly, but the Venetians refused, indulging great hopes of becoming masters of Lombardy, particularly as Lodi and Piacenza, immediately after the duke's death, had submitted to them. They trusted that either by force or by treaty they could strip Milan of her power; and then so press her, as to compel her also to surrender before any assistance could arrive; and they were the more confident of this from seeing the Florentines involved in war with King Alfonso.

The king being at Tivoli, and designing to pursue his enterprise against Tuscany, as had been arranged between himself and Filippo, judging that the war now commenced in Lombardy would give him both time and opportunity, and wishing to have a footing in the Florentine state before he openly commenced hostilities, opened a secret understanding with the fortress of Cennina, in the Val d'Arno Superiore, and took possession of it. The Florentines, surprised with this unexpected event,

perceiving the king already in action, and resolved to do them all the injury in his power, hired forces, created a council of ten for management of the war, and prepared for the conflict in their usual manner. The king was already in the Siennese, and used his utmost endeavors to reduce the city, but the inhabitants of Sienna were firm in their attachment to the Florentines, and refused to receive him within their walls or into any of their territories. They furnished him with provisions, alleging in excuse, the enemy's power and their inability to resist. The king, finding he could not enter by the Val d'Arno, as he had first intended, both because Cennina had been already retaken, and because the Florentines were now in some measure prepared for their defense, turned toward Volterra, and occupied many fortresses in that territory. Thence he proceeded toward Pisa, and with the assistance of Fazio and Arrigo de' Conti, of the Gherardesca, took some castles, and issuing from them, assailed Campiglia, but could not take it, the place being defended by the Florentines, and it being now in the depth of winter. Upon this the king, leaving garrisons in the places he had taken to harass the surrounding country, withdrew with the remainder of his army to quarters in the Siennese. The Florentines, aided by the season, used the most active exertions to provide themselves troops, whose captains were Federigo, lord of Urbino, and Gismondo Malatesti da Rimino, who, though mutual foes, were kept so united by the prudence of the commissaries, Neri di Gino and Bernardetto de' Medici, that they broke up their quarters while the weather was still very severe and recovered not only the places that had been taken in the territory of Pisa, but also the Pomerancie in the neighborhood of Volterra, and so

checked the king's troops, which at first had overrun the Maremma, that they could scarcely retain the places they had been left to garrison.

Upon the return of the spring the commissaries halted with their whole force, consisting of five thousand horse and two thousand foot, at the Spedaletto. The king approached with his army, amounting to fifteen thousand men, within three miles of Campiglia, but when it was expected he would attack the place he fell upon Piombino, hoping, as it was insufficiently provided, to take it with very little trouble, and thus acquire a very important position, the loss of which would be severely felt by the Florentines; for from it he would be able to exhaust them with a long war, obtain his own provision by sea, and harass the whole territory of Pisa. They were greatly alarmed at this attack, and, considering that if they could remain with their army among the woods of Campiglia, the king would be compelled to retire either in defeat or disgrace. With this view they equipped four galleys at Livorno, and having succeeded in throwing three hundred infantry into Piombino, took up their own position at the Caldane, a place where it would be difficult to attack them; and they thought it would be dangerous to encamp among the thickets of the plain.

The Florentine army depended for provisions on the surrounding places, which, being poor and thinly inhabited, had difficulty in supplying them. Consequently the troops suffered, particularly from want of wine, for none being produced in that vicinity, and unable to procure it from more distant places, it was impossible to obtain a sufficient quantity.

But the king, though closely pressed by the Florentines, was well provided except in forage, for he obtained everything else by sea. The Florentines, desirous to supply themselves in the same manner, loaded four vessels with provisions, but, upon their approach, they were attacked by seven of the king's galleys, which took two of them and put the rest to flight. This disaster made them despair of procuring provisions, so that two hundred men of a foraging party, principally for want of wine, deserted to the king, and the rest complained that they could not live without it, in a situation where the heat was so excessive and the water bad. The commissaries therefore determined to quit the place, and endeavor to recover those castles which still remained in the enemy's power; who, on his part, though not suffering from want of provisions, and greatly superior in numbers, found his enterprise a failure, from the ravages made in his army by those diseases which the hot season produces in marshy localities; and which prevailed to such an extent that many died daily, and nearly all were affected. These circumstances occasioned overtures of peace. The king demanded fifty thousand florins, and the possession of Piombino. When the terms were under consideration, many citizens, desirous of peace, would have accepted them, declaring there was no hope of bringing to a favorable conclusion a war which required so much money to carry it on. But Neri Capponi going to Florence, placed the matter in a more correct light, and it was then unanimously determined to reject the proposal, and take the lord of Piombino under their protection, with an alliance offensive and defensive, provided he did not abandon them, but assist in their defense as hitherto. The king being informed of this resolution,

saw that, with his reduced army, he could not gain the place, and withdrew in the same condition as if completely routed, leaving behind him two thousand dead. With the remainder of his sick troops he retired to the Siennese territory, and thence to his kingdom, incensed against the Florentines, and threatening them with new wars upon the return of spring.

While these events were proceeding in Tuscany the Count Sforza, having become leader of the Milanese forces, strenuously endeavored to secure the friendship of Francesco Piccinino, who was also in their service, that he might support him in his enterprises, or be less disposed to do him injury. He then took the field with his army, upon which the people of Pavia, conscious of their inability to resist him, and unwilling to obey the Milanese, offered to submit themselves to his authority, on condition that he should not subject them to the power of Milan. The count desired the possession of Pavia, and considered the circumstance a happy omen, as it would enable him to give a color to his designs. He was not restrained from treachery either by fear or shame; for great men consider failure disgraceful,--a fraudulent success the contrary. But he was apprehensive that his possession of the city would excite the animosity of the Milanese, and perhaps induce them to throw themselves under the power of the Venetians. If he refused to accept the offer, he would have occasion to fear the duke of Savoy, to whom many citizens were inclined to submit themselves; and either alternative would deprive him of the sovereignty of Lombardy. Concluding there was less danger in taking possession of the city than in allowing another to have it, he

determined to accept the proposal of the people of Pavia, trusting he would be able to satisfy the Milanese, to whom he pointed out the danger they must have incurred had he not complied with it; for her citizens would have surrendered themselves to the Venetians or to the duke of Savoy; so that in either case they would have been deprived of the government, and therefore they ought to be more willing to have himself as their neighbor and friend, than a hostile power such as either of the others, and their enemy. The Milanese were upon this occasion greatly perplexed, imagining they had discovered the count's ambition, and the end he had in view; but they thought it desirable to conceal their fears, for they did not know, if the count were to desert them, to whom they could have recourse except the Venetians, whose pride and tyranny they naturally dreaded. They therefore resolved not to break with the count, but by his assistance remedy the evils with which they were threatened, hoping that when freed from them they might rescue themselves from him also; for at that time they were assailed not only by the Venetians but by the Genoese and the duke of Savoy, in the name of Charles of Orleans, the son of a sister of Filippo, but whom the count easily vanquished. Thus their only remaining enemies were the Venetians, who, with a powerful army, determined to occupy their territories, and had already taken possession of Lodi and Piacenza, before which latter place the count encamped; and, after a long siege, took and pillaged the city. Winter being set in, he led his forces into quarters, and then withdrew to Cremona, where, during the cold season, he remained in repose with his wife.

In the spring, the Venetian and Milanese armies again took the field. It was the design of the Milanese, first to recover Lodi and then to come to terms with the Venetians; for the expenses of the war had become very great, and they were doubtful of their general's sincerity, so that they were anxious alike for the repose of peace, and for security against the count. They therefore resolved that the army should march to the siege of Carravaggio, hoping that Lodi would surrender, on that fortress being wrested from the enemy's hands. The count obeyed, though he would have preferred crossing the Adda and attacking the Brescian territory. Having encamped before Caravaggio, he so strongly entrenched himself, that if the enemy attempted to relieve the place, they would have to attack him at a great disadvantage. The Venetian army, led by Micheletto, approached within two bowshots of the enemy's camp, and many skirmishes ensued. The count continued to press the fortress, and reduced it to the very last extremity, which greatly distressed the Venetians, since they knew the loss of it would involve the total failure of their expedition. Very different views were entertained by their military officers respecting the best mode of relieving the place, but they saw no course open except to attack the enemy in his trenches, in spite of all obstacles. The castle was, however, considered of such paramount importance, that the Venetian senate, though naturally timid, and averse to all hazardous undertakings, chose rather to risk everything than allow it to fall into the hands of the enemy.

They therefore resolved to attack the count at all events, and early the next morning commenced their assault upon a point which was least

defended. At the first charge, as commonly happens in a surprise, Francesco's whole army was thrown into dismay. Order, however, was soon so completely restored by the count, that the enemy, after various efforts to gain the outworks, were repulsed and put to flight; and so entirely routed, that of twelve thousand horse only one thousand escaped the hands of the Milanese, who took possession of all the carriages and military stores; nor had the Venetians ever before suffered such a thorough rout and overthrow. Among the plunder and prisoners, crouching down, as if to escape observation, was found a Venetian commissary, who, in the course of the war and before the fight, had spoken contemptuously of the count, calling him "bastard," and "base-born." Being made prisoner, he remembered his faults, and fearing punishment, being taken before the count, was agonized with terror; and, as is usual with mean minds (in prosperity insolent, in adversity abject and cringing), prostrated himself, weeping and begging pardon for the offenses he had committed. The count, taking him by the arm, raised him up, and encouraged him to hope for the best. He then said he wondered how a man so prudent and respectable as himself, could so far err as to speak disparagingly of those who did not merit it; and as regarded the insinuations which he had made against him, he really did not know how Sforza his father, and Madonna Lucia his mother, had proceeded together, not having been there, and having no opportunity of interfering in the matter, so that he was not liable either to blame or praise. However, he knew very well, that in regard to his own actions he had conducted himself so that no one could blame him; and in proof of this he would refer both the Venetian senate and himself to what had happened that

day. He then advised him in future to be more respectful in speaking of others, and more cautious in regard to his own proceedings.

## CHAPTER IV

The count's successes--The Venetians come to terms with him--Views of the Venetians--Indignation of the Milanese against the count--Their ambassador's address to him--The count's moderation and reply--The count and the Milanese prepare for war--Milanese ambassadors at Venice--League of the Venetians and Milanese--The count dupes the Venetians and Milanese--He applies for assistance to the Florentines--Diversity of opinions in Florence on the subject--Neri di Gino Capponi averse to assisting the count--Cosmo de' Medici disposed to do so--The Florentines sent ambassadors to the count.

After this victory, the count marched into the Brescian territory, occupied the whole country, and then pitched his camp within two miles of the city. The Venetians, having well-grounded fears that Brescia would be next attacked, provided the best defense in their power. They then collected the relics of their army, and, by virtue of the treaty, demanded assistance of the Florentines; who, being relieved from the war with Alfonso, sent them one thousand foot and two thousand horse, by whose aid the Venetians were in a condition to treat for peace. At one time it seemed the fate of their republic to lose by war and win by negotiation; for what was taken from them in battle was frequently restored twofold on the restoration of peace. They knew the Milanese were jealous of the count, and that he wished to be not their captain merely, but their sovereign; and as it was in their power to make peace with either of the two (the one desiring it from ambition, the other

from fear), they determined to make choice of the count, and offer him assistance to effect his design; persuading themselves, that as the Milanese would perceive they had been duped by him, they would in revenge place themselves in the power of any one rather than in his; and that, becoming unable either to defend themselves or trust the count, they would be compelled, having no other resource, to fall into their hands. Having taken this resolution, they sounded the count, and found him quite disposed for peace, evidently desirous that the honor and advantage of the victory at Caravaggio should be his own, and not accrue to the Milanese. The parties therefore entered into an agreement, in which the Venetians undertook to pay the count thirteen thousand florins per month, till he should obtain Milan, and to furnish him, during the continuance of the war, four thousand horse and two thousand foot. The count engaged to restore to the Venetians the towns, prisoners, and whatever else had been taken by him during the late campaigns, and content himself with those territories which the duke possessed at the time of his death.

When this treaty became known at Milan, it grieved the citizens more than the victory at Caravaggio had exhilarated them. The rulers of the city mourned, the people complained, women and children wept, and all exclaimed against the count as false and perfidious. Although they could not hope that either prayers or promises would divert him from his ungrateful design, they sent ambassadors to see with what kind of color he would invest his unprincipled proceedings, and being admitted to his presence, one of them spoke to the following effect;--"It is customary

with those who wish to obtain a favor, to make use either of prayers, presents, or threats, that pity, convenience, or fear, may induce a compliance with their requests. But as with cruel, avaricious, or, in their own conceit, powerful men, these arguments have no weight, it is vain to hope, either to soften them by prayers, win them by presents, or alarm them by menaces. We, therefore, being now, though late, aware of thy pride, cruelty, and ambition, come hither, not to ask aught, nor with the hope, even if we were so disposed, of obtaining it, but to remind thee of the benefits thou hast received from the people of Milan, and to prove with what heartless ingratitude thou hast repaid them, that at least, under the many evils oppressing us, we may derive some gratification from telling thee how and by whom they have been produced. Thou canst not have forgotten thy wretched condition at the death of the duke Filippo; the king and the pope were both thine enemies; thou hadst abandoned the Florentines and the Venetians, who, on account of their just indignation, and because they stood in no further need of thee, were almost become thy declared enemies. Thou wert exhausted by thy wars against the church; with few followers, no friends, or any money; hopeless of being able to preserve either thy territories or thy reputation. From these circumstances thy ruin must have ensued, but for our simplicity; we received thee to our home, actuated by reverence for the happy memory of our duke, with whom, being connected by marriage and renewed alliance, we believed thy affection would descend to those who had inherited his authority, and that, if to the benefits he had conferred on thee, our own were added, the friendship we sought to establish would not only be firm, but inseparable; with this impression,

we added Verona or Brescia to thy previous appointments. What more could we either give or promise thee? What else couldst thou, not from us merely, but from any others, have either had or expected? Thou receivedst from us an unhoped-for benefit, and we, in return, an unmerited wrong. Neither hast thou deferred until now the manifestation of thy base designs; for no sooner wert thou appointed to command our armies, than, contrary to every dictate of propriety, thou didst accept Pavia, which plainly showed what was to be the result of thy friendship; but we bore with the injury, in hope that the greatness of the advantage would satisfy thy ambition. Alas! those who grasp at all cannot be satisfied with a part. Thou didst promise that we should possess the conquests which thou might afterward make; for thou wert well aware that what was given at many times might be withdrawn at once, as was the case after the victory at Caravaggio, purchased by our money and blood, and followed by our ruin. Oh! unhappy states, which have to guard against their oppressor; but much more wretched those who have to trust to mercenary and faithless arms like thine! May our example instruct posterity, since that of Thebes and Philip of Macedon, who, after victory over her enemies, from being her captain became her foe and her prince, could not avail us.

"The only fault of which we are conscious is our over-weening confidence in one whom we ought not to have trusted; for thy past life, thy restless mind, incapable of repose, ought to have put us on our guard; neither ought we to have confided in one who betrayed the lord of Lucca, set a fine upon the Florentines and the Venetians, defied the duke,

despised the king, and besides all this, persecuted the church of God, and the Divinity himself with innumerable atrocities. We ought not to have fancied that so many potentates possessed less influence over the mind of Francesco Sforza, than the Milanese; or that he would preserve unblemished that faith towards us which he had on so many occasions broken with them. Still this want of caution in us does not excuse the perfidy in thee; nor can it obliterate the infamy with which our just complaints will blacken thy character throughout the world, or prevent the remorse of thy conscience, when our arms are used for our own destruction; for thou wilt see that the sufferings due to parricides are fully deserved by thee. And though ambition should blind thine eyes, the whole world, witness to thine iniquity, will compel thee to open them; God himself will unclosethem, if perjuries, if violated faith, if treacheries displease him, and if, as ever, he is still the enemy of the wicked. Do not, therefore, promise thyself any certainty of victory; for the just wrath of the Almighty will weigh heavily upon thee; and we are resolved to lose our liberty only with our lives; but if we found we could not ultimately defend it, we would submit ourselves to anyone rather than to thee. And if our sins be so great that in spite of our utmost resolution, we should still fall into thy hands, be quite assured, that the sovereignty which is commenced in deceit and villainy, will terminate either in thyself or thy children with ignominy and blood."

The count, though not insensible to the just reproaches of the Milanese, did not exhibit either by words or gestures any unusual excitement, and

replied, that "He willingly attributed to their angry feelings all the serious charges of their indiscreet harangue; and he would reply to them in detail, were he in the presence of anyone who could decide their differences; for it would be evident that he had not injured the Milanese, but only taken care that they should not injure him. They well knew how they had proceeded after the victory of Caravaggio; for, instead of rewarding him with either Verona or Brescia, they sought peace with the Venetians, that all the blame of the quarrel might rest on him, themselves obtaining the fruit of victory, the credit of peace, and all the advantages that could be derived from the war. It would thus be manifest they had no right to complain, when he had effected the arrangements which they first attempted to make; and that if he had deferred to do so a little longer, he would have had reason to accuse them of the ingratitude with which they were now charging him. Whether the charge were true or false, that God, whom they had invoked to avenge their injuries, would show at the conclusion of the war, and would demonstrate which was most his friend, and who had most justice on their side."

Upon the departure of the ambassadors, the count determined to attack the Milanese, who prepared for their defense, and appointed Francesco and Jacopo Piccinino (attached to their cause, on account of the ancient feud of the families of Braccio and Sforza) to conduct their forces in support of liberty; at least till they could deprive the count of the aid of the Venetians, who they did not think would long be either friendly or faithful to him. On the other hand, the count, perfectly

aware of this, thought it not imprudent, supposing the obligation of the treaty insufficient, to bind them by the ties of interest; and, therefore, in assigning to each their portion of the enterprise, he consented that the Venetians should attack Crema, and himself, with the other forces, assail the remainder of the territory. The advantage of this arrangement kept the Venetians so long in alliance with the count, that he was enabled to conquer the whole of the Milanese territory, and to press the city so closely, that the inhabitants could not provide themselves with necessaries; despairing of success, they sent envoys to the Venetians to beg they would compassionate their distress, and, as ought to be the case between republics, assist them in defense of their liberty against a tyrant, whom, if once master of their city, they would be unable to restrain; neither did they think he would be content with the boundaries assigned him by the treaty, but would expect all the dependencies of Milan.

The Venetians had not yet taken Crema, and wishing before they changed sides, to effect this point, they PUBLICLY answered the envoys, that their engagements with the count prevented them from defending the Milanese; but SECRETLY, gave them every assurance of their wish to do so.

The count had approached so near Milan with his forces, that he was disputing the suburbs with the inhabitants, when the Venetians having taken Crema, thought they need no longer hesitate to declare in favor of the Milanese, with whom they made peace and entered into alliance; among

the terms of which was the defense of their liberty unimpaired. Having come to this agreement, they ordered their forces to withdraw from the count's camp and to return to the Venetian territory. They informed him of the peace made with the Milanese, and gave him twenty days to consider what course he would adopt. He was not surprised at the step taken by the Venetians, for he had long foreseen it, and expected its occurrence daily; but when it actually took place, he could not avoid feeling regret and displeasure similar to what the Milanese had experienced when he abandoned them. He took two days to consider the reply he would make to the ambassadors whom the Venetians had sent to inform him of the treaty, and during this time he determined to dupe the Venetians, and not abandon his enterprise; therefore, appearing openly to accept the proposal for peace, he sent his ambassadors to Venice with full credentials to effect the ratification, but gave them secret orders not to do so, and with pretexts or caviling to put it off. To give the Venetians greater assurance of his sincerity, he made a truce with the Milanese for a month, withdrew from Milan and divided his forces among the places he had taken. This course was the occasion of his victory and the ruin of the Milanese; for the Venetians, confident of peace, were slow in preparing for war, and the Milanese finding the truce concluded, the enemy withdrawn, and the Venetians their friends, felt assured that the count had determined to abandon his design. This idea injured them in two ways: one, by neglecting to provide for their defense; the next, that, being seed-time, they sowed a large quantity of grain in the country which the enemy had evacuated, and thus brought famine upon themselves. On the other hand, all that was injurious to his enemies

favoured the count, and the time gave him opportunity to take breath and provide himself with assistance.

The Florentines during the war of Lombardy had not declared in favor of either party, or assisted the count either in defense of the Milanese or since; for he never having been in need had not pressingly requested it; and they only sent assistance to the Venetians after the rout at Caravaggio, in pursuance of the treaty. Count Francesco, standing now alone, and not knowing to whom else he could apply, was compelled to request immediate aid of the Florentines, publicly from the state, and privately from friends, particularly from Cosmo de' Medici, with whom he had always maintained a steady friendship, and by whom he had constantly been faithfully advised and liberally supported. Nor did Cosmo abandon him in his extreme necessity, but supplied him generously from his own resources, and encouraged him to prosecute his design. He also wished the city publicly to assist him, but there were difficulties in the way. Neri di Gino Capponi, one of the most powerful citizens of Florence, thought it not to the advantage of the city, that the count should obtain Milan; and was of opinion that it would be more to the safety of Italy for him to ratify the peace than pursue the war. In the first place, he apprehended that the Milanese, through their anger against the count, would surrender themselves entirely to the Venetians, which would occasion the ruin of all. Supposing he should occupy Milan, it appeared to him that so great military superiority, combined with such an extent of territory, would be dangerous to themselves, and that if as count he was intolerable, he would become doubly so as duke. He therefore

considered it better for the republic of Florence and for Italy, that the count should be content with his military reputation, and that Lombardy should be divided into two republics, which could never be united to injure others, and separately are unable to do so. To attain this he saw no better means than to refrain from aiding the count, and continuing in the former league with the Venetians. These reasonings were not satisfactory to Cosmo's friends, for they imagined that Neri had argued thus, not from a conviction of its advantage to the republic, but to prevent the count, as a friend of Cosmo, from becoming duke, apprehending that Cosmo would, in consequence of this, become too powerful.

Cosmo, in reply, pointed out, that to lend assistance to the count would be highly beneficial both to Italy and the republic; for it was unwise to imagine the Milanese could preserve their own liberty; for the nature of their community, their mode of life, and their hereditary feuds were opposed to every kind of civil government, so that it was necessary, either that the count should become duke of Milan, or the Venetians her lords. And surely under such circumstances, no one could doubt which would be most to their advantage, to have for their neighbor a powerful friend or a far more powerful foe. Neither need it be apprehended that the Milanese, while at war with the count, would submit to the Venetians; for the count had a stronger party in the city, and the Venetians had not, so that whenever they were unable to defend themselves as freemen, they would be more inclined to obey the count than the Venetians.

These diverse views kept the city long in suspense; but at length it was resolved to send ambassadors to the count to settle the terms of agreement, with instructions, that if they found him in such a condition as to give hopes of his ultimate success, they were to close with him, but, if otherwise, they were to draw out the time in diplomacy.

## CHAPTER V

Prosecution of the war between the count and the Milanese--The Milanese reduced to extremity--The people rise against the magistrates--Milan surrenders to the count--League between the new duke of Milan and the Florentines, and between the king of Naples and the Venetians--Venetian and Neapolitan ambassadors at Florence--Answer of Cosmo de' Medici to the Venetian ambassador--Preparations of the Venetians and the king of Naples for the war--The Venetians excite disturbances in Bologna--Florence prepares for war--The emperor, Frederick III. at Florence--War in Lombardy between the duke of Milan and the Venetians--Ferrando, son of the king of Naples, marches into Tuscany against the Florentines.

The ambassadors were at Reggio when they heard that the count had become lord of Milan; for as soon as the truce had expired, he approached the city with his forces, hoping quickly to get possession of it in spite of the Venetians, who could bring no relief except from the side of the Adda, which route he could easily obstruct, and therefore had no apprehension (being then winter) of their arrival, and he trusted that, before the return of spring, he would be victorious, particularly, as by the death of Francesco Piccinino, there remained only Jacopo his brother, to command the Milanese. The Venetians had sent an ambassador to Milan to confirm the citizens in their resolution of defense, promising them powerful and immediate aid. During the winter a few slight skirmishes had taken place between the count and the Venetians;

but on the approach of milder weather, the latter, under Pandolfo Malatesti, halted with their army upon the Adda, and considering whether, in order to succor the Milanese, they ought to risk a battle, Pandolfo, their general, aware of the count's abilities, and the courage of his army, said it would be unadvisable to do so, and that, under the circumstances, it was needless, for the count, being in great want of forage, could not keep the field, and must soon retire. He therefore advised them to remain encamped, to keep the Milanese in hope, and prevent them from surrendering. This advice was approved by the Venetians, both as being safe, and because, by keeping the Milanese in this necessity, they might be the sooner compelled to submit to their dominion; for they felt quite sure that the injuries they had received would always prevent their submission to the count.

In the meantime, the Milanese were reduced to the utmost misery; and as the city usually abounded with poor, many died of hunger in the streets; hence arose complaints and disturbances in several parts, which alarmed the magistrates, and compelled them to use their utmost exertions to prevent popular meetings. The multitude are always slow to resolve on commotion; but the resolution once formed, any trivial circumstance excites it to action. Two men in humble life, talking together near the Porta Nuova of the calamities of the city, their own misery, and the means that might be adopted for their relief, others beginning to congregate, there was soon collected a large crowd; in consequence of it a report was spread that the neighborhood of Porta Nuova had risen against the government. Upon this, all the lower orders, who only waited

for an example, assembled in arms, and chose Gasparre da Vicomercato to be their leader. They then proceeded to the place where the magistrates were assembled, and attacked them so impetuously that all who did not escape by flight were slain: among the number, as being considered a principal cause of the famine, and gratified at their distress, fell Lionardo Veniero, the Venetian ambassador. Having thus almost become masters of the city, they considered what course was next to be adopted to escape from the horrors surrounding them, and to procure peace. A feeling universally prevailed, that as they could not preserve their own liberty, they ought to submit to a prince who could defend them. Some proposed King Alfonso, some the duke of Savoy, and others the king of France, but none mentioned the count, so great was the general indignation against him. However, disagreeing with the rest, Gasparre da Vicomercato proposed him, and explained in detail that if they desired relief from war, no other plan was open, since the people of Milan required a certain and immediate peace, and not a distant hope of succor. He apologized for the count's proceedings, accused the Venetians, and all the powers of Italy, of which some from ambition and others from avarice were averse to their possessing freedom. Having to dispose of their liberty, it would be preferable, he said, to obey one who knew and could defend them; so that, by their servitude they might obtain peace, and not bring upon themselves greater evils and more dangerous wars. He was listened to with the most profound attention; and, having concluded his harangue, it was unanimously resolved by the assembly, that the count should be called in, and Gasparre was appointed to wait upon him and signify their desire. By the people's command he

conveyed the pleasing and happy intelligence to the count, who heard it with the utmost satisfaction, and entered Milan as prince on the twenty-sixth of February, 1450, where he was received with the greatest possible joy by those who, only a short time previously had heaped on him all the slanders that hatred could inspire.

The news of this event reaching Florence, orders were immediately sent to the envoys who were upon the way to Milan, that instead of treating for his alliance with the count, they should congratulate the duke upon his victory; they, arranging accordingly, had a most honorable reception, and were treated with all possible respect; for the duke well knew that in all Italy he could not find braver or more faithful friends, to defend him against the power of the Venetians, than the Florentines, who, being no longer in fear of the house of Visconti, found themselves opposed by the Aragonese and Venetians; for the Aragonese princes of Naples were jealous of the friendship which the Florentines had always evinced for the family of France; and the Venetians seeing the ancient enmity of the Florentines against the Visconti transferred to themselves, resolved to injure them as much as possible; for they knew how pertinaciously and invariably they had persecuted the Lombard princes. These considerations caused the new duke willingly to join the Florentines, and united the Venetians and King Alfonso against their common enemies; impelling them at the same time to hostilities, the king against the Florentines, and the Venetians against the duke, who, being fresh in the government, would, they imagined, be unable to resist them, even with all the aid he could obtain.

But as the league between the Florentines and the Venetians still continued, and as the king, after the war of Piombino, had made peace with the former, it seemed indecent to commence an open rupture until some plausible reason could be assigned in justification of offensive measures. On this account each sent ambassadors to Florence, who, on the part of their sovereigns, signified that the league formed between them was made not for injury to any, but solely for the mutual defense of their states. The Venetian ambassador then complained that the Florentines had allowed Alessandro, the duke's brother, to pass into Lombardy with his forces; and besides this, had assisted and advised in the treaty made between the duke and the marquis of Mantua, matters which he declared to be injurious to the Venetians, and inconsistent with the friendship hitherto subsisting between the two governments; amicably reminding them, that one who inflicts unmerited injury, gives others just ground of hostility, and that those who break a peace may expect war. The Signory appointed Cosmo de' Medici to reply to what had been said by the Venetian ambassador, and in a long and excellent speech he recounted the numerous advantages conferred by the city on the Venetian republic; showed what an extent of dominion they had acquired by the money, forces, and counsel of the Florentines, and reminded him that, although the friendship had originated with the Florentines, they had never given occasion of enmity; and as they desired peace, they greatly rejoiced when the treaty was made, if it had been entered into for the sake of peace, and not of war. True it was, he wondered much at the remarks which had been made, seeing that such light and trivial

matters should give offense to so great a republic; but if they were worthy of notice he must have it universally understood, that the Florentines wished their country to be free and open to all; and that the duke's character was such, that if he desired the friendship of the marquis of Mantua, he had no need of anyone's favor or advice. He therefore feared that these cavils were produced by some latent motive, which it was not thought proper to disclose. Be this as it might, they would freely declare to all, that in the same proportion as the friendship of the Florentines was beneficial their enmity could be destructive.

The matter was hushed up; and the ambassadors, on their departure, appeared perfectly satisfied. But the league between the king and the Venetians made the Florentines and the duke rather apprehend war than hope for a long continuance of peace. They therefore entered into an alliance, and at the same time the enmity of the Venetians transpired by a treaty with the Siennese, and the expulsion of all Florentine subjects from their cities and territories. Shortly after this, Alfonso did the same, without any consideration of the peace made the year previous, and not having even the shadow of an excuse. The Venetians attempted to take Bologna, and having armed the emigrants, and united to them a considerable force, introduced them into the city by night through one of the common sewers. No sooner had they entered, than they raised a cry, by which Santi Bentivogli, being awakened, was told that the whole city was in possession of the rebels. But though many advised him to escape, saying that he could not save the city by his stay, he

determined to confront the danger, and taking arms encouraged his followers, assembled a few friends, attacked and routed part of the rebels, slew many more, and drove the remainder out of the city. By this act of bravery all agreed he had fully proved himself a genuine scion of the house of the Bentivogli.

These events and demonstrations gave the Florentines an earnest of approaching war; they consequently followed their usual practice on similar occasions, and created the Council of Ten. They engaged new condottieri, sent ambassadors to Rome, Naples, Venice, Milan, and Sienna, to demand assistance from their friends, gain information about those they suspected, decide such as were wavering, and discover the designs of the foe. From the pope they obtained only general expressions of an amicable disposition and admonitions to peace; from the king, empty excuses for having expelled the Florentines, and offers of safe conduct for whoever should demand it; and although he endeavored, as much as possible, to conceal every indication of his hostile designs, the ambassadors felt convinced of his unfriendly disposition, and observed many preparations tending to the injury of the republic. The League with the duke was strengthened by mutual obligations, and through his means they became friends with the Genoese, the old differences with them respecting reprisals, and other small matters of dispute, being composed, although the Venetians used every possible means to prevent it, and entreated the emperor of Constantinople to expel all Florentines from his dominions; so fierce was the animosity with which they entered on this war, and so powerful their lust of dominion, that without the

least hesitation they sought the destruction of those who had been the occasion of their own power. The emperor, however, refused to listen to them. The Venetian senate forbade the Florentine ambassadors to enter their territories, alleging, that being in league with the king, they could not entertain them without his concurrence. The Siennese received the ambassadors with fair words, fearing their own ruin before the League could assist them, and therefore endeavored to appease the powers whose attack they were unable to resist. The Venetians and the king (as was then conjectured) were disposed to send ambassadors to Florence to justify the war. But the Venetian envoy was not allowed to enter the Florentine dominions, and the king's ambassador, being unwilling to perform his office alone, the embassy was not completed; and thus the Venetians learned, that however little they might esteem the Florentines, the latter had still less respect for them.

In the midst of these fears, the emperor, Frederick III., came into Italy to be crowned. On the thirtieth of January, 1451, he entered Florence with fifteen hundred horse, and was most honorably received by the Signory. He remained in the city till the sixth of February, and then proceeded to Rome for his coronation, where, having been solemnly consecrated, and his marriage celebrated with the empress, who had come to Rome by sea, he returned to Germany, and again passed through Florence in May, with the same honors as upon his arrival. On his return, having derived some benefits from the marquis of Mantua, he conceded to him Modena and Reggio. In the meantime, the Florentines did not fail to prepare themselves for immediate war; and to augment their

influence, and strike the enemy with terror, they, in conjunction with the duke, entered into alliance with the king of France for the mutual defense of their states. This treaty was published with great pomp throughout all Italy.

The month of May, 1452, having arrived, the Venetians thought it not desirable to defer any longer their attack upon the duke, and with sixteen thousand horse and six thousand foot assailed his territories in the direction of Lodi, while the marquis of Montferrat, instigated either by his own ambition or the entreaties of the Venetians, did the same on the side of Alexandria. The duke assembled a force of eighteen thousand cavalry and three thousand infantry, garrisoned Alexandria and Lodi, and all the other places where the enemy might annoy them. He then attacked the Brescian territory, and greatly harassed the Venetians; while both parties alike plundered the country and ravaged the smaller towns. Having defeated the marquis of Montferrat at Alexandria, the duke was able to unite his whole force against the Venetians and invade their territory.

While the war in Lombardy proceeded thus, giving rise to various trifling incidents unworthy of recital, King Alfonso and the Florentines carried on hostilities in Tuscany, but in a similarly inefficient manner, evincing no greater talent, and incurring no greater danger. Ferrando, the illegitimate son of Alfonso, entered the country with twelve thousand troops, under the command of Federigo, lord of Urbino. Their first attempt was to attack Fojano, in the Val di Chiane;

for, having the Siennese in their favor, they entered the Florentine territory in that direction. The walls of the castle were weak, and it was small, and consequently poorly manned, but the garrison were, among the soldiers of that period, considered brave and faithful. Two hundred infantry were also sent by the Signory for its defense. Before this castle, thus provided, Ferrando sat down, and either from the valor of its defenders or his own deficiencies, thirty-six days elapsed before he took it. This interval enabled the city to make better provision for places of greater importance, to collect forces and conclude more effective arrangements than had hitherto been made. The enemy next proceeded into the district of Chiane, where they attacked two small towns, the property of private citizens, but could not capture them. They then encamped before the Castellina, a fortress upon the borders of the Chianti, within ten miles of Sienna, weak from its defective construction, and still more so by its situation; but, notwithstanding these defects, the assailants were compelled to retire in disgrace, after having lain before it forty-four days. So formidable were those armies, and so perilous those wars, that places now abandoned as untenable were then defended as impregnable.

While Ferrando was encamped in the Chianti he made many incursions, and took considerable booty from the Florentine territories, extending his depredations within six miles of the city, to the great alarm and injury of the people, who at this time, having sent their forces to the number of eight thousand soldiers under Astorre da Faenza and Gismondo Malatesti toward Castel di Colle, kept them at a distance from the

enemy, lest they should be compelled to an engagement; for they considered that so long as they were not beaten in a pitched battle, they could not be vanquished in the war generally; for small castles, when lost, were recovered at the peace, and larger places were in no danger, because the enemy would not venture to attack them. The king had also a fleet of about twenty vessels, comprising galleys and smaller craft, which lay off Pisa, and during the siege of Castellina were moored near the Rocca di Vada, which, from the negligence of the governor, he took, and then harassed the surrounding country. However, this annoyance was easily removed by a few soldiers sent by the Florentines to Campiglia, and who confined the enemy to the coast.

## CHAPTER VI

Conspiracy of Stefano Porcari against the papal government--The conspirators discovered and punished--The Florentines recover the places they had lost--Gherardo Gambacorti, lord of Val di Bagno, endeavors to transfer his territories to the king of Naples--Gallant conduct of Antonio Gualandi, who counteracts the design of Gambacorti--René of Anjou is called into Italy by the Florentines--René returns to France--The pope endeavors to restore peace--Peace proclaimed--Jacopo Piccinino attacks the Siennese.

The pontiff did not interfere in these affairs further than to endeavor to bring the parties to a mutual accommodation; but while he refrained from external wars he incurred the danger of more serious troubles at home. Stefano Porcari was a Roman citizen, equally distinguished for nobility of birth and extent of learning, but still more by the excellence of his character. Like all who are in pursuit of glory, he resolved either to perform or to attempt something worthy of memory, and thought he could not do better than deliver his country from the hands of the prelates, and restore the ancient form of government; hoping, in the event of success, to be considered a new founder or second father of the city. The dissolute manners of the priesthood, and the discontent of the Roman barons and people, encouraged him to look for a happy termination of his enterprise; but he derived his greatest confidence from those verses of Petrarch in the canzone which begins, "Spirto gentil che quelle membra reggi," where he says,--

"Sopra il Monte Tarpejo canzon vedra, Un cavalier, ch' Italia tutta onora, Pensoso piu d'altrui, che di se stesso."

Stefano, believing poets are sometimes endowed with a divine and prophetic spirit, thought the event must take place which Petrarch in this canzone seemed to foretell, and that he was destined to effect the glorious task; considering himself in learning, eloquence, friends, and influence, superior to any other citizen of Rome. Having taken these impressions, he had not sufficient prudence to avoid discovering his design by his discourse, demeanor, and mode of living; so that the pope becoming acquainted with it, in order to prevent the commission of some rash act, banished him to Bologna and charged the governor of the city to compel his appearance before him once every day. Stefano was not daunted by this first check, but with even greater earnestness prosecuted his undertaking, and, by such means as were available, more cautiously corresponded with his friends, and often went and returned from Rome with such celerity as to be in time to present himself before the governor within the limit allowed for his appearance. Having acquired a sufficient number of partisans, he determined to make the attempt without further delay, and arranged with his friends at Rome to provide an evening banquet, to which all the conspirators were invited, with orders that each should bring with him his most trust-worthy friends, and himself promised to be with him before the entertainment was served. Everything was done according to this orders, and Stefano Porcari arrived at the place appointed. Supper being brought in, he

entered the apartment dressed in cloth of gold, with rich ornaments about his neck, to give him a dignified appearance and commanding aspect. Having embraced the company, he delivered a long oration to dispose their minds to the glorious undertaking. He then arranged the measures to be adopted, ordering that one part of them should, on the following morning, take possession of the pontiff's palace, and that the other should call the people of Rome to arms. The affair came to the knowledge of the pope the same night, some say by treachery among the conspirators, and others that he knew of Porcari's presence at Rome. Be this as it may, on the night of the supper Stefano, and the greater part of his associates, were arrested, and afterward expiated their crime by death. Thus ended his enterprise; and though some may applaud his intentions, he must stand charged with deficiency of understanding; for such undertakings, though possessing some slight appearance of glory, are almost always attended with ruin.

Gherardo Gambacorti was lord of Val di Bagno, and his ancestors as well as himself had always been in the pay or under the protection of the Florentines. Alfonso endeavored to induce him to exchange his territory for another in the kingdom of Naples. This became known to the Signory, who, in order to ascertain his designs, sent an ambassador to Gambacorti, to remind him of the obligations of his ancestors and himself to their republic, and induce him to continue faithful to them. Gherardo affected the greatest astonishment, assured the ambassador with solemn oaths that no such treacherous thought had ever entered his mind, and that he would gladly go to Florence and pledge himself for the truth

of his assertions; but being unable, from indisposition, he would send his son as an hostage. These assurances, and the proposal with which they were accompanied, induced the Florentines to think Gherardo had been slandered, and that his accuser must be alike weak and treacherous. Gherardo, however, hastened his negotiation with redoubled zeal, and having arranged the terms, Alfonso sent Frate Puccio, a knight of Jerusalem, with a strong body of men to the Val di Bagno, to take possession of the fortresses and towns, the people of which, being attached to the Florentine republic, submitted unwillingly.

Frate Puccio had already taken possession of nearly the whole territory, except the fortress of Corzano. Gambacorti was accompanied, while transferring his dominions, by a young Pisan of great courage and address, named Antonio Gualandi, who, considering the whole affair, the strength of the place, the well known bravery of the garrison, their evident reluctance to give it up, and the baseness of Gambacorti, at once resolved to make an effort to prevent the fulfillment of his design; and Gherardo being at the entrance, for the purpose of introducing the Aragonese, he pushed him out with both his hands, and commanded the guards to shut the gate upon such a scoundrel, and hold the fortress for the Florentine republic. When this circumstance became known in Bagno and the neighboring places, the inhabitants took up arms against the king's forces, and, raising the Florentine standard, drove them out. The Florentines learning these events, imprisoned Gherardo's son, and sent troops to Bagno for the defense of the territory, which having hitherto been governed by its own prince, now became a vicariate.

The traitor Gherardo escaped with difficulty, leaving his wife, family, and all his property, in the hands of those whom he had endeavored to betray. This affair was considered by the Florentines of great importance; for had the king succeeded in securing the territory, he might have overrun the Val di Tevere and the Casentino at his pleasure, and would have caused so much annoyance, that they could no longer have allowed their whole force to act against the army of the Aragonese at Sienna.

In addition to the preparations made by the Florentines in Italy to resist the hostile League, they sent as ambassador, Agnolo Acciajuoli, to request that the king of France would allow René of Anjou to enter Italy in favor of the duke and themselves, and also, that by his presence in the country, he might defend his friends and attempt the recovery of the kingdom of Naples; for which purpose they offered him assistance in men and money. While the war was proceeding in Lombardy and Tuscany, the ambassador effected an arrangement with King René, who promised to come into Italy during the month of June, the League engaging to pay him thirty thousand florins upon his arrival at Alexandria, and ten thousand per month during the continuance of the war. In pursuance of this treaty, King René commenced his march into Italy, but was stopped by the duke of Savoy and the marquis of Montferrat, who, being in alliance with the Venetians, would not allow him to pass. The Florentine ambassador advised, that in order to uphold the influence of his friends, he should return to Provence, and conduct part of his forces into Italy by sea, and, in the meantime, endeavor,

by the authority of the king of France, to obtain a passage for the remainder through the territories of the duke. This plan was completely successful; for René came into Italy by sea, and his forces, by the mediation of the king of France, were allowed a passage through Savoy. King René was most honorably received by Duke Francesco, and joining his French with the Italian forces, they attacked the Venetians with so much impetuosity, that they shortly recovered all the places which had been taken in the Cremonese. Not content with this, they occupied nearly the whole Brescian territory; so that the Venetians, unable to keep the field, withdrew close to the walls of Brescia.

Winter coming on, the duke deemed it advisable to retire into quarters, and appointed Piacenza for the forces of René, where, having passed the whole of the cold season of 1453, without attempting anything, the duke thought of taking the field, on the approach of spring, and stripping the Venetians of the remainder of their possessions by land, but was informed by the king that he was obliged of necessity to return to France. This determination was quite new and unexpected to the duke, and caused him the utmost concern; but though he immediately went to dissuade René from carrying it into effect, he was unable either by promises or entreaties to divert him from his purpose. He engaged, however, to leave part of his forces, and send his son for the service of the League. The Florentines were not displeased at this; for having recovered their territories and castles, they were no longer in fear of Alfonso, and on the other hand, they did not wish the duke to obtain any part of Lombardy but what belonged to him. René took his departure,

and send his son John into Italy, according to his promise, who did not remain in Lombardy, but came direct to Florence, where he was received with the highest respect.

The king's departure made the duke desirous of peace. The Venetians, Alfonso, and the Florentines, being all weary of the war, were similarly disposed; and the pope continued to wish it as much as ever; for during this year the Turkish emperor, Mohammed, had taken Constantinople and subdued the whole of Greece. This conquest alarmed the Christians, more especially the Venetians and the pope, who already began to fancy the Mohammedans at their doors. The pope therefore begged the Italian potentates to send ambassadors to himself, with authority to negotiate a general peace, with which all complied; but when the particular circumstances of each case came to be considered, many difficulties were found in the way of effecting it. King Alfonso required the Florentines to reimburse the expenses he had incurred in the war, and the Florentines demanded some compensation from him. The Venetians thought themselves entitled to Cremona from the duke; while he insisted upon the restoration of Bergamo, Brescia, and Crema; so that it seemed impossible to reconcile such conflicting claims. But what could not be effected by a number at Rome was easily managed at Milan and Venice by two; for while the matter was under discussion at Rome, the duke and the Venetians came to an arrangement on the ninth of April, 1454, by virtue of which, each party resumed what they possessed before the war, the duke being allowed to recover from the princes of Montferrat and Savoy the places they had taken. To the other Italian powers a month was

allowed to ratify the treaty. The pope and the Florentines, and with them the Siennese and other minor powers, acceded to it within the time. Besides this, the Florentines, the Venetians, and the duke concluded a treaty of peace for twenty-five years. King Alfonso alone exhibited dissatisfaction at what had taken place, thinking he had not been sufficiently considered, that he stood, not on the footing of a principal, but only ranked as an auxiliary, and therefore kept aloof, and would not disclose his intentions. However, after receiving a legate from the pope, and many solemn embassies from other powers, he allowed himself to be persuaded, principally by means of the pontiff, and with his son joined the League for thirty years. The duke and the king also contracted a twofold relationship and double marriage, each giving a daughter to a son of the other. Notwithstanding this, that Italy might still retain the seeds of war, Alfonso would not consent to the peace, unless the League would allow him, without injury to themselves, to make war upon the Genoese, Gismondo Malatesti, and Astorre, prince of Faenza. This being conceded, his son Ferrando, who was at Sienna, returned to the kingdom, having by his coming into Tuscany acquired no dominion and lost a great number of his men.

Upon the establishment of a general peace, the only apprehension entertained was, that it would be disturbed by the animosity of Alfonso against the Genoese; yet it happened otherwise. The king, indeed, did not openly infringe the peace, but it was frequently broken by the ambition of the mercenary troops. The Venetians, as usual on the conclusion of a war, had discharged Jacopo Piccinino, who with some

other unemployed condottieri, marched into Romagna, thence into the Siennese, and halting in the country, took possession of many places. At the commencement of these disturbances, and the beginning of the year 1455, Pope Nicholas died, and was succeeded by Calixtus III., who, to put a stop to the war newly broken out so near home, immediately sent Giovanni Ventimiglia, his general, with what forces he could furnish. These being joined by the troops of the Florentines and the duke of Milan, both of whom furnished assistance, attacked Jacopo, near Bolsena, and though Ventimiglia was taken prisoner, yet Jacopo was worsted, and retreated in disorder to Castiglione della Pescaia, where, had he not been assisted by Alfonso, his force would have been completely annihilated. This made it evident that Jacopo's movement had been made by order of Alfonso, and the latter, as if palpably detected, to conciliate his allies, after having almost alienated them with this unimportant war, ordered Jacopo to restore to the Siennese the places he had taken, and they gave him twenty thousand florins by way of ransom, after which he and his forces were received into the kingdom of Naples.

## CHAPTER VII

Christendom alarmed by the progress of the Turks--The Turks routed before Belgrade--Description of a remarkable hurricane--War against the Genoese and Gismondo Malatesti--Genoa submits to the king of France--Death of Alfonso king of Naples--Succeeded by his son Ferrando--The pope designs to give the kingdom of Naples to his nephew Piero Lodovico Borgia--Eulogy of Pius II.--Disturbances in Genoa between John of Anjou and the Fregosi--The Fregosi subdued--John attacks the kingdom of Naples--Ferrando king of Naples routed--Ferrando reinstated--The Genoese cast off the French yoke--John of Anjou routed in the kingdom of Naples.

The pope, though anxious to restrain Jacopo Piccinino, did not neglect to make provision for the defense of Christendom, which seemed in danger from the Turks. He sent ambassadors and preachers into every Christian country, to exhort princes and people to arm in defense of their religion, and with their persons and property to contribute to the enterprise against the common enemy. In Florence, large sums were raised, and many citizens bore the mark of a red cross upon their dress to intimate their readiness to become soldiers of the faith. Solemn processions were made, and nothing was neglected either in public or private, to show their willingness to be among the most forward to assist the enterprise with money, counsel, or men. But the eagerness for this crusade was somewhat abated, by learning that the Turkish army, being at the siege of Belgrade, a strong city and fortress in Hungary,

upon the banks of the Danube, had been routed and the emperor wounded; so that the alarm felt by the pope and all Christendom, on the loss of Constantinople, having ceased to operate, they proceeded with deliberately with their preparations for war; and in Hungary their zeal was cooled through the death of Giovanni Corvini the Waiwode, who commanded the Hungarian forces on that memorable occasion, and fell in the battle.

To return to the affairs of Italy. In the year 1456, the disturbances occasioned by Jacopo Piccinino having subsided, and human weapons laid aside, the heavens seemed to make war against the earth; dreadful tempestuous winds then occurring, which produced effects unprecedented in Tuscany, and which to posterity will appear marvelous and unaccountable. On the twenty-fourth of August, about an hour before daybreak, there arose from the Adriatic near Ancona, a whirlwind, which crossing from east to west, again reached the sea near Pisa, accompanied by thick clouds, and the most intense and impenetrable darkness, covering a breadth of about two miles in the direction of its course. Under some natural or supernatural influence, this vast and overcharged volume of condensed vapor burst; its fragments contended with indescribable fury, and huge bodies sometimes ascending toward heaven, and sometimes precipitated upon the earth, struggled, as it were, in mutual conflict, whirling in circles with intense velocity, and accompanied by winds, impetuous beyond all conception; while flashes of awful brilliancy, and murky, lurid flames incessantly broke forth. From these confused clouds, furious winds, and momentary fires, sounds

issued, of which no earthquake or thunder ever heard could afford the least idea; striking such awe into all, that it was thought the end of the world had arrived, that the earth, waters, heavens, and entire universe, mingling together, were being resolved into their ancient chaos. Wherever this awful tempest passed, it produced unprecedented and marvelous effects; but these were more especially experienced near the castle of St. Casciano, about eight miles from Florence, upon the hill which separates the valleys of Pisa and Grieve. Between this castle and the Borgo St. Andrea, upon the same hill, the tempest passed without touching the latter, and in the former, only threw down some of the battlements and the chimneys of a few houses; but in the space between them, it leveled many buildings quite to the ground. The roofs of the churches of St. Martin, at Bagnolo, and Santa Maria della Pace, were carried more than a mile, unbroken as when upon their respective edifices. A muleteer and his beasts were driven from the road into the adjoining valley, and found dead. All the large oaks and lofty trees which could not bend beneath its influence, were not only stripped of their branches but borne to a great distance from the places where they grew, and when the tempest had passed over and daylight made the desolation visible, the inhabitants were transfixed with dismay. The country had lost all its habitable character; churches and dwellings were laid in heaps; nothing was heard but the lamentations of those whose possessions had perished, or whose cattle or friends were buried beneath the ruins; and all who witnessed the scene were filled with anguish or compassion. It was doubtless the design of the Omnipotent, rather to threaten Tuscany than to chastise her; for had the hurricane

been directed over the city, filled with houses and inhabitants, instead of proceeding among oaks and elms, or small and thinly scattered dwellings, it would have been such a scourge as the mind, with all its ideas of horror, could not have conceived. But the Almighty desired that this slight example should suffice to recall the minds of men to a knowledge of himself and of his power.

To return to our history. King Alfonso was dissatisfied with the peace, and as the war which he had unnecessarily caused Jacopo Piccinino to make against the Siennese, had produced no important result, he resolved to try what could be done against those whom the conditions of the League permitted him to attack. He therefore, in the year 1456, assailed the Genoese, both by sea and by land, designing to deprive the Fregosi of the government and restore the Adorni. At the same time, he ordered Jacopo Piccinino to cross the Tronto, and attack Gismondo Malatesti, who, having fortified his territories, did not concern himself, and this part of the king's enterprise produced no effect; but his proceedings against Genoa occasioned more wars against himself and his kingdom than he could have wished. Piero Fregoso was then doge of Genoa, and doubting his ability to sustain the attack of the king, he determined to give what he could not hold, to some one who might defend it against his enemies, in hope, that at a future period, he should obtain a return for the benefit conferred. He therefore sent ambassadors to Charles VII. of France, and offered him the government of Genoa. Charles accepted the offer, and sent John of Anjou, the son of King René, who had a short time previously left Florence and returned to France, to take possession

with the idea, that he, having learned the manners and customs of Italy, would be able to govern the city; and also that this might give him an opportunity of undertaking the conquest of Naples, of which René, John's father, had been deprived by Alfonso. John, therefore, proceeded to Genoa, where he was received as prince, and the fortresses, both of the city and the government, given up to him. This annoyed Alfonso, with the fear that he had brought upon himself too powerful an enemy. He was not, however, dismayed; but pursued his enterprise vigorously, and had led his fleet to Porto, below Villamarina, when he died after a sudden illness, and thus John and the Genoese were relieved from the war. Ferrando, who succeeded to the kingdom of his father Alfonso, became alarmed at having so powerful an enemy in Italy, and was doubtful of the disposition of many of his barons, who being desirous of change, he feared would take part with the French. He was also apprehensive of the pope, whose ambition he well knew, and who seeing him new in the government, might design to take it from him. He had no hope except from the duke of Milan, who entertained no less anxiety concerning the affairs of the kingdom than Ferrando; for he feared that if the French were to obtain it, they would endeavor to annex his own dominions; which he knew they considered to be rightfully their own. He, therefore, soon after the death of Alfonso, sent letters and forces to Ferrando; the latter to give him aid and influence, the former to encourage him with an intimation that he would not, under any circumstances, forsake him. The pontiff intended, after the death of Alfonso, to give the kingdom of Naples to his nephew Piero Lodovico Borgia, and, to furnish a decent pretext for his design and obtain the concurrence of the powers of Italy

in its favor he signified a wish to restore that realm to the dominion of the church of Rome; and therefore persuaded the duke not to assist Ferrando. But in the midst of these views and opening enterprises, Calixtus died, and Pius II. of Siennese origin, of the family of the Piccolomini, and by name Æneas, succeeded to the pontificate. This pontiff, free from the ties of private interest, having no object but to benefit Christendom and honor the church, at the duke's entreaty crowned Ferrando king of Naples; judging it easier to establish peace if the kingdom remained in the hands which at present held it, than if he were to favor the views of the French, or, as Calixtus purposed, take it for himself. Ferrando, in acknowledgment of the benefit, created Antonio, one of the pope's nephews, prince of Malfi, gave him an illegitimate daughter of his own in marriage, and restored Benevento and Terracina to the church.

It thus appeared that the internal dissensions of Italy might be quelled, and the pontiff prepared to induce the powers of Christendom to unite in an enterprise against the Turks (as Calixtus had previously designed) when differences arose between the Fregosi and John of Anjou, the lord of Genoa, which occasioned greater and more important wars than those recently concluded. Pietrino Fregoso was at his castle of Riviera, and thought he had not been rewarded by John in proportion to his family's merits; for it was by their means the latter had become prince of the city. This impression drove the parties into open enmity; a circumstance gratifying to Ferrando, who saw in it relief from his troubles, and the sole means of procuring his safety: he therefore

assisted Pietrino with money and men, trusting to drive John out of the Genoese territory. The latter being aware of his design, sent for aid to France; and, on obtaining it, attacked Pietrino, who, through his numerous friends, entertained the strongest assurance of success; so that John was compelled to keep within the city, into which Pietrino having entered by night, took possession of some parts of it; but upon the return of day, his people were all either slain or made prisoners by John's troops, and he himself was found among the dead.

This victory gave John hopes of recovering the kingdom; and in October, 1459, he sailed thither from Genoa, with a powerful fleet, and landed at Baia; whence he proceeded to Sessa, by the duke of which place he was favorably received. The prince of Taranto, the Aquilani, with several cities and other princes, also joined him; so that a great part of the kingdom fell into his hands. On this Ferrando applied for assistance to the pope and the duke of Milan; and, to diminish the number of his enemies, made peace with Gismondo Malatesti, which gave so much offense to Jacopo Piccinino, the hereditary enemy of Gismondo, that he resigned his command under Ferrando, and joined his rival. Ferrando also sent money to Federigo, lord of Urbino, and collected with all possible speed what was in those times considered a tolerable army; which, meeting the enemy upon the river Sarni, an engagement ensued in which Ferrando was routed, and many of his principal officers taken. After this defeat, the city of Naples alone, with a few smaller places and princes of inferior note, adhered to Ferrando, the greater part having submitted to John. Jacopo Piccinino, after the victory, advised an immediate march upon

Naples; but John declined this, saying, he would first reduce the remainder of the kingdom, and then attack the seat of government. This resolution occasioned the failure of his enterprise; for he did not consider how much more easily the members follow the head than the head the members.

After his defeat, Ferrando took refuge in Naples, whither the scattered remnants of his people followed him; and by soliciting his friends, he obtained money and a small force. He sent again for assistance to the pope and the duke, by both of whom he was supplied more liberally and speedily than before; for they began to entertain most serious apprehensions of his losing the kingdom. His hopes were thus revived; and, marching from Naples, he regained his reputation in his dominions, and soon obtained the places of which he had been deprived. While the war was proceeding in the kingdom, a circumstance occurred by which John of Anjou lost his influence, and all chance of success in the enterprise. The Genoese had become so weary of the haughty and avaricious dominion of the French, that they took arms against the viceroy, and compelled him to seek refuge in the castelletto; the Fregosi and the Adorni united in the enterprise against him, and were assisted with money and troops by the duke of Milan, both for the recovery and preservation of the government. At the same time, King René coming with a fleet to the assistance of his son, and hoping to recover Genoa by means of the castelletto, upon landing his forces was so completely routed, that he was compelled to return in disgrace to Provence. When the news of his father's defeat reached Naples, John was

greatly alarmed, but continued the war for a time by the assistance of those barons who, being rebels, knew they would obtain no terms from Ferrando. At length, after various trifling occurrences, the two royal armies came to an engagement, in which John was routed near Troia, in the year 1463. He was, however, less injured by his defeat than by the desertion of Jacopo Piccinino, who joined Ferrando; and, being abandoned by his troops, he was compelled to take refuge in Istria, and thence withdrew to France. This war continued four years. John's failure was attributable to negligence; for victory was often within his grasp, but he did not take proper means to secure it. The Florentines took no decisive part in this war. John, king of Aragon, who succeeded upon the death of Alfonso, sent ambassadors to request their assistance for his nephew Ferrando, in compliance with the terms of the treaty recently made with his father Alfonso. The Florentines replied, that they were under no obligation; that they did not think proper to assist the son in a war commenced by the father with his own forces; and that as it was begun without either their counsel or knowledge, it must be continued and concluded without their help. The ambassadors affirmed the engagement to be binding on the Florentines, and themselves to be answerable for the event of the war; and then in great anger left the city.

Thus with regard to external affairs, the Florentines continued tranquil during this war; but the case was otherwise with their domestic concerns, as will be particularly shown in the following book.