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The Lombard communes

William Francis Thomas Butler

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THE
LOMBARD COMMUNES

A HISTORY OF THE REPUBLICS
OF NORTH ITALY

BY

W. F. BUTLER, M.A.

PROFESSOR OF MODERN LANGUAGES, QUEEN'S COLLEGE, CORK

ILLUSTRATED

Vagliami il lungo studio e'l grande amore



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PREFACE

IN tracing this history of the city-states of Lombardy I have relied in the main for the facts on Lanzani's "Storia dei Comuni italiani," and on the works, earlier in date, but differing but little as to the events recorded, of Leo, von Raumer, and Sismondi. But I have carefully checked their statements by reference to Muratori's great compilation, the "Annali d'Italia," and to the contemporary chronicles published by him in the "Rerum Italicarum Scriptores."

For special points I have consulted numerous other works, amongst which are specially to be named Salzer's "Ueber die Anfänge der Signorie in Oberitalien" and Cipolla's "Storia di Verona." Cantù, in his "Storia degli Italiani" and "Storia di Como," gives many curious details as to life and manners. Ferrari's "Histoire des Révolutions d'Italie," though its political theories are wild in the extreme, gives perhaps the best idea of the warfare between city and city, and the fury of internal factions.

There are, however, one or two points in regard to which I differ from most of the writers quoted.

Lanzani, following Ferrari and others, lays down a theory of the origins of the internal feuds of the Italian cities, which has found great favour in the peninsula. He holds that these factions were, in a large measure, the result of an antagonism between the civic nobility, who were to a certain extent of Roman descent, or who, at any rate, had imbibed Roman ideas, and the country nobles, men in whom German ideas still survived, and who had been forced by the victorious burghers to come and live within the walls of the cities.

But this theory seems to me to be entirely unsupported by evidence, a point already mentioned by Salzer. It is often easy to class the noble families of a city into two opposing factions. But it would be practically impossible to find any case in which one of these factions represented the original civic aristocracy, the other the conquered country nobles.

Again, Leo and Sismondi, in their account of the factions in the north-east of Italy in the early thirteenth century, represent the family of Romano as at the head of a noble or Ghibelline party, in opposition to a popular Guelf one. But, apart from the fact that the use of the names Guelf and Ghibelline is here an anachronism, the attitude of the house of Romano towards the Empire and towards the nobles is entirely misrepresented. So far from being a partisan of the Hohenstaufen dynasty, Ezzelino the Stammerer, the first of his house to rise to prominence, had so incurred the enmity of Barbarossa, that a special clause to secure him against the Emperor's vengeance was inserted into the Peace of Constanz. His son Ezzelino the Monk sided with Otho of Saxony, the rival of Frederick II. of Hohenstaufen. And though the last and most famous Ezzelino won most of his renown as a partisan of Frederick II., in his early career, as Gittermann has clearly shown, he had been hostile to that sovereign.

And in the second place, when the house of Romano appears as the chief disturbing element in the north-east of Italy we find it, not heading a faction of country nobles against the burghers of the towns, but, on the contrary, allied with the popular party in Verona, and with Salinoterra of Ferrara, whom we are expressly told was supported by the "plebeians" there, and in opposition to the great noble houses of the Veronese Mark—the Marquises of Este, the Counts of San Bonifazio, the Lords of Camino and Camposampiero. To all these great nobles the House of Romano must, as a matter of fact, have appeared as mere upstarts.

I have selected the maps to illustrate as far as possible the manner in which now one faction now the other got

the upper hand in the Communes. The boundaries of the various city-states are taken from those given in the historical atlases of Spruner-Menke and Droysen, with some small modifications suggested by the chronicles. The material at present available for Piedmont is very unsatisfactory. With regard to maps iv and v, I have coloured the whole of the district subject to each city with the colour of the faction which for the moment was the prevailing one in the city itself. But it must be remembered that in almost every case there was a body of exiles in possession of a greater or lesser number of the country castles and the districts adjoining them.

A book dealing with Italy hardly seems complete without some mention of literature and art. But as regards literature in the vulgar tongue and painting, though the Tuscans before the date at which this work ends had already achieved some of their greatest triumphs in these fields, what the Lombards had accomplished is so slight as to be hardly worth noticing.

With architecture, however, things are very different. Lombardy possesses a remarkable wealth of monuments, extending from the days of the Roman Empire to those of the Renaissance. In a city like Verona, for instance, there is an almost unbroken succession of remains covering the whole of that period.

The epoch more especially dealt with in this work, the age of the free cities, has left us abundance of memorials in both religious and secular edifices. In Modena and Parma, in Cremona and Pavia we find churches in that style of Romanesque architecture to which the special name of Lombard is given, within whose walls were held the first assemblies of the burghers of the growing city republics, before whose altars knelt the men who went forth to conquer at Legnano, to whose shrines came some German Cæsar to return thanks for a fleeting victory over the liberties of the Communes. And to these solemn piles, with their porches supported by lions carved in marble, their façades covered with grotesque carvings of men and animals, their massive walls relieved by round-arched colonnades, their high raised sanctuaries

under which are dim crypts supported by contorted pillars, succeed the lighter forms of the pointed arch, introduced from beyond the Alps.

As regards secular buildings, the grim square towers still stand in Bologna and Mantua, Pavia and Asti which recall the days when round their bases rang the clash of arms of rival factions. Verona, Brescia, Bergamo, Piacenza show us noble examples of the magnificence of the Communes. The public palace, or seat of government, called by various names—Palace of the Commune, Broletto, Palace of Justice or of Reason—is still one of the chief features of these and other cities. From under the great archway the Carroccio bearing the battle-flag of the republic was drawn into the piazza by the hands of children or noble ladies, while the bell in the great tower above rang out defiance to some rival Commune. In the great halls in the upper storey met the various councils of the state. From the richly decorated balcony projecting from the centre of the pile the rulers harangued the people, or, if they lost the favour of the fickle populace, were hurled down to the vengeance of the mob seething in the piazza below.

But there is no lack of books in English dealing with these buildings from the point of view of architecture. My intention has been rather to tell of the purposes for which these edifices were constructed, and the times of which they are a memorial.

ROY WAIN
 OLIVER
 YRABOL

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TABLE OF PRINCIPAL DATES

A.D.

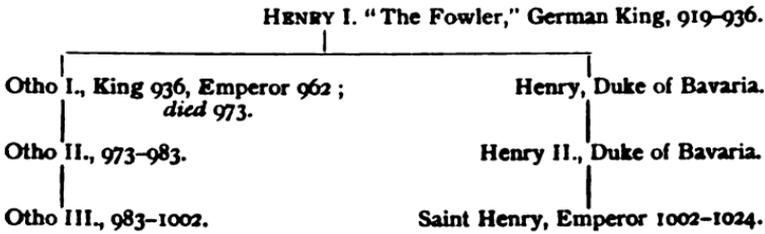
- 410. Alaric takes Rome.
- 476. Odovacer deposes the Emperor Romulus Augustulus.
- 493. The Goths conquer Italy.
- 553. Justinian subdues all Italy.
- 568. The Lombards invade Italy.
- 750 or 51. The Lombards capture Ravenna.
- 754. Pepin, king of the Franks, invades Italy.
- 756. Pepin's donation of the Exarchate of Ravenna and the Pentapolis to St. Peter.
- 773. Lombard kingdom destroyed by Franks.
- 800. Charlemagne receives the Imperial Crown in Rome from Pope Leo III.
- 962. Otho the Great crowned Emperor at Rome.
- 1074. Degree of Pope Gregory VII. concerning Investitures.
- 1122. Concord of Worms.
- 1152. Accession of Frederick Barbarossa.
- 1162. Destruction of Milan.
- 1167. The Lombard League formed.
- 1176. Battle of Legnano.
- 1183. Peace of Constance.
- 1197-1209. Contest for Imperial Crown between Philip of Hohenstaufen and Otho of Bavaria.
- 1212. Otho quarrels with Pope Innocent III., who sets up Frederick II. of Hohenstaufen as Emperor.
- 1220. Frederick II. crowned at Rome.
- 1226. Second Lombard League formed.
- 1237. Battle of Cortenuova.
- 1247. Revolt of Parma from Frederick II.
- 1250. Death of Frederick II. The Great Interregnum till 1273.
- 1259. Downfall of Ezzelino.
- 1266. Invasion of Charles of Anjou.
- 1277. The Visconti expel the Della Torre from Milan.
- 1290. Downfall of William of Montferrat.
- 1302. The Della Torre expel the Visconti from Milan.
- 1310. Henry of Luxemburg comes to Italy.

14 TABLE OF PRINCIPAL DATES

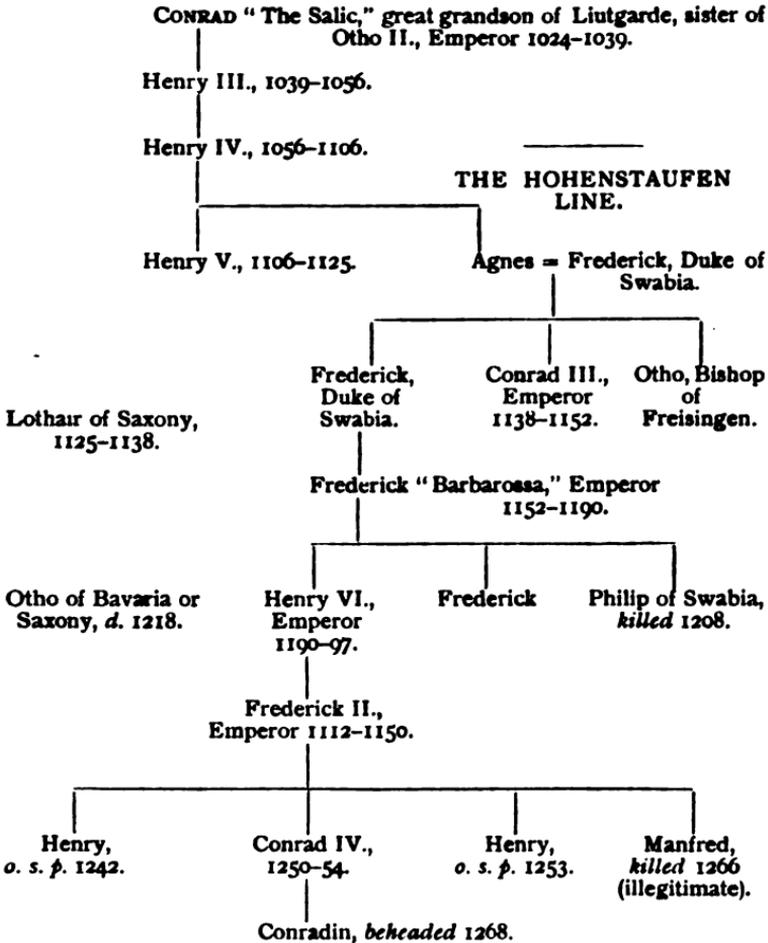
A.D.

- 1313. Death of the Emperor Henry of Luxemburg.
- 1327. Louis of Bavaria comes to Italy and deprives the Visconti of their power.
- 1330. King John of Bohemia comes to Italy.
- 1332. League formed by the Despots of Lombardy against King John.
- 1336. Piacenza surrenders to Azzo Visconti.

THE SAXON LINE

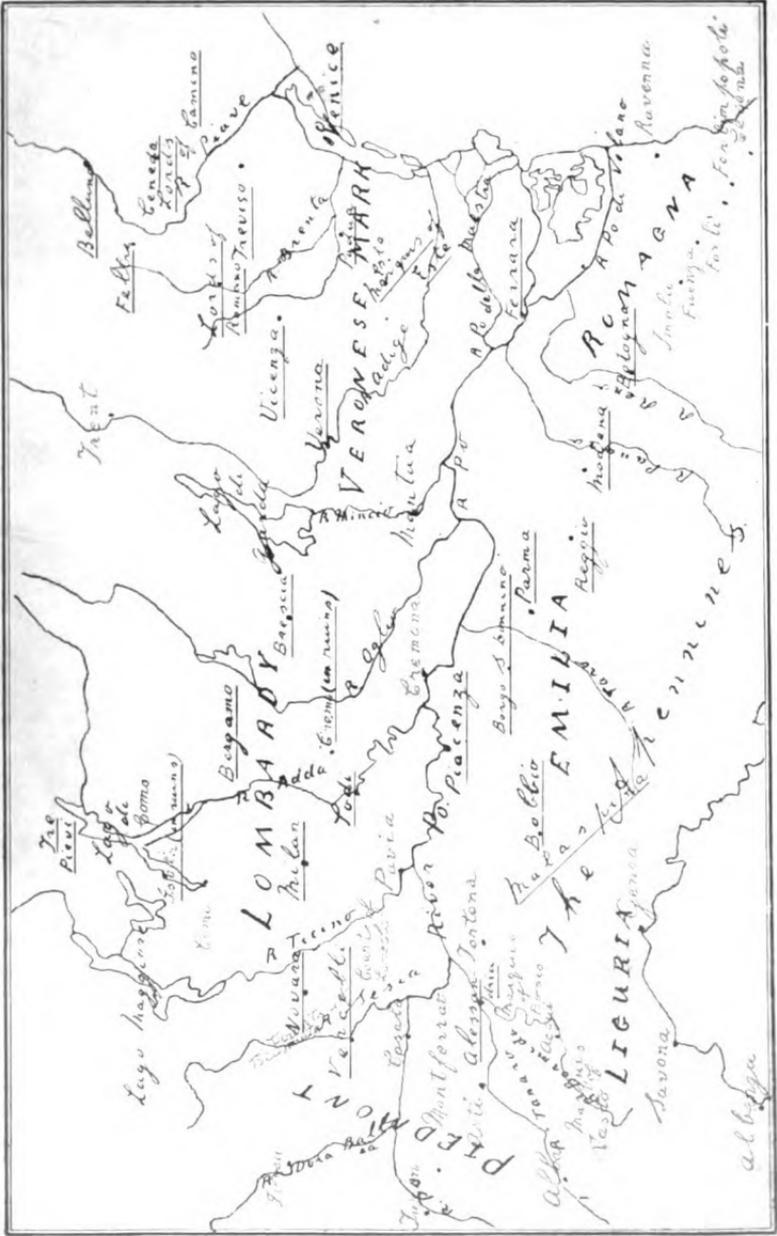


THE SALIAN OR FRANCONIAN LINE



ROUGH LIST OF BOOKS USEFUL FOR THE
STUDY OF THE HISTORY OF THE
LOMBARD COMMUNES

- Cantù, C. Ezzelino da Romano. Milan, 1879.
 „ Storia degli Italiani. Turin, 1855.
 „ „ della Città e della Diocesi di Como. Florence, 1856.
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 Conferenze Fiorentine sulla vita italiana, Articles by Bonfadini and
 others in. Milan, 1895.
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 Hegel. Geschichte der Stadtverfassung von Italien. Leipzig, 1847.
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 1881.
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 Von Raumer. Geschichte der Hohenstaufen. Leipzig, 1840.
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 Symonds. The Renaissance in Italy. London, 1898. ~
 Tout. The Empire and the Papacy. London, 1878. ~
 Villari. Le Invasioni barbariche in Italia. Milan, 1901.
 „ I Primi due Secoli della Storia di Firenze. Florence, 1893.
 Street, Brick and Marble in the Middle Ages. London, 1874.



MAP I.

GENERAL MAP OF LOMBARDY.

Black and underlined.
Red.

... of the Truce of Venice, 1177.

CHAPTER I

WHAT LOMBARDY IS, AND HOW MUCH

THE Lombards were the last of the Germanic tribes who effected a settlement within the limits of the Roman Empire. They selected the Italian peninsula itself for attack, and pushed their conquests far and wide through the land, until their dominions stretched from the Alps to those lands in the south once known as Apulia and Lucania. But, as they entered Italy from the north, the first object of their attack was the fertile plain watered by the Po. There they established the seat of their government, there they settled down most thickly on the conquered soil, and there they have left until our own day the impress of their name.

Lombardy, then, in the earliest sense of the word, comprised the whole territory bounded by the Alps, the Apennines and the sea, with the exception of those portions which still remained subject to the Emperors who reigned at Constantinople. Subsequent political changes have altered the extent of territory to which the name has been applied. On the west, the name Pedemonte, or Piedmont, at first given to the districts lying close to the foot of the Alps, has, with the growth of the power of the House of Savoy, gradually extended its signification, until it came to be applied to the whole country as far east as the Ticino and the Scrivia. The north-eastern corner of the peninsula, detached for a time from Italy, and added to the German kingdom as a "Mark" or frontier province, received from this circumstance the name of Veronese or Trevisan Mark. This district, bounded by the Mincio and the Po, corre-

sponded roughly with the territory occupied by the ancient people of the Veneti. When in the fifteenth century the city of Venice brought it under her sway it was natural that the old name Venetia should be revived and applied to all this region. South of the Po the great Roman road, the Via Æmilia, had given in ancient times its name to the district it traversed. This name persisted under the form Emilia, and as the lands south of the Po became politically detached from those lying north of the river, we find the name of Emilia given to the states ruled by the Dukes of Parma and of Modena.

In our own day, then, Lombardy designates the land lying between the rivers Ticino, Po, and Mincio. But for the student of the history of medieval Italy

“The waveless plain of Lombardy,
Bounded by the vaporous air,
Islanded by cities fair,”

is most conveniently taken as including the whole space between Alps and Apennines watered by the Po and its tributaries.

It is the history of the city life of this region, the rise of republican institutions in the face of the feudal system which prevailed in Western Europe, the contests which resulted between the two opposing principles, the conflicts between city and city, and the final extinction of freedom at the hands of tyrants, themselves, for the most part, the offspring of republican institutions, that I wish to trace in these pages.

The central physical feature of the regions with which I am about to deal is the great River Po, which, flowing nearly due east from its source under Monte Viso to the many mouths by which its waters mingle with those of the Adriatic Sea, during its course of over four hundred miles, forms, as it were, a great central artery running through the plain between the Alps and the Apennines, and affording an easy means of communication from the sea to Casale in Montferrat.

The whole level space between the two mountain ranges seems once to have been a gulf of the Adriatic. Only the chain of the Cottian Alps connected Italy with the rest of Europe. The streams flowing from the mountains and bringing with them masses of detritus, in the course of ages silted up this gulf, until they finally produced an alluvial plain intersected from north to south by numerous rivers flowing from the Alps or the Apennines, which unite to form one main channel, the Po.

The Alps, as is natural from their greater mass, supplied the larger portion of the material of the newly formed land. Hence we find that the lowest point of the depression between the two ranges, that, namely, through which the Po takes its course, is much nearer to the Apennines than to the Alps. It is, in fact, only in the neighbourhood of Parma that the plain begins to extend to any considerable distance south of the river.

This plain, level as it seems when viewed from a church tower, or from the outlying spurs of the mountains, shows, on a closer view, a certain variety of elevation. Besides the moraines, which mark the former limits of Alpine glaciers, and which sometimes attain the height of a thousand feet, there are several isolated groups of hills, rising like islands above the surrounding levels. The chief of these, the hills of Asti and Montferrat, divide the broad valley in which Turin lies from the rest of the plain, and cause the course of the Po to deviate considerably to the north-east. These hills rise to a height of more than two thousand feet, and are separated from the main chain of the Apennines by the valley of the Tanaro.

Another isolated group, the Monti Euganei, lies south of Padua, and rises to the height of 1,890 feet. These hills, with the Monti Berici, near Vicenza, and the ranges which run between this city and Verona, give to a large part of the north-eastern corner of the peninsula, the former Trevisan Mark, a hilly character which is of importance for the history of the district during the Middle Ages.

Besides these isolated groups, the Alps, and to a less degree the Apennines, send out foothills of lesser or greater elevation. We have, therefore, in addition to the Lombard plain strictly so called, a considerable tract of hill country in which several important towns are situated.

The great lakes which are found in this hill country along the foot of the Alps have but small importance for our history. On the other hand, the rivers which flow from them, or which issue direct from the valleys into the plain, have always, either as natural boundaries between state and state, or as means of defence against an enemy, played a great part in the story of Lombardy.

They are almost all tributaries of the great central artery, the Po. Of those in the extreme east which flow direct into the Adriatic, some such as the Reno and Adige, have either at one time flowed into the Po, or are closely connected with it by side branches and canals. The chief of these rivers are, from west to east, the Dora Baltea, Sesia, Ticino, Adda, Oglio, Mincio, and Adige on the north, and the Tanaro, Trebbia, Taro, Panaro, and Reno on the south of the main river. To the north-east the Brenta and the Piave make their way through many mouths into the Venetian lagoons, and the Isonzo, flowing into the head of the Adriatic Sea, divides the purely Latin lands from those in which the Slavonian element begins to prevail.

In the earliest ages in which we hear of this region the uncertain glimpses which history gives us of it show it as already the seat of many great cities. In the centre Etruscan civilisation flourished, and a league of twelve cities, of which Felsina, the later Bologna, and Mantua were the chief, ruled from the Apennines to the lakes. Already Padua rose among its waters, the refuge, so men said, of Trojan Antenor, and the Veneti, a people of uncertain origin, held the country where the Euganean hills looked over the marsh lands round the mouths of Brenta and Adige.

Then came a wave of Celtic invaders from across the Alps. The Veneti held their ground against them; but

the Etruscan League, with its civilisation and the cities which were its seat, disappeared, scarcely leaving more than a dim tradition to mark its existence.

When next we obtain a sight of the valley of the Po it is for the most part a Celtic land, the home of a warlike race, pastoral rather than agricultural, dwelling but little in cities, whose territory, covered with dense forests and tracts of marsh land, seemed cold and savage to the dwellers to the south of the Apennines.

Next came the Roman, who secured his hold of the land by building walled towns, opening up great roads, and establishing a Roman population in the midst of the newly-conquered Gauls.

To the period of the Roman conquest belongs the foundation of many great cities. Etruscan Felsina rose again as Bononia; Mutina, Cremona, Placentia; later on Parma, Regium, Dertona, Hasta, and many others were built to serve as bulwarks of the new Power. The centres of the Gallic tribes, Mediolanum, Comum, Pergamum, Brixia, grew from collections of wooden houses to fenced cities of brick and stone. Mantua, a survival apparently of the Etruscan power, received new life; wealthy Patavium and the other towns of the Veneti welcomed the conquerors from the Tiber as friends and kinsmen. The forests disappeared, the swamps were drained, a multitude of cities sprang up amid rich corn-fields and vineyards; and when the rest of Italy, exhausted by war and by the disappearance of the smaller land-owners, was ceasing to be a nurse of men, and was fast becoming a land of pastures and pleasure grounds, the valley of the Po was in all the vigour of a new life.

One of the characteristic features of the north of Italy at the present day is the density of its population and the number of cities it contains. As most of these centres of population were already in existence in the days of the later Roman Empire, and as the history of Lombardy is before all a history of separate city-states, it will be well here to enumerate the chief.

Their geographical position, too, is important; their history has often differed according as they lie in the

level plain, or are set on hills, or nestle in mountain valleys. They may, therefore, be conveniently grouped into classes, as cities of the plain, the hill, or the mountain.

Beginning with the first and most important class, we find on the west, and to the north of the Po, Vercelli on its river, the Sesia, which descends from the spurs of Monte Rosa. About fourteen miles to the north-east is Novara, the territory of which in later days ran up by the Lake of Orta to end below the Simplon range. Thirty miles due east brings us to Milan—Mediolanum, the "Middle City"¹—the old capital of the Insubrian Gauls, later on the seat of Emperors of the West, at the time when Roman strength, though fading fast, was still able to offer a stout resistance to the barbarians, throughout the Middle Ages the political, as it is now the intellectual and commercial, centre of North Italy.

Its rival Pavia, the champion of the Ghibellines, lies only twenty-two miles south of Milan, on the Ticino, not far from its junction with the Po. Some eighteen miles from Pavia, and twenty miles to the south-east of Milan, is Lodi, whose name, but not whose site, brings us back to the old Laus Pompeia which fell a victim in the year 1111 to the enmity of Milan.

Beyond the Adda is Crema, a colony from Cremona; and about twenty miles to the south-east we come to the latter city, which lies on the Po, and was once the ruler of the district between that river and the Oglio.

East of Cremona, and distant forty miles from it, lies Mantua, surrounded by the waters of the Mincio, which here expands into lagoons.

*"Here wanton Mincius winds along the meads,
And shades his happy banks with bending reeds."*

Still proceeding eastwards, we come to where "many-domed Padua proud" stands among the winding streams of Brenta and Bacchiglione.

This portion of Italy is broken by isolated hills.

¹ Cf. Midh in Ireland.

Verona on the rushing Adige, Vicenza, thirty miles east at the foot of the Monti Berici, and the small town of Este at the foot of the southernmost peak of the Colli Euganei, serve as a transition to the second class of cities, those of the hills; for, though not precisely hill towns, much of their territory is hilly if not actually mountainous, a fact which has had considerable influence on their history.

Still farther to the east is Treviso, which closes our enumeration of the cities of the plain north of the Po; for Udine and Aquileia scarcely come into the tale of the Lombard cities; and although Venice does so come in, yet she must stand alone, separate from all other communities as the city of the sea.

South of the Po, amidst the many streams into which the great river breaks up before seeking its rest in the Adriatic is Ferrara—"La gran donna del Po"—about forty-seven miles south of Padua. Bologna, south-west of Ferrara, though in the plain, lies near to the range of the Apennines, to the summit of which its territory extended.¹ Modena, twenty-three miles to the north-west, Reggio, Parma, and Piacenza, all lying along the great Roman highway the Via Æmilia, while themselves cities of the plain, ruled over a large extent of mountainous country. Finally, Alessandria, youngest of all these cities, built by the Lombard League in 1168 to command the passes between Genoa and Piedmont and Lombardy, and to hold in check the feudal lords of Liguria and Montferrat, closes our survey of this group.

Passing now to the second group, those towns which are either themselves built on heights, or which lie in midst of hilly districts, we have first those situated round

¹ Ferrara was not founded until 604 A.D., and was an outpost of the Exarchate of Ravenna against the Lombards. Strictly speaking it and Bologna are in Romagna, the portion of the Roman province of Æmilia which was not conquered by the Lombards. The two cities are so closely connected with the rest of the Lombard cities that for convenience they may be included among their number. The main stream of the Po no longer flows by Ferrara.

the upper waters of the Po and its affluents in the modern Piedmont.

Turin, nowadays the most important of these, never played a very important part in the Middle Ages, a fact to be explained, no doubt, by the power of the feudal lords of the Houses of Savoy and Montferrat, who held the hill country in the neighbourhood, and to one or the other of whom it was generally subject. The city itself lies in the plain beside the Po, but close by, on the opposite side of the river, the hills of the Montferrat range rise abruptly.

Chieri, near Turin, now quite a small town, was in the Middle Ages much more important than its neighbour. It lies among the hills of Montferrat. Chierasco and Alba on the Tanaro, Acqui on the Bormida, Asti on the southern edge of the Montferrat range, Tortona and Bobbio farther east, are all in the hill country. With the one exception of Asti, none of them ever attained to much importance, or to any long-continued independence from outside control.

Separated from this group by the width of the Lombard plain are Bergamo, situated on a hill at a height of 1,245 feet above the sea, and some thirty miles north-east of Milan, and Brescia, another thirty miles to the east of this, both where the foothills of the Alps sink down into the plain. Their territories in the Middle Ages ran up to the ridges of the High Alps which separate the Italians from the German-speaking peoples.

Here, too, we must name Como, itself built on a piece of level ground on the shores of its lake, but surrounded on all sides by steep hills, which, with semi-Alpine valleys between them, extend over almost the whole district subject to the city.

To the east, in the Trevisan Mark, we have only the already mentioned Verona and Vicenza in this class.

The cities lying well in among the mountains are but few in number and small in importance. Aosta and Ivrea, in the valley of the Doria Baltea under the shadows of Monte Rosa and Mont Blanc; Susa, in the deep valley leading up to the Mont Cénis; Trent, among



VICTORIA.

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the mountains of South Tyrol ; Feltre and Belluno, on the upper waters of the Piave, are all that need be mentioned in this group.

The cities mentioned in the above sketch of the geography of the basin of the Po are all that are of importance for the medieval history of the district. With places such as Concordia, Altinum, or Aquileia, once great and flourishing, but which had either perished utterly or sunk into obscurity under the successive waves of barbarian invasions, the historian of the Lombard cities has no concern.

There are, however, some names of places lying beyond the watershed of the Po which may be added here, to make our list of city-states complete. The history of Genoa is at times closely bound up with that of Milan ; and neither geographical limits nor the events of history mark Bologna off from Imola and the other towns of Romagna, nor Ferrara from Ravenna, the town defined for all time by Dante as the spot where Po descends

“ Per aver pace coi seguaci sui.”¹

The subsequent pages will show the importance of a clear conception of the geography of Lombardy. Here may be pointed out the short distances from city to city, tending inevitably to intensify hostile feelings, and the differences in situation leading to a difference in the political life of each. The cities in the plain were on the whole the wealthiest and the most democratic. The hill cities were never able thoroughly to break the power of the feudal aristocracy whose rock-perched castles studded all their territories. Those of Piedmont could never make head against the great feudal princes whose territories of mountain and valley hemmed them in on every side. Finally, the small mountain communities, poor and cut off by natural obstacles from all expansion, lived a life apart, except in so far as they followed the fortunes of some more powerful neighbour.

¹ “ With all its followers in search of peace ” (“ Inferno ”).

CHAPTER II

THE RULE OF THE BISHOPS

THE basin of the Po would seem to have been, during the later days of the Roman Empire, the most flourishing portion of the Italian peninsula. During the Republic it had been to a certain extent a new land, offering a virgin soil to the settler, and to the cities which he founded a power of rapid growth, something like that which we now associate with the western states of America. In other parts of Italy already, in the time of Cicero and even earlier, large estates had eaten up the small proprietors. But this does not seem to have been the case in Cisalpine Gaul. The Roman conquest had meant in many provinces, notably in Samnium, the uprooting from the soil of the previous inhabitants ; and although Roman colonists were sent to secure the conquered districts, their numbers do not seem to have been great enough to fill the gaps in the ranks of the land-owning population caused by war and confiscation. Hence most of the land in South and Central Italy fell into the hands of a few great senatorial families, who cultivated their estates by slave labour, to the ruin and gradual extinction of the small proprietor.

North of the Apennines, however, the procedure of the conquerors was different. The gaps caused by war among the natives were filled by the settlement in the conquered districts of a vast number of small proprietors. The surviving natives were left in possession of a sufficient share of land. This was more especially the case in the lands south of the Po, occupied by the Senones and Boii. In the case of the Boii half of their lands were distributed

to Roman colonists in 197 B.C., the other half was divided up amongst those of the former inhabitants who had escaped the sword. It is said that the limits of the farms allotted to the new colonists, of which the average extent was four or five acres, can be distinctly traced at the present day in the neighbourhood of some of the Emilian towns; and especially between Bologna and Cesena in Romagna.¹

North of the Po there was but little displacement of the original inhabitants. The Insubres, in the great plain round Milan, kept their lands; the Cenomani, to the east of them, had fought on the Roman side, and so secured themselves from all molestation. These Celtic tribes were largely a pastoral people; their country was thinly peopled, covered with forests and marshes, and therefore offered great tracts of unoccupied land available for new settlers. That there were plenty of such, attracted by the fertility of the virgin soil, is shown by the rapidity with which the Celts adopted the Latin speech and civilisation.

In the land of the Veneti there was no conquest. The natives submitted peacefully to the protecting power of Rome. Here, with increased security, prosperity rapidly increased. Patavium, in the days of Strabo, was, after Rome, the richest town in Italy; and, although it may be doubted whether the 120,000 men capable of bearing arms ascribed to it by this writer should not be taken to refer in reality to the whole levy of the Veneti, yet this estimate shows the ideas that prevailed as to its wealth and resources. The foundation in B.C. 181 of Aquileia, with its 4,500 colonist families, must have still further increased the prosperity of this part of Italy.

Moreover, Cisalpine Gaul escaped on the whole from the disasters that befel Samnium, Etruria, and parts of Latium during the wars of Marius and Sylla.² It is true

¹ Bologna, Cremona, and Piacenza being "Latin" colonies, the colonists received much larger allotments, about thirty acres each. Parma and Modena were colonies of Roman citizens.

² Bleloch ("Bevölkerung der griechischen-römischen Welt") esti-

that the province had its share of trouble during the conflicts that followed on the death of Cæsar ; but the misfortunes of Cremona and its unlucky neighbour Mantua were more felt by individuals than by the cities themselves. While Samnium was left a desert, and the six thousand armed burghers of Praeneste were replaced by a handful of absentee landholders, in the valley of the Po little seems to have happened save that in some parts a change took place in the ownership of landed property, without any appreciable diminution of the number of inhabitants or of holdings.

One fact is clear, the survival in this part of Italy of a large free population, long after the growth of large estates cultivated by slaves had diminished the number of freemen in the other districts of the peninsula. We learn from Pliny that, in 100 A.D., the landlords of Cisalpine Gaul still worked with free labour. And on the whole we may consider the condition of the whole basin of the Po in 400 A.D. as one of extreme prosperity ; at any rate, compared with the state of the rest of Italy.¹ It was looked on as one of the most important portions of the Empire. The excellent strategic position of Milan marked it out as the most suitable residence of the Emperors, who strove to hold in check the ever-increasing hosts of the barbarians ; and from 302 until 401, in which year Honorius abandoned it for the safer residence of Ravenna, it may be looked on as for all practical purposes the capital of the Western Empire, of which, after Rome and Carthage, it was then the wealthiest and most populous city.

It will be useful here to take a short survey of the government of the valley of the Po as it was about the year A.D. 400, before the floodgates of the barbarian invasions had been loosed on Italy.

mates the population of Italy under Augustus at about 5½ millions, of whom about one-third were to be found north of the Apennines (quoted by Salvioli, "Stato e Popolazione dell' Italia prima e dopo le Invasioni barbariche," p. 10).

¹ But see Salvioli, p. 13, for a contrary view. Yet he admits that Cisalpine Gaul was in a better condition than the rest of Italy.

In the rearrangement of the provinces of the Empire effected by Diocletian and Constantine the older divisions of Liguria, Cisalpine Gaul, and Venetia had been superseded by a new grouping. There was a province called Liguria, which included not only the old territory of that name, but all the valley of the Po as far as the Adda on the north, and Piacenza on the south of that river. Milan was the capital of this province, as well as being, as we have said, one of the capitals of the Empire. North of the Po, from the Adda to the eastern limits of Istria, was the province of Venetia and Istria, with Aquileia as its capital; and south of the Po from Piacenza to Ariminum was known as Æmilia.

As was the common rule throughout the Empire, these provinces were divided up into "civitates," that is, an urban centre with a dependent district attached to it. Each of these had at its head, in accordance with the universal Roman practice, two chief magistrates, called Duumviri, and a senate, called the Curia. Originally these municipalities had possessed considerable local independence. The centralising tendency of the later Empire had, however, greatly curtailed this, and had put nearly all power into the hands of the Provincial governors. The functions of the decurions, as the members of the Curia were called, had been practically limited to the collection of the taxes, and to the supervision of the public buildings. For the collection of the taxes they were individually responsible. If an incursion of barbarians or some natural calamity made it impossible for the city to pay the sum at which it was assessed, the property of the decurions was seized and sold to make up the deficiency.

As the financial condition of the Empire became worse, as invasions became more frequent, the demands on the decurions increased. The position from being one of honour became an intolerable burden, from which there was no escape. All who held a certain amount of property were enrolled in the Curia, and the dignity became hereditary. Vast numbers of this class were reduced to poverty or sold as slaves to satisfy

the demands of the Imperial exchequer. Many sought to escape by abandoning their property and taking refuge in deserted places, or by entering the army or the Church. The legislation of the later Emperors is full of enactments relating to the forcible bringing back of runaway decurions.

It was chiefly the moderately wealthy landowners who were ruined in this fashion. The great land-owning families had contrived to make the chief civil and military officers of the State hereditary in their families, and as holders of the offices were exempt from serving in the Curia.

City life had completely superseded the older Celtic tribal life in Cisalpine Gaul. The great landowners usually resided within the walls, spending only a portion of the year at one or other of the villas on their country estates. Part of these estates was cultivated by slaves, part was let out to a class called *coloni*, who make their appearance during the later Empire.¹ The colonus occupied a portion of land, paying to the owner a fixed rent, the amount of which could not be raised. In many respects his position was a semi-servile one. He could not leave the land on which he was born; if the estate was sold he went with it; he had scarcely any civil rights. His sons were in the same position as himself, and there was practically no way by which he could attain his freedom. On the other hand, he could not be evicted from his holding. His position, in fact, closely resembled that of the medieval serf.

No doubt, even at the opening of the fifth century, there were many small free proprietors in Cisalpine Gaul, some dwelling here and there in the country districts, but most of them inhabiting the towns. But here, as elsewhere, the tendency was for the estates of the great senatorial families to absorb those of the lesser proprietors. Finally, within the walls were many landless freemen,

¹ We first hear of them about the time of Constantine. The question of their origin—whether they sprang from slaves who had risen, or freemen who had descended in the social scale—has given rise to much discussion.

some engaged in trade or manufactures, others a mere hungry mob subsisting, like the lower orders at Rome, on the charity of the state.

We have not to concern ourselves here with the elaborate hierarchy of Imperial officials. We must note, however, that the Church had adapted herself to the Roman municipal institutions. The diocese of the Bishop coincided with the *civitas* over which the municipality ruled. The later Emperors had given the Bishops a certain amount of civil authority. Under the title of *defensor* it was the duty of the Bishop to report on any oppressive acts of the governors or tax-collectors. This recognised official status of the Bishops is not without importance in the later history of the cities.

Then came the great flood of the barbarian invasions. The hosts of Alaric and Rhadagæsus swept over the open country without much injury to the fenced cities; but it was otherwise with the Tartar hordes led by Attila. The Scourge of God levelled Aquileia to the earth, and drove the inhabitants of Concordia, Altinum, and Patavium to seek refuge among the lagoons of the Venetian sea-coast.¹ In the cities farther west the fate of Aquileia inspired such terror as to prevent all resistance; and Vicenza, Verona, Brescia, Bergamo, Milan, and Pavia, though given up to all the horrors of pillage, were left undestroyed, and their inhabitants escaped the sword.

But even this terrible inroad did not permanently injure the prosperity of the valley of the Po. The hordes of Attila passed back again beyond the Alps, and with renewed peace the losses of the provincials were in some measure repaired. One lasting result followed from this raid. The fugitives from the ruined cities on the Venetian mainland took refuge among the lagoons which separate the firm land from the open sea; and from their rude huts grew in the course of ages the mighty city of Venice whose fortunes will be so closely

¹ Hodgkin, "Italy and her Invaders," vol. ii. p. 153. ". . . Per universas Venetiarum urbes. . . Hunni bacchabantur" ("Historia Miscella" in Hodgkin).

intermingled with those of the republics of which we are studying the history.

Then, twenty-four years after Attila's invasion, the Roman Empire of the West fell, and the insignia of Imperial rule were sent to Constantinople; while a Herulian chief, Odovacer, was proclaimed king by the barbarians, and received the title of "Patrician" from the Eastern Emperor, Zeno.

His brief reign and his overthrow by Theodoric and his Ostrogoths need not detain us. The new monarch established a wise and firm rule. His residences, Ravenna, Pavia, and Verona, as well as his titular capital, Rome, felt the effects of his protecting care. At this time Milan was still the most important city of the province of Liguria, but we see signs of the advancing greatness of its neighbour Ticinum, better known by its later name, Pavia, as the inveterate enemy of its older rival. Its strong position sheltered as it was by two rivers, the Ticino and the Po, caused Theodoric to select it as a place of safety wherein to leave his mother and the other non-combatants of the Gothic host (490 A.D.).¹ When he had established his rule in the peninsula he built there a palace and public baths, and it is probably to him that the city owed the strong fortifications which made it in after years the last refuge of the Gothic name in Italy.

The losses sustained by the provincials during the strife between Theodoric and Odovacer were amply made good during the settled years of the former's reign. It is from the troublous times which followed on his death, the re-conquest of Italy for the Eastern Empire by the arms of Belisarius and Narses, and then the descent, after a brief interval of rest, of a new and formidable invader, the Lombards, that we may date the downfall of the ancient social system of the peninsula.

The war between Goths and Byzantines lasted nearly twenty years.² During its course the Italians suffered untold miseries. Milan was rased to the ground by the Goths, and its male inhabitants put to the sword, to the

¹ Hodgkin, vol. iii. pp. 220, 221.

² 536-555 A.D.



TOMB OF THEODORIC, RAVENNA.

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number, if we may believe Procopius, of three hundred thousand. This figure, though no doubt entirely too great for credibility, gives us some idea of the impression made on Procopius by the population and importance of the city.

The invasion, in 568, of the Lombards, the race who have left their name to the part of Italy with which we are concerned, is important as marking the beginning of those political divisions of the peninsula to which an end has been put only in our own day. Unlike the Ostrogoths, they did not make a thorough conquest of the land, and even in those provinces in which they most firmly established their power isolated cities were left which still maintained their allegiance to the Empire. Thus the island in the lake of Como, the Isola Comacina, held out against the invaders until 588. Piacenza and Cremona, aided no doubt by their position on the Po, which afforded a passage to the war vessels of the Empire, were not added to the Lombard dominions until 601-603, long after the surrounding country had been subdued. Ravenna and its Exarchate, which included Bologna and Ferrara, the district along the eastern coast known as the Pentapolis, Rome and the surrounding territories, as well as maritime Venetia, a great part of the southern coast, and isolated cities such as Naples and Amalfi, remained entirely free from the new Lombard state.¹ In this way Italy ceased to be one homogeneous country, and so here we may fix the beginnings of that political disunion and that feeling of particularism which is by no means extinct at the present day.

More important for our history is the fact that some cities such as Cremona were isolated for years in the midst of their enemies. It is impossible not to believe that this circumstance must have led to a rekindling of military and municipal spirit and of the power of initiative which had been lost under the centralising system of the later Empire. We must suppose, too, that, in practice,

¹ Liutprand's conquest of Ravenna and other cities only led to the Frank invasion and the destruction of the Lombard kingdom.

a large amount of political power passed into the hands of the citizens, and so we may place here the first beginnings of that municipal independence which will have reached its full growth three centuries later.¹

The Lombard realm fell before the power of the Franks and their great leader Charlemagne in 774 A.D. The new sovereign confirmed to the Popes the possession of the territory formerly ruled by the Exarchs of Ravenna, which his father, Pepin, had already presented to them after he had overthrown the Lombards who had wrested this district from the Byzantines. The duchy of Rome, as the country from the mouth of the Liris to a point near Viterbo was called, had been for about fifty years virtually independent under the joint rule of the Popes and the Roman people. It was now formally separated from the Eastern Empire, and the Pope was recognised, if not as the actual sovereign, at least as its practical ruler. As if in return for these favours, Pope Leo III., on Christmas Day 800 A.D., placed on Charles's head the Imperial diadem, and the Roman people acclaimed him as Emperor, the legitimate successor of Augustus.

The former dominions of the Lombards were governed by Charles, who assumed the title of King of the Lombards, as a kingdom separate from his territories north of the Alps. In the districts formerly belonging to the Greek Emperors he ruled as Patrician and Emperor of the Romans, but delegated his power to the Roman pontiffs. It seems quite impossible to determine what exactly both he and Pepin meant to confer on the Popes by the famous donation of the Exarchate and other territories. In later days the Popes based their claim to complete independence on these donations; it seems certain, however, that Charles and his successors exercised most of the rights of sovereignty at least over the city of Rome and its neighbourhood.

¹ Villari draws attention to the words of Paulus Diaconus, who mentions the part taken in a civil war between two Lombard rulers by the *singulæ civitates*, and notably by the citizens of Vicenza. This was shortly before 700 A.D. ("Le Invasioni barbariche, p. 323. See also *ibid.*, p. 327).



CHARLEMAGNE.
(From the painting by Dürer.)

The powerful Lombard duchy of Beneventum in the south, and the isolated Greek possessions round the coast of what in later times became the kingdom of Naples, together with the lagoons of Venetia, were the only portions of the peninsula not brought under the rule of the Frankish monarch.

The subsequent fate of the Carolingian dynasty, the endless partitions and re-partitions, the attempts, all useless, to set up a separate Italian kingdom under a native sovereign, need not detain us. The interval from the death of Charles the Great in 814 to the accession of Otho I. of Saxony in 962 is a dreary space filled with revolution and counter-revolution, mingled with the worse scourge of Hungarian and Saracen invasion. Yet all through this period, so hopelessly black to all outward seeming, a silent change was taking place. The germs were being matured which were destined to blossom forth into full life at the opening of the twelfth century.

At the end of this period we meet with a transformed people. Instead of the degenerate provincials of the fifth and sixth centuries, unwarlike, corrupted by luxury, lost to all sense of liberty, ministered to by vast multitudes of slaves, we find a hardy race of men, trained to arms, liberty loving, full of energy. The infusion of Teutonic blood had given new life to the Peninsula. New ideals inspired men's minds. Social conditions had entirely altered. Slavery in the Roman sense was almost dead. The mass of the population was not, indeed, free ; but the serf who had replaced the slave had at least some rights, and there were many degrees of serfdom, some of which approached nearly to full personal freedom. A new form of speech, too, the development of the Latin spoken by the uneducated masses of the people, was beginning to assume a regular shape and to take rank as a recognised language.

All these changes had been the result of the six centuries of constant warfare which had followed on the year 400. They had almost entirely altered the whole state of society and destroyed the fabric of Roman civilisation. In its stead we find the beginnings of the

modern world. The most important features of the change from the old to the new can be briefly stated.

During these centuries of war the Roman system of administration had disappeared. Entire cities had been blotted out ; in others the population had dwindled more and more ; the country districts were almost uninhabited ; vast forests and tracts of uncultivated marsh land had replaced the cultivated fields of former ages. As law and order vanished men were forced to depend for their safety on their own strength.

The surviving free population of Roman origin was concentrated within the shelter of the cities. The country parts were left to serfs ruled over by lords for the most part of Germanic origin. It was this infusion of a Teutonic stock which above all awoke the Italian peninsula to new life and vigour.

Odoacer, in common with the other barbarian leaders who had settled in the Empire, had provided for his followers by dividing amongst them a proportion of the land, or rather of the revenue arising from it ; it is said a third part. Theodoric, in his turn, distributed among the Goths the lands before held by Odoacer's supporters, as well, doubtless, as those which the ravages of war had left without Roman proprietors.

The Lombards, who seem in political matters to have treated the Italians with far more harshness than the previous conquerors had done, followed their precedent when dealing with the land. Many wealthy nobles were slain and their property transferred to Lombards ; the remaining proprietors were divided among Lombards to whom the name "guests" was given.¹ The "guest" received one-third of the revenue of the land, and it would seem that in course of time this was altered to one-third of the land itself, so that the original owner now held two-thirds of his former estate, the Lombard "guest" one-third.

The number of Roman landowners would naturally tend

¹ See Villari, "Le Invasioni barbariche in Italia," p. 271-274, where he discusses the relations of Lombards and Romans.

to diminish, for many would emigrate to the portions of the peninsula still subject to the Byzantine rule, or beyond the sea. The Frankish rulers made large grants of unoccupied or confiscated land to their followers, the Saxon Emperors followed the same plan. In the course of time, then, the greater part of the landed property passed into the hands of men of German origin, so that at a later date the name Lombards or Teutons is constantly used to denote the proprietors of the country districts.¹ Any Roman proprietors who remained would gradually adopt the mode of life and the ideas of the German landowners.²

In short, in the country districts, there arose a land-owning, warlike class ruling over a subject population, the descendants of the *coloni* of the late Imperial times, or of the few Roman freemen who had not abandoned the country for the cities.

Within these latter, on the other hand, the Roman element continued to predominate. The Germanic invaders on the whole preferred country life, and though many of them, of the Lombards especially, did take up their residence in the urban centres, it would seem that the majority settled themselves on the lands of which they had become proprietors. In this way the semi-deserted rural districts received new inhabitants; in this way, too, the immense estates which in the late Imperial times were characteristic of Italy, though, as we have seen, to a less degree in the Po valley than elsewhere, were subdivided among new owners.

It is the opinion of Villari that the Lombards, while depriving the subject Roman population of all political power, did not entirely abolish the old municipal organisation. This also continued to survive in the districts under Byzantine rule. Especially did the late Roman institution of *scholæ*, or trade guilds in which were enrolled all the citizens who exercised manual trades,

¹ Teutonici. See Salvioli, p. 68.

² So in Ireland the Celtic or Anglo-Norman landlords who, by adopting Protestantism, preserved their lands, became completely identified with the new English proprietors.

persist, though obscurely, to reappear at a later date as one of the most important features of the new municipal life.

Political power, on the other hand, was centralised in the hands of the King and his delegates. The Lombards set up in each important centre a Duke, who ruled over one or more cities and their dependent territories.

As in Roman times, the *civitas* formed the unit of administration. This comprised not only the walled town—the city in the modern sense—but also the country district—the *ager* dependent on it. In Central Italy, where from the remotest times the population had lived in walled towns, this dependent district was not of very great extent. In Cisalpine Gaul, colonised at a comparatively late period, and where the urban centres were mostly of Roman origin, the extent of territory included in the *civitas* was often—as in the cases of Pavia, Brescia, Parma, and Piacenza—very considerable, a fact that explains the great power to which the cities of Lombardy at once attained, when they began to act as independent commonwealths.

The Frankish rulers did not make any very material changes in the Lombard institutions. Instead of the Dukes they placed Counts with less extended powers, and as a rule having only one city subject to them. Side by side with the Count stood the Bishop; still largely chosen by popular election, and charged with the duty of safeguarding the rights of the people from possible encroachment by the Count.

In the troubled times of the downfall of the Empire the Bishops had acquired immense landed possessions, either through gifts from the monarchs wishing to obtain the support of the Church, or from private individuals anxious to benefit their souls, or from the voluntary surrender of their property by the poorer freemen, who in time of trouble found their position as tenants of the Church infinitely preferable to the risks they as freemen ran of oppression and spoliation on the part of grasping nobles. In this way the Bishops joined to the prestige arising from their ecclesiastical dignity that

which sprang from their being the largest landowners in the diocese.

As the territory subject to the Count, the *county* as it began to be called, coincided on the whole with the ancient Roman *civitas*, so, too, it coincided with the diocese which had also been originally marked out by the same limits. Occasionally this was not the case. The later Carolingian monarchs often subdivided the larger counties, and so we find that several were included in the large dioceses of Milan and Pavia. So, too, the limits of the county were sometimes modified from those of the former *civitas*. These discrepancies became a fruitful source of conflict in later times. When the chief power in the cities had passed from the Counts to the Bishops, and then to the hands of the burghers themselves, both Bishops and burghers endeavoured to bring the whole diocese under their temporal rule, including those portions which now formed part of another county. The long hostility between Modena and Bologna, to mention one striking instance, arose from the conflicting boundaries of county and diocese.¹

To secure the frontiers of the kingdom Charles grouped several counties under a Markgraf, or Count of the Marches, our English marquis. So arose the powerful Markgrafs of Ivrea, supervising the passes between France and Italy, and those of Friuli, whose duty it was to protect the north-eastern angle of the peninsula against foreign invasion. Over the whole kingdom he maintained a constant supervision by means of itinerant officials, the *missi dominici*, royal messengers, whose duty it was to report on the administration and set right all abuses.

All this centralised system of administration perished in the wreck of the Carolingian Empire. The Counts succeeded in turning into private possessions the Crown domains which had formerly been granted to them to enable them to support the dignity of their office. Then

¹ So, too, arose the quarrels between Florence and Siena, and Siena and Arezzo.

they made the office itself hereditary, and even divisible among all their children. At the same time the system by which the immense domains of the Crown were parcelled out as fiefs, to be held by military service, came into full vigour. Fiefs, at first mere temporary *beneficia*, became hereditary; the holders of royal fiefs were granted immunity from the jurisdiction of the Counts, and were given judicial power over their tenants and dependents; the unity of the county was in this way impaired.

The great allodial proprietors followed the royal example, and divided their lands among a number of vassals, so as to have at their command a large force capable of bearing arms. The small proprietors in many cases surrendered their property to a more powerful neighbour or to the Church and received it back as a fief, with the guarantee of protection. The Bishops and rich abbeys divided their immense domains in the same way. In this manner what we know as the feudal system was gradually established in Italy.

The later Carolingians vainly endeavoured to check the increasing independence of the Counts and other great lords. The most effectual means which suggested itself for this was to transfer the jurisdiction formerly possessed by the Count to the Bishop of the city. The Frankish kings enjoyed an almost preponderant voice in the election of the Bishop; the latter from the nature of his office was likely to be less inclined to rebellion, and had besides no descendants to whom to endeavour to transmit his office. The new scheme therefore commended itself at once as a material increase of the royal authority.

This movement by which the Bishops began to acquire temporal authority over the city in which they resided is of cardinal importance in tracing the rise of republican institutions in Lombardy.

It seems that the earliest examples of such power being conferred on a Bishop occur in the closing years of the ninth century.¹ The substitution of the Bishops for

¹ Modena in 892.

the Counts was, however, a very gradual process and extended over the whole of the tenth and a considerable portion of the eleventh centuries.

We can distinguish in it three steps. First, all the property of the state in the city and immediate vicinity—the walls, towers, open spaces, the royal taxes, &c.—was granted to the Bishop, with rights of jurisdiction over the tenants of the Church. In return the Bishop was to provide for the upkeep of the fortifications and of the roads and bridges. Grants of this nature are extant for quite a number of towns—for example, for Modena in 892, Bergamo in 904.

The next step was the entire effacement of the Count within the city. So in Parma in 962 the Bishop was given all the powers of a Count in the city and for three miles round, and wherever else the inhabitants of Parma had property. The Bishop of Lodi about the same period was given complete jurisdiction over that city, and for seven miles round it.¹ The immediate effect of these two steps in this new and important movement—the Revolution of the Bishops, as it has been styled—was the separation of the city proper from the dependent district included in the Roman *civitas*.

The urban centre, and a greater or smaller extent of territory round it, was exempted from the power of the Count. Over the rest of the old *civitas* he still remained supreme. Hence the word *contado*, or county, acquired in Italian a new meaning; it came to signify the country districts as opposed to the town, and so to this day *contadini* are the peasants as opposed to the townspeople.

The authority of the counts, now limited to the country parts, was still farther impaired by the fact that the possessions of the Church everywhere were exempted from their control, and Leo estimates that already in the time of Louis the Pious about one-third of the land of Italy was owned by the Church. Besides, the large proprietors had in general received royal "exemptions" which practically placed them on an equality with the Counts. The later Carovingians and the kings that

¹ See Hegel, vol. ii. pp. 70, for these details.

followed them appear to have multiplied counties and marquisates; these became hereditary, and were subdivided among all the sons; and so we find that the whole history of the tenth century is one of a continual decentralisation, the separation of town from country, and the splitting up of the latter into an infinity of small jurisdictions.

The third step in the Revolution of the Bishops was an attempt at reaction against this. The Bishop's rule was extended over the whole diocese, abolishing the Count. We find that this occurred in Vercelli in 999, in Parma in 1035, in Bergamo in 1041. But this attempt at restoring unity came too late. We may suppose that the great landowners, now transformed into hereditary Counts the Counts now from royal officials become great landlords, were not easily brought under the rule of the Bishops. Besides, the authority of the latter was being undermined in the towns by the appearance of a new factor in politics, the townsmen united in a loose municipal organisation, and led by increasing numbers and wealth to a new position of influence in the state.

It was the rule of the Bishops that prepared the way for municipal independence in Lombardy, and with it we have at last reached our true subject—the history of these municipalities during the brilliant period of their activity and freedom.

Before treating of the movement by which the townsmen won for themselves the powers possessed by the Bishop, replacing him as he had previously replaced the Count, it will be well to retrace our steps a little, and to inquire into the condition of the urban population under the Frankish rule.

Under the later Roman Empire the civilian population was in general unarmed and untrained to war. The Gothic conquerors seem to have maintained this disarmament of the subject Romans. With the advent of the Lombards, however, we find that those cities which remained subject to the Emperors of Constantinople were forced to rely for their defence very much on their own exertions.

The town populations were once more trained to arms and organised as a permanent militia. Once more we hear of the *exercitus Romanus* as a name equivalent for the free population of Rome ; so too we find the militia, or *exercitus* in Ravenna and other places, taking part in public affairs.

We find in Rome and Ravenna in the eighth and ninth centuries the free population divided into four classes : the clergy, the *optimates militiæ*, the *milites* or *exercitus*, and finally the *cives onesti*, or *populus*. The second class would be formed of the families distinguished by birth, official rank, and wealth. The *milites* would include the smaller landowners and the merchants, and the fourth class would take in those freemen who carried on trades or other occupations which did not allow them to devote much time to military exercises. We see here a foreshadowing of later times and of feudal institutions. From the *optimates* came the great landowning nobles of a subsequent epoch. From the *exercitus* sprang the warlike class who, receiving fiefs in return for the obligation to military service, formed the minor nobility so numerous in Italy.

These two classes we find in later times distinguished from the *popolo*, the commercial and working classes, who did not make warfare their profession. These were organised, according to their occupations, in *scholæ* or guilds, ruled by officials of their own, who in course of time were dignified with the name of consul.

Finally, below these various classes of freemen, came the great mass of the unfree, deprived of many personal and all political rights.

Thus it would seem that the revival of a warlike spirit among the Italians, and the beginning of the social system which prevailed through the Middle Ages, are to be traced first of all in those parts of the peninsula which remained, up to the end of the eighth century, subject to the Empire.

In the parts of Italy conquered by the Lombards it is probable that the vanquished were at first prohibited from using arms. But as in the course of time a gradual fusion

of races took place this prohibition would naturally become obsolete. The Franks imposed the duty of serving in time of war on all freemen throughout their empire, and so, all over Italy, the free population, once unwarlike and unarmed, became once more trained to war.

With this diffusion of a warlike spirit from the Germans to the Provincials, the importance of the town populations naturally increased. The distracted state of Italy in the early tenth century added to their importance. It has been said by some writers that the Lombards, on their first invasion, destroyed the fortifications of the greater part of the cities they conquered, and forbade their restoration. But during the civil wars of the tenth century the Hungarians, then a savage race of horsemen, the scourge of Christian Europe, broke into the valley of the Po, and in the distracted state of the country the only refuge from their ravages was behind the walls of whatever fortified towns existed. The cities, left to themselves for defence, hastily constructed new walls, or repaired those which, under the Frank rule, had fallen into decay ; the kings encouraged the work, and soon every town and almost every village was able to offer resistance to an enemy. Henceforth the walled cities play a considerable part in the contests between the various competitors for the crown.

So we find the towns once more fortified and filled with a population trained to arms, beginning to enjoy, under the rule of their Bishops, an existence independent of one another, apart from the country districts, and in great measure exempt from the direct rule of the sovereign.

The early Teutonic invaders of the Roman Empire were averse to city life, and the bulk of them seem to have settled down on the lands which they had acquired in the conquered provinces. Of the Lombards, however, as we have said already, many settled in the towns as garrisons, or in official positions, and it is even possible that in some places, such as Pavia, the majority of the free population were of German origin. But most writers are agreed that the bulk of the urban population was of Roman blood.

The Frank conquest did away with the distinction between cities held by the Byzantines and those under the Lombards; differences of race, too, had been very largely obliterated by time. With the tenth century we find instead of the former national distinctions, the freemen distinguished into classes, as milites and cives. The former class was composed at first of all those freemen distinguished by birth or landed property, then to these were added all those who, in return for military service, were granted fiefs by the sovereigns, great landowners, or the Church. Thus a special class arose whose chief business was war, and it is easy to see how the name of milites was applied to this class, as also how it came in time to take the meaning of our word knight.

The rest of the free citizens, shopkeepers, workers in certain handicrafts looked on as honourable, small landowners, are included under the name cives or arimanni. Below these two classes we find again a great mass of people in various stages of servitude : serfs of the King, or the Church, or of great men. These would form the mass of the artisan, farming, and labouring classes, and amongst them there were very great differences of position ; from those who were not counted as fully free simply because they were shut out from various political and civil rights, to real serfs bound to the soil with which they were bought and sold.

In the eleventh century we find a further distinction among the milites. They are divided into Capitani and Valvassores. The former were the great allodial proprietors, and all those holding fiefs from the King, and also from the Archbishops and Bishops. The Church was the largest landowner in North Italy, and the Bishops had found it necessary, as they gradually acquired political power, to portion out their domains as fiefs, in order to have at their call a body of warriors by profession ; the vassals of the Bishops formed therefore by far the most numerous class. In fact, as the Capitani, or "Captains," dwelling in or near the various cities were almost all vassals of the Church, and as they figure most largely in civic affairs, they are frequently spoken of as all holding

under the Bishops. We must remember, however, that there were many great lords directly subject to the King.

The Captains in turn parcelled out their fiefs into smaller portions, also held on condition of military service. These sub-vassals were known as Valvassors.

The Optimates and Milites of the former Greek possessions corresponded to the Captains and Valvassors of Lombardy, and in course of time were known by the same name. All over North Italy we find by the eleventh century the freemen divided into *populus* or *cives* on the one hand and *milites* on the other, and the latter again subdivided into Captains and Valvassors, who, together formed the class known in later days as nobles.

There was, however, in the Italian cities, at any rate at first, no rigid noble caste such as we find in countries north of the Alps. Fiefs were freely bestowed on persons not of free birth; and in the time of Frederick Barbarossa his aristocratic historian, Otho of Freisingen, is shocked at the democratic notions of the Italians in this respect. They did not disdain, he says, to admit to the honour of knighthood and other dignities the workers at even the contemptible mechanic arts, whom other nations exclude as one would a pestilence from the more honourable and free callings.¹

All those who obtained wealth by commerce seem to have been freely admitted among the *milites*; we have in fact a mixed city nobility of birth and wealth who formed a real aristocracy constantly recruited from the commercial classes. In the eleventh and early twelfth centuries, the chief mark of this civic nobility was that its members fought on horseback, while the mass of the freemen performed their military service on foot.

The conditions in the country parts were very different and more analogous to those prevailing in the rest of Europe. The population fell almost entirely into two classes, the noble landowners and their serfs. There were of course some freemen not important enough to be counted among the nobles, but they were mostly gathered in groups in the small country towns and

¹ Otho of Freisingen, cited by Hegel, vol. ii. p. 167.

villages. In the open country the poorer freemen had almost all been forced to put themselves under the protection of some more powerful neighbour, giving up in exchange a greater or less portion of their liberty.

The country nobles corresponded to the same class in other parts of Europe. Some were descendants of the Carolingian Counts, others allodial proprietors, with noble vassals holding fiefs under them, others held fiefs from the King, others again were vassals of the Bishops, Captains and Valvassors, whose fiefs lay at a distance from the episcopal city. Town and country were thus sharply contrasted, a state of things that was soon to lead to hostility between them.

Of course in different cities different conditions prevailed. In some a very large number of the Captains and Valvassors resided in the city. In others this class seems to have been small. To take examples from Tuscany, Florence in its early days seems to have had very few holders of fiefs living within its walls. Its territory almost to the walls of the city was all "incastled" with the strongholds of nobles having no connection with the city, and so the early history of Florence is one of a constant warfare with these nobles; the contado of Florence had to be conquered step by step by the townsmen. In Siena, on the other hand, a very large number of great landowning families dwelt in the city from the earliest times, and so when the Marquisate of Tuscany fell to pieces on the death of the Countess Matilda in 1115, Siena at once appears as the mistress of a wide domain.

It would appear that in Lombardy, where the Bishops had obtained such very extensive possessions, and had parcelled them out among a number of feudal vassals, many of these usually continued to reside in the cities; and hence when the power passed from the Bishops into the hands of the leading citizens, the new city republic found itself at once without any effort ruling over a very large part where not the whole of the diocese.

To trace the revolution whereby power passed from the hands of the Bishops to those of the citizens will be the aim of the next chapter.

CHAPTER III

THE RISE OF THE COMMUNES

WE must retrace our steps a little to resume the general political history of Italy up to the opening of the eleventh century. On the death of Charlemagne his great empire began to fall to pieces, and was partitioned and re-partitioned among his descendants. Seven of these held power in turn in Italy. In the various partitions of the Carlovingian dominions the peninsula had fallen to the prince who bore the Imperial title, and in this way the view arose that the crown of the Cæsars should be born by whoever was crowned with the Iron Crown of Lombardy.

In 887 the Carlovingian Empire finally broke up. The crowns of Italy and the Empire were disputed by pretenders, great Italian nobles, or the neighbouring sovereigns of Burgundy and Provence. Nine competitors arose and fell in the next sixty years. We have seen how among the effects of this confusion was that the Bishops increased in power, from the efforts of rival claimants to win them over to their side, and that the cities were now all fortified, and the citizens becoming of weight as a factor to be reckoned with by the contending parties.

Finally, Berengar, Markgraf of Ivrea, the most powerful noble of North Italy, obtained the throne. He wished to marry his son and co-regent Adalbert to Adelheid, the widow of his predecessor Lothair, whom he was suspected of having murdered. The young and beautiful widow resisted this arrangement, and is said, in consequence, to have received the severest treatment at the hands of her would-be father-in-law.



HENRY IV., EMPEROR.



OTHO I., EMPEROR ("THE GREAT").

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She escaped from her confinement in the castle of Garda, and fled across the Lombard plain until she found shelter in the famous castle of Canossa, in the Apennines near Reggio. From here she sent to the German king, Otho of Saxony, entreating his aid. He was easily won by her message, crossed the Alps, and almost without a blow made himself master of Berengar's dominions. The latter submitted, and received back his kingdom as Otho's vassal. Otho married Adelheid and returned to Germany.¹

But Berengar's cruelty soon stirred up the Italians against him. Otho was again called in, again easily subdued the country, and in 962 was crowned king of Italy at Milan, and soon afterwards in Rome as Emperor.²

This crowning of Otho of Saxony as Emperor is a fact of cardinal importance for the whole history of the Middle Ages, only second to the revival of the Western Empire by Charlemagne. Henceforth the principle obtained that whoever was chosen king by the Germans should also receive the Italian crown in Lombardy, and be then crowned as Emperor at Rome.

His son and grandson of the same name succeeded Otho I. Powerful in Germany, these princes established their authority firmly in Italy. Except for one attempt, on the extinction of the Saxon line in 1002, we hear of no more efforts to set up a separate Italian kingdom under a native king.

The state of the valley of the Po at the opening of the eleventh century, the period to which we have now reached, requires some attention.

Of great lordships there remained only a few of the Markgravates originally instituted to defend the frontiers of the kingdom. At the north-western angle of the peninsula a large part of the Markgravate of Ivrea had been granted by Otho I., on the downfall of

¹ This was in 951 A.D.

² Pavia, Milan and Monza, all put forward claims to be the city in which the coronation ceremony should be performed. In later days the contest lay between Milan and Monza.

Berengar, to the Markgrafs of Turin or of Susa, as they are sometimes called. These territories were destined to pass by marriage in a few years to the progenitors of the illustrious House of Savoy, who already held large possessions beyond the Alps as well as the county of Aosta on the Italian side. Thus commenced the gradual progress of this family towards the acquisition of territories in Italy which in our day has led them to the throne of a united Italian kingdom.

The territories thus united formed a state commanding the chief passes leading towards France, too important to be interfered with by the Emperor, and containing, with the exception of Turin, Ivrea, and Chieri, no cities likely to give trouble by claims of independence.

The hill country between the upper waters of the Po and those of the Tanaro was held by the Markgrafs of Montferrat, and south of this the mountainous region as far as the sea coast was under various Markgrafs or Counts, of which the most important were those of Saluzzo and Savona.

In all this hilly region the towns were small. Asti alone was of any importance, and under its Bishop was free from feudal control. We find in fact that in that part of Italy now known as Piedmont the towns, enclosed as they were among hills, never attained to much importance, and that the feudal sovereignties here maintained their ground against the municipal institutions of the rest of the Po valley.

The north-eastern angle of Italy formed in Carlovingian times the Markgraviate of Friuli. This corner of the Peninsula is the most exposed to a foreign invader, and through it had passed most of the barbarian hosts whose various invasions we have already mentioned. To the east the Pass of the Pear Tree led out to the limits of civilisation and Christianity, where Slavs and Magyars and more barbarous tribes still filled in a confused welter all the lower valley of the Danube. From its north-western angle the Brenner opened out a way to Germany. This pass, the lowest of all the great roads across the Alps, is singularly free from natural

difficulties, and has at all times afforded an easy communication with the valley of the Inn and the upper waters of the Danube. But though the road was easy the valley through which it runs is at certain points, notably at the famous defile, the "Chiuse" of Verona, so narrow as to be easily blocked against invaders by a handful of resolute defenders. The city of Verona, commanding the outlet from this defile, has therefore been at all times a place of the utmost strategic importance.

To the new German sovereigns the firm possession of this city and the adjoining territory must have been a matter of supreme concern. We find, therefore, that the first Otho took special measures with regard to this district. The Patriarchs of Aquileia had acquired a large jurisdiction in that eastern portion to which the name Friuli is now limited. The rest of the Mark, with Verona as capital, was now separated from the Italian kingdom, and joined under the name of the Mark of Verona to the German duchy of Bavaria. The Bishops of Padua and other cities received exemptions from the power of the Markgrafs, but in Verona itself, and no doubt in most of the district, the power of the Bavarian ruler was not interfered with by episcopal privileges.¹

The owner of the Castle of Canossa, Albert Azzo, had received from Otho, as a reward for the shelter he had given to Adelheid, the counties of Modena and Reggio, those parts, namely, of those civitates which had not passed to the Bishops of the two cities. These possessions were further increased by the acquisition of the cities of Mantua and Ferrara, the latter as a fief of the Archbishops of Ravenna. The territory of Brescia seems also to have come into the hands of Albert Azzo's son and successor, Thedald. These large territories gave Albert Azzo's descendants a position among the greatest of Italian lords. The acquisition in the next generation of the immense dominions of the Markgrafs of Tuscany gave to this house the predominant position in Italy, and it rose to the highest point of dignity and power in the

¹ Leo, p. 328-329.

person of its last representative, Matilda, the "Great Countess," as she was called, the intrepid defender of the Papacy in the War of Investitures.

In addition to these great lordships there was an immense number of smaller potentates, descendants of Counts, who had turned portions of their counties into fiefs, large allodial landowners who had acquired all the rights of Counts in their possessions, holders of fiefs directly from the Crown. Among them we need only mention the family from which sprang the royal House of Guelf and the famous Marquises of Este. They possessed immense domains scattered all over North Italy, from Genoa to the mouths of the Po; in later days their chief fiefs lay round Este among the Euganean hills and the neighbouring marshy district of the Polesine.

The cities were, as we have seen, almost all under the rule of the Bishop as Count. His power extended over the country districts to a greater or less degree, according to Imperial grants.

Curiously enough, the Archbishops of Milan, by far the richest and most powerful prelates in Lombardy, do not seem to have acquired a legal right to the government of their city as early as some of their suffragans.¹ Practically, however, their authority overshadowed that of the Count, and we soon find them acting in all things as temporal rulers of the city.

The century from 1000 A.D. to 1100 A.D. is the epoch in which the cities of Lombardy took the last steps to full municipal freedom. Unfortunately our information regarding the various stages in this great movement is of the scantiest. We know the general history of the time, but of the course of the revolution, for so we must call it, by which the cities emancipated themselves from the temporal rule of the Bishops we know scarcely anything.

¹ Hegel, vol. ii. p. 77-78 and p. 142. According to Bonfadini the Estensi were Counts of Milan until the revolt of Arduin (p. 85, "Vita Italiana"). According to Lanzani the Archbishop was made Count soon after 978 (p. 126), but only of city and for three miles round.

All we can say is that, at the opening of the eleventh century, the bishops exercised in the cities the authority which had formerly been vested in the Counts ; at its close the cities have reduced the prelates to insignificance, and stand before us as so many free republics. A German historian has figured with poetic imagery the transformation of Italian institutions during this century : "The power of the Bishops was the calyx which for a certain time had kept the flower of Italian life close-packed within the bud. Then the calyx weakened and opened and Italian civic life unfolded itself to the eye to form and bear fruit." ¹

We may go farther and say that as what was a bud at eventide appears to us next morning as an open flower, but the processes of the change have escaped our view, so it is with the blossoming of republican freedom in Italy. At such a date it was not, at a later period it is : the steps in the change are hidden from us.

We must content ourselves, then, with tracing the main events in the history of the eleventh century ; and we shall deal more especially with Milan, the most important of our cities, of whose history we luckily possess somewhat ample details.

The Saxon line came to an end in 1002.² Though most of the Italians had grown accustomed to German rule, yet there were not wanting turbulent spirits, amongst them Arduin, the powerful Markgraf of Ivrea, who refused to acknowledge Henry of Franconia, the newly chosen German king. Arduin took the title of King, and established himself for a short time between the Alps and the Apennines.

The mere appearance of Henry II. south of the Alps caused most of Lombardy to declare in his favour, and entering Pavia without opposition he there received the crown. But during the festivities a quarrel arose between the burghers and the Germans of Henry's suite. His army, which was encamped outside the walls, pressed into the town to rescue their master, and cleared for

¹ Leo, vol. i. p. 417.

² To the Saxon line succeeded the Franconian or Salian line.

themselves a road by setting fire to the houses. The whole city was destroyed, and no doubt plundered, and so originated a deadly enmity between Pavia and the Germans.

Hostilities of a sort went on for some years between Henry and Arduin, until the latter, despairing of success, retired to a monastery. It is at this period that historians place the first open warfare between Pavia and Milan. This marks at once the increasing independence of the cities and the commencement of that long and deadly enmity between the two rivals whose hatred to one another influences the whole subsequent history of the Lombard republics.

Pavia, the ancient Ticinum, lies on the River Ticino a few miles above its junction with the Po, a position which gives it easy water communication for a considerable distance above the city, as well as downwards to the sea. Its strategic importance was in those days considerable, for it is the point to which all the roads from France over the Alpine passes naturally converge.¹ In late Roman times the ordinary route from Gaul to Rome seems to have led first to Pavia, from which the journey was continued either by water to Ravenna, and then over the central Apennines by the Via Flaminia, or else directly south over the pass at Pontremoli. These advantages of site caused the Goths to make it one of their chief strongholds; it was strongly fortified by them, and in later times the Lombards, who only took it after a siege of three years, established there their capital.

The territory dependent on the city was extensive and of extreme fertility. On this account Pavia became the centre of a landowning aristocracy. Since it was the seat of government under the Lombards and the Franks it naturally became the residence of a large official class; in this way the city, of which the majority of the inhabitants were very probably of Teutonic origin, received a

¹ The chief roads from France to Italy were from Vienne through the Tarentaise and over the Little St. Bernard to Aosta, or else from Briançon over Mont Genève to Susa.

markedly aristocratic character, which is plainly evident in its later history.

Its situation, moreover, was eminently suited for commerce, and we also find a considerable manufacturing element among the population. Against its natural advantages can only be set that the air is foggy, and is said to be less invigorating than in the adjacent cities. Such, in fine, was the prosperity of Pavia that although it was sacked by the Hungarians in 924—it is said only two hundred citizens escaped from the massacre—yet forty years later the writer Liutprand calls it the richest and fairest of Italian cities, second only by a little to Rome itself.

Milan, the Roman, as Pavia was the Lombard, capital of North Italy, is an example of a city which has always ranked among the very greatest, without there being at first sight any evident reason for such predominance.

It lies in an open plain with no natural advantages for defence, near no navigable river, and in a district surpassed in fertility by many other parts of Lombardy. Yet it always appears as a large and wealthy city, and in our own day is not unworthy to be called the Manchester of Italy. The secret of its importance may perhaps be found in its central position in the great plain between Alps and Apennines, and in its situation with regard to the passes leading north over the former chain into Germany. The roads most used by the Romans over the Séptimer and Splügen passes, as well as the more modern routes by the Gothard and the Simplon, naturally start from Milan, and it affords perhaps the best point from which an army can strike at any invader from beyond the Alps. The later Roman Emperors fixed there their residence on this account; the Church made it the ecclesiastical centre of North Italy, and the virtues of Saint Ambrose gave to the see a position in the peninsula inferior only to Rome and Ravenna.

The city preserved its importance through all the barbarian invasions; even the slaughter of its population by the Goths was only a temporary blow. Here the

Roman element persisted, strong in the shelter of the Church, and as it was naturally in a most favourable position for trade with Germany it became a centre of commerce and manufactures. Hence while Pavia was Lombard and aristocratic, we find a more democratic element prevailing in Milan.

It was only natural that jealousy should arise between two cities so near one another, each having claims to be considered the metropolis of Lombardy. The contest between Henry II. and Arduin gave the first pretext for open hostilities; with increasing independence came increased chances of satisfying the mutual hatred, and between 1013 and 1150 we find a chronic state of enmity between the rivals with six actual wars.

With increased intercourse with Germany, and under the peaceful rule of the Saxon Emperors, Milan rapidly increased in wealth. At the opening of the eleventh century it is said that the city and the adjoining ecclesiastical domains numbered three hundred thousand inhabitants.¹

Its Archbishop was the wealthiest and most influential of the Lombard prelates, and in the early years of the eleventh century the see of St. Ambrose was occupied by a really great man capable of the highest flights of ambition, and with all the qualities necessary to make him the arbiter of affairs in Italy. Aribert, a member of an influential family of Capitani, was chosen Archbishop of Milan in 1018. A few years later the Emperor Henry II. died. The inhabitants of Pavia, mindful of his former severity towards their city, rose in insurrection on the news of his death, destroyed the royal palace, and endeavoured to persuade the King of France, and, on his refusal, the Duke of Aquitaine, to come and take possession of the crown of Italy. Their efforts were unsuccessful, and Aribert proceeding to Germany assured the new King, Conrad the Salic, of the obedience of Milan and the greater part of Lombardy. Conrad soon came into Italy; and, since Pavia refused to open her gates to him, he received the Iron Crown in Milan.

¹ Lanzani, p. 126.

It is probably from this time that the custom grew up that the King of Italy should be crowned at Milan or in the neighbouring town of Monza.

Conrad failed to take Pavia, and had to content himself with laying waste its territory, a task in which no doubt he had the hearty co-operation of the Milanese. After hostilities had lasted a considerable time Pavia submitted, and Conrad returned to Germany, leaving Aribert as his representative in Italy. To reward his services the King gave him the right of investiture over the bishopric of Lodi. This meant that the future Bishops of that city were no longer to seek confirmation of their election from the King, but from the Archbishop. In those days the Bishops and their flocks were united in the closest union. Episcopal elections were still made by the clergy and leading citizens; the Kings then confirmed the election and gave the new Bishop possession of the lands of the see. The Carlovings and their immediate successors had turned this right of confirmation into one of nomination, but the increasing power of the cities had made the later Emperors chary of abusing this right. This grant to a neighbouring prelate, who would be backed up in asserting his rights by his flock, seemed then to the citizens of Lodi a grievous infringement of their privileges, and excited in their minds a deadly hatred against Milan. In a few years this feeling burst into flame when, on the death of the Bishop of Lodi, Aribert attempted to interfere in the election of his successor. The Lodesans took up arms against him, the Milanese supported their pastor, and laid siege to the recalcitrant city. Aribert, who, we are told, at this time "disposed of the whole kingdom at his nod," proved too strong for his opponents, and forced Lodi unwillingly to submit to his demands. Henceforth, as between Pavia and Milan, so too between the latter and Lodi we find constant hostilities.

To the enemies of Milan were soon to be added Cremona, provoked by aggressions on Aribert's part, and Como, to whose Bishops the counties of Bellinzona, Misocco, and Chiavenna had been granted by the

Emperors. These grants had given to the Bishop and people of Como control over the trade routes between Milan and Germany, and it is easy to see how this would lead to quarrels over rights of transit and dues, which finally broke out into open warfare.

While Milan and its Archbishop were thus by their growing power and pretensions exciting the fears and hatred of their neighbours, dissensions broke out in the city itself which mark a step on the road to its emancipation from episcopal rule. The lower vassals, the Valvassors, had long been striving to make their fiefs hereditary. The Captains opposed this, discontent grew, until finally, on a Valvassor being deprived of his fief, the others flew to arms and attacked the Captains.¹ Aribert joined the latter, and the Valvassors had to leave the city. In the country they received a great accession of strength. Not only were they joined by the Valvassors of the northern parts of the Archdiocese—the counties of Seprio and Martesana—but the free nobles of these parts, who feared the encroachments of Aribert, as well as the inhabitants of Lodi, united with them in the hope of checking the increasing power of Milan.

The two parties met in battle at the Evil Field between Lodi and Milan. The battle was indecisive, but the Bishop of Asti, who had come to the help of Aribert, fell, and his death caused the party of the Valvassors to claim the victory. It would seem that the conflict spread from Milan and Lodi all over Lombardy. On the one side were the Valvassors and those nobles who were not vassals of the Bishops, on the other the prelates and the Captains.

Aribert appealed to the Emperor for help, and Conrad came with a large army to restore peace. It would seem that he had become jealous of the great power of Aribert, or else was persuaded of the justice of the demands of the Valvassors; at any rate, instead of helping the Archbishop he showed himself inclined to support the opposite faction. Some inkling of Conrad's views had got abroad among the populace, and a rumour spread that

¹ A.D. 1035.

the grant of the Investiture of Lodi was to be revoked. Indifferent as the mass of the citizens might be to the quarrels between the nobles, they looked on a diminution of the privileges of the Archbishop as an insult to themselves. The very day after Conrad's entry a fearful tumult broke out in Milan, with threats against the person of the Emperor. The German forces were helpless, scattered through the populous city, and Conrad was forced to yield to the demands of the mob that he and his followers should at once quit the town. Taking a sudden resolution he marched to Pavia. Hostile as the people of this city had been to the Germans, their hatred of the Milanese was so great that the mere fact that these had attacked the Emperor converted them to fervent loyalty. Conrad established himself in Pavia, and began to set in order the affairs of Lombardy.

This sudden conversion of Pavia to the Imperial interests proved lasting. Henceforth through good or evil fortune this city was the firmest upholder of the German interests in Italy. No doubt at first this was from purely selfish motives, as a means of resistance to the increasing power of Milan. But the Emperors of the House of Hohenstaufen seem to have aroused among the citizens a feeling of romantic loyalty that will compare with anything to be met with among those nations north of the Alps who prided themselves on their chivalrous devotion to their sovereigns.

Conrad, fully determined to punish the Milanese for their sedition, assembled the Italian vassals at Pavia, and on Aribert's appearance had him thrown into prison. This step exasperated the Milanese beyond measure, and seems quite to have put an end to the dissensions between Captains and Valvassors. After a short captivity Aribert escaped by plying his gaolers with the heady vintage of Lombardy until they sank into a drunken sleep. Conrad now attempted to reduce Milan by force of arms, but his army was weakened by sickness, and the walls, strengthened, it is said, by three hundred towers, enabled the citizens to beat off his attacks. The Emperor invoked the aid of the Pope, who deposed and excommunicated

Aribert, without making the slightest impression on him or his supporters. Conrad also sought to weaken the power of Aribert and his supporters by promulgating a law by which all fiefs were made hereditary, and which thus established the principle for which the Valvassors had been contending.¹ This law was a serious blow to the influence of the Bishops and the Captains throughout Lombardy. For the moment, however, it was of no effect against Milan. Aribert, strong in the affection of his flock, was still able to maintain unity in the city and to defy his sovereign. Events in Germany demanded Conrad's presence in that country, and he was forced to depart, leaving Milan still unsubdued. Before his departure, however, he caused all his partisans to swear to lay waste the territory of the disobedient city once a year, an oath which we may guess was taken with alacrity by the burghers of Pavia and Lodi. Aribert was not behindhand in measures for defence. He armed and disciplined all classes of the citizens, and to form a rallying-point for his new military organisation he invented a singular device which was afterwards copied by all the Italian municipalities. On a strong wagon a mast was erected, from the top of which floated a banner. At its base was an altar; the wagon itself was hung with scarlet cloth, and drawn by white oxen selected for their size and beauty. The name of *Carroccio* was given to this machine; it was to serve as the centre of the army; around it the bravest warriors were stationed; on it priests stood to invoke the blessing of heaven on the soldiers, and to abandon it to the enemy was looked on as the extreme of disgrace.

With such new institutions Milan prepared to face her enemies, when the news of Conrad's death arrived, and at once put an end to hostilities.² This bold defiance of the Emperor clearly shows that the spirit of resistance to external authority had taken root among the Milanese.

¹ In future no vassal of the Bishops, Counts, &c., was to loose his fief except when convicted of crime by the judgement of his peers. (Leo, p. 396, and Hegel, p. 148, vol. ii.).

² A.D. 1039.

The people, united under their Pastor, had successfully opposed their sovereign. A few years later a farther step was taken on the road to independence, this time directed towards weakening the power of the Archbishop.

A Valvassor illtreated a Plebeian—that is to say, a free citizen of the non-noble class. The mass of the citizens, who had no doubt become conscious of their strength during the war against the Emperor, took up arms against the insolence of the nobles, and a desperate civil contest began in the very streets of the city. The nobles were strong in their warlike training, their horses and armour, above all in the fortress-like dwellings which they had already begun to erect. The people had in their favour an immense superiority in numbers, but they lacked the cohesion which can only be given by a vigorous leader. They found such a one among the ranks of their adversaries. A certain Lanzone, a "Captain" holding high judicial functions, abandoned his fellows, and either from personal ambition or led by a genuine feeling of sympathy with their cause, joined himself with the popular party. He was chosen as leader, and so skilfully did he direct the people that the nobles, greater and lesser, were forced to abandon the city. With them went the great Archbishop, who in this contest only figures, and in vain, as a peacemaker, and thus he disappears from our view. He had once disposed of the whole kingdom at his nod, he now, in his closing years, saw himself unheeded among the contending factions from whose strife the municipal liberty of Milan was to spring.

The nobles thus expelled maintained themselves in their castles in the country, and were joined by all the feudal element in the counties of Seprio and Martesana.¹ The burghers were unable to hold the open field against their well-armed adversaries, and the nobles set themselves to cut off the city from all intercourse with the country parts, hoping thus to reduce it by famine. To this end they erected a strong castle before each of the

¹ These counties formed the northern portion of the diocese of Milan.

six city gates, and for three years persisted in this blockade. During this period the besieged citizens, since the legal authority was in exile, must have governed themselves by elected rulers, so here we may well put the first appearance of republican institutions in Milan.

To put an end to the struggle Lanzone, at the end of three years, went to Germany to the new king, Henry III., and worked so well on him that he obtained from him a promise of four thousand horsemen. Returning to Milan with the news of the approaching aid, he seems to have reflected that in thus calling in German soldiers he was exposing his country to unknown risks, and therefore he opened negotiations with the nobles, laying stress on the approach of the German forces. The nobles were inclined to an accommodation; and so a pacification was brought about. The nobles returned, and it would seem that the government of the city¹ was entirely remodelled. The people had learned that they could rule themselves without the Archbishop; the authority of the latter was now much diminished, and the direction of affairs passed from his hands to those of the freemen, whether Captains, Valvassors, or simple burghers. According to Bonfadini the new constitution was ratified by the Emperor in 1055 at the general assembly of the Italian kingdom in the plain of Roncaglia, and was published in the statutes of the city in 1066. From this epoch, therefore, he dates the origin of the Commune of Milan.

The succeeding half-century is memorable in the history of Europe for the struggle between Pope and Emperor on the subject of Investitures. The Frankish kings had, as we have said, exercised the right of confirming the election of the Bishops chosen by the clergy and people. As the Bishops, by grants from the sovereign, grew into great public officials and feudal lords of vast territories, the kings were naturally led to pay more and more attention to the suitability from their point of view of the persons thus elected.

On the death of a Bishop his rights of jurisdiction in public matters naturally fell back to the Crown, so did

¹ Bonfadini, p. 100, for this, but he does not state his authority.

his fiefs, and the new Bishop had to seek from the monarch a re-grant of the rights enjoyed by his predecessor. These temporal rights were conferred on the new prelate by the bestowal of a ring and a staff, the symbols of his jurisdiction. Without this "Investiture," as it was called, the person chosen by clergy and people was not entitled to take possession of his see.

It is easy to see that the sovereigns were tempted to turn their right of confirmation into one of nomination. They would inform the electors that they would refuse Investiture to all except the candidate they themselves favoured; in this way the electors were left no choice but to give their votes to the person designated by the King. Under the later Carolingians, and above all in the anarchy of the tenth century, we find the monarchs disposing at pleasure of the sees of Lombardy, conferring them as a reward for political services on the most unworthy persons, and reducing the Church to a state of the greatest degradation. In the early eleventh century the increasing power of the cities somewhat checked this state of affairs in Lombardy; at any rate, the Saxon and early Franconian monarchs seem to have avoided appointing Bishops against the will of the clergy and citizens. In Germany there was no such check, and under the third and fourth Henrys the dignities of the Church were looked on merely as affording a provision for the friends and kinsmen of the ruler, or as a means of raising money by their sale to the highest bidder. The German annalists of this period give lurid descriptions of the manner in which the Church was degraded by this state of affairs. The most unsuitable, the most shameless persons filled the highest spiritual offices, looking on them merely as a means for extorting money from the lower clergy or the people, and for gratifying their own desires of luxury and ambition. The very excess of the abuse brought about a reaction. A succession of zealous Popes aided by popular feeling set themselves steadily to the task of rooting out simony and restoring purity of morals among prelates and clergy.

To attain this end two things, as the German his-

torian Leo points out, were absolutely necessary. First the Papacy must be made independent of the Empire, so as to be able to act as an independent judge in all cases of suspected simony, and then to put this judgement into execution; secondly, the mass of the clergy must be turned aside from seeking the advancement of themselves and their families through concessions of feudal benefices, and this could only be brought about by the establishment of a celibate priesthood.

The attempt to carry out these reforms met, as was natural, with obstinate resistance. Stringent decrees were passed against simony and the marriage of the clergy by the five Popes who from 1048 to 1073 followed one another on the chair of Peter. During these years the guiding spirit of the movement for reform was the famous Hildebrand, sub-deacon of the Roman Church, who in 1073 himself succeeded to the Papacy under the title of Gregory VII.

The struggle in Italy centred round Milan. Here, on the death of Aribert, four candidates to the Archbishopric appealed to the suffrages of clergy and people. They were all of noble birth, belonging apparently to the Captains; for since the prelates had become great temporal lords, the high nobility looked on the episcopal dignity as by right belonging only to their class. The Emperor, however, apparently fearing that a member of the high nobility in the see of St. Ambrose might be tempted by Aribert's example to set himself in opposition to the sovereign, forced on the city a certain Guido, a man of low origin, who might be expected to be thoroughly devoted to his interests. Clergy and nobles were incensed by this appointment; the former on one occasion, to show that they did not recognise Guido as lawful Archbishop, left him alone at the altar in the midst of some public function. A man of immoral life himself, Guido soon won the higher clergy over to his side by condoning their vices, and through their means he found supporters among the families from which they had sprung.

Three of the defeated candidates maintained their



Photo.]

GREGORY VII.
(From the Stanze of Raphael.)

[Alinari.

opposition, led less, it would seem, by disappointed ambition than by a pure zeal for the reform of the Church. They declared that Guido had obtained his position by simony, and invoked against him the lately published Papal decrees ; they inveighed against his way of life and that of his supporters, declaring that the clergy should offer to their flocks an example of temperance and chastity. The mass of the people, disgusted by the scandalous lives of the clergy, eagerly embraced these views ; the reformers had also the support of their own connections among the nobility.

We see now in Milan, and indeed in all Lombardy, a curious struggle entered into by the people with the support of Rome against the vices of the clergy. The latter were supported not only by Guido but by many of the other Lombard prelates, who, like him, had obtained their sees by doubtful means or were of immoral life. The Milanese clergy pleaded that St. Ambrose had allowed to the Milanese priesthood the privilege of marrying ; old custom seems to have sanctioned over a large part of Europe that where the priests did not marry they might have concubines, wives in all but the name ; among the laity were many who held that this state of affairs should not be interfered with.

The city was therefore filled with confusion. The leaders of the Papal party stirred up the mob to attack the non-celibate clergy. Their houses were sacked, their wives and concubines beaten, they themselves forced to flight. Both parties appealed to Rome, and Landulph and Ariald, leaders of the Papal party, were excommunicated by Guido and an assembly of Lombard Bishops. The Pope, however, caused this sentence to be annulled, and forced Guido and his supporters to confess themselves in the wrong. A temporary pacification followed, and Guido was acknowledged as Archbishop by the Pope. Ariald and Landulph were by no means satisfied with the leniency shown by the Pope in this affair. He aimed at introducing reform gradually, and refused to proceed to extremities against those who, after all, were only following the customs of a former generation ; they demanded

a thoroughgoing change, and the rooting out of all unchaste or simoniacal priests. The struggle broke out anew and with ferocity. Landulph was fallen upon in Piacenza by the clerical party of that city, and so ill-treated that he soon afterwards died. His death brought into the field a still more formidable champion of reform, his brother Herlembald, a man of great daring and political capacity; Ariald was still unwearied in his efforts, and at this very period the third of the leaders of this party, Anselm, became Pope under the name of Alexander II.

The conflict had spread over the greater part of Lombardy. Pavia and Asti had refused to acknowledge the Bishops set over them by the King; in Vercelli and Piacenza the Bishops living in concubinage maintained themselves against the populace. In an interval of tranquillity in Milan Archbishop Guido led his forces against the Pavesans and utterly overthrew them at the battle of the "Field of Death." But Herlembald and Ariald, backed by the new Pope, again took up their campaign against Guido and the married clergy. The former by his eloquence gathered round him a band of followers, young men of the upper and middle classes, who went so far as to drag from the altars the offending clerics when they attempted to celebrate the Divine offices. The Archbishop himself did not escape; he was set on in church, and almost slain; his palace, too, was plundered. This outrage, which seems chiefly to have been the work of the peasants who had flocked into the city for Pentecost, caused a reaction in Guido's favour. His supporters gained the upper hand for a time, and seizing Ariald, they cut off his ears and nose, tore out his tongue, blinded him, and tortured him till he died. This aroused Herlembald and his party to new efforts; Guido was forced to leave the city, and the reformers laid waste the houses of his partisans. Herlembald now acted as the virtual master of Milan, without the least regard to the rights of the Archbishop. Weary of the strife, Guido resigned his dignity in favour of one of his supporters named Godfrey, who received investiture from the King, but whom the

Milanese entirely refused to recognise.¹ The government of the city was carried on by Herlembald and a Council of thirty of his partisans, and from this date we may definitely date the emancipation of Milan from the rule of the Archbishop.

Guido soon repented of his resignation, and opened negotiations with Herlembald so that he might return to the city. Peace was made; but on Guido's entering Milan he was seized and thrown into prison, where he soon after died. Herlembald and his followers besieged Godfrey in Castiglione, and in union with the Pope set about the choice of a new Archbishop. The people, supporters as they had been of the Papacy in its efforts to reform the morals of the clergy, were not at all inclined to accept the direct interference of Rome in the affairs of the see. When Herlembald and the Papal Legate used every means to secure the election of a certain Atto, the larger number of the citizens, angry at their procedure, opposed an armed resistance, ill-used both Legate and new Archbishop, and forced the latter to swear to renounce his dignity. Next day Herlembald gained the upper hand, but Atto seems to have had a sufficient experience of his diocese, and, though recognised as lawful Archbishop by the Pope and Herlembald, to have taken up his residence in Rome. Herlembald's government soon raised up for him many enemies. He required every priest to prove by the oaths of twelve men that he had never had unlawful intercourse with women, and all such as could not pass this test were expelled from their functions, and their goods confiscated. By this means Herlembald was able for a time to support an armed force sufficient to maintain his rule. But such rule was in its nature illegal and oppressive, and above all offensive to the greater nobles. A new conflict broke out in which Herlembald obtained a complete victory. But his opponents were now too numerous to be put down by one defeat. In 1075 disorders again arose; the factions came to a pitched battle, in which Herlembald was defeated and slain.

¹ A.D. 1068.

In this very year Hildebrand, now Pope, renewed in a Council at Rome the former decrees forbidding simony and the marriage of the clergy, excommunicated several of the German courtiers who carried on a regular traffic in Church dignities, and finally took the last step towards freeing the Church from the royal influence by promulgating the famous decree which forbade all Bishops to receive investiture by ring and staff.

This startling innovation plunged the Papacy into open conflict with the Emperor Henry IV. For fifty years under this Emperor and his son, Henry V., all Germany and Italy were convulsed by the struggle which followed. The disorders which had for nearly thirty years vexed Milan and Lombardy were now merged in a strife involving nearly all Europe.

The party which had defeated Herlembald had sworn to accept no Archbishop except one appointed by the Emperor. He nominated Thedald, a Milanese nobleman, and as Godfrey and Atto were still alive there were now three claimants to the see of St. Ambrose. The net result was the destruction of the Archiepiscopal power. Each claimant was lavish in grants to the people of the rights formerly possessed by the Archbishop, thus giving a legal sanction to what the citizens had already won for themselves.

Though Herlembald had perished, the cause for which he had fought triumphed. Thedald, who in the quarrel between Pope and Emperor had naturally sided with the latter, could only maintain himself for a year; the Papal party then gained the upper hand, and Thedald was left in possession only of some of the country districts, while the city governed itself.

The chief importance, in fact, of the War of Investitures in Lombard history is that it gave the cities an opportunity to emancipate themselves wholly from the rule of the Bishops, and to take up a very independent attitude towards the Emperor. They were of course involved in the conflict; the simoniacal Bishops and their supporters sided with the Emperor; his cause, too, was embraced by the greater part of the country nobles; the reform party

supported the Pope. But as time went on we find the cities inclined to withdraw from the general struggle, and to devote their energies to ends more directly affecting their own private interests. One and all they sought to get rid of outside authority, whether it was that of the Bishops or, in the case of many towns, that of Matilda of Tuscany, Hildebrand's chief supporter, the last representative of the great House of Canossa.

The task was made easy for them. In many cases two rival prelates contended for the same see, and vied with one another in trying to win over the citizens by grants of their rights, parting with judicial powers, with the tolls which they levied on roads and markets, handing over the fortifications to the burghers, recognising the officers whom they elected to look after their interests. In this way, though we possess practically no details of the movement, the municipalities all over Lombardy became free.

The reformation in the morals of the clergy for which the people had striven had been on the whole carried through ; there were still, it is true, some simoniacal Bishops, but in the main Hildebrand's ecclesiastical policy had triumphed in Italy. Satisfied with this, the townsmen were not disposed to aid him very actively in his extreme political aims ; and so, unheeding larger issues, they pursued their own way towards freedom.

The Imperial authority still imposed respect, and in the later years of the struggle, especially when, after the death of Henry IV., peace was for a moment restored, and the simoniacal Bishops finally got rid of, few of the towns ventured to openly oppose the Emperor. Even soon after the memorable humiliation of Henry IV. before the Pope at Canossa,¹ there was a strong reaction in his favour. In 1081 Henry was able to put Thedald in possession of Milan, and was solemnly crowned by him in the presence of a large number of Bishops of the anti-papal faction. For the next twelve years he had the upper hand in North Italy ; then we find a momentary union of Milan and her old rivals Lodi

¹ A.D. 1077.

and Cremona, which was also joined by Piacenza, and by which all four bound themselves to resist him, recognising as Emperor in his stead his rebellious son Conrad. This union, a foreshadowing of the later Lombard League, gives unmistakable evidence of the growth of independence among the cities. They had, in fact, at last become conscious of their strength, had shaken off the control of the Bishops, and were now ready to take advantage of the difficult position of the Emperor to establish their complete freedom.

The first use the newborn municipalities made of their liberty was to engage in a fratricidal struggle with one another; and thus begins that war of city against city which fills the whole of their history, and which is their disgrace, but at the same time makes their story one of such absorbing interest.

At first this warfare was carried on in the name of Pope or Emperor. When, on the death of Henry IV., the War of Investitures entered on a second stage, this pretext was given up. The cities, while nearly all professing submission to Henry V., who began his reign at peace with the Pope, gave him but small assistance when war broke out afresh. But neither did they openly oppose him. They simply took advantage of the difficulties in which Henry was involved to pursue their own private ends without the slightest regard to his interests or to his attempts at pacification.

There were many causes for these hostilities between city and city. Commercial jealousy, quarrels over tolls and roads, above all over the use and regulation of the watercourses which are of such importance for the agriculture of Lombardy, boundary disputes especially frequent where the limits of diocese and county did not coincide, all these urged the new-born free communities to war. Another fruitful cause of strife were the relations between the towns and the country nobles. As power passed from the Bishops it naturally came largely into the hands of the leading citizens, the Captains and Valvassors, who, while lords of large tracts in the country, habitually resided within the walls. The jurisdiction over

these lands, formerly enjoyed by the Bishops, now naturally passed to the municipal authorities : hence each city now found itself ruler of a considerable territory extending over a large part of the diocese.

There were, however, many nobles who did not reside in the towns, and formed no part of the new association of the townsmen, the *Comune Civitatis* as it began to be called. They were the descendants of the former Counts, those landowners holding direct from the Emperor, and finally the episcopal tenants whose lands lay in remote parts of the diocese. This feudal element was obnoxious to the urban population. They levied tolls on merchandise, blocked the roads, often swooped from their castles to plunder the passing merchants, in some cases claimed rights of jurisdiction inconsistent with the newly-acquired municipal freedom.¹ So we find that the cities one and all adopted the same attitude towards the country nobles. They claimed supreme dominion over the whole diocese, either as the lawful successors of the Bishops, who had in many cases obtained all the rights of the former royal Counts over their diocese, or in many cases as themselves now representing these Counts. We find, in fact, that the citizens set themselves to reconstruct for their own advantage the ancient *civitas*—the town ruling over a subject district, an institution that had perished in the wreck of the Carovingian institutions.

Even where the diocese spread over several counties the same policy was pursued. Milan claimed dominion over the counties of Seprio, Martesana, Lecco, and Anghera, which formed the northern part of the immense Archdiocese ; Como laid claim to Bellinzona, Chiavenna, and the Val Tellina, as having formerly been subject in temporals, as they still were in spirituals, to its Bishop.

So to the war of city against city was joined one between the cities and the castles. Of the innumerable combats and sieges which must have filled this period we know little ; the strife was prolonged in the mountain

¹ Cf. the Counts of Lomello and Pavia, those of Biandrate and Novara, those of San Bonifazio and Verona.

regions almost to the end of the thirteenth century, and we obtain vivid pictures of it at this time in the annals of Reggio and Parma. On the great plain of Lombardy, however, the task of the cities was easier. Otho of Freisingen, describing the state of affairs about 1150, says that by then all the nobles of Lombardy except the Marquis of Montferrat had had to recognise the supremacy of the towns. The treatment of these new subjects was remarkable. They were deprived of their semi-sovereign rights, which passed to the cities, and were forced to build residences within the walls, in which they were to pass a specified number of months every year; their castles, too, were always to be at the service of the city magistrates. But in return they obtained the full rights of citizenship, were made eligible for all public offices, were long left considerable jurisdiction over their vassals, and sometimes even exempted from certain taxes.

We shall find in later times that the forced settlement in the towns of a numerous and wealthy landowning class, in addition to those who had resided there from of old, had a most important influence on the internal history of the Lombard cities. For the present, however, it will be enough to mention that the war against the castles introduced new causes of quarrel between the cities. Many nobles sought to escape from the attacks of a neighbouring Commune by placing themselves voluntarily under the rule of one more distant, whose yoke would therefore be more endurable; others sought the citizenship of more than one town, so as to play one off against the other. From all these causes the first fifty years of the twelfth century were filled with a confused strife spreading from the greater cities to the smaller communities of freemen, and the innumerable castles which then rose above the plains, or crowned the foothills of the Alps and Apennines.

We have seen that the Lombards withdrew from the struggle between Pope and Empire to pursue their own private quarrels. Thus Cremona in 1100 attacked Crema, originally founded by fugitives from the former city, and

over which the parent city persistently strove to assert her authority.¹ Of old jealousy had existed between Cremona and Milan, and Crema naturally sought help from the latter. Natural allies of Cremona through a common hatred of Milan were Lodi and Pavia, and a few years afterwards we find the three attacking Tortona, a small town in the hills south of the Po, between which and Pavia there seems to have been the same enmity as between Milan and Lodi.

These minor hostilities were followed by a warfare of much greater importance. Dissensions arose in Lodi between the citizens and the Captains and Valvassors. The latter were expelled, together with the Bishop, and sought help at Milan. The Archbishops of this city had since Aribert's time laid claim to a special authority over Lodi, and the Milanese ordered the latter city to receive back the fugitives. A refusal gave the signal for war. Cremona, and no doubt Pavia, helped Lodi; Brescia, which had quarrels of its own with Cremona, aided the Milanese. The Lodesans defended themselves with vigour for four years; but being far inferior in territory and numbers to their rivals, they could not prevent the devastation of their lands. Milan at this period of her history shows a power of expansion which is in truth surprising. It is possible that the civil strife over ecclesiastical matters, of which we have given some account, had made the whole population skilled in the use of arms, and inspired them with a specially warlike spirit. At any rate they overthrew the forces of Pavia in 1108, and utterly defeated Cremona in 1110. A curious illustration of the manners of the time is given us by the tale told of the treatment of the prisoners taken on the former occasion. They were assembled in the great square of Milan, their hands tied behind their backs, and lighted torches being fastened beneath, they were driven through the open gates back to their own city, amidst the jeers of the Milanese.

The Emperor came to Lombardy in 1110 and tried to

¹ The Countess Matilda had granted Crema and the adjoining district, known as the *Insula Fulcherii*, to Cremona in 1098 (Cantù).

restore peace ; but the cities paid no attention to his exhortations. His contest with the Pope required his immediate presence in Central Italy ; and though he burned the small town of Novara, which had refused to acknowledge him, he could not afford to spend in Lombardy the time necessary to reduce Milan to obedience, so he passed on over the Apennines, leaving Lodi to its fate. Exhausted by four years of devastating warfare, the city fell at last into the hands of the Milanese and was rased to the ground. The inhabitants were scattered amongst six open villages, and the market which had brought riches to them was done away with. For forty-seven years Lodi disappears from the list of Lombard cities ; during this period her citizens groaned under the harsh rule of their rivals.

There had been renewed troubles over Church matters during this period in Milan. Archbishop Grossulan, accused of simony, was for many years an exile ; his successor Jordan, chosen in 1112 with the approval of the Pope, was equally disinclined to acknowledge Henry V. as Emperor, or to accord to the Roman See the rights which it was now endeavouring to establish over the successors of St. Ambrose. The Bishop of Pavia seems to have been in the same position, and through the influence of these prelates the two rivals laid aside their hostility for a moment, and entered into a league equally hostile to Pope or Emperor.

There seems also to have been a reconciliation between Milan and Cremona, to the great detriment of Crema, which was now attacked by both and captured.

Dreadful natural calamities—an earthquake, a rain of blood, and other portents—ushered in the year 1117. The Lombards saw in these phenomena the displeasure of Heaven, and the Archbishop and consuls of Milan summoned a general meeting of all Lombardy, in order to reconcile all feuds, and to urge men to repentance for their sins. Two lofty stages were erected in the space called the Broglio of Milan, on one the Archbishop and his suffragans took their seats, on the others were the Consuls of Milan and other towns with the leading

citizens. An immense crowd filled the surrounding space, and implored pardon for their sins while mutually forgiving past injuries.

This assembly seems to have brought about a general pacification ; its chief importance for the historian is that for the first time we find consuls named as at the head of the state. The cities are now in fact republics, fully independent except for the nominal obedience they owed the Emperor, and under a constitution which will be better treated of in the next chapter.

CHAPTER IV

MILAN AND HER NEIGHBOURS

WE have now reached the period when the cities, having cast off the yoke of the Bishops, stand forth as so many free republics, owning, however, the universal supremacy of the Empire.

At the head of each of the city-states, exercising both supreme executive and judicial functions, are the consuls, a name recalling the glories of ancient Rome. These magistrates, first mentioned in the archives of Milan in 1107, though the name does not appear in the annals until ten years later, seem to have originated during the closing years of the eleventh century. They were as a rule chosen annually; their number varied in various places, and even from year to year in the same town—we hear of twenty in Milan in 1130; and besides the internal government of the city, to them was entrusted the command of the military forces in wartime.¹

By their side, as advisers in all matters of importance, was a Council, chosen from the most experienced and dignified burghers, to which the name of *Credenza*, or Privy Council was given. Without their approval no matter of importance could be entered upon by the consuls.

Below this *Credenza* we find, in later times at any rate, another and larger body, variously styled General Council or Senate, or Grand Council, or Council of the Commune, often numbering several hundred members, taken from the various classes of the free citizens.

¹ In Milan, and no doubt in either cities, the three classes of Captains, Valvassors, and free citizens each had representatives among the consuls (Otho of Freisingen, bk. ii. chap. xiii.)

Finally, as ultimate depository of all power, was the *Parlamento*, or general assembly of the burghers, called together on great occasions by the sound of the great bell of the city, and assembling either in the great square or Piazza Grande, or in one of the churches. This assembly was only summoned to discuss matters of the greatest importance, such as an alteration in the laws or constitution. It would appear, too, that only such measures were laid before it for approval or rejection as had previously been agreed upon by the Councils.

This constitution rested on older and more simple institutions. The trades guilds, some of which had maintained themselves from Roman times amidst the Lombard and Frankish rule, began to acquire increased importance, as the necessity for protection in troubled times caused men everywhere to join in associations for mutual defence. These guilds elected their own chiefs, to whom, perhaps, the name of Consul was given, and a body of counsellors. They possessed common funds, and were bound to protect their members as far as possible from outside attack. They would, in course of time, come to include the greater number of the townsmen, the fully free citizens being enrolled in the greater guilds whose members followed occupations looked on as specially honourable. We find the bankers, the merchants, the cloth manufacturers as the chief of these guilds in later times.

Alongside of these associations of the middle and lower classes the Captains and Valvassors had also their associations for protection. These *Consorterie*, as they were called, generally had their foundation in kinship, the different members of one family formed a union, having certain officers at its head. The kinsmen built their houses as much as possible in the same quarter of the city, often around a small piazza, and provided for their security by the erection at the common expense of the *Consortes* of one or more of those lofty, fortified towers, the remains of which still form such a characteristic feature in some towns—for example, in Albenga, Mantua, Asti, and Bologna.

It was part of the duties of the heads of the *Consorteria* to provide for the guard and upkeep of these towers, which served as a refuge in case of attack, as well as a means of offence against rival families by means of machines of war placed on the top. As the cities gradually subdued the feudal nobles, and forced them to become residents within the walls, the numbers of these towers increased. The newcomers built houses recalling their country castles by their strength; the city nobles followed this example; family vied with family in the height and ornamentation of their towers—witness the extraordinary leaning towers of the *Asinelli* and *Garisenda* at Bologna—until finally the city as seen from the open country seemed positively to bristle with these lofty and slender edifices of brick and stone. Their numbers became enormous. Pavia is still called the “city of the hundred towers.” In Bologna we know of at least 180. Verona and Lucca boast of having at one time had the amazing number of seven hundred.¹ Besides the towers, the *Consortes* erected a colonnade or *loggia*, opening on to the *piazza* or to the street, where they could meet to celebrate weddings, or for funerals, or to discuss matters of common interest. The expression “*famiglia di torre e loggia*” became usual to indicate a family of wealth and position.

On the downfall of the rule of the Bishops their jurisdiction passed naturally into the hands of the noble *Consorterie* and the chief guilds of the ordinary citizens. From the union of the two classes came the expression, “*Comune Civitatis*,” to express the new municipal organisation. From this is derived the Italian *comune*, in English *commune*, the name employed by the Italians to describe the new city-states.

These new institutions were, as we have already said, of a markedly aristocratic character. In the first place the great mass of the population, the artisans, the smaller tradesmen, were altogether shut out from them. Many of these were still in a state of greater or less dependence

¹ Frati, “*La Vita privata di Bologna*,” p. 3; Cipolla, “*Storia di Verona*,” p. 172.



"TORRE E LOGGIA."
SIENA.

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on the Bishops, or on some of the noble families, or of the greater guilds. As time went on they attained to a larger degree of personal freedom, but for the whole twelfth and the greater part of the thirteenth century they had absolutely no political rights.

In addition to this the consuls, and no doubt the other officers of the municipality, were chosen, so as to give a definite proportion of representation to each of the three classes—the Captains, Valvassors, and ordinary citizens. In Milan, and no doubt in other towns, the two first classes had a great preponderance. Out of the twenty consuls of 1130 nine were Captains, six Valvassors. Naturally, too, the non-noble citizens would as a rule choose their consuls from their most prominent and wealthy fellows.

Especially, too, did the need of experienced leaders in war tend to throw the direction of affairs into the hands of the upper classes. In Milan, during the struggle against Frederick Barbarossa, all the consuls seem to have been nobles. But here we mark a change in the meaning of this word. The old distinction between Captains, Valvassors and Cives disappears, we now find Milites or Nobiles distinguished from Cives. The test of the former is that they fought on horseback. To the old divisions according to birth a new one succeeds which takes account of wealth as well. In Verona, in 1228, we find the public offices open to all who have horses and corresponding military equipment, and own property worth a thousand pounds money of Verona, as well as to all the “*consueti milites*,” irrespective of their wealth. We have, in fact, a real aristocracy of mingled birth and wealth, not forming a closed caste, but accessible to all who could acquire a certain amount of property. In Milan, after the rebuilding of the city in 1167, the consuls were chosen from the nobles, using the word in its new sense, by one hundred *artista*—*i.e.*, members of the trades guilds. But soon the practice sprang up that the consuls of one year named their successors for the next year; a state of affairs which threw all power into the hands of the new civic aristocracy.

This system, though persisting in Verona and also in other towns as late as 1228, was bound to decay. First of all there was a natural tendency among the ruling classes to close their ranks and to admit no new families to office. The milites began to grow into a caste. In this tendency we must see, to a great extent, the influence of the country nobles, accustomed to despise all those who were occupied in trade or manufactures. But the commercial classes were continually increasing in wealth, and, finding themselves now shut out from the offices of the state, a large and ever-increasing class grew up envious of the ruling families, and eager to break through their monopoly of power.

At the same time, as discontent with the aristocracy grew, the milites weakened themselves by their feuds with one another. Many writers have declared that the quarrels between rival noble families which began to distract almost all the Lombard cities about the beginning of the thirteenth century, were due to hostility between the old citizen nobility and the newcomers from the country whom the former had forced to reside within the walls. Some have gone so far as to assert that the strife was due to latent race hatred. The town nobles, say they, whether descendants of Captains and Valvassors,¹ or of wealthy merchants, were of Roman, the country nobles of Teutonic origin. There seems, however, little or no ground for this assertion. Looking into the details of the feuds it is impossible to say that on one side were the feudal nobles, on the other the milites of the cities.

The country nobles did certainly cause discord in the towns in which they settled. But it was by introducing their own lawless ways, by continuing within the walls the quarrels which they had had on their own domains, by despising the civic magistrates, and revenging themselves without recourse to the justice of the

¹ No doubt some Captains and Valvassors long resident in the cities were now engaged in commerce, or in banking; the rich families who now ranked with them probably often continued their former business. Hence there would be a certain contrast between the old town nobility and the country element.

Comune. The city nobles copied their manners, and became more and more separated in sympathies from the mass of the people. Not only did they fight among themselves, they joined in oppressing the lower classes, and so still further increased popular discontent.

So we find, in the thirteenth century, a class hostility which is nonexistent at an earlier epoch. The middle classes, the *grassi popolani*, as they were called in Florence, rise against the aristocratic rule. They first obtain a share in the government, as in Piacenza, where, in 1222, they got one-half the public offices and one-third of the embassies; then they exclude the nobles altogether from power.

Much of the subsequent history of the Communes depends on this quarrel between the middle classes and the nobles, and the gradual extinction of the power of the latter. In time, a new struggle would begin, this time between the middle classes and the lower orders, the *plebe*, or *popolo minuto*¹; but in Lombardy, before this movement could run its course, it was as a rule checked by the appearance of the tyrant.

At the period of which we now treat these class dissensions were still in the future. The cities governed by a *patriciate*, to adopt a convenient word—

“Sober and modest, knew internal peace.”²

United within, they were able to concentrate all their efforts on the subjugation of the country nobles, or on their warfare against neighbouring and rival cities.

The movement in favour of a general pacification inspired in Lombardy by the calamities of 1117 was not of long duration. Parma fought with Piacenza in the very next year; in 1120 Parma was at war with Cremona. Verona, placed between the territories of Vicenza and Mantua, waged war on these two cities in 1121, and four years later we find Reggio and Modena attacking Mantua on one side, while Verona assailed her on the other.

¹ Siena offers the best example of such a struggle.

² Dante, “Paradiso,” xv.

All these hostilities pale before the ten years' struggle waged between Milan and Como, of which a poet of the latter town has left us a record in rude Latin verses, in which he compares the struggle between his mother city and the Lombard metropolis to the ten years' contest waged on the wind-swept plains of Troy. Since the extensive district subject to Como lay between Milan and the Alpine passes by which her commerce found its way into Germany, it is easy to see how quarrels with regard to rights of passage, tolls, &c., would occur between the two cities. Hence arose a feeling of hostility which in 1118 burst into open flame.

The contest between Empire and Papacy was still dragging along its course. The death of Pope Paschal II., early in 1118, gave Henry V. the opportunity of endeavouring to place on the Papal chair a supporter of his own, Burdinus, Archbishop of Braga, in opposition to Gelasius II., who had been chosen by the majority of the Roman clergy and people a few days after Paschal's death. The cities of Lombardy on the whole were nominally on the Emperor's side; in many of them the Bishops acknowledged Burdinus, in others Henry proceeded to nominate Bishops of his own party, deposing the supporters of Gelasius. In Como the Bishop held with Gelasius. Henry declared him deposed and nominated in his stead a Milanese of one of the leading noble families of that city. The new Bishop advanced with a body of armed men from among his kinsmen and friends into the territory of Como, but was fallen upon and captured by the citizens commanded by two of their consuls. Many of his followers perished; the rest fled to Milan and spread out on the piazza the blood-stained garments of the slain, while the widows and orphans with shrieks and tears called on the people to avenge the dead. The crowd was easily worked to fury against their rivals, and the Archbishop himself, Jordan, though a supporter of the lawful pontiff, shared the passions of the mob. Patriotism prevailed over his ecclesiastical leanings; he closed the doors of the great church in the face of the people, and declared he would

not reopen them—nay more, that he would place the city under an interdict—unless the burghers of Milan took the field to avenge their countrymen.

The civic forces issued out with the Carroccio and took the way to Como. All travellers from Milan towards Switzerland are familiar with the ruined tower of Baradello, which stands boldly on a conical hill, seeming a sentinel to the enchanting region of lakes and mountains which begins at Como, a mile or two beyond. At the foot of this castle, then the main bulwark of Como towards the south, the two armies met. Night came on, leaving the combat undecided. In the darkness the Milanese left their camp and passing round Baradello fell on Como while its defenders were all absent in the camp. The city was given over to pillage and the flames. But at daybreak the burghers, seeing the smoke from the summit of Baradello, hastily rushed to the rescue of their families and homes, and falling on the Milanese, who were occupied in plundering, inflicted on them a complete overthrow.

Both cities now prepared for a deadly struggle. Milan sought and obtained allies from all parts of Lombardy, and found perhaps even more useful help in the territories of Como itself.

The movement towards municipal autonomy had not been confined to the cities. The inhabitants of the smaller towns, and even of the villages, whether fully free or vassals of the Church, or of feudal nobles, had shared in the general tendency to combine for mutual protection. They went farther in many cases, and aimed at complete emancipation from any overlord but the Emperor. But in this they encountered the opposition of the cities, who claimed to rule over the whole of their contado. In Tuscany, owing to the late rise of the greater Communes, and to their jealousies with one another, some quite small communities such as San Gemignano, Colle, Prato, and the *castelli* of the Val di Nievole, actually did succeed in gaining their independence, and survived as miniature republics until the fourteenth century. In Lombardy, however, where, as has been already said, the greater

Communes found themselves almost from the first in possession of a large part of the *contado*, the small communities found it impossible long to resist encroachments on their freedom. They were left, it is true, a measure of self-government, but had to pay taxes to the ruling city, and submit to its commands in all important matters.

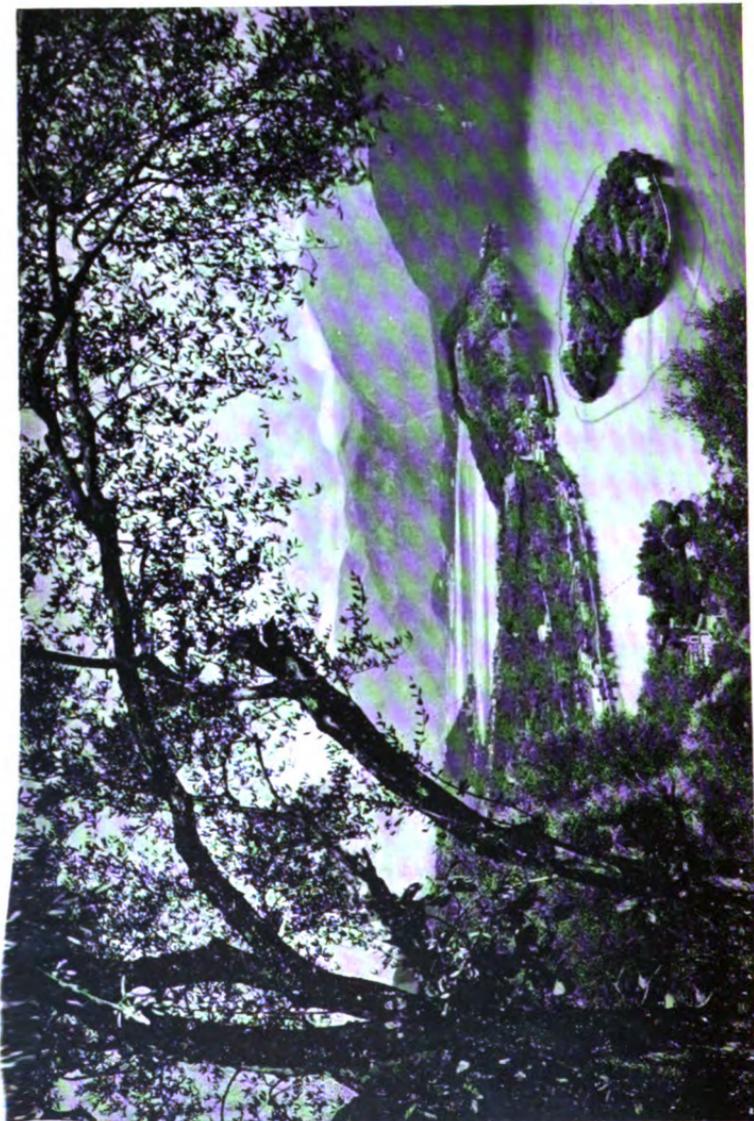
They did not, however, always give up the idea of shaking off this yoke; and so, in the case of Como, Milan found no difficulty in exciting to revolt many of the small towns along the lake, Bellagio, Menaggio, and others whose picturesque sites are now so familiar to the tourist.

Chief among these small communities were the inhabitants of *Isola Comacina*, the small island, barely a mile in circumference, which lies, the only island in the lake, only a few yards from the shore, not far from that delightful region the *Tremezzina*, which claims with justice the title of the "Garden of Lombardy."

Its situation had made it important from the earliest times. To it had fled, during the Lombard invasion, the most spirited among the Roman inhabitants of the neighbourhood, carrying with them their property. The small stretch of water between it and the mainland proved to the Lombards, unacquainted with navigation, an obstacle which they could not overcome. Not until twenty years had passed did it come under the Lombard rule, and then only in virtue of an honourable capitulation. Byzantine civilisation had preserved itself here during this interval amidst the flood of surrounding barbarism; and it is from it, and not from Como, that many modern writers derive the origin of the *Maestri Comacini*, the guild of masons and architects alluded to in the Lombard laws, to whom in later times was due the erection of so many of the churches which display the architectural features designated by us as Lombard.

We find the island, *Christopolis* as it had been called while it served as a refuge from the Lombards, serving as a shelter to the son of King Berengar. Cantù quotes a charter of Otho I. in which he concedes to the inhabitants

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[Alinari.]

ISOLA COMACINA.

Photo.]

and to those of Menaggio privileges hitherto unheard of.¹ The island seems to have been strongly fortified, and possessed a small district on the mainland where the inhabitants had the farms from which they drew their subsistence. Much of their income no doubt came from a carrying trade on the lake or from fishing. The nine churches said to have existed on it are another proof of its prosperity.

The Isolani felt the same jealousy and dread of Como that the latter city felt towards Milan. They now saw a chance of freeing themselves from the yoke. With the coming spring, in conjunction with the people of Bellagio, Menaggio, Gravedona, and other places all led by the same feelings, they equipped a flotilla of seven vessels, with which they made a sudden descent on Como. They met with a complete overthrow, and the Comasques had time to prepare themselves for the much more formidable attack which threatened from the south.

Not only did the forces of Milan take the field against them, but the poet declares that Brescia, Bergamo, Cremona, Novara, Pavia, Asti, Vercelli, and cities more distant still, Parma, Guastalla, Bologna, Ferrara, Mantua, and Verona, appeared as allies in their train. The Countess of Biandrate, a feudal lordship extending over a large part of the diocese of Novara, came to the hosting, carrying her infant son in her arms, and even the distant Tuscan valley of the Garfagnana sent its noble knights. It is hard to explain this gathering from such distant cities. Possibly they were all for the moment on the side of Henry V. and his Antipope, and a feeling of loyalty to their Emperor may have called them to the field.

This great force devastated the territory of Como, and laid formal siege to the city, while the vessels of Isola and its confederates scoured the lake. The valour of the Comasques and the strength of their walls beat off all attack. It was not possible for a burgher army, composed largely of men who lived by their daily labour, to keep the field for any length of time. The allies after

¹ Cantù, "Storia della città e della diocesi di Como," p. 132. But is the charter genuine?

several useless assaults retired, proclaiming by a herald that they would return next year in the month of August. No doubt they chose this date as enabling them to reap the crops and destroy the vintage of their enemies.

The next campaign was equally fruitless of results; the Milanese retired promising to return in the following May. Como then turned to chastise its rebellious subjects. Both parties fitted out vessels of war, distinguished by names such as the *Wolf*, the *Claw*, the *Swift*, the *Crastina* (or *Cristina*), and the *Alberga*.

The allied communities of Dongo, Gravedona and Domasco, near the head of the lake, who had formed a federation under the name of the Tre Pievi, or Three Parishes, and who aspired to set up an independent Commune, constructed a great ship to take the same place in the rebel fleet as the Carroccio had in the army. Twelve oarsmen urged it along, twenty-four valiant warriors defended it, from its mast floated the banner of the Tre Pievi, while below was a crucifix and altar.

The fleet of Como, numbering twelve vessels, and manned by the flower of the citizens, sailed against their opponents. The latter do not seem to have ventured on a regular battle, and the Comasques carried destruction far and wide along the shores of the lake. With the ships they had captured, and no doubt employing all their own of every size, they collected a hundred vessels, and descended on Isola. They sacked the island—we must suppose that there was on it some kind of citadel to which the inhabitants retired, for they certainly were not subdued on this occasion—and laid waste the mainland districts subject to the Isolani. Bellagio and other places felt their vengeance, and the fleet, laden with spoil, returned in triumph to Como.

For the next years the history of the war is the same. There were raids by the Milanese to the walls of Como, counter-raids on the rich villages and small towns, such as Varese, which were thickly scattered over the north of the diocese of Milan. The conflict raged especially around the castles and villages along the lakes of Lugano and Como. On the former lake the Milanese

fitted out vessels at Lavena, and induced Lugano and other places to revolt to their side. The Comasques from the village of Melano, under Monte Generoso, fought them successfully, and chastised the rebels. It would be impossible to relate all the naval encounters, the surprises of castles, the plunderings, the various acts of treachery of which these lovely shores were the theatre. On one occasion Melano with the vessels in its port was betrayed to the enemy by the Comasque leader. At once the *Alberga* and *Crastina* were carried overland from Como to the Lake of Lugano, set sail for Lavena, recovered the captured vessels, captured others, and finally regained Melano.

In 1124 the Tre Pievi returned to their allegiance, and with their aid Isola and Menaggio were once more laid waste. A new attack on Como by land followed this, but so far was it from daunting the Comasques that in the meantime they again fell on Isola. This time we have clear mention of a fortress on the island which resisted all attack.

The town of Lecco, at the extremity of the south-eastern arm of the Lake of Como, lay in the Archdiocese of Milan. The same reasons which made Isola and Bellagio hostile to Como should have made Lecco an enemy of the Lombard metropolis—in fact, we find that this was the case in later times. For the present, however, it would seem that Lecco felt more enmity to Como: no doubt there were constant causes of quarrel over the fisheries and navigation of the lake. Milan then found here a basis for a naval attempt on Como. Thirty vessels were got together at Lecco and advanced down the lake. The fleet of Como met and defeated them, and the triumphant warriors returned to Como, to take part in a sally which drove off a force which had once more advanced to the walls of their city.

During the next two years the same incidents were repeated, raids by one and the other party, combats on the lake, revolts and recapture of castles, a new attempt on Como. But the long war was beginning

to tell on the latter city. Year after year its territory was ravaged, more of its subjects fell away, the enemies pushed their raids into the distant Valtellina, the whole district of Lugano was lost to them. Above all Como lost the man who had been the soul of its defence—the Bishop Guido, who died in 1125, uttering sad forebodings as to the fate of his country.

The Milanese, with vastly greater resources, resolved on a final effort in 1127. Their call for help from their allies was answered as before by Asti, Cremona, Novara, Pavia, Vercelli, Parma, Bologna, Ferrara, and Mantua. The conquered Lodi, and Crema the constant client of Milan, sent their forces as a matter of course. New allies appeared—Alba, Albenga, Modena, Piacenza and Vicenza. The nobles of Garfagnana came as before, so did the young Count of Biandrate, now a boy eager to taste of war. Genoese engineers came to direct mining operations, Pisans to construct engines of war. Lecco and Isola attacked on the side of the lake.

The courage of the people of Como was not broken by the overwhelming might of their enemies. But their resources were unequal to their spirit. The flower of their youth had fallen in the nine years' war. Old men and mere boys had to take their places on the walls. The latter, shaken by the machines constructed by the Genoese, began to yield. A desperate sortie of the besieged in the hope of destroying these engines was repulsed; the assailants had already opened a breach, and awaited the next day in order to give the final assault. Then the townsmen, seeing all hope of defending their city gone, embraced the desperate resolution of conveying the remnant of their forces, with the women and children, to the neighbouring fortress of Vico, and from thence continuing the war.

In the darkness of the night, while a chosen band of warriors made a final sortie to distract the attention of the enemy, the women and children, and finally the surviving defenders of the city, embarked on the vessels in the harbour, carrying with them what they could of their property. At daybreak the Milanese saw

the wall deserted and the city void of life. But they also saw the walls of Vico manned and ready to sustain a new siege, which its position on a rock inaccessible to their machines would infallibly render as arduous as had been that of the city.

They therefore sent to the fugitives, proposing an honourable capitulation. The walls of Como were to be destroyed, and Como was to pay homage and tribute to Milan, but the property of its inhabitants was to be inviolable. This latter condition was not observed; the city was sacked, its fairest edifices destroyed, many of the inhabitants led away into captivity. We will see how in later days these outrages were avenged.

I have dwelt thus at length on this war because it offers in its varied and picturesque details a vivid picture of the fratricidal contests of the cities, and because it shows us the degree of independence to which they had now attained, and the wonderful outburst of energy, and the intense patriotism which liberty had produced. Besides, there can be little doubt that it was in this long struggle that the Lombards acquired the experience in warfare and the spirit of self-reliance which in the next generation enabled them to defy the power of the Empire.

One cannot fail to remark that the Emperor seems in no way to have interfered to put a stop to this war. The quarrel over Investitures had been ended in 1122 by the Concordat of Worms, which reconciled Empire and Papacy on a basis of mutual concessions. Henry V. would no doubt have sooner or later turned his attention to re-establishing the Imperial authority in Lombardy, and as a preliminary to imposing peace on the contending cities. But this energetic and gifted monarch died in 1125, at the comparatively early age of forty-four.

His death was followed by a quarrel over the succession. The Electors passed over Frederick of Hohenstaufen, Duke of Swabia, nephew of Henry on his mother's side, and inheritor of the greater part of his private possessions. In his stead they chose Lothair

of Supplinburg, Duke of Saxony, a province which had always been inclined to opposition against the Emperors of the Franconian line. Frederick was not inclined to renounce his claims without a struggle, and he was still farther embittered by an attempt of the new monarch to deprive him of the lands he had inherited from the Franconian House. War broke out in Germany in 1126. Next year Frederick's brother Conrad returned from the Holy Land, and with his brother's consent took the title of King. Leaving Frederick to carry on the war in Germany, Conrad passed into Italy, hoping by his presence there to win the whole country to his obedience.

The Imperial authority had been in abeyance in the peninsula for several years past, and the Communes, left without restraint on their actions, had taken the opportunity to pursue their quarrels with one another with ever increasing fury. It became practically a matter of course that each city should be in a chronic state of feud with its immediate neighbours. Temporary peaces might be patched up, two rivals might find themselves for a moment united by a common hostility to a third, but these were mere breaks in the ordinary course of affairs. We may lay down as an axiom that two Communes having a common frontier were perpetually at variance.

The Romans, in laying out the civitates of Cisalpine Gaul, had in the main followed the plan of giving to each of the towns they founded a long and somewhat narrow strip of territory, running from Apennines or Alps north or south, until it touched the Po. This is especially to be noticed in the case of the cities founded along the Via Æmilia, in the modern provinces of Emilia and Romagna. Hence, as a glance at the map will show, each Commune found itself shut in between two neighbours on the east and west respectively, with a third, lying north or south as the case might be, and usually separated from it by the Po or some other large river. Bearing this in mind, it will be easy to grasp the general principle underlying the apparently confused warfare

which fills up most of the next century. Each town was in a state of chronic hostility to its eastern and western neighbour, and to a less extent with the city whose territory fronted it on the opposite side of the Po.

So Piacenza was the deadly enemy of Parma and Pavia, and since Milan lay on the other side of Pavia a natural alliance sprang up between Piacenza and Milan. Brescia was bounded by Bergamo on the west, and on the south-west the Oglio separated it from Cremona. Both these cities were enemies of Milan, so the latter was brought into alliance with Brescia. On its eastern frontier the Lago di Garda cut off Brescia from Verona, except for a few miles at its southern extremity; but there was no natural division between Mantua and Brescia, hence these two cities were generally at variance. Cremona was as we have seen the neighbour and enemy of Brescia; its border only touched the territories of Mantua for a short distance, so that Cremona and Mantua, though often at variance, were often drawn together by a common hostility to Brescia.

The situation of Milan and Pavia was somewhat different. Their territories did not run up to the mountains, and were of more circular form. Seven cities hemmed in the territory of Milan, and in most cases no natural boundaries served to divide them. Hence Milan was ringed round with enemies. Chief of all was Pavia, whose long duel with Milan forms the central point round which one may group the main story of the Lombard cities. We have already seen the relations of Milan with Lodi, Como, and Cremona; this last ranks next after Pavia among the opponents of the city of St. Ambrose. To these foes must now be added Novara on the west and Bergamo on the east. The small Crema, over which Cremona claimed dominion, was forced by this to become the ally, one might almost say the vassal, of Cremona's rival. On the other hand Vercelli, which, as bordering on Novara and Pavia, might have been expected to be on the Milanese side, seems for some unexplained reason to have lived on good terms with its neighbours.

South of the Po Bologna and Modena were at constant variance. Reggio was at first generally allied with Bologna; Parma was the close friend of Modena. Reggio was also constantly at war with Mantua, which possessed a small district south of the Po, which she sought to extend at the expense of Reggio. So we find Modena, Mantua, and Parma frequently leagued against Bologna and Reggio. At a later period, however, for reasons not easy to explain, we find the three Emilian towns, Modena, Reggio, and Parma, in close alliance with Cremona against Bologna, Brescia, Piacenza, and Milan.

To sum up, we can class all the cities west of the Mincio in two groups under the headship of Milan and Pavia. Under the first were arranged Crema, Brescia, Piacenza, Tortona; under the second we find Cremona, Lodi, Bergamo, Como, Novara, and Asti. Vercelli has no very definite position; Mantua, Reggio, and Modena were outside the influence of the two leaders; finally Parma supported now the one, now the other, according as her hostility was directed at one time against Cremona, at another against Piacenza.¹

The state of affairs in eastern Lombardy, the Trevisan or Veronese Mark as it was called, was somewhat different. We have seen how under the Othos this district had been separated from the kingdom of Italy, and joined first to the Duchy of Bavaria, then to Carinthia when this latter district was raised to the position of a duchy. Under the First Conrad the whole eastern portion of the Mark, the territory now known as Friuli, was given to the Patriarch of Aquileia, and completely freed from all dependence on Carinthia. The rest of the Mark was now separated geographically from Carinthia, and the influence of the Dukes was less and

¹ Parma fought Cremona in 1120, 1121, 1131, and 1153; she fought Piacenza in 1118, 1149, 1153 (when Cremona and Piacenza were for a moment allied), and 1159. In 1152 Parma ravaged the lands of Reggio, and took and burned the small town of Borgo San Donnino and carried off all its inhabitants as captives (*Chronicum Parmense.—Chronicum Placentinum*).

less able to make itself felt in these parts. So the Bishops, and finally the Communes, began to establish their power here as in the rest of Lombardy, and finally about the close of the eleventh century a disputed succession in Carinthia enabled the Mark to shake off all dependence on the Dukes.

The Lake of Garda, and the delta of the Po cut off the most part of this region from the neighbouring cities. It was only along its south-western boundary that it had any close contact with the rest of Lombardy. The territory of Mantua formed the frontier along most of this boundary, and it is only through the relations of Verona with this city that the Trevisan Mark comes into contact at this early period with the general current of Lombard history.

Of the four chief cities of this region Treviso and Verona had no direct contact with one another. Padua touched the frontiers of both, so did Vicenza, which latter city was bounded on the south by Padua. Hence there was here no natural system of alliances possible. Each Commune fought with its three neighbours, the result being a tangle of feuds impossible to reduce to order. To the east of Treviso, lay a kind of debateable region where feudal lords and small towns tried to preserve their independence alike from Treviso and from the Patriarchs of Aquileia. The contests here led to practical anarchy. Finally the small towns of Feltre and Belluno among the mountains lagged behind the others in their development. The Bishops here preserved their authority down to a comparatively late period.

The Milanese received Conrad with enthusiasm. They may have thought that the German princes should not have raised a new dynasty to the throne without some consultation with the Italians. The Archbishop, Anselm, was at the moment engaged in a quarrel with the Pope over the rights of his see, and so was eager to gain for himself the support of the Imperial name. Conrad received the Iron Crown of Lombardy at Monza, and the ceremony was afterwards repeated at Milan. This city was now by far the most powerful in Lombardy, since

the burghers of Como and Lodi, though retaining a semblance of autonomy, were completely subject to the orders of their conquerors. But Conrad soon found that his Italian subjects aimed more at serving their own interests than his, and were of little use to him in his attempt to push on to be crowned in Rome.

Pavia, Cremona, and Novara naturally rejected the choice of Milan; the Pope, supporting Lothair as the lawful king, laid the city under an interdict, and possibly on this account Brescia and Piacenza forsook their former ally and joined the party of Lothair. A desultory warfare ensued, in which the Milanese chronicler, Landulph the Younger, claims the advantage for his fellow citizens. But this in no way advanced Conrad's cause. The Papal interdict turned many of the Milanese from his side; he found himself treated with contempt by his subjects, until finally an outbreak in Milan forced him to leave that city for Parma. Here, too, he found little help, and finally he recrossed the Alps after a stay of some years in Lombardy.

Soon after Lothair appeared on the scene, but with forces so small as to be able to attempt nothing against the greater cities, such as Verona and Parma, which refused to receive him. With the Cremonese he besieged Crema for a month, but in vain; then, with the newly elected Pope Innocent, he proceeded to Rome, where he received the Imperial Crown, but was not strong enough to expel from the city the Antipope Anaclet, who had been set up on the death of Pope Honorius, in 1130, by a faction among the Roman nobility. Unable to accomplish anything farther in Italy, he returned to Germany. Nothing can more clearly show the low state to which German power had fallen south of the Alps than the powerlessness of both the rivals to establish any hold on Lombardy.

It is from this conflict that many writers date the origin of the famous names of Guelf and Ghibelline, those party cries which fill such an important place in the story of Italy. They very probably originated at this time in Germany, but it seems certain enough that



STATUE OF CONRAD III.

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their introduction into Italy was at a much later date, most probably during the struggle towards the end of this century between Philip of Hohenstaufen and Otho of Brunswick. We do not hear of them during the time of the Lombard League, so we will leave the question of their origin and meaning untouched for the present.

The Hohenstaufens, seeing that fortune was unfavourable to their arms, submitted to Lothair in 1134, and this prince reigned with undisputed authority until his death three years later. On a second expedition to Italy the Milanese and Parmesans received him warmly; Cremona and Pavia, however, presuming, perhaps, on their former services, were less obedient and refused to be reconciled with the rival cities. Lothair now turned on his former allies. The district of Cremona was laid waste, Piacenza taken by assault, and Pavia had to pay a heavy fine to escape similar harsh treatment. For the moment the Imperial power was restored in Lombardy.

Conrad of Hohenstaufen, who succeeded Lothair,¹ abandoned Italy to itself. He was first occupied in Germany, then went on a crusade, and when finally, after a reign of fifteen years, he was preparing to come and receive the Imperial crown at Rome, he was overtaken by the hand of death. These fifteen years were a time of increasing confusion in Italy. Mantua fought Verona—the chroniclers count five wars between 1125 and 1150, and tell us that on one occasion the victorious Mantuans cut off the noses of three thousand Veronese captives—Bologna fought Modena, Brescia fought Cremona. Parma had war on all her borders—with Piacenza, with Cremona, and with Reggio. In the Mark, Padua and Treviso were ranged against Vicenza and Verona. But the most serious quarrels were in Central Lombardy: Cremona persisted in her attempts to subdue Crema, and the latter Commune put itself under the protection of Milan. The hostilities between Milan and Pavia had begun again in 1135. In the following year the latter had gained an important victory. The Milanese army was captured or dispersed “like

¹ In 1137.

timid sheep." But in 1139 victory favoured the Milanese. The greater part of the army of Cremona was captured under the walls of Crema.

Ten years later Cremona and Parma are allied against Milan, Piacenza, and Crema. The former triumphed, and even captured the Milanese Carroccio.

To these conflicts between the greater cities must be added those between the larger Communes and the small communities in their dioceses which tried to establish their independence. Thus in 1152 Parma burned Borgo San Donnino and led away all its inhabitants as prisoners. A Milanese historian gives the name of four communities destroyed by his countrymen. If to these we add the continual hostilities between the Communes and the country nobles, of which the details are almost entirely unknown to us, we shall be able to obtain some idea of the distracted state of Lombardy about the middle of the twelfth century.



STATUE OF FREDERICK I.

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CHAPTER V

MILAN AND FREDERICK BARBAROSSA

SUCH was the condition of affairs all over Italy when a new monarch was elected to the German throne, who showed himself determined to re-establish the fulness of the Imperial rights over the peninsula. Frederick of Hohenstaufen, who has gone down to history under his nickname of Barbarossa, nephew of Conrad, was chosen unanimously as his uncle's most worthy successor. As representative of the Franconian Emperors, as well as Duke of Swabia, he was master of wide possessions, and through his mother, Judith, he was nearly allied to the great House of Welf, which had been the most troublesome opponent of the Emperor Conrad, as well as of the last two Henrys. His character was noble, he was full of great ideas, had a lofty sense of the dignity and rights of his position, and in Germany, at any rate, showed himself eager to punish wrongdoing and maintain internal peace. He possessed considerable military talents, and in the government of his kingdom set himself to establish, as far as circumstances would allow, strong centralised institutions which would enable Germany to appear among European nations as a real kingdom, instead of a loosely joined agglomeration of semi-independent lordships. In the actual conduct of warfare he did not rise superior to the cruelty of his age, but, the victory once obtained, he was magnanimous. "I love to reward rather than to punish," was his speech to the Milanese after the first capitulation of their city. It is, in fact, worthy of remark that neither then, nor at the time of the destruction of the city, after a second and more inexcusable rebellion, nor when his arms had brought about

the surrender of Tortona and Crema, do we hear of any of those executions which even down to our own day have always accompanied the triumph of lawful authority over rebellion.

Preparations for an expedition to Italy which had been contemplated by Conrad were now pushed forward with vigour. Frederick saw his authority firmly established north of the Alps, and was determined once more to assert the rights of the Empire in the peninsula, to which also he was invited by pressing messages from the Pope.

A great Diet, at which nearly all the German princes and prelates assisted, was held at Constance in 1153. During three months Frederick, surrounded by a brilliant court, gave order to the affairs of his kingdom, and dispensed justice to all comers. It happened that among the multitude assembled in the city there were two citizens of the ruined Lodi. Seeing how Frederick redressed wrongs and upheld the right, the thought came to them of pleading the cause of their country, still groaning under the yoke of Milan. They went into a church, took from it a large cross, and bearing this, advanced to the feet of Frederick, where, flinging themselves to the ground, they besought him with tears to have pity on them, and to free them from slavery.

This strange spectacle moved the pity of the bystanders and of the Emperor himself. He at once had a decree made out, ordering the Milanese to give back liberty to Lodi, and dispatched an Imperial officer to communicate it to the parties concerned. This official went first to the villages, in which since the destruction of Lodi its burghers had lived dispersed. He communicated his letter to the consuls and the Credenza, but its contents, so far from being satisfactory to them, filled them with terror. The Emperor was still far off, Milan was near, and might easily take a fearful vengeance for this interference with her subjects. They implored the messenger not to proceed to Milan, and when they could not turn him from his purpose, they sent to assure the Milanese that they were innocent of having provoked Frederick's intervention.

The royal letter was read at Milan before the assembly of the people. It excited them to fury ; the bearer with difficulty escaped with his life, while the document itself was torn and trampled underfoot. The people of Lodi were now a prey to the extremes of terror. They sent their wives and children for protection to Cremona ; they themselves scattered during the day through the woods, and in the open country, expecting at every moment to see the Milanese advancing for their destruction. These latter, however, did not venture to provoke Frederick too far, and attempted nothing against Lodi.

In the meantime the Italian cities sent, as usual, deputations to congratulate the new monarch, and to offer him the customary presents. Cremona and Pavia took advantage of this to lodge complaints against the aggressions of Milan. Instructed of this the Milanese attacked these two cities, and forced the burghers of Lodi and Como, as well as their allies from Crema, to follow them into the field. A battle took place between Milan and Pavia, which lasted all day, without decisive result. In the night, however, the Milanese were seized with a sudden panic and fled, leaving their camp and a great booty a prey to their enemies.

In October, 1154, Frederick, at the head of a great army, came down into Italy by the Brenner Pass, and proceeded to the plain of Roncaglia, near Piacenza, where, from of old, had been held the Diets or general assemblies of the Italian kingdom. Frederick himself has left us, in a letter to his uncle, the historian Otho of Freisingen, a concise but clear account of his proceedings in this expedition. The great vassals of the kingdom and the deputies of the Communes appeared before him to do homage, receive justice, and proffer their complaints. The Marquis of Montferrat complained of the attacks made on him by the people of Chieri and Asti, and was joined in his accusations by the Bishop of the latter city, which had evidently not yet wholly shaken itself free from episcopal rule. Pavia accused the Milanese of grasping aggression against its neighbours. Como and Lodi besought the Emperor to free them from their slavery.

"The deceitful and proud Milanese uttered lying speeches," and offered four thousand marks, provided he would confirm their rule over these two cities. This offer Frederick rejected with scorn, and demanded from Milan guides and provisions for his army on its march from Piacenza to Novara where, he declared, he would give sentence regarding the various complaints.

The route chosen by the guides, which indeed was the shortest, led through the districts which had been laid waste during the recent campaign between Milan and Pavia. The supply of food ran short; the Germans ascribed this to the deliberate hostility of the Milanese; and, in revenge, attacked and destroyed the castle of Rosate, though defended by five hundred knights,¹ and pillaged the surrounding districts. The Milanese attempted to pacify Frederick's anger, but in vain. His army advanced to the River Ticino and seized two bridges which the Milanese had constructed to help them in their attacks on Novara. Then he took and destroyed two castles which they held on the other side of the river, and from which they used to make inroads on the Novarese territory.

Novara, Vercelli, and Turin, which he visited in succession, all welcomed him; and then, crossing the Po, he advanced to punish the misdeeds of Chieri and Asti.² The townsmen did not await his coming, but fled with such of their property as they could carry, and the two places were given to the flames.

Then he advanced against Tortona, and ordered the burghers to renounce their alliance with Milan and to contract one with Pavia. On their refusal he prepared to lay siege to the city. Here, for the first time, he found what opposition the Communes from behind their strong walls were able to offer to a feudal army. He easily

¹ "Equites" says Otho of Freisingen.

² The contemporary accounts say Cairo, a small town and castle much more to the south, near Savona. But Frederick speaks of "this strong and large place," and from this and from the order of his march it is evident that Clarium (*i.e.*, Chieri), and not Carium, is meant.

made himself master of the lower town ; but the castle, or upper town, whose walls rose from a steep rock, defied all his assaults. In vain the most powerful machines cast stones into the town, or battered the walls ; in vain a mine was opened against the only tower whose foundations did not rest on the solid rock. The townsmen, aided by two hundred Milanese and by some of the nobles from the neighbouring Apennines, attempted frequent sorties, and successfully met Frederick's mine by a counter mine. The Imperial army, to which were joined the forces of Pavia and Montferrat, had to turn the siege into a blockade. A ditch cut off the town from all access to the open country, and after constant struggles the Pavesans succeeded, not indeed in shutting off the besieged from the only well from which they could draw water, but in rendering it useless, first by casting into it the dead bodies of men and horses, and then by throwing in pitch and burning sulphur.

Easter came, and Frederick proclaimed a truce of four days. During this time the clergy, issuing in procession from Tortona, implored pity for themselves, as being innocent of all part in the resistance of the burghers. Then they artfully began to intercede for the city. But they were answered that their fate could not be separated from that of their fellows, and that these could expect no mercy unless after an unconditional surrender. Unwillingly they had to return within the walls.¹

Finally hunger and thirst accomplished what arms had proved unequal to. After a two months' seige the townsmen were forced to surrender. Frederick allowed them to leave the city, bearing with them as much of their property as they could carry. They took refuge in Milan ; and the Imperial army was rewarded with the plunder of the city, which was then given to the flames.

After this tedious siege Frederick, on the invitation of the citizens, proceeded to Pavia, where he was received

¹ Sismondi (chapter viii.) somewhat misrepresents this episode. It is quite true that they asked leave to pass through the lines of the besiegers, but they also did what they could to secure favourable terms for their fellow citizens.

with all possible honour. Here he received the crown of Lombardy, and wore it for three days, in the midst of the universal rejoicings of the citizens.

He then set out for Rome, to receive the Imperial crown. Piacenza, by which he passed, was hostile ; the example of Tortona had taught him how long might be the time necessary to reduce even the smallest city, and he passed on, leaving the Lombards for the moment to themselves.

We need not follow the Emperor in his expedition south of the Apennines. It is sufficient to say that his German vassals, anxious to regain their homes after a year's campaign, forced him to disband his army at Ancona, without undertaking the campaign against the Normans of Apulia, on which, urged by the Pope, the Greek Emperor, and by many nobles of South Italy, he had decided. He himself, with his immediate followers, returned to Germany by Verona, where, when crossing the Adige, he nearly fell a victim to a treacherous attack planned by the citizens.

This first expedition of Frederick had shown the power of the Empire when united under a capable chief. But no less had it shown its weakness. His army passed over the open country like a devastating storm ; but it was another matter when a feudal army had to reduce a fortified town. In the then state of military science famine was almost the only means of reducing a walled city, and the feudal army could not be kept together long enough to break down the resistance of a number of fortresses. The climate of Italy, too, was found to have fatal effects on the Germans ; their armies melted away rapidly ; and, if a city could hold out for six months, it might reasonably hope to see the hostile army forced by natural causes to raise the siege. To counteract these disadvantages Frederick at first was able to utilise the mutual hostility of the Lombard cities. The forces of Cremona, Pavia, and the Italian nobles supplied the deficiencies of the German levies ; but it might easily have been foreseen that, if the Lombards should once lay aside their feuds, and unite against the

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MILAN.
NAVIGLIO GRANDE.

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foreigner, it would be an almost impossible task to reduce them once more to submission.

Before leaving Italy Frederick had put the Milanese to the ban of the Empire, and deprived them of all their rights and privileges. These, or some of them, he conferred on Cremona, in return for "its faithful devotion and unstained honesty." As soon as he had gone the Milanese took measures to secure themselves against the attack which they knew was only postponed.¹ Their first step, taken as soon as the Emperor had left Pavia on his way to Rome, was to rebuild Tortona. This they did in spite of the attacks of the Pavesans, who on one occasion, however, succeeded in inflicting heavy losses on them. Next they fell on Novara and Pavia, inflicted much damage on them, and made themselves masters of a great part of the territory of the former city. On the side of Como they invaded the neighbourhood of Lugano, and captured twenty castles in this region.

At the same time they put their city into a state of defence. To secure the safety of the suburbs which had sprung up outside the original circuit of the walls, they constructed the large moat, or rather canal, which, under the name of the Naviglio Grande, forms such a picturesque feature in the modern city. This moat, circular in form, formed the boundary of the city for centuries afterwards. On the inner side ramparts were erected, with gates of stone. It is said that on this work they spent the immense sum of fifty thousand marks of silver, eleven hundred thousand pounds of our money.

They justly suspected that the citizens of Lodi would join the Emperor as soon as he appeared. They proposed, then, to bind them by an oath to be obedient in all things to the commune of Milan. This oath the Lodesans refused to take, except with the proviso "saving the fidelity due to the Emperor;" and, as the Milanese refused to accept this, and the Lodesans allowed their movable property to be carried off rather than consent, stronger measures were determined upon. The forces of Milan marched against the villages in which

¹ This was in 1156.

the Lodesans lived ; the latter fled before them *en masse* into the territory of Cremona ; and the villages were rased to the ground.

Besides Tortona, the Milanese could count on the assistance of Piacenza, Crema, Brescia, and the formidable Isolani of the Lake of Como. Bergamo, as the natural enemy of Brescia, was a strong upholder of the Imperial cause ; but her burghers met with a complete overthrow at the hands of their enemies, in which over two thousand of them were captured, together with the great banner of their city, which for years was displayed with great pomp on the anniversary of the battle in the Church of SS. Faustinus and Giovita.

Frederick had been detained for more than two years beyond the Alps, but at last in the summer of 1158 an immense army concentrated at Ulm, and from there set out by four different routes for the plains of Lombardy. Almost all the great nobles and prelates of Germany accompanied the army, the most formidable which, for centuries, had descended through the passes of the Alps.

The various detachments concentrated in the neighbourhood of Brescia. This city attempted to resist ; but, terrified by the numbers of the enemy, the inhabitants capitulated after a few days, paying a large sum of money, and giving hostages. Here Frederick held a Diet, at which deputies from Milan appeared to negotiate peace. The Emperor, however, required complete submission, and as this was refused the Milanese were once more proclaimed rebels.

Frederick then advanced on Milan, and forced a passage over the Adda in spite of the resistance offered by a thousand horsemen. On the other side of the river Frederick met the deputies of the Lodesans, who besought him to provide them with new homes. He marked out a site for them, about four miles distant from their former city, and on this place they established a new and strongly fortified town, to which they gave the name of their old home, and which has lasted to our own day.

We are fortunate in possessing abundant contemporary

accounts of all these events. Otho of Freisingen and his continuer Radevicus give us the point of view of the Germans, and of the Emperor himself. The views of the Communes hostile to Milan are put before us by Otho Morena, a magistrate of Lodi, and employed in Frederick's service, as well as by his son Acerbus. Finally, a Milanese, Sire Raul, represents the party of independence.

Frederick had issued orders to all Lombardy to send its forces to fight under the Imperial standard. The Marquises, Counts, and Captains obeyed his orders, so did nearly all the cities. Even Piacenza was afraid to face the gathering storm, and bound herself by oath to send a hundred fully armed horsemen and a hundred archers to the siege of her former ally. Only Crema, Tortona, and the islanders of Lake Como dared to stand by Milan.

With an army said to number fifteen thousand horse and a hundred thousand foot, or more, Frederick advanced against the offending city. On their side the Milanese prepared for an obstinate defence. They could dispose of fifty thousand combatants, and flattered themselves that it would be impossible completely to blockade the city; while the deep canal which they had lately constructed served to protect their walls from direct attack by the rams and other instruments of war.

Frederick, in spite of the frequent sallies of the besieged, succeeded in drawing lines round the city. He pitched a camp before each of the seven gates, and the troops from these were able to come to the help of any part where a sudden attack might be made. Constant sallies and combats succeeded one another.

Outside the Porta Romana stood a monument of Roman days, a marble tower rising from four solid arches. Here the Milanese had placed forty men in order to prevent it from being used by the enemy as a point of vantage on which to erect catapults and balistæ. They had hoped to be able to hold the ground between it and the gate, but the Imperial forces succeeded in isolating the tower from all help. The garrison, how-

ever, held out for a week, until the Germans, getting under the arches, began to demolish the vaulting. Then, fearing that the tower would give way beneath them, the survivors surrendered. This post then became for the besiegers one of their most important bases of attack.

In the meantime, the surrounding districts were laid waste, and the sallies of the burghers generally ended in disaster, though on one occasion they surprised the enemy and captured from them an immense number of horses. The constancy of the citizens was shaken by repeated reverses, and by the view of the devastation of their lands by the Pavians and Cremonese. Famine and disease began to prevail inside the walls; and citizens were not wanting who declared that these disasters came from the wrath of Heaven, provoked by their impious resistance to the sacred majesty of the Empire. Dissension began to rise within the walls; the poorer classes began to feel their sufferings intolerable.

At this juncture the Count of Biandrate, the owner of immense fiefs in the territory of Novara, who was also a citizen of Milan, brought forward proposals of peace. He enjoyed great credit amongst the people, and would indeed appear to have been, for a time at least, in supreme command of the civic forces. His position as one of the chief feudatories of Lombardy made him a *persona grata* with the Emperor also; and he succeeded, not without some tumults, in inducing the Milanese to send delegates to the Imperial camp to negotiate a pacification.¹

The terms of this were unexpectedly lenient. Milan renounced all jurisdiction over Como and Lodi, promised to pay a large indemnity, to build an Imperial palace, and to swear fidelity to the Emperor, surrendered all the Regalian rights, and submitted the nomination of the consuls to Frederick's approval. On the other hand there was to be a complete amnesty, Milan was to retain its dominion over the counties of Seprio and Martesana, and all the rest of the Archdiocese, the Imperial army was not to enter the city, and Tortona, Crema, and the

¹ September, 1158.

Isola Comacina were to be included in the treaty. Besides this the alliance between Milan and these cities was to continue. Curiously enough Frederick was unable to include Cremona, Pavia, and the other cities hostile to Milan in this treaty. He could only promise to use his influence to bring about a general pacification—a striking instance of the insecure basis on which his power still rested.

The submission of the city was made in the most ample manner. The Imperial throne was set up four miles outside the walls. Frederick and his wife took their seat on it; he wore his crown as on solemn occasions; and the nobles of Germany and Italy arrayed themselves around their lord. The whole population, first the Archbishop and clergy bearing sacred relics and crosses, then the nobles barefoot, and with their swords slung behind their backs, then the people with ropes around their necks, advanced in long procession to make their submission before the throne.¹ This ceremony over, the Emperor dismissed the greater part of his forces, and, after a short residence at Monza, repaired to Roncaglia, where he assembled a great Diet to regulate the affairs of the Italian kingdom.

For this purpose four celebrated jurists of Bologna were summoned to inquire into the rights appertaining to the Crown. Two consuls from each of fourteen cities were to aid them in the task. Frederick aimed at nothing less than establishing a regular constitution, which would define once for all the respective rights of the sovereign and of the subject.

The Archbishop of Milan opened the proceedings by an extraordinary speech, in which he propounded the most exaggerated doctrines as to the Imperial supremacy. The Emperor was the sole lawgiver, his mere will was law, an order, a letter, a sentence of his was binding on all. These doctrines had been unheard of up to now in the feudal monarchies; above all, the Church had for over a century been preaching an entirely contrary doctrine; and it adds to our surprise when we find this

¹ 1158.

very same Archbishop, only a year or two later, an active opponent of Frederick, excommunicating him, and even directing military operations against him. Perhaps the explanation is that the Archbishop hoped by Imperial support to regain the authority over the city possessed by his predecessors, and we are confirmed in this belief by finding at the time of the truce of Venice (1177) that the Bishops of Padua, Piacenza, Brescia, &c., whose flocks were all opposed to Frederick, had been excommunicated for supporting him. These prelates still possessed or claimed a certain amount of temporal power over the cities, and it was no doubt to preserve this, and to recover what they had lost, that they had joined the Imperial party.

The commission then proceeded to inquire into the Royal prerogatives. They decided that all those rights to which the name "Regalia" was usually given belonged to the King, and that under this term were included the duchies, marquisates, and counties, the right of coining money, of levying tolls, of exacting provisions for the army (*fodero*, as this was called), of receiving the dues arising from imports and exports, ports, mills, and fisheries, and all revenues which might come from the rivers. In addition the subjects were bound to pay a capitation tax.

This decision as to the kingly prerogatives was, no doubt, influenced by the Roman conception of the omnipotence of the Imperial power, for the study of the Roman law had been very lately revived and pursued with enthusiasm at Bologna, and had begun to affect to an ever increasing extent the jurisprudence of the time. At the same time it is to be remarked that the rights here adjudged to the Emperor were only the most ordinary prerogatives of government, and were, if anything, inferior to those possessed by the English Kings, and by the Kings of France within the royal domain. It was the first step towards the establishment of a strong central government. The consuls of the various cities—those of Milan, it is said, first of all—bowed to the decision, and resigned into Frederick's hands all the Regalia.

Frederick now took further steps towards strengthening his authority. He absolutely forbade all warfare between city and city, as well as between private individuals. All particular alliances were to be dissolved, and any quarrels that might arise were to be settled by the Royal judges. During the Diet an immense number of private lawsuits had been brought before him for decision. To cope with these he had appointed judges for the different dioceses, taken from cities unconcerned in the points at issue. He now formed the plan of appointing in each city a magistrate to exercise both judicial and executive functions, who was to be taken from some other Commune, and who was to exercise authority in his name. To these magistrates, as representing the Imperial power, the name *Podestà* (Latin, *potestas*) was given; and, as he held that the assent of the Diet allowed him to override all previous engagements, he at the same time entirely did away with the consuls, or made them subordinate to his new magistrates.

His design was, in fact, to establish a really effective government, dispensing justice and maintaining order by means of magistrates appointed by himself, and revocable at his pleasure. This is government as we understand it at the present day; and it was institutions of the kind that created the strong monarchies of France and England.

Had he carried through his plans, Italy would have been spared centuries of bloodshed ending in slavery. But she would have lost all that makes her special glory—that splendid flower of vigorous individual life which springs up in small communities where each man can take a direct part in public affairs, where honours and the chance of performing great deeds are within the reach of all. The life of Bristol and York, of Orleans and Rouen, has been a more peaceful and, we may suppose, a happier one than that of the Italian Communes. But they have missed the glory in art and literature which will for ever be associated with the free cities of Tuscany, the splendid maritime supremacy of Pisa and Genoa and Venice, the marvellous development

of commerce and manufacturing industry that we find in Lombardy. Italy might have gained, the world would have lost by the victory of Barbarossa.

It was perfectly certain that, however right Frederick's reforms might be from the abstract point of view, they would meet with fierce opposition. For at least half a century the cities had been in possession of all those privileges which were now withdrawn at one stroke. They had acquired these privileges step by step; they looked on them as their only safeguard against feudal oppression or Royal tyranny; it was their possession that had made the various Communes flourish, and had evoked that burning flame of local patriotism of which we have already seen examples. To them Frederick's measures meant destruction to all they had learnt to prize, a retrograde step from liberty to slavery.

Frederick himself had recognised this. He had confirmed to Lodi, Pavia, and Cremona all the privileges which they actually enjoyed, and he furthermore declared that he would confirm to all the Communes those Regalian rights of the grant of which by former sovereigns they could furnish documentary proof. But this was in reality a mere elusive concession. In most cases the Regalian rights had passed insensibly from the Bishops to the citizens during the confusion at the close of the eleventh century. In scarcely any case would formal documents exist recording the privileges which the Communes had acquired in a great part by usurpation, and which had then in course of time grown into a right by prescription. Almost certainly the Milanese could show no other sanction for their institutions than that which long possession might give, and doubtless many other cities were similarly situated. Even the Bishops, in many cases, would have found it hard to produce documents to prove that they had succeeded by lawful means to the authority of the Counts.

The feudal lords no doubt fared much better. Most of those who held directly from the Crown had at some time or another received formal grants of county rights in their domains. Frederick's measures, too, would tend

to free them from all encroachments made on them by the cities, preserve them from further attack, and so would restore them to the position of independence which they had held half a century before. Hence we find the Marquises, Counts, and greater nobles generally supporting the Imperial policy. The net result of Frederick's reforms was that an annual sum of thirty thousand talents (perhaps marks) was added to his revenues.

To propound this new organisation of the kingdom was easier than to carry it out; and Frederick soon found himself once more in collision with the cities which had before resisted him. The Cremonese accused the people of Piacenza of having attacked their delegates when on their way to Roncaglia. Whether this complaint was founded or not we cannot say, but Frederick decided in favour of his own partisans, and condemned the Piacentines to destroy their fortifications, and to level all their towers to the height of twenty cubits. The burghers pretended to obey, but in reality evaded carrying out the order. He next, also to please the Cremonese, gave orders that the people of Crema should destroy part of their walls. Far from obeying, the people broke out into a violent tumult when Imperial officers arrived to give the order and to institute a Podestà.

But it was with Milan that the chief conflict arose. Both sides accused the other of a breach of the capitulation which had so recently been concluded; but the balance of wrongdoing is on the whole on the side of the Emperor. He had distinctly promised to leave to the city all its rights over the districts subject to it, except over Como and Lodi. But the nobles of Seprio and Martesana were discontented with the rule of the city, and Frederick was induced to withdraw these counties from the jurisdiction of Milan, and to set up in them a German Count. He had been crowned at Monza, and asserted that this town should be looked on, on this account, as peculiarly united to the kingdom, and should therefore owe allegiance to the Emperor alone. These

proceedings were manifest violations of the treaty, but the Milanese had to submit without hope of redress.

Less questionable but more obnoxious to the people were his measures towards the city itself. The treaty had guaranteed to them the right of electing the consuls, on condition that the election should be confirmed by him. But now, relying on the decision of the Diet of Roncaglia, that the Regalian rights all belonged to him, he held that he was freed from observing this clause, and sent his Chancellor and other dignitaries to the city for the purpose of removing the consuls and putting a Podestà in their place. The people broke out into a tumult at this, and attacked the envoys, so that the leading citizens were forced to send them secretly outside the walls lest they should fall victims to the mob. All efforts at an explanation were now fruitless. The Milanese accused the Emperor of violating the capitulation; he made the same charge against them, declaring that they had sworn obedience to him, and had, by their consuls, made a full surrender of all their privileges to him at the Diet of Roncaglia. To this they answered according to the German Radevicus: "We have sworn indeed, but we have not promised to keep our oath."

After such a reply, if such indeed was their reply,¹ no accommodation was possible. Frederick was then at Bologna, whither he cited the Milanese to appear before him to justify their conduct. They did not obey, but prepared for new hostilities, and in April, 1159, not eight months after the peace, they were once more put to the ban of the Empire; their goods were declared forfeited, their city was condemned to be destroyed, and they were to be reduced to the condition of serfs.

The Milanese had expected this, and had themselves commenced hostilities. They attacked the castle of Trezzo, and took it after a three days' siege, getting possession of a considerable treasure which Frederick

¹ Hegel believes that this accusation of Radevicus is due to a misunderstanding of what the deputies really said. Such disregard for the sanctity of an oath is entirely contrary to what we know to have been the character of the Lombards at this period.

had placed in it for safety. The lives of the German garrison were spared, but the Lombards found among the prisoners were executed as traitors, and the castle destroyed. Then, before Frederick could collect his forces, they, with the people of Crema, attacked Lodi, while the Brescians invaded the territory of Cremona. Both these enterprises, however, were unsuccessful, and the Brescians in particular suffered heavy losses.

Frederick now summoned his German vassals to take the field, and contented himself, while awaiting their arrival, with making destructive raids on the Milanese territory. His energetic Italian policy had already gained for him a dangerous enemy and for the Milanese a useful ally.

Already causes had arisen to destroy the good understanding which had existed at first between Frederick and the Englishman who, under the title of Adrian IV., then held the Papal see. Now, after his first victory over the Milanese, the Emperor set about establishing his authority over the inheritance of the Countess Matilda. Royal legates were sent into Central Italy to demand tribute from the cities which the Pope looked on as belonging to the Church. To the Pope's protests that Frederick was infringing the privileges of the Holy See, that the only right possessed by him in the city of Rome was that of exacting the tribute called *fodrum* on the occasion of his coronation, and that he had no right to the lands comprised in the donation of Matilda, the Emperor replied casting doubt on the rights of the Pope to any temporal dominion independent of his authority and asking how the Pope could deny that he was the lawful ruler of Rome since Adrian himself recognised him as King of the Romans. With two opponents of such inflexible character an accommodation was clearly impossible.

Accordingly Adrian prepared for war. He found a powerful ally in the Norman monarchy established in Sicily and South Italy, which had lately been consolidated by the overthrow of the rival Norman principality of Capua. The Emperors had never recognised as legiti-

mate the rule of the Normans in the peninsula, and Frederick had, on his first expedition to Italy, formed an alliance with the Pope, the Greek Emperor, the Prince of Capua, and many discontented southern barons, with a view to bringing South Italy under his authority. This coalition had failed, for the German vassals had refused to serve any longer in Italy after his coronation, but Frederick had not renounced his designs, so now the King of Sicily was naturally led to conclude an alliance with Adrian. And now, coming to an open breach with the Emperor, the Pope in August, 1159, came to an agreement with Milan, Brescia, Piacenza and Crema, by which he promised to excommunicate him before eleven days had passed. The illness and death of the pontiff in September prevented the carrying out of this agreement.

Frederick, in spite of reinforcements from Germany, did not yet feel strong enough to lay siege to Milan. The Cremonese took advantage of this to satisfy their private hatred against Crema, and by the offer of a large sum of money induced Frederick to undertake the siege of this steadfast ally of Milan. The town was small but well fortified by a double wall and a wide and deep ditch, and was well supplied with food.

The siege began in July and lasted for nearly seven months. The inhabitants made a desperate defence, and their resistance roused Frederick to acts of ferocity, rare even in that age. A certain number of the prisoners captured in the preliminary skirmishes were hanged in sight of the town; the citizens retaliated by slaying on their walls an equal number of the enemy. Frederick, infuriated, executed a large number of the hostages which he had previously received from Crema, as well as six Milanese who had been captured while on a mission to Piacenza. The Italian allies exceeded the Germans in acts of cruelty. The Cremonese slew the prisoners they had taken and shot their heads within the walls; the townsmen retaliated and mutilated the slain.

The Emperor had prepared an immense wooden tower which he wished to bring close up to the city, in order to throw a bridge from it to the walls. To this he

fastened the hostages of Milan and Crema who were still in his hands, children of the most illustrious families of these towns, hoping thus to turn aside the storm of missiles with which the besieged had hitherto checked the advance. The fathers and relatives of these unfortunates uttered lamentable cries of despair as the tower advanced with its living freight. But one of them lifting up his voice—such is the story told by the German historian—cried out to his children : “ Happy they who die for their country,” and exhorted them not to fear a death which was preferable to seeing the violation of the women and the misery of the children of their native city, and to witnessing their country fall a prey to the impious hands of the men of Cremona and Pavia.

During this time the engines on the walls were keeping up a continuous fire on the tower, which began to yield under the blows ; and Frederick, fearing its total destruction, gave orders to withdraw it. Four of the Milanese, five of the hostages of Crema had been slain, and two seriously wounded ; and the chronicler has piously recorded the names of these unhappy victims. Yielding to the better impulses of his nature, Frederick did not repeat this barbarous and useless expedient.

His anger, however, demanded fresh victims ; but the prayers of the clergy in his camp, though they could not stop all farther executions, at any rate saved the lives of the greater part of the intended victims. It must be put down to the credit of the Church that, in that barbarous age, her hand often interposed to save those whose lives the law had declared forfeited. One is forced to admit that Frederick, in dealing with his rebellious subjects, showed a clemency which we look for in vain in the dealings of Alva in the Netherlands or of the English in Ireland and in India.

After more than six months of constant assaults, the besiegers succeeded in bringing their towers close up to the walls, and in letting fall drawbridges by which their best troops advanced to the assault, while bowmen in the upper storeys worked havoc amongst the defenders. Yet

the besieged maintained their ground and beat off attack after attack. Their losses from the missiles of the assailants were, however, so great that as evening fell they abandoned the outer circle of walls, ready to sustain a new siege within their interior defences.

Their losses, however, had been enormous, and on reviewing their situation they found that they had little to hope for from a further resistance. They sought and obtained the mediation of the Patriarch of Aquileia, and Henry the Lion of Bavaria, pointing out that if they had resisted the Emperor it was because they were bound by the most solemn ties to Milan, and because they were ready to undergo all extremities rather than fall under the power of their deadly enemy Cremona. They were ready to accept any conditions from Frederick, provided he did not hand them over to the Cremonese. Frederick again showed himself clement in the hour of victory. He allowed all the inhabitants to leave the city with as much property as they could carry with them, and to go wherever they pleased, while to auxiliaries from Milan and Brescia he accorded the like terms except that they were to go out without arms or goods.

The total surviving population of this, one of the smallest of the Lombard cities, is said to have amounted to twenty thousand souls, amongst which we must no doubt reckon a large number of the peasants from the surrounding district who had taken refuge within the walls. They retired to Milan. The town was burned and with its territory handed over to the Cremonese, who destroyed all that had escaped the flames, not sparing even the churches.

This long siege had exhausted the time during which the German feudatories were bound to serve; most of them now recrossed the Alps, and Frederick, with forces too reduced to undertake any serious operations against Milan, retired to Pavia.

The death of Pope Adrian had been followed by a disputed election. The majority of the Cardinals gave their votes to a Sienese, Rolando Bandinelli, already distinguished as a diplomatist, but a minority, backed

up by a strong party among the nobles and the inferior clergy, chose the Cardinal Octavian, a man of violent character, who, it seems, was looked on as a friend to the Emperor. Frederick at once seized this opportunity of asserting the superiority of the Empire over the Papacy, and convoked a Council at Pavia, to which he summoned the prelates of the various Christian kingdoms, and before which he ordered the two competitors to appear, in order to have their claims heard and decided on.

Such an action was, in fact, to go back to the days of the Othos, and to reduce the Church to the position of servitude from which Hildebrand had freed her. The lawfully elected Pontiff, Rolando, who took the title of Alexander III., entirely refused to recognise the right of the Emperor to interfere in the election; his rival, known as Victor III., on the contrary, presented himself before the Council at Pavia. Here his claims were examined, and he was recognised as the lawful Pope by the assembly, at which few or no prelates were present except those of Germany and some of those of Lombardy.¹ This was followed up by the excommunication of Alexander, and ambassadors were sent to secure the adhesion of the other Christian sovereigns.

On his side, Alexander, at Eastertime 1160, excommunicated Frederick and Victor, and drew close the relations between the Holy See and Milan and her allies. The Archbishop of Milan, who at the Diet of Roncaglia had propounded such extreme views as to the prerogatives of the Emperor, now appears as actively hostile to him, and not only repeated the Papal excommunication, but added to those who fell under its ban several bishops and feudal lords and the consuls of Pavia, Lodi, Cremona, Novara and Vercelli. A nephew of the Archbishop's had been among the Milanese nobles hanged before Crema; this possibly accounts for his changed views.

The decision of the Council of Pavia had no weight outside Frederick's dominions. All the rest of Europe acknowledged Alexander, and the Milanese were now

¹ From fifty to seventy Bishops, besides Abbots, were present according to Von Raumer.

assured of the support of that power which had already more than once proved itself mightier than that of the German Cæsars.

The greater part of Frederick's army had been disbanded after the fall of Crema, and the ensuing year was occupied by a desultory warfare, carried on chiefly by the forces of Frederick's Italian allies. An attempt by Milan and Piacenza to lay siege to Lodi was frustrated by the arrival of help from Cremona, and the war resolved itself into a series of mutual raids and attacks on castles, in which the fortunes of both parties were pretty evenly balanced.

Only one of the numerous combats recorded by Morena deserves mention. The Milanese, with the full strength of four of the "portæ," or quarters into which the city was divided, and some auxiliaries from Brescia, had laid siege to the castle of Carcano, which lay on an island or peninsula in a small lake in the territory of Como. Frederick came to the rescue with the troops of Como, Novara, and Vercelli, the Counts of Biandrate and of Seprio and Martesana, the Marquis of Montferrat, and some soldiers of Pavia. He managed to cut the Milanese off from their supplies, and reduced them to the alternative of surrendering or cutting their way through the hostile army. They chose the latter course. The Emperor with his German cavalry broke the wing of the Milanese opposed to him. He reached the Carroccio, killed the oxen which drew it, overthrew the car, and captured the standard of the Commune. But on the other wing the Milanese and the horsemen of Brescia had overthrown the men of Como, Vercelli, and Novara, nearly destroying the contingent of the latter city. Then they turned against the Emperor, who, outnumbered, had to retreat in haste and shut himself up in the castle of Baradello, abandoning his prisoners and a great booty. Next day the Lodesans and Cremonese, who were hastening to Frederick's aid, were defeated. But on the other hand the garrison of the castle made a sortie, and burned the machines of the besiegers, and the Milanese returned home, leaving Carcano untaken.

This battle, the first in which the Italians had met Frederick in the open, took place in August, 1160. Next spring a large force assembled in Germany, and by the month of June had reached Lombardy. The Milanese had up to now maintained their ground in the open country, and the Piacentines had in the preceding March inflicted a signal defeat on the burghers of Lodi; but now Frederick possessed such an overwhelming superiority in numbers—it is said that his army again numbered a hundred thousand combatants—that he was soon able to overrun the whole Milanese territory, and to cut off all food supplies from the city. To add to the distress of the townsmen a terrible fire had destroyed nearly a third of the city, and consumed the granaries in which most of the provisions were stored. Nevertheless the townsmen, though completely cut off from their allies of Brescia and Piacenza, held out bravely. Vigorous sorties were made, in one of which the Emperor himself was nearly taken or slain. But famine began once more to prevail within the walls; the poorer classes became mutinous; of the nobles many fled to the Imperial camp. At length envoys were sent to propose terms of surrender. Frederick demanded an unconditional submission, and the leaders of the Commune, forced by a popular tumult and seeing that farther resistance was hopeless, were compelled to yield.

Once more the whole population, with ashes on their heads and ropes round their necks, came out from the walls to prostrate themselves before the Emperor. The Carroccio and ninety-four banners were handed over to the Germans, four hundred hostages of the chief citizens were given up, and the unarmed multitude was sent back to the city, there to await the Emperor's decision. He, however, guaranteed them their lives, ordering them in the meantime to take the oath of allegiance and to destroy the gates, and make breaches in their walls. More than a fortnight passed before his final orders were made known. Then the whole population was ordered to leave the city. Many of the wealthier sought refuge in the neighbouring towns, the rest were dis-

tributed among four open villages, where they constructed huts for themselves, thus undergoing the fate which more than fifty years before they had inflicted on Lodi.

On the 25th of March the Emperor with his army entered the deserted city through a breach in the walls, and made known his final sentence. The city was to be utterly destroyed, and the task was entrusted to the neighbouring cities whom Milan had so long vexed. Lodi was to destroy the quarter of Porta Orientale, Como that of Porta Comacina, and so the four other quarters were assigned to Pavia, Cremona, Novara, and the feudal lords of Seprio and Martesana. So eagerly did they perform their work of destruction that at the end of six days not a fiftieth part of the lordly city remained standing.

CHAPTER VI

THE LOMBARD LEAGUE

THE fall of Milan appeared to have firmly established Frederick's authority in Lombardy. It might seem that with a little prudence he could in a short time have built up south of the Alps a power that would enable him not only to overcome his opponents in the rest of the Peninsula, but also to reduce to complete subjection the feudatories of Germany.

A little reflection, however, will show that his power in Lombardy, in spite of his twice-repeated victory over Milan, was built in reality on very insecure foundations. The keen-witted Italians cannot have failed to observe that the Emperor's success had not been obtained as much by his German levies as by the efforts of his Italian allies Lodi, Pavia, and the other cities near Milan. These cities had served as secure bases for his operations; their territories had supplied him with provisions; their militia had enabled him to maintain the blockade of Milan when the German feudatories had completed their time of service, and had returned to their homes. But suppose that instead of allies Frederick had found the Lombard cities united against him, it was plain that he would have found it impossible even to reduce the smallest of them. With no fortified base, no allies to supply him with provisions, his army would have melted rapidly away. The walled cities could defy the means of attack possessed by the Germans, and before they could be reduced by famine the feudal levies, if not already dispersed by want of supplies, would break up of themselves, their term of service having expired.

Such views must have been held by many Lombards,

and the greatest prudence would have been requisite on the part of Frederick in order to prevent any fresh quarrels, and, above all, to give no occasion for any league against the Germans between the various communes.

Unfortunately for Frederick's aims this prudence seems wanting in his action. He seems to have looked on his triumph as complete, and to have taken no pains to make the restored Imperial authority acceptable in Lombardy.

In August, 1162, Frederick returned to his dominions north of the Alps, where he was busied in a fruitless attempt to induce the French monarch to declare for the Antipope. Before his departure he had appointed governors with the title of Podestà, Germans or Italians devoted to his cause. To Pavia, Lodi, and Cremona he left their old institutions; but elsewhere, alike in cities such as Como and Novara, which had eagerly supported his cause, or in those such as Parma and Padua, which had never displayed any hostility to him, as well as in those which had actively opposed him, he did away with the Consular government and set up officials who began to render themselves intolerable by their oppressions to all the Lombards alike.

Increased and exorbitant taxation—the landowners of Milan had to hand over to their Podestà one-third of the third part of the produce which they received as rent from the cultivator¹—forced labour on Imperial castles and palaces, outrages against women, denial of justice, this was what the revival of Imperial authority brought with it for the Italians.

Besides, differences of national character and institutions caused constant friction between the German rulers and garrisons and the subject populations. Appeals to the Emperor or his legates only made matters worse. Occasionally an official was removed, to be succeeded by one as tyrannical; more open complaints only led to fresh exactions.

Frederick's return to Italy, after a year's absence, was

¹ Besides, every freeman in Milan had to pay 3 solidi yearly; for every yoke of oxen and every oilpress 12 denarii were exacted. (V. Raumer, vol. ii. p. 185).

hailed by the Italians as affording some prospect of relief from oppression. The Milanese, men, women, and children, advanced to meet him, in torrents of rain, as he passed near their dwellings; and, throwing themselves on their knees, besought his mercy. He seemed moved at first, and released their hostages; but the deputies whom he ordered them to send to Monza to submit their complaints to his ministers, instead of obtaining relief were forced to pay 880 pounds as a gift to the Emperor, in honour of his safe return to Italy.

Frederick indeed made some attempt to improve matters. He declared himself ready to hear all complaints and to remedy injustice. But, as a matter of fact, relying on the decisions of the Diet of Roncaglia, he did little to satisfy the expectations of the Lombards. Some abuses were remedied; in other cases the officials, who naturally found Frederick more ready to believe their statements than those of his late enemies, were able to represent their own actions favourably, and to silence all complaints as coming from the spirit of sedition. One city did indeed obtain from the Emperor a discreditable boon. Pavia asked leave to destroy the fortifications of Tortona, alleging that that city had been raised from its ashes by the rebel Milanese. Frederick consented, but the Pavesans, going further, laid the whole city in ruins.

The Antipope Victor died in the spring of 1164. Frederick saw in his death a chance of ending the schism in the Church, and sent orders forbidding a new election. But the Cardinals of Victor's party, before Frederick's orders reached them, had already chosen as Pope Guido of Crema, who took the name of Paschal III. The Emperor, naturally averse to making a complete surrender to Alexander, and hoping ultimately to persuade the rest of Christendom to accept a Pontiff devoted to his interests, accepted their choice, and the schism continued. The German prelates acknowledged Paschal, but elsewhere he met with no support. Up to now many conscientious men in Italy and elsewhere had looked on Victor's claims as having some appearance of justification. But Paschal's election and consecration had been

carried out in a highly irregular fashion, with the result that opinion in Italy veered round almost altogether to the side of Alexander.

As well as with the active hostility of the Pope, and the increasing discontent of the Lombards, Frederick had to cope with other and dangerous enemies. Chief of these was the King of Sicily, against whose dominions Frederick had long been meditating designs of conquest.

The Greek Empire was at this period experiencing one of those revivals of power and influence which form such a marked feature in its history whenever a strong line of rulers was on the throne. Manuel Comnenos, the then Emperor, had turned his attention to Italian affairs, and had made a vigorous effort to regain those possessions in Southern Italy which the Normans had won from his predecessors. Foiled in this, he now turned towards Central and Northern Italy, hoping to take advantage of the confused political circumstances in those provinces in order to win a footing in some of the seacoast cities. Since the Crusades it could not be a matter of indifference to the Emperor of the East what pontiff reigned in Rome. The King of France won Manuel over to the side of Alexander. There was a natural jealousy between the rival Cæsars of the East and of the West; and besides, Frederick, if firmly established in Lombardy and Southern Italy, might prove a more dangerous enemy than the Normans. All these causes rendered Manuel disposed to unite himself to Frederick's adversaries.

He found an instrument to his hand in the Venetian Republic. This State, grown wealthy through the Crusades, had established its power firmly in the Upper Adriatic. It had been allied with the Greeks against the Normans, but had made peace with the latter in return for extensive commercial privileges. It thus served as a link between the two formerly hostile powers. The Venetians could not view with indifference the establishment on the mainland of a strong power such as Frederick aimed at setting up. They, too, had recognised Alexander, and were ready to give ear to the efforts made by

Manuel to excite them against Barbarossa. From all sides the storm was gathering round the Emperor. ✓

There had already been tumults in some of the Lombard cities. In Bologna the Podestà had been murdered, and his body flung from the windows of his house into the street. The Milanese had assassinated one of the officials set over them. In Padua the burghers, excited by an outrage attempted by the Imperial governor, rose and expelled him from the city.

It was in the neighbourhood of Padua, a part of Italy which so far had lain outside the conflicts between Frederick and the Lombards, that the movement of resistance to the Emperor first took organised shape. Manuel Comnenus is said to have sent agents to Venice and the neighbouring towns with large sums of money, to stir up the Lombards to arms, and the result was that the four cities of the Veronese Mark—Treviso, Vicenza, Padua, and Verona—united with Venice in a league to resist all oppression on the part of Frederick, while acknowledging his lawful prerogatives. From the union of these cities was to spring the famous Lombard League.

Frederick, on hearing of this movement in the Veronese Mark, drew out his forces to re-establish his authority. He had scarcely any German troops with him, and was therefore forced to rely on the levies of the cities which had aided him against Milan. With these he advanced against Verona and took some castles in the territory of that city. But the confederated cities got together an army, and prepared to meet Frederick in the open field. The Emperor did not feel strong enough to risk a battle; he found that he could not trust the dispositions of the forces under his command, Italians who had no personal hostility against the cities of the Mark, and who were many of them no longer favourably disposed towards himself. He deemed it more prudent, therefore, to retire to Pavia, and to await the arrival of more troops from beyond the Alps before undertaking any further offensive measures.

In the meantime he sought to strengthen his position by bestowing privileges on Mantua and Ferrara, the

cities nearest to the Mark. He also sought to attach the feudal lords more firmly to himself by large concessions, and took measures to put the castles in his hands in a state of defence. Much of his time at Pavia was taken up in negotiations with Pisa and Genoa, intended to secure naval help from these cities in his projected expedition against Sicily. Finally, having made matters secure, as he thought, in Central Lombardy, he set out in the autumn of 1164 for Germany, there to personally urge on the levying of an army which would make him completely master of Italy.

But he was now, like his predecessors, destined to find what an impossible task it was to maintain control over both his Italian and his German dominions, and what a danger to the Imperial authority was any quarrel with the Roman pontiff. Disorders in Germany, many of them originating from dislike to his ecclesiastical policy, kept Frederick fully occupied north of the Alps; and two years elapsed before he could once more appear in Italy at the head of an army.

His opponents had made use of this respite in order to strengthen themselves. Alexander III. quitting France, where he had found shelter for some years past, established himself once more in Rome, and helped by the Normans, extended his power over a great part of central Italy. The cities of the Veronese Mark secured the defiles by which an army from Tyrol must enter their province, and extended their authority over the feudal lords in their neighbourhood.

In the rest of Lombardy the cities remained quiet. We have a grievous picture of their condition from the pen of the staunch Imperialist writer Morena. He says of the Imperial Governors: "Unjustly did they exact more than seven times that which the Emperor wished, and oppressed bishops, marquises, counts, cities, consuls and captains, and almost all other Lombards, rich and poor, because they knew that no one, through love or fear of the Emperor, would dare to breathe a protest; yet no one could endure such a weight without being reduced to extremities." He then gives a long list of the par-

ticular vexations, and continues : "Therefore the Lombards, oppressed more than I have said, they who were accustomed to live at ease, and without any restriction of their freedom to dispose as they liked of their own affairs, held this new and hard servitude as the greatest of disgraces, saying amongst themselves that it was better to die than to endure that great shame, that great infamy. Yet, however, they delayed always to take violent measures to change this manner of life, or to do or plan anything evil, nor was there any Lombard, as far as I at any rate saw, or heard from others, who took any measures to avenge himself, for they ever daily expected the arrival of the Emperor, saying one and all, 'We do not believe that what evil and shame the officers of the Emperor work on us, that they do according to the will of the Emperor.'"

At length, in the autumn of 1166, Frederick set out towards Italy at the head of a great army. The passes from Tyrol into the Mark were closed against him by the Veronese ; he, therefore, took a side route, branching off from the main Brenner road and descended into Central Lombardy by the Val Camonica. It is significant of the extent to which general oppression had stilled old enmities and excited a common feeling of hostility to the foreigner, that Brescia and Bergamo, long at deadly feud, were now alike opposed to the Emperor, who ravaged their territories impartially. Even Cremona itself, up to now so faithful, seems to have taken up an attitude of hostility.

So far, however, the cities proceeded to no overt acts. Frederick halted at Lodi, where a great crowd of suppliants from all classes and from all parts presented themselves before him imploring relief from the exactions of the officials. At first, on hearing their complaints, the Emperor showed himself touched by them ; but at length, according to Morena, "as if despising the complaints of the Lombards and holding them of no account, he did nothing in the matter."

This treatment brought the exasperation of the Lombards to the highest point ; but for the moment they

were powerless against the great force at the Emperor's command. Having completed his preparations, Frederick set out on his march towards Rome. He had determined on concentrating all his efforts with a view to making himself master of that city, and then proceeding to the conquest of South Italy. Part of his army advanced through Tuscany; and the Pisans and Genoese had promised their co-operation by sea. The Emperor himself took the way of the Via Emilia towards Romagna, meaning to threaten the borders of the Norman kingdom, and then advance on Rome through Central Italy. He seems to have calculated that once Alexander and King William of Sicily were conquered, he could deal at leisure with the cities of the Veronese Mark. This calculation was no doubt sound except in one point; he had completely overlooked the possibility that the confederacy begun in the Mark might extend itself over the rest of the Valley of the Po.

But this was what actually happened. The oppressions of the Imperial governors increased still more when Frederick had quitted Lombardy, until finally, towards the end of February, 1167, the three cities, Cremona, Mantua, and Bergamo, united with their former enemy, Brescia, to devise measures to free themselves from the yoke now grown intolerable. Inspired by the example of the cities of the Trevisan Mark, and, urged no doubt by their emissaries, they bound themselves to resist all oppression, and not to submit to any burdens more than they had been accustomed to during the century previous to the death of Conrad III.

The first congress, a secret one, seems to have taken place at Bergamo; a few days later another was held at Cremona, at which representatives from the Milanese were present. The hard fate of Milan had excited sympathy even amongst those cities which had been her most inveterate enemies; a common oppression had drawn all Lombards together to resist the foreigner, and so the Milanese were gladly received as members of the League.

Finally, on April 7th, another meeting was held

at the monastery of Pontida, on the borders of the territories of Brescia and Bergamo; the League was again solemnly sworn to; and a determination was taken which would infallibly plunge the confederates into war with the Emperor, nothing less than the decision to rebuild Milan and restore its scattered citizens to their homes.

This last meeting, and the decision arrived at, could not long remain secret. The Pavesans and the Imperial Governor, the Count of Diez, seemed likely to forestall the confederates by falling upon the Milanese left without means of defence in their four villages. These latter now experienced the same agonies of fear which years before they had inflicted on the inhabitants of Lodi. Some of the inhabitants of Pavia were connected by ties of friendship with leading Milanese, and to these they sent warnings that their total extirpation was contemplated. Even if their lives were spared, their homes were to be laid waste and their property seized. Terrified by these messages, some of the more wealthy sent their goods for safety to Como and Bergamo, even to Pavia itself, others fled with what they could carry off; the multitude expected at any moment the advance of a ruthless enemy.

At length, on April 27th, a troop of horsemen was seen advancing towards the village of San Dionigi. Terror gave place to joy when they were found to be ten knights of Bergamo bearing the banners of that Commune, and followed by its citizens in battle array. Then came the banners of Brescia, then of Cremona, and the forces of these cities. The Milanese assembled from their villages, and all proceeded joyfully to the desolate site of Milan. Here the citizens and their allies set to work to restore the ditches and rebuild the city walls. The work of rebuilding their houses was left until the more pressing needs of defence had been provided for. The confederate forces, among which apparently are to be counted representatives of Mantua, Ferrara, and the cities of the Trevisan Mark, remained until the city was once more in a condition to resist

attack. Universal enthusiasm speeded on the work; the women gave their jewels to adorn the restored churches, and in a short space of time Milan had once more taken its place among the cities of Lombardy. Some of the gates erected on this occasion and adorned with rude sculptures remain to this day, memorials of the uprising of a people against its oppressors.

While these events were taking place in Lombardy, Barbarossa was in Romagna engaged in establishing his power over the cities of that province. It is curious that we possess scarcely any account of his proceedings during this period, nor of the motives which caused him to spend more than six months in this part of Italy without either advancing against Rome or taking measures to check at once the commencements of the Lombard uprising.

The League was rapidly gaining strength. Piacenza, Parma,¹ and Ferrara joined it, and the Imperial officials seem to have been expelled without difficulty from the confederated cities.

After the rebuilding of Milan it became of supreme importance to the League to win over to their cause Lodi, which from its situation between Cremona and Milan would enable the Emperor to drive a wedge between the members of the League, and would, as in previous campaigns, give him a secure basis of operations against Milan.

The Cremonese, as old allies of the Lodesans, were charged with the task of winning them over to the general cause. Twice their deputies proceeded to Lodi to entreat the burghers no longer to give aid to the oppressor of the Lombards, and to join the League which aimed at winning back the ancient privileges of the cities. But their entreaties, urged even by the deputies on their knees, could not overcome the feelings of gratitude of the Lodesans. To them Frederick was the restorer of their city, the protector of their freedom

¹ Parma apparently not without some resistance, for the *Chronicon Parmense* declares that in 1167 the "Milites Parmenses" defeated Piacenza, Cremona, Brescia, and Mantua.



MILAN.
PORTA TICINESE.

against the ambition of the Milanese ; they declared that the confederates were traitors to the sovereign for whom they were resolved, if necessary, to sacrifice their property and their lives.

Stronger methods were now tried. A last embassy threatened the city with destruction and its inhabitants with death. But these menaces could not shake the constancy of the men of Lodi, who declared that they could never believe that their former allies and protectors of Cremona would now join with their enemies ; but that even if this were so they would still hold fast to their oath of fidelity to the Emperor. Upon this the allied cities advanced their forces and shut in Lodi on every side. The burghers defended themselves for a time with courage ; but food began to fail ; they saw their territory devastated ; no help came from Frederick ; and, yielding at last to force, they submitted and joined the League.

From Lodi the army marched against the Castle of Trezzo, and took it after a stout resistance, obtaining possession of much treasure which Frederick had deposited there as in one of his chief strongholds.

Towards the beginning of July Barbarossa took the offensive. He seems to have believed that he might safely neglect the affairs of Lombardy until he had entirely subdued the Pope and the Normans. Deprived of these allies, the Lombards, so it seemed to him, would neither dare nor be able to resist his arms.

Instead of at once attacking Rome he first turned against Ancona. This important port had lately grown powerful through extensive commerce. Its trade with the East brought it into close connection with the Greek Empire ; and the citizens had lately acknowledged the authority of Manuel Comnenus, and had received a Greek garrison. It seemed to Barbarossa highly dangerous to leave untaken in his rear a city from which Greeks or Normans might easily intercept his communications with Romagna, and which afforded Manuel a foothold from which to extend his influence over Italy.

He therefore laid siege to Ancona, which offered a

vigorous defence. At the end of three weeks, however, both parties were inclined towards a compromise. Ancona gave hostages as a pledge of neutrality, and a large sum of money; and Frederick hurried on towards Rome. Here he met at first with complete success. The part of the city lying round St. Peter's was taken after a brave defence; and the Romans, who had up to now given a vigorous support to Alexander, were detached from his cause by negotiations. The Pope, after holding out for some time in the fortresses of the Frangipani in and around the Colosseum, escaped from the city and fled into the territories of King William of Sicily, and Frederick and the Antipope Paschal entered Rome in triumph.

Frederick and his consort were once more solemnly crowned; and it seemed as if the conquest of Naples and Apulia was only a matter of time. But an unexpected disaster shattered all his hopes of victory. Owing to the prevalence of malaria the neighbourhood of Rome is extremely dangerous in summer to foreigners, and even to natives. Besides this, the heat of the Italian summer requires, in order to preserve health, a moderation in eating and drinking, of which the German invaders of Italy have at all times shown themselves incapable. The month of August which followed Frederick's entry into Rome was extremely hot; a sudden torrential rainfall was succeeded by even greater heat. The result was a devastating pestilence, which, in the space of a week, carried off an immense multitude of soldiers, and which seemed to that age the direct vengeance of Heaven for the attack on the Holy City and the lawful pontiff.

Frederick's great army was annihilated. Eight Bishops, Duke Frederick of Swabia, son of the Emperor Conrad, Duke Welf the younger of Bavaria, six Counts, more than two thousand knights, besides an immense multitude of the common folk, were carried off. Of the survivors, some, in expiation of their sins, embraced the monastic life, others abandoned the army, and sought to escape to their homes, others were so weakened by disease that

they were henceforth useless.¹ Nothing was left to Frederick but to retreat to the more healthy climate of Tuscany, leaving a garrison behind him to protect the Antipope. By September he was in the neighbourhood of Lucca, having lost two thousand more troops on the march, and with no force left to face the army of the Lombard League.

The direct road over the Apennines, from Lucca to the valley of the Po, leads up the valley of the Magra to a pass which is commanded by the small town of Pontremoli. The inhabitants of this place, aided by the Lombards, held the pass in force; and the Emperor, unable to force his way through, was only saved from destruction by the help of the Marquis Obizzo Malaspina, lord of extensive fiefs in the mountain districts. Under his guidance the remnant of the Imperial forces was led through difficult side roads amongst the mountains, and, not without loss, arrived at Pavia.

Frederick now summoned all his loyal subjects to meet him in this city with all their forces, in order to chastise the Lombards. The call was answered only by Como, Novara, and Vercelli, the Marquises of Montferrat and Malaspina, the Count of Biandrate, and the Lords of Belforte, Seprio, and Martesana. The assembly took place towards the end of September; and Frederick, casting his glove on the ground, declared his purpose of chastising the revolted cities, and put them to the ban of the Empire. From this decree were excepted only Lodi, which had yielded to force, and Cremona, which the Emperor hoped either to win back to her former loyalty, or to make an object of suspicion to the rest of the confederates.

A war of raids and skirmishes now began, in which the territories of Milan and Piacenza suffered considerably. But Frederick, with his scanty forces, could not venture on any important move against his opponents. Their strength was increasing every day. New cities had joined

¹ Amongst those who perished special mention must be made of the historian Acerbus Morena, and of the warlike Archbishop of Cologne, one of Frederick's most talented and devoted servants.

the League, including the powerful Bologna. Frederick's menaces only had the effect of inciting the Lombards to a closer union, and of merging into one the confederacies of the Veronese Mark and of Lombardy proper. In December the *Societas Lombardiæ*, as the confederates called themselves, renewed the oath of association, and took measures to define the objects for which they were striving, and to provide for internal union. Besides the four cities of the Mark and Venice, this oath was subscribed by the deputies of Milan, Bergamo, Lodi, Cremona, Brescia, Mantua, Ferrara, Bologna, Modena, Parma, and Piacenza.

As Frederick found that with the troops at his disposal he could make no head against his opponents, he determined to recross the Alps to gather a new army. In March, 1168, he set out secretly with only a few followers, and took the road over Mont Cenis. He carried with him some Lombard hostages. One of these, a Brescian noble, he hanged at Susa, the last town on the Italian side of the pass. The townsmen, irritated by this, and encouraged by the small numbers of Frederick's followers, took up arms, and forced him to release the remaining prisoners. It is even said that some of them formed a plot to murder him, and that his life was saved only by one of his nobles, who, the plot having been discovered, took his master's place, while the latter fled in disguise with only five followers. In this manner did Barbarossa, his plans of conquest shattered, arrive once more in his German territories.

The affairs of Germany once more retained Frederick beyond the Alps, and this time for nearly seven years. The League had, then, an unequalled opportunity to extend and consolidate its power. Como, Novara, and Vercelli now abandoned the Imperial cause, so did the Lords of Seprio and Belforte, and Oberto Malaspina. Asti, too, gave in its adhesion, and Tortona was restored by the men of Parma and Piacenza, and the inhabitants brought back to their homes. Tortona, of course, now joined the League, and of the towns of Romagna, Ravenna, Rimini, Imola, and Forlì followed this example.

The object of the confederates, as appears from the oath of association, was to free themselves from the obligation "to pay tributes or render services greater than those which they had given or rendered from the time of the Emperor Henry¹ to the entrance of Frederick." With this end in view the cities swore to make neither peace nor truce without the common consent, and to prevent any army from beyond the mountains from entering Italy, and if such should enter, to make war until it had repassed the Alps. The League was to last for fifty years, a common army was to be always ready, the contingents and contributions of each city were to be settled in proportion to its resources. No private enmities were to be permitted between city and city, and all cases of dispute were to be arranged by the League. To conduct the common affairs deputies from each city formed a body of magistrates, who, under the name of Rectors, formed the executive authority, and decided on measures affecting the general safety.

Immediate results of this organisation were the settling of disputes of old standing between various cities. Milan renounced all claims to a supremacy over Como, Lodi, and Novara; Brescia and Cremona settled boundary disputes, and so on in other cases. The unfortunate burghers of Crema alone seem to have reaped no advantage. As a concession no doubt to Cremona, they were not restored either to their city or to their independent existence.

It will be seen, however, that no real organised federation was established. The League remained a mere confederation of independent cities, bound together by a common danger, but united by no regular constitution, and without any central body to which each member had parted with some of its sovereign rights. It was impossible that it could have been otherwise in that age. The idea of the Imperial power was too deeply rooted in the minds of the Italians of the twelfth century for them to have any notion of independence. They were not fighting against the Imperial prerogatives; they did not aim at freeing Lombardy from a foreign yoke; their

¹ Apparently Henry V.

object was merely to restrain the sovereign within the limits of what they conceived to be their legal rights. Once these were conceded, they were, on their side, ready to declare themselves faithful subjects of the Emperor. It was not until nearly a century and a half later that we find in Lombardy, and still more in Tuscany, men who dared to limit their allegiance to a mere verbal acknowledgment of the Imperial supremacy.

And, besides, to establish a regular federative constitution would have meant the surrender of some or all of the very things for which they were fighting—liberty to make peace and war, freedom from outside interference with their own concerns, freedom, too, from taxation imposed by an outside body. The spirit of particularism, the jealousy between city and city was too deeply implanted in the Italian mind to make at this junction anything more than a loose temporary union possible.

For the moment, however, this organisation sufficed. The ever-faithful Pavia and the Marquis of Montferrat remained almost the sole supporters of Frederick between the Alps and the Apennines, and they could not hope long to resist the superior forces of their enemies. To isolate them from one another, and to oppose an obstacle to invasion from the West, the confederates determined to found a city at a spot where the junction of the Tanaro and the Bormida offers great facilities for defence. In a marshy plain, whose heavy soil offered obstacles to the heavy cavalry of the age, the forces of Milan, Cremona, and Piacenza marked out a site of which the strategic advantages have been proved time and again in subsequent Italian campaigns. To this place the inhabitants of five neighbouring villages were transported, houses were built for them, fortifications marked out. Many considerable families from the various cities of the League were induced to take up their residence there, a Bishopric was founded, and the new bulwark against aggression received the name of Alessandria, a fitting mark of respect from the Lombards to the Pontiff who was the patron of their association and their most efficient ally. So rapidly did the new foundation grow

that two years after its foundation Alessandria was able to take part with fifteen thousand men in a campaign against Montferrat.

The Lombards now attacked Frederick's remaining supporters. Biandrate was taken and its castle rased by the burghers of Novara, Vercelli, Milan, Lodi, and Brescia.

Next came the turn of Pavia. We have no details of the campaign against this steadfast city ; but in or about 1170 it too was forced to enter into the League. Two years later the Marquis of Montferrat, defeated in battle, had to yield up lands and castles to purchase peace, and to swear that he would be obedient in all things to the Rectors of the Society of Lombardy.

It was no doubt during this period that the subjugation of the feudal lords in the Lombard plain became complete. The restoration of the Imperial authority had meant for them freedom from the yoke which the cities had already imposed on them, so that they were naturally inclined to range themselves on the side of Frederick ; though we learn from Morena that they too had suffered from the oppressions of the Imperial officers. Unfortunately for us no contemporary Lombard writer was inspired to write the history of the struggle of his compatriots for freedom. The history of the Morenas ends with Frederick's withdrawal across the Alps, and we have to depend on German or ecclesiastical writers and the bare chronicles of Sire Raoul of Milan and Bishop Sicard of Cremona for our knowledge of the later phases of the war. We would wish to have some idea as to the personality of the men who dared to plan a general uprising against the Emperor, of the statesmen who reconciled the jarring elements of the League and gave unity to its councils. We feel sure that many stirring incidents, sieges of castles, campaigns against the feudal lords, would have been worthy of our attention ; but all knowledge of this kind is unhappily lost to us. We only know that by 1174 the authority of the League had been extended over all the feudal lords from Turin to the Venetian sea-coast, that the Marquises of Montferrat, Malaspina, and Este, the Counts of Biandrate and

Camino, not to mention many other less powerful nobles, had all sworn to obey the commands of the Rectors of the League.

One incident of this period, a discreditable one, has been preserved to us. Como took an opportunity to wipe off her old scores against the inhabitants of Isola. Probably the islanders had not joined the League; at any rate the men of Como made a descent on the island in 1169, and completely destroyed the town. Of nine churches only one was left, and those of the inhabitants who escaped the sword were obliged to abandon their homes and settle at Varenna in the territory of Milan. The island has remained uninhabited to this day; a rich vegetation covers the site where once rose houses and towers, the home of a hardy race of warriors; and the deserted spot preserves among one of the fairest scenes of Italy the memory of the implacable enmities which once distracted the peninsula.

The interval between the subjugation of Pavia and Montferrat and Frederick's reappearance in Italy was the most flourishing period of the League. Thirty-six towns, great and small, in Piedmont, Lombardy, Emilia, the Veronese Mark, and Romagna were enrolled in it; and in all the wide valley of the Po there were no feudal lords who dared to remain on the side of the Empire.¹ In the rest of Italy, however, the Imperial authority was still strong. The powerful Genoa had been won over to Frederick's side by lavish concessions; and an attempt of the Lombards to coerce the city by forbidding all export of corn from Lombardy to Liguria was of no avail, although the inhabitants of the two Rivieras suffered for a time from famine. Tuscany, except the allied cities of Pisa and Florence, was obedient to the Empire; and these two cities were not moved so much by hostility to Frederick as by the enmity which existed

¹ Asti, Alba, Acqui, Alessandria, Tortona, Bobbio, Vercelli, Novara, Milan, Lodi, Pavia, Como, Bergamo, Brescia, Cremona, Mantua, Piacenza, Pontremoli, Parma, Reggio, Modena, Ferrara, Verona, Vicenza, Padua, Treviso, Feltre, Belluno, Ceneda, Venice, Bologna, Imola, Faenza, Ravenna, Rimini, San Cassiano (Lanzani, p. 256).

between Pisa and Genoa. Frederick's Legate in these parts, Archbishop Christian of Mainz, who had succeeded in passing with a small body of followers from the Alps to the Genoese territory in 1171, and had then established himself in Tuscany, found himself soon in a position to raise a considerable army. His power extended from Tuscany over a large part of Romagna, the Duchy of Spoleto, and the Mark of Ancona.

Manuel Comnenus still maintained his hold on the city of Ancona, and no doubt aimed at extending his authority over Central Italy from this base. He had even hopes of obtaining from the Pope and the Italians the crown of the Western Empire. With this object in view he kept up a close connection with the Lombards and the Pope, sent large sums of money to the Italians, and concluded an alliance with Pisa. He had not, however, succeeded in keeping the friendship of the Venetians. Commercial disputes had led to an open quarrel between Venice and the Greek Empire, in the course of which the fleet of the former had inflicted great damage on the islands of the Archipelago, until its progress was arrested by a destructive pestilence. Christian of Mainz considered that this rupture gave him a favourable opportunity of seizing Ancona, and putting a stop to all danger of a further extension of Greek influence in Italy.

Venice was still allied with the Lombards, but feared the growing commercial prosperity of Ancona, and so was led to listen favourably to Christian's overtures. In the spring of 1174 the latter advanced with a large army raised in Central Italy and attacked Ancona by land, while a Venetian fleet cut off all communication on the side of the sea.

We need not enter into the details of this siege. With the sieges of Tortona, Crema, and Alessandria it offers another example of the heroism of which the inhabitants of the Italian Communes were capable in the defence of their liberties. At the same time it shows the weakness of the Lombard League for combined offensive action. It was most important to the confederates that this city should not succumb to Christian's arms, yet no concerted

effort was made for its relief, and it was due to the exertions of a leading nobleman of Ferrara, Guglielmo Marchesella, that an army was at length got together in Lombardy and Romagna, which, combined with the forces of the Countess of Bertinoro, compelled Christian to retire at a moment when the city had been reduced to the last extremity through hunger.

Frederick, in the meantime, had at last brought the affairs of Germany into a satisfactory state and had collected an army for a new invasion of Italy. The Lombards, by the adhesion of Como to the League, had command of all the passes leading direct from Germany over the Alps. The more open country on the north-eastern frontier of Italy was defended by the fortified cities of the Veronese Mark; and Frederick if he had chosen this route would have found himself far from all possible allies. But the north-western angle of the peninsula was still open to him. The Count of Savoy, firmly planted on both sides of the Alps, held the roads over the Mont Cenis and the neighbouring passes; and his authority extended on the Italian side over the flat country of Piedmont as far as Ivrea and Turin. These cities, held in check by such a powerful lord, had not made the same progress towards freedom as the other communities of Lombardy. They had never entered the League, and the latter, feeling no doubt its weakness for offensive warfare, had never made any attempt to bring this region under its control, and so secure all the entrances into Lombardy.

Frederick, then, entered Italy on this side in October, 1174.¹ Crossing the Mont Cenis, he burned Susa in revenge for the insult received from its townsmen when, more than six years before, he had passed through it as a fugitive. Turin received him without opposition, and he found himself in possession of a friendly country as a base for further operations, and in touch with his allies the Genoese and the numerous feudal lords of Piedmont. Pavia and Montferrat, as soon as they heard of his

¹ Frederick's return to Italy almost coincided with the raising of the siege of Ancona (Leo, vol. ii. p. 96).

approach, broke away from the League, and joyfully returned to their former allegiance.

With a large army he advanced on Asti, the most important city in all that region. The confederates exhorted the burghers to resist, promising help ; but the townsmen, terrified by the strength of the hostile army, or, as the Lombards believed, secretly inclined in Frederick's favour, surrendered with scarcely a show of resistance. From Asti the Imperial army, swollen by the contingents of Pavia and Montferrat, directed its course on Alessandria.

Though six years had elapsed since the foundation of this city, it had not yet been fortified with solid walls and towers. A ditch and a hastily constructed rampart formed its only defences ;¹ and this slender fortification joined with the lowly aspect of the houses, most of which were thatched with straw, excited the derision of the Imperial host who named it "the town of straw," a title which the heroism of its citizens has made into one of honour with succeeding ages. Frederick hoped that he would easily make himself master of this city, which had been founded in direct opposition to his interests.

The courage of the townsmen made up for the weakness of their fortifications. They had, indeed, at first thought of flight, but a torrential rainfall, which laid under water the marshy district round the city, seemed to them a direct interposition of Heaven in their favour, and encouraged them to resist. A direct assault failed, and the burghers, sallying forth, captured the machines of the besiegers and forced them to fly to their camp. Frederick, in spite of the murmurs of his followers, did not abandon the siege on account of this check. Autumn merged into winter ; the season was of unusual rigour : the marshy ground bred disease amongst the troops, and still the siege went on. Both sides displayed the greatest resolution ; both sides, too, mingled acts of devotion with deeds of cruelty such as had marked the siege of Crema. The swampy nature of the soil rendered siege

¹ According to the life of Pope Alexander III. by the Cardinal of Arragon, there were no walls or towers. Of the other authorities some agree with this statement, others differ from it.

operations difficult ; but after nearly six months of siege hunger began to prevail inside the city.

With the approach of spring the Lombards determined to make a vigorous effort to relieve their allies. A large army was assembled near Piacenza, and set out, followed by a great supply of provisions, towards the beleaguered town. On hearing of its approach Frederick determined on a final effort. His engineers had driven a mine right into the heart of the city ; and, on the night before Good Friday, when the besieged were trusting to the sanctity of the day, or, if we may believe contemporary writers hostile to the Emperor, were reposing on the security of a truce offered by Frederick himself, a chosen band of warriors made their way through it into the great square. But the alarm was soon given, the burghers flew to arms ; of the assailants some were slain by the sword, others flung themselves from the ramparts, the rest were smothered in the mine through the falling in of the roof and the inflow of water from the city ditch.¹ Then the townsmen, encouraged by this success, threw open the gates, and led, as they believed, by St. Peter on a white horse, flung themselves on the hostile camp. A wooden tower filled with soldiers ready to be drawn to the final assault was set on fire and all in it destroyed, and the burghers worked havoc among the engines of war and even in the camp of the assailants.

In the meantime the Lombard army had reached the neighbourhood of Tortona. Frederick, with his weakened army, saw himself forced to raise the siege. On the following night he set fire to his camp, and set out towards Pavia. His road led him close to the confederates, who, greatly superior in numbers, barred his progress. Neither party would risk a decisive action. The majesty of the Imperial name had still such weight with the Lombards that they did not dare to be the first to join battle. On the other hand, the Emperor was loath to begin an unequal combat. He encamped, therefore, close to the enemy, without making any hostile move against them. Next day moderate men of both

¹ This seems to be the meaning of Romuald of Salerno.

parties came forward with proposals for a pacification. They were welcomed by each side, and the bases of an agreement were settled. Six arbitrators were chosen, three by each party, who were to decide on the points of variance between the Emperor and the Lombards, who each promised to abide by their decision. The arbitrators were to bring about an agreement by the middle of the next May; in the meantime the Emperor was to proceed undisturbed to Pavia, and the Lombards to retire to their homes.

Both parties had now great hopes of peace. A large part of Frederick's troops returned home; and he himself invited the Pope to send legates to find a means for a final pacification between Church and State. In the meantime the Emperor's affairs were prospering. Como, which had joined the League only through compulsion, now declared for Frederick, and so the direct route between Lombardy and Germany was once more opened to him. In Romagna, Imola, Faenza, Ravenna, Rimini, and the small town of San Cassiano had been members of the League. But Romagna like Lombardy was distracted by jealousy between city and city. Imola, for example, was constantly at variance with Bologna and had apparently only joined the League after a series of defeats at the hands of her rival. Christian of Mainz, after his unsuccessful siege of Ancona, had turned his attention to Romagna, and with the help of Forlì and other towns, of the feudal lords, who still for the most part in Romagna had not fallen under the yoke of the cities, and of troops from Tuscany, was soon able to make himself master of the greater part of the province, to bring Imola, Faenza, and Rimini over to the Imperial party and to harass the territory of Bologna. Nearly all Central Italy as far as Rome was now obedient to Frederick, and he had at last succeeded in bringing about peace between his allies Genoa and Lucca and the Pisans, and in attaching all three cities to his cause. Besides, he had hopes of inducing Cremona to return to its old allegiance. The forces of that city had been so slow in setting out to join the army got together for the

relief of Alessandria that they had only reached Piacenza when the Lombards, after their truce with Frederick, were returning home. This slackness was deemed by many to be due to a want of loyalty to the League amongst the consuls of the city; and though the people, indignant at what had happened, rose in riot, pillaged the houses of the consuls and deposed them from their office, the Lombards had begun to regard the city with suspicion. Frederick now increased this by naming the consuls of Cremona as final arbitrators in case the six commissioners for peace could not agree.

All these causes combined to make Frederick still put forward high pretensions at the congress which followed at Pavia. Yet his attitude towards the Papal legates whom he had invited to assist at it was, as far as forms went, most conciliatory. In substance, however, he was less accommodating, and it was soon found that the conflicting pretensions of all parties could not be reconciled. The Lombards demanded complete amnesty for the past, and terms which practically amounted to the entire abolition of the decrees of the Diet of Roncaglia and the recognition of all the privileges which they had enjoyed under Barbarossa's three predecessors; while yielding on their side provisions for the Imperial army when the sovereign marched to be crowned at Rome and military service from the holders of fiefs.

Frederick, on his side, demanded that the cities should abide by the decisions taken at Roncaglia, merely promising to correct abuses. Between Pope and Emperor, too, no terms of agreement could be arrived at. The former, indeed, seemed no longer to associate his cause so closely with that of the Lombards, but Frederick's demands before consenting to a reconciliation were so high—at least according to the ecclesiastical historian—that the legates declared their consent to them impossible, and the whole negotiations were broken off.

Hostilities were therefore once more renewed. The Lombards attached the territories of Como and the other allies of Frederick; he laid waste the lands of

Alessandria, while awaiting a new army from beyond the Alps. At the other extremity of the Lombard plain Christian of Mainz again took the field and captured San Cassiano, after which he inflicted considerable damage on the Bolognese.

An unexpected difficulty came to weaken the help which the Emperor was expecting from Germany. Henry the Lion, head of the House of Guelf, Duke of Bavaria and Saxony, and the most powerful of the German vassals, refused to obey the Imperial summons. An interview between the two at Chiavenna failed to induce Henry to return to his obedience, even though the Emperor fell on his knees before him in the endeavour to shake his purpose. Once more the impossibility was shown of controlling at once his dominions north and south of the Alps, and it seemed better to the Emperor to take no measures against Henry and to concentrate all his forces against the Lombards.

In spite of Henry's defection, a considerable army was collected in Germany; and coming down through the passes of the Grisons into the territory of Como, was joined by the Emperor in that city.

At the head of this army and of the burghers of Como he set out through the territory of Milan, in order to effect a junction with the Pavesans and the Marquis of Montferrat. The Milanese trembled for their safety if the two armies should succeed in joining, and marched out with their whole strength to intercept the Emperor. With them were the cavalry of Brescia, Verona, and all the Mark, five hundred horse from Lodi, two hundred from Novara and Vercelli, and about the same number from Piacenza.¹ Three hundred of the noblest youths of Milan were formed into a company round the Carroccio, and had sworn to die rather than let that sacred emblem of the city fall into the hands of the enemy. Nine hundred others, called the Company of Death, had in like manner bound themselves to conquer or to die.

¹ The infantry of Verona and Brescia guarded Milan (Sire Raoul Muratori).

The two armies met in the great plain between Busto Arsizio and Legnano on the 29th of May, 1176, a day for ever afterwards glorious in the annals of Italy. A cavalry skirmish brought on a general engagement. At the first shock many of the Lombard horsemen fled before the German cavalry ; and some, convinced that the day was lost, did not stay their course until they reached Milan. But the foot, first throwing themselves on their knees for a moment, and invoking the protection of their patrons Saint Peter and Saint Ambrose, stood firm and boldly faced the enemy. Frederick, at the head of his men, pressed on towards the Carroccio. Already the battle wavered, the company of the Carroccio was for a moment pressed back, and the car seemed lost, when the Company of Death rushing forward attacked the enemy with fury. The Imperial standard-bearer was slain, Frederick himself was thrown to the ground, and the cry arose that he was slain. The wavering Lombard army rallied, and pressed on in its turn to the attack ; the Germans were thrown into disorder ; and the Brescians breaking from an ambush turned the disorder into rout.

The pursuit was urged for eight miles. Many of the Imperial host were drowned in the waters of the Ticino, and almost the entire contingent of Como was captured or perished by the sword. The Imperial camp, with a great booty, Frederick's weapons and banner fell into the hands of the victors, together with many noble prisoners. The news of the Emperor's death was universally believed ; the Empress, who had remained in Baradello, clad herself in mourning ; and it was not until several days had elapsed that the grief of his followers was turned into joy by his appearance almost alone before the sheltering walls of Pavia.

Great as was the battle of Legnano, in which for the first time the citizen militia of Italy had met and overthrown in the open field the feudalism of Germany, the immediate results of the victory were not very striking. Como, indeed, was forced to re-enter the League and to submit to severe conditions before

recovering from the Milanese those of her sons who had been taken prisoners. The Lombard army, too, appeared before Pavia, but broke up at once to allow every man to enjoy his triumph in his own home. But the effect on Frederick was great. He realised once for all the uselessness of his efforts to subdue the Lombards by force of arms, and turned to the surer ways of negotiation. His first aim was a reconciliation with the Pope. Alexander had long been recognised as Pope by the rest of the Christian world; and Frederick determined to renounce all farther effort to depose him from the chair of Peter, or to make the indomitable old man yield to his pretensions and give up the liberties which the Papacy had wrested from the Emperors of the Franconian line.

In the October following on the battle of Legnano ambassadors were sent to Alexander, and were favourably received by the pontiff, who was now growing old and anxious to bring peace to the Church before his death, and who had no personal animosity against Frederick, once he was willing to give up his attempts to reduce the Papacy to subjection.

The main bases of a peace between Church and Empire were soon agreed on. The Emperor recognised Alexander as lawful Pontiff, and abandoned the Antipope. On the other hand, he and his partisans were to be freed from excommunication, and a certain number of the prelates who he had appointed during the schism were to be recognised. But, as the peace was to be a general one, and as the affairs of Lombardy and of the King of Sicily could not so easily be settled, it was arranged to call together a congress to discuss in detail and decide once for all the questions which had been the cause of the struggle which had so long vexed Germany and Italy.

Frederick now turned to negotiate with some of the cities, offering them separately what they were demanding collectively. Cremona gladly accepted his overtures. Old friendship bound the city to Pavia; the renewed prosperity of Milan was reviving the old animosity;

the citizens could not be without some feeling of gratitude to the Emperor, under whose banners they had taken vengeance on their rival. Frederick confirmed to the city all the privileges which it claimed, and the Cremonese openly renounced the League.

More surprising was the defection of Tortona, which had suffered so much already at Frederick's hands. But its isolated situation, exposed to attack on three sides from Frederick's allies, Pavia, the Marquis of Montferrat, and Genoa, had no doubt caused it to suffer more than most cities from the war; and the inhabitants preferred a reconciliation with the Emperor, which would remove from them once for all the danger of another destruction at the hands of Pavia, to the uncertain event of continued hostilities. Alba and Acqui had by now gone over to Frederick's side, so that Alessandria was now the only member of the League in this portion of the peninsula.

In the April of 1177 Pope Alexander arrived at Ferrara to confer with the Rectors of the League as to the place of meeting with the plenipotentiaries of the Emperor, and as to the demands to be put forward. The Lombards seem to have feared that the Pope, having in view only the interests of the Church, might dissociate his cause from theirs; they clearly gave him to understand that they intended to insist on the recognition of the liberties for which they had fought, and that, as they had been the firmest bulwark of the Papacy against the Empire, they now expected the co-operation of the pontiff in obtaining the satisfaction of their demands.

The choice of the town in which the representatives of all parties were to meet occasioned considerable discussion. The Emperor objected to any of the towns which belonged to the League, and proposed Pavia or Ravenna, cities obnoxious to the Lombards. Finally he suggested Venice. Although this proposition was at first objected to by the confederates, for Venice, once the instigator and a member of the League, had, without ever formally breaking with it, taken part for Frederick against Ancona, yet, since the Pope and



ALEXANDER III. BESTOWS A SWORD ON THE DOGE.
(BASSANO.)

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the King of Sicily agreed to it, they finally consented. So great was the reverence inspired by the person of the Emperor, that the Lombards insisted that the Doge and twelve leading citizens should bind themselves by oath to exclude the Emperor, from the city until the Pope should allow him to enter. It was feared that the mere presence of Frederick at the negotiations would so overawe the deputies that they would not dare to press their claims.

The congress opened at Venice in May. The peace between Church and State had been practically arranged already, so that the affairs of the Lombards were first entered on. At first the negotiations made but little way. Frederick demanded that the Lombards should either submit to the decrees of Roncaglia, or take as the measure of their privileges those rights which they had possessed in the time of Henry IV.

It was utterly impossible that the cities should agree to either of these propositions, which would have deprived them of nearly all that they had been fighting for. They, on their side, put forward two proposals. They would either render to the Emperor all those services which they had rendered under his three predecessors, or would take as a base of negotiations conditions drawn up by the Cremonese, apparently during the negotiations after the siege of Alessandria. This last document was now produced, but neither party could agree as to the meaning of the various clauses. Long discussions followed, and there seemed no prospect of a settlement. At length the Pope, seeing clearly that if matters were pressed to a settlement the whole negotiation would fall through, proposed a truce for six years, during which time the various points which were uncertain might be fully investigated and cleared up. After further lengthy negotiations, during which, by consent of all parties, Frederick was allowed to come to Chioggia, within a few miles of Venice, the Emperor agreed to this, on condition, however, that he was for fifteen years to come to enjoy the revenues of the inheritance of Matilda. After these fifteen years the rights of both parties to these much-

disputed lands were to be settled in accordance with justice. The reconciliation of Pope and Emperor was to take place at once ; and between Frederick and the King of Sicily there was to be a truce for fifteen years.

Both parties were to be secured from mutual injuries while the truce lasted ; both were to enjoy security for person and goods in the lands of the other ; the League was to remain in vigour ; and two magistrates were to be appointed in each Commune to provide for any disputes which might arise. As soon as the Emperor had sworn to the truce, he and his supporters were freed from excommunication, he was invited to leave Chioggia, and was escorted with great pomp to Venice. Here, amidst scenes of the greatest pomp, the reconciliation of the two heads of the Christian world took place. The spot is still shown on the threshold of St. Mark's where the Pope bestowed the kiss of peace on his late adversary. Later writers have distorted the history of these events by ridiculous stories of Papal pride on this occasion ; but all serious historians are agreed that nothing occurred to mar the harmony of the reconciliation, and that Pope and Emperor soon became fast friends.¹

All matters of dispute between Church and Empire were now satisfactorily arranged, and a general amnesty for the past accorded by both sides. It is noticeable that among the prelates received back at this time into the bosom of the Church were the Bishops of Padua, Mantua, Piacenza, Brescia, and Novara. They had, no doubt, followed the party of Frederick, hoping by his aid to re-establish their old authority over their cities.

The solemn promulgation of peace and truce took place on August 1st, but Frederick lingered on in the wealthy and delightful city until September. Great was the concourse of prelates and nobles who flocked from all parts to the festivities which celebrated the peace.

¹ The story that Alexander placed his foot on Frederick's neck, exclaiming, "Thou shalt walk upon the asp and the basilisk," though consecrated by paintings in the Vatican executed in the time of Pius IV., has no foundation in fact.

The number of knights is said to have amounted to 8,400, and Venice, though far from having attained to the architectural splendour and the opulence of later times, was able to afford entertainment for all, while the well-organised government was able to maintain the most perfect order in spite of the presence of such a multitude.

It may not be amiss to give a list of the partisans of Frederick and of the members of the League who signed the pacification of Venice. On the Emperor's side were Genoa and her three dependent allies, Savona, Albenga, and Ventimiglia, Turin and Ivrea, which were now attaining to a certain independence of the Counts of Savoy and of their Bishops; Asti, Alba, Acqui, the Marquis of Montferrat and those of Bosco and Vasto, who were the chief of the feudal nobles in the Ligurian Apennines; Tortona, Casale, Monvelio, Pavia, Cremona, the Counts of Lomello and Biandrate, and, in Romagna, Imola, Faenza, Castel Bolognese, Ravenna, Rimini, Cesena, Forli, Forlimpopoli, and Castrocaro. The League numbered among its members Venice, Treviso, Padua, Vicenza, Verona, Mantua, Ferrara, Bologna, Brescia, Bergamo, Lodi, Milan, Como, Novara, Vercelli, Alessandria, Bobbio, Piacenza, Parma, Reggio, Modena, Belmonte, Carnesino, the Marquis Malaspina, and the men of San Cassiano and Doccia.

The six years of the truce passed without any further troubles in Lombardy. Our information as to what measures were actually taken to investigate what the rights of the various cities were is of the scantiest; it appears, however, that Frederick, though scrupulously observing the truce, considered himself free to treat separately with the individual cities. Thus Como withdrew from the League, and received in return the most ample concessions, the cession of the Imperial castles of Baradello and Olonio, and jurisdiction over all Captains and Valvassors in the diocese, including the Valtellina.

The many changes of side by Como during this period give us the first example of the rapid mutations so frequent in later Italian history. Here, as later, these changes were no doubt due to the fact that factions had

appeared in the town which alternately gained the upper hand, thus inaugurating one of the most striking features in the history of the Communes.

The defection of Como was balanced to some extent by the re-entry of Faenza into the League. The Emperor's diplomacy, however, was rewarded by a striking success. Early in 1183 Alessandria made a separate peace with him. It is hard to see what arguments this town, founded in defiance of Frederick, could have brought forward at the close of the truce to substantiate its claim to stand on the same footing as other cities. Its burghers feared the total destruction of the town; so, to make their status secure, they turned to seek the Imperial favour.¹ This was granted them on a rather curious condition. On a given day all the inhabitants left the city, and at some distance outside the walls were met by a deputy of the Emperor, who, on receiving from them an oath of fidelity, led them back to their homes, and then gave them the right of electing their consuls, and of enjoying all the privileges which he had already conceded to Tortona and Pavia. In memory of this favour the name of the city was to be changed to Cæsarea, but this name, at first used in legal documents, soon fell into disuse, and the city still preserves for us the name of the great pontiff, the protector of the free cities of Lombardy.

Alexander III. had died in 1181. His virtues and his abilities make him rank among the greatest of the Popes. His zeal never led him into excess, and his constancy in adversity and moderation in good fortune enabled him to establish once for all the liberties of the Church on a secure foundation.

The truce expired in 1183. Frederick had no desire to renew the war; and delegates were sent by him to a congress at Piacenza to arrange a lasting peace. After all preliminaries were settled the delegates of the Lombards proceeded to Constance, where in a great assembly

¹ Alessandria was built on ground belonging to the Marquises of Bosco. The inhabitants had previously arranged matters with them, acknowledging them as their feudal superiors. The consuls were to receive investiture from them.

the peace known as the Peace of Constance, the Magna Charta, as it has been styled, of the liberties of the Communes, was solemnly promulgated.

Reflection on Frederick's part as to the dangers of once more entering into a contest with the Lombards, and the wishes of his son Henry, anxious to be formally recognised as King of the Romans, caused him to recede from the pretensions which he had put forward at Venice. The cities obtained what they had been fighting for. They were granted all their customs, and the Regalian rights within the walls, and in the dependent districts all those which they actually exercised or had exercised in the past, namely, the rights of peace and war, of erecting fortifications, rights to the *fodero*,¹ the woods, pastures, waters, bridges, and mills, jurisdiction in civil and criminal matters. Where the exact extent of these concessions was uncertain, the matter was to be decided by the Bishop, aided by impartial assessors. If they preferred not to submit to this inquiry they were to enjoy all rights on the payment of 2,000 marks yearly, or less if this sum seemed excessive. They were to freely elect the consuls, who were then to be invested by the Emperor; and this investiture was to be repeated every five years. In those cities where the Bishop possessed the rights of the former royal count the consuls were to be invested by him.

On the other hand, all the inhabitants between the ages of fifteen and seventy were to take the oath of allegiance to the Emperor; and all Imperial vassals were to do homage for their fiefs. The right of appeal in cases of the value of more than 25 lire was reserved to the Imperial legate for each city, who was to judge in accordance with the customs of each. The cities were to aid the Emperor in maintaining the Imperial rights against all who were not members of the League; they were to pay him the customary *fodero* on his entering Lombardy, and to maintain the roads and bridges and to

¹ The *fodro*, or *fodero*, was a tax in money or kind levied to support the military forces of the Emperor. In future the Emperor was only to receive it when he was actually in Lombardy.

supply him with a market. In return the Emperor was not to make an unnecessary delay in any city or diocese. There were numerous other minor points settled, in especial the jurisdiction of Milan over the counties of Seprio, Martesana, Burgaria, and others was recognised, saving all the rights of Bergamo, Lodi, and Novara. There was to be a complete amnesty on both sides for the past, and all grants made during the war to the detriment of the League were annulled.

Finally the names were given of the confederate cities, seventeen in number, to which these terms were granted. With the exception of Venice, Ferrara, Como, and Alessandria, and the addition of Faenza, they are the same as those of the cities given as members of the League at the Truce of Venice. Venice, as being an independent state, had no need of any concessions; Como and Alessandria had already made a separate peace. To Ferrara a delay of two months was accorded, within which term it might accede to the treaty. Of the smaller places named as members of the League at the Congress of Venice, Bobbio and San Cassiano are expressly excluded from the Peace of Constance; the three others are not mentioned. Likewise were excluded Imola, Gravedona,¹ Feltre, Belluno, and Ceneda. We cannot give any reason for the exclusion of Imola and Bobbio; of the others, Gravedona and San Cassiano were small places, jurisdiction over which was claimed by Como and Imola respectively; Feltre, Belluno, and Ceneda, which are not mentioned at the Congress of Venice, but which had at one time been members of the League, seem still to have been under the rule of their Bishops.

Finally, as allies of the Emperor are named Genoa, Pavia, Cremona, Como, Tortona, Alessandria, or Cæsarea, Asti, and Alba. The first six had all received special grants from Frederick, so no doubt had the two others. We find no mention of the rest of the cities and smaller places given in the long list of the Emperor's allies at the Congress of Venice, except of Imola and Faenza. Some

¹ Gravedona was one of the Tre Pievi of the Lake of Como, and all three are probably included under that name.

of those in Piedmont were no doubt still legally under the Count of Savoy or the Bishops; one can only conjecture the cause of the omission of those of Romagna.

The net result of this peace was that the free cities now appear as a recognised order of the Italian kingdom. They obtained great privileges, yet not greater than were enjoyed by the chief German or Italian feudatories. The early sovereigns, Frankish or German, had tried to rule Italy by Imperial Marquises and Counts. The failure of this plan led to an attempt to govern by means of the Bishops. They in the confusion of the war of investitures lost their hold on the cities; now, finally, these latter, the actual possessors of power, obtain a legal recognition of their status. They become great corporate feudatories, the equals of any of the feudal Princes or Marquises.

That this new experiment failed to introduce a settled government, and to restore the Imperial authority in Italy, was due, perhaps, less to the privileges gained by the cities than to the renewed weakness of the Empire during the contests for the crown which lasted for nearly a quarter of century after the death of Henry VI. in 1197. For the moment, however, during the remaining seven years of the reign of Barbarossa, and the seven during which his son Henry VI. held the throne, the Peace of Constance seemed to have regulated satisfactorily the relations between the Empire and the Communes.

Thus ended this great war. There is perhaps no other struggle in the history of the world in regard to which the sympathy of the narrator and the reader can be so fully accorded to all the contending parties. The great figure of Barbarossa—the legendary hero of the German race—upholding what he regarded as the sacred rights of the Empire; the steadfast and lofty-minded Pontiff, the champion of the freedom of the Church and of the liberties of the Communes; the nameless heroes, with their watchword "Liberty," who closed round the war car of Milan at Legnano; the unknown statesmen who

planned the League—all alike deserve our admiration and compel our respect.

Of few wars can it be said that they ended in a treaty so just and so honourably observed. A few years after the Peace of Constance Frederick once more visited Lombardy. He came as a loyal observer of the treaty, an indulgent sovereign forgetful of wrong done him in the past. He was loyally received by the cities, even by Milan which had known such evil days through him. It was more difficult to avoid friction between Pope and Emperor; yet during the rest of Frederick's life he came to no open breach with the Church. Nay more; moved by the capture of Jerusalem by Saladin, the aged Emperor once more took the field, this time in the cause of Christianity against Islam. He perished, drowned in the little river Salef on the confines of Syria, while leading an army of ninety thousand men to the rescue of the Holy Land. But his people refused to believe in his death. Legend and song have made us familiar with the belief long cherished in Germany that—

“ Der alte Barbarossa,
Der Kaiser Friederich,
Im unterird'schen Schlosse
Hält er verzaubert sich ”

—that he sleeps in the mountain cavern, awaiting the hour of his country's need, to arise and to lead her to victory over her foes.

We should have a higher opinion of human nature if we could close our history here.

CHAPTER VII

THE CONQUEST OF THE CONTADO AND THE GROWTH OF FACTION

THE Peace of Constance, which expressly recognised the right of the Communes to form leagues for the safeguarding of their rights, might have laid the foundation of a federation of cities acknowledging the authority of the Empire, but possessing autonomy in all eternal matters. Such a federation would have been strong enough to resist any attack from outside, and it could not have failed, during the contests for the throne which followed the death of Henry VI., to free itself from all but a mere nominal dependence on the Empire, and to build up a federal state in the valley of the Po which would infallibly have obtained a preponderance over the rest of Italy.

Italian writers have continually lamented that no attempt was made to establish such a federal state. But in the nature of things no such attempt was possible. The conception of a federal union was something too high for the newly emancipated Communes of the twelfth century. Each city fought first of all for its own hand. A common danger had for a moment united the Lombards. But the League had never been a real federal union. It had been merely an alliance of independent states, which fell apart as soon as the pressure from outside was removed.

The Peace of Constance had even consecrated disunion. It recognised the rights of the cities to make war on one another, and it left two hostile confederacies face to face : on the one side Milan and the

League, on the other Pavia, Cremona, Como and the other Imperialist Communes.

These confederacies were soon broken up. Neighbouring cities resumed their own quarrels. Once again Brescia fights with Bergamo, Verona with Padua, Parma with Piacenza. Once again Italy was filled with strife, all the greater now that the Communes were more powerful and more independent.

Frederick kept the peace he had sworn with the Lombards. A year or two after the Treaty of Constance he revisited Italy, and was well received by the Milanese. In return he loaded them with favours, granting them all the Regalian rights in the Archdiocese, and in the counties of Seprio, Martesana, Lecco, Burgaria, and Anghera, in return for the payment of £300 a year. Such a sudden change of front seems surprising; but doubtless he received large sums in ready-money for these favours, and for similar ones which he bestowed on other cities.¹

On the other hand, his relations with Pavia and Cremona seem altered. The influence of the latter city had prevented the League from taking any steps towards rebuilding Crema. Now Frederick allowed the Milanese to restore the town, which was declared independent of Cremona. This latter was exasperated beyond measure by this, and even dared to defy the Emperor. Unmindful of the services of Cremona in the past, Barbarossa laid waste her territories at the head of the forces of Milan, Brescia, Piacenza, and other places, and granted to Milan a considerable territory lying to the north of Crema. By the mediation of Bishop Sicard, the chronicler of his native town, a reconciliation was effected,² and the relations of Frederick with the Lombards remained peaceful during the remainder of his reign.

¹ We know that Piacenza paid £15,000, as well as £1,000 to the Imperial legates, on the occasion of the Peace of Constance; other cities doubtless paid similar sums.

² Cremona gave up Gaustalla and Luzzara, places south of the Po, part of the inheritance of Matilda which it had forcibly seized. But it soon recovered possession.

The next few years saw an ever-increasing hostility between city and city. Parma fought Piacenza, Mantua fought Ferrara, the cities of the Veronese Mark fell out among themselves. The shock to Christendom caused by the capture of Jerusalem by Saladin for a moment brought about peace, not only in Italy, but throughout Europe. A new Crusade was preached, and the Italians were conspicuous in their efforts for the rescue of the Holy Land. The maritime peoples sent out powerful fleets; the Marquis of Montferrat and many of the Italian prelates led forces from the inland cities. Cremona, we learn, took a large part in the enterprise. A ship was built and equipped by the contributions of the burghers, and sailed down the Po to the open sea, laden with soldiers and equipment; and again in 1203 a thousand warriors led by Bishop Sicard went from the city to Palestine.

The cessation of hostilities was not of long duration, and a few years later a quarrel arose between Brescia and Bergamo which involved the greater part of Lombardy in war. Both cities had been extending their rule over the feudality in their dioceses. Some of these sought to preserve their independence by playing off one city against the other, putting themselves voluntarily under one Commune to escape the encroachments of the other. From this cause a dispute arose between the two cities regarding some frontier castles near the Lake of Iseo. Bergamo, complaining of being wronged, sought help from Cremona, which was in constant feud with Brescia over rights of irrigation and navigation on the River Oglio. The latter warmly took up the cause of Bergamo, and succeeded—how we know not—in obtaining help from eleven other cities.¹

While Bergamo attacked the Brescian territory on one side, the confederates crossed the Oglio, preparing to advance on Brescia, which had Milan for its only ally. But the Brescians, a people distinguished above all other Lombards for a spirit of obstinate endurance, did not

¹ Pavia, Lodi, Como, Parma, Piacenza, Reggio, Modena, Mantua, Verona, Bologna, Ferrara.

lose heart, and, falling on the enemies before they had advanced far from the river, by a skilful stratagem put them to rout. The defeated army fled towards the Oglio, hotly pursued, and crowded on to the bridge which they had thrown over the river. The bridge broke under the strain, and of those of the confederates who had escaped the sword the greater part perished, swallowed up in the mud or carried away by the current. In this, by far the most bloody battle which had so far marked the contests of the cities, ten thousand of the allies perished, and the day was for long known as the day of the *Mala Morte*, or Evil Death. The Emperor, Henry VI., brought about a peace in the same year, through which the Brescians reaped nothing by their victory.

Henry was more occupied by his invasion and conquest of the Norman dominions in South Italy, and with quarrels with the Popes arising from his encroachments on their possessions, than with the affairs of Lombardy. With regard to that province he abandoned the policy of the later years of Barbarossa, and reverted to that pursued in the early days of his father's reign. Instead of keeping peace and endeavouring to attach all the cities alike by mildness, he endeavoured to uphold his authority by means of a faction among them. Thus he was lavish in favours to particular Communes—such, for instance, as Brescia, Piacenza and Ferrara. But he did not in the least care whether these concessions infringed the rights of other cities. Thus he gave Pavia extensive rights over the waterway of the Ticino, which the Milanese looked on as an injury to their interests, with the result that hostilities again broke out between the two rivals.

A grant to Piacenza of rights over the small town of Borgo San Donnino brought on a furious struggle between that city and Parma, which claimed Borgo San Donnino as part of her territory. The old-standing quarrel over Crema was renewed when Henry in 1191 cancelled Barbarossa's decision, and handed over Crema and the adjoining district to Cremona. Crema resisted by the aid of Milan, whereupon Henry encouraged the formation of a league consisting of Pavia, Cremona,



HENRY VI.

(From a Minnesinger MS. of the 14th Century.)

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Lodi, Como, Bergamo, Parma, and the Marquis of Montferrat, who attacked the Milanese territory on all sides. As Montferrat was at war with Asti and Vercelli, and Ferrara with Mantua, all Lombardy was filled with confusion.

The grant of Crema to Cremona was solemnly repeated in 1195, and Crema, with her allies Brescia and Milan, was put to the ban of the Empire. This step, joined with Henry's preponderance in the central and southern parts of the peninsula, excited general alarm, and eleven cities renewed the Lombard League as an answer to it.¹

However, other matters engaged Henry's attention, the League took no hostile steps, and next year the ban was removed. Como and Cremona made peace with Milan,² and, though feuds between other cities continued, a general conflict was averted. Henry's death in 1197, and a double election to the Imperial dignity, with a consequent civil war, removed all danger from the side of Germany.

The fifty years following on the establishment of the Lombard League were a time of rapid growth in the power of the cities. By the Peace of Constance they had secured autonomy; they were increasing in wealth and population; they had entirely broken the power of feudalism, and now were establishing their authority over the whole extent of their respective dioceses. Not only the cities, but many smaller communities also, had shared in the general movement towards freedom. Some of these small communities were formed by associations of freemen, or of minor nobles who had no feudal lord, and therefore only acknowledged the authority of the Emperor or of his representative the rural Count. Others were vassals of the Bishops or of the great Abbeys, which were extensive landholders. These Church lands had not as yet been incorporated into the territory subject

¹ Verona, Padua, Mantua, Bologna, Faenza, Reggio, Modena, Piacenza, Crema, Brescia, Milan; also the Tre Pievi of the Lake of Como.

² Crema managed to hold her own against the attacks of Cremona.

to the cities. Now, in many cases, just as the cities had shaken off the Rule of the Bishops, the small country towns on Church land forced their overlords to grant them charters of self-government, freeing them almost entirely from dependence. So in many places the vassals of the feudal lords combined together and gained their freedom. Thus we read that the inhabitants of six villages in the Piedmontese Val di Belbo conspired against the oppression of their lords, took their castles with the slaughter of the owners, and then, aided by the Alessandrines, established the small town of Nizza.¹

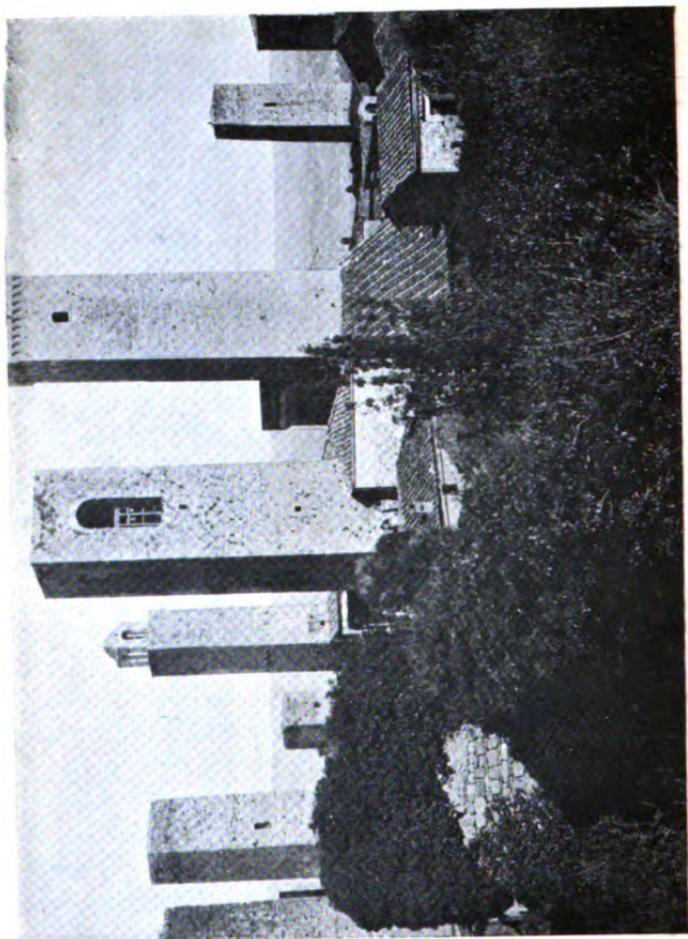
In these various ways a multitude of small Communes were established within the limits of the dioceses of the greater cities. So we find the Tre Pievi of the Lake of Como acting as an independent member of the League of 1195. On Lake Maggiore, Intra, Pallanza, Oggebbio, Cannobio, all for a time governed themselves by their own consuls and popular assemblies.² In Piedmont during the war with Frederick Barbarossa many small free communities came into existence, such as Mondovì, founded by the inhabitants of four villages, and Chivasso, Savigliano, Cherasco—the former built, it is said, by the aid of the Milanese.³ Several small Communes of this kind are mentioned among the signatories of the Truce of Venice—Castel Bolognese, Belmonte, Monteveglio, and others.

Scarcely had these little towns gained their freedom when they were exposed to attack from the greater Communes in whose dioceses they lay. We have already seen the inveterate enmity of Como and the Isola Comacina, and the fate of the latter. There was a feud of a similar kind between Como and the Tre Pievi. Galvanus Flamma, a historian of Milan, gives a list of four towns in the Archdiocese which had been destroyed by the Milanese.

¹ In 1234 (Ferrari).

² A stone in the Palazzo della Ragione at Cannobio, dated 1291, declares that the town then had "merum imperium et mixtum" (Boniforti, "Il più bel giro del mondo," p. 118).

³ So Cuneo, at a later period, was founded under the auspices of the Milanese to weaken the lords of Savoy and Montferrat.



SAN GIMIGNANO.

In Tuscany some of these small communities, such as San Gimignano and Prato, succeeded in holding their own until, in the fourteenth century, they fell, along with the greater cities of Arezzo, Volterra, and Pistoia, beneath the ever-advancing power of Florence. In Romagna San Marino, perched on its mountain crag, by a strange survival has preserved one of these microscopic states to our own day. But in Lombardy, where the cities were greater than those of Central Italy, the small towns were swallowed up one after the other with scarcely an exception. Some, such as Borgo San Donnino, made desperate struggles for freedom. Placed on the borders of Parma and Piacenza, this town for a time managed to play one city off against the other. But in 1268 the Parmesans took it and rased it to the ground,¹ leaving nothing standing but the great church, a beautiful specimen of Lombard architecture. Pontremoli secured a certain amount of freedom by alternately seeking the protection of Parma, Lucca, and the Marquises Malaspina. Casale San Evasio gave itself to Vercelli in 1170, no doubt as a protection against the Marquises of Montferrat. This did not save it from sack by Alessandria in 1175.² Forty-five years later it had shaken off its allegiance to Vercelli, and was allied with the Marquises, for we find that Casale was then taken by the Milanese, who were at war with Montferrat, and that, at the request of Vercelli, the whole population was led away captive. At a later period, when republican institutions were giving way before the rule of despots, Casale gave itself to Montferrat, of which state it ultimately became the capital.

The annals of Reggio, the archives of Bologna and Alessandria, are full of mentions of the submission of small Communes to the cities, or of their forcible conquest. In 1235 Alessandria destroyed Capriata, massacring men, women, and children, tearing the dead

¹ They had already destroyed it in 1152.

² Civalieri, "Storia di Alessandria," p. 10. In 1193 the Alessandrins again surprised and sacked Casale, but the burghers rallied and finally routed them.

from the tombs, destroying houses and churches. The village of Uxesio, which voluntarily submitted, was made a "citizen," and bound itself to build a house in Alessandria, after the fashion of single individuals who received the citizenship. Leaving out the small communities of Piedmont, we find only Crema which succeeded in maintaining its liberty against the pretensions of the city in whose diocese it was situated.¹

The inhabitants of the small places thus absorbed were not, as a general rule, admitted to the citizenship of the greater Communes.² They sank to the position of subjects, being bound to render military service, and pay an annual tribute to the ruling city. But in return they were left a very complete autonomy; they were governed as before by their consuls, assisted by a council. They passed their own statutes for their internal government, subject to the approval of their masters. It is said that in Tuscany alone more than five hundred localities had their own statutes, which were in force down to the eighteenth century, and which are still extant. Some of these small communities had others still smaller depending on them. Thus Limonta and Civenna had put themselves under Bellagio, the place so well known nowadays as the centre of the enchanting scenery of the Lake of Como, and itself subject to Como.

As time went on the condition of the small communities changed for the worse. Their contributions were increased as the necessities of the constant warfare between the cities demanded an increased outlay. Often, too, when the ruling state desired to raise money for an exceptional need it imposed an altogether disproportionate assessment on the subject country districts, Treviso, under the rule of Alberto della Scala, being forced to pay him fifteen thousand florins a month, raised six thousand from the city and the rest from the subject

¹ Piacenza took Bobbio in 1212 and again in 1229.

² When Bologna allowed the people of Nonantola to be enrolled as part of one of the four gates or quarters into which the burghers of Bologna were divided, it was in order to entice them away from Modena, which claimed Nonantola as a dependency.

territory. Como, under the Visconti, was to pay them four thousand florins a month and the Valtelline six hundred, but Bormio and Poschiavo, instead of paying their share as part of the Valtelline, were ordered to make up five hundred florins of the contribution due from the city of Como.¹

Exactions of this kind brought on constant revolts. The Valtelline and the Tre Pievi were perpetually struggling to free themselves from Como.

Such revolts were punished by heavier impositions and the loss of much of the local autonomy. In general much of the internal freedom vanished during the thirteenth century. The cities placed over the subject communities an officer, generally one of their own nobles, who, with the title of Podestà, or Captain, replaced the former consuls. He exercised his power in an arbitrary manner, altering the statutes to suit the wishes of the ruling city, and too often using his office as a means of enriching himself and his friends.

So much were the burthens of the country people—the *villani*, as they were called, from the word villa, applied to a village—increased, that many of the poorer landholders were glad to sell their lands to the officials or their friends, and migrate to the cities, or else cultivate as tenants the lands they had formerly owned. Others, of the richer sort, also sought relief by taking up their residence in the cities, and handing over their lands to tenants. From these causes there was a great migration from the country to the towns. The newcomers, by joining the trades guilds, which in the thirteenth century were gradually becoming the chief factor in the constitution of the cities, soon acquired all citizen rights, which, it must be remembered, were rigorously confined to those who possessed a house and habitually resided within the municipal boundaries. The cities rapidly increased in population in this way. The conservative Dante regrets the good old times when—

¹ In 1296 a forced loan was raised by Parma of thirteen thousand Imperial lire, eight thousand of which were contributed by the country districts.

“La cittedinanza ch' è or mista
Di Campi, di Certaldo e di Figghine
Pura vedeasi nell' ultimo artista.”¹

The La Scalas of Verona, and many of the leading families of Florence—the Cerchi, for instance—were immigrants of this sort. Ivrea encouraged immigration by granting the citizenship to all who owned a house within the walls. Milan granted the rights of citizenship in 1211 to all from the country parts who would settle in the city and dwell there for thirty years. But the country parts suffered beyond measure by the disappearance of the small proprietors, the effects of which have lasted to this day; the landowners, instead of living on their estates, are, in Lombardy at least, concentrated in the cities, and pass but a short time on their properties, while the country districts suffer from all the evils of absentee landlordism.

Against this decline of the status of the free inhabitants of the country we can put the amelioration of the vast mass of cultivators who had been in a condition of servitude on the lands belonging to the Church or to the feudal lords. Almost everywhere the policy of the cities was to emancipate these. In many cases they founded small fortified towns at strategic points, and encouraged the serfs from the surrounding country, and even the free tenants of the feudal lords, to settle in them, guaranteeing to protect them against their masters, as well as very extensive privileges.

Thus sprang up the innumerable places with the name Borgofranco, Villafranca, Villanova, Castelfranco, &c., which are to be found all over Lombardy and Central Italy. In 1197 Vercelli decreed that the spot called Villanova should remain free and absolute for ever to the honour and advantage of the Commune of Vercelli, so that no one in future should extort any contributions from the inhabitants, nor exercise any jurisdiction over

¹ “But in their veins the blood unmingled ran
(No Campi, no Certaldo, no Figghine)
Down to the very lowest artisan.”

(Wright's Dante—“Paradiso,” Canto XVI.)

them. They were to be fully owners of their houses and plots of land, with power of freely disposing of them as they pleased. No external authority was to be introduced there, except that of the Commune of Vercelli.

Twenty years afterwards the same city founded Borgofranco. The place was well fortified, and the inhabitants received most ample privileges, and exemption from taxes for four years, after which they were to pay the tax called *fodro*, like the citizens of Vercelli themselves.

Ivrea founded Castelfranco in 1250, and transferred to it the inhabitants of three neighbouring villages. They were to be free from all servitude, "for liberty is a gift of inestimable value, nor could it be sold with profit for all the gold in the world." They were to be counted as if they dwelt in one of the "portæ" or quarters of Ivrea, were to be free from all the tributes and services paid by the subjects of Vercelli, were to have complete internal freedom, and draw up a "statute" or code of laws for themselves, which the Podestàs of Ivrea were to swear to respect.

In 1221 Bologna invited settlers from other districts, and promised the right of being governed by consuls of their own choice to every twenty families who would found a village in the Bolognese territory. And we find similar measures taken by many other Communes such as Florence, which, besides many other similar foundations, built three towns in 1300, in the Upper Valdarno, to hold in check the Ubaldini, and Pazzi, and other lords in that region. By these measures the power of the country noble was greatly diminished without any direct attack from the cities. His plight was worse still if he came into open conflict with a Commune. His serfs would be incited to rise, and, if the fortune of war turned against him, he would be forced as a condition of peace to recognise their liberty. Or he might even be deprived altogether of part or all of his lands, and the cultivators, now free from all personal servitude, would become subject to the victorious city. This happened in the case of Biandrate in 1199. Novara and Vercelli divided up the men of this town and of some neighbouring spots

between them. They were freed from all dependence on the Count, became vassals of the conquerors, and were forced to build houses for themselves in the cities. Briandrate itself was rased to the ground, and in later times we find the Podestà of Novara obliged to swear that he would visit the site twice a year and destroy any house he found there, so that the spot might remain desolate for ever. The Counts of Biandrate, however, still retained great possessions in Val Sesia and Val d'Ossola, as well as in parts of Piedmont, and as late as 1290 we find them at variance with the Commune of Asti.¹

The final step in the emancipation of the serfs was reached later. With an enlightenment far in advance of the rest of Europe the burghers, passionate lovers of liberty themselves, formulated the principle that serfdom was contrary to the law of nature. So the different Communes took measures to enfranchise all the serfs within their jurisdiction. Bologna, the home of law, was one of the first Communes to enter on this path. In 1256, by a solemn decree of the rulers of the city, all the serfs in the territory of Bologna were bought from their lords and freed, paying in return a certain quantity of corn to the Commune.²

Florence followed this example in 1289. The decree lays down the principle that every man has a natural right to liberty, and goes on to order that, in future, no man shall dare to buy, or acquire in any other manner, serfs of any kind whatsoever.³

This rise to liberty of the serfs made up, to a large extent, for the loss of the old free proprietors who had left the country for the towns. Personal freedom, however, by no means implied political freedom, nor did it bring with it the acquisition of landed property; and the

¹ One branch, the Counts Biandrate of San Giorgio in the Canavese, figure frequently in later times in the history of Piedmont. They remain to the present day.

² Those above the age of fourteen were bought at 10 soldi each, the rest at 8 soldi (Cantù, p. 383).

³ Fideles, colonos perpetuos vel conditionales adscriptitios vel censitos vel aliquos alios (Cantù, p. 387).

communities of emancipated serfs shared, for the most part, in the decline of political status which the small communities underwent in the later thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

We have already seen that almost from the moment when the cities had organised themselves as free municipalities they had turned their arms against those of the nobles of the Contado who did not form part of the Commune. Over a great part of Lombardy these had nearly all been forced to submission by the time of Frederick Barbarossa's first descent into Italy.

His attack on the liberties of the Communes had given the nobles an opportunity of freeing themselves from this dependent condition; and so we find the feudal nobles—as, for example, those of the counties of Seprio and Martesana—on his side in his conflict with Milan. The foundation of the Lombard League, and Frederick's withdrawal from Italy in 1168, left them more than ever exposed to attack. Besides, it would appear from Morena that many even of the Marquises, Counts, Captains, and other nobles had suffered from the oppression of the Imperial officials, and so looked favourably on the League. Either on this account, or yielding to force, all the nobles of Lombardy had embraced the cause of the League before Frederick's return to Italy in 1174. The two chief feudatories of the north-west of Lombardy, the Marquis of Montferrat and the Count of Biandrate, had, as we have seen, been reduced by force of arms. The Malaspinas and the Estensi do not seem to have needed this compulsion. The two leaders of the army which the League assembled for the relief of Alessandria were Ezzelino of Romano, called the Stammerer, lord of great possessions in the Mark of Verona, and grandfather of the ferocious Ezzelino, whose crimes form such a lurid page in the history of the succeeding century, and Anselmo da Doara, of a great Cremonese family, which has also attained celebrity in the annals of Italian tyrants.

As Frederick failed in his attempt to destroy the liberties of the Communes, and finally had to establish them on a more solid basis than before, so the nobles in Lombardy, far

from recovering what they had lost in the first part of the twelfth century, were now brought much more thoroughly under the power of the Communes. All the cities, it must be remembered, whether partisans or opponents of Frederick, had pursued the same policy towards the nobles. All were determined to extend their authority over the whole Contado. And Frederick, to conciliate the cities which supported him, or to win over to his side the waverers, had to legalise their aggressions.

So he and his successor, Henry VI., forced the nobles of the Valtelline, and the rest of the diocese of Como, to recognise Como as their feudal superior, just as they had once acknowledged the Bishop of that city as their Count. He gave Tortona jurisdiction over all the nobles of her Contado. So with Pavia. Here we find Henry VI. authorising the city to prevent the rebuilding of Lomello, the seat of the representatives of the old royal Counts of Pavia, who had the same influence in that diocese as the Counts of Biandrate had in that of Novara, and who were still attempting to assert their authority in the city itself.

When Frederick was reconciled with Milan and her confederates he in a like manner recognised the *status quo*. He formally gave the Milanese jurisdiction over the counties of Seprio and Martesana, the nobles of which had been prominent on his side in the early stages of the war, and which he himself had freed from all dependence on Milan after the first capitulation of that city. And, in addition to this, he conferred on them the counties of Lecco and Anghera, of which the Archbishops had at one time been Counts.

Two circumstances combined to render the subjugation of the nobles a much easier matter in Lombardy than in other parts of Italy. If we exclude Piedmont, there were in the first place few really great feudatories in North Italy. The Marquis of Montferrat, the Count of Biandrate, the Malaspinas, the Marquises of Este, and the lords of the Canavese were almost the only nobles holding a large and compact extent of territory. Of these the Marquises of Montferrat held their own against the

cities, though finding it advisable to enrol themselves as burghers of Vercelli in 1182, and of Asti at a later date. The lands of the Counts of Biandrate were in course of time divided among several branches of the family, and were gradually absorbed by Novara and Vercelli. The Malaspinas, occupying a great tract of mountainous country from the frontiers of Pavia to the borders of Lucca and Pisa, preserved the sovereignty over portions of their domains down to the eighteenth century. The lords of Este were forced to acknowledge the supremacy of Padua over the northern portions of their lands in 1213, and to become burghers of that city. But they kept full possession of the swampy district known as the Polesine of Rovigo; and, taking advantage of the intestine conflicts in the Mark of Verona, long played a leading rôle in these parts and established their power solidly in Ferrara.

The second circumstance arose from the physical configuration of Lombardy. Over a great portion of it, including practically the whole territories of Pavia, Milan, Lodi, Cremona, and other cities, the level nature of the country gave no natural means of defence by which a few well-armed men might resist a greater force. In the hilly provinces of Tuscany, Umbria, and Romagna, where every village and every castle is piled high, a natural fortress, on some precipitous hill, and where great feudal families had divided up the inheritance of the Countess Matilda, or held large continuous tracts as vassals of the Pope, the struggle between cities and nobles was far more protracted. And being protracted it developed great bitterness. Numberless instances of atrocities committed by the burghers on the nobles in Central Italy might be cited in the thirteenth and above all in the fourteenth centuries. In Lombardy, on the other hand, instances of such atrocities are rare. Almost all such cases in North Italy occurred in Piedmont, where the geographical features were much the same as in Tuscany.

The contrast between the geographical conditions of the two regions had, furthermore, an important bearing on the status of the nobles in each, once they had been

subdued and become citizens of the victorious Communes. In the great levels of the Lombard plain cavalry had an immense superiority over infantry, and cavalry, in the citizen armies, was supplied by the nobles and wealthier classes generally, who alone could provide the expensive equipment of the heavy-armed mounted men of the period, and who alone could afford the expenditure of time necessary to obtain a mastery over horse and weapons.

So the mass of the burghers could not do without the aristocracy of mingled birth and wealth which formed the governing class in all the cities during the twelfth century. The country noble isolated in his castle, the city aristocrat in the narrow streets among a multitude of enemies, might be easily enough overpowered. But outside the walls the aristocracy united in a body was invincible.

If dissensions between class and class arose within the walls the populace by sheer force of numbers might easily expel the nobles ; but once in the level open country the mail-clad cavalry of the latter formed a force against which the citizen infantry were powerless. A city from which the nobles were expelled saw its whole territory outside the walls lost to it, or exposed helplessly to the raids of neighbouring hostile communities. We have already seen an instance of this in the early eleventh century when the people under Lanzone drove out the nobles from Milan. In the early thirteenth century we find innumerable examples of the same state of things at Piacenza, at Brescia, and again at Milan, to quote only a few out of many examples.

It followed from this that the aristocracy, whether of old civic origin, or conquered country nobles, retained a far greater influence in Lombardy than they did, for example, in Tuscany. There the hilly country enabled the feudality to resist the Communes for a much longer period ; but there, among a tangle of hills and valleys, heavy cavalry was not of much use, and so, once conquered, the nobles were not indispensable to the cities, and could do them but little injury if they broke away

from the Commune in a body. And it is to this cause that we may ascribe the complete overthrow of the nobles as a political party, and their ultimate exclusion from civic rights which is such a curious feature in the history of Florence, Siena, and other Tuscan communities.

There were many cities which had not completed the conquest of the Contado by 1183. Brescia, Bergamo, Novara, and Vercelli, which claimed jurisdiction over the valleys running up to the foot of the High Alps, had made far less progress in this respect than the cities whose Contadi lay in the plain. Especially backward were the towns which lie strung along the old Roman Æmilian Way, in the district south of the Po, which, from the Roman road, has adopted the designation of Emilia.

The Apennines, which on the south side, towards Tuscany, fall somewhat abruptly down to the valley of the Arno, sink gradually to the plain on the north, in a tangled network of hills and valleys. At Bologna the foothills almost touch the line of the great road and the city walls, then they draw away in a great curving arc so that Modena, Reggio, and Parma lie well out in the plain with, in hazy weather, scarcely a glimpse of the hills from the walls. At Piacenza, where the road touches the Po, the hills are nearer, and farther west they too almost reach the river, on the borders of the lands of Piacenza and Pavia. In this hill country, much of which belonged to the inheritance of the Countess Matilda, the feudal lords had maintained the ground more successfully than the rest of their compeers.

After the Peace of Constance these backward cities turned their attention to gaining complete control of the Contado. Occasionally they met with checks. Reggio was put to the ban of the Empire in 1193 for aggressions on the feudality, and the ban was only removed on the burghers giving up the castles and lands they had won and releasing their owners from the oaths they had sworn to the city. The Marquis of Montferrat defeated Asti in 1191 and took two thousand prisoners.

To escape the aggressions of one city the nobles would often voluntarily put themselves under the protection of

another, its rival. This method of defence added a new cause for discord among the cities to those, sufficiently numerous, one might think, which existed already. The great attack on Brescia in 1191 had its origin in a treaty between that city and a neighbouring countly family, by which the latter sold three castles in the Contado of Bergamo to Brescia, and engaged to expend the money in buying lands in the Brescian territory. Another contest was provoked between the two cities when the powerful family of Brusati, lords of the greater part of the picturesque Val Camonica, revolted from Brescia and put themselves and their castles under the protection of her rival.

The mountainous region of the Frignano to the south of Modena, originally part of the lands of the Countess Matilda, was held by a number of noble families, descendants of the officials which she and her predecessors had placed over that region. These, to protect themselves from the attacks of Modena or Reggio, had formed a kind of confederation among themselves, and aided by their remoteness from the cities had preserved their freedom down to the end of the twelfth century. But after an unsuccessful war with Bologna, on account of which Modena had been forced to make large sacrifices of territory, the Modenese sought for compensation by a vigorous attack on the Captains, as they were called, who held Frignano. These latter had, however, secured the assistance of Parma, which sent its forces, with the Carroccio, to their help. Modena was near at hand, Parma far off, and was, besides, probably not very keenly interested in the struggle, since her territories nowhere touched on those of Modena. In spite, therefore, of this effort of Parma, the Captains had to submit and become burghers of Modena.

This was in 1205; but eight years afterwards we find a general revolt of these lords, who handed themselves and their castles over to Bologna, between which state and Modena there was chronic hostility about a question of boundaries. The revolted nobles were subdued, and a series of victories over Bologna prevented any help

coming to them from that quarter. But in 1234 there was another revolt, and no less than twenty-three castles were handed over to the Bolognese. Henceforward both states looked on themselves as lawful rulers of Frignano; and, though Modena again subdued the district, it remained for long a bone of contention between the two cities, to the great advantage, no doubt, of the Captains.

Numerous conventions between the cities and the conquered nobles have been preserved, and give us a full insight into the fate of these latter. From them it appears that the Communes pursued a uniform policy towards the feudality of the country, and one which cannot by any means be styled illiberal. Invariably the nobles were compelled to swear allegiance to the Commune, to build a house within the walls, which they were to inhabit for one or two months every year in time of peace, and double that period in time of war. Their castles were to be at the command of the city, they were to do military service, and their vassals were to pay an annual tribute to the magistrates. Furthermore, they were to keep the roads in their neighbourhood open to the commerce of the city. This was a most important provision, for it must be confessed that the aggressions of the burghers on the feudality were not without their excuse. Too often the latter had acted as mere robbers, swooping down on the caravans of the merchants, and in every case exacting vexatious tolls throughout the districts subject to them. In many cases it had become a matter of vital necessity to the Communes to open a safe road for their commerce by destroying the castles which impeded the circulation of goods along the trade routes.

In return the cities confirmed the nobles in the possession of their lands, promised them help against their enemies, admitted them to the citizenship, and as nobles allowed them to share in the highest offices of the commonwealth.

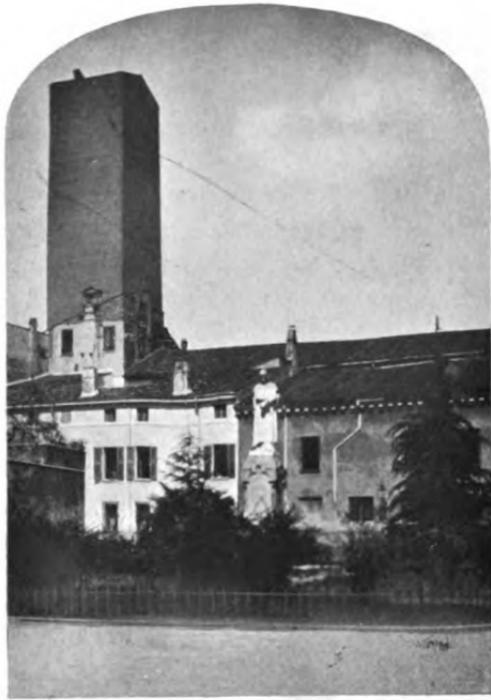
Such are the main features of the compacts between nobles and Communes. But, naturally, there is an

infinite variety in the details. If the noble had only been subdued after an obstinate war his castles might be destroyed or else permanently garrisoned by the Commune. Sometimes he lost part, more rarely all, of his possessions. The jurisdiction in matters of life and death over his vassals was generally assumed by the city; as a rule in minor matters it was left to the lord. But Como, to secure her authority over the unruly population of the Valtelline, pledged herself to maintain some of the nobles, such as the family of Venosta, in all their rights.

It was only when, in the course of the thirteenth century, the rise of a democratic party in the cities had brought on an embittered struggle of classes, that the feudal jurisdiction of the nobles on their fiefs was entirely swept away, and they themselves made subject to the ordinary taxes.

Naturally where the submission of the noble had been voluntary the conditions he received were still more favourable. He often received a sum of money as a compensation for the feudal rights he had surrendered. Sometimes the city bought certain of his lands and castles, imposing on the noble the obligation of spending the money thus received in the purchase of lands and houses in or near the city. Sometimes the noble, especially a powerful one whose many retainers would be useful in war time, received a yearly sum of money from the state, so as to induce him to fidelity; often he received additional lands as fiefs. Many lords whose possessions were widely scattered became vassals of two or even more towns, and then it was expressly laid down that in case of war between two such Communes they were not to be called on for military service.

In all this variety of detail one essential fact stands out. The nobles received the full citizenship and were at once eligible for the public offices. Modena, in 1274, even granted to the Captains of the Frignano that at least eight of them should always belong to the General Council. Milan assigned a definite representation in like manner to the feudality of the Seprio. The towns



A TOWER, MANTUA.

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received an immense accession both of wealth and force by the admission of so many new citizens; and the nobles found themselves in a position in the Communes sufficient to compensate them for the loss of their old life of isolated independence.

So now we find added to the population of all the cities a wealthy and warlike class, impatient of control, accustomed to rely on their own efforts, and not to look to laws to obtain redress for injury, proud of their birth, despising the merchant, born to command, looking on all of plebeian birth as their natural subjects. The addition of this class had important results. Not only did the nobles bring with them from the country their contempt for the peaceful trader or artisan, but they brought in, too, their whole wild life of feud and violence, their impatience of all settled order. The houses they built in the cities became fortresses, from the lofty towers of which the engines of war known to the period could pour forth destruction on any assailant. The feuds which they had carried on against their neighbours in the country were prosecuted with all the more eagerness now that they and their rivals dwelt in close proximity. The fierce passions, nurtured by habits of absolute command acquired on their own domains, refused to submit to the trammels of laws laid down by men inferior in birth and unskilled in arms.

In the cities they found, as we have seen, an aristocracy—the milites, the descendants of those Captains, Valvassors, and other nobles who had from the first formed part of the Communes, or of those families grown rich through trade or the acquisition of land, who were able to acquire warhorses and heavy armour, and could afford the expenditure of time necessary to master their use. The newcomers naturally took rank with these men, in whose hands lay the direction of affairs. Wealth and birth maintained their prestige, even though much of the actual power of the feudal lords had been shorn away by the Communes; and so they found it natural to try and make up by a gain of influence inside the walls for whatever they had lost by the fate of war in the open country.

We still find three classes sharply enough distinguished in the cities—the nobles or milites, an aristocracy resting their prestige, as we have seen, either on birth or on riches, and now increased by the accession of the country feudality; the free, non-noble citizens or popolo, engaged in commerce, manufactures, or following certain trades; and finally the plebe or popolo minuto, the lower orders, artisans, or others who were excluded from nearly all civic rights. It seems quite certain that the struggle against Barbarossa had greatly strengthened the aristocracy. The people in time of danger would naturally trust the direction of affairs to those whom superior acquirements or skill in war or diplomacy raised above the level of the crowd. Those who did their work well in one year would very naturally be again chosen as fit persons to whom to intrust the safety of the state.

An echo of this fact in the history of Milan is preserved for us in the pages of Galvanus Flamma, a writer, it is true, of a later time, and an unsafe guide on constitutional matters, but who in this instance may well have caught some measure of the truth. He says that after the restoration of Milan an agreement was made by which the *artistæ*, whom he seems to take to belong to the artisan class, but who may well have really been the members of the trades guilds,¹ were to choose one hundred of their number who were to elect, not from themselves or from the popolo, but from the nobles, twelve consuls who were to govern the city; but that, in the course of time, this agreement was broken, and the consuls of one year claimed the right of nominating their successors. They thus shut out all pretence of popular election, and ultimately hit on the plan that each noble *parentela*² should choose one member, and that from the number thus chosen (who amounted to one or two

¹ He evidently distinguishes *artistæ* from popolo, but it seems much more likely that he is misled by the customs of his own day, and that the *artistæ* were really members of the *arti* or guilds which composed the popolo.

² *Parentela* = *Consorteria*, an association of noble families, related or not, for purposes of defence, &c.

hundred) twelve consuls were to be selected yearly, till all had had their turn, and then the former consuls held office again in rotation.

We see plainly here the first steps towards the establishment of an oligarchic rule, completely shutting out from the government all outside a certain limited number of families. This is, in fact, what really happened a hundred years later at Venice, where the process known as the "Closing of the Grand Council" concentrated all power in the hands of an oligarchy, which did not even include all the nobles. One is tempted to attribute this increase of the power and claims of the aristocracy to the influx into the cities of the Marquises, Counts, Captains, and other feudal nobles. Despising as they did all peaceful occupations, and valuing nobility of descent above all else, they looked down alike on the rich merchant trading with foreign countries, whose wealth allowed him to live with a splendour equal to or greater than that displayed by the Captains or Valvassors, and on the humbler traders or manufacturers who formed the bulk of the popolo.

The aristocratic prejudices of Otho of Freisingen had been shocked by the ease with which men of the lowest origin, "whom other nations exclude like the pest from the more honourable and liberal employments," could attain to the rank of milites and to the highest honours. To the feudal nobles this state of things must have been almost as distasteful as it was to the German prelate. And so we find an effort made to establish a close aristocratic caste in whose hands the administration should be concentrated, to the complete exclusion of the non-noble freemen.

Meantime these freemen had been increasing rapidly in wealth and numbers. In spite of constant warfare the prosperity of the cities had been steadily growing. Their manufactures, especially cloth and the finer kinds of metal work, were exported to all the countries beyond the Alps; a share of the profitable traffic with the East carried on by the maritime cities passed through their markets. If proof of their wealth and enterprise were

wanting, we would find it in the extensive banking business which at this period the Lombards had established throughout Europe. The name Lombard Street in London remains still as a memorial to their activity in this direction ; and in fact we find the name Lombard in somewhat unpleasant prominence as synonymous with usurers in many countries during the thirteenth century. ¹ Hence new families kept continually rising to wealth. So we find in the cities a number of free citizens, wealthy, and in theory eligible to office, but in practice excluded from the government.

The numbers of the free burghers had also increased enormously. Not only were their numbers swelled by a constant inflow of free peasants from the country ; but there was also a steady progress in the emancipation of the lower classes. As these shook off all remains of servitude to Bishop or feudal lord, they united to form new guilds, or were enrolled in those guilds the members of which were entitled to full burgher rights. At first scarcely any had been free burghers except the notaries, bankers, and money-changers, merchants, and those engaged in certain manufactures. Now we see new guilds, tradesmen, workers in various arts, admitted to an equality with these. Even many of the artisan class now attained the full citizenship, and the number kept constantly increasing. In Parma, in 1215, we find fifteen guilds among the popolo, the chief being money-changers, clothmakers, and butchers ; in 1253 seven, and in 1261 four additional ones were added. Precisely at the time when the rise from the status of popolani to that of milites was made difficult, or hindered altogether, did a great emancipation of the lower orders take place, giving them rank among the popolo.

This ever-increasing class found itself shut out, to a greater or less extent in the different cities, from a share in public affairs, although on it fell most of the burthen of taxation, and it supplied the great mass of the fighting force of the city. So long as the richer families passed

¹ We are told that the citizens of Asti first began to lend money at interest in 1226.

automatically into the ranks of the governing class, so long as a capable man, no matter what his birth, could see before him the prospect of rising to the highest posts in the Commune, there had been a kind of safety-valve guarding against discontent. But now the multitude, shut out from the honours and yet bearing the burdens of the state, found natural leaders among its richer families—the *grassi popolani*, as they began to be called. Among the families whose wealth had given them a place among the city milites, many were suffering from the pride of the feudality, who refused to look on them as equals.

With such a condition of affairs a conflict was inevitable. And so, at the opening of the thirteenth century, we find conflicts between nobles and popolo breaking out in many cities. As early as 1185 we find nobles and commons at war in Faenza, and the former being expelled besieged the city with help from the Emperor. In 1198 we find discord in Milan, which did not apparently break out for the moment into open hostilities. The city seems to have been split up into no less than four factions. The butchers, bakers, and lesser guilds in general formed a society called the *Credenza di Sant' Ambrogio*, the *popolani grassi* had their own association, the lesser nobles formed a party called the *Motta*, while the greater ones had established a union called the *Società dei Gagliardi*. Similar disorders broke out almost at the same period in other towns—Reggio, Padua, and Brescia. In the latter the nobles wished to make an attack on Cremona and Bergamo; but the people, on whom most of the burthen of these expeditions fell, refused; and, on the nobles persisting in their design, broke out into insurrection. The nobles, as usually was the case in these struggles, were at a disadvantage within the walls where their cavalry could not act. They were expelled into the open country, where they easily held their own. They called in the help of their late enemies of Cremona, and this city, aided by Mantua and the exiles, thoroughly defeated the popolo of Brescia, taking their Carroccio. The struggle went on with constant vicissi-

tudes during the early years of the century, pacifications being constantly patched up by ecclesiastics or neighbouring cities, which were broken almost as soon as made. The nobles, brought back by a papal legate, fall on the people, who, taken unawares, are partly massacred and partly expelled. The victorious nobles, however, quarrel among themselves, and one faction recalls the people, expelling the hostile party. The struggle was varied by the attempt of a powerful country lord, the Count of Casalotto, to set himself up as despot ; but this, a foretaste of what these struggles were eventually to lead to, was an undertaking too much in advance of the age, and the Count and his supporters were driven out. A new pacification was followed by a fresh outbreak, during which the nobles were once more expelled. Brought back by the Emperor Otho, they were once again driven outside the walls, and this time the mob levelled all their palaces. But the city could not exist without the nobles, its mainstay in time of war ; and so they once more returned, and the exhausted Brescia for a moment enjoyed internal peace.

Similar struggles followed in Cremona—where the inhabitants of the new town rose against those of the old town, each faction having its own magistrates—in Lodi, in Alessandria, in Chieri, and above all in Piacenza.

In this latter city, which, one would think, would have had enough to do to defend itself from the combined attacks of Parma, Cremona, and Pavia, the struggle was particularly violent.¹ From 1219 to 1236 we find at least seven distinct outbreaks, after most of which the nobles were expelled from or quitted the city for their castles, returning in consequence of victories in the field, or by virtue of the good offices of neighbouring cities or of the Church, until a victory of the nobles and the pressure of the war against Frederick II. brought about a peace

¹ In Piacenza the struggle between the two classes began in 1219, when the Commune had made peace with its neighbours, and we find the parties again in arms in 1221, 1223, 1225, 1232, 1233, 1234, and 1235. In this latter year the people expelled the nobles and joined Frederick II. The nobles returned next year, and Piacenza remained hostile to the Emperor till 1250.

which lasted fourteen years. Each of these expulsions was preceded by street fighting, in which the nobles from their towers rained missiles on the people, who sought the help of fire; and each victory was followed by the plunder and destruction of houses. The parties sought help from outside; the people from Cremona or Parma, the nobles from Milan, and the Contado was ravaged by each party in turn.

In these internecine contests the people found an organisation ready to their hands in the guilds with their officers and revenues. At their head we often find a noble, induced to desert his own class through sympathy with the claims of the popolo, or through ambition, or through jealousy of his fellow nobles. The nobles looked for help to the unenfranchised mass of the people, the plebe, as they are often called, who had not as a rule much sympathy with the middle classes who formed the popolo.

One of the most important results of these struggles was the widening of the limits of citizenship. But we must remember that in no city did the whole population ever attain to the full franchise. Even in democratic Florence the mass of the operatives in the woollen industry were shut out from all political rights as late as the year 1378. The revolution, called the Revolution of the Ciompi, led to the creation in that year of three new guilds—one of the wool workers with nine thousand members, the others of dyers, carders, tailors, shoemakers, barbers, &c., with four thousand. But a counter revolution led once more to their exclusion; and we are told that towards the end of the republic the government was once more so thoroughly concentrated in the hands of the middle classes that the full burghers numbered less than four thousand out of ninety thousand Florentines.

During the heat of the struggle between nobles and popolo, however, both parties, especially the nobles, sought the support of the lower orders. New guilds then were formed, or formally recognised as having a right to share in the government. Traces of this gradual

extension of the franchise are found in the distinction between greater and lesser "Arts" or guilds, with different rights, found in some cities such as Florence and Milan, as well as in the names *primo popolo* and *secondo popolo*, which denote the admission to burgher rights of successive strata of the population.¹ In time one might even have had a *terzo popolo*, consisting of the lower orders; but in Lombardy, at any rate, the rise of the despots put a stop to further development in this direction.

The first quarter of the thirteenth century was a period of fierce struggle between the classes in many cities. The war with Frederick II. restored internal peace. After his death the conflict broke out again.

The second half of the century is, on the whole, marked by the triumph of the popolo and the supremacy of the arti in the state. In different cities the relative importance of the various guilds differed. In most the bankers and money-lenders and the merchants properly so called were the chief. The bulk of the upper middle classes, the *grassi popolani*, belonged to these, and they also included many nobles, especially those of the older civic nobility. In Florence the Guild of Wool and the Guild of Calimala, or importers and refiners of foreign cloth, were by far the most influential. In Parma and Bologna the butchers were prominent; in Milan they had but a subordinate position.

Naturally in such a contest the old unity of the Comune was imperilled. Each party chose its own leaders, with councils and financial arrangements modelled on those of the Commune. The old consular form of government disappeared in the confusion. The city felt the need of one single authority to preserve peace, the factions felt the same need in order to give unity of direction to their efforts. About the year 1200 we find the consuls replaced almost everywhere by one single magistrate styled Podestà.

¹ In Florence there were seven "greater" and fourteen "lesser Arts" over and above the *popolo minuto*, who in 1378 obtained for a moment admission to three new Arts.

This name Podestà was, as may be remembered, the title given to the officials placed over the cities after the Diet of Roncaglia by Barbarossa to administer them in his name. Now that the Communes placed the supreme power in the hands of a single individual of their own choice, it was natural to apply this name to him. The substitution of one supreme magistrate for the joint rule of the consuls took place in some Communes even before the Peace of Constance. It is noticeable that the innovation first appears in the Veronese Mark, among the cities—Verona, Vicenza, and Padua—which had been the first to band themselves against the Emperor. In most Communes the new magistracy makes its appearance in or about the year 1200.

At first it was a mere temporary expedient, designed to meet some pressing danger from outside or to repress some special outbreak of disorder within the walls. Hence we find at first the Communes in one year under a Podestà, in another returning to the old consular government. But soon after 1200 we find the new magistracy adopted permanently practically everywhere. Sometimes we can clearly trace the variations in the form of government to conflicts in the city.

The Podestà was always a noble, and almost always was a "foreigner," *i.e.*, not a citizen of the Commune he was called on to govern. He was chosen either by the whole body of burghers, or, more usually, by a select number elected for that purpose, and was taken from some friendly or allied city. The normal duration of his office was twelve months, though there were cases in which the term was prolonged to two or even three years. Towards the end of the thirteenth century, on the other hand, we find some Communes in which the Podestà held office only for six months.

In his hands was placed the supreme executive power. He was general in the field, supreme judge and maintainer of tranquillity at home. Strict precautions were taken to ensure his impartiality in the exercise of these functions. He must have no relatives in the city which

he was to administer, must not acquire property nor contract any relationships within its limits. He must not bring with him his wife or any members of his family. Before accepting office he had to swear to obey all the statutes of the Commune, and to agree to strict regulations as to his mode of life, and the train of men learned in the law, knights, and war horses which he was to bring with him at his own expense. While in office he must not accept presents, must not eat or drink with any citizen, nor hold private intercourse with any; when his term had expired he must remain a certain time, and allow his whole conduct to be investigated by a special tribunal appointed for the purpose. If their verdict was favourable he received the salary agreed on beforehand—in Milan 2,000 silver lire, in Forlì 70, as well as some marks of honour. If he had abused his power he was deprived of all or part of his salary.

Fettered by restrictions as the office was, it yet gave its holder immense powers as judge, administrator, and general, and afforded the nobles a field in which to attain distinction. Hence it was eagerly sought for. We possess a book, "*Oculus Pastorum*" by name, which was intended as a handbook for those who sought the position. In it the noble could learn how he should enter on his functions, how speak in favour of war or peace, how pronounce a discourse in praise of his predecessor, how administer justice, and finally how hand over his office to his successor. A successful Podestà would be summoned by city after city to govern it; and the ever-increasing violence of faction in the thirteenth century offered ample scope to an ambitious man to turn his office to his own private advantage, in spite of all restrictions. More than one of the early usurpers of the liberties of the Communes attained their ends by making use of their powers as Podestà.

The post, however, was not without its dangers. The Bishop of Bologna, appointed Podestà by his fellow townsmen in 1192, and continued in office for a second year, saw himself attacked by a sudden rising of the people. His palace was plundered, his friends killed,

and he himself escaped with difficulty. His successor, taken from Pistoia, was equally unlucky. He was seized by the nobles, against whom he had shown much severity, and who by way of return pulled out all his teeth. In Modena, in 1213, the Podestà had his tongue torn out. Many were assassinated by a powerful family, or fell victims to a sudden insurrection.

At first the Podestà, within the limits of the city statutes and of the oath he had taken, was virtually a temporary dictator. He had, however, a council to advise him, corresponding to the former consuls, with whom were joined perhaps the heads of the chief guilds. The Italians were too fully persuaded of the advantage of a balance of power not to seek soon to lessen this authority. A body was chosen to form the guiding power of the state, leaving only executive and judicial authority to the Podestà. The members of this body, Ancients, Good Men, Rectors or Priors, as they were variously called, formed the real administrative power, or "Signoria." Their number varied in different Communes and at different periods, and as a rule bore some relation to the wards into which the city was divided. Thus at Florence there were at one time twelve "Good Men," at another six Priors. They prepared all legislative and administrative measures, which they then laid before the special council of the Podestà (the old *Credenza*), and if these latter agreed, the matter was next submitted to the general council to approve or reject. In matters of great importance the whole assembly of the burghers, the *Parlamento*, was consulted; but as a rule only the members of the Signoria and one or two others had a right to harangue this assembly, and the measures submitted to it must be approved or rejected without modification.¹

During the second half of the thirteenth century the members of the Signoria were all taken from the trades

¹ The rise to power of the middle classes in the thirteenth century modified these arrangements, and threw power into the hands of two new councils, the special and general councils of the "people," from which the nobles were excluded.

guilds, and bore a definite relation to the number of these. Such were the magistracy of the Anziani at Bologna, the Priors of the Arts at Florence, the Nove at Siena.

Since the Podestà originated amidst tumults, it is not rare at first to find two or more in a city, at the head of rival factions. So in Milan there were three in 1192, four in 1213, while the year before there had been twelve military tribunes. There were two in Cremona in 1200 and again five years later. Sometimes when peace was made both remained. In this case one would represent the whole Commune, the other the popular element. From this latter arose a new functionary, the Podestà, or Captain of the People, who towards the end of the thirteenth century began to encroach on and absorb most of the power of the Podestà.

There were many Communes in which there were few or no quarrels between the different classes, either because the ruling aristocracy was too powerful to be easily attacked, or because the people had been admitted at an early period to a sufficient share in the government.¹ But we find these cities torn by feuds of another kind, the blame of which must again be laid in great part on the country feudality.

The independent life of the nobles on their fiefs had fostered in them an impatience of the restraints of law ; and they had learned to look not to legal means, but to their own right hands, for the redress of grievances. This view, sanctioned by the feudal code in almost every country at that age, they brought with them to the cities. They continued within the walls the feuds which had been started with their country neighbours, they began new ones, and carried them on in the streets and squares and from the towers of their houses regardless of any attempts of the civic magistrates to maintain order.

¹ Verona would seem to belong to the first catalogue ; here the aristocracy was automatically recruited from the wealthy popolani. But the despotism of Ezzelino seems to have rested on the mass of the people whom he admitted to privileges hitherto only enjoyed by the wealthy. Padua is an example of the second.

We have a graphic description of the extent to which these feuds were carried on in Genoa, a city which has at all times been distinguished for the turbulence of its population, where the nobles, we are told, disdained to appeal to the tribunals to redress injuries done to them, and fought out their quarrels in the very heart of the city. "The family of Volta, constructing a wonderful machine, erected a battering-ram attached to the tower of Oberto Grimaldi, and to the new tower of Oberto Spinola; and by means of this ram they destroyed in sight of every one the new tower which Buldonoso had built at the crossways of St. Siro. On their side the Dorias erected a machine in the garden of St. Siro, and hurled stones at the houses and towers of the Spinolas, and of Oberto Grimaldi. The latter erected several machines in their turn, and cast stones at the houses and towers of the Dorias."¹

A similar picture remains to us of the condition of Florence: "The numerous towers were some a hundred, others a hundred and thirty cubits high, and all, or almost all, the nobles had them; those who had none proceeded to build them; they placed balistas, great and small, on top, and several streets were barricaded. The custom of fighting had developed to such an extent that one day they fought, and the next day the combatants ate and drank at the same table, discoursing of the valour which they had shown against one another the day before."

As time went on hostilities became more rancorous, and whole quarters of the cities were devastated by fire, which, beginning in the houses of one or the other faction, involved the general mass of the citizens in a common ruin. Verona was almost completely destroyed in 1172 by a fire started in this way. Again, when the Montecchi were expelled from this city in 1206, the shops of the merchants were involved in the destruction of their houses. A large part of Vicenza was consumed in like manner in 1194. It would be easy to multiply examples of the miseries inflicted on the peace-

¹ Ferrari, vol. ii., p. 262. This was in 1194.

ful burghers in this fashion. They go far to explain the rancour displayed in later times by the trading classes towards the noble families who had at one time been looked on as the natural leaders of the Commune. Innumerable efforts were made to reconcile the factions, or at least to lessen their powers of injury. The annals of all the cities give instances of solemn reconciliations brought about by the clergy or the consuls, consecrated by the most sacred oaths, and sealed by marriages arranged between hostile families—reconciliations which, as a rule, did not endure for a year, sometimes not for a single week. Where the party of peace got the upper hand for a moment a favourite policy was to reduce the height of the towers to a uniform level. In Genoa all were cut down in 1196 to 80 feet; in Modena, nearly thirty years later, the Podestà is said to have levelled all the towers. Albenga, Siena, Florence are still full of the massive stumps of towers thus reduced to moderate dimensions; the few which still survive with something like their former threatening aspect in Pavia, Bologna, and San Gemignano fill us with astonishment, and enable us to form some faint idea of the aspect formerly presented by all Italian cities.

Many writers have tried to explain these feuds by supposing an antagonism between the original civic nobility and the later incomers from the country. This may be true in some cases; but a study of the actual divisions among the noble families will show that there is no proof as a rule of any such antagonism. A brawl at a marriage feast or a banquet, rivalry for the public offices between two great houses, an insult, an overbearing action would start a quarrel which, spreading to kindred or allied families, might ultimately involve all the nobles of the city. A broken promise of marriage gave rise to a strife which deluged Florence with blood for fifty years, and led to the destruction of one-half of the nobility. Out of more than seventy noble families we find thirty-nine on one side, the remainder on the other, and here the quarrel spread to many families of the *grassi popolani*.



TOWERS OF SAN GEMIGNANO.

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The cities of the more easterly parts of Lombardy have an unenviable pre-eminence with regard to these feuds. In the days of the Lombard League there was already a quarrel of long standing in Ferrara between the family of the Adelardi and that of the Torelli. We will return to this contest later on, as also to those which raged with peculiar violence in the cities of the Veronese Mark almost from the moment when the Peace of Constance had removed the check imposed by the struggle against Barbarossa.

To the war of city with city we have now added a struggle between class and class within the walls, as well as constant feuds between the various noble families. It is a picture of confused strife, in which we seek for some general principle underlying the struggle—some names which, adopted as party cries, would serve as a guide to us among the tangled record of factions. Such a principle was found in the enduring conflict between the Papacy and the Empire, and such names were supplied by the rivalry between two noble families of Germany.

The great House of Welf, Dukes of Bavaria and Saxony, relations of the Estensi of Italy, and ancestors of the royal House of Hanover, had constantly struggled against the predominance of the Emperors, first of those of the Franconian line, then of those of the House of Hohenstaufen, and so had been naturally led to support the Popes in their contests with the Empire. On the extinction of the Franconian line a struggle for the throne had arisen between Lothair of Supplinburg, supported by the Welfs, and Conrad and Frederick of Swabia, heads of the House of Hohenstaufen. We have seen how both claimants had sought support in Italy, and how the recognition of one candidate by Milan had led Pavia and her allies to embrace the cause of the other. On the death of Lothair, Conrad of Swabia was chosen as Emperor, but was opposed by Henry the Proud of Bavaria, and his brother Welf. At a battle fought at Weinsberg in 1140 between Conrad and Welf, it is said that the army of the former used as their warcry the name Waiblingen, the name of one of the Hohenstaufen

castles, while the opposing army took for theirs the name of their leader. From this time forth, it is said, the name Waiblingen was used as the rallying cry of the supporters of the Hohenstaufen, that of Welf became synonymous with the opponents of this House ; and as the Hohenstaufen were in general at variance with the Papacy, the name of Welf grew to be equivalent with that of defender of the Church.

Such would seem to be the best supported view, though it is by no means a certain one, as to the origin of the celebrated names which, under the Italianised forms Guelf and Ghibelline, have obtained such a widespread celebrity, and served as a rallying cry for faction through all the most brilliant period of Italian history. The time of their first introduction into the peninsula has given rise to much discussion. Some would have it that they came in at the time of the contest between Lothair and Conrad ; but this conflicts with the view that the names were first used as party cries in 1140, after Lothair's death. Others would trace them to the days of Barbarossa and the Lombard League. Contemporary Italian historians seem, however, to have no knowledge of them during this struggle. Another widely-spread view is that these names were brought into Italy for the first time during the civil war which followed on the death of Henry VI. in 1197.

Philip of Swabia, brother of Henry, claimed the throne, and was opposed by Otho, head of the House of Guelf, who had the support of the Pope.^{*} The war between the two competitors dragged on for eleven years. Milan and her allies were naturally adverse to the House of Hohenstaufen, from which they had suffered so much in the past ; the adhesion of Milan to Otho's party would of itself be enough to lead her enemies to favour Philip ; the various noble factions which were at this period convulsing the Trevisan Mark would attach themselves to one or the other competitor as interest or inclination demanded. It is, then, easy to see that the names Guelf

^{*} Otho was really the second son of Barbarossa's opponent, Henry the Lion, but his elder brother was absent in Palestine.

and Ghibelline would be introduced into Italy, and employed one to distinguish the party of Otho and the Church, the other to denote the supporters of the House of Hohenstaufen. As the animosity between city and city increased, as factions grew fiercer within the walls, the names spread, and took firm root about the middle of the thirteenth century. When Philip's death left Otho triumphant the reason for these party names might seem to have become extinct. But the internecine warfare in Lombardy continued, and was fanned into new vigour by the breach between Otho and the Pope. Milan, Brescia, and Piacenza were more influenced by their fear of the Hohenstaufens than by reverence for the Pope; they clung therefore to Otho. So did certain of the nobles of the Mark, who held that the Pope had no right to attempt to depose the lawful Emperor. Pavia, Cremona, and their allies, from of old supporters of the Hohenstaufens, rallied to the cause of the Pope's new *protégé*, Frederick of Sicily, son of Henry VI. The lords of Este, strong supporters of the Church, ranged themselves on the same side, with their faction among the nobles of the Mark. All Lombardy was divided into two hostile camps, following or opposing the head of the House of Welf in his conflict with the head of the House of Swabia.¹ By a curious freak of fortune the Ghibelline cause was for a moment (1212) identified with that of the Pope, the cities usually hostile to the Empire, Milan and Bologna for example, fell under the ban of the Church. But this was a mere temporary aberration. Once Frederick was established on the throne things drifted back to their normal condition. Milan and her allies were reconciled with the Pope, though maintaining an attitude of disaffection, if not of open hostility, to the Emperor. Frederick's party continued to support him, even when he became estranged from the Papacy; and once Otho was dead the nobles of Imperialist tendencies readily gave him their allegiance.

By a species of malign fate Frederick drifted, almost against his will, into a conflict with the Pope, at the same

¹ In 1212.

time that he had to deal with a rebellious movement of Milan and her allies in Lombardy. Once more the Pope was joined with a Lombard League in a deadly struggle against the Empire; the quarrel was fought out to the bitter end, closing only after thirty years with the ruin of the House of Hohenstaufen; and during this period the name Guelf was thoroughly identified with the party which opposed the Empire and upheld the interests of the Church.¹

So the names Guelf and Ghibelline represent, in the main, the opposing principles of ecclesiastical or lay supremacy. But, together with these broad points of difference, there were mixed up many secondary causes, which tended to confuse the main issue. The party names grafted themselves on to the rivalry between city and city, to the strife between nobles and popolo, to the personal feuds of noble families. They long survived their original causes, and became devoid of meaning, without losing their animosity.

A complete triumph of one or the other party was impossible. The Ghibellines admitted the supremacy of the Church in spiritual matters; the most advanced Guelfs never denied the rights of the Emperors as supreme overlords of Italy. There were Popes who strove to reconcile the warring factions, and who excommunicated Guelf cities which had expelled their Ghibellines. There were Emperors who lived at peace with the Church.² In the days of the Emperor Otho the cities generally counted as Guelf represent for a moment the principle of Imperial supremacy. There were Guelf Communes who defied or made war on the Popes. Matteo Villani declares, and with justice, that the Guelf party "was the foundation, and solid and enduring fortress of the liberty of Italy, and contrary to all tyranny, so that if any one becomes a tyrant he must of necessity become a Ghibelline;" yet we find that Ghibelline Pisa and Pavia were quite as tenacious of their internal

¹ Yet neither Rolandino nor Maurisio use the names Guelf or Ghibelline. After 1250 they became common in the annals.

² Notably Rudolf of Habsburg.

liberties, and as adverse to the rule of a despot, as were those Communes which were most pronouncedly Guelf. To some extent the Ghibellines were the party of the nobles, especially of the feudal nobles who looked to the Emperors to safeguard them from the encroachments of the cities. Yet in the Trevisan Mark the Estensi, the Counts of Saint Boniface, and the Lords of Camino, ultimately ranged themselves on the Guelf side, so did many of the Conti Guidi of Tuscany, and the Malaspinas of Lunigiana. The Guelfs were the party of the popolo, above all of the trading and manufacturing middle classes, yet both in Pavia and her enemy Piacenza the nobles were Guelf, the popolo Ghibelline.

This complication of secondary causes, joined to the fact that the Empire could never aim at the total destruction of the Papacy, universally recognised as the necessary centre of Christendom, and that the Popes could not do without the Empire, to which they looked for the preservation of order, will go far to explain why no final victory was possible. The nobles could not subsist without the trading classes; the latter, in Lombardy at any rate, could not dispense with the nobles. The rivalry of the cities, the conflicts between internal factions remained even if Pope and Emperor were for a moment reconciled. Did a city uphold one side, its neighbour and rival was forced to range itself on the other. When Parma went over to the Guelfs in 1247, Piacenza became Ghibelline; Milan in the hands of the Ghibelline nobles continued to fight Cremona, now the main bulwark of the Guelfs. A momentary triumph of one party was inevitably followed by a reaction, as old animosities or new discontents sprang into life; for a hundred years the balance between Guelf and Ghibelline swings up and down with unfailing regularity, until the growth of despotic power put an end to this as to all other manifestations of municipal freedom, and replaced all the factions arising from the free play of popular passions by one dead level of servitude.

Except in the case of the cities of the Mark, where feuds between rival nobles commenced at a much earlier

period than elsewhere, we can distinguish two periods in the struggle of Guelf against Ghibelline. In the first, lasting up to the middle of the thirteenth century, each city pursued on the whole a definite policy. Milan, Bologna, Brescia, and their allies are consistently Guelf; Pavia, Cremona, Modena, and their friends uphold the Ghibellines.¹ But as faction grew more violent within the walls we find rapid and often confusing changes of side. There are Guelfs and Ghibellines contending in every city, and the triumph of one party is marked by the expulsion of the other. Opposed to the Commune there appear the "exiles of the Commune," organised as a regular state, and awaiting their chance of getting possession in their turn of the city, with the help of those Communes which were in the hands of their own party.

In many cities these factions were for a long period confined to the nobles.² It has been constantly asserted by historians that in this case the Guelfs represent the old burgher nobility, the Ghibellines the newer feudal element. But if we examine the actual facts we shall find that but little can be advanced in support of this theory. In Verona the heads of what became the Guelf party were the feudal chiefs of the Contado,³ the descendants of the former Counts of the city. In Ferrara the majority of the nobles were partisans of the Estensi and followed them when they broke with the Emperor, and the Estensi were the greatest feudal house of the Mark. In Florence the leading Ghibelline houses—the Uberti, Lamberti, and Amidei—can be clearly proved to have been among the oldest families in the city, dating back to before the foundation of the Commune.

The real origin of Guelf and Ghibelline factions in the interior of the Communes would seem to be this. We have seen that the hostility which almost inevitably broke

¹ For convenience I use the words Guelf and Ghibelline here, though they were certainly not in general use before 1250.

² *E.g.*, Parma, the cities of the Mark, and Florence.

³ In Verona the Counts of St. Boniface. So in Pavia the Counts of Langosco, a branch of the Counts of Lomello.

out between neighbouring cities had given rise to a system of alliances by which all Central Lombardy was divided into two great factions, headed respectively by Milan and Pavia. When Barbarossa tried to revive the Imperial authority in Lombardy, Milan, proud of her position as the most powerful of all the Communes, resisted him; her enemies, the weaker party, ranged themselves on the side of the Emperor. Hence in Milan and the cities allied with her there grew up a tradition of hostility to the Empire which threw them inevitably on the side of the Papacy. Equally inevitably Pavia and her allies embraced the cause of the House of Hohenstaufen. We have, then, a period during which the cities are arrayed in two hostile camps, one Papal, the other Imperial. But we have seen that factions of one kind or another arose in nearly every city. The weaker party sought for help amongst the enemies of the Commune. Thus the nobles of Brescia turned for aid to Cremona and Bergamo, the nobles of Milan in 1221 got help from Bergamo and Lodi, the popolo of Piacenza were aided by Cremona in 1229. The same thing happened when the feuds were confined to the nobles. Now that the individual feuds between the cities had been concentrated around one great principle, the weaker faction, whether nobles, or popolo, or a party among the nobles, inevitably embraced the cause opposed to that which the ruling faction supported. The nobles of Milan, at first equally Guelf with the popolo, were forced by gradual steps, and almost against their will, to declare themselves Ghibelline. In Piacenza, where the nobles were the stronger party, the popolo sought help at first from Cremona and Parma, then openly, in 1235, embraced the Imperial party. The Uberti and their followers in Florence definitely became Ghibelline in 1246, when they saw a chance of becoming masters of the city by getting the assistance of the German troops of Frederick II. In this way, then, and not on any *a priori* grounds, must we explain the introduction of the Guelfs and Ghibellines into every city; and this alone will account for the fact that while in Milan and Brescia the

Ghibellines represent the party of the nobles, in Pavia, Piacenza, and apparently in Ferrara and Mantua, they represent the party of the popolo ;¹ while in Parma, Asti, and many other cities the middle classes were for long indifferent to the factions, attending only to the immediate interests of the Commune.²

Of course we must allow something to the influence of the personal element in deciding which faction would be adopted by any particular person or party in a city. The minds of the devout must infallibly have been affected by the terrors of Papal interdicts and excommunications, though, indeed, Bergamo paid no heed to them for thirty years, and Pavia and Cremona for even longer periods. The nobles, too, would be specially influenced by the glamour of the Imperial dignity. Private motives appear very clearly in the case of Parma, where on the election to the Papacy of Sinibaldo Fieschi (Pope Innocent IV.), his kinsmen the Rossi, Lupi, and others, declared themselves Guelfs, and ultimately dealt a deadly blow to the cause of Frederick II. by detaching from his side the city which had been his constant ally for thirty-five years. We find traces of internal struggles of this kind even in the days of Barbarossa. Ten nobles of Verona were executed for intrigues with him at the very commencement of the Lombard League. During the negotiations at Venice he gained over a party to his interests in Treviso. The variations in the attitude of Como and Cremona during his war with the Lombards would seem to point to the existence in these cities of parties supporting and opposing the Empire.

One cannot lay too much stress on the infinite diversity which is perhaps the main characteristic of the story of the cities of Italy. As Symonds puts it,

¹ It seems almost certain that the supremacy of the Ghibellines in Verona rested also on the support of the popolo, and above all on the poorer portion of it.

² This is very noticeable in the case of Asti. The people followed with equal readiness in the field whichever of the noble factions had for the moment the upper hand, though on the whole they were slightly more favourably disposed to the Guelfs.

“When the Communes emerge into prominence . . . they have already assumed shapes of marked distinctness and bewildering diversity. Each wears from the first and preserves a physiognomy that justifies our thinking and speaking of the town as an incarnate entity. The cities of Italy, down to the very smallest, bear the attributes of individuals. The mutual attractions and repulsions that presided over their growth have given them specific qualities which they will never lose, which will be reflected in their architecture, in their customs, in their language, in their policy, as well as in the institutions of their government. We think of them involuntarily as persons, and reserve for them epithets that mark the permanence of their distinctive characters.”¹

And so the general facts sketched in the preceding pages are modified from city to city. The cities of Central Lombardy were particularly torn by feuds between class and class. In the Trevisan Mark such conflicts are but little heard of ; but here rival noble houses contend for the supremacy ; and their quarrels are accompanied by the conflagration of whole quarters within the walls and the wholesale devastation of the country districts. In the Emilian towns—Parma, Reggio, and Modena—the energies of the population found vent in the warfare against neighbouring Communes ; it is not until towards the close of the first half of the thirteenth century that internal discord becomes an important feature in their history, to rage then with as much fury as in the rest of the valley of the Po.

¹ Symonds, “The Age of the Despots,” p. 26.

CHAPTER VIII

THE WARS OF THE CITIES AND THE FACTIONS OF THE MARK

ITALY was left undisturbed from the side of Germany during the eleven years while Philip and Otho struggled for the crown. The cities made use of this interval to pursue their own private quarrels with ever increasing animosity. It would be impossible even to enumerate all the feuds between city and city which are recorded by contemporary annalists. Ferrari makes the curious calculation that during the period from 1190 to 1250 no less than 1,465 combats are recorded between rival Communes, without taking into account the conflicts between smaller places, dependent on greater cities. We find Milan arrayed against Pavia, Como against Bergamo, Brescia against Bergamo and Cremona, Verona against Mantua, Ferrara against Ravenna, Modena against Reggio—in short, every city against its neighbours.

A particularly violent struggle between Parma and Piacenza brought into the field all Central Lombardy as allies of one or the other party. We have already mentioned that Henry VI., in exchange for a sum of money, had granted to Piacenza the town of Borgo San Donnino, which he seems to have looked on as an Imperial fief, but which Parma claimed as rightfully belonging to her. This was in 1191, and the two cities immediately flew to arms. Both parties alternately got possession of the disputed town, both sought the help of their allies. Pavia, Cremona, Bergamo, Reggio, and Modena took part with Parma; Milan, Como, Brescia, Asti, Alessandria, Vercelli, and Novara gave help to Piacenza. A

pitched battle was fought between the strength of each party in 1199, in which the advantage would seem to have remained with Parma and Cremona. In the next years the party of Parma still more gained the upper hand. Como and Milan suffered heavily; discord broke out in Brescia between nobles and people, with the result that the former called in the help of Cremona and Bergamo; and these gained a complete victory over the popolo, whose Carroccio was brought in triumph to Cremona. The latter city seems for some unexplained reason to have been rapidly rising to a position second only to that of Milan, and to have begun to supersede in influence her old ally Pavia. As well as fighting Brescia, Milan, and Piacenza in the cause of Parma, she was able to come to the help of Mantua, which was being hard pressed by Verona; and the united forces succeeded in inflicting on the latter city a defeat so severe that the Veronese had to agree to a disadvantageous peace.

Pavia was not so successful in her warfare against Milan. Isolated from her allies—for Lodi had made peace with Milan in 1198 and Milan, having given up her attempts to subdue Novara had exchanged her former hostility to that city for an alliance—Pavia was ringed round with enemies, and began to weaken under their incessant attacks. The capture of the strong castle of Vigevano after a siege of six weeks, and a great defeat in the open country left the rich district of the Lomelline between the Rivers Ticino and Po at the mercy of the Milanese; and Pavia was forced to submit to hard peace conditions, and to join the alliance of Milan. In 1202 we find Pavia forced to follow the banners of her rival in a raid against the territory of Bergamo.

More peaceful counsels began to prevail in Lombardy as the preparations for the Fourth Crusade turned men's thoughts towards a general pacification of Christendom. Cremona and Bergamo were reconciled with Brescia and Como; and in 1202 Piacenza and Milan made a treaty with Cremona and Parma, by which Borgo San Donnino was left to the latter. A war between Reggio and

Modena, in which the latter had been aided by Verona and Ferrara, was also brought to an end; and, for a moment, there was an almost universal peace.

It is unfortunate that there was no contemporary writer during the twelfth and early thirteenth century who might have given us a general history of Lombardy. As some compensation for this a succession of writers have preserved to us, not indeed the history of Lombardy as a whole, nor even a continuous picture of the life of a particular city, but detached pictures now of one city at one particular epoch, now of another at a different time. In this way, though in the records of each individual city there are gaps, yet each in turn rises before us for a moment, and from the glimpses thus afforded to us we can piece together the history of the whole.

Thus our knowledge of the beginnings of the Commune at Milan and of the strife about the marriage of the clergy comes to us from the chronicles of Arnolph, and of the elder and younger Landolph, the latter of whom was himself much involved in some of the events he relates. We get a vivid picture of the rivalry between neighbouring cities in the rude poem by an unknown citizen of Como telling the story of the ten years' war of his native town against Milan. The Morenas give a valuable insight into the feelings with which Lodi and the other towns oppressed by Milan regarded Barbarossa's war with that city. The bald pages of the Milanese Sire Raoul are yet vivified here and there by a glow of patriotic pride as he tells the tale of the resistance of the Lombards to the Emperor. As Sir Raoul ends, Cremona comes into our view. The annals of Bishop Sicard and of another unknown writer give us only the barest outline of facts, yet enable us to understand in some measure the fierce energy and the expansive force which run through the life of the Communes at this period. Then the Emilian cities take up the tale, their annals increasing in volume and in literary value as the great struggle between the Papacy and the doomed House of Hohenstaufen draws to its close. From

amongst the unnamed writers of the annals of Modena and Reggio, of Parma and Piacenza, stands out clearly the personality of Fra Salimbene of Parma. Less a serious historian than a recounter of his own experiences, he has reproduced, as in a mirror, the age in which he lived, with its fierce party struggles and its great figures such as Frederick II. and St. Louis of France. He brings before us by a hundred anecdotes the daily life of the clergy, of the feudal lords, of the merchants and artisans of the Communes. The political events of the time are recounted, together with the strange outbreaks of religious fanaticism among the people, the careers of eminent Churchmen or party leaders, and the petty details of daily life. The extraordinary frankness of the work is equalled by the clearness and boldness with which men and events are judged. The outspokenness with which he treats of the manners of the age is the more remarkable when we remember that he composed the work in his old age for the information of his niece, a nun at Parma.

We would give much for some chronicle which would have preserved to us the outlook on affairs of Pavia, ever battling stubbornly for the Hohenstaufen, ever slipping gradually back from its proud position as the rival and equal of Milan. But the loyalty to the Empire and the hatred of Milan, which are the two main features in the story of Pavia, inspired none of its citizens to tell the tale of his country's battle in a losing cause. It is not until the early fourteenth century, when the city had sunk before her rival, when the hand of God lay heavy on her, that one of the sons was led to give us the "Praises of Pavia," a work in which the loyalty of the writer cannot disguise from us that the sun of the capital of the Lombards had set for ever.

Towards the close of the thirteenth century we again meet with Milanese writers ; and we find in the chronicles of Asti one of the most vivid impressions left to us of the turbulent life of a Commune where almost every year was marked by a revolution, and yet, in spite of all, the citizens prospered and extended their power far and wide.

But of all the provinces of Italy there is none which has left us such numerous and such brilliant records of the thirteenth century as the Trevisan Mark. From Gerardo Maurisio of Vicenza, the partisan of the House of Romano, whose exploits he relates, to the statesman Mussato, the worthy precursor of the humanists of the Renaissance, the contemporary of Dante and looked on by his own age as a genius even superior to the great Florentine, we have a succession of real historians with an insight into political affairs and a skill in recounting events not unworthy of the remarkable facts they relate. And among the diversified pages of Italian history there are none more striking than the tale of the feuds which tormented the Trevisan Mark—

“The land which Po and Adige lave,”

as Dante styles it, and which its children, before their quarrels had laid it waste, fondly called “The Mark of Love”¹—as they are related to us in the writings of Maurisio and Ferreto of Vicenza, of Rolandino and Mussato of Padua, to mention only the four chief writers of this portion of Italy.

Either on account of the hilly nature of a large part of this district, or profiting by the feuds between the chief cities, which here were all nearly equal in power, the feudal lords of the Mark preserved their independence longer than did most of those in the rest of Lombardy. The Counts of San Bonifazio, descendants of the former Counts of Verona, held their ground almost at the very gates of that city, within which they still preserved certain rights. The House of Este, seated on the southern slopes of the Euganean hills and in the marshy district called the Polesine of Rovigo, between the Adige and the Po, and the lords of Camino, on the borderland between Treviso, Belluno, and the lands of the Patriarch of Aquileia, were able, through their own resources or their alliances, to preserve their independence all through

¹ Cantù, “Ezzelino da Romano,” p. 135.

the twelfth century. Later in origin than these three families, but destined to obtain a fearful prominence over them all, were the lords called first of Onara, a name they subsequently changed for that of their chief seat, Romano.

The founder of this family, a certain Etzel, or Ezelo, is said to have come into Italy in the train of the Emperor Conrad the Salic, a poor knight owning only one horse. He received from this Emperor the fiefs of Onara and Romano, and from the Bishop of Vicenza he obtained the small town of Bassano. From him was descended Ezzelino, surnamed the Stammerer, who largely increased the possessions of his family, obtaining many castles and lands as fiefs of the Patriarchs of Aquileia and the Bishops of Feltre and Belluno. In this way, besides many scattered possessions, he became master of a compact territory between the lands of Vicenza, Treviso, and Padua, and grew to be equal in power to any other of the feudal lords of the Mark.

In his younger days he is said to have gained great renown by his exploits during the Crusade led by the Emperor Conrad ; and, on his return, he played a prominent part in the affairs of the Mark. Following the common practice of the feudal lords whose lands lay on the borders of two or more Communes, he sought to maintain his freedom from the control of any one city by becoming a burgher of Vicenza, Treviso, and Padua, in each of which he built for himself a strong house. His skill in arms, his wisdom in the arts of peace, caused him to be named by the confederate cities one of their generals in the war against Barbarossa. We find him, together with Anselm da Doara, in command of the forces sent by the League to the relief of Alessandria ; and at the Peace of Constance a special paragraph in the treaty records that he was once more readmitted to the Imperial favour.¹ He cannot have survived for long

¹ Some writers have rather absurdly taken this to mean that he deserted the cause of the League. Rather it shows that he felt that he required a special clause to secure him from the vengeance of the Emperor.

after the conclusion of this peace; but in these days of his old age he committed the crime which blemishes his previous good repute, and was the first act in the bloody drama which was to work such havoc in the Mark.

The family of Camposampiero were lords of wide domains in the dioceses of Padua and Treviso. A marriage was projected between the eldest son of Tisolino, head of this family, and Cecilia of Baone and Abano, one of the richest heiresses in the territory of Padua. Before concluding the agreement Tissolino consulted his father-in-law, Ezzelino. The latter betrayed the confidence thus reposed in him, and, sending rich presents to Cecilia's guardian, obtained her hand for his son, another Ezzelino, called in later times the Monk, from his retirement to a cloister in his old age. The marriage was celebrated before the Camposampieros could interfere; and the treacherous act of the lord of Romano excited their fiercest resentment. Not long after her marriage, as Cecilia was visiting her Paduan estates, she was surprised by Tisolino's son and brutally outraged. The younger Ezzelino repudiated his bride,¹ and from these mutual injuries a deadly feud sprang up, which was to end only with the almost complete destruction of the House of Camposampiero.

Deeds of violence such as these, or political jealousies, had from an early period led to feuds within the aristocracies which ruled the Communes of the Mark. As early as 1172 we read that Verona was burned by its own citizens, and in 1194 a nearly similar fate overtook Vicenza. In this city a party known as the Maltraversi, headed by the descendants of the former Counts of Vicenza, was at variance with the family of Vivario and their supporters, amongst whom was Ezzelino the Monk. The quarrel broke out into open violence in 1194; the two factions fought in the streets; Ezzelino and his party, to defend themselves, set fire to some houses, and the flames spreading, consumed a large part of the city.

This was the commencement of a long and complicated series of wars, which involved all the cities of the

¹ She afterwards married a noble Venetian.



SOAVE.
ANOTHER VIEW.

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Mark. Ezzelino and the Vivarii withdrew to Bassano, which now, like the greater cities, had begun to govern itself as a Commune, but where he still maintained his rank as the chief citizen. Vicenza claimed dominion over the town, as successor to the rights of the Bishop ; but Bassano had no desire to be swallowed up by its powerful neighbour, and, with Ezzelino, bid defiance to the burghers of Vicenza. The interposition of Verona brought about a peace, and the banished faction returned. A few years later, however, Ezzelino and Bassano were again at variance with Vicenza ; and this time it would appear that both parties in that city were united in attacking the lord of Romano. He turned to Padua for help, and this city, glad of a chance of wiping out old injuries, fell on the Vicentines and routed them, taking over two thousand prisoners. Vicenza sought assistance from the Veronese, who came with their Carroccio, and ravaged the Paduan lands right up to the city walls, until the terrified Paduans released their prisoners. On this Ezzelino addressed himself also to Verona, became a burgher of that Commune, and put his chief castles into its hands, with the result that the Veronese brought about a reconciliation between him and Vicenza, by the terms of which he was readmitted to that city, and restored to all his possessions. But this irritated the Paduans, and, instigated no doubt by the Camposampieros, they fell on Onara and seized the castle.

In the meantime Treviso had attacked Belluno, which was still under the rule of its Bishop ; the Patriarch of Aquileia interposing to end the quarrel, was himself involved in it ; Treviso incited a number of the Patriarch's vassals to revolt from him ; and he, to obtain help from Venice, sought burgher rights there. Hence a war between Treviso and Venice. And about the same period Verona was at deadly feud with Mantua. In short, the whole Mark was filled with rapine and bloodshed until, in 1202, the interposition of the Pope, who was busily organising the Fourth Crusade, brought about a general peace in the Mark as well as in Central Lombardy.

This peace was not of long duration. The very next year Bologna fell on Modena. These Communes before the days of the Lombard League had had frequent quarrels, arising out of conflicting claims to the small town of Nonantola, and to the allegiance of several of the feudal lords on their borders. The feud which now began afresh lasted, with but short intervals of truce, for nearly fifty years; and a permanent rivalry between Bologna and Modena may now be added to those between Milan and Pavia, and Parma and Piacenza.

In the Mark the peace scarcely lasted longer. A fresh outrage of Ezzelino's on the family of Camposampiero brought on new hostilities between the two families, in which the Marquis of Este appears as an opponent of Ezzelino. Peace was again made, only to be broken by an attempt of the Camposampieros to murder Ezzelino while he was attending a great festival at Venice. Azzo of Este was walking with Ezzelino at the moment of the attack, and the latter asserted that, far from trying to help him, the Marquis had done his best to hinder him from defending himself. The two families of Este and Romano were now permanently estranged.

Verona was the theatre in which they first fought out their quarrel. Here the Count of San Bonifazio stood at the head of one party, which was opposed by the family of Montecchi (Shakespeare's Montagues) and their adherents. Ezzelino had been Podestà in Vienna in 1200, and had established amicable relations with the Montecchi; Azzo of Este was on terms of friendship with San Bonifazio. The two factions among the nobles appealed to arms to settle their differences. It is not very clear how often one party expelled the other during the years 1204 to 1208, but it is certain that early in 1206 the Montecchi were driven out, after a fierce fight in the streets and a conflagration which destroyed a great part of the city. The defeated party appealed to Ezzelino, and found a powerful supporter in Salinguerra, the competitor with Azzo of Este for the rule of Ferrara.

In this city, we are told, there existed two factions,

already of long standing in the days of William Marchesella degli Adelardi, the liberator of Ancona. The majority of the nobles, with the Adelardi at their head, were at variance with Torello Salinguerra, head of the chief noble house in the city, who was favoured by the people.¹ William Marchesella, being left without male heirs, determined to end the feud by giving his niece, Marchesella by name, and the inheritor of his vast possessions, in marriage to Torello's son. As she was still only a child, it was settled that on William's death Torello was to assume the guardianship of her and her estates until such time as the marriage could be celebrated.

But this arrangement by no means suited the partisans of the Adelardi, eager to continue the feud even when their leader had abandoned it. As soon as William was dead they sought a new head in the Marquis of Este, whose territory lay along the northern borders of Ferrara. An agreement was soon come to with him; Marchesella was carried off from the care of Salinguerra, and brought to the castle of the Marquis, where she was at once betrothed to his son Obizzo. She died before the marriage could take place, and, by William's will, half of his lands were now to go to his sister's sons, the rest to the Church. But so powerful was the spirit of faction that it prevailed over self-interest, and William's nephews voluntarily resigned their inheritance in favour of the House of Este in return for its support against Salinguerra. The lands thus acquired and the support of a whole faction in the Commune gave the Marquis a position in Ferrara which ultimately led to his posterity obtaining sovereign rights over the city. For the present he was received as a burgher, and struggled with Salinguerra for pre-eminence.

Naturally the quarrel of the two factions now assumed a very bitter aspect, and all Ferrara was filled with confusion. The chronicler tells us that the rival parties

¹ The chronicler of Ferrara says, "The greatest part of the Plebeians and the Ramberti and some other powerful men of the nobles favoured Salinguerra." Most of the nobles opposed him.

expelled one another ten times before the year 1220, and each temporary triumph was marked by the destruction of the houses and the pillage of the goods of the vanquished faction. He goes on to say that his father, sitting by the fire in the winter evenings, used to relate how he himself had seen the destruction of thirty-two lofty towers in the course of these civic brawls.

At the opening of the thirteenth century Salinguerra, son of Torello, was at the head of the one party, Marquis Azzo of Este led the other. Ezzelino and Salinguerra had thus both a common enemy in the person of the Marquis; they were also connected by marriage, so that it was but natural that they should unite to support the Montecchi of Verona against the faction led by San Bonifazio in alliance with the house of Este.

The whole Mark was now arrayed in two hostile parties. On the one side were the Houses of Este, San Bonifazio, and Camposampiero, to whom were shortly added the lords of Camino and the Vivarii of Vicenza. On the other side stood Ezzelino and Salinguerra, supported by the inhabitants of Bassano and the Commune of Treviso. In Vicenza Ezzelino had changed his relationship to the factions which strove for mastery. It would seem that both parties had united against him in the attack on Bassano and the war which followed with Padua. As soon as peace was made he had joined the faction of his former enemies, the Counts of Vicenza, no doubt angered by the manner in which he had been treated by those who had once been his friends. For the moment there was peace in Vicenza; the Vivarii were in power, but had proceeded to no oppressive measures against their adversaries.

Aided by Ezzelino and Salinguerra, the Montecchi returned to Verona, and drove out their adversaries by the strong hand. The latter turned for help to Mantua, whose citizens were devoted to the interests of the Count of San Bonifazio—possibly he, to secure himself from the aggressions of Verona, had sided with Mantua in the preceding war between the two cities. The Marquis of Este, at the head of the Mantuans and of his partisans

collected from all the Mark, advanced to restore the exiles. After fierce fighting in the streets the Montecchi were once more expelled, their houses destroyed; and Azzo followed up his success by making himself master of the castles in which the defeated party had taken refuge.

Fortune seemed to smile on the Marquis. In 1208 he re-entered Ferrara, from which Salinguerra had driven him in the preceding year; and it is said that he was made supreme ruler of the city,¹ the first example of a free Commune resigning its liberties into the hands of a despot. Secure in the rule of Verona, of which he guided the policy till his death in 1212, with Ferrara obedient to his will, and Mantua allied to him, Azzo now brought about a league between these cities and Cremona and Modena. The territory which lies in the angle formed by the sudden bend of the Po northward at Guastalla and again eastward at Borgoforte, and which had once formed part of the territories of Matilda, had been for some time contested by Mantua, Reggio, and Cremona. The first of these cities had been extending its rule over districts claimed by Reggio, and we find the allies of Mantua now operating in this region against the castle of Suzara. Since Modena and Bologna were, as we have said, in a chronic state of hostility, an alliance had naturally been formed between the latter Commune and Reggio. Parma was also allied to Reggio, and the Bolognese brought into the field their allies, Imola and Faenza. The forces of these five Communes advanced to relieve the castle, and were opposed by the five leagued with Azzo of Este. As is too often the case with the history of this period, we know nothing of what followed, beyond the bare fact that Suzara was relieved; but for many years we find hostilities continuing between Reggio and Mantua as well as between Reggio and Modena.

It is to be noted that Azzo of Este and his faction, to whom Sismondi already applies the name of Guelf,

¹ There are, however, grave doubts as to the genuineness of the act purporting to record the election of Azzo as "gubernator et rector et generalis et perpetuus dominus."

appear here as allies of the Imperialistic Cremona, which in the very same year was once more at war with the Papally inclined Milan and Brescia. This goes far towards proving that the factions in the Mark had not yet assumed any decided position towards either Pope or Emperor, and that the real crystallising of the warring factions among the nobles and of the rival cities into the definite shape of groups ranged under the banner of the Empire or of the Church did not take place until a period later than that which is generally assigned to it.¹

Following up his success at Verona, Azzo in the next year (1209) expelled Ezzelino from Vicenza by the help of the Vivarii. In the open field, however, Ezzelino, at the head of his own vassals and the burghers of Bassano, entirely defeated the forces of Vicenza. Azzo was only just in time to drive back the victors from the walls of that city; and then, assembling all his strength, he advanced to attack Bassano. Treviso, however, where Ezzelino had powerful supporters, moved to his help; so, too, did Padua, always ready to range herself in opposition to Vicenza. Salinguerra seized the opportunity to make a sudden attack on Ferrara, in the absence of so many of the partisans of his rival, and once more made himself master of that town. This news caused Azzo to retreat from his operations against Bassano, and the two factions once more faced one another on equal terms. At this moment Otho, left uncontested ruler of Germany by the murder of his rival Philip, descended by the Brenner, and issued orders for a general cessation of hostilities.

The rival leaders went to Otho's camp, where a reconciliation, a temporary one as it proved, was brought about, not without difficulty. Otho seems to have recognised the advantage it would be to him to attach the great nobles of the Mark to his interests, irrespective of their personal rivalries. He made large grants to Salinguerra, brought back the Montecchi to Verona, and installed Ezzelino as Podestà of Vicenza. Azzo of

¹ *I.e.*, until the time of the quarrel between Frederick II. and the Lombards in 1226.

Este had received the Marquisate of Ancona from the Pope, he now took it a second time from Otho's hands. This favour, however, did not counterbalance in Azzo's mind the resentment he felt at the benefits conferred on his enemies. He was Otho's kinsman, and as such expected the Imperial support in his private quarrels. His future conduct towards Otho bears witness of this resentment.

For the moment, however, peace reigned in Italy. The Pope was friendly to Otho; and the cities through which he passed on his journey to Rome received him with fitting honour. Reaching the Eternal City, and renewing his lavish promises to respect the rights of the Holy See, and to surrender all claims on Romagna, Spoleto, the Mark of Ancona, and the lands of the Countess Matilda, Otho received the Imperial Crown at the hands of Innocent III.

The harmony between Pontiff and Cæsar lasted but for a short time. The blame for the rupture must be entirely laid upon Otho, whom success had blinded to the dangers of a quarrel with the Pope. With many good qualities he was of a rough, overbearing disposition, ungrateful to his supporters and inclined to overestimate his own strength. Seeing himself, as he thought, secure in possession of the throne, he began to regret the sacrifices of the Imperial rights which he had made to purchase Papal support, and gave a ready ear to those of his councillors who urged him to violate his engagements and revive all the claims of former Emperors to dominion in Italy.

Otho had made the most lavish promises to the Pope; but no sooner was he crowned than he changed his attitude. The investiture of Azzo of Este as Marquis of Ancona seemed an encroachment on the Papal rights over that district; and the Emperor still further infringed the rights of the Church by seizing many towns in Central Italy and setting up a Duke in Spoleto. Former Emperors had, it is true, made similar appointments, but Otho had solemnly sworn to acknowledge the Pope as sole ruler of Spoleto, Romagna and the Mark

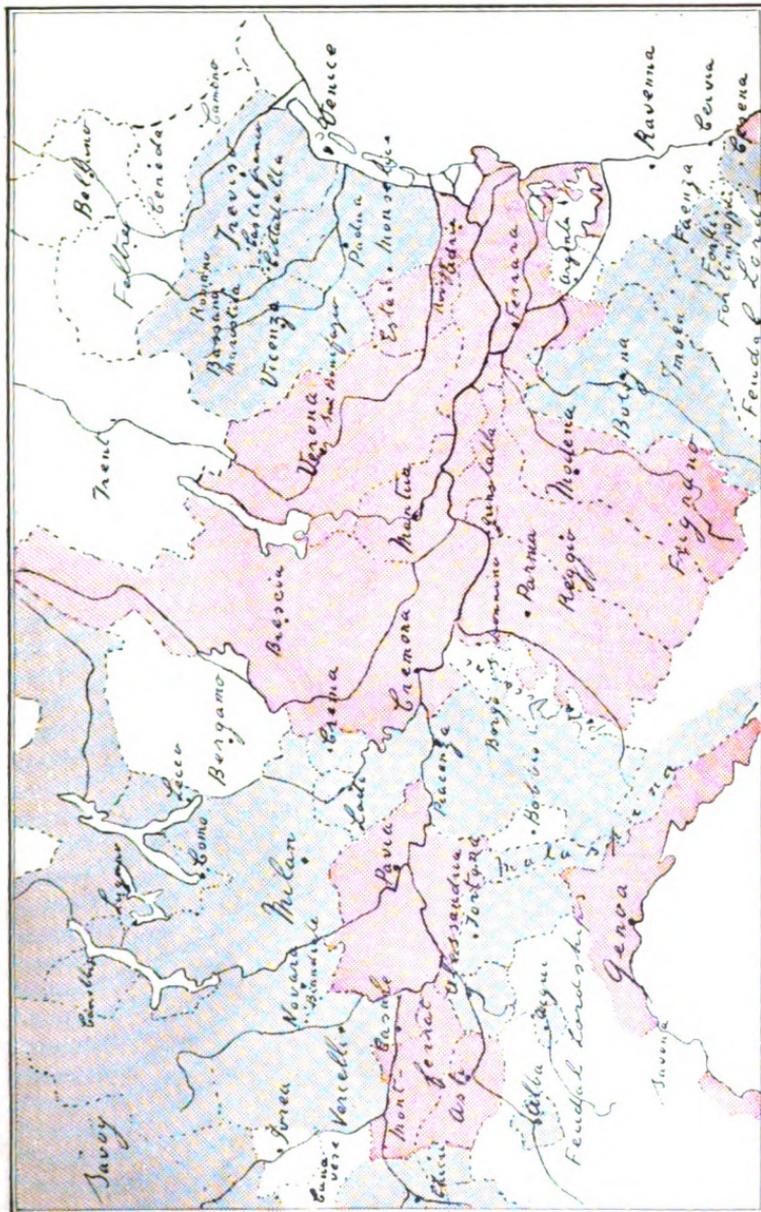
of Ancona and to abandon to him the inheritance of Matilda, or that part of it at least which comprised Southern Tuscany. Still more unjustifiable was his attack on Apulia and Sicily, the dominions of Innocent's ward Frederick, son of Henry VI., the last representative of the House of Hohenstaufen. In league with some discontented barons of the mainland, he invaded Frederick's kingdom in 1210 and soon made himself master of a large number of cities and fortresses.

The repeated expostulations of Innocent proving fruitless, that pontiff as a last resource excommunicated Otho, and declared his deposition from the Empire. Papal emissaries were not long in exciting a revolt in Germany, where Otho had never been able to make himself very popular; and a deputation from many leading nobles and prelates was sent to Frederick to offer him the Imperial crown and to beg him to come in person and head his supporters north of the Alps.

Frederick's counsellors shrank from the dangers of the enterprise, but the young monarch—he was only sixteen—overruled their fears; and relying on Innocent's support he left his kingdom and proceeded to Rome, where he was received by Pope Innocent with every mark of friendship.

The Genoese, who had most important commercial relations with Sicily, had easily been won over to Frederick's side. Their fleet escorted him to Genoa, where he waited until the efforts of the Pope to bring the Lombards over to his cause should bear fruit, and enable him to pass across the valley of the Po into Germany.

The news of the outbreak in Germany had determined Otho to recross the Alps. Before leaving Lombardy he had summoned the deputies of the cities to meet him at Lodi to renew their oaths of fealty. Almost all obeyed, but Azzo of Este, more obedient to the Pope than to the Emperor, did not appear, and his example was followed by the Communes of Pavia, Cremona, and Verona. From this moment the House



MAP II.
 STRUGGLE BETWEEN OTHO OF BAVARIA AND FREDERICK OF HOHENSTAUFEN IN 1212.

Partisans of Otho. Black.
 Partisans of Frederick II. Red.
 Uncertain or Neutral Uncoloured.

of Este stands pre-eminent as the champion of the Papal cause in Lombardy.

Innocent's efforts to win over the cities met with only a partial success. Close allies of the Popes as the Milanese had been during the preceding half century, the remembrance of their sufferings at the hands of the House of Hohenstaufen outweighed their attachment to the Papacy, and they returned a flat refusal to the overtures of Innocent. Piacenza followed the example of Milan, so did its smaller neighbours Lodi and Crema. But this attitude was in itself enough to cause Pavia and Cremona to side with the Pope. Besides, these two cities were as attached to the Hohenstaufens as Milan was averse to them. Parma had long been allied with Cremona against Piacenza; Ferrara, Mantua, and Verona were under the influence of the Marquis Azzo, Modena was leagued with them; all these cities declared for Frederick. So did Reggio, though apparently only for a moment, for the next year we find the Commune, aided by Bologna, at war with Modena. Bologna, like Milan, feared the Hohenstaufens, and so held with Otho; its attitude determined that of its allies in Romagna Cesena, Faenza, Imola, Forli, Bertinoro. But these were confronted in that province by a hostile league formed by Rimini, Pesaro, Fano, and Urbino, which all ranged themselves on the side of Frederick.

In the Mark Ezzelino, with Salinguerra, remained faithful to Otho. Vicenza and Treviso were ruled by their partisans; Padua, too, was on their side. In Brescia nobles and people were, as usual, at variance; the former leaned towards Cremona, the latter towards Milan; the victory of the popular party secured the Commune for Otho.¹

In short, all Lombardy was divided into two hostile camps, to which later writers have applied the names Guelf and Ghibelline. But, by a curious confusion, the Ghibelline cause was for the moment that of the Pope; Pavia and Cremona, which had braved the Papal

¹ Acqui, Alba, Alessandria, Como, Vercelli, Novara, Tortona, were all allied with Otho and the Milanese.

thunders in the cause of the House of Swabia, now found themselves the allies of the Church in support of that same house; Milan and Piacenza, which had suffered so much from the Empire, were now arrayed in defence of the Emperor against the pretensions of the Papacy; and the Emperor himself was head of that House of Welf whose name had become synonymous with that of champion of the Church.

Frederick remained nearly three months in Genoa, vainly endeavouring to secure a passage across Lombardy by negotiations. The slender forces at his disposal made it dangerous to attempt to force a road; but delay seemed more dangerous still, and the young sovereign resolved to risk everything on a bold stroke.

Asti, the chief city in Piedmont, had embraced his cause, so had the Marquis of Montferrat, whose house from of old had been faithful to the Hohenstaufens and allied with Pavia. But Alessandria, founded by a pontiff, had already developed such hostility to Asti, that it now refused to listen to Innocent, and with Alba and Acqui prepared to resist his *protégé*. Frederick, however, evaded the hostile forces and came safely to Asti. The road north was barred by Vercelli and Novara—the former from of old hostile to Montferrat, the latter in alliance with Milan since that city had renounced farther attempts to oppress its smaller neighbours. The westward road seems to have been closed to him by the hostility of the Count of Savoy, so Frederick proceeded to Pavia, from which he hoped to make his way eastward to where the cities supporting him formed a solid group and commanded the entrance to the passes leading northward through Tyrol.

But the territories of Milan and Lodi separated Pavia from her allies further east; and a strong force of Milanese patrolled the banks of the Lambro which ran between the lands of Pavia and Lodi. The young Frederick, impatient of further delay, determined again on a bold policy, and setting out from Pavia under cover of the night, he succeeded in evading his enemies, and reached Cremona, where he was welcomed by Azzo

and his partisans.¹ From here his passage to Verona and the road northward to Germany was easy. The direct route over the Brenner into the valley of the Inn proved, however, to be held against him; and he was forced to make his way over the mountains into the valley of the Upper Rhine, where he was received as sovereign by the Bishop of Coire and the Abbot of St. Gallen. Pushing on regardless of danger, he reached Constance with a handful of followers, only to find that Otho with a considerable force was only a few hours' march distant, and that his cooks and other servants had already entered the town to prepare for their master's arrival. Frederick's position seemed desperate, but his eloquence prevailed on Bishop and burghers to range themselves on his side; the gates were closed, and Otho, unprepared for a siege, was forced to retire,

For the next six years the two rivals fought out their quarrel in Germany, success inclining ever more and more to the side of Frederick, until in 1218 Otho's death placed him in undisputed possession of the Empire. Italy during this period was left quite free from all interference from the side of Germany, and the cities were able to satisfy their mutual animosities under the banners of the two claimants to the Imperial crown.

The war was at first carried on on a large scale, resembling in this the struggle of the days of the Lombard League, and involving, as we have seen, nearly all the cities of Lombardy. Cremona comes forward at this period as the chief opponent of Milan and the principal supporter of Frederick. A great confederate army from Milan, Piacenza, and six other Communes, as well as many of the popular party of Brescia, invaded the Cremonese territory in 1213. At Castel Leone they surrounded the forces of Cremona, which were aided by three hundred Brescian nobles and some help from Pavia; but these, drawing courage from their desperate situation, and in spite of inferior numbers, gained a

¹ Most of his escort were slain or captured by the Milanese.

complete victory, taking four thousand prisoners and the Carroccio of Milan.¹

This victory was not followed up; and the Milanese turned against Pavia, hoping to crush this city, which was almost isolated in the midst of the partisans of Otho. Tortona, Vercelli, Alba, Acqui, and Alessandria joined their forces to those of Milan, but here, again, the allies met with a complete overthrow, two thousand prisoners being left in the hands of the Pavesans. The supporters of Innocent and Frederick saw in these disasters the working of the Papal interdict which had been pronounced against Milan and Bologna in the previous year. Modern historians suggest that the internal dissensions between nobles and people, which broke out with renewed violence in this year in Milan were largely responsible for the ill-success of her arms.

In the Veronese Mark also the war was at first prosecuted on a large scale. Azzo of Este had led an army assembled from Verona, Ferrara, Mantua, and other Communes² against Ezzelino, on whose side were Treviso, Padua, Bassano, and Vicenza. Azzo had hoped to capture this latter city, but his forces were completely routed near the walls.

This was in 1212. Soon afterwards Azzo died, and with his death the league which he had built up in Eastern Lombardy began to fall asunder. Salinguerra attacked Ferrara, and forced Azzo's son and successor, Aldobrandino, to share the rule with him, both uniting in naming the Podestà. A private quarrel between Aldobrandino and Padua led to the siege of the castle of Este by the latter city, helped by Ezzelino. After an obstinate defence the young marquis was forced to surrender, to become a burgher of Padua, and to acknowledge the overlordship of the Commune over Este and the adjoining district.

¹ According to Raumer, p. 189, vol. iii., the Cremonese were surrounded by their enemies, and asked for a truce, as it was close to Pentecost. On this being refused they fought with the courage of despair.

² Pavia, Cremona, Reggio, and Brescia (this city was still under the influence of the nobles).



TREVISO.
SALONE DEL GRAN CONSIGLIO.

The death of Azzo, and the overtures of Innocent to Salinguerra, on whom he conferred a large portion of the lands of the Countess Matilda in the dioceses of Bologna and Modena, led to a pacification between the supporters of Otho and Frederick in the eastern cities. The Montecchi returned to Verona, the opponents of Ezzelino to Vicenza. Matters drifted back to the old state of desultory warfare between city and city, with intervals of peace, broken almost as soon as made.¹ The occasion of one of these quarrels is so characteristic that it deserves to be given at some length.

The people of Treviso, to celebrate an interval of peace, had summoned all the neighbouring populations to a splendid festival in their city. Amongst other amusements they had provided a mimic castle of wood adorned in the most sumptuous manner with coverings of vair, ermine, samite, purple, and scarlet, set off with gold and costly jewels. Within this castle were stationed the twelve most beautiful ladies of Padua with their attendant maidens, armed with all kinds of flowers and fruits. The chosen youths of the neighbouring cities advanced in bands to attack the fortress defended by such a garrison. The ladies made a long and vigorous defence. Showers of violets and lilies, apples, pears, grapes, and even the choice fruits of the East mingled with perfumed waters of various kinds, hurtled through the air. In spite of these missiles the ladies stuck to their posts. But finally a band of Venetians, "fighting prudently and delectably," pressed forward through the rain of projectiles, breached the walls, and planted on them the banner of St. Mark. The youth of Padua, inflamed at this sight, pressed forward in turn to force their way inside the fortifications. The two bands were crushed together in the breach; angry words arose; from words both parties came to blows; the Paduans proved the stronger, and in the struggle seized on the banner of St. Mark and tore it.

With difficulty the Trevisans restored order, and drove both parties out of the town. The Venetians flew to arms

¹ So in 1213 Reggio and Bologna were at war with Modena, in 1215 Reggio and Cremona were at war with Verona and Mantua.

to demand satisfaction for the outrage to their flag. The government of Padua refused it. Hence a war between the two cities, in which the Paduans got the worst. As a condition of peace they were forced to send to Venice twenty-five of the young men who had destroyed the banner. Once arrived in Venice these were courteously treated, and sent home honourably to their own city. But in memory of this, down to the last days of the Venetian republic, the city of Padua sent every year on a fixed day a tribute of thirty hens. These were let loose in Venice, and were chased and killed by the populace, among whom the day of the "Paduan hens" was one of the most noted festivals.

The war in Central and Western Lombardy was carried on vigorously during these years. The Milanese, having put an end to their internal quarrels, began to make up for their previous reverses. In two successive campaigns they made themselves masters of a great portion of the territory of Pavia; then, in alliance with the Count of Savoy, they proceeded westward against the Marquis of Montferrat and captured Casale, now subject to or allied with the Marquis, and, to please the burghers of Vercelli, carried off the whole population into captivity.

Successes gained by Cremona and Parma on the eastern frontiers of Milan and Piacenza did not check the progress of the Milanese towards the west. Pavia, almost surrounded by enemies—having as immediate allies only Asti and Montferrat—begins at last to sink beneath the attacks of her hereditary foe. Milan was now far superior in commerce and manufactures, in population and wealth, to the former metropolis of the Lombard kings. We can assign no certain reason for the decline of Pavia. She has left us no records from this period, and the annals of other cities throw no light on her internal affairs. Perhaps dissensions between nobles and people, of the existence of which some years later we have proof, crippled her forces abroad, or dried up her wealth at home; all we can say with certainty is that the place formerly held by Pavia as the second city of Lombardy must henceforth be assigned to Cremona.

In 1217 Milan obtained a decisive advantage over her rival. A great defeat of Pavia and Asti forced the former city to renounce Frederick's party and to enrol herself among the allies of Milan. In the following year a confederate force, composed of Milanese and Pavesans, with the contingents of eight other Communes, advanced against Cremona and Parma. Help came to these latter from Modena and Reggio ; and these four cities scattered the opposing army at Zibello, in that part of the lands of Cremona which lay south of the Po.

The battle, like most others in these contests, led to no immediate results. The Lombards were beginning to weary of the war ; the death of Otho, leaving Frederick undisputed master of Germany, took from Milan and her allies all pretext for continuing the struggle. Innocent III., greatest of the medieval Popes, had died in 1215 ; his successor, Honorius III., was turning all his energies to arousing the nations of the West to a new Crusade. His emissaries were already busied in working for a universal pacification. Under these circumstances peace was soon brought about. Milan and her allies were freed from the interdict. Frederick was recognised as Emperor. Parma, Cremona, and their allies made peace with the former partisans of Otho. Even the interminable quarrels of the factions in the Trevisan Mark were stilled. The year 1219 is passed over in silence by all the annalists ; for once peace reigned in Lombardy.

It is noteworthy that in all the warfare of this period we hear of no attempts of one city to destroy or enslave another. The strength of the majority of the Communes was too equally balanced to make such an attempt possible ; and the penalty paid by Milan in the days of Barbarossa for the destruction of Lodi and Como had no doubt effectually taught the more powerful cities the danger of trying to build up an empire at the expense of their weaker neighbours. Besides, the conquest or destruction of any Commune would have been too glaring a violation of the Treaty of Constance to have passed unpunished by any Emperor who claimed the smallest influence in Italy. Except for spasmodic efforts of Cre-

mona to recover Crema—to the possession of which she had a legal claim—it is not until the end of the thirteenth century, when the Imperial power had practically become extinct in Italy, that we find the larger cities beginning to destroy the liberty of their smaller neighbours.¹

Hence the constant wars of this period were of an entirely desultory nature. They took the form of raids to destroy the enemy's crops, or of isolated attacks on border castles. If there was a battle on a large scale, the victors scarcely ever followed up their advantage. They went home to enjoy a triumph in their own city, leading behind them long strings of prisoners, or, greatest trophy of all, the Carroccio of the rival Commune.

Great delight was taken in insulting one's enemies. A favourite means to this end was to shoot the body of an ass from the engines of war so that it fell within the walls of the hostile city. Another device was to strike money in the enemy's territory, or to hold races for a prize consisting of a richly embroidered cloth (*correre il palio*, as it was called) around the hostile walls.

Each city carefully preserved the trophies of its success. The great tower of the cathedral at Modena still holds the bucket which the horsemen of that city once snatched from within the walls of Bologna. The war machines of the Bolognese captured on another occasion were placed in the cathedral of Parma, and this nearly led to a conflict between this city and Modena, which had shared in the victory. The Bolognese carried off the gates of Imola; the Perugians did the same to Foligno, and, wishing to adorn their cathedral, fell on Arezzo and seized upon the marble columns with which the Aretines were preparing to ornament their own. One can still see in Perugia the fragments of the chains carried off from Siena, and in the cathedral of Siena the visitor is still shown the two great masts which bore the

¹ One must except the cases where the cities attacked smaller communities not recognised by the Peace of Constance. The subjugation of Borgo San Donnino by Parma, and of Bobbio by Piacenza, will come under this head.

standards on the Florentine Carroccio at Montaperti. ¹ The chains of the port of Pisa, for long suspended in Florence and Genoa, can now be seen on the wall of the Campo Santo in Pisa, to which they were restored in our own day by the captors as a symbol of Italian unity.

Scarcely any territorial changes arose from such a warfare. The forces were too equally balanced, and the intervention of Pope or Emperor or of neighbouring Communes led to a mutual restoration of conquests at the pacifications which were as numerous as they were short-lived. The Mantuans did indeed extend their territories south of the Po at the expense of Reggio, and Milan won from Como the district between Varese and the western shores of the Lake of Lugano, but on the whole a map showing the boundaries of the Communes in 1212 will serve with but little alteration until the end of the century.

To-day the Lombard plain stretches out before the traveller an endless succession of meadow lands or fields of rice and corn, intersected by countless irrigation channels, the view constantly interrupted by rows of mulberry-trees or of elms on which the vines are trained. The land seems like some vast garden set round villages or isolated farmhouses, whilst ever and again the smoke from some factory chimney ascends against the clear sky. The Lombardy over which the forces of the Communes raided and fought had the same general features—the vast levels, the distant bounding ranges of Alps and Apennines, the deep blue of the o'erarching sky. But the details were very different. Immense forests covered much of the plain. The rivers, swollen in spring by the melting snow on the mountains, tore great gashes across the face of the land, or spread their waters over the levels to form swamps thick-grown with a rank vegetation, which is still called to mind by the frequent cane breaks which cover all uncultivated spots near the watercourses.

There can have been scarcely any isolated farmhouses; the country population clustered in walled villages under

¹ Modern authorities declare that these masts really belong to a Siense Carroccio.

the castles of the feudal lords, or gathered in those which the policy of the Communes led them to build along their frontiers. At frequent intervals, far closer together than in any other part of Europe then, or even in most lands to-day, the walls of the cities rose above the plain, their outline diversified by the lofty and slender towers of the nobles, or by the graceful bell towers of the churches with their open upper storeys. Round about their walls swamp and forest ceased. The careful husbandry which distinguishes modern Lombardy had begun to take root wherever there was protection from hostile inroads.

Here and there were to be found great monasteries, with dependent townships gathered round them. But this was rarer in Lombardy than in other countries. Italian monasticism on the whole preferred the cities. Except for the Irish foundation of Bobbio and a few others, the valley of the Po had little to show that could compare with Cluny or Clairvaux or Fontevrault, or with the princely abbeys which were scattered thickly over the country districts of England and the Teutonic-speaking lands.

In spite of the constant turmoil, there was an immense increase in the prosperity of the country during the period which followed the Peace of Constance. We find proofs of this in the notices of the annals telling of the extension and embellishment of the cities. The circuit of the walls was extended as the swelling population overflowed the older limits. Pavia is said to have had three successive rings of fortifications by the early fourteenth century. Modena increased the circuit of her fortifications in 1188. Reggio began to surround herself with new walls some forty years later.

Streets were paved, a thing almost unknown in the rest of Europe, canals dug to irrigate the fields, or to supply the needs of the various industries. The Naviglio Grande, constructed during the struggle with Barbarossa, still brings an unfailing supply of water to Milan.¹ The

¹ Notices of similar canals to bring water to the cities or to draw off the overflow of the rivers are frequent in the annals of Modena, Reggio, Parma, and other cities.



Photo.]

COMO.
BROLETTO. •

[Alinari.]

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destructive floods caused by the melting of the Alpine snows forced the Lombards from an early period to try by means of embankments and canals to gain some control over the waters. Thus they gained a skill in engineering far in advance of that possessed by all other nations.

All the cities strove to adorn themselves with public buildings. Besides the numerous romanesque cathedrals and churches dating from the second half of the twelfth and the early years of the thirteenth century, of which Cremona, Modena, Parma, amongst others, have preserved such fine examples, the public buildings devoted to secular uses which were erected at this period bear witness to the communal spirit. In every city rose the palace of the Commune, often called in Lombardy *Broletto*, sometimes as in Mantua and Verona, *Palazzo della Ragione*, to be the home of the public officials and the meeting-place of the various governing councils. Beside it rose the great bell tower, the outward sign of the city's freedom; projecting over the adjoining *Piazza* was a balcony—the *arengo*—from which the rulers addressed the general assembly of the burghers gathered in the open square below.

Many of these buildings still exist, the glory of the cities containing them. The *Broletto* of Como dates from 1215; that of Brescia was finished in 1227. The *Palazzo della Ragione* of Mantua was completed between 1198 and 1250; the *Palazzo del Podestà* at Bologna, begun in 1201, was not fully finished till 1264. The Milanese began the *Broletto* in 1228. Perhaps the most characteristic of all these buildings is the *Palazzo della Ragione* of Verona, dating from 1185, the glorious campanile of which bears an inscription saying that it was the work of the Commune of Verona—"free, prosperous, and victorious."¹

Statistics of Milan in the first half of the thirteenth century have been preserved to us by Frà Bonvesin da Riva, one of the earliest poets in the vulgar tongue.

¹ The magnificent hall of the *Palazzo della Ragione* in Padua, the largest vaulted hall unsupported by pillars in the world, was finished in 1219. The actual roof dates, however, from 1306.

According to him there were thirteen thousand *porta familiares*—probably houses—forty thousand men within the city able to bear arms, a total urban population of two hundred thousand, four hundred notaries, two hundred doctors, two hundred juris-consults or *judices*, eighty schoolmasters, fifty *scriptores Librorum*—i.e., copiers and sellers of books—sixty *Plateæ* or Loggie belonging to noble families. There were one hundred towers on the city wall, one hundred and fifty castles in the Contado with dependent villages. There were six thousand wells, three thousand mill wheels. Twelve hundred modii of flour and seventy oxen were consumed daily. Four hundred butchers and as many bakers, with one thousand taverns, catered for this population.

A later writer tells us that in Pavia nearly every house had its well ; sanitation was attended to, the streets were paved and drained ; the number of towers was innumerable ; there were one hundred and thirty-four churches (which he names) within the walls. There were many manufactures and much agriculture. The city—this was in the days of Pavia's decline—could put in the field two or three thousand horse and fifteen thousand or more foot-soldiers.

The wealth needful for the construction of cathedrals and palaces was largely derived from manufactures and from foreign commerce. The Lombard cities served as points of distribution for the commodities brought by the Venetians from the East. The wool of England and other northern countries was imported in return, and woven into the cloth for which Lombardy was famous. The growth of the woollen industry was in a great measure due to the religious order of the Umiliate. This order was at first composed of persons of both sexes living in the world. At a later period, when its members led a strictly monastic life, they gained their living by carrying on various industries, of which cloth-making became the chief.

Como, where their first regular house was established, was renowned for its cloth, so were Milan and Parma. The steel of Milan was soon to gain a worldwide

fame.¹ The silk industry, now one of the chief of Lombard industries, came later. The hilly districts abounded in wine and oil, agriculture was far in advance of anything to be found in the west of Europe.

Nor must we omit to mention the activities of the Lombards as the pioneers of banking. The name Lombard Street in London is a memory of the time when all bankers and money-changers were known as Lombards. The moneylenders of Vicenza were a powerful factor in the politics of the city about 1218. The citizens of Asti began to lend money in foreign countries in 1226. We are told that when, some years later, the King of France, irritated by their opposition to Charles of Anjou, seized all the property in his dominions belonging to citizens of Asti, their losses amounted to fifty thousand florins of gold.

The constant wars of this period were not so destructive as we might imagine at first. True, the open country suffered terribly from raids in which crops were destroyed or carried off, fruit trees cut down, and unprotected villages burned. But such raids were generally hastily carried out, and the assailants seldom penetrated close to the city walls. The actual loss of life both in open warfare and in internal feuds was small. Non-combatants were almost always respected. When at the capture of the castle of Fratta in 1224 by Azzo of Este and the Count of San Bonifazio, the whole of the inmates, men, women, and children, were put to the sword, the deed excited feelings of horror even among their partisans. In sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Ireland it was thought worthy of special remark when the soldiers of the state spared the women and children of a captured castle, and the State Papers contain cold-blood records of the deliberate slaughter of the unarmed country people of districts entered by the royal forces.

Even in pitched battles there was little bloodshed. Quarter was always given; we hear of thousands of captives but seldom of great loss of life. The fate of the

¹ There were one hundred master smiths making coats of mail, and thirty *Fabri sonaclorum* according to Frà Bonvesin.

prisoners, however, was not an enviable one. The Italian was humane after a fashion of his own; but his humanity had definite limits, and he had but little conception of chivalry towards a fallen foe. To hasten their ransom the captives were thrust into noisome dungeons, or exposed in the open air to the inclemency of the weather. As the century went on and party feuds assumed a bitterer intensity there was a change for the worse. We read of prisoners put to death in cold blood and of massacres in the streets. The Genoese, after their victory over the Pisans at Meloria, passed a law that the eight thousand prisoners they had taken should be kept in perpetual captivity, so that, the women of Pisa being deprived of their husbands and unable to marry again, the population of the city might dwindle away. Yet the most shocking deeds of violence took place not in Lombardy but in the cities of Romagna and Central Italy.

Warfare outside and factions within the walls might have been expected to stifle manufactures and destroy trade. Curiously enough, this does not seem to have been the case. We know that in many cities where feuds raged violently the mass of the artisan classes were unaffected by them, and stayed quietly at their work while the nobles were assailing one another's palaces. Still the fires which were the frequent accompaniment of these riots must often have done great damage, and one cannot help wondering at the steady growth in the prosperity of the cities in the midst of such continual disturbance.

As for foreign trade, it was carried on in spite of the continual warfare. The merchants formed themselves into companies for purposes of defence; the Commune gave armed escort to the convoys, and arranged with its allied cities for their protection in their territory, and so the merchant journeyed by devious routes from one friendly town to another until he finally reached one of the cities—Verona, Milan, Pavia, or Asti—which had access, without much risk of interruption, to one of the Alpine passes which led to the great markets for Italian wares in France or Germany.

The turbulent existence, which to us would seem intolerable, led to the development of all the faculties of the burghers of the rising Communes. It was but the expression of the immense energy of the Italian mind, shaking off the feudal control which still weighed on the rest of Europe. The very uncertainties of existence called forth the spirit of enterprise in the townsman. The rivalry with his neighbours developed an intense patriotism; his bodily powers were strengthened by warfare; he learned to rely upon himself in danger; his mind was sharpened by the keen strife of internal politics. The burgher, called to deliberate on war and peace, learned to look beyond his own immediate surroundings to the great questions of European politics; he acquired a breadth of view and a vigour of mind unknown among the urban population of other lands. If the cities could have laid aside their jealousies and formed a confederation strong enough to resist all external pressure, a period of immense material prosperity would no doubt have set in. But it would have been at the expense of that intense individuality which the city-state calls forth more than any other political organisation.

Amid the strife of the thirteenth century the keen Italian intellect was being tempered and sharpened; the individual was able to develop himself to the full extent of his attainments. Already the germs were being sown which, at a later period when political liberty was giving way to servitude, were to blossom forth into the literary and artistic splendours which give to Italy in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the leadership in the history of European culture, and which were to culminate in the glories of the Renaissance.

CHAPTER IX

FREDERICK, THE WONDER OF THE WORLD, AND THE SECOND LOMBARD LEAGUE

TWO years after Otho's death the young Frederick, having firmly established his power in Germany, re-crossed the Alps in order to receive the Imperial crown. During the eight years since 1212 the Imperial authority had been in abeyance in Italy. In fact, except for the interval from 1210 to 1212, Germany had been distracted for over twenty years by the strife of rival claimants to the monarchy, and the Communes of Italy had been left practically free from external control. During this period they had increased and solidified their power, had gained confidence in their own strength and experience in the conduct of outside affairs.

This is the fact of primary importance which disengages itself from the story of the confused warfare of which we have treated in the last chapter ; just as the real significance of the struggle which was shortly to ensue between the Communes and Frederick is that it marks the entry into the feudal world of a new and democratic element, the burghers of the free cities. The latter had learned their strength, and had begun to take a part in matters of general European interest. They had learned to extend their views beyond their own immediate horizon ; we now find them beginning to play a *rôle* in European history which had before been confined to the feudal nobility.

Frederick appeared in Italy as the close friend and ally of the new Pope Honorius III. The Lombards who had fallen under the ban of the Church on account of

their support of Otho had by this time made their peace with the Pope; consequently no open opposition was made to the passage of the ally of the latter. But the Milanese still maintained an attitude of sullen suspicion to the representative of the House of Hohenstaufen; and Frederick, availing himself of the pretext that the Archbishop was absent in the Holy Land, judged it more prudent not to provoke any expression of open hostility, and deferred proceeding to Milan to receive the Iron Crown, until he could be sure of a favourable reception.

Bologna, on the other hand, received him warmly, and was rewarded by ample confirmation of her privileges. Other cities obtained similar marks of favour; but Frederick was soon to find how little the devotion of the Italians was to be relied on. Faenza received him splendidly; but the friendliness of the burghers gave place to fierce anger as soon as Frederick showed some marks of favour to the rival Commune Forli.

In Rome he was well received; the coronation was carried out with remarkable pomp, and—a most unusual circumstance in the history of such ceremonies—without any collision between the Roman populace and the Emperor's German followers.

All the energies of Pope Honorius were directed to organising a new Crusade, which the depressed state of the Christians in Syria seemed to render urgently necessary. Frederick had already, of his own free will, assumed the Cross at his coronation at Aachen. While Otho lived it was not to be expected that he should seek to fulfil his vow, and after the former's death various disturbances in Germany had made his presence in that country necessary. Now all reason for delay seemed removed, and the Pope urged on him the necessity for a speedy commencement of the expedition.

Frederick solemnly renewed his oath; a part of his forces were to start in the following March, he himself not later than August, 1221. There seems to be no reason to doubt that the young monarch had been sincere in his first resolution to take the Cross. His present attitude seems less certain. He had learned in

the intervening years the necessity for his presence in his dominions, if his authority was to be anything more than nominal. He now saw clearly that a considerable time would be required to establish his power firmly in the hereditary territories which he had quitted in 1212.

Already there were not wanting signs that the unusual harmony between Pope and Emperor could not last long. One possible source of quarrel had, indeed, been removed by Frederick. Not only had he recognised the Papal claims to the Patrimony of St. Peter,¹ the Duchy of Spoleto, the Mark of Ancona, and the Exarchate of Ravenna; but he had also confirmed to the Holy See the heritage of the Countess Matilda, and issued decrees for the purpose of putting the Papal officials in possession.

But he had sworn, at the time of his elevation to the throne of Germany, that his hereditary dominions of Sicily and Apulia should never be united to the German Crown. His son Henry was recognised as King of Sicily, and during his minority the kingdom was to be administered by a regent. Now Frederick had caused Henry to be recognised by the princes and prelates as his successor in Germany; and kept in his own hands the administration of his hereditary dominions, with every intention, as it soon appeared, of re-establishing in them a strong centralised government, such as had prevailed under some of the Norman sovereigns. This procedure of Frederick's excited, as was to be expected, strong protests from Honorius. The chief desire of the Pope, however, was the speedy undertaking of the Crusade; and, making all other considerations subservient to this, he accepted the excuses of Frederick, and allowed the question of the Sicilian kingdom to fall into abeyance.

In tracing the career of Frederick II. it would almost seem that there was something inexplicable in the malignant destiny which drove him into conflict with the Papacy. The ward of Innocent III. backed up in his early years by all the power of the Church, full of expres-

¹ The district from Radicofani to Ceperano.



FREDERICK II. AND HIS FALCONER AND HAWKS.

sions of gratitude to "his mother, at whose breast he had sucked, and in whose bosom he had reposed," we find him gradually estranged from his whileome protector, and drifting, almost without any fault of his own, into open hostility. He had promised of his own free will to undertake the Crusade; he had invoked against himself, again of his own free will, the penalty of excommunication if he did not start by a fixed date. He failed to keep his oath, apparently through no fault of his own. Excommunicated for not going, excommunicated for going, excommunicated for coming back, he was solemnly reconciled with the Church; and once again, after a brief period of apparent harmony, the two heads of Christendom drifted apart, one can hardly say how. Frederick was once again excommunicated, and ended his life, in spite of unceasing efforts at reconciliation, in deadly enmity with the Holy See.

Yet perhaps one can find a reason for the apparently unjustifiable hostility of the Lombards and the Papacy to Frederick. He was gifted in more than common measure, so that a contemporary English writer calls him *stupor mundi*, and a modern historian describes him as "the most wonderful man in a wonderful age";¹ with a love of order, a genius for organisation, brave, hard-working, a lover of art and literature, and, rarest of all in that age, of science, skilled in all accomplishments, all his great qualities would seem to have been rendered useless to him by one all-pervading vice—duplicity. Its existence in him was rather instinctively felt than proved by his contemporaries. The Lombards, Pope Honorius, later Popes—all are singularly unanimous in regarding all his actions with suspicion, in refusing to put faith in his most solemn protestations. "No Pope ever let him alone," says Freeman; "it was perhaps an unerring instinct which hindered any Pope from ever letting him alone." Frà Salimbene declares "He had no faith, was a trickster and a deceiver."²

Above all were his contemporaries suspicious of his

¹ Matthew Paris and Freeman.

² "Fu uomo scaltro e furto" (Balzani, p. 254).

orthodoxy. In his later years, when he was hopelessly embroiled with Rome, we find definite charges brought against him—that he denied the immortality of the soul and the virgin birth of Christ; that he said that “Jews, Christians, and Saracens had been led away by three impostors—Moses, Jesus, and Mahomet—and that he, Frederick, would set up a better religion than any of them.” But it would seem that even early in his reign, in spite of his lavish expressions of devotion to the Church, in spite of his severe, not to say ferocious laws against heresy, men doubted if he were really a Christian. And strangely enough, this doubt finds expression not merely in Christian writers, but in the pages of the Mahomedans who deal from their point of view with the history of his Crusade.

This, then, was the stumbling-block in Frederick's career. He could never convince men of his sincerity. All his overtures to his enemies were looked on as but new proofs of perfidy, all his acts viewed with suspicion, and he paid the penalty of the distrust which he inspired. He saw his life-work thwarted; he was unable to obtain from his enemies the peace which he desired; and he died a broken, disappointed man at a comparatively early age.

Frederick, as we have seen, had bound himself to start for the East by the summer of 1221. But he soon began to negotiate with the Pope for an extension of the term. Difficulties in collecting a sufficient force; above all, disorders in Apulia rendered it impossible for him to fulfil his promise. Then came a revolt of the Saracens of Sicily, who were still numerous in the mountainous districts of the interior. Their subjugation was a matter of considerable difficulty; and to prevent the recurrence of such outbreaks Frederick transported the survivors to the mainland, settling as many as sixty thousand, it is said, in the city of Lucera, and at a later period a smaller number in Nocera. Here, cut off from communication with their co-religionists of Africa, and surrounded by a hostile population, they became the strongest support of the royal power.

Five years were consumed in these affairs, and Frederick was not yet ready to set out for the Holy Land. At a conference between Pope and Emperor at San Germano, in the summer of 1225, a new date for the departure was agreed upon. Frederick was to sail in August, 1227. Should he for any cause whatsoever not keep this promise, he was *ipso facto* to incur the penalty of excommunication.

Everything seemed at last satisfactorily arranged, and Frederick was preparing to march into Lombardy at the head of a force from Apulia in order to meet the German princes to deliberate with them about the Crusade, and to provide for the tranquillity of his northern dominions during his absence, when his plans were dashed to the ground by the unexpected action of the Lombard Communes.

During the preceding years matters in Lombardy had gone on in their accustomed way, without much effective interference from the Imperial power. As before, Bologna fought Modena and Imola; Reggio, aided by Parma and Cremona, was at constant variance with Mantua, which was helped by Verona, Ferrara, and Modena. In the Mark the Estensi and the Count of San Bonifazio still kept up their feud with Salinguerra and the house of Romano. In the West, Alessandria and Tortona fell out with Genoa, and Alba, Vercelli, and Milan intervened on their side, while Asti and the Count of Savoy helped the Genoese.

The peace of 1218 had been followed in Milan and Piacenza by the renewal of discord between nobles and popolo. The exact course of events in the former city is obscure. Four parties would seem to have been in existence—the Captains, the Valvassors, the richer burghers, and the artisans. Apparently the land-owning nobility who formed the first two classes had not coalesced with the wealthy merchants to the same degree as in other cities. Each party formed, so to speak, a state within the state. Associations, bound together by oaths, were formed in each party to strengthen their position. Thus we hear of a “Società dei Gagliardi,” or “dei Forti,”

which would seem to have represented the higher nobility, while the Valvassors were bound together in a league called the Motta. Then there was the Credenza di Sant' Ambrogio, started, as we have seen, in 1198, among the artisans. They are said to have built a palace with a tower as a place of meeting, set up a regular jurisdiction of their own, and raised funds for common purposes.

To preserve the unity of the Commune the twelve elected consuls were replaced by a foreign Podestà; but, since it often happened that the various factions could not agree in their choice, we meet with two or even more rival Podestàs, each supported by his party. Thus in 1213 there were four, in 1222 there were two. Or, again, the partisans of the old consular *régime* would get the upper hand, and the consuls would again appear at the head of the government. In 1221 the dissensions broke out into actual civil war. Captains and Valvassors, as in the days of Aribert, left the city, and called to their help the forces of Cremona, Lodi, and Mantua. It was not until four years later that peace was made by the intervention of the Pope, on the basis of a division of offices between the nobles and the popolo, under which name were included the richer burghers and the Credenza of Sant' Ambrogio. One condition throws a curious light on the age. The lower orders now for the first time obtained access to the higher dignities of the Church. Up to this period the nobles had succeeded in keeping these to themselves, and even now they managed to secure that the Archbishop should always be chosen from the ranks of the nobility.

The struggle in Piacenza lasted longer, and had important results on the external policy of the city. Here the milites—*i.e.*, the wealthier classes—when opposed by the popolo retired to the hilly country districts, and called to their help the semi-independent feudality of the Apennines. From 1219 to 1226 there were four separate quarrels, followed by temporary reconciliations. Peace then lasted for five years, when the struggle broke out more violently than ever. The

popular party, unable alone to cope with the nobles, turned to the old enemies of the Commune. They took a Podestà from Parma, and got military aid from Cremona. Thus they threw themselves into the hands of the Imperial or Ghibelline party, as we may now fairly call it, of which Cremona and Parma were the chief bulwarks in Lombardy, and which was now at open variance with the majority of the Lombards headed by Milan. Temporary reconciliations, followed by new outbreaks, fill up the period till 1236, the year when Frederick was preparing once for all to chastise the Milanese and their allies. Papal legates brought back the nobles to the city after an absence of nearly a year. They broke the peace almost as soon as they were re-admitted, drove out the popular leaders favourable to the Emperor, and ranged Piacenza once more on the side of Milan.

The affairs of Piacenza have brought us far past the year 1226, to which we must return. When in that year Frederick summoned the German princes to meet him at Cremona at Easter, 1226, and made preparations to lead thither a force from Apulia, the Milanese and their allies took alarm. They had long been watching his proceedings in his southern territories, where, by every means in his power, he had been strengthening the royal authority, and had shown himself in a special manner jealous of any show of independence in the cities. Now fearing, or pretending to fear, that the Imperial visit to Lombardy was meant to bring about the overthrow of their liberties, fifteen cities sent their deputies to a conference near Mantua, at which the Lombard League was solemnly revived. This new confederacy was formed of Alessandria and Turin—practically the first appearance of this city as a free commune—Milan with her constant allies Brescia and Piacenza, the smaller communities of Lodi and Vercelli, the four cities of the Veronese Mark—Bergamo, Mantua, Bologna, and her ally Faenza. They were soon joined by Crema and Ferrara, and by the Marquis of Montferrat, the Count of Biandrate, and other feudal lords.

This second Lombard League differs very much from the first. In the days of Barbarossa the Communes had combined under the pressure of intolerable oppression to make a last stand for their liberties. Now their confederacy took on a markedly aggressive character. They forbade all communication with the Emperor, or with the cities which remained in his obedience, assembled an army to watch his advance into Lombardy, and refused him entry to the cities by which he passed. Most hostile step of all, they blocked the defiles leading from Trent to Verona, and refused a passage to the Emperor's son Henry and the other German princes who had reached Trent on their journey to Cremona.

An attempt of the burghers of this last city to free the defiles by an attack from the rear failed, and the Germans, after six weeks' delay in Trent, were forced to return home.

All these proceedings were the more unjustifiable, as Frederick had not so far made the slightest attempt to violate the conditions of the Peace of Constance. To his reproaches, joined to those of the Pope, the Lombards could oppose no solid arguments; they took refuge in vague charges, which plainly show that Frederick had given them no definite ground of complaint, and that their proceedings were based on mere general suspicion of his designs. The result was that a severe blow was struck at the prospects of the Crusade, and Frederick had for the moment no means of chastising the insolence of the Lombards.

The projected Diet at Cremona thus practically failed. A few of the German princes had penetrated into Italy by way of Carinthia, and the cities hostile to Milan—Parma, Modena, Reggio, Asti, Pavia, and Como—sent their deputies. The Marquis of Este and some other nobles attended, so did deputies from Genoa, Lucca, and Pisa. Finding the rest of the Lombards obstinate, Frederick put them to the ban of the Empire as rebels, and the Papal legate pronounced against them the sentence of excommunication.

The Emperor was unwilling, or unable, to proceed to open hostilities, and sought the intervention of the Pope.

The Lombards also consented to accept his arbitration. His decision, given early in 1127, cannot but excite our surprise. All offences on both sides were to be forgiven and forgotten, and the Communes were to be received once more into the Imperial favour, while as their only punishment the Lombards were to maintain four hundred knights for the Crusade for two years. This sentence cannot have failed to anger the Emperor, who saw open rebellion and insult to his person thus lightly condoned. He was, however, desirous of peace in Italy, and accepted the award. The Lombards, on the other hand, neither took any measures to supply the knights, nor refrained from hostilities against the cities of the Imperial party.

Before the peace had been ratified Pope Honorius died and was succeeded by a nephew of Innocent III., who took the name of Gregory IX. He had much of the fiery and unbending nature of his uncle, and soon showed both Frederick and the Lombards that they had to do with a very different personality from that of the mild Honorius.

The time drew on for the Emperor to start for Palestine. A considerable army and fleet was gathered near Brindisi. All was ready for the departure when a pestilence, brought on by the summer heat, broke out among the soldiers from more northern climates. In spite of this Frederick set sail, but fell ill himself, so that after three days at sea he put back, and retired to the neighbourhood of Naples to effect a cure. On this news the army, which had been collected with such difficulty, dispersed.

As soon as news of this reached Gregory, he refused to see in Frederick's illness anything more than a pretext to escape from his engagements, and without delay, in conformity with the treaty of San Germano, he excommunicated the Emperor.

The Pope to justify his action issued letters denouncing the Emperor's conduct; the latter, in return, did not refrain from vehement reproaches against the Pope himself and the general action of the Papacy. The breach between the two heads of Christendom became daily wider. In order to prove his sincerity to the world,

Frederick redoubled his efforts for the Crusade, and in the following August he at length set out from Italy, and landed without mishap in Palestine.

Far from appeasing the Pope, Frederick's attitude only brought new excommunications on his head. In Syria he obtained by diplomacy more than former Crusaders had been able to gain by arms. Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and other places were ceded to him by the Sultan. But on entering the Holy City, he found that the Patriarch had laid the Church of the Holy Sepulchre under an interdict, and had once more repeated the excommunication.

In the meantime, in Italy, the Pope had declared the crown of Naples vacant, and had got together an army which had already overrun a great part of the country. Gregory appealed to the Lombards for aid in this enterprise, and received some troops from Milan and Piacenza. The Lombards, as a whole, were too much occupied with their own immediate affairs to send any substantial help to the pontiff.

The Bolognese had determined on a great effort to crush Modena, which had ranged itself on the Imperial side. In 1228 a great army took the field. Besides the forces of Bologna, contingents came from nine cities of Romagna, from Ferrara, even from Florence. Milan, Piacenza, and Brescia sent a thousand knights; even Reggio, which had not joined the League, is said to have sent troops to fight her old antagonist. The combined army entered the territory of Modena, wasted it far and wide, and laid siege to the castle of Bazano. The Modenese army advanced to the relief. With it were arrayed the forces of Parma and Cremona, the latter, we are told, numbering four thousand foot and one thousand knights. By skilful movements they relieved Bazano, and then, boldly advancing into the Contado of Bologna, compelled the hostile army to retire and defend that city. The armies joined in battle at Santa Maria in Strada, and after a fight, which lasted till "after the going down of the great evening star," the confederate host was scattered to the winds.



A HOHENSTAFEN KNIGHT.
(From an Almanac of the 12th Century.)



SEAL OF FREDERICK II. AS KING OF JERUSALEM.

Next year the Bolognese repeated the invasion, ranging the contingents of fourteen other Communes under their banner. Once more the burghers of Modena, Parma, and Cremona sallied forth against them. Another battle, bloody and long contested, took place. Once more fortune smiled on the Imperialist cities. The Bolognese were driven in headlong flight, their Carroccio was taken, their battering train of mangonels carried in triumph to Parma, and placed as a monument of victory in the cathedral of that city. These disasters forced Bologna to consent to a truce for eight years.

They also brought about a revolution in the city itself. The trades guilds, exasperated by the ill success of the campaign, which they attributed to the incompetence of the ruling aristocracy, demanded a share in the government. This they obtained after the usual tumultuous street fighting. A conflict with the Bishop over the jurisdiction in the Church lands followed soon on this. It brought down on the city a Papal interdict, which seems to have had hardly any effect on the Bolognese, so far had the spirit of independence, even in religious matters, taken root in the Communes.¹

In the meantime a general war had been raging in Piedmont, interrupted by peaces, or rather truces, broken almost as soon as made. Genoa, Asti, the Marquis of Montferrat, and the Count of Savoy were leagued against Alessandria, Alba, Tortona, and Vercelli. Asti met with more than one disaster in this contest, a thousand of her citizens being carried off to the dungeons of Alessandria, from which few of them returned. The Milanese led an army, collected from the members of the League, to the aid of Alessandria. The chronicler of Asti relates that the lands of that city were laid waste by no less than twenty-three allied cities. Montferrat was also devastated; but on the whole the confederates accomplished little. They penetrated, however, far up

¹ Henceforth the popolo at Bologna was organised under the *Anziani*, or heads of the guilds. There were also two councils of the popolo, corresponding to the Consiglio di Credenza and the Consiglio Generale of the Commune.

the valley of the Stura where, in order to hold the feudal lords of this region in check, a town was founded on a wedge-shaped piece of land—from which came its name Cuneo—into which the inhabitants of the surrounding villages were gathered.

In the meantime Frederick had returned to Southern Italy. Landing in the summer of 1229, he soon had driven the Papal troops from the greater part of his dominions. He showed himself desirous of peace; the Pope, too, finding that the Lombards could not, or would not, send any considerable forces to his help, was inclined to an accommodation. All was soon satisfactorily arranged; and in the summer of 1230 a treaty, signed at San Germano, put an end to the contest between Pope and Emperor. A general amnesty was proclaimed, the feuds in Lombardy were for the moment stilled, and a friendly meeting of Gregory and Frederick at Anagni set the seal to their reconciliation.

The Lombards, as we have said, had given no substantial help to the Pope. But Frederick's return had caused them, in December, 1229, to renew the League, and they still maintained a defiant attitude towards him. To restore his influence in Lombardy was now the Emperor's chief aim. For this purpose he summoned a Diet, to be held at Ravenna late in the year 1231, at which all the Communes were to appear, as well as the German princes and the young King Henry.

The Pope wrote to exhort the Lombards to obedience. But once more they declared that they could not trust Frederick, got together an army, and again blocked the passes. The assembly therefore came to nothing; and the offending Communes were once more put to the ban of the Empire. In order to confer with his German subjects Frederick had to take ship to Friuli, a pretty clear proof that he had not come to Ravenna with any force sufficient to justify the suspicions of the Lombards. Whilst in this territory he received overtures which were destined to bring about a complete change in his position in Lombardy. To explain this clearly it will be necessary to retrace our steps a little, and to take up at some length the course of affairs in the Mark.

We have already seen how the death of Azzo VI. of Este and of the Count of San Bonifazio had given the preponderance in the Mark to their adversaries. Salinguerra had returned to Ferrara, where the young Aldrovandino of Este was forced to share the control of the city with him. The Montecchi had returned to Verona, but, on the other hand, Ezzelino's adversaries had been readmitted to Vicenza. This bringing back of the exiles seems to have been the work of Padua, which, free from internal dissensions and under a more democratic government than the other Communes, aspired to the leadership of the Mark.

Treviso was also free from internal strife. She was friendly to Ezzelino, and devoted herself to an aggressive policy against the Patriarch of Aquileia and the Bishop of Feltre and Belluno, which brought her more than once into collision with Padua, where these prelates had obtained burgher rights as a protection against attack.

Vicenza and Verona were torn by factions among the nobles, complicated in the former city by the emergence of a democratic party. The restored exiles soon grew strong in Vicenza, and expelled Ezzelino and his party in 1214. These remained in exile for four years, when Padua brought about their recall. They were expelled again almost immediately, and sought to return by force of arms. Under the leadership of Ezzelino's son, Ezzelino III., they gained a brilliant victory at Bressanvido.

This is the first notable exploit in which the future tyrant of the Mark figures. Born in 1194, he had early given evidence of his capacity. A daring soldier, he was no less skilled in the arts necessary for the Italian party leader. Constant in adversity, prudent in success, able to dissemble his feelings, but incapable of forgetting a wrong, he had as yet given no sign of the pitiless nature which in later times was to turn him into a monster and to attach to his name undying associations of horror.

Padua again brought about a peace. The exiles

returned to Vicenza, and Ezzelino sold to that city the important castle of Marostica for the immense sum of forty thousand pounds.

In the meantime peace had reigned in Verona, which was strengthened by the marriage of the young Ezzelino to the sister of Count Richard of San Bonifazio, who at the same time married Ezzelino's sister the famous Cunizza. Soon after this Ezzelino II. retired to a monastery, without, however, withdrawing from all intervention in politics.

This reconciliation of the two factions, which coincided with the general pacification which followed on the death of Otho, was first broken in Ferrara. The partisans of Azzo VII. of Este, who had succeeded his brother Aldrovandino, attacked Salinguerra, burned his palace, and drove him out. After a few days peace was made; Salinguerra returned, and next year his adversaries were expelled in their turn.

In the meantime the people of Vicenza had formed an association to break the power of the ruling aristocracy. The leader of the movement was a Brescian, of the noble house of the Martinenghi; and his native city sent him a detachment of two hundred horse to help him to overawe the Vicentine nobles. Ezzelino had begged the Count of San Bonifazio to prevent these troops reaching Vicenza; he refused, and the old feud broke out again. The first consequence was the expulsion from Verona of Ezzelino's faction the Montecchi.

San Bonifazio, helped by Mantua and Padua, now joined Azzo in an attack on Salinguerra. The latter, by a piece of treachery, made the Count a prisoner; and the contest was further embittered when at the capture of Fratta Azzo's forces massacred all the inhabitants, sparing neither age nor sex. The Mark was once more thrown into confusion by the contending factions.

At this time a new party arose in Verona called the "Quattroventi," or "Twenty-Four."¹ They combined with the Montecchi, and while the Count was still a

¹ Some writers, notably Gittermann, take the Twenty-Four to have been a popular association. More probably they were nobles.



MAROSTICA.

prisoner, restored them to the city. As usual, the returned exiles did not long keep the peace. At Christmastime, 1225, the allies attacked the Count's party, and after several days' street fighting gained control of the city. Ezzelino seems to have taken no part in this rising; but a treacherous attack on him by the Count, who had been freed from his captivity in Ferrara, led him once more to appear as the leader of the Montecchi. The Count and his chief partisans were seized, and Ezzelino became completely master of the city.

Sismondi, Leo, and Italian writers following them have described Ezzelino the Monk and his more famous son as the leaders of the Ghibelline or Imperial party in the Mark. According to them, the opposite faction, that of Este and San Bonifazio, represented the Guelf cause. They farther assert that the former stood at the head of the feudal aristocracy, while the latter led the more democratic burgher party.

An examination of the facts, however, clearly shows that there is no ground whatsoever for these assertions. Quite the contrary. The House of Romano had, so far, always been in opposition to the Hohenstaufen Emperors. Ezzelino the Stammerer had been one of the Rectors of the first Lombard League; a special clause pardoning him was considered necessary by the framers of the Peace of Constance. Ezzelino the Monk and his supporter Salinguerra had been the allies of Milan in opposing Frederick II. On the other hand, Azzo VI. of Este had been the ally of Parma and Cremona, with which latter city he had concluded an alliance on behalf of Ferrara as early as 1208; and it was he who had organised the League of 1212 between Ferrara, Mantua, Verona, and Cremona in opposition to Frederick's adversary Otho.

Salinguerra had made his peace with Frederick's patron, Innocent III., by 1215, but Ezzelino was not reconciled to the Church till 1220, and no doubt then made a formal submission to Frederick. Yet neither of them seems to have taken any steps towards a full reconciliation with the young Emperor. Azzo III. of

Este and the young Count of San Bonifazio, on the other hand, appeared at court in 1220, when both received signal marks of the Imperial favour. The former was freed, by Imperial decree, from the conditions imposed on his brother by Padua in 1213. The latter received a most ample charter confirming him in all his rights, especially in the countship of Verona, and the jurisdiction over certain classes of the citizens, notably the bakers and butchers, which he claimed in virtue of that office.

Moreover, in 1226, Verona, which, as we shall see, was then entirely in the hands of Ezzelino and the Montecchi, joined the Lombard League, and must have borne the chief part in blocking the defiles of the Adige. Ferrara, too, joined the League; and since 1225 Salinguerra's authority had been solidly established in that city.¹

As to their respective positions with regard to the aristocratic and popular parties, the Estensi stood at the head of the feudal nobility in the Mark, and had still independent rule in the district between Adige and Po. The Count of San Bonifazio was not only the greatest feudal noble in the diocese of Verona, but also claimed to be Count of the city, and still actually possessed some of the rights attaching to that dignity, a case probably unique at this period in Lombardy. He held the same position towards Verona as the Counts of Lomello and Biandrate, respectively, had held, more than a generation previously, towards Pavia and Novara.

The Montecchi, Ezzelino's party in Verona, though themselves feudal nobles, seem to have been allied with the merchants and rich burghers, if not with the lower orders in general.² Salinguerra, we are expressly told, was supported by the democratic party in Ferrara. In Vicenza the House of Romano first appears as supporting the party of the Vivarii against the Count

¹ Azzo of Este attended the Diet at Cremona in 1226. He was, therefore, then hostile to the League.

² For when the Montecchi were expelled in 1206 their houses and those of the merchants were alike destroyed.

of Vicenza, then on the side of the Count and then once more on the side of the Vivarii. It seems more probable that here the Count's party would represent the country nobles. The democratic movement in Vicenza between 1218 and 1226 seems, however, to have been more obnoxious to the Vivarii than to their opponents. In this city, then, we may allow that Ezzelino III. and his brother Alberic really did appear as the adversaries of the popular party.

It is true that, by the change of policy of which we shall soon have to speak, Ezzelino ranged himself finally on the Imperial side, and that, as the chief upholder of Frederick's cause in the Mark, his name was identified for more than twenty years with the party which adopted the name of Ghibelline. He drew Salinger after him, and his hereditary enemies, Este and San Bonifazio, at once embraced the party of the cities leagued against Frederick. The Pope quarrelled with Frederick, so that once more Pope and Lombards were allied against the Emperor, and the House of Este henceforward leads the Papal or Guelfic party in the Mark. Este and Romano being thus the two protagonists in the struggle in this part of Italy, later historians have tried to work their early private quarrels into some relation with the parts they afterwards played, and into connection with the greater struggle between the Papacy and the Empire and the lesser one between aristocracy and democracy in the Communes. The Ezzelini appear as Ghibellines and aristocrats, the Estensi as Guelfs. But, even granting that the names Ghibelline and Guelf had come into use at all in the days of Ezzelino the Monk, nothing can be clearer than that, for the first quarter of the thirteenth century, it is the Ezzelini who are the opponents, the Estensi who are the supporters of the House of Hohenstaufen.

The beginning of the year 1226 saw Ezzelino and his faction masters of Verona. Then came the renewal of the Lombard League, to which confederacy Verona adhered in April. We cannot doubt that the city took the chief part in closing the defiles of the Adige against

the Germans during the summer ; and for its contumacy it was excommunicated and put to the ban of the Empire along with its allies.

The negotiations which followed between the Emperor and the Lombards by removing the danger of an attack from Germany relaxed the discipline which had bound the confederates together. The popular party in Vicenza had for some years been struggling against the nobles. They obtained assistance from Padua, and to secure their hold on the city set burghers of that city to garrison the towers of the Vivarii and other partisans of the House of Romano. These sought help from Ezzelino. On an appointed day they rushed to arms, and attacked their own houses. Ezzelino hurried with his forces from Verona, the towers were captured, and the nobles were once more masters of Vicenza. Alberic of Romano was installed as Podestà ; and the lords of Romano once more acquired a commanding position in the Mark.

In the meantime the Count of San Bonifazio had escaped from captivity. The League desired above all things to maintain union in the Mark ; and, feeling sure of Ezzelino, they wished to win the Count over to their party, as they had gained the lords of Biandrate and Montferrat. Besides, Mantua was a prominent member of the League, and the Count enjoyed in a special degree the favour of the burghers of that city.

The League, therefore, opened negotiations for the return of the Count and his supporters to Verona. They succeeded. Ezzelino laid down the Podestàship, and withdrew ; all existing parties in the city were dissolved, and every Veronese was to swear never to revive them. Strange to say this oath was kept for nearly three years.

Ezzelino, having yielded to the wishes of the League as regards Verona, sought an outlet for his restless energy in an attack on the Camposampieri. They were citizens of Padua, which at once embraced their cause. The burghers, nobles, and commons alike flocked to the general assembly ; many noble ladies joined the throng ; the Carroccio was drawn into the Piazza amid scenes of wild enthusiasm ; and a great force advanced on Bassano.



BASSANO.

Yielding to the advice of his father, who pointed out to him that at present he was no match for the mighty Padua, but that by biding his time he might hope to see not only that city but all the Mark at his mercy, Ezzelino bent before the storm, and swore to give back to the Camposampieri the captured castle of Fonte. "I myself saw him," says Rolandino, "riding on a tall war-horse through the waves of the Brenta; but the Podestà who was awaiting him on the bank did not allow him to come to the shore." Sitting his horse in the river he took the oath.

While swearing to the peace, Ezzelino thought only of vengeance. He had detected many burghers of Treviso among the ranks of the Paduans, and vowed to make that city smart as a whole for the treachery, as he regarded it, of individuals. With this end in view, he craftily urged Treviso to attack the Bishop of Feltre and Belluno. The Trevisans seized these towns; while Ezzelino, falling on the lords of Camino, deprived them of most of their castles. The aggrieved parties were burghers of Padua; and that city once more took the field against Treviso and her dangerous ally. Ezzelino had stirred up a greater storm than he had foreseen. The Paduans wasted the lands of Treviso far and wide, and passed a decree that the devastation was to be repeated twice in each year. In this way Ezzelino had brought down punishment on Treviso. But he was himself involved in the calamities of that city. His lands were ravaged and his castles destroyed. Treviso was forced to sue for peace; Ezzelino's influence in the city was seriously impaired. The League, and the Paduans in particular, began to regard him as a dangerous fire-brand whose influence in the Mark seemed fatal to any hope of lasting peace.

More misfortunes followed for the House of Romano. Alberic was driven from Vicenza in 1229 by the intervention of Padua and Verona; and following on this came a revolt of the serfs on his domains. They seized Bassano, which town, the main seat of the power of the Romanos, was only recovered by the most strenuous

exertions of the two brothers. In the space of barely three years the House of Romano had fallen from the arbiters of the Mark to the position of country nobles threatened on all sides by hostile Communes.

The most sudden changes of fortune are characteristic of Italian history. Before a year had passed Ezzelino was once more ruler of Verona. After his departure from that city in 1227 a new personage appears on the scene, a certain Julian, the head of an association of which we know nothing except that it obtained complete control of the government.

It would seem that, during the previous years of strife, the public offices had been monopolised by the nobles of whatever faction had been uppermost for the moment. The "Communanza," or society of which Julian was Rector or head, now brought it about that in future a list should be made of the milites or nobles, and of all those who had horses and military equipment and property to the extent of 1,000 lire, and that the public offices should be filled from those whose name was on the list, until all had served in turn. Thus the constitution was placed on a more democratic basis, although the mass of the people were still shut out from a share in the government.

Julian was hostile to the Romanos, and, as we have seen, drove Alberic from Vicenza. After a period of nearly three years, during which Verona had enjoyed internal peace, he vanishes from the scene as suddenly as he had appeared. The Count of San Bonifazio had also suffered at his hands, and now once more made a bid for supremacy. A first outbreak, at Easter, 1230, was quieted by the banishment of the chiefs both of the Montecchi and the Count's party. They soon returned. In July a new tumult took place, and the Count seized the Palace of the Commune. His opponents flew to arms; numbers seem to have been on their side; the Palace was stormed; and the Count with many of his adherents fell once more into the hands of his enemies. Salinguerra became Podestà; Ezzelino returned to Verona, and became practically master of the city.

The neighbouring Communes—Padua, Mantua, and

Vicenza—friendly to the Count, or hostile to Ezzelino—flew to arms in support of the Count's party, most of whom had escaped and fortified themselves in the castle of San Bonifazio. They fell on the Veronese territory from all sides, and wasted it horribly. Ezzelino replied by announcing his intention of starving the Count to death. Some of the captives, it is said, actually perished from hunger; the Count himself, if we are to believe Gherardo Maurisio, owed his life to the old Ezzelino the Monk, who left his cloister in order to persuade his son to clemency, and, finding his efforts fruitless, found means to supply his former enemy with food.

The interposition of the League, joined to a new inroad from Padua and Mantua, at length secured the liberation of the Count, after, as it would seem, a year's captivity. Now that Frederick was once more turning his attention to Lombardy, and had summoned the Germans to meet him at Ravenna, the League was more than ever interested in preserving tranquillity in the Mark. With this end in view, a separate league was organised, comprising Padua, Brescia, Mantua, Vicenza, and Ferrara. Its special mission was to maintain peace in Verona, which city was invited also to adhere to it. Ezzelino and Alberic were also to be admitted to this league, apparently as feudal lords of Bassano and Romano.

Once more the contending factions went through the form of a reconciliation. The Count was to be kept in the custody of the League until the castle of San Bonifazio was surrendered to the Commune of Verona; but, on the other hand, Ezzelino was to leave the city.

The Count was handed over to the Lombards, swore to the League and was liberated; but his castle was not given up to Verona. In the meantime Ezzelino the Monk had fallen under the suspicion of heresy, and the Pope had incited the Paduans to attack the possessions of his sons in order to get possession of his person. The younger Ezzelino now asked for admission to the separate League to protect himself from this attack. But the deputies of certain cities protested against this. Only the threat of Ezzelino's envoy, the historian Maurisio,

that farther opposition would force his master to go over to the side of the Emperor, and so admit the Germans by the Val Sugana into Bassano and the lands of Vicenza and Treviso, caused them to accede to his request.

But this conciliatory step came too late. The League had twice forced him to retire from Verona; they had received his enemy the Count into their association. Ezzelino was at last convinced that the confederate cities would never allow him to hold the mastery over Verona for which he had been striving. He therefore turned to Frederick. He is said to have opened negotiations with the Emperor during the latter's stay at Ravenna. In the spring of 1232 Frederick was in Friuli, and here the definite compact was made. Ezzelino abandoned his former allies, and engaged himself to hold Verona for the Emperor, who, on his side, promised to send troops to protect the city from the Lombards. The Milanese Podestà of Verona, distrusting the attitude of Ezzelino's partisans, had ordered them to renew the oath to the League. Ezzelino hastened back to the city, won over the Montecchi and their following to his change of side, stormed the Palace of the Commune, and once more made himself master of Verona. An Imperial officer was received within the walls, and he was followed by a force of knights and Saracen bowmen sufficient to repel any sudden attack from the League. Thus the position of affairs in the Mark was changed with startling rapidity, and the door into Lombardy opened for the German armies.

The defection of Verona and Ezzelino from the League materially strengthened Frederick's position. Troubles in the south, however, claimed his immediate attention, and for the present he took no active measures against the Lombards. In the meantime Mantua and Padua fell on Verona and ravaged its territory. The Marquis of Este, too, arrayed himself on the side of the League. Treviso, on the other hand, without seceding from the League, supported Ezzelino. In the warfare which followed, while the Mantuans wasted the lands of Verona, the Paduans advanced against the territories of Ezzelino

and Alberic, and inflicted a pretty severe defeat on Treviso.

The Pope now intervened in the cause of peace. Two Cardinals appeared at Padua, and the Lombards agreed to submit their differences with Frederick to the Papal decision. The Legates then proceeded to Verona, and in Ezzelino's absence restored the Count's party. Ezzelino hastened back and expelled them again, whereupon he was excommunicated. More attacks on Verona followed, until Ezzelino, with the help of Treviso and the nobles of Vicenza, gained some decided successes over his enemies.

The Papal decision was made known in June, 1233. It was practically identical with the one formerly given by Pope Honorius, except that the Lombards were now to furnish five hundred knights for the Holy Land. Frederick was naturally indignant at this verdict, which seems dictated not by the merits of the case, but by a desire on the Pope's part to win support in Lombardy in the case of another breach between Papacy and Empire. If Frederick should crush the League he would be master of Italy to a degree attained to by none of his predecessors since the days of the Henrys, and the Papacy would be entirely at his mercy. We see here the beginnings of that policy which led the Popes to combat in every way the setting up in Italy of anything like a strong central power; if we should not rather call it the revival of the policy which had led former pontiffs to call in the Franks against the Lombards and to lend support to the Norman rulers of the south.

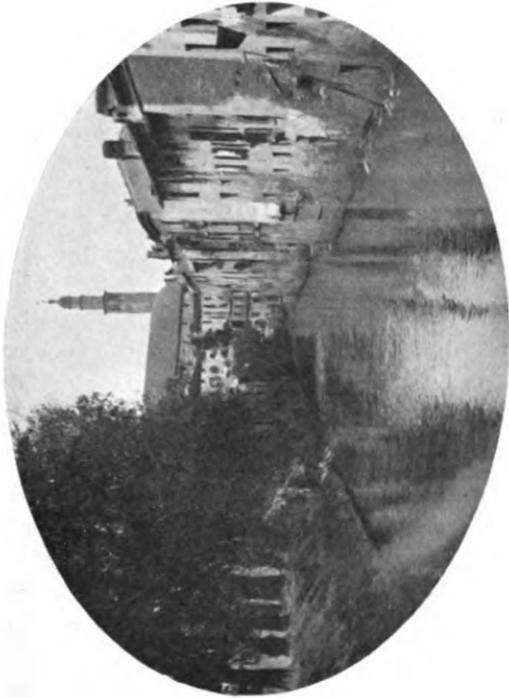
Loud though Frederick's complaints were he accepted the verdict. Not so the Lombards, who sought by procrastination to evade even the small concessions which they were ordered to make. To recover Verona was to them of prime importance. The means they adopted to this end led to one of the most curious episodes in the varied history of the Mark.

The newly founded Dominican and Franciscan orders had devoted themselves to the healing of the feuds which

vexed the Communes. The Italians, always susceptible to eloquence, were moved by their preaching to reconciliations, usually, we must confess, as short-lived as they were sudden. Now a Dominican, Frà Giovanni, from Schio, near Vicenza, came forward to pacify the Mark. He had brought about a settlement of the dispute between the Commune and Bishop of Bologna, and was looked upon as a saint in that city, where many tales were told of the wonders he had worked. The Paduans went to welcome him at Monselice, placed him on the Carroccio and brought him in triumph to the city, where he healed many private feuds. Then he reconciled Treviso with the lords of Camino and her other enemies. In Vicenza he was given the lordship of the city, and after reforming the government with arbitrary power, summoned a general assembly to meet him at Paquara, near Verona, in August, 1233, for the purpose of putting an end to all public and private enmities, and especially to regulate the affairs of Verona.

An attack in June by an army supplied by Milan, Brescia, Mantua, Bologna, and Faenza had made that city disposed to treat. Giovanni was welcomed as a heaven-sent messenger of peace, brought back the Count and his followers, freed Ezzelino from the excommunication, and was given the custody of the castles of the contending factions. But his success began to turn his head. His proceedings in Vicenza had already roused opposition; he now caused himself to be recognised as ruler of Verona, and, mounting the Carroccio of the city in the market-place, assumed the titles of Duke and Podestà of Verona. Like most of the cities of Lombardy at this period, Verona was full of heretics, and Frà Giovanni inaugurated his rule by burning on the charge of heresy sixty men and women of the principal families in the Piazza dell' Erbe.

The day for the great assembly drew near. An immense multitude gathered on the plain of Paquara, on the banks of the Adige, below Verona. There were present the Patriarch of Aquileia, nine Bishops; the



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lords of Este, of Romano, and other nobles ; the Carroccios of Verona, Mantua, Brescia, Padua, Vicenza, surrounded by the entire population of those cities ; countless numbers from Venice, Ferrara, Treviso, Bologna, and even from distant Modena, Reggio, and Parma ranged round their standards. A contemporary writer estimates at four hundred thousand the numbers present ; another declares that not until all mankind are assembled in the Valley of Jehoshaphat will such a multitude ever be gathered together again.

To this great host Frà Giovanni preached from the text, "My peace I leave you, My peace I give you," and his voice, we are told, was distinctly heard even to the farthest limits of the assembly. A bodyguard of armed Bolognese surrounded him to keep off the pressure of the crowd. The effect of his words was immense. The whole assembly was filled with compunction for their past offences, and displayed their sorrow by sobs and cries of penitence. Old enemies were reconciled, and falling on each other's necks demanded pardon for the past ; the feuds of generations seemed to have vanished before the burning words of the monk. The more weighty matters in dispute were submitted to the arbitration of Frà Giovanni. Measures were taken to remedy the political disorders of the Mark. Ezzelino was reconciled with Padua, and a marriage was arranged between Alberic's daughter and the son of the Marquis of Este.

This peace, so acclaimed by all, lasted just five days. The Paduans saw with dislike the position which Frà Giovanni had acquired in Vicenza, and now that the first burst of enthusiasm had cooled the former political leaders of that city were beginning to long once more for the power they had laid aside. A riot broke out, instigated by Padua. Frà Giovanni hurried to Vicenza, and being favoured by a large body of the citizens began to attack the towers of the authors of the disturbance. He had already got possession of a large part of the city when the arrival of a force from Padua changed the day. His partisans were driven out and he himself taken

prisoner. The former constitution of the city was restored, and parties stood once more as they had been before the monk's intervention.

As soon as news reached Verona of Frà Giovanni's ill fortune the crafty Ezzelino rushed to arms, and asserting that the Count's faction were privy to the intrigue of Padua in Vicenza, he stirred up the mob against them and cast the chief among them into prison. Then he hastened to Vicenza to release the monk. This he effected by exchanging for him those whom he had arrested in Verona. Ezzelino now appeared as the champion of Frà Giovanni, who, on his side, by his failure at Vicenza, was exposed to the derision of all, and they were many, who were opposed to his mission of pacification. Great as were his gifts as a preacher, his ambition and his greed for worldly titles caused the sceptical among his contemporaries to mock at his pretensions to sanctity. He did not show himself equal to the task he had set himself. His head was turned by his sudden successes, and he was tempted to abandon a spiritual career for a political one, for which his very virtues rendered him unfit.

Frà Giovanni remained for some time longer at Verona; but the real ruler was once more Ezzelino. The Count's party again left the city. The last act of the monk was to induce the Bolognese to withdraw their garrisons from the castles in the Veronese district. Then he retired to Bologna, and so vanishes from our history.

War once more broke out in the Mark. On the one side were Ezzelino and Treviso, on the other Padua and the lords of Camino. Then the Count of San Bonifazio, with the Lombards, chiefly the men of Brescia and Mantua, pressed plundering and burning up to the walls of Verona. The interposition of the Venetians brought about yet another peace; and Alberic fulfilled one of the conditions of the peace of Paquara by giving his daughter in marriage to the young Rinaldo of Este.

Negotiations were still dragging on between the Pope and the Lombards with a view to a reconciliation between

the League and the Emperor. In spite of Gregory's representations the confederates would not desist from attacks on the cities friendly to Frederick. The latter, wishing to show a mark of his favour to the Cremonese, had sent to their city a number of elephants, camels, and other Eastern animals, which he took great pleasure in collecting. The Milanese and their allies made an attempt to carry them off on the way from Parma to Cremona. The burghers of the latter city hurried forward to protect the convoy. Contingents from Reggio, Modena, Parma, and Pavia came to their aid, and a pitched battle was fought at Zenevolta, with no very definite result, except that the animals arrived safely at their destination. We hear of Piacentines on both sides, the popular party, no doubt, helping their allies of Cremona, the nobles faithful to their traditional friendship with Milan. At the same time Bologna broke the truce with Modena, laid waste its territory, and brought about a revolt of the nobles of Frignano.

After endless delays the Lombards professed to yield to the exhortations of the Pope, who was still pressing for a new Crusade; and at last declared their readiness to accept his decision on the points at issue with the Emperor. This was in October, 1234. A few weeks later came startling evidence of their perfidy. News arrived that the Emperor's son, Henry, had raised the standard of revolt in Germany, and had been recognised as King of Italy by Milan and her allies.

Henry had already excited suspicions as to his loyalty. One of Frederick's reasons for his visit to Friuli in 1232 had been to inquire into his conduct, and to take measures to secure his obedience. Henry had given all outward assurances of fidelity; but soon began again to intrigue against his father. He found but little support in Germany, therefore he turned to the discontented Lombards. In December, 1234, his envoys concluded a treaty in Milan by which that city, with Brescia, Lodi, Novara, Bologna, and the Marquis of Montferrat recognised him as King. In return he promised to recognise the League, to guarantee their immunities, and to espouse

their quarrels with the Communes of the opposite party. This treaty, showing to what lengths the Lombards were prepared to go, may be said to have made a reconciliation with the Emperor impossible.

Frederick took instant action to crush the rebellion. He hastened into Germany, while the Pope addressed letters to the prelates of that country denouncing all who opposed the Emperor. The revolt collapsed on his appearance, and Henry, taken prisoner, ended his days in captivity in an Apulian castle.

The Lombards, however, obstinately persisted in their hostility; and the League was solemnly renewed in 1235 by Milan and ten other cities.¹ The Pope did not yet despair of peace, and sought by his legates to induce the Lombards to submit. But his conduct only served to excite grave suspicions in Frederick's mind, while he made no impression on the Lombards. Frederick complained that Gregory was unduly lenient towards the League, while exacting too many concessions from him, the aggrieved party; and he began to cast doubts on the Pope's impartiality.

The affairs of Germany and his marriage with Isabella, daughter of Henry III. of England, detained Frederick north of the Alps for more than a year. In the meantime he nearly lost his hold on Verona.

Papal envoys again appeared in the Mark to pacify the factions of that city. The League, relying on their secret hostility to the Emperor, or trusting to deceive them, hoped by their means to win Verona back to their confederacy. The city submitted to them, and a Podestà from Perugia took over the government in the name of the Church. The Count's party were brought back, and Ezzelino once again left the city.

About the same time, too, Alberic was forced to leave Vicenza. The factions in that city had broken out again soon after the downfall of Frà Giovanni, and Alberic's enemies had brought about the election of Azzo of Este as Podestà for 1235. He expelled the chief adherents of

¹ Milan, Lodi, Novara, Como, Alessandria, Brescia, Treviso, Padua, Ferrara, Bologna, and Faenza.

the Romanos, and continued to make war on them in their castles.

All this happened before the peace which the Venetians brought about towards the end of 1235. This peace seemed to promise a period of general tranquillity for the Mark. The conditions laid down at Paquara were now carried out. The marriage between the rival families of Romano and Este seemed to put an end to their hostility; Treviso and Padua were reconciled, and Ezzelino became a burgher of the latter city. The fortunes of the House of Romano were once again at a low ebb, and Ezzelino saw himself forced once more to swear to the League.

The Veronese, however, would not abandon the Emperor. The Count's party were soon expelled again. Evidently the mass of the people detested them, and were ready to side with the Montecchi and the Four-and-Twenty against them. The exiles, however, were soon restored; and seeing that they could not bring the city over to the League nor maintain themselves long against their enemies, they began to plot to seize it by force, and to expel their opponents.

The Marquis of Este, who had been elected Podestà of Vicenza for a second year, had quarrelled again with Alberic's supporters, and had banished the chief of them. He had now become an ardent supporter of the League, so much so that we soon find him denouncing the penalty of death on any one who should so much as mention the name of the Emperor. He joined in the plot organised in Verona, and assembled a force near the castle of Montebello, in order to come to the help of the Count as soon as a tumult should break out in the city. Ezzelino was absent in the territory of Treviso, cut off from his friends by Vicenza and the lands of the Count.

But the conspiracy was discovered. When the Count's party rose their opponents were prepared. Instead of driving out the Montecchi they were beaten in the street fighting and themselves expelled. Ezzelino hastened from Treviso, over the snowy mountain paths. A road had to be cut by him in places through the piled-up drifts. He found Verona already in the hands of his

partisans. The towers and houses of eleven families, supporters of the Count, were destroyed, and the Perugian Podestà was expelled on the charge of having aided the conspiracy. This latter action drew down on Ezzelino the Papal excommunication, of which he took no heed. He had at last reached the goal for which he had so long striven. Three times already had he seized on Verona, and each time he had been forced to relinquish his prey. Now for the fourth and last time he was master of the city ; and this time he was to rule it until his death.

CHAPTER X

FREDERICK'S WAR WITH THE LOMBARDS AND WITH THE CHURCH

THE first result of Ezzelino's rule in Verona was that that city was at once attacked by Vicenza and Padua, while the Count of San Bonifazio and his party carried on the war from their castles. Treviso, too, now definitely broke with Ezzelino, and falling on his lands in her territory inflicted on them enormous damages, which Ezzelino, later on, assessed at sixty thousand pounds. He appealed urgently to Frederick for help, and in May the advance guard of the Imperial forces, numbering five hundred mounted men and one hundred Saracen bowmen, entered Verona.

Frederick, in the meantime, was assembling his army, and in August arrived at Trent, where he was welcomed by the brothers Ezzelino and Alberic. Times had changed since Barbarossa had been able to gather all the princes of Germany under his standard for an invasion of Lombardy. The Germans had now no liking for campaigns south of the Alps. They were of opinion that Italy should be conquered by the forces of the loyal cities and of Frederick's hereditary possessions, Sicily and Apulia. Only three thousand mounted men followed the Emperor when, in August, 1236, he made his triumphal entry into Verona, from which city he hoped to proceed to the complete subjugation of Lombardy.

The territory of Verona, stretching from the Alps to the Po, cut off the cities of the Mark from the rest of the confederates. The lands of Brescia and the

long, narrow district of Mantua isolated it in turn from the group of Communes—Parma, Reggio, Modena, and Cremona—which formed the main strength of the Imperial party. Isolated again from these by Piacenza and Lodi were Asti and Pavia. These cities favoured Frederick's cause; but they were surrounded by enemies and, for the moment, were compelled to inaction, especially since the Marquis of Montferrat had broken with Pavia and had adhered to the League.

On the side of Milan were ranged Alessandria, Vercelli, Novara, Brescia, Como, Lodi, and Crema. The smaller communities of Piedmont were neutral or favoured the League. Piacenza had been fluctuating, according as the people or the nobles had gained the upper hand. In June of this year, however, a Papal legate, the Cardinal of Præneste, had brought about a reconciliation by which the nobles were restored to the city. But they began almost at once to plot against their adversaries, and were favoured by the Cardinal, who, either secretly inclined to the League or deceived by the nobles, allowed them to take such measures that the heads of the popular party left the city. Sentence of banishment was at once pronounced against them; and Piacenza, now entirely in the hands of the nobles, entered the League. The attitude of Bergamo was doubtful, but, as events soon showed, its sympathies were with the Emperor.

Mantua formed a connecting link between these cities and the eastern members of the League. Its district touched that of Ferrara, which in turn bordered on the lands of the Marquis of Este on one side, and on those of Bologna on the other. Faenza, also a member of the League, was closely allied with Bologna, and was at this time engaged in a war which for the moment had made it the predominant city in Romagna. With Faenza were allied Imola and Cesena, while the Imperial Vicar in the province was supported by Ravenna, Rimini, Forlì, Forlimpopoli, Bertinoro, and many feudal lords. Thus this region was divided between partisans of the

Emperor and of the League. Already before Frederick's arrival in Italy Faenza had gained the upper hand, and had forced Forli, Forlimpopoli, and Bertinoro to submission.

From Verona Frederick could either attack the other cities of the Mark, which could not easily receive help from the rest of the confederates, or he could force his way through to Cremona, and with that city as a base strike at Milan, the heart of the opposition to him. He chose the latter alternative. Passing into the southern territories of Brescia, he captured several castles which commanded the passage of the Oglio. The confederate army, estimated at fifty thousand men, contented themselves with observing his movements, without hindering his junction with the army which Cremona, Parma, Reggio, and Modena had sent to meet him. Then, fixing his headquarters at Cremona, he attacked the lands of Mantua, so as to keep open his communications with Verona.

As soon as the Emperor had crossed the Mincio, the Paduans, Trevisans, and Vicentines, with the lords of Camino and Este, assembled all their forces to crush Verona, the greater part of whose mounted forces had accompanied Frederick. The united armies laid siege to the important castle of Rivalta, near the Adige. Ezzelino had remained behind to protect Verona, and sent urgent messages to the Emperor for help. Leaving Cremona in the evening at the head of his cavalry, Frederick, after a ride of unexampled length, reached San Bonifazio in twenty-four hours. The news of his arrival caused a panic in the confederate camp. They broke up in confusion, and each contingent hastened with all possible speed back to its own city.

On Ezzelino's advice Frederick pushed forward against Vicenza. He reached the city before the burgher infantry. The remaining townsmen and the horse under the Marquis of Este rejected the summons to surrender. The Germans and the Veronese at once attacked the city; some of the former scaled the walls, and threw open a gate for their comrades. The Marquis

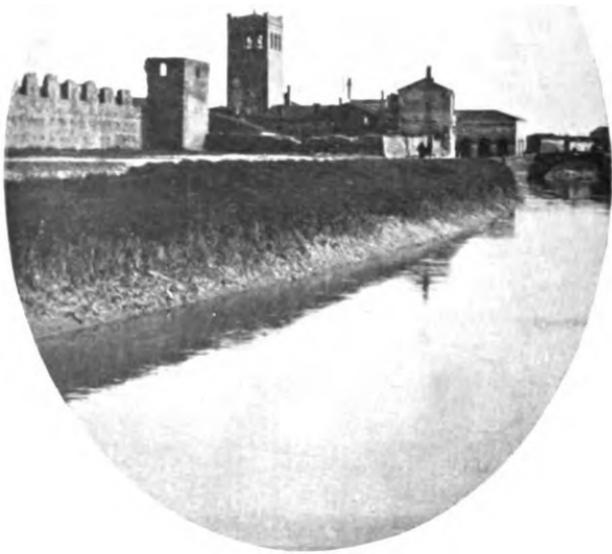
fled, and the whole army poured into the city, which was given over to all the horrors of fire and sword. The Germans made no distinction between friend and foe. Even the historian Maurisio, eager partisan of the Emperor as he was, was stripped of all his belongings, including his dearly loved books, and dragged about in chains, until after a few days an Imperial proclamation ordered the release of the prisoners.

After this exemplary punishment, Frederick showed himself inclined to mildness. The constitution of the city was, outwardly at least, recognised, but the choice of the Podestà and the practical direction of the government was left to Ezzelino. The latter was now master of Verona and Vicenza, and later tradition revives an old legend in order to show how Frederick expected him to maintain his power. Walking one day with him in the Bishop's garden, Frederick, while discoursing with him on the means for preserving his hold on Vicenza, began to strike off with his knife the heads of the tallest flowers. "I shall not forget this lesson," was the remark of Ezzelino.

Another anecdote illustrates the mixture of scepticism and belief as regards many of the prevailing opinions of the time which is such a feature in Frederick's character. He asked his astrologer to foretell by which gate he would leave Vicenza. The astrologer gave him a sealed paper, to be opened after he had quitted the city. Hoping to put him to confusion, the Emperor caused a breach to be made in the wall, and passed out through it with his army. The paper was opened, and on it was written, "Per portam novam exhibit rex" !²

His sudden and striking success at Vicenza altered Frederick's plans. He determined to complete the conquest of the Mark. The season was too advanced for siege operations, but Frederick carried fire and sword into the lands of Padua and Treviso, hoping to terrify these cities into a surrender. Salinguerra now listened to the counsels of his old ally, and brought

² It appears from Maurisio that there was a gate in Vicenza called Porta Nova.



MONSELICE.

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Ferrara over to the Imperial party; and the lords of Camino, more hostile to Treviso than to their rivals of Romano, joined the same party. Though thus cut off from all outside help, the two cities showed no signs of yielding. A revolt of the Duke of Austria recalled Frederick to Germany, and, leaving Ezzelino as his representative in the Mark, he passed over the Piave against the German rebels.

In February, 1237, Ezzelino and the Imperial general, Gebhard von Arnstein, left their winter quarters of Vicenza to attack Padua. To protect themselves in this peril, the Paduans had entrusted the government of the Commune to sixteen of the leading nobles, and in a general assembly had appointed Azzo of Este general, solemnly handing over to him the banner of the Commune, and hailing him as the shield and guardian of the Mark.

Soon, however, it was discovered that some of the sixteen were in secret communication with Ezzelino. All fell at once under suspicion, and the Podestà ordered them to retire to Venice. Instead of obeying, all but two fled to their castles, and soon declared openly for the Emperor. Then, by a bold march along the skirts of the Euganean hills, the Imperial forces fell on the castle of Cartura, where the Paduans had placed two hundred chosen knights, in order to keep open their communications with Este. The surprise was complete, and the whole force was captured. Next Ezzelino advanced on the strong fortress of Monselice. This was an Imperial castle, but the castellans had been forced to acknowledge the supremacy of Padua. This they were now glad to shake off, and Monselice surrendered without a blow.

The Marquis of Este saw his own territories now cut off from Padua. Ezzelino sent to him ordering him to decide whether he would be for or against the Emperor, and the Marquis, abandoning his trust, at once submitted.

Confusion now reigned in Padua. The Podestà fled,

and the city, left without a leader, was torn by conflicting counsels. However, the patriotic party had still sufficient courage left to repel a first assault with considerable loss to the assailants. But the friends of the captured knights were above all anxious for their security; and their influence was such that, not twenty-four hours after this success, they had carried a motion, proposed by Ezzelino's secret partisans, to surrender the city in exchange for the captives.

The treaty was soon made; the constitution and the rights of the Commune were to remain untouched, and Ezzelino even promised to use his utmost endeavours to secure the welfare of the city. The Imperial army was met outside the gates by the whole population, and greeted with all outward demonstrations of joy. When Ezzelino came to the Porta Torrisella, he removed his helmet and, leaning from his horse, kissed the gatepost. To the more hopeful among the burghers it seemed a symbol of goodwill and future protection; to Ezzelino it meant that the day of vengeance had dawned for that people who, as the chronicler puts it, "were wont to hate and persecute him as if he were a wolf."

Padua had surrendered in the end of February, and but a few weeks later Treviso, left helpless, submitted to the Empire, or rather to the lordship of Ezzelino. The words of his father when, ten years before, he had counselled him to submit for the moment to Padua, but to bide his time in the hope of one day seeing not Padua alone, but all the Mark at his feet, had come true. The old man had carefully treasured in his memory a saying of his wife, the Tuscan Adelaide of Mangona, who was believed to be gifted with supernatural powers. The first half of the prophecy seemed now to have been fulfilled. The double meaning that lurked in the obscure Latin lines had escaped the notice of Ezzelino the Monk and his sons.

Thus when Frederick returned to Italy in September, 1237, he found one considerable province already lost to the League. In the interval Ezzelino had laid siege to the castle of San Bonifazio; and though its great

strength and the valour of its defender, the youthful son of the Count and of Ezzelino's sister, the celebrated Cunizza, had so far foiled his efforts, its reduction by hunger was only a question of time. It was all important to the Count to prevent this fortress falling into the hands of the Veronese ; so on condition that the siege should be raised and his possessions secured to him he submitted to Frederick. More important still, he brought over to the Imperial side Mantua, a city which was altogether guided by him. Frederick received the submission of this Commune in October, on guaranteeing to it all its liberties.

This was the weak point in Frederick's position. He relied on Italian aid to subdue the League, and was not strong enough to hold down by main force the cities which had come over to him. He was therefore forced to recognise the existing constitutions, placing the government in the hands of those among the burghers who for one reason or other supported him. Still less could he interfere with those Communes which had always been on his side. Cremona and Parma were just as jealous of their liberties as was Milan ; it was hatred of that city, far more than devotion to the Empire, which had ranged them under Frederick's banner. No doubt Frederick hoped later on to establish his direct authority in the cities, and to be as much master of them as any other king was of his dominions. For the moment, however, he was forced to respect the autonomy of all—an autonomy, we must admit, which was but the merest shadow in the cases of Vicenza and Padua.

At the opening of his second campaign Frederick might well congratulate himself on his previous successes. Only Bologna and Faenza, of the eastern cities, still remained to the League. The western cities, however, grouped round Milan, were still bent on resistance ; and against them Frederick directed his forces.

With the contingents of all the Italian Communes of his party, amongst whom were many burghers of Trent, a city which does not often come into our story, two

thousand German cavalry and a force of Saracen bowmen, variously estimated as seven or ten thousand strong, the Emperor set out from Goitò, in the district of Mantua, and entered the lands of the Brescians. With him were Ezzelino, the Marquis of Este, and the Count of San Bonifazio. The Emperor had with him an elephant, which excited the wonder of the Italians. "And on this beast of an elephant," so the chronicler of Mantua quaintly puts it, "was a Carroccio, and over the Carroccio floated the standard of the Empire, and armed Christians and Saracens were in the Carroccio." The castles in the southern territory of Brescia soon fell into his hands.

The confederate Lombards had assembled a considerable army to check his advance towards Milan. We are told that a few years before the Milanese had raised a force of seven thousand cavalry, under seven captains, and that they could put fifty thousand infantry under arms. It was thus easy for the League to equip a considerable field army, while leaving the cities amply garrisoned.

The army of the League advanced across the narrow portion of the district of Bergamo which separated the Contado of Milan from that of Brescia. They crossed the Oglio, and posted themselves at Manerbio, halfway on the direct route from Cremona to Brescia. The swampy nature of the ground effectually protected their position from attack. From this spot they were able to cover Brescia, and to keep a watch on Bergamo, which had lately shown leanings towards the Imperial party. The Emperor took up his quarters at Ponte Vico, where the modern railway from Cremona to Brescia crosses the Oglio. The outpost of the two armies were in touch with one another.

The position taken up by the confederates had one serious disadvantage. If Frederick were to cross the Oglio, and advance through the northern part of the friendly territory of Cremona, he could easily place himself between their army and Milan, while he himself would have a secure line of communication with Cre-

mona. He might even make a dash on Crema, or Milan itself, before the army of the League could come to the rescue. We must suppose, however, that the confederates had seen this latter danger and provided against it by leaving strong garrisons in Lodi and Crema, as well as in the castles between the latter city and their quarters at Manerbio.

Frederick was above all things anxious to draw his opponents to a pitched battle in the open. They were fully alive to the danger to them of this, and remained in their position, which Frederick did not venture to attack. The armies faced one another for a fortnight, during which time Papal envoys attempted to renew the negotiations for peace which they had been carrying on during the summer, and which the obstinacy of the nobles of Piacenza had brought to nothing. The Emperor would not listen to them. The time for negotiations was passed; the Lombards must submit or let the sword decide.

The confederates trusted that the lateness of the season would of itself cause the break up of Frederick's army. The contingents from the Italian cities would not remain long in the field; the Germans and Saracens would suffer from the swampy soil and the November rains. The Emperor was quite aware of their hopes, and knew that it would be difficult for them too to keep their forces under arms. He laid his plans accordingly. He gave out that he intended to retire to Cremona for the winter, and sent on some of his troops to the city. Then he broke up his camp, and, abandoning the Brescian territory, crossed the Oglio with his whole army.

The Lombards believed that Frederick's army was disbanded, and that he had withdrawn to Cremona. Leaving Manerbio they gladly began their homeward march. They crossed the Oglio, and on the 27th of November, four days after Frederick had left his camp, they had reached Cortenuova in the district of Bergamo, marching carelessly and singing as they went, when they were suddenly assailed by the Saracens of the Imperial vanguard. The Emperor, in fact, instead of retiring

south to Cremona, had advanced northwards along the right bank of the Oglio, and had posted his whole army on the flank of the retiring Lombards.

Taken completely by surprise, and attacked with vigour by the enemy, who fell on them with shouts of "Miles, Roma! Miles, Imperator!" the confederates, consisting of the flower of the cavalry and infantry of Milan, with contingents from Alessandria, Como, Crema, Vercelli, Novara, and Piacenza, hastily got their ranks into some sort of order, and repelled the first charge of the Saracens. They even held their ground against the charges of the flower of the German and Italian knights headed by the Emperor, his son Enzo and Ezzelino, until, finding their flank menaced by a force from Bergamo, they were forced to give ground. But a picked body of the chosen youth of Milan, the Company of the Forti, who had bound themselves by oath to die rather than yield, maintained their ranks unbroken around the Carroccio of their city, until night put an end to the combat.

Frederick ordered his troops to sleep in their armour, so as to be ready to renew the battle at the first light of morning. The Podestà of Milan, finding his army too shaken to renew the combat, ordered a retreat in the night, hoping thus to save the Carroccio and the bulk of his army. The heavy rains had made the roads impassable, and the ponderous wagon stuck fast in the mud. It was found at daybreak by the Imperial cavalry, lying overturned in the midst of the abandoned baggage train of the confederates, stripped of its ornaments, with the exception of the golden cross, which its guards had not been able to detach from the top of the mast. The cavalry soon overtook the fugitives and scattered them in hopeless rout. "Then the renowned knighthood of Pavia avenged itself on the knights of Milan, and faithful Cremona with its allies dyed its axes in blood, and the Saracens emptied their quivers," cries exultantly Pietro delle Vigne, Frederick's chancellor. Milan, alone, is said to have lost eight hundred knights and three thousand foot-soldiers. The Imperialists declared that ten thousand men, probably half the hostile army, had perished or had

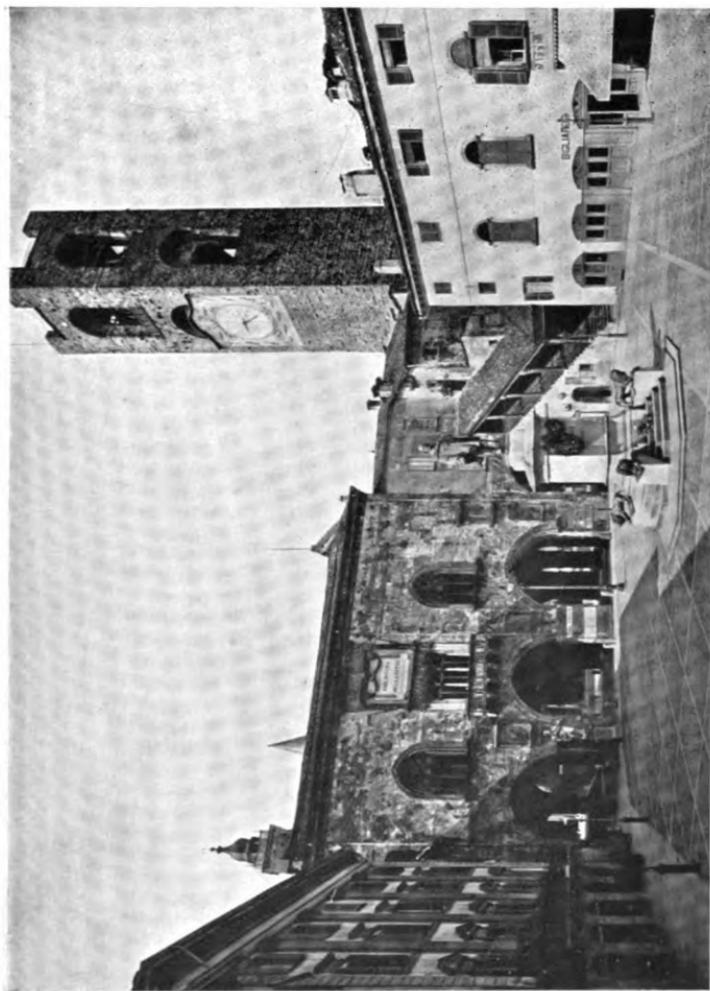


Photo.]

BERGAMO, BROLETTO.

[A Itinari.

been captured. Among the captives was the Milanese Podestà, Tiepolo, son of the Doge of Venice, and more than three hundred nobles of Milan, Alessandria, Novara, and Vercelli. The Archbishop of Milan, who had accompanied his flock to battle, could not be found. To complete the disaster, the men of Bergamo fell on the fugitives scattered throughout their territory and captured them in numbers.¹ Scarcely any would have reached Milan had not Pagano della Torre, lord of the Valsassina, between the district of Bergamo and the Lake of Como, guided them across the mountains into his lands, thrown open his castles to them, provided them with food and clothing, and escorted them to Milan.² This act of kindness sank deep into the hearts of the populace, and in later days opened to the Della Torre the way to the lordship over the city.

After this great victory Frederick made a triumphal entry into Cremona, wearing his crown and preceded by the long train of captives. The Milanese Carroccio was dragged along by the elephant, and the captive Podestà was lashed to the standard pole. Tiepolo and many of the chief captives were then sent to Apulian dungeons; the Carroccio was sent, with a pompous letter describing the victory, as a present to the Roman people, and placed on the Capitol.

In Milan the news of the disaster was followed by an outburst of despair, which, as is often the case in Italy, found expression in wild blasphemy. If we can believe Matthew Paris, the mob broke into the churches, hung the crucifixes upside down, defiled the very altars, and laid violent hands on the clergy. The League seemed shattered. Lodi submitted almost at once, and thus the road to Pavia was opened. Frederick spent the early

¹ According to many writers, it was only after the battle that Bergamo declared for the Emperor, hence the fugitives expected no attack in their territory.

² It seems up to this to have escaped notice that the city of Bergamo lies between Cortenuova and the Valsassina, and that the latter lies completely aside from the route from Cortenuova to Milan. The confederate army must, therefore, have been driven northward towards the mountains.

days of January in that city ; and we can imagine with what ecstasies of delight the inhabitants once more saw an Emperor within their walls. They had of late years been forced more and more to yield to the power of Milan ; now at last they might look for the destruction of their rival.

By March, Novara and Vercelli, the Marquis of Montferrat, all the cities of Piedmont as far as Susa, with the single exception of Alessandria, had sent in their submission to the Emperor. Como came over to his side soon after, and thus Milan was left isolated from all her allies.

The few remaining cities of the League sent to treat for peace. Accounts differ widely as to what concessions they were prepared to make ; but it is certain that they fell short of the Emperor's demands. He wished to have the same authority over the Communes as every other king had in his dominions ; and to this the Lombards would not consent. The Milanese, voicing the determination of the rest of the confederates, declared that they would rather perish sword in hand beneath the ruins of the city than submit and die more slowly by hunger and oppression. As a matter of fact their position was by no means so desperate as appears at first sight. They knew that Pope and Emperor were once more drifting towards an open quarrel. The actual subjects in dispute were trivial ; but it was certain that a Pope with political views such as Gregory's must look with lively alarm on the complete destruction of Lombard freedom. Frederick would then be as much master of Northern Italy as he already was of the south, and would have the Papacy completely at his mercy. He had already given ample grounds for the suspicion that he would strive to reduce the Popedom to a complete subjection to the civil power. The Pope would be reduced to the level of the Patriarch of Constantinople. Even if we reject the rumours that Gregory sent secret encouragement to the Milanese, it must have been perfectly evident to them that a rupture between the Papacy and the Empire was only a matter of time. The question

was Could they hold out until an actual breach took place?

In the then state of military science a walled city, if properly provisioned and free from traitors within the walls, could resist almost indefinitely a besieging army however strong. A common danger had united the Milanese. They strengthened their walls and laid in ample stores of food. The constitution of Frederick's army gave them time for this. The Imperial authority had been greatly weakened in Germany since the days of Barbarossa, largely owing to concessions forced from his grandson when contending against Otho of Brunswick, or preparing for the Crusade. He could not force the Germans to take the field in sufficient numbers, nor did his finances enable him to raise a mercenary force, or, if raised, to hold it long together. The Italian contingents could hardly remain away from home for any considerable period. In fact, after Cortenuova Frederick's army had broken up, and months must elapse before a new one could be assembled. All these considerations emboldened the cities, Milan, Alessandria, Brescia, Piacenza, Bologna, and Faenza, which still held out.

Not till the August after Cortenuova was Frederick again ready to assume the offensive. The Marquis Lancia, at the head of a force supplied by Pavia, Asti, and the other cities west of the Ticino, prepared to reduce Alessandria, while Frederick with the main army attacked Brescia. A powerful army had at last come from Germany. No less than eight prelates and many lay princes appeared in person at the head of their vassals. A large force of Apulians and Saracens was furnished by Frederick's hereditary dominions. A choice body of cavalry came from the Rhone Valley, and the Lombards of the Imperial party sent their contingents.¹ Even foreign countries sent men to swell the host. Henry III. of England, Frederick's father-in-law, supplied one hundred knights and a great sum of money. The Count of Toulouse, the King of

¹ Some of the Brescian nobles, hostile to the popular party, served under Frederick's banner.

Castile, the Emperor Vataces, even, it is said, the Soldan of Egypt sent chosen warriors to display their valour under the Imperial eagle, as if to some great tournament.

The great host assembled at Goito, a castle in the Mantuan territory, of which the name, but not the physical features, figure in Browning's "Sordello," and advanced on Brescia, the conquest of which seemed easier than that of Milan, and would probably terrify the other confederates into submission. But the men of Brescia—

"Brescia the armed, Brescia the strong,
In valour clothed more stubborn than her steel—"

have always been famed for courage above the common order. They prepared, with greater resources, to emulate the resistance offered by Crema two generations before in a similar crisis. For more than two months they defied all attacks, and even made numerous successful sorties. In the Emperor's camp was a famous Spanish engineer, Calamandrino by name, who directed the siege operations. He was captured in one of the sorties, and forced by threats of death to give his services to the besieged. All the engines known to the military science of the time, mangonels, catapults, great movable towers, were employed against the defences; but the courage and skill of the Brescians beat off all attacks. Exasperated by the long resistance, the Emperor caused the captives taken in the preceding year in the Brescian castles to be bound to the front of the towers, which were moved up against the walls. This cruel action proved as useless now as formerly before Crema; the burghers did not slacken in their resistance, encouraged by the exhortations of the prisoners, who preferred death to the ruin of their country. In revenge the German captives were hung by the arms over the most vulnerable points of the fortifications.

The siege lasted into October, and the Imperial army made no progress. The autumn rains began to sow

disease in their camp, and in a last great sortie the Brescians inflicted heavy loss on the assailants, and almost penetrated to the Emperor's tent. Next day Frederick abandoned the siege,¹ burned his machines, and concluding a truce with Brescia, withdrew to Cremona, where his army disbanded.

The siege of Brescia is the turning-point in Frederick's struggle with the Lombards. His failure encouraged his adversaries beyond measure. All his efforts had been foiled by one city, and the remaining confederates had not only been left unmolested, but had been able to take the offensive. Bologna had ravaged the Modenese, Milan the lands of Pavia and Bergamo, Piacenza those of Cremona. The Cremonese, helped by some of Frederick's troops, had indeed given their adversaries a great overthrow, taking a thousand prisoners; but as a set-off to this Alessandria had successfully resisted all attacks.

Even in the Mark Frederick's authority, or rather that of Ezzelino who ruled it in Frederick's name, had not been undisturbed. The former ruling class in the Communes was impatient of Ezzelino's authority, which was daily taking away all but the shadow of communal liberty. The Count's party were hostile to him in Verona; in Vicenza the nobles, laying aside all their private quarrels, united against him, and withdrew to their castles. In Padua, where both nobles and middle classes were his enemies, a widespread conspiracy was formed to give the city into the hands of the Marquis of Este, and its success would have meant, beyond all doubt, the loss of that city to the Imperial cause.

The Marquis appeared, in the July previous to the siege of Brescia, before the Porta Torrisella, and at the same moment his supporters inside the walls rose. Ezzelino, after the first surprise, called his German troops to arms; he was just in time to prevent the conspirators from opening the gate, and the majority of them fled from the city. He himself, with a small body of cavalry, sallied out by another gate, and, skirting the walls, fell unexpectedly on his enemies,

¹ October 9, 1238.

who were drawn up in the Prato della Valle. They fled before the unexpected onslaught, and only the fleetness of his horse saved the Marquis from captivity. Ezzelino at once attacked the Marquis's lands. Este was captured after a short siege ; but Montagnana defied all his efforts. Ezzelino was forced to retreat, and soon afterwards the Marquis recovered Este. Ezzelino found his position so unsafe that he wrote urgent letters asking the Emperor for help.

Early in 1239 the Emperor visited the Mark, where he was received with all outward signs of loyalty. He professed to look on the warfare between Ezzelino and the Marquis as a mere private quarrel, and invited the latter to his court, where he sought to reconcile the two adversaries. Ezzelino pretended to obey, but his spies kept a careful account of all the Paduans who visited the Marquis. They were marked down as victims for the future vengeance of Ezzelino.

Frederick made a considerable stay in Padua, elaborating a series of enactments which would establish his authority on a firm basis in those parts of Lombardy under his control. At the same time he gave expression to his love of splendour by the magnificent festivities with which he sought to dazzle the people ; and the Paduans, following their pleasure-loving nature, vied with him and his courtiers in pomp of dress and splendid entertainments.

An interruption came when news was brought that on Palm Sunday, while Frederick was presiding with Imperial pomp over the annual festivities in the Prato della Valle, the Pope had solemnly pronounced sentence of excommunication against him in Rome.

The open breach between Pope and Emperor had come at last. Perhaps the chief among the many causes of his action put forward by the Pope was Frederick's proceedings in relation to Sardinia. The Popes had long claimed to be suzerains of this island, and several of the great Pisan families, who had divided the island amongst themselves after the expulsion of the Moors, had acknowledged the claim. But, just before the end of the

siege of Brescia, the Emperor had brought about the marriage of his son Enzo with the heiress of a large part of the island, and had allowed him to take the title of King of Sardinia. The Pope looked on this as an infringement of the rights of the Church; Frederick, however, declared that Sardinia lawfully belonged to the Empire, and refused satisfaction. The Pope began now openly to take part with the Lombards. A Papal legate appeared in Milan, and Frederick was required to submit his quarrel with the League to Papal arbitration.

Prudence should have counselled the Emperor to refrain from all provocation to the Pope until the Lombards had been conquered. His honour was, however, touched by the Papal demands; and the result of his former conflict with Gregory had led him into the fatal error of undervaluing the real strength of the Papacy. He therefore rejected Gregory's proposal, and gave no attention to his threats.

In the meantime events had greatly strengthened the pontiff. He was sure of the support of Milan and her allies. The Venetians, too, irritated at Frederick's treatment of the son of their Doge, and hoping to make conquests on the coasts of Apulia, placed their resources at his disposal. A happy chance, too, threw Genoa on his side.

The Genoese had so far held aloof from the war in Lombardy. Frederick sent envoys to win them over to his cause. As the city was torn by feuds between the nobles, and the towns on the western Riviera were in revolt, he hoped to establish his influence in the Commune. Before the arrival of his ambassadors peace had been restored within and without the walls; and the envoys found the government hesitating as to their attitude.

They determined to refer the matter to the general assembly of the burghers. The Podestà, a member of a great Milanese house, read out the Imperial rescript, in which Frederick demanded that the city should take "an oath of fealty and homage" to him. But by the alteration of a single letter he made it appear that the Emperor

required an oath of "fealty and subjection."¹ The anger of the quick-tempered assembly took fire at this demand, which seemed to imply the surrender of their liberties. The envoys were dismissed, and Genoa put itself under the protection of the Church.

The Pope could now rely on the help of the two great maritime Communes, and the Lombards had been strengthened by the acquisition of Ravenna, which had hitherto supported the Emperor. There was a faction in the city hostile to the ruling party, and these, headed by Paolo Traversari, head of a great noble family, seized the government early in 1239, and allied themselves with Faenza and Bologna. The excommunication of the Emperor was practically a declaration of war against him by the Pope. Once more a Pope and a Lombard League were arrayed against an Emperor of the House of Swabia. From this moment we may with certainty apply to the contending parties the names of Guelf and Ghibelline.

Frederick affected to make light of the excommunication. His chancellor, the celebrated Pietro delle Vigne, justified his conduct in a set oration before the assembled Paduans; and to the document in which Gregory set forth the grounds of his action, he answered in letters to all Christian kings and prelates, to the great lords of Germany and France, and to the Roman people.

He then prepared to leave the Mark. To secure his tranquillity he took hostages, amongst them the son of the Marquis of Este and his young wife, daughter of Alberic of Romano. Alberic's attitude had for some time been doubtful. Probably he was jealous of his brother's influence with the Emperor. This treatment of his daughter now roused his anger. He entered into an alliance with his old enemies the Da Camino, and by a sudden attack on Treviso they made themselves masters of the city, expelling the Imperial garrison. Treviso at once placed herself under the protection of the Pope and the Venetians.

¹ Instead of "juramentum fidelitatis et hominii," he read out "juramentum fidelitatis et dominii."

Frederick at once called out the whole force of Padua to recover the city. He soon saw that this would not be an easy task. The frontier town of Castelfranco defied him for several days, until an eclipse of the sun gave him a pretext for raising the siege. His presence seemed necessary in Central Lombardy, so, in order to secure the Paduans to his cause, he gave their Commune a grant of all the lands of Treviso as far as the River Sile, on which the city stands. The Paduan army was disbanded, and the Emperor, accompanied by the Marquis and some Vicentine nobles, set out for Verona. On the way one of their friends, a confidant of the Emperor, is said, looking at them, to have drawn his hand significantly across his throat, indicating that their lives were in danger. The road led near the castle of San Bonifazio; and Este and his friends asked the Emperor's leave to visit the Count. Leave was granted, they went; but the Emperor waited in vain for their return. Safe in the almost impregnable castle, they paid attention neither to Frederick's promises nor to his threats; and a few days later the Marquis, the Count, and all their adherents were declared traitors.

It would have been Frederick's most natural course to crush Treviso and Este before proceeding against the other hostile cities. But, whether it was that he thought that Ezzelino could put down the rebels, or that his allies elsewhere urgently demanded his presence, he left the Mark. His operations during the following months seem carried out without any fixed plan. In spite of the brilliant campaign culminating at Cortenuova, Frederick seems to have been wanting in the higher requisites of a general. Instead of consistently following out one great and well-devised plan, he is continually turning aside, guided by the impulse of the moment.

So, first, with the levy of Modena and aid from other cities he attacked Bologna. From here he returned to Central Lombardy without having done more than take a few castles. News of discord between the nobles and the people in Milan and the revolt to his side of Lecco and other places on the Lake of Como determined this

action. Aided above all by the Cremonese, he entered the Milanese territory and laid it waste. The indignant chronicler of Milan exclaims that more than twenty times had the Carroccio of Milan entered the lands of Cremona, and that now once, under the protection of the Emperor, did the Cremonese Carroccio venture into the district of Milan.

Undeterred by Cortenuova, the Milanese put in the field a large army, in which even monks and priests were enrolled, under the leadership of the Pope's legate. By skilful use of the numerous waterways which intersect the Lombard plain, and by digging new canals, they protected their territories while avoiding the risks of a pitched battle. Although Frederick, besides his Saracens and the Italian levies, had now five thousand Germans in his army, he withdrew without having inflicted much damage.

He now determined to leave the Lombards alone and to crush the Pope. He knew that the latter was trying to turn all Christendom against him, and was fomenting a revolt in Germany. Once before energetic action against the Papal territories had brought Gregory to consent to peace; he hoped that similar action now would lead to like results. Besides, if he remained any longer in the north of Italy trouble was almost certain to arise in his southern possessions. Already Enzo had been sent to reduce the Mark of Ancona, now Frederick passed into Tuscany.

There can be little doubt that Frederick's action was a mistake. The Pope's efforts in other parts of Europe met for the moment with but little success. To crush the Lombards was the most important matter for the Emperor, and the Pope might easily have been deprived of most of his dominions, even though Frederick himself had remained in Lombardy.

The cities of the Papal states were as much inclined to resist the Pope's authority as those of Lombardy were adverse to that of the Emperor. Frederick found but little difficulty in overrunning most of Central Italy, and even Rome itself seemed incapable of resistance. But

Gregory was saved by his own indomitable courage. Putting aside all thoughts of submission, although he knew that the Emperor had won over a strong party in the city, he appealed to the religious feelings of the Romans. He quitted his palace surrounded by all the prelates then in the city and by the entire Roman clergy. Bearing aloft the most sacred relics, they passed in solemn procession to the sound of penitential psalms. Arrived at the Lateran the aged pontiff—he had nearly reached his hundredth year—took the crown from his head and placed it on the relics of the Apostles Peter and Paul, exclaiming, "Defend it, O Holy Ones! Do you defend the city which the Romans leave to the mercy of the enemies of God!" Then, with a voice broken by tears, he drew such a moving picture of the peril of the Church and of Frederick's crimes that the listening multitude was won over to his cause, the partisans of the Emperor fled, and the populace in a fury of enthusiasm assumed the cross against the enemy of the Church.

Frederick could effect nothing against this combination of the citizens with the Pope, and giving up all idea of a siege retired to his Apulian kingdom.

In the meantime the Lombards had not remained idle. The Marquis of Este had recovered most of his castles in the Euganean hills, and apparently about this time Mantua, following the example of the Count of San Bonifazio, had revolted from the Emperor. Urged by the Papal legate, a Diet of the League, assembled at Bologna towards the close of the year 1239, determined on a more important enterprise—the reduction of Ferrara.

This city had enjoyed unexampled prosperity during the fifteen years of Salinguerra's rule. The Po, which at that time flowed by the city, as well as various navigable canals, afforded easy access to ships from the East and brought wealth to the inhabitants. Great fairs, held twice a year, attracted merchants even from France. The burghers, enjoying practical liberty under the wise guidance of Salinguerra, vied with one another in con-

tributing to the needs of the State. It was considered a disgrace to be taxed at too small a sum ; the rich voluntarily yielded more than the taxgatherers demanded ; their granaries, and above all those of Salinguerra, stood open to the poor in times of scarcity. So wealthy was the Commune that, after paying all expenses of administration, there remained a surplus, which was divided every month among the burghers.

The war in Lombardy and Salinguerra's adherence to Frederick's side increased this prosperity. Ferrara became the natural port from which Frederick maintained his communications with Apulia and Sicily. The soldiers and supplies brought by sea from these territories could be sent up the Po or the Mincio to Frederick's headquarters, and as the control of the greater part of the waterways of Lombardy was in Frederick's hand, the merchants of Ferrara had easy means of forwarding the goods which came to them from the East to the inland cities, and then to the countries beyond the Alps.

Precisely such a traffic had made the wealth of the Venetians. It had been their constant aim to establish a monopoly of the trade between the East and the shores of the Adriatic. Hence we find them always ready to attack cities such as Ancona or Ravenna which ventured to compete with them. Their attitude towards the increasing trade of Ferrara was therefore one of unconcealed hostility. Already their fleet had blockaded the mouths of the Po in order to force all merchant ships to take their course to Venice ; but the Ferrarese had equipped a fleet in their turn, and had completely defeated the blockaders, carrying home in triumph several captured ships.

The Venetians were eager for revenge, and entered warmly into the scheme for an attack on Ferrara. February, 1240, saw the city encircled by three armies. The Venetians supplied one, Bologna, Ravenna, and other Communes of Romagna another, the third was composed of the Mantuans under San Bonifazio, with whom were the Marquis of Este and Alberic of Romano

with a force from Treviso. Contingents from Milan, Brescia, and Piacenza swelled its numbers.

Salinguerra, now almost eighty years of age, did not lose courage. The populace was devoted to him; five hundred German cavalry had been sent to him by the Emperor. Reggio and Modena had sent a picked body of auxiliaries. To pay these he had a great treasure, four immense jars full of gold, as the chronicler relates.¹

For four months the besieging armies held the city shut in. Repeated assaults failed, and even the siege machines from Venice had little effect on the fortifications. Long prosperity had, however, sapped the constancy of the townsmen. The wealthy middle class could not bear to see their traffic cut off by the blockade and their fields laid waste by the enemy. The majority of the nobles had always been hostile to Salinguerra; now they joined with the merchants in insisting on peace. Salinguerra had to yield, and terms of surrender were agreed upon. The city and its inhabitants were to be preserved from all plunder or injury; Salinguerra was to go free to his house. The Leaguers entered the city early in June, and at once seized Salinguerra. In vain he invoked the treaty. His perfidious enemies declared that they had allowed him to return in safety to his house, and so had carried out the letter of their compact. The Marquis of Este was the only one who protested against this violation of the terms of surrender. Salinguerra was sent to Venice, where he spent the four remaining years of his life in an honourable captivity, and on his death was buried with due respect in the church of San Niccolo di Lido.

The city was governed for two years by a Venetian Podestà, and then by Azzo of Este, backed up by his faction. We are told that so evil was the new rule that fifteen hundred persons—or families, according to some—left the city. Azzo's power was now established on the wreck of the opposite party. Thenceforward Ferrara ceased to exist as a free Commune. With Verona it gives us the earliest example of how the fury of party

¹ Four dolia, according to the "Chronicon Parvum Ferrariense."

strife within a Commune led to the voluntary surrender of freedom into the hands of a despot.

The capture of Ferrara was a serious blow to the Imperial interests, and threatened Ezzelino's position in the Mark. As some compensation to the Ghibelline cause at the other extremity of Lombardy a faction favourable to Frederick, which had for some time existed in Alessandria, now got the upper hand and brought the city over to his side.

It must excite surprise that no determined attempt to relieve Ferrara was made by the Communes allied with the Emperor. Attacks on Treviso and on the lands of Este did not draw off the besiegers. Ezzelino indeed captured Bassano, the chief seat of the power of the Romanos, which had fallen to Alberic at the division of the family property. But he seems to have acted at this juncture without any well-considered plan, and most of his energies were directed to suppressing the discontent which the severities of his rule had provoked in Vicenza, Verona, and Padua. Up to the period when he had established himself in the latter city his character compares favourably with that of the general run of his contemporaries. Now a strain of cruelty and suspicion showed itself ever more and distinctly, until these passions had obtained such a mastery over him that he developed into a tyrant such as Italy up to then had never seen. Executions by the sword or by fire followed close on one another. Cruelty provoked fresh discontent; the suspicious tyrant found, or pretended to find, that plot followed on plot. A reign of terror began in Padua. The friends of the House of Este were marked down for destruction. Eighteen persons were hanged merely because they had been seen speaking to Jacopo da Carrara, who had revolted to the side of the Marquis. The sole survivor of the rival House of Camposampiero fled to Ferrara, his friends were imprisoned, and after some years left to die of starvation. The most influential citizens fled, their goods were seized, their houses and towered palaces destroyed. Writing three years after the fall of the tyrant, Rolandino says



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EZZELINO'S CASTLE.

that one-half of the once flourishing city still lay in ruins.

Against direct attacks of Este and of the Mantuans Ezzelino gained brilliant victories in the field ; he failed, however, entirely to overcome his enemies. Alberic and the Da Camino maintained their hold on Treviso ; the Marquis held his own in the Euganean hills ; the Count of San Bonifazio and the Vicentine nobles held out in the castles in the hill country between Vicenza and Verona. In the rest of Lombardy the two parties balanced one another ; the presence of Frederick was required to turn the scale in favour of his supporters.

Accordingly the Emperor quitted his Apulian dominions, where he had successfully combated all attempts at revolt, and, two months after the fall of Ferrara, appeared in Romagna. Reinforced by contingents from nearly all Tuscany, and by the levies of most of the smaller Romagnol Communes, he advanced on Ravenna, which surrendered after a brief resistance. Then he turned on Faenza, the chief centre of opposition to him in this region.

Faenza was at this time the foremost of the cities of Romagna. It was strongly fortified, and its thirty-six thousand inhabitants were united in their determination to resist, for they had shortly before expelled a Ghibelline faction which had come into existence owing to a private feud between two noble houses.

As usual in the sieges of the period, a blockade had to be substituted for direct assaults. The winter was severe, but Frederick held his ground round the walls. A wooden city took the place of tents, and lines strengthened by forts cut off Faenza from all outside help. To pay his troops the Emperor was forced to melt his plate and pledge his jewels. As this did not suffice, he stamped money of leather, which after his final victory was redeemed in pieces of gold. The citizens began to suffer from hunger. They tried to send out of the walls the "useless mouths," but the Emperor refused to let them pass his lines. A part of the walls had fallen before the siege engines, and mines had been driven under them in

other portions. An offer to surrender, if the burghers might leave the city and settle, abandoning all their goods, wherever the Emperor might direct, was rejected. Frederick demanded an unconditional submission. At length, after an eight months' siege, the burghers gave way, and issued from the walls, to face, as they believed, a certain death. But with wonderful generosity Frederick pardoned their obstinacy, as well as the shameful insults which they had, in the days of their prosperity, heaped not only on him, but on his mother. Their lives and property, even their constitution, were left to them on the sole condition that they should swear allegiance to him and renounce their alliance with the Lombards.

Cesena submitted shortly afterwards, and so all Romagna was now obedient to the Emperor. A few days after the fall of Faenza news reached Frederick of another great success. The Pope had summoned a General Council to meet in Rome in the spring of 1241, in order to give judgement in the conflict between him and the Emperor. Frederick, having no confidence in the impartiality of such a tribunal, had done all in his power to prevent its assembling. Scarcely any of the German prelates obeyed the Papal summons, but from England and France a considerable number set out for Rome. Frederick refused to allow them to pass through the parts of Italy in his power, and his lieutenant, the Count of Savoy, guarded the Alpine passes leading from France into Italy.

The Pope therefore turned for help to the Genoese, and this people undertook to fit out a fleet sufficient to carry the Bishops from Nice, where many of them had assembled, to the Roman coast. That Genoa should take part with the Pope was sufficient to make her rival Pisa embrace the cause of the Emperor. The Pisans in a short space of time equipped forty galleys, which were reinforced by twenty-seven Sicilian ships, and they sent an embassy to Genoa to give warning that they would oppose the voyage of the Genoese fleet. Their vessels held the sea between Pisa and Corsica. The Genoese fleet was inferior in numbers, but their admiral con-

sidered that honour required him to force a passage instead of seeking to avoid his enemies by the longer route round Corsica. The hostile squadrons met between the two islands of Giglio and Monte Cristo.¹ The defeat of the Genoese was complete. Only five of their ships escaped; three sank with all their crews; the rest, twenty-two in number, fell into the hands of the Pisans. Two thousand Genoese perished; four thousand were captured, along with a hundred leading ecclesiastics. Two Cardinals, three Archbishops—amongst them the Archbishop of Milan—and the deputies of the Lombard cities, as well as numerous other prelates, were among the prisoners. It is said that they were first confined, bound with chains of silver, in the Baptistery of Pisa, then they were sent to dungeons in various parts of Apulia.

To add to the favourable aspect of Frederick's affairs, dissensions had again broken out between nobles and people in Milan. The latter refused to take the field to repel an inroad of the Pavesans. Not until the nobles, who had attempted alone to drive back the enemy, had been overpowered by superior forces did patriotism prevail over party spirit. But nobles and people together were defeated with loss by the Pavesans a few days after the naval victory of the Pisans.

Frederick was disposed to look on the triumph of his arms, and the destruction of the Pope's plan for a General Council, as evident signs that Heaven upheld his cause. The news of the Pisan success caused a sudden change in his plans. He had intended, and wisely, to secure his hold on Romagna by attempting the conquest of Bologna, after Milan the leading city of the League. Now he determined once more to defer the subjugation of Lombardy, and to finish once for all with Gregory, whose stubborn spirit, he hoped, had been conquered by the late blows to his cause. He marched on Rome. The neighbouring towns had submitted; the Colonna had received him into their castles; the powerful family of

¹ This battle is often, but improperly, called the Battle of Meloria, from the shoal near Leghorn, where fifty years later the sea power of Pisa was finally destroyed by the Genoese.

the Frangipani had declared for him ; and Rome, cut off from all help, seemed a certain prey, when Gregory, worn out more by his forced sojourn in the city during the unhealthy season than by the weight of his years, sickened and died.

His character is, perhaps, best displayed in an extract from a letter written a few weeks before his death. " Do not let yourselves be alarmed by the changeable appearance of the present time ; do not be terrified in adversity, do not be filled with pride in prosperity ; but trust in God, patiently enduring His trials. The bark of Peter is sometimes tossed here and there by contrary winds and driven towards the rocks, but soon it is seen again, contrary to all expectations, issuing from the foaming waves and riding over the surface of a tranquil sea."

True to his contention that he was at war, not with the Church, but with the Pope, Frederick retired from before Rome to allow undisturbed freedom of election to the Cardinals. Their choice fell on a Milanese, already advanced in years, who took the name of Celestine IV., but who died after less than three weeks' reign. The Romans, to hurry this election, had shut up the Cardinals in close confinement among the ruins on the Palatine hill ; now, to escape similar treatment, the Princes of the Church fled from the city, and nearly two years elapsed before they could unite in choosing a new Pontiff.

Thus freed from Papal opposition, the Emperor might fairly look forward to a speedy triumph over the Lombards. Unfortunately at this moment Germany and all Christendom were threatened with destruction by an inroad of barbarians from Asia. The Mongol Tartars, obeying the orders of the successor of Genghis Khan, who ruled at Pekin, had poured like some devastating flood on the West. Russia, Poland, Hungary, and Bohemia had gone down before the torrent ; the German princes called urgently for help, and Frederick, believing that the affairs of Italy were now in a less critical position, sent four thousand cavalry and a strong body of infantry to the help of his subjects north of the

Alps. The walls of the German cities and the stout hearts of the defenders drove back the wild horsemen of the steppes, but in the meantime the chance of crushing the Lombards had been lost.

Frederick did not feel himself strong enough, after the despatch of such a large force to the help of the Germans, to attempt operations on a large scale in Lombardy. An attack on Genoa, following up the defeat of that city on the sea, seemed to promise more success. Already, before the battle, Imperial commanders had invaded the territories of the Commune. One body, led by Oberto Pelavicini, from Lombardy, had entered the eastern districts. Helped by the Malaspina and other nobles of the Lunigiana, and by contingents from Tuscany, he captured several castles among the mountains and penetrated to the coast. On the other side a great force was assembled from Pavia, Tortona, Alessandria, Vercelli, Alba, and Acqui. The Marquis of Montferrat and the lesser feudal lords, who still kept their independence in the Ligurian mountains, the Marquises of Ceva, Carretto, and Bosco joined it. Savona, next to Genoa the largest town on the Ligurian coast, revolted from that city; Albenga, Finale, and most of the western Riviera followed its example. Then came Frederick's fleet under a Genoese exile, Anselmo de' Mari, and attacked Noli, which still remained faithful to the republic.

The Genoese did not lose courage amidst danger from so many sides. A letter to the Pope, written after the destruction of their fleet, runs in this strain: "Let your Holiness know that the citizens of Genoa consider as nothing the loss they have suffered in this battle; but, abandoning all other business, they are working without ceasing to build and arm new vessels. Therefore we beg your Holiness, on our knees, in the name of the blood of that Jesus whom you represent on earth, not to attach too much importance to the misfortune which has just befallen us, and not to abandon the noble cause which you have determined up to now to defend."

They devoted all their energies to fitting out a new fleet, and were soon able to put to sea in such superior

numbers, that the Imperial admiral had to raise the siege of Noli. While the Genoese were engaged in repairing the fortifications there, Anselmo directed a daring stroke against Genoa itself. He boldly sailed into the harbour, and destroyed or plundered the defenceless merchant ships and quays. Then, as the Genoa hastened back to their city, he circled round their fleet, and established himself at Savona. Next spring eighty-three galleys issued from Genoa to drive the enemy from the Ligurian coast. They could accomplish nothing against Anselmo's rapid movements. First, aided by a Pisan fleet, he attacked the eastern Riviera. When the Genoese approached he made again for Savona; then, doubling on his pursuers, he once more threatened Genoa; then he led on his opponents in a vain chase as far as the shores of Provence.

From here he withdrew, by way of Corsica, to the Apulian coast. The Genoese hoped that the campaign was over for the year, when they heard that he had again reappeared at Savona. On land the Genoese had more success, for the rugged country put countless obstacles in the way of the invading armies. Early in 1243 the dexterous use of Genoese gold detached the Marquises of Ceva, Carretto, and Montferrat from the Imperial cause; and the latter promised to bar the road against any fresh invasion of Liguria on the west. Perhaps even a greater blow to Frederick was the defection of Novara and Vercelli, which once more re-entered the League.

The war in Liguria was now centred round Savona, which was besieged for several months, and defended with great courage by the burghers. A relieving force from Pavia, Alessandria, and other Communes could not force its way through the mountains; but the city held out against all assaults, until the approach of a great Pisan fleet numbering eighty galleys caused the besiegers to retreat. The Pisans sailed to Genoa, and shot arrows of silver as a mark of derision into the town. Joined with fifty-five Sicilian ships, they now held the mastery of the sea, and Savona and Albenga persisted in their



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revolt against Genoa during the rest of Frederick's reign.

The war in Lombardy had degenerated into isolated raids of Cremona on Brescia and Piacenza, of Mantua against Verona, of Ezzelino against Treviso and Este. The natural result was widespread misery. "Lombardy," says Frà Salimbene, was reduced to such a solitude that neither cultivators of the fields nor travellers were to be found therein. Men could neither plough, nor sow, nor reap, nor gather in the vintage, nor dwell in the farms. However, near the cities men ploughed under a guard of soldiers. And this one had to do on account of the thieves and highwaymen who had multiplied beyond all measure. And they took people and led them away to prison until they redeemed themselves for money. And so, at that time, one man would meet another on the way as gladly as he would see the devil."

It was probably due to mutual exhaustion that Pavia and Milan concluded a peace, or rather truce, in 1241; for we hear that the space between the two cities resembled more "the abode of wild beasts than a cultivated land." Frederick must have allowed the Pavesans thus to seek security on one frontier; for we next hear of them as active in the attacks on Genoa. Como then took the place of Pavia as the chief opponent of Milan, and the region round the Lombard lakes became, in its turn, a scene of widespread desolation.

Ezzelino, though unable to subdue Treviso, was steadily improving his position in the Mark. Montagnana, a large town belonging to the Marquis of Este, fell into his hands, and the chief of the disaffected nobles of Vicenza made their peace with him. Far more important was the capture of the castle of San Bonifazio. Up till now it had defied all the attacks of the Veronese, to whose city it was a standing menace; but the garrison, closely blockaded, and cut off from all communication with Mantua, was forced to capitulate in the autumn of 1243. The exultant people of Verona destroyed the hated stronghold so thoroughly that now

no vestige of it remains. At the same time the severity of Ezzelino's rule kept increasing. The massive prisons which he built in Padua were filled with victims of his suspicions. Many of the leading citizens perished on the scaffold, or amidst tortures. Even in Verona, where the mass of the people had been won over to his rule by their admission to the public offices, he detected, or pretended to detect, conspiracies among the nobles. The suspected persons paid with their lives, and a fresh demolition took place of towers and palaces.

It was not until June, 1243, that the Cardinals could agree as to the choice of a new Pope. Frederick had addressed letters to them, urging on the election, and couched in the most violent terms. Serpents, animals without a head, sons of Ephraim, sons of Belial, were some of his epithets. He followed up his words with a new advance to the walls of Rome, in the course of which his Saracen troops committed unheard-of cruelties at the capture of Albano. This brought the Cardinals to compliance with the wishes of the Christian world. They begged the Emperor to retire, promising a speedy election; he consented, and their choice fell on the Genoese Sinibaldo dei Fieschi, who took the name of Innocent IV.

The new Pope belonged to one of the most illustrious of the noble families of the Riviera who had been forced to become citizens of Genoa. The Fieschi, Counts of Lavagna, with three other noble houses, alone possessed the privilege of adorning their palaces with the alternate rows of black and white marble which, with this exception, could only be employed in the churches and public buildings. According to an English writer, he was one of those determined characters in which the Ligurian coast has always been so fertile; men who proceed, in spite of all obstacles, towards the goal which they have set for themselves—men of the stamp of Garibaldi and Columbus.

He was a personal friend of the Emperor, to whose party his family had hitherto inclined; but Frederick knew too well his stern sense of duty to be blind to

the fact that personal friendship would not prevail with him over what he might conceive to be the interests of the Church. "I have lost a good friend," said Frederick on hearing of the election, "for no Pope can be a Ghibelline."¹ However, he affected to share in the general joy over the end of the long interregnum, ordered the *Te Deum* to be sung throughout the kingdom, and sent letters to Germany to announce the approaching reconciliation of Pope and Emperor.

Negotiations for peace were begun at once. They broke down over the question of the Lombards. Frederick, ready enough to make concessions in other matters, refused to allow the pontiff to interfere between him and his rebellious subjects; and Innocent, on his part, declared he would accept no peace with the Emperor in which the League was not included.

The sudden revolt of Viterbo from the Imperial side increased the tension between the two parties. Frederick, seeing in the devotion of Viterbo a constant menace to Rome, had given the burghers many signal marks of favour, protected their markets, and built there a sumptuous palace, as if designing to make it the capital of Italy. The Governors sent there in his name had unfortunately excited discontent by oppressive conduct; and a new Bishop hostile to the Emperor, taking advantage of this discontent, entered the city suddenly at the head of an armed force, won the townsmen over to his side, and besieged the German garrison in the castle.

Innocent at once took the city under his protection, and the Romans sent help to the burghers, their former enemies. The Emperor hurried to the spot with an army, and another siege began, to be compared both for its obstinacy and its result with that of Brescia. Two furious assaults were repulsed, and the besieged, issuing from the walls by means of underground passages during

¹ This sentence in its actual form is not likely to have been pronounced by the Emperor, for the word Ghibelline would not have been used by him to describe his party. The first part of the remark, however, is probably genuine.

the second attack, set fire to the machines and drove Frederick's force back to their camp with heavy loss. The Emperor, shaken by this disaster, retired from the city.

In spite of this, negotiations still went on ; and early in 1244 the basis of a treaty was agreed on at Rome and sworn to by Frederick's plenipotentiaries. But new difficulties at once arose. The League was not mentioned in the treaty ; and the contracting parties would come to no agreement as to the order in which the respective stipulations were to be carried out. Negotiations began again, and were cut short in a dramatic fashion. The news suddenly spread that the Pope had disappeared from Sutri, to which town he had gone under the pretext of being nearer to the Emperor, who was then at Pisa. Then came tidings that riding through the night, disguised as a soldier, he had reached Cività Vecchia, where a Genoese fleet of twenty-two vessels, which had been fitted out and despatched with the greatest secrecy, awaited him. The Pope reached the harbour at dawn, and the fleet, only waiting for the arrival of some of his following, who had been unable to keep up with pontiff, set sail for Genoa. It was under the command of the Podestà, who had planned the whole enterprise in concert with Innocent ; and it carried three of the Pope's nephews and a strong force of chosen seamen and soldiers. In spite of a furious storm the fleet reached Genoa in safety, undisturbed by the Pisans, who had no inkling of its passage by their shores.

The Genoese received the Pope with transports of joy. He gave out that his flight had been caused by the knowledge that a plot had been laid to capture him, and that a force of German cavalry had been despatched to seize him at Sutri. "The wicked flee when no man pursueth" was Frederick's comment on his flight. In fact, it seems certain that the Genoese fleet had been summoned to Cività Vecchia long before the movement of the German cavalry towards Sutri. Innocent had clearly seen the dangers to which he would be exposed at Rome, and had determined by a bold stroke to put himself beyond the limits of Frederick's power.

After a three months' stay in Genoa, the Pope set out for Lyons, a city nominally forming part of the Empire, but practically as free as Milan, and well disposed to him. Here he was close to the dominions of the King of France, to which he could easily betake himself if danger threatened from Frederick ; and the central position of the city, equally convenient for the prelates of Spain, England, and Germany, made it particularly suitable for the place of assembly of the General Council, which Innocent summoned to meet him in June, 1245.

He chose the route over the Mont Cénis, rather than again expose himself to the dangers and discomforts of the sea. He traversed the lands of the Marquises of Carretto and those of Asti, Montferrat, and Savoy. The party of the Church was now predominant to the west of the Ticino. Alessandria had already re-entered the League ; Asti, which had up to now supported the Emperor, did not venture to keep the sick pontiff outside her walls, and seems then to have been won over to his side. A more serious defection from Frederick was that of the Count of Savoy, who gave Innocent a free passage through his lands on both sides of the Alps. As soon as he had reached Lyons the Pope renewed the excommunication against Frederick, without waiting for the assembly of the Council which was to give the final verdict in the quarrel.

The Council began its sessions in June. The Pope himself appeared in the *rôle* of accuser. He denounced in scathing terms Frederick's conduct, his oppression of the Church in Sicily and Apulia, his harsh treatment of the prelates captured on the Genoese fleet, his perfidy, his unbelief, his scandalous life, resembling that of a Mahometan rather than of a Christian prince. The Emperor's cause was defended with skill by the learned and eloquent Taddeo of Suessa. Frederick had advanced to Turin, the Italian city nearest to Lyons ; and it was now decided to allow him the space of twelve days in which to appear before the Council and justify himself. He refused, not unnaturally, to trust himself among so many enemies. At the end of the twelve days, a time too short for a messen-

ger to go and return between Lyons and Turin, the Pope, in spite of a farther appeal from Taddeo, pronounced the final sentence. The Emperor was solemnly deposed, his subjects released from their allegiance, the German princes ordered to proceed to a new election, all supporters of Frederick excommunicated.

At the end, amidst the terror and astonishment of all who witnessed the ceremony, the Pope and all the prelates reversed and extinguished against the ground the torches which they had been holding, a symbol of the extinction of the Imperial glory.

Frederick's journey to Turin had at least had the advantage of reviving his authority in Piedmont. The Marquises of Montferrat, Carretto, and Ceva again rejoined his party; the burghers of Alessandria brought him the keys of their city; Asti and the Count of Savoy returned to their allegiance.

In the autumn Frederick turned his arms against the Milanese. He himself with the forces of Pavia and Piedmont advanced into their territory from the west. The Milanese, aided by some cavalry from Piacenza and five hundred Genoese cross-bowmen, made such skilful use of the rivers which intersect their territory, that Frederick could neither draw them to a pitched battle nor force his way towards the city. In the meantime King Enzo, with the levies of Parma, Reggio, Cremona, Lodi, and Bergamo, had attacked from the east. He had crossed the Adda and captured Gorgonzola, distant only a few miles from Milan, when his farther progress was checked by the men of two of the "gates" or quarters of the city, sent back in haste from the main camp, along with the Genoese. In the battle which followed Enzo was unhorsed and captured. He was released, however, by the charge, it would appear, of the men of Parma and Reggio, though the Milanese asserted that they had freed him on his swearing never again to enter their lands. Neither side could claim a victory; but the fight stopped Enzo's advance, and shortly afterwards the Imperial forces withdrew from the Milanese to their own homes. This was the last attempt of Frederick to crush the metropolis of Lombardy.

After ten years of war the Emperor's cause was on the whole in the ascendant in Italy, All Romagna obeyed him, so did most of the Mark of Ancona. In Umbria, Perugia, Assisi, Orvieto, and Todi formed a powerful party opposed to him, but most of the other Communes had gone over to him, compelled by force or of their own free will. Rome and many of the small towns round about were hostile to him, but in 1246 Viterbo again joined his party. Of the Tuscan cities, Siena, Arezzo, and above all Pisa were active in his cause ; Lucca, though at variance with Pisa, does not seem to have opposed him. Florence had for years been torn by the dissensions of the Uberti and Buonedmonti, which had divided the nobles into two hostile camps. Both parties, however, had been obedient to Frederick, and had sent help to him at the siege of Faenza. At last the Uberti, two or three years after the Council at Lyons, obtained the active support of the Emperor's son, Frederick of Antioch, and brought the city over decidedly to the Ghibelline party.

Even in Lombardy the majority of the Communes were on his side. The main strength of his opponents was formed by Milan, Brescia, and Piacenza, with the lesser cities Crema, Novara, and Vercelli. In the east Bologna, Ferrara and Mantua formed a second hostile group ; and finally Treviso, isolated from all allies, still held her ground, under Alberic da Romano, against all the attacks of Ezzelino.

Yet the very extent of country under Frederick's rule made it difficult for him to establish his authority on a firm basis anywhere. The fire of rebellion, stamped down in one district, was likely to spring up again in another from which, for the moment, the Imperial forces had been withdrawn. The spirit of faction had taken root everywhere, and everywhere the weaker faction was disposed to seek help from the enemies of the Commune. We have seen that some of the Brescian nobles took part in the siege of their city under Frederick's banner. At a later period a faction called the Malisardi handed over several important castles to the Cremonese. If the erst-while weaker party succeeded, with outside help, in getting

the upper hand, forthwith it brought the Commune over to the opposite side in the great struggle which had involved all the cities. It is by the predominance within the walls, now of one party, now of another, that we must explain the frequent changes of side of cities such as Alessandria, Ravenna, or Vercelli.

The verdict of the Council of Lyons gave a new weapon to all the disaffected parties in the Ghibelline cities. The thunders of the Church could not fail in the long run to affect the minds of the more timorous or the more scrupulous. The mendicant orders had become the most effective champions of the Papacy. They were to be found everywhere, in spite of the obstacles thrown in their way by Frederick, denouncing the supporters of the Emperor, dilating on his evil life, pointing out the fatal consequences in the next world of resistance to the Church in this. Ezzelino, we are told, "feared the Friars Minor more than any other persons in the world."¹ Their arguments could be reinforced in the case of the merchant classes by very practical examples of the dangers even in this world of disobedience to the Church. The Pope, having the ear of the Transalpine peoples, could shut out the merchants of the offending cities from the markets, cause their goods to be seized, empower their creditors to refuse payment. So we find in the next few years signs of the growth of a Guelf, or Papal, party even in cities such as Cremona, which had hitherto been entirely devoted to Frederick.

The three Emilian cities which were among the most active supporters of the Emperor had hitherto been singularly free from internal strife. In the year 1244, however, a rising of the trades guilds took place in Parma. They demanded a larger share in the government of the city, and chose as a leader a nephew of the Pope's, whom they raised to the new office of Captain of the People. Three of the Pope's sisters and one of his nieces had married into some of the chief noble families in Parma; and these families, taking advantage of the disturbed state of the city, organised themselves into a

¹ Rolandino, cited by Leo, p. 308, vol. ii.

Guelf faction with the design of making themselves masters of the Commune. The plot was discovered, and the Pope's relatives, the Lupi, Rossi, San Vitale, and Correggeschi, with their supporters, were driven out, and their houses destroyed. The exiles retired to Reggio.

This expulsion took place in 1245, and the exiles found similar disorders in Reggio. Here the great noble house of the Sessi had murdered the Podestà of the merchants in 1244 during an expedition against a neighbouring castle. This naturally led to tumults against the Sessi, and seems to have been used as a pretext for attacking them by some of their private enemies. In January, 1245, the two parties fought in the Piazza; in the following summer the Fogliani (also relations of the Pope), the Roberti, the Lupicini (kinsmen of the murdered Podestà) joined in another attack on the Sessi. Some of their friends from outside the walls burst in through one of the gates, and the whole city was given over to street fighting. Enzo hurried to the spot, and drove the opponents of the Sessi, some twenty families in all, from the city, along with the exiles from Parma.

The year 1246 was marked by no important events in Lombardy. In the next year the Emperor once more visited Turin; and it was supposed that he was meditating an attack on the Pope at Lyons, when news was brought to him of the sudden revolt of Parma.

The exiles from Parma had gathered to the number of about seventy knights at Piacenza, from which they threatened the border districts of their own city. They learned that many of the best knights of Parma had gone with King Enzo to besiege a Brescian castle, and that the captain of the German garrison in the city was occupied in celebrating the marriage of his daughter. They resolved to strike a sudden blow at the city itself. Advancing with the greatest secrecy, they had almost reached the walls before news of their approach came to the ears of the Governor. He hurried out with such of the nobles as he could muster, and with those of the Germans whom the festivities had left sufficiently sober to fight. Almost at the first onset the Podestà, the poet

Arrigo Testa of Arezzo, was slain, the Imperial Governor wounded, and his troops scattered. The Germans are said to have made no farther resistance, but to have called out to the exiles that they might go on and seize the town. The leading supporters of the Emperor, finding that they could not rouse the artisans, who remained undisturbed at their looms, in spite of the advance of the enemy, quitted the city, and shut themselves up in their castles in the Contado.

The exiles entered the gates unmolested, and the mass of the citizens, by one of those sudden changes so common in the history of the Italians, at once embraced their party. Enzo hurried back from the Brescian territory, but failed to seize the crucial moment and to attack before Parma had thoroughly accepted the new *régime*. The Lombard forces hurried from all sides to secure their hold on this important acquisition. Three hundred horse came from Piacenza; the exiles from Reggio and other Ghibelline Communes flocked there; the Papal legate brought a thousand lances from Milan. Feverish efforts were made to provision the city and to put the walls in a proper state for defence.

The loss of this great and wealthy city—it could muster one thousand burghers rich enough to serve on horseback—was a heavy blow to Frederick. Parma commanded the road leading by Pontremoli into Tuscany, which since the loss of Ferrara had been Frederick's chief means of communication with the centre and south of the Peninsula. He hurried back from Turin and gathered his forces from all sides for a siege. His sons Enzo and Frederick of Antioch, Ezzelino with a strong force from the cities of the Mark, the Marquis Lancia, Oberto Pelavicini, Buoso da Doara—in short, all his leading supporters—gathered round him. The Cremonese came in such numbers that only the old men were left to guard their walls; the Pavesans came in force, as well as contingents from Reggio, Modena, and Bergamo. Besides these there were Germans and men of Frederick's southern dominions, and, most formidable of all, a body of Saracens from Lucera. The chronicler, Frà Salimbene



BOLOGNA.
TOMB OF ROLANDINO PASSEGGIERI.

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of Parma, estimates the total of Frederick's army at thirty-seven thousand men.

The Guelfs had not been idle. It would seem as if all the leaders of both parties had gathered to Parma as to a spot where the long struggle was to be finally decided. The Count of San Bonifazio had come with the Mantuans; the Marquis of Este brought a large body of Ferrarese; the Genoese sent three hundred cross-bowmen; the Fieschi of Lavagna as many. Even Alberic da Romano and Biachino da Camino had made their way across the intervening hostile territory to the help of the threatened city.

Within the walls the energy of the Papal legate, Montelungo, and of the monks had roused the enthusiasm of the mass of the people. They placed themselves solemnly under the protection of the Blessed Virgin, and determined to perish under the ruins of their city rather than surrender. Attacks on the walls were repulsed, and the damage done by the engines of war made good by the efforts of the whole population; but the weapon on which the Emperor chiefly relied for the reduction of the city was famine. The Mantuans and the Ferrarese endeavoured to send food by boat up the Po. On one occasion they succeeded in introducing a large supply; on another they were routed and their flotilla destroyed by the men of Reggio.

Frederick now determined to terrify the besieged into submission. About two hundred of his chief partisans had left Parma at the time of the revolt, and were now serving in the Imperial camp. But all other natives of Parma had been seized by Frederick's command, wherever they could be found, and thrown into prison. Their number amounted to about a thousand, and was made up of merchants, of soldiers who had been serving as garrisons in various places, and of young men, many of them of the leading families, who had been studying law at the schools of Modena.¹ The Emperor declared that he would put some of these captives to death every day

¹ Law schools, under Frederick's patronage, had been opened at Modena, to compete with those of the Guelf Bologna.

until the city surrendered. Accordingly two nobles and two burghers were put to death before the walls. Next day two more shared the same fate. The infuriated citizens replied by burning alive on the Piazza several spies or messengers from the Emperor. Then the men of Pavia, to their eternal honour, protested against Frederick's conduct. "We have come to fight," said they, "not to act as executioners." These courageous words put a stop to farther cruelties.

The approach of winter led Frederick to dismiss many of his troops. Many of the allies of Parma, not all of whom had shut themselves up within the walls, also returned home, for it seemed unlikely that the siege could be continued through the cold season. But Frederick, resolved to be turned aside by no obstacles, caused a new town to be constructed within four bow shots of the walls, and on the road leading to Piacenza. It was surrounded with walls and ditches, and furnished with several gates. A church and a palace were built; and the houses were rapidly constructed from materials brought from the devastated villages of the Contado. In this town, to which the proud name of Vittoria was given, Frederick passed the winter secure against the inclemency of the weather, while other camps still maintained a close blockade round the city.

The desperate position of the burghers, more and more a prey to hunger, gave them courage to strike a bold blow for safety. One day, when the siege had lasted nearly six months, the keen eyes of a Milanese watcher on the walls detected that the Emperor with a large body of followers had quitted Vittoria. He had been ill, and now, feeling better, had gone hawking along the banks of the Taro. The garrison of Vittoria, never dreaming of an attack from the starving townsmen, were keeping but a careless watch. The sentinel persuaded the legate and the captains to seize the opportunity, and stake all their fortunes on a sudden sally. The Milanese, the Piacentines, the infantry of Mantua attacked the lines on one side of the city; the legate himself with the rest of the garrison rushed out against Vittoria. In front was

borne the standard of the Virgin. Behind followed a great multitude—old men, women, and children, pressing on in one great wave of enthusiasm against the enemy. The garrison of Vittoria, taken unawares, could not check the fury of the assault. Once inside the walls the burghers set fire to some of the wooden buildings; the flames spread, the disordered defenders were unable to re-form their ranks among the burning houses. In a short time the men of Parma were masters of the city which was meant to be the symbol of their destruction. The whole Imperial army was scattered in hopeless rout before any news of the onslaught could reach the Emperor. Two thousand of them are said to have perished; three thousand were captured.

Taddeo da Suessa, who was in temporary command, was found among the wounded, and was hacked to pieces by the furious burghers. The Imperial crown, of wonderful beauty, the sceptre, the seal of the Empire, the Carroccio of Cremona, called Berta, the contents of the treasury, and an incalculable amount of booty of all sorts fell into the hands of the victors.

This disaster—the greatest in Frederick's career—put an end to all his hopes of crushing the Lombards. The war, however, dragged on. In the spring the Emperor again appeared before Parma, but could not undertake a siege. Small successes in the field restored his prestige in some measure. Vercelli again came over to his side. But he could not subdue the Marquis of Montferrat, who had taken Turin during the siege of Parma. Novara, too, which would seem to have once more submitted to him, re-entered the League in this year.

In the Mark Ezzelino captured Feltre in 1248, and Belluno and Este in the following year. These successes could not counterbalance the loss of Romagna. The Pope had sent to Bologna, as his legate, the Cardinal Ottaviano degli Ubaldini. Of a great Tuscan Ghibelline house, this prelate had eagerly embraced the Guelf cause. He was far more of a warrior than a Churchman; indeed, his orthodoxy was so doubtful that he was reported to have said, "If there is such a thing as a soul I have lost

mine on account of the Ghibellines"; and Dante has placed him beside Frederick and Farinata degli Uberti in the burning coffers where the incredulous are punished in hell :—

"Qua dentro è lo secondo Federico
E il Cardinale."¹

He induced the Bolognese to organise a great expedition against Romagna. Imola, Ravenna, Cesena, Forlimpopoli, Cervia, Bertinoro, and Rimini all submitted and joined the Guelfs. Faenza, where there was an Imperial garrison, surrendered after a fortnight's siege.

Then the Bolognese turned against Modena. During the fifty years in which the two cities had been almost uninterruptedly at war the valiant burghers of Modena had obtained more than one striking victory in the open field. As late as 1239, in conjunction with the men of Parma, they had routed the Bolognese, capturing two thousand prisoners. But the superior population and resources of Bologna were beginning to tell in the long run. A large part of the Modenese territory had been conquered. During the siege of Parma the family of the Rangoni had left the Emperor's camp and started a Guelf faction in Modena. They and their followers, to whom the name of Aigoni was given, had been driven from Modena; but the Bolognese had established them in the castle of Savignano, not far from the city.

The Bolognese, under the leadership of the Cardinal, advanced towards Modena. Their army consisted of a thousand horse from the nobles, the men of three out of the four quarters of the city, the contingents of Mantua and of the towns of Romagna, and three thousand horse and two thousand foot, sent by the Marquis of Este. King Enzo led out the Modenese against their enemies. With him were Germans and Apulians, the exiles of Parma and Piacenza, and auxiliaries from Cremona, Reggio, and Pavia. The two armies met at Fossalta. After a long and desperate battle the superior numbers of the Bolognese army prevailed. The Mode-

¹ "Inferno," Canto X.

nese line was broken, and their army scattered in flight. Enzo and his chief captains, trying in vain to restore order, were captured, along with more than sixteen hundred others.

The victors re-entered Bologna in triumph. The young king, only twenty-four years of age, excited universal admiration by his personal beauty, his curling yellow locks falling to his waist, his courage and his talents as a leader. The Senate of Bologna determined that such an enemy should never be let free to take revenge for this defeat. He was treated with all possible honour, but a law was passed forbidding his release. In spite of the promises and the threats of Frederick, the Bolognese remained constant in this resolution. Enzo passed the remaining twenty-two years of his life confined in a sumptuous suite of rooms in the palace of the Podestà, where he was visited every day by the chief nobles of the city, who endeavoured to solace his captivity by every means in their power. He died still a captive, young in years, but the last survivor of the House of Hohenstaufen.

In September the Bolognese laid siege to Modena. The burghers defended themselves stoutly behind their walls. To draw them out into the open the Bolognese shot from one of their catapults the dead body of an ass, shod with silver—a most deadly insult according to the ideas of the time. The carcass landed in the basin of the chief fountain in the town. This so infuriated the Modenese that they made a vigorous sortie, threw the besiegers into confusion, and destroyed the machine from which the insulting missile had come. Enough had now been done for honour; so, seeing no chance of help from the Emperor, Modena negotiated for peace. This was easily granted, on condition that the Aigoni should be readmitted, and that the city should join the Guelfs. The Bolognese restored their conquests, the legate reconciled the city with the Church; and so in January, 1250, Frederick lost one of his most vigorous allies.

Shortly before this Como, equally hard pressed by Milan, had been forced to re-enter the League. The

return of Faenza and Ravenna to Frederick's side in 1248 could not compensate for these losses. One last gleam of success came to the Emperor in 1250, when Piacenza, hitherto one of the pillars of the League, suddenly came over to his side. This city had been the deadly foe of Parma for more than sixty years; and it was scarcely to be expected that this long-standing hostility should be blotted out by the accession of Parma to the Guelf cause. The ruling nobles of Piacenza, however, putting the interests of party before local patriotism, had taken a Podestà from Parma; and this man, during a time of scarcity, had sent a large supply of grain to his own city. This excited a tumult among the mass of the people. They soon got the upper hand, and elected as Rector of the people Uberto de Iniquitate, one of the banished chiefs of the popular party. He secured the return of the exiles, amongst whom was the noble family of De Andito, or Landi. The Guelf nobles left the city, and Piacenza ranged itself on the side of the Emperor.

The war against Parma was at once renewed. The combined forces of Piacenza and Cremona, under the Podestà of the latter city, Oberto Pelavicini, the chief Ghibelline leader in Central Lombardy, gained a great victory under the very walls of Parma. Besides those who perished in the fight great numbers of the Parmesans were drowned in the ditches of the city, which itself very nearly fell into the hands of the victors. The Cremonese might think their rout at Vittoria well avenged, for they brought home in triumph fifteen hundred prisoners and the Carroccio of Parma, called Blancardo.

But this success came too late to be of use to the Imperial cause. Frederick had practically abandoned the war in Lombardy, and, retiring to the south, tried, but in vain, to induce Innocent to agree to terms of peace. Worn out before his time, perhaps as much by his continual misfortunes as by his excesses, he died in Apulia in December, 1250.¹

¹ The Archbishop of Palermo reconciled him with the Church on his deathbed and gave him the sacraments.

All possibility of reviving the authority of the Empire in Italy came to an end with Frederick's death. For sixty years, except for the short visit of his son and successor, Conrad, Italy was free from any semblance of German control. In Germany the Imperial authority never recovered the ground it had lost during his reign. In order to win support for his Italian projects Frederick had been forced to make concessions to the German feudatories, which practically destroyed the prerogatives of the Emperor.¹ After Conrad's death, in 1254, until the election of Rudolf of Habsburg, there is a period of almost twenty years during which there was no recognised sovereign of Germany. When at last the interregnum came to an end, the monarchy of the Hohenstaufens had become a federation of practically independent princes, who left little to their nominal superior beyond the empty title of Cæsar.

But the struggle between Frederick and the Second Lombard League had been disastrous for the Communes also. To make head against enemies without and factions within, the cities had been inevitably compelled to put the supreme direction of affairs in the hands of a single individual. Ambitious feudal nobles or able demagogues were not slow to seize on the chance thus offered them of establishing a despotic rule in the communities over whose destinies they had gained control. We have seen Verona and Ferrara yielding themselves to a master in order to make head against their enemies.

The other cities were not slow to follow on the same path. The rest of our history will show how one and all, a prey to internal faction, and engulfed in the conflict of Guelfs and Ghibellines—which divided all Italy into two hostile camps—the Communes lost the liberties for which they had struggled so hard, and sank under the yoke of the despot.

¹ One should not omit to mention that in the years after the Council of Lyons the Pope had stirred up revolts in Germany, which prevented Frederick from getting any considerable support from that country, and seriously crippled him in his campaigns against the Lombards.

CHAPTER XI

THE FALL OF EZZELINO—THE CAREER OF OBERTO PELAVICINI

WITH the death of Frederick, and the eclipse of the authority of the Empire which followed, it seemed as if the free cities had definitely triumphed in Lombardy. Once more, as after the Peace of Constance, we might have looked for the establishment of a federation of which the germ already existed in the Lombard League. But now, even more than in the days of Barbarossa, anything more than a temporary union was rendered impossible by the rivalry between city and city, and by internal dissensions. The whole of Italy had ranged itself into two hostile camps during the struggle between Frederick and the Papacy, and the internal factions, checked in the first stress of the war, had sprung up again and grafted themselves on to these great parties. In one city the nobles, in another the people had embraced the cause of the Empire; in yet another rival noble families had sought to strengthen themselves by declaring for one or the other side in the quarrel. The violence of faction had increased during the later days of Frederick's reign; the factions themselves remained after his death. But they were no longer mere detached quarrels in one particular city. Each party had allies outside the walls, and could invoke the help of one-half of Lombardy in the name of the Empire or the Papacy.

The factions survived Frederick's death. To the struggle between the Empire and the League with its ally the Papacy succeeds that between Guelf and

Ghibelline. These factions arose from the blending of the greater quarrel with the rivalry between city and city, and still more with the party struggles within the walls. All menace from the side of Germany to the freedom of the Communes had disappeared. Yet the warfare in Lombardy still went on, and the quarrel of Guelf and Ghibelline—upholders in theory of principles already dead—continued, and attained its maximum development at a time when the contest between Pope and Emperor had apparently reached its close.

The history of Lombardy for the next fifty or sixty years is made up of a confused and often ferocious struggle between city and city, between party and party, of an endless shifting of the balance of power and of the grouping of the Communes, as now fortune sways to the side of the Guelfs, now to the side of the Ghibellines. The final result of this tangle of strife is the total disappearance from Lombardy of republican institutions and the rise of a new form of government, the rule of the Despot.

A salient feature in the history of the Communes during the second half of the thirteenth century is the increasing violence of factions within the walls. We have already traced the origin of these dissensions in various cities. The struggles between rival communities, and above all the great conflict between Frederick II. and the League, to a certain extent had checked internal strife. But we have seen how some years before the Emperor's death factions had shown themselves again, and had even arisen in cities such as Parma, which up to then had been free from such troubles.¹ On his death civic discord broke out afresh, and with more violence than ever now that all danger from outside was removed. It was augmented by the steady growth of the importance of the popolo.

The mass of the people were increasing in numbers and wealth, in spite of the constant warfare. The members of the trades guilds contributed more and more

¹ Also in Cremona, which, except for a few years in the early part of the century, had been free from internal strife.

to the revenue of the Commune ; and it was but natural that, as time went on, they should demand a greater share in the government.

We have already seen the beginnings of the struggle between the middle classes and the ruling aristocracy. The latter had held their ground during the years when the war for or against Frederick II. had taxed the whole energies of the Communes. But once this conflict was over, the middle classes, who had borne the brunt of the struggle, press forward to power in every city. The aristocracy almost everywhere oppose them vigorously, but unsuccessfully. The transference of power to the middle classes is another salient feature in the history of the fifty years after Frederick's death.

Another characteristic is the blotting out to a great extent of the old political landmarks. Up to now there has been something like continuity in the foreign policy of the towns. Milan and Brescia oppose the Hohenstaufens, Cremona and Pavia support them. But henceforward we find sudden changes in the attitude of the cities, according as one faction or another gets the upper hand. So Parma, so long devoted to Frederick, was seized by a party among the nobles and brought over to the side of the Church ; almost immediately afterwards Piacenza, where the nobles had ruled for fourteen years, passes under the control of the popolo, and abandons its traditional alliance with Milan. In Milan, where nobles and people had been equally hostile to the Emperor, the nobles, expelled from the cities by their adversaries, openly join the Ghibellines. The nobles of Pavia, on the other hand, seek aid from the popolo of Milan and become Guelf. Before long we shall see Milan Ghibelline and Cremona the bulwark of the Guelfs ; while other cities, such as Asti and Alessandria, change sides with bewildering rapidity. We have to deal now with a tangled strife between Commune and Commune, between nobles and commons, between rival noble families, the whole inextricably bound up with contending theories about the supremacy of Pope or Emperor.

Frederick's death seemed to render the triumph of Milan and her allies certain. Outside the Mark, where Ezzelino ruled with practically sovereign power, almost the only cities north of the Apennines faithful to the Imperial cause were Cremona, Pavia, Piacenza, Lodi, Bergamo, Vercelli, and Ivrea. The death of the Emperor disheartened his supporters. When Innocent, leaving his retreat at Lyons, re-entered Italy, he was met by overtures for submission from many of the enemies of the Church. The Count of Savoy and the Marquis of Carretto were among the first to be reconciled with the pontiff; Albenga and Savona made their peace with Genoa. Even the Pisans sent to treat for peace; and neither Pavia nor Lodi made any attempt to hinder the Pope's journey to Milan.

Lodi was at this time distracted by faction. The family of the Averganchi headed the nobles; the popolo had found leaders in the noble house of the Vistarini. The former looked for help to Cremona and Pavia, the latter to Milan. Each faction called its allies to its aid. After considerable fighting the Milanese party gained the day; Succio dei Vistarini, Captain of the People, was entrusted with its government for ten years, and Lodi entered into an alliance with Milan. In the same year (1251) Pavia made peace with her old rival—a peace which, however, was little more than a truce—and the partisans of the Empire were driven from Asti.

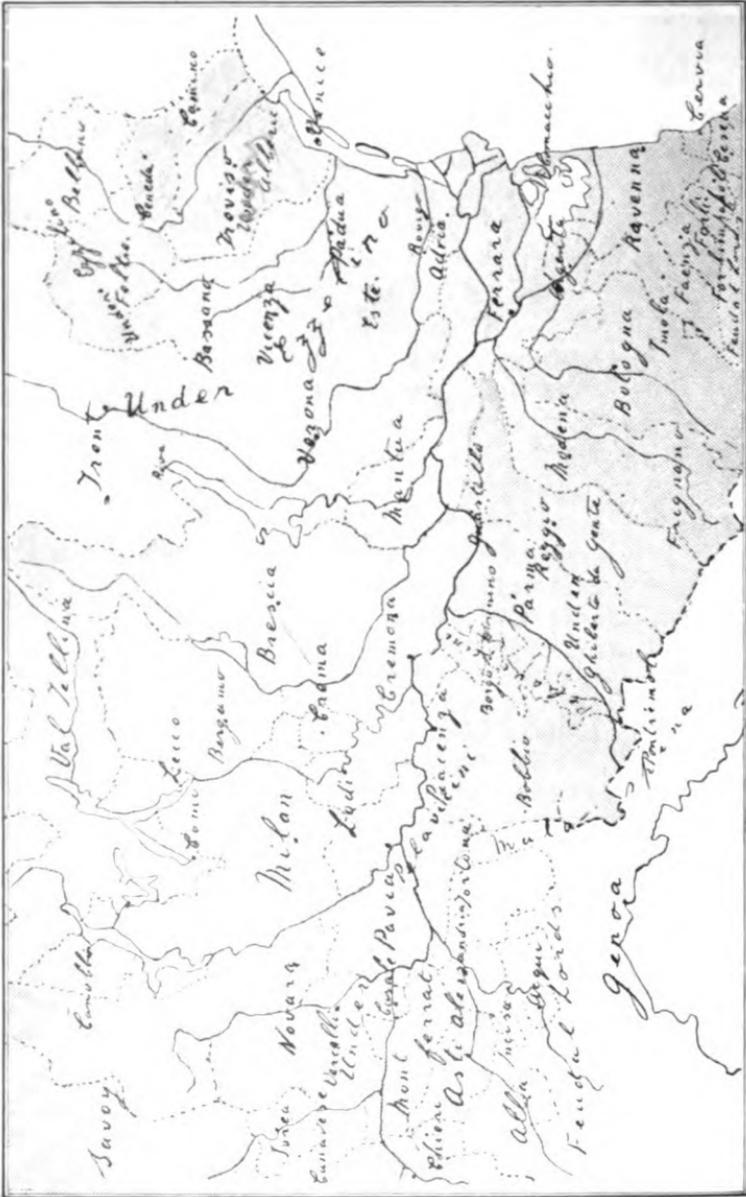
The supporters of the Pope seemed now free to reduce their few remaining enemies in Central Lombardy, and to crush the tyrant of the Trevisan Mark. But the union between the Guelf cities relaxed with the removal of external dangers. Fresh dissensions broke out in Milan between the nobles and the people. The efforts of the Pope, who was alarmed by the arrival in Lombardy in 1251 of Conrad, son and successor of Frederick, led to a renewal of the League by eight cities.¹ But this league had no immediate results; the nobles in Milan began to lean towards the Ghibelline party; and order

¹ Alessandria, Novara, Milan, Brescia, Mantua, Modena, Ferrara, Bologna.

was only restored in the Commune by appointing as Podestà and Captain-General the Marquis Lancia of Incisa, the uncle of Frederick's natural son Manfred, and an ardent Ghibelline. He held these posts for three years; and his tenure of office would seem to indicate the predominance of the nobles in the Commune, during which time the ardour of Milan for the Papal cause sensibly cooled.

In the meantime the Ghibellines, as we may now once for all call the supporters of the Hohenstaufens, found capable leaders. It is remarkable that nearly all the prominent figures which stand forth during the ensuing years belong to this party. In the south, Conrad and Manfred, finding all their efforts for a reconciliation with the Pope fruitless—for Innocent had resolved on the utter destruction of the Hohenstaufens—taxed all the pontiff's efforts to subdue them. In Central Lombardy Cremona and Piacenza found in Oberto Pelavicini and Buoso da Doara leaders of great military capacity, who not only beat off all attacks on these cities, but, aided by internal dissensions in other towns, extended their influence far and wide in Lombardy, and revived or strengthened the Ghibelline cause in Parma, Como, Tortona, and Vercelli. In Parma the disastrous results of the war with Cremona and Piacenza led to a popular movement to reconcile the two opposing factions. A certain Ghiberto da Gente was set up as Podestà of the People, and recalled the exiled Ghibellines. He then made peace with Cremona, and the prisoners who had languished in the dungeons of that city since the great defeat of Parma in 1250 returned home. Out of 1,575 only 318 had survived the rigours of their captivity. Ghiberto governed the city for the next six years by the favour of the popolo, with practically despotic power, and though at first he professed neutrality, he seems to have ruled as a Ghibelline.

Though Pope Innocent kept urging on the Milanese and their allies the necessity of prompt action against the growing power of Pelavicini and the tyranny of Ezzelino, it was not until 1256 that an army could be got together



MAP III.

LOMBARDY IN 1255.

- Guelfs ...
- Ghibellines ...
- Uncertain or neutral ...
- Black.
- Red.
- Uncoloured.

to attack the Mark. Innocent IV. died before this year, and it was the exhortations of his successor, Alexander IV., which finally set this enterprize in motion.

During all the vicissitudes of the past fifteen years Ezzelino's power had been steadily increasing. Frederick, sufficiently occupied elsewhere, had given him full control over the affairs of the Mark, placing under his orders the Imperial officers sent to administer the various cities. In time Ezzelino got the appointment of these officers into his own hands. Instead of Germans or Apulians we find kinsmen or dependents of the Lord of Romano as Podestàs of the Communes or Captains of the fortresses. Ezzelino began to act with more and more independence of his sovereign. Frederick's death, far from discouraging him, only gave freer scope to his ambitions. The dream of making himself master of all Lombardy, independent of any control from beyond the Alps, may have flashed across his mind.

Besides Feltre and Belluno he had brought Trent under his power; the town and castle of Este were captured soon after the conquest of Belluno; in the year of Frederick's death Cerro and Calalon, the last fortresses held by Azzo in the Mark, fell into his hands. But Treviso, under Alberic and the lords of Camino, resisted him; so too did Mantua, in spite of repeated devastations of its territory.

His cruelty increased as the years went by. In the pages of Maurisio Ezzelino appears to us as a strenuous and chivalrous party leader, in no way more cruel than the other leaders of his day. Now he turns into a veritable monster, suspicious of all, and filled with an insatiable lust for blood. The change was a gradual one; and the chroniclers, especially Rolandino, whose work was published but a few years after the tyrant's death, have left us such precise statements about his actions as must convince us of their truth.

His rule in Verona was, as we have seen, grounded on the favour of the multitude, and had been secured by giving the middle classes access to the offices of the state. But even here blood flowed in streams. The

smallest suspicion, the vaguest denunciation, was enough to bring about the destruction of a whole family. Among the victims were his former allies, the Montecchi,¹ his father-in-law with his sons, and even his half-brother.

In Vicenza, as in Verona, it was the nobles who had most to fear from his rule. Here he imprisoned and mutilated without distinction of age or sex the members of the family of Pilei, who for fifty years past had played a great part in Vicenza, sometimes as allies, more often as opponents, of the House of Romano.

It was in Padua, however, that he gave fullest scope to his pitiless spirit. He felt that he was hateful to all classes in this Commune, formerly the bulwark of freedom in the Mark. Neither age nor sex was safe from his fury; no one was too high placed or too insignificant to escape his suspicions. The great family of the Dalesmannini had long been among his most ardent supporters. A widow (lady) of their house, residing at Mantua, and therefore quite beyond the influence of her kinsmen, married a dependent of the Count of San Bonifazio. At once the Dalesmannini were seized and put to death. The whole family of the Caponegri was blotted out, and their fate was shared by many houses of less note. William of Camposampiero perished on the scaffold in 1251; all his relations and friends were seized, and most of them shared the same fate. One, to escape torture, flung himself from an upper window of his palace. Besides those of both sexes who perished by fire or on the scaffold, innumerable victims died under torture. The children of some of the noblest Paduan families were blinded or otherwise mutilated.

Ezzelino's nephew, Ansedisio dei Guidotti, to whom he entrusted the government of Padua, showed himself, if possible, more merciless than his uncle. The existing prison was not large enough to hold the suspects; he built two new dungeons, and all three were soon full to overflowing. Those who were led out to execution were perhaps more fortunate than those who were left to

¹ In 1253.

languish in the noisome cells until hunger and thirst or disease freed them from their misery.

On one occasion the courage of one of his destined victims nearly freed the Mark from Ezzelino's tyranny. Two brothers from Monselice were accused of treason, and brought to Ezzelino's residence. They began to protest their innocence with loud cries. The tyrant heard the noise as he was sitting at table, and came out to mock them and their despair. Suddenly one of them flung himself on Ezzelino and bore him to the ground. Not finding any weapon on his person, he tore his face with his teeth, and tried to strangle him with his manacled hands. His brother tried to come to his help, but was cut down by the guards. Not until they had literally hacked the assailant to pieces could they succeed in rescuing the half-strangled Ezzelino.

Soon afterwards an unknown man was arrested as he was trying to penetrate to the presence of the tyrant. He was seized and searched, and a dagger was found on him. Repeatedly put to the torture, no words could be wrung from him, and he seemed not to understand any of the languages in which he was addressed. He was burned alive ; and common fame asserted that he was an emissary of the Old Man of the Mountains, the head of the famous eastern sect of the Assassins.

The efforts of Pope Alexander at length set in motion a crusade to rid the Mark of the tyrant. The Archbishop of Ravenna, a prelate whose mode of life was more suited to the camp than to the Church, was sent to Ferrara to direct the enterprise. The same indulgences were promised to all who would join him as were accorded to those who fought against the Saracens in the East. The Archbishop found the most effectual help in Venice, a city which could not view without anxiety the growth of Ezzelino's power in the Mark.

The crusading army landed from the Venetian lagoons near the mouth of the Brenta. A Venetian noble, Guistiniani, commanded the contingent of his city ; the Papal banner was entrusted to the young Tisone, the last survivor of the great house of Camposampiero.

A whole division was composed of exiled Paduans ; monks of every order accompanied the host, exciting enthusiasm by their preaching.

Ezzelino was engaged in a determined effort to capture Mantua, and was also hoping to get possession of Brescia by the help of the nobles, who were, as usual, at war with the popolo. He did not abandon his enterprise on hearing of the projected attack on Padua. The strong walls, the difficult country between it and the sea, and the large mercenary garrison under Ansedisio would, he considered, be enough to foil all attacks.

But Ansedisio proved himself an incapable general. He led a force, composed largely of Paduans, to stop the progress of the invaders ; but so many of these took the opportunity of deserting that he found it impossible to risk a battle ; and on the legate making a feint of marching directly on the city, he hurried back to shut himself up within the walls. The crusading army then took, one after the other, the castles between Padua and the sea, and effected a junction with a second force, led by the Marquis of Este, from Rovigo. Ansedisio diverted the course of the Brenta, to prevent the Venetian vessels from sailing up towards the city ; but the result was that his enemies passed over the dry bed of the river, and with little difficulty captured the suburbs. The troops within the walls offered a valiant resistance to the first assault. But the monks in the crusading army rushed forward with a battering-ram under the shelter of a wooden penthouse, and began to batter the gate of Ponte Altinate. The defenders hurled flaming pitch and oil on the machine, and set it on fire. The flame was so great that the wooden doors of the gateway themselves caught fire. The assailants, seeing this, fed the flames, and the doors were consumed. The defence began to slacken ; the burghers showed signs of rising on the garrison. Ansedisio lost courage, and fled with his partisans through the western gate.

The legate and his army entered the city in triumph, amidst the jubilation of the inhabitants, freed at last from a slavery which had lasted twenty years. But the

crusaders had been largely recruited from the dregs of the population of the neighbouring cities, and, breaking all the bonds of discipline, they began a horrible sack. For eight days the miserable city was subjected to the licence of the unbridled soldiery. Rich and poor alike were stripped of their possessions. Though but few were slain, numbers were tortured to compel them to disclose their riches, and the women were outraged. The Paduans asked themselves whether they had not suffered as much in those few days as in all the years of Ezzelino's tyranny.

At last the legate restored order. The Paduans, in spite of all their losses, could congratulate themselves on having recovered their liberty. The interdict which had so long lain on the city was removed, and the churches resounded with hymns of joy. From the opened prisons came forth a miserable multitude. More than a thousand were found in the three chief prisons,¹ and there were six smaller ones, all filled with captives. Men and women come forth, some blinded, some deprived of a hand or foot, others without a tongue. Among them were troops of children deprived of their eyesight, or still more barbarously mutilated.

The capture of Padua was followed by the liberation of Este, Monselice, Cittadella, and the greater part of the territory of Padua. Then the crusaders advanced towards Vicenza. The long-forgotten Frà Giovanni of Schio reappears for a moment at the head of the Bolognese contingent. Near Vicenza they were joined by Alberic and the Trevisans.

Ezzelino had hastened back from Mantua on hearing that the legate's forces were close to Padua. The first messenger who announced the loss of the city was hanged; Ansedisio, who arrived to confirm the news, met with no mercy—he was executed in Verona. The army of the crusaders retreated in confusion as soon as they heard of Ezzelino's approach. The Bolognese set the example, and withdrew to their own city. The Guef

¹ One of these, the famous "Malta," was in the little town of Cittadella. Its ruins still exist.

leaders looked on Alberic with suspicion, and refused to allow him to enter Padua ; he retired in anger to Treviso, and at once opened negotiations with his brother.

Then Ezzelino advanced to recover Padua. But the city was so well defended that after three fruitless assaults he had to retire. After securing Vicenza with a garrison of Saracens, Germans, and his faithful vassals of Bassano and Asolo, he withdrew to Verona, meditating a horrid vengeance on Padua. At the time of the capture of that city he had in his army the flower of the burgher forces, numbering, it is said, eleven thousand. He had assembled them without arms in the enclosure of the Church of Saint George at Verona. Here he surrounded them with his armed forces, and demanded that all the men from the village where the legate had first encamped should be handed over to him for punishment. The trembling multitude pointed these out to him, and they were led away to prison. Then he demanded in succession the inhabitants of the first fortress which had surrendered, then those of Cittadella which had first revolted, then those of the whole remaining Contado. The townsmen pointed these out, and they were led off. Then he demanded the inhabitants of such and such a street, of such and such a quarter, then all the nobles who remained. In short, the whole multitude was seized in turn, and lodged in prison without an attempt at resistance. Now on his return to Verona he gave orders to slay all who had survived the rigours of their captivity. Of the whole number only two hundred escaped by some means or other with their lives.¹

He then prepared to prosecute the war. He was completely reconciled, after a quarrel which had lasted eighteen years, with his brother Alberic, so that he could now count on the support of Treviso ; and he entered into a close alliance with Oberto Pelavicini and Buoso da Doara, who between them ruled Cremona. The next year, 1257, passed only in unimportant skirmishes and

¹ It seems impossible to doubt the truth of this story, though the number of eleven thousand seems entirely incredible.

raids, varied by bloody executions in Verona and Treviso.

The legate had gone to Mantua and then to Brescia in order to compose the dissensions of that city. As usual nobles and popolo were at feud in Brescia. For many years past the nobles had formed an association, called the Malisardi, which had openly sided with Frederick II. against the Commune. It would appear that at this moment the nobles had obtained the upper hand, and that the leaders of the other party were in prison. Ezzelino had long been endeavouring to induce the nobles to accept him as their leader, but these feared such a dangerous ally, and so far had rejected his offers. Now the legate induced them to make peace with the popolo and to release the captives. But the quarrel broke out again almost at once, and this time the nobles were driven from the city. Forced at last to accept Ezzelino's overtures, they arranged for a joint attack on Brescia by Ezzelino and the Cremonese.

The legate had with him a considerable force inside the walls, under Leonisio, son of Count Rizzardo of San Bonifazio (who had died in 1254), and Biachino da Camino. Instead of awaiting attack within the city, he sallied out to the relief of some beleaguered castles. The mere junction of Ezzelino with the Cremonese spread such terror in the Guelf ranks, that they scarcely offered any resistance when brought face to face with the enemy. The whole army fled in wild confusion. Four thousand prisoners fell into the hands of the Ghibellines, amongst them the Bishop of Verona, the Podestàs of Brescia and Mantua, and the legate himself. Brescia opened her gates at once to the victors; the Bishop and most of the clergy and the leading Guelfs fled, and the three Ghibelline leaders divided the rule of the city. Strange to say, Ezzelino treated the captive legate with respect. He seems to have distinguished between open enemies and those whom he looked on as domestic rebels.

The acquisition of Brescia counterbalanced the loss of Padua. Yet it led ultimately to Ezzelino's downfall. He

was determined to gain full possession of Brescia. He therefore tried to stir up strife between his two colleagues Buoso and Oberto. But each revealed to the other the proposals of their dreaded ally; and, no longer feeling themselves safe, they left the city. Ezzelino at once assumed the sole government.

In their anger at this treachery Buoso and Oberto offered their alliance to Azzo of Este. The Guelfs and Ghibellines of Lombardy already had begun to feel that their interests were not necessarily bound up with the relations between the Papacy and the Empire. The Guelfs looked to their own immediate aims, which were not always identical with those of the Papacy. We shall soon see professed Guelfs in open opposition to the Pope. The Ghibellines put their own interests before principles, which, now that there was no Emperor, were in a measure merely theoretical.

So, although the Pope had expressly forbidden any peace with Pelavicini, a league was made in June, 1259, between Cremona and its two chiefs, on one side, and Azzo of Este, the young Count of San Bonifazio, and the Communes of Mantua, Ferrara, and Padua on the other. The confederates bound themselves to utterly destroy the brothers Ezzelino and Alberic, to recognise Manfred as King of Apulia and Sicily, and to try and reconcile him with the Church, and to aid Pelavicini to recover Piacenza, from which he had lately been expelled.

The first attack of the confederates was on Brescia, where Ezzelino himself was, with the flower of his troops. Far from being dismayed by the confederacy against him, he was planning a stupendous stroke. It was nothing less than to gain possession of Milan, as he had lately seized on Brescia. The dissensions between the nobles and people in Milan, of which we shall shortly speak, had lately resulted in the expulsion from the city of the greater part of the nobles. The exiles, maintaining themselves in their castles in the Contado, followed the example of the Brescian nobles and made secret overtures to Ezzelino. He promised his help to restore them in return for the lordship of the city.

He laid his plan with the utmost skill. As if unwilling to await the attack of his opponents behind the walls of Brescia, he moved with his army to attack the town of Orzinuovi in the territory of Brescia, where Pelavicini had a garrison. The Cremonese at once brought all their forces to Soncino on the opposite bank of the Oglio, as if fearing Ezzelino meant to fall on Crema, which had lately come into Pelavicini's hands. The Marquis of Este with the men of Ferrara and Mantua posted himself at Marcaria on the left bank of the Oglio, to strike at Ezzelino's communications if he should cross the Oglio. At the same time the people of Milan sent out their army under their leader Martino della Torre, to co-operate, as had been agreed on, with the Cremonese.

This latter move was precisely what Ezzelino had been counting on. As if fearing to be cut off from Brescia he gave orders to retreat on that city. The infantry marched off to Brescia; but Ezzelino with his cavalry, the most numerous that had ever been seen in Lombardy, and amounting, say some, to eight thousand men, rapidly pushed up the left bank of the Oglio, unmarked by the enemy. When he had reached Palazzuolo, not far from where the river issues from Lake Iseo, he crossed suddenly into the territory of Bergamo, and marched with the utmost speed straight for Milan.

He had counted on the Cremonese and Milanese passing the Oglio to pursue him towards Brescia, and expected to get between the Milanese army and their city. The nobles had partisans inside the walls, who would open one of the gates to him, and thus the metropolis of Lombardy, empty of defenders, would fall into his hands.

Unluckily for the success of this daring scheme, the Milanese army had moved more slowly than he had expected, and was still at Cassano on the right bank of the Adda. There were Guelfs among the nobles of Bergamo, and some of these sent hasty messengers to Martino della Torre to warn him of Ezzelino's movements. At once the Milanese hastened home, and

arrived at Milan before the enemy. The citizens at once rushed to man the walls, and Ezzelino saw his whole design frustrated.

With the Milanese nobles who had flocked to join him he turned north, and assaulted the important town of Monza. The inhabitants beat him back, and he then resolved on retreat. A first attempt to recross the Adda at Trezzo was foiled by the strong castle which commanded the bridge there. Then he turned south to the bridge at Cassano. An advanced guard of cavalry had seized the bridge when the Cremonese and the Marquise of Este came up from the east, and after a severe fight drove them back.

Ezzelino's situation might well appear desperate. Two great rivers were between him and his own territories; all the bridges and fords of the Adda were guarded; and the Milanese army was advancing in his rear. Yet he showed no signs of discouragement. Only once had his countenance appeared disturbed. It was when he heard the name Cassano. An astrologer had warned him that "Assano" would be fatal to him.¹ He had therefore avoided all places with names ending in these syllables, and had for years kept away from the original seat of his power Bassano. He had not gone forward with the vanguard to seize the bridge, and perhaps it is to his absence that its loss should be ascribed.

Now, seeing no help for it, he advanced to retake the bridge at all costs. He had almost succeeded when he was wounded by an arrow, and his discouraged followers at once began to retreat. Next day, the wound having been dressed, he rallied his men, and directed them against a ford higher up the river, giving a passage into the territory of Bergamo. His forces had barely crossed when the Cremonese and their allies appeared, and

¹ Or it may have been his mother's prophecy which was running in his mind—

*"En quia fata parant lacrymosos pandere casus,
Gentem Marchisiam fratres abolere potentes
Viderit Assanum, concludent castra Zenonis."*

joined battle. The Milanese appeared in the rear, and prepared to cross the Adda in pursuit. Ezzelino still maintained order in his ranks, and might have cut his way through in spite of the overwhelming numbers of his adversaries, if it had not been for the sudden defection of the Brescian cavalry. The nobles of this city had only allied themselves with him urged by dire necessity. His rule had not decreased their aversion to him, and now they saw a chance of freeing themselves from the yoke. They separated from the rest of the army, and marched off, unhindered by the Cremonese, to Brescia.

This defection disheartened the remaining troops. Ezzelino still tried to maintain order, and to fight his way in the direction of Bergamo. But his ranks were broken, his best troops slain, and finally, after prodigies of valour, he was struck from his horse and made prisoner. The soldiers would have torn him to pieces, and one, whose brother had been mutilated by his orders, had already wounded him on the head with a reaping-hook; but Pelavicini and the other leaders rescued him from their hands.

He was brought to Pelavicini's tent, and treated with every consideration. But he refused food and medicine, rejected all the efforts of the monks to reconcile him with the Church, and, it is said, finally tore the bandages from his wounds, and so, after eleven days in captivity, died. He had reached his sixty-sixth year, and had ruled for twenty-three in Verona.

In Ezzelino we have the first example of those tyrants such as a Bernabò Visconti or a Galeazzo Maria Sforza, the story of whose inhuman cruelties fills such a large part of the history of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. But to the thirteenth century, by which the full developments of tyranny were unsuspected, he was a unique figure of horror; and so among all Italian tyrants his name has a gloomy pre-eminence. A popular legend declared him to be the son of the devil.

The most striking feature in his career is perhaps the contrast between his early years, when he appears as a

valiant soldier and an upright if stern ruler, and his later life, when he became a monster of cruelty. As to the truth of the atrocities which he committed there can be no doubt. The Paduan writer Rolandino, not to mention others, gives us so many specific examples that we cannot believe them to be inventions.

Leo propounds a curious theory to account for this change in his character. According to him it was Ezzelino's love of abstract justice, of order, his hatred of the anarchy of the time which led to all his excesses. He looked on himself as the representative of law, and he treated all who resisted him as rebels against the natural order of things. He broke down resistance to his will with a strong hand; but cruelty only led to more resistance, until finally his hatred to all opposition became an overmastering impulse which led him to crush without mercy all whom he merely suspected of disaffection. To the trembling Paduans he compared himself to a father who wished to cleanse his house of scorpions, serpents, and all such noxious reptiles. And, according to one of the annalists he was wont to say, "The sins of the nations require a hand to chastise them, we are given to the world to exact vengeance for crime." But crime to him soon came to mean the smallest opposition to his political designs or his own personal desires. All feelings of humanity were extinguished by a wild rage against those who dared to resist his will.

Yet perhaps it was merely the possession of unlimited power that was fatal to the balance of his character. He had many enemies on whom, when once in possession of Verona and Vicenza, he was able to take vengeance for injuries done him in the past. His power as representative of the Emperor was practically absolute. He was able to punish opposition to himself as treason to the state. One deed of cruelty led on to another, until in the end the passion of cruelty overcame every other, and he became a virtual maniac possessed with a thirst for blood which ever called for new victims without ever being satiated.



VERONA.
ROMAN BRIDGE.

The death of the dreaded tyrant caused unbounded rejoicings in the Mark. Verona recalled the Guelf exiles ; Belluno and Feltre set up their old form of government. Trent had already recovered its freedom. The men of Bassano formed themselves into a Commune under the suzerainty of Padua. In Vicenza the foreign garrison held their ground for some time, and even resisted an attack of the Paduans. But they soon saw their cause was desperate, and abandoned the city, which declared that the day on which its liberty had been restored should be kept as a perpetual feast. The Venetians joined in the general rejoicings, sounding all their bells, and illuminating their bell towers.

Alberic soon found his position in Treviso untenable, and fled with his family and his treasures. He took refuge in the strong castle of San Zeno, near Asolo, which Ezzelino had chosen as a last retreat in case of disaster, and which he had striven by all the means in his power to make impregnable. Here, with a strong force of mercenaries, he hoped to be able to resist any attack.

Alberic's rule in Treviso had been as tyrannical as that of his brother in the rest of the Mark. It is true that some contemporary writers only speak of his cruelties, "blinding children, and hanging monks and priests in their vestments," after his final breach with the Guelfs. But others tell us that he had previously exercised the same severities on the partisans of the Emperor in Treviso as Ezzelino had used against the supporters of the Church. Now he imprudently kept the attention of the Trevisans fixed on him by raids on their lands and on those of the men of Bassano.

The Great Council of Treviso, after reciting his misdeeds, passed the following atrocious sentence. Alberic and his sons, if ever they fell into the hands of the Trevisans, were to be dragged at the tails of horses and then hanged, his wife and daughters were to be burned alive. They then prepared to attack the castle. The Paduans, Vicentines, Veronese, the lesser towns of the Mark, even the Venetians, sent contingents, and

the whole force was put under the command of the Marquis of Este.

Alberic made a valiant defence. But his chief engineer, after a three months' siege, opened secret negotiations with the enemy, and corrupting some of the German garrison, admitted the assailants within the walls. Alberic, with his family and some faithful warriors, withdrew into the great central tower. Here he might still have defended himself were it not that water failed. His last action was worthy of a better man. He offered his own life to secure the safety of his family and followers. He trusted to his kinship and old friendship with Azzo of Este to gain this concession. But Azzo did nothing to check the popular fury which demanded the extirpation of the whole House of Romano. Alberic's followers went free, but his family found no mercy.

His six sons, the youngest still in the cradle, were cut to pieces before his eyes, and their remains thrown in his face; his wife and two beautiful daughters were led half naked round the camp, then horribly mutilated and finally burned alive. Alberic, last of all, after witnessing these atrocities, had his flesh torn with hooks, and then was tied to a horse's tail and dragged to death.

Treviso, Vicenza, and Padua divided between them the lands and goods of the fallen house. One member of the family of Romano still survived. Cunizza, once the wife of Rizzardo di San Bonifazio, then famed for her many amorous adventures, long outlived the ruin of her house. She found a refuge with her mother's family the Counts Alberti of Mangona, in Tuscany, and with her kinsmen the Cavalcanti of Florence. Here she passed her closing years in prayer and works of charity, striving thus to atone for her early frailties and her brother's crimes. A curious document drawn up by her in 1265 still survives, by which she frees all the serfs of her family in the Mark, for the salvation of her own soul and those of Ezzelino and Alberic, of her mother Adelaide, and of her father. As all the possessions of her house had been confiscated and the serfs set free this document must



VERONA.
CHURCH OF SAN GIORGIO.

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Only be meant as a sign of her forgiveness of those who had wronged her house.¹

The houses of the Cavalcanti were close to those of the Alighieri. The youthful Dante must often have seen in the church or in the streets, perhaps even within the home of the Cavalcanti, the aged figure of her whose name had once been on all men's lips. Her wonderful story, her later years of prayer and penance, the overthrow of her house touched his youthful imagination. He meets her spirit, in his Vision, among the blessed in the sphere of Venus—

“Cunizza fui chiamata, e qui rifulgo
Perchè mi vinse il lume d'esta stella.
Ma lietamente a me medesima indulgo
La cagion di mia sorte, e non mi noia,
Che forse parria forte al vostro vulgo.”²

Thus she sings, in a passage which has much disturbed the commentators.

A later poet has been attracted by the tale which links her name with that of the poet Sordello of Mantua, the “anima lombarda . . . altera e disdegnosa.” Browning, for metrical reasons, has altered her name to Palma, a name really borne by two of her sisters.³ But Browning's poem, “Sordello,” though some light is thrown on its obscurities by a knowledge of the history of the Mark, pays scant heed to the real history of the time of which it treats, and still less to the real characters of the figures which pass across its pages.

For a moment a new era of peace and union seemed about to dawn on the Mark. Verona, Vicenza, Padua,

¹ It is true that she gives over the souls of those who had betrayed San Zenone “to all the devils.”

² Dante, “Par.,” Canto IX.

³ The other children of Ezzelino the Monk were Agnese, married to a Guidotti, and mother of the cruel Ansedisio; Palma, who died young; Palma Novella, wife of Alberto da Baone; Emilia, or Imia, who married into the Conti, and whose goods were confiscated after her death by the Inquisition; Sofia, married first to Enrico di Egna, and mother by him of another of Ezzelino's cruel ministers, and then to Salinguerra.

and Treviso made a solemn league for the preservation of freedom and concord. But these pacific dispositions did not last. Internal peace only lasted three months in Verona. Then the popular aversion to the House of San Bonifazio broke out again; the young Count and his party were expelled, and Verona, under the leadership of Mastino della Scala, returned definitely to the Ghibelline party.¹

The town of Bassano had been allowed to choose whether it would place itself under Vicenza or Padua. It chose the latter, reserving its local independence. At the same time the Paduans added to their territory the strip of land, reaching north to Bassano, between the Trevisan border and the left bank of the Brenta. This district, mostly owned by the House of Romano, had formed part of the Contado of Vicenza: hence arose new discord between that city and Padua.

The Brescian Ghibellines had dedicated a church to St. Francis, as a thanksgiving for Ezzelino's overthrow. But they refused to readmit the Guelf exiles, and gave the lordship of the city to Pelavicini, who repressed with the strong hand all efforts of the exiles to drive him out. The prisons of Cremona were soon filled with Brescian Guelfs captured in arms, or suspected of plotting against his rule. For a moment there seemed to be a chance of peace between the two factions in Central Lombardy. The Pope was ready to free Pelavicini, Buoso, and the Cremonese from excommunication if they would give up their alliance with Manfred. This they refused to do; and Pelavicini stepped into Ezzelino's place as the leader of the party in Lombardy hostile to the Church. On the other hand, the Guelf party in Milan began to show themselves restive to the Papal authority, and came to an understanding with Pelavicini, which, for a time, put an end to nearly all hostilities between the Milanese and their neighbours.

Returning now to the affairs of Central Lombardy, we find the chief events of the years between the death

¹ San Bonifazio was readmitted, but was expelled again in 1263, this time for ever.

of Frederick II. and the coming of Charles of Anjou bound up with the career of the Ghibelline leader Oberto Pelavicini. His timely defection from the side of Ezzelino not only saved him from the ruin which fell on the House of Romano, but materially added to his power, by bringing under his rule the important city of Brescia, where, as we have seen, internal factions had put an end to the traditional supremacy of the Guelfs. In 1258 he had come into possession of Crema; and though in the previous year he had been expelled from Piacenza, the Guelf cities of Ferrara, Mantua, and Padua had bound themselves, as the price of his assistance against the tyrant of Verona, to aid him to recover his power there, an enterprise in which he succeeded in 1261.

The career of Pelavicini gives us one of the best examples of the opportunities for gratifying personal ambition which the disturbed state of Italy offered to men of exceptional capacities.

A younger son of a powerful feudal family seated on the confines of Parma and Piacenza, Oberto first appears in Parma, so poor that he rode habitually a broken-down horse. He was weak of body, thin, and had lost one eye in infancy. Such, however, was his political sagacity and his capability as a party leader, that he was chosen Podestà of several cities, and so succeeded in working on public opinion that Cremona and then Piacenza and other important towns prolonged his tenure of this office first for a series of years, and then in some cases for life. A Ghibelline by conviction, the Hohenstaufen aided his career, and his own efforts and successes soon made him to be looked on as the leader of that party in Central Lombardy. He had, we are told, "an appetite for rule above that of all other men"; and we are also told that wherever he ruled he favoured the heretics Patarini, Paulicians, and others of which Lombardy was then full. His career, due apparently not so much to prowess in arms as to skill in politics, marks him out as a forerunner of the despots of the fifteenth century—men such as some of the later Visconti and Sforza, who from the recesses of their

palaces directed great armies and added city after city to their dominions, without ever appearing themselves in the field.

Such was the man whom an unexpected turn of affairs enabled not only to figure as the head of the Lombard Ghibellines, but also to appear for a time as ruler of the Guelf democratic party in Milan.

In this city, which the pressure of external war had kept in internal peace during a long period, the old quarrel between nobles and people broke out afresh in 1252. A temporary peace was patched up by entrusting, for three years in succession, the office of Podestà to the Marquis Manfred Lancia of Incisa, who succeeded in preserving tranquillity until 1256. On the expiration of his office the feud broke out anew, and was embittered by the murder of one of the people by a nobleman who was his debtor.¹

The nobles, driven from the city, prevailed as usual in the open country, where their heavy armed cavalry easily broke the ranks of the more poorly equipped foot-soldiers of the popular party.

In all the struggles between classes in the Lombard cities the popular party had drawn to their side some of the noble families, who either sympathised with their claims or saw that the prestige of their rank and riches would infallibly lead the mass of the citizens to entrust them with the supreme direction of affairs. After the disastrous battle of Cortenuova, when the people of Bergamo suddenly changing sides had fallen upon the Milanese fugitives, the latter had been succoured, as we have seen, by a feudal lord, Pagano della Torre, who owned wide possessions in the Valsassina.

Popular gratitude for this had thenceforth given the

¹ The nobles had preserved the right of being absolved from the murder of an artisan on payment of 7 lire 12 denarii (Leo, vol. iii. p. 204). The mass of the people were exasperated beyond measure by the heavy taxation rendered necessary by the war against Frederick II., which continued to be levied for some years after his death, in order to pay off the debts which the Commune had increased in the struggles.

family a position of great influence in Milan, and now its head, Martino della Torre, appears as leader of the people against the nobles.¹

Repeated conflicts, expulsions of the nobles, and attempts at pacification make up the history of the next few years.

In Como similar conditions prevailed, and we find the people, headed by the Vitani, in violent opposition to the nobles under the Rusconi.

At length, in 1258, three months after a last and solemn pacification, known as the Peace of St. Ambrose,² the nobles withdrew once more from Milan, and sought help from the Rusconi and the neighbouring Ghibelline cities. In a battle near Como the popular party obtained a complete victory; the Rusconi were expelled from Como, and the Milanese nobles were forced to sue for peace. A treacherous attack, during the negotiations, on the unsuspecting popular party gave the nobles once more the upper hand; but in 1259 all was again in confusion, and the nobles adopted the desperate plan of calling in Ezzelino to their aid. It has already been told how nearly he obtained possession of Milan. On his final overthrow, however, the nobles found themselves openly on the side of the Ghibellines, and shut out from any hope of reconciliation with the populace.

Della Torre, on the other hand, had utilised the struggle to get himself chosen as "Ancient of the People" and virtual ruler of the city for a term of years. To this he added in 1259 the lordship over Lodi; while Como under the Vitani was devoted to his interests.

The nobles, however, were still dangerous, entrenched as they were in their castles, and likely to be helped by the Ghibelline cities. Martino therefore hit on the daring plan of gaining over Pelavicini to his interests. Accordingly he caused the latter to be proclaimed in

¹ The Archbishop led the nobles.

² By this peace all offices of the state, down to that of trumpeter, were to be equally divided amongst the nobles and the popolo.

1259 as Captain-General of Milan for a term of five years.

Milan now appears as holding a middle position neither Guelf nor Ghibelline; and, by a curious irony of fate, very soon came into conflict with the Pope, who desired a pacification with the expelled nobles, and who detested Pelavicini as a supporter of heresy.¹ Oberto's power now reached its highest point. Brescia, Crema, Pavia, and Vercelli were directly subject to him.² He recovered Piacenza in 1261; he ruled also in Tortona and Alessandria. His compact with Della Torre gave him control not only of Milan but of its allies Como,³ Lodi, and Novara, while the Ghibellines of Bergamo, Parma, Reggio, and Modena looked on him as their natural head. Finally, in the great Ghibelline stronghold, Cremona, he, as Podestà of the Commune, shared the government with the Podestà of the Mercadanza, Buoso da Doara. In other words, he seemed virtually master of the whole of Central Lombardy.

Such a rapid rise was followed, however, by a still more striking downfall.

The Torriani profited by Oberto's aid still farther to strengthen their position. The power of the banished nobles was broken by the capture of nine hundred of them in the castle of Tabiago; and many leading noble families had accepted the new condition of affairs in Milan. Martino della Torre, and his brother Filippo, who succeeded him in 1263 as head of the family, now felt strong enough to maintain themselves without Oberto's help. In 1263 Oberto's term as Signore in Novara expired, and Martino was chosen in his stead. In the next year Filippo was recognised as Signore of Lodi, Como, Bergamo, and Vercelli; and Pelavicini, on

¹ Wherever Oberto ruled he encouraged the heretics. No less than fifteen different sects of heretics were to be found in Milan and its territory in the middle of the thirteenth century (Lanzani).

² Pavia seems to have been in a more independent position towards him than the other Ghibelline cities; at least after 1257.

³ In 1259 Martino della Torre was made Podestà of Como for five years (Salzer, p. 53).

the expiration of his term of office in Milan, saw himself shut out, apparently without the possibility of making any effectual opposition, from these towns and from Milan itself. His rule was now restricted to the definitely Ghibelline cities, in which he maintained himself in open opposition to the Torriani until the coming of Charles of Anjou.

The party of the nobles had in the meantime received an unexpected addition of strength. Two years before the beginning of the joint rule of Della Torre and Pelavicini in Milan, the archiepiscopal see in that city had become vacant. Factions among the clergy, and then Oberto's intrigues, prevented the election of a successor until the Pope, in 1262, himself filled up the vacancy by appointing Otto Visconti, a member of a noble family owning great estates around the lower end of Lago Maggiore.

The Visconti, henceforth so closely bound up with the history of Milan, seem, in the days when the city was still governed by the Archbishops, to have come into possession of the hereditary viscountship of the city, an office which possessed a very extensive jurisdiction over the artisan classes. This post brought great wealth and influence over the lower orders to the family.

Both Martino and Oberto refused to recognise the new Archbishop, who thereupon naturally joined himself to the nobles, to whose party he belonged by birth, and who adopted him as their leader.

The rulers of Milan seized the lands and castles of the Archbishop, and the Pope in reply placed the city under an interdict. Hence, an illustration of the confusion of parties in Italy, we find the professedly Guelf party of the Torriani allied with the leader of the Lombard Ghibellines and under the ban of the Church, while the avowed Milanese Ghibellines were supported by the Pope and headed by his Archbishop of Milan.

The renewed attacks of the nobles met with no success, even when Pelavicini, breaking with the Torriani in 1264, had allied himself with them. The Della Torre strengthened themselves by handing over the Signoria

of Milan, in name at least, to Charles of Anjou, who was beginning to be looked on as the champion of the Papal party in Italy, and received from him a Provençal Podestà and a body of French troops.

Parties in Lombardy once more permit of a sharp definition: on one side the Guelf headed as of old by Milan, under the rule of the Della Torre; on the other, the Ghibelline cities grouped round Cremona, which was jointly governed by Oberto Pelavicini and Buoso da Doara. ✕

During the years of which we have been treating the Papacy had been engaged in an unrelenting warfare against the surviving members of the House of Hohenstaufen; first against Conrad, who succeeded his father as German King and in the kingdom of Naples, and after Conrad's death,¹ against Manfred, the youngest son of Frederick II., who ruled Naples as regent for the infant son of Conrad, and then, on a false rumour of his death, as sovereign. In spite of all the efforts of the Popes during the next ten years Manfred not only held his ground in his kingdom, but extended his power over a large part of Central Italy. The Pope finally realised that the only means of crushing him lay in calling to his aid a foreign prince who should receive as a reward the crown, which the Church party held had been forfeited by the Hohenstaufens.

After protracted negotiations the Papal offers were accepted by the Count of Provence, Charles of Anjou, brother of St. Louis of France, who prepared a large army of Frenchmen and Provençals with which to expel from Naples and Sicily their actual ruler. News of Charles's preparations excited the factions of Lombardy to renewed activity. The Guelfs of Modena, aided by those of Ferrara and Mantua, expelled the opposite faction from their city. Then they proceeded to Reggio, where for some years both parties had lived in peace together,² and attacked one of the gates.

¹ In 1254 (Leo).

² The Guelf party apparently obtained the chief power in Reggio in or about 1257. A Bolognese was Podestà in 1258.

Aided by the Guelfs of Reggio, the noble families of Fogliani and Roberti, they forced their way in, and after hard fighting expelled the opposite party, the noble family of Sessi and their supporters. News of these events threw Parma also into confusion. There both parties had united in 1259 to expel Ghiberto da Gente, who had ruled for six years in the Ghibelline interest. Now the Guelfs rose, and, after fierce street fighting, gained the upper hand. Two Podestàs were appointed, one for each faction, a compromise which ended, in 1266, in the total expulsion of the Ghibellines.¹

On the other hand Oberto Pelavicini and Buoso da Doara made preparations to oppose the passage of Charles's army.

In 1265 Charles with part of his forces proceeded by sea to Rome; the main body of his army advanced by land. Six years before several of the smaller towns of Piedmont, Alba, Chierasco, Cuneo, and others, beset by powerful feudal lords, had sought protection for themselves by choosing Charles as their lord. In this way his army had a free passage across the frontier passes. The Marquis William of Montferrat, whom we are destined to meet again in the course of this history, and who had previously been reckoned among Manfred's supporters, now appeared on the side of Charles, and the support of Asti and Turin opened all these regions to the invaders.

The shortest route for the French army from Piedmont to Rome would have been that across the Apennines and through Tuscany. But Tuscany was entirely in the hands of the Ghibellines under the vigorous leadership of Pisa and Siena; and Charles's generals decided to march straight across Lombardy, and, avoiding Tuscany, to proceed by way of Bologna and Romagna into Umbria.

¹ Parma had been under Ghiberto da Gente from 1253 to 1259. He gained power as a mediator between the two factions, and recalled the Ghibellines who had been in exile since 1247. He ruled, however, in the Ghibelline interest. After his expulsion the city was in a very disturbed state. Oberto Pelavinci became Podestà in 1263, but his efforts to gain the lordship of Parma failed.

The Ghibelline cities, however, formed a solid line across the centre of Lombardy; Pavia, Piacenza, and Tortona on the left resting on the Apennines, Cremona, and apparently Crema, in the centre, and on the right Brescia and Verona, whose territories ran up to the High Alps. It seemed possible for the Ghibellines, entrenched behind the innumerable rivers of Central Lombardy, if not to prevent, at least seriously to delay the progress of the invading army.

The French, having stormed Vercelli on their way, advanced through the territory of Milan. Oberto and Buoso drew out their forces, and posted themselves at Soncino, to prevent the passage of the Oglio. But the Ghibellines confined themselves to the defensive—it is said by the treacherous advice of Buoso, corrupted by French gold—until the lords of Este and San Bonifazio had collected in their rear the forces of the Guelfs of Ferrara and Mantua. Then the French, by a sudden movement, crossed the Oglio unopposed at a point higher up—Buoso gets the credit of having acted treacherously here also—and passing under the walls of Brescia, into which town they shot arrows as they passed, they advanced in Oberto's rear, to join the forces of Mantua and Ferrara. Many strong fortresses were stormed by them, and Oberto was glad to escape unattacked into Cremona.

The decisive battle of Benevento, and Manfred's defeat and death, lie outside our scope. But the passage of Charles's army brought about the final overthrow of Oberto.

Brescia, from of old inclined to the Guelfs, had long been weary of the Ghibelline rule. More than one conspiracy against Oberto had been discovered and repressed with severity. Now, however, when Oberto had been forced to weaken his garrison, the townsmen rose, and, having expelled his supporters, chose Napoleone della Torre, then head of his house, for their lord.

Oberto now directed all his efforts to maintain himself in Piacenza and Cremona. He withdrew his forces from Alessandria, where, since 1262, he had, with the



PIACENZA.
CATHEDRAL.

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support of the Ghibelline faction of the Lanzavecchi, ruled as *custos*, or military governor. The opposite party, the Pozzi, were recalled from exile, and both factions seem to have lived in more or less tranquillity, tempered with street fighting, until in 1270 the city sought to attain to a more peaceful state of affairs by conferring the hereditary lordship on Charles of Anjou. At the same time Oberto handed over Tortona to the Pavesans, who only held it for a year.

In Cremona, where for several years Buoso and Oberto had shared the chief power, the former, irritated by some secret negotiations of the latter with the Roman court, conspired against his colleague and expelled him from the city. Piacenza alone now remained in Oberto's possession, and even here he was unable to maintain himself against the intrigues of the Papal party. He fell almost without a struggle in the next year, and it was said that he used to express his wonder how one priest by his soft words had deprived him of his dominion.

Driven from all the cities which had once obeyed him, he maintained himself for a few years longer in his castles, until his death in 1269.¹ The family, which in later times altered its name to Pallavicino, remained until the eighteenth century in possession of a small territory round Busseto, between the territories of Parma, Piacenza, and Cremona, as immediate vassals of the Empire.

Buoso did not long enjoy the fruit of his treachery. In 1267 he was expelled from Cremona, with, it is said, 10,000 Ghibellines, his partisans, and spent the rest of his life as a wandering and indigent soldier of fortune.

His grandfather² had conducted negotiations with Frederick Barbarossa as one of the Rectors of the Lombard League; the memory of the son lasts to our own day, chiefly through the biting lines of Dante, who met him among the traitors in hell.

³ "Là dove i peccatori stanno freschi."

¹ He is said to have been reconciled to the Church on his deathbed.

² Leo and others say his *father*, but this scarcely seems possible.

³ "Inferno," Canto XXXII.

Piacenza and Cremona now appear on the side of the Guelfs ; and at about this time the Della Torre, by the mediation of Charles of Anjou, made their peace with the Pope. Otto Visconti was recognised as Archbishop, the possessions of his see given up to him, and Milan was freed from all ecclesiastical censures. In all Lombardy only Pavia and Verona remained faithful to the Ghibelline cause. To still more strengthen the Guelfs a new league was formed in 1267 which embraced nearly every city of Lombardy and the Trevisan Mark. The Ghibelline power seemed broken for ever.

CHAPTER XII

GUELFS AND Ghibellines AND THE RISE OF THE POPOLO

ONE of the most curious features in the story of medieval Italy is the constant vicissitudes of fortune which, without any apparent cause, suddenly alter the whole political balance of the country. No sooner does one party appear lost beyond recovery, than it seems to gather new force from its very overthrow, rapidly regains the ground it had lost, and in its turn tastes the sweets of success, to fall once more and rise again in endless alternations. Before ten years have elapsed from the conclusion of the new Guelf league we shall find the Ghibelline party once more vigorous, if not triumphant, in Lombardy.

We may find the explanation of the instability of Italian politics in the fact that the victorious faction invariably ruled on party lines, expelling their opponents wholesale, seizing their goods, and admitting of no lasting compromise with their adversaries. Such a government was naturally displeasing to the more moderate spirits, who preferred the good of the city to party interests; a large number of the citizens saw themselves permanently shut out from all share in the offices and honours of the state; and the mass of the people might justly complain that affairs were managed, not in the interests of all, but merely in those of the dominant faction. Moreover, the party in power in all ages manages to offend many who at one time have been favourably disposed towards it; it is blamed for disasters which may occur abroad, and for heavy taxation which it may have had to impose at home, and so a discontented party naturally grows up. The

example of England, where during the nineteenth century Liberals and Conservatives have practically alternated with every new Parliament, shows this clearly ; the difference is that in medieval Italy street fighting, the firing of houses, and the expulsion *en masse* of the beaten side took the place of the more peaceful ballot-boxes of our own day.

Even in towns such as Milan and Piacenza, where the parties were closely bound up with the struggle of class against class, we find this shifting of the balance from one side to the other. It will help to explain this if we remember that the term "people" in medieval Italy as a rule only includes what we would call the middle classes ; the artisans, no doubt the mass of the population, were nearly entirely shut out from even the most democratic governments. Hence their support might well be given at one time to the nobles, at another to the popolo ; and so the balance of parties be maintained fairly even.

In some Communes, it is true, where the Guelfs and Ghibellines represented class interests, we find comparative stability. Thus in Milan the popular party, headed by the Torriani, ruled at first for about twenty years, and then the Visconti held the city for twenty-five years, ruling as Ghibellines, at the head of the nobles. We notice this stability especially in cities situated in the open plain. Yet the chronicler of Asti tells how more than five times in his own lifetime he had seen the nobles expelled from Pavia.

In the towns whose territories lay mostly in the hill country the changes are exceptionally violent and bewildering. Como was in an almost perpetual state of confusion between 1250 and 1310 ; and the coming to Italy in that year of the new Emperor Henry VII. did not restore peace. The chronicler of Asti declares that seven times one faction in Alessandria had expelled the other. Asti itself was in but a little better condition at the opening of the fourteenth century.

In general, the most frequent and sudden changes of fortune occur in the cities where the parties had their origin in quarrels among the nobles. The factions fought

one another from the towers of their palaces, or in the streets or squares below, until one party drove out the other ; the mass of the people, meanwhile, "sat quietly at their looms, or at other employments, and worked away as if nothing was the matter."¹ This was the case at Parma at first. It was also the case at Asti, and apparently at Bergamo, as well as in Modena and Reggio, and in most of the cities of Romagna.

The beaten faction left the city and retired to their castles in the Contado. The victors seized on the government of the Commune, but could not, as a rule, follow up their enemies outside the walls ; for where the mass of the people were indifferent the rulers dared not demand from them any unusual military service, or impose any increased taxation. Meanwhile the exiles from their castles infested the open country, interfered with the trade of the peaceful citizens, or ravaged the lands from which they drew their food supplies. The sufferers, driven to action, forced the governing faction to patch up a peace ; or the efforts of the clergy—the Franciscans especially seem to have been active as peacemakers—brought about a temporary reconciliation. The exiles were recalled ; their palaces re-built ; often marriages were arranged between the leading families on both sides ; and matters settled down for a short period, often only for a few months, until another explosion led to more fighting, house burning, and wholesale expulsions. Sometimes the exiles would gain a great victory in the open country and march on the city. Partisans inside would open the gates ; the mob scenting plunder would rise to welcome their return, and the party which lately had ruled now saw their houses stormed and plundered, and fled in their turn to their castles, to recommence hostilities from thence, and so on *da capo*. Or, if the exiled faction did not succeed in re-entering the city, they seized on a great part of the Contado. Thus the valley of the Taro and the foot-hills of the Apennines in the territory of Piacenza were almost permanently in the power of the Ghibellines of Piacenza

¹ Salzer, p. 109, fr. Frà Salimbene.

for a quarter of a century after the expulsion of Oberto Pelavicini. The Sessi and their followers, driven from Reggio in 1270, the Grasulfi, expelled from Modena in 1264, held their ground among the mountains, where, even in times of the fullest internal peace, the Communes found it hard to maintain their authority over the feudal lords whose castles crowned every crag.

In the territory of Modena the Ghibellines held some of the mountain strongholds for twenty years. Then the Guelf nobles began to fight amongst themselves. The extreme Guelf party expelled the Moderates, who seized on the castles of Savignano and Sassuolo on the edge of the plain, and set up a regular government there, with a Podestà of their own. Joined by the Ghibelline exiles they harassed the city. The exiles from Reggio made common cause with them. A great victory in 1288 over the ruling faction of Reggio led to the readmission of the exiles to both cities. But discord continued. To secure peace the Modanese gave themselves to the Marquis of Este in 1288. Next year the Ghibellines of Reggio, who after months of tumult had expelled the Guelfs, followed the example of Modena. Peace at home was only secured by the loss of freedom.

The internal history of Brescia offers a good example of the vicissitudes of the parties. Although the Guelf exiles of the popular party had fought under Oberto Pelavicini against Ezzelino, he would not restore them to their homes when he gained possession of Brescia in 1260. Pelavicini, in the five years during which he ruled, became obnoxious to many of those who had formerly supported him. His overthrow in 1265 was brought about by a union between the nobles and people, and as a result the exiles were readmitted, and Guelfs and Ghibellines were solemnly reconciled. Up to now the nobles had almost all been Ghibellines, in opposition to the Guelf popolo. But now many of the leading nobles had gone over to the Guelf side; and for a long period we hear of no more dissensions between nobles and popolo. The Guelf party, strengthened by the adhesion of so many nobles, expelled the Ghibellines in 1268. The

Ghibellines maintained themselves in the open country, and so harassed the city that King Charles of Naples was made lord for six years so as to put a stop to the factions.

Not until 1272 did a Papal legate succeed in reconciling the adversaries. But he accomplished his work well, and for twenty-three years the city had peace within, while in outside affairs it at first supports the Della Torre and the Guelf cities, then is found allied with Cremona, Piacenza, and Visconti, forming a moderate party between the violent Guelfs and Ghibellines.

Internal discord broke out afresh in 1295. There were now four parties among the nobles—Guelfs, Ghibellines, Griffi, and Bardelli. The Griffi had been the leading Ghibelline family; now, with some other nobles, they formed a faction apart. A fifth party, a popular Guelf one, then appears on the scene, and takes the name of Ferioli. The Guelfs, properly so called, who numbered twenty-four noble families, expelled the other four factions. The usual warfare began in the Contado, until to secure peace the lordship of the city was given to the Bishop Maggi for five years, and the exiles were readmitted. The Maggi were among the leading Guelfs, but the Bishop, to secure his power, turned on some of his former allies. He expelled the Guelf Brusati as well as the Griffi, and ruled till his death in 1308. The Emperor Henry VII. restored the exiles. The result was a fierce fight within the city, between the Maggi, now definitely Ghibelline, and the Brusati, who were aided by the people. The latter won, and one of the Brusati was made Signore. The Emperor came again, this time to restore the Ghibellines. This he only succeeded in doing after a desperate siege.

No sooner had he gone when the parties were once more at one another's throats. The Maggi, helped by the Ghibellines of Bergamo and Cremona, won, and again expelled the Brusati. The latter joined the Guelf exiles of Cremona, captured that city, and then seized on nearly all the hilly part of the Contado of Brescia, as well as a large part of the plain. This was in 1212, and in 1213 the city was in such straits that the Ghibellines were forced

to readmit the exiles. Marriages were made between the noble houses of either party to secure a permanent peace; but two years later the Ghibellines began again to harass their opponents. This time it was the Guelfs who won and expelled the Ghibellines. War ensued all over the Contado. The exiles, helped by Can Grande della Scala, won a considerable victory; this, however, was followed by a disastrous overthrow in which they lost most of their infantry. But, secure in their castles, they held their ground so well that the Guelfs were forced to call King Robert of Naples to their aid, and to give him the lordship of the city. His troops cleared most of the Contado of Ghibellines, and for a time the city enjoyed peace, though the Ghibellines were by no means annihilated. Rather, after a few years, they reappear almost as active as before. Brescia, like her sister Communes, only found peace under the rule of a despot.

Opposed to the Commune we regularly find "the exiles of the Commune" forming an organised political body under an elected war captain, and in close alliance with other Communes, or other groups of exiles of their own party. Within the city the government has frankly become that of a faction. We find in treaties and other public documents expressions such as "The Commune of Cremona, namely, the party of the Barbarasi,¹ which now is the Commune of Cremona and rules the Commune of Cremona." The Podestà of Verona, in 1271, no longer swears to serve the Commune, but "those who now hold and rule Verona." The "pars intrinseca" stands in perpetual opposition to the "pars extrinseca," or "forenses," in the annals and in the official documents of the time.

The fury of faction increased as time went on. We note a marked development of cruelty. Ezzelino had shocked his age; the succeeding generation gives us numberless instances of atrocities which rival his worst crimes. A Ghibelline outbreak at Mantua in 1268 spared neither age nor sex. "Women were dragged to the scaffold pell-mell with children." Four years later "neither innocent children nor feeble old men were spared; virgins

¹ Salzer, p. 20. The Barbarasi were the Ghibellines of Cremona.



VERONA.
PALAZZO DELLA RAGIONE.

were burned alive." It was feared that the city would remain empty of inhabitants, as it had already been reduced almost to a heap of ruins.

We read of wholesale massacres of rival families, often under circumstances of revolting treachery. Dante holds up to infamy the Bishop of Feltre, who gave up the Ghibelline exiles of Ferrara to the vengeance of their enemies. The tragic fate of Count Ugolino and his family in the "Hunger Tower" at Pisa has been immortalised in the "Inferno."

The vanquished party was driven out *en masse*, their houses destroyed, their property confiscated. Twelve thousand persons were expelled from Bologna in 1274, ten thousand from Cremona in 1266. When the Florentine Guelfs split in the early fourteenth century we hear of four thousand Guelf exiles able to bear arms taking advantage of an amnesty on one occasion. Whole cities were destroyed, and the inhabitants massacred or driven into exile. Such was the fate of Camerino in 1261; of Sinigaglia four years previously. The provinces of Central Italy were the theatre of the worst excesses; but the annals of Lombardy show a marked growth of ferocity. The Ghibelline exiles of Modena, forced to surrender in the castle of Monte Valario, were all put to death in cold blood. The Ghibellines of Vercelli carried off by surprise the Podestà Paganino della Torre, who was then handed over to the exiled Milanese nobles, who killed him. In revenge, fifty-two nobles, captives at Milan, were slain by the Podestà of that city. Conspiracies against the ruling party were ruthlessly suppressed; torture and mutilation were the common accompaniment of the death penalty.¹ When the Bolognese captured twenty exiles in the castle of Samodia in 1292 they beheaded two or three every day, until all had perished. The members of the family of the Lupi, captured by their fellow-citizens at Canulo in 1308, were hanged. When the Lambertazzi were definitely expelled from Bologna in 1306, the boys cut the

¹ As in the case of the Abbot of Vallombrosa, tortured and executed by the Guelfs of Florence on the charge of being implicated in a Ghibelline plot. For this the city was put under an interdict.

bodies of the slain into bits, and carried them on hooks to their houses.

The factions made even the commonest acts of life symbolical of their mutual detestation. "Flags, colours, the fruits of the earth, the manner of walking, of cracking the fingers, of yawning, all became party signs. The inhabitants of Bergamo murdered some strangers from Calabria in their sleep, because they had cut garlic in a fashion which was used by the faction opposed to that ruling in the city. Ghibellines wore their plumes on the left, Guelfs on the right; Ghibellines raised the first finger, Guelfs the thumb, when taking an oath; the former cut apples across, the latter perpendicularly; the Ghibellines drank from plain, the Guelfs from chiselled cups; where Guelfs wore red roses their opponents wore white." In their houses and their dress the same opposition was maintained. Ghibelline fortresses had swallow-tailed battlements, Guelf square. The climax was reached when the soldiers of Milan in the fifteenth century tore the figure of Christ from the cross in the Duomo of Crema "because it inclined the head to the Guelf side."¹

To strengthen itself by securing internal discipline, each party in the Commune gave itself a head invested with almost despotic power. Here we have the germ from which arose the tyrants who destroyed the republican freedom of the cities. The family which supplied the leader—sometimes that house from whose private feuds the internal dissensions had arisen, sometimes one which had come into prominence during the struggle—gives its name to its party. The Guelfs and Ghibellines in each Commune are personified by the names of two rival houses. So we have the Lambertazzi and the Geremei in Bologna; the Acarisi and Manfredi in Faenza; the Fogliani and the Sessi in Reggio; the Fisiraga and Vistarini in Lodi, drawing the whole city after them in their feuds, and ranging themselves under the banner of Church or Empire. The noble house of the Torriani come forward to head the people of Milan against the nobles, who are forced in self-defence to become Ghibellines, and put at

¹ Symonds, "Renaissance in Italy."

their head the Archbishop Otto Visconti. In Pavia the Count of Langusco heads the Guelf nobles; the Ghibelline popolo find leaders in the Beccheria. The Rusconi represent the nobles in Como; the Vitani, allies of the Della Torre, lead the people. After many vicissitudes the factions of Piacenza range themselves under the banners of the Landi and the Scotti; those of Brescia under the Brusati and the Maggi; those of Bergamo under the Soardi and Coleoni.

Guelfs and Ghibellines are in every city, but in many they bear local names. In Cremona the Guelfs, who seem to appear for the first time in 1249, took the name of Capelletti¹; their opponents were known as the Barbarasi or Troncaciuffi, names that at once recall the Roundheads and the Croppies of English and Irish history. The Ghibelline nobles of Brescia were known as the Malisardi; the Guelfs of Modena as the Aigoni. In Genoa the Rampini, in Milan the Malisardi, were Guelfs. The Genoese Ghibellines were called Mascherati. In Reggio there were the parties "Above the Street" and "Below the Street," the former being the extreme Guelfs. The Ghibellines of Pavia were called Fallambrini, those of Novara Rotondi, their opponents, being known as Marcabotti and Sanguigni.

Accidental as the first outbreak of strife in a city often was, or dependent on private or class interests, the factions inevitably tended to rest on real divergencies of principle. The nobles of Vicenza had suffered dreadfully at the hands of Ezzelino, yet, only a few years after his fall, we find an avowed Ghibelline party among them. Verona had rejoiced at the overthrow of the tyrant, but did not swerve for a moment from her allegiance to the survivors of the House of Hohenstaufen. We notice a distinct tendency on the part of the popolo, as it rose to power, to adopt the Guelf party. This is especially seen in the Communes of Tuscany; but it is also the case in Parma, Bologna, and, apparently, in Cremona. At the

¹ Shakespeare's Capulets would seem to be named after these Capelletti, whom later traditions brought (erroneously) to Verona. His Montagues are certainly the Montecchi.

same time, we must note that in Verona and Mantua the rise to power of the people meant the triumph of the Ghibellines. The great feudal lords were attracted, naturally enough, to the Imperial party ; though here again we must note the exceptional attitude of the Houses of Este and San Bonifazio.

Piacenza gives us a curious instance of these tendencies. At first the popolo, with the great feudal family of De Andito or Landi at their head, had been Imperialist, while the nobles had been the allies of Milan and the League. It was the people who set up Pelavicini. But during his rule a change seems to have set in. After his expulsion, quite a number of the nobles appear as forming with the Landi the Ghibelline party, in close alliance with the feudal lords among the mountains, while the middle classes are now on the side of the Guelfs, and on friendly terms with the ruling popular party in Parma, Cremona, and Milan.¹

We must not forget that there were some towns free from changes. Verona was steadily Ghibelline ; the Count of San Bonifazio and his supporters, though restored to the city after Ezzelino's death, were expelled in 1263 for good and all. Padua once freed from Ezzelino remained Guelf as long as her independence lasted. In Bologna the nobles fought among themselves during the later years of Frederick II. ; but a Ghibelline party did not appear until about 1255, and never gained complete control of the Commune.

Or there might be only one short period of struggle. Thus Mantua had been consistently Guelf, and under the influence of the families of Este and San Bonifazio until 1260. In that year the Marquis and Count were expelled by a sudden uprising. They returned two years later

¹ On the other hand, in Brescia the nobles became Ghibelline to gain help in their struggle with the popolo. After Pelavicini's expulsion the nobles seem to have controlled the city for many years. They split into factions. At the close of the century there were twenty-four noble Guelf families, fourteen noble Ghibelline families. Some eight or ten others formed the factions of the Griffi and Bardelli, of whom the former were Ghibelline.

and drove out their adversaries. Then followed a period of unexampled violence. Four powerful families led after them the four quarters into which the city was divided. Of these the Casaloldi and the Bonaccolsi expelled the Arloti and Zanicalli. The Marquis of Este attempted to restore the latter ; but the whole city rose in uproar against him. He withdrew, but plotted to gain possession of the city. Pinamonte Bonaccolsi, an unscrupulous and able man, alienated the Count of San Bonifazio from the old ally of his house ; and they, with the Casaloldi, foiled all the efforts of the Marquis.

This was in 1269, and three years later Bonaccolsi drove out the Count and the Casaloldi. He had managed to attach the people to his side, and by their help he expelled the Count of Marcharia and his followers, who had aided him against San Bonifazio. The old Guelf aristocracy of Mantua had been shattered in these struggles. Bonaccolsi appeared as leader of the popolo, and an avowed Ghibelline. Being now *de facto* ruler of the city, he was elected by the multitude as Captain of the People for life—a dignity which he passed on to his son. A despotism was thus set up in Mantua which continued under a succession of able and unscrupulous descendants of Pinamonte until 1328, when the Bonaccolsi were overthrown by Lodovico Gonzaga, whose posterity ruled Mantua until 1708.¹

Amidst all the confusion of the time we can mark a steady growth of the power of the popolo during the last fifty years of the thirteenth century. The rising democracy in Milan, in Mantua,² and in other towns committed suicide by setting up a despot. But in Parma, Reggio, Modena, and Bologna—to name only those Communes where this movement can be most clearly traced—the popolo, organised in its trades guilds or *Arti*, became the ruling element in the state, and broke the power of the old aristocracy.

¹ The Counts of San Bonifazio disappear after 1272 from the history of the Mark and Mantua ; but they still remained powerful in other parts of Italy.

² Pinamonte Bonaccolsi nearly destroyed the Mantuan nobility.

From an early period the trades guilds had had certain elected magistrates to decide cases arising out of question of trade, markets, &c. These *Consoli delle Arti*, or *della Mercadanzia*, as they were called, were frequently called to assist at the deliberations of the ruling magistrates of the *Commune*. In the thirteenth century the constant warfare of city against city led to increased taxation, and it was but natural that the classes on whom the increasing burthen pressed most heavily should demand more and more voice in the management of public affairs.

Hence arose the continual conflicts between *popolo* and nobles which we have spoken of as occurring in almost every city during the first thirty years of the century. These quarrels were checked for a time by the war with Frederick II. But they soon broke out again; and the people, strong in their numbers and organisation, increasing every day in wealth, almost always triumphed over the aristocracy, who were weakened by their constant feuds.

The first step in the rising power of the guilds is the admission of their heads to a share in the government. This was obtained in Bologna in 1228, in Parma in 1244, in each case by a popular insurrection.¹ Then there appears a new magistrate—Captain of the People, Ancient of the People, *Podestà of the People*, as he was called in different cities. This magistracy, a development of an earlier and minor one, that of *Podestà of the Merchants*, appears as equal, and soon as superior, to that of the *Podestà of the Commune*. The new magistrate, curiously enough, is often a noble, sometimes from another city. His duties are to head the armed forces of the guilds, to suppress disorders among the nobles, to protect the people from the oppression to which they were too often exposed at the hands of the turbulent younger members of the aristocracy. He has a special guard, his smaller and greater councils composed of members of the guilds, his own courts of justice, his

¹ In Milan, Brescia, Piacenza, and Cremona, as we have seen, the rise of the *popolo* was earlier.

own revenues. Alongside of the Palace of the Commune—the seat of the Podestà and councils of the Commune—rises the Palazzo del Popolo, where the new magistrate holds his seat.¹

This new office first appears in Parma in 1244, in Piacenza in 1250, in Bologna in 1255, in other cities in the following years. In some cases the partisans of the older order were able to do away with the new magistracy, for a time at least. In Parma the new office was abolished in 1244, almost as soon as it was set up; and not till 1253 do we hear of another Captain of the People in that city. In that year it was revived in the person of Ghiberto da Gente, already Podestà of the Merchants, who took advantage of it to make himself despot of the city. This latter proceeding was, indeed, a common one in those cities where the resistance of the old privileged classes was great. The popolo were ready to sacrifice their liberty, if by so doing they could crush their opponents. The best example of this is the history of the Della Torre in Milan.

Ghiberto was overthrown in 1250, and the Captainship of the People abolished. It was set up again in 1266, a year in which the Ghibellines were expelled, and the people definitely triumphed over the nobles thus weakened. The government of Parma passed now into the hands of the trades guilds. For nearly forty years Parma enjoyed prosperity under this new government. The private quarrels of the nobles were repressed; their insolence towards the lower orders was curbed by statutes passed in 1279. Parma, tranquil at home, extended its influence by peaceful means over Reggio and Modena, and held the same position among the Emilian cities as Milan in Central Lombardy and Bologna in Romagna.

The new government in Parma and in other cities which followed the same course of development was, on the whole, a government of the middle classes. Only certain guilds had full civic privileges. In Parma in 1215 fifteen guilds were subject to the Rector of the

¹ In Reggio the Palazzo del Popolo was built in 1280.

Merchants, and no doubt it was these fifteen that obtained a share in the councils of the state in 1244. In 1253 seven, and in 1261 four more, were admitted to the same privileges. Of the older ruling classes the merchants, bankers, and those whose position in the ruling oligarchy was based on wealth acquired by trade or manufacture, took their place naturally in the new government as members of a guild. In some cities the bankers, lawyers, and merchants had special privileges over those guilds such as shoemakers, masons, carpenters, who belonged more to the artisan class. In other cities, again, these wealthier guilds were under certain disabilities. In Bologna the lawyers were excluded from the Council of the People; in that city and Parma the butchers were specially important; in Florence the "Art of Wool" was of greatest influence.¹ The poorer classes in general were shut out from any share of the government. But they, in turn, were constantly striving to obtain the privileges enjoyed by the classes above them. In some cities new guilds were from time to time admitted to those privileges; in others the lower orders, shut out from power, were ready to help any ambitious man who strove to make himself despot; in others they were ready to help the nobles to recover their lost power.

As for the nobles, properly so called, the landowning feudal aristocracy, they now really become a caste apart. In some Communes they were still allowed a share in the government, on condition of enrolling themselves in a guild; in others they were completely shut out from all the magistracies, though still allowed to enter the Council of the Commune.

Thus, instead of the old aristocracy, we have a new oligarchy set up, consisting of the middle classes. On the one hand the Magnates, Grandi, or Nobili are excluded, on the other the Plebe or Popolo Minuto.²

¹ The seven "Greater Arts" of Florence were: (1) Judges, Notaries, and Doctors of Law. (2) The Guild of "Calimala," or importers of foreign cloth. (3) Bankers and Money-changers. (4) The Guild of Wool. (5) The Silk Mercers. (6) Physicians and Apothecaries. (7) Furriers.

² Florence and Siena at the close of the thirteenth and the opening



Photo.]

**LEANING TOWERS.
BOLOGNA.**

[Pietro Poppi, Bologna.

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The new middle-class government was in general Guelph in its tendencies. The triumph of the *Arti* marks in Parma, Piacenza, Modena, Bologna, as well as in Tuscany, a definite Guelph victory. In Parma in 1284 all Ghibellines were included among the "potentes," and as such were subject to special disabilities.

This brings us to a curious feature in the development of the Communes—the penal laws against the nobles. The victorious middle classes, weary of the ceaseless feuds of the nobles amongst themselves, and of their acts of violence against the persons and property of the rest of the population, passed laws not only excluding them from all share in the government of the city, but subjecting them to a special and onerous code of laws, the least infringement of which was visited by heavy penalties, of which one of the commonest was the destruction of their palaces and towers. To be made a noble was a punishment reserved for unruly burghers; to be enrolled among the people was a reward bestowed on those nobles who had deserved well of the Commune.

The famous "Ordinances of Justice" of Florence are the best-known example of these statutes; but we find similar laws in force in most of the other Tuscan cities—Siena, Lucca, even Ghibelline Pisa. North of the Apennines, besides the decrees in Parma, already mentioned, Bologna offers the best instance of such measures.

This city, owing to the extent of its territory and its importance from early times, possessed an unusually large and powerful nobility. The "*Cronica di Bologna*," giving a list of the families who took sides in the quarrel of the Lambertazzi and Geremei, names nearly two hundred families, who, from their names, nearly all appear to have been noble.¹ There were over 180 towers erected by nobles. The two famous leaning towers of the Garisenda and the Asinelli, and the ten or twelve others which remain in a mutilated condition, of the fourteenth century offer the best examples of such middle-class oligarchies.

¹ A similar list for Florence gives only seventy-six.

enable us to form some faint idea of what the city must have looked like in the thirteenth century.

During the later years of the war with Frederick II. we constantly hear of feuds between different noble families. The Tetalasini fought the Pepoli; the Lambertini fought the Scannabecchi; the chronicles give long lists of warring families, between whom peaces were arranged by earnest monks or vigorous Podestàs. In spite of these quarrels the city remained constant in its opposition to the Emperor. But soon after Frederick's death the Bolognese, like many other communities, showed that they were not inclined to give a blind obedience to the Pope in matters affecting their own immediate interests.

A Bolognese nobleman, Brancalone degli Andalò, had been made Senator of Rome, where he distinguished himself by the severity with which he repressed the turbulence of the nobles. The latter finally managed to alienate from him the support of the mass of the people and threw him into prison. He had, however, before accepting office, taken the precaution of getting as hostages members of some of the chief noble Roman families, who had been sent to Bologna. His wife now (1255) persuaded the Bolognese to put the hostages in close captivity. This brought down on the city the anger of Pope Alexander IV., to whom Brancalone was exceedingly obnoxious, and who laid the city under an interdict. The Degli Andalò had sufficient influence to persuade the government to defy the Pope. Their chief supporters in this matter were the powerful family of the Lambertazzi. There were many of the burghers, however, to whom a breach with the Church was hateful, and they found natural leaders in the deadly enemies of the Lambertazzi—the great House of the Geremei.

In connection with the enmity between these two houses the chroniclers recount the tragic story of Bonifazio and Imelda, a Bolognese Romeo and Juliet.¹

¹ It does not appear when (if ever) this tragedy took place; apparently the two families were already at variance.

Bonifazio, of the Geremei, loved the fair Imelda, of the Lambertazzi, and was secretly received by her in her house. But a servant betrayed the secret to Imelda's brothers, who, rushing to their sister's room, stabbed Bonifazio with one of the poisoned daggers, of Eastern make, which the Crusades had brought into use in Italy. Then they dragged the body away to hide it in a deserted spot. Imelda had fled at the noise of her brothers' entry. Now she returned, and, following up the traces of blood, she came to her lover's body. Life was not yet extinct; and Imelda, recognising the kind of weapon used, attempted, in the only way known to her, to counteract the effects of the poison. She tried to suck the venom from the wound. But she only sacrificed her own life without saving her lover's. The poison took effect on her also, and she fell dead across Bonifazio's lifeless body. Henceforward the hatred of the two families knew no bounds, and in time all the nobles of Bologna ranged themselves on one side or the other.

The quarrel with the Pope was brought to an end in the same year by mutual concessions. But the people, who, as we have already seen, had obtained in 1238 a share in the government by a violent insurrection, seem to have profited by the division among the aristocracy to increase their power. The first Captain of the People was created in 1255, and about the same time we hear of certain "Companies of Arms" whose duty seems to have been to check the lawlessness of the nobles.¹ Alongside of the Captain of the People there was the magistracy called the *Anziani*, or Ancients, seventeen in number, elected by the Companies of Arms and the guilds, as well as a council of forty-two members, eight of whom were chosen by the merchants and bankers, the others from the other guilds and the Companies. There was also a Council of the Credenza of the People, from which the nobles were excluded. They were still eligible for the Council of the Popolo provided they were enrolled in a Company, or among the bankers and merchants.

In 1270 another step was taken against the nobles.

¹ These Companies originated about 1230 (Gaudenzi).

They were shut out from the Companies of Arms, which, together with the Arti, had by now got the chief share in the government of the city.

These new arrangements did not stop the feuds. In 1258 there was a great battle in the city between the Geremei and the Lambertazzi, besides innumerable minor outbreaks. Another quarrel with the Pope brought down a sentence of excommunication on the city in 1259. The Geremei came forward decidedly as partisans of the Pope; the Lambertazzi and their faction naturally drifted towards the Ghibellines. After another year of street fighting the city was reconciled with the Church, but internal tranquillity was not restored.

Robberies of shops by young nobles in want of money and excitement,¹ quarrels over a lady's hand at a dance or over a box on the ear given during a merrymaking and spreading to a riot involving the whole city, a rising of the shoemakers who set fire to the Palace of the Podestà, a popular tumult against the Captain of the People, the "parties" at one another's throats in the streets, make up the annals of Bologna for the next few years. The exasperated people at length took severer steps to curb the nobles. Special laws were passed to curb them, and a "Standard-Bearer of Justice" was appointed to enforce these laws by armed force if necessary. The "magnates" were forbidden to enter the palace of the government, or to go to their country castles.

Up to this date Bologna had been Guelf in its foreign policy. Now, however, the Lambertazzi, who had been gradually drawing nearer to the Ghibellines, incited the city to attack its old enemy Modena. The Modenese had taken advantage of Bologna's quarrel with the Pope in 1259 to shake off the dependence in which they had been since 1250. They had expelled their Ghibellines in 1265, and these were carrying on war against the city from their castles in the mountains. The Modenese Guelfs attempted to ward off the impending onslaught by concessions, but these were of no avail, and a large Bolog-

¹ The young nobles were hanged.

nese army captured a number of border castles. The Modenese sought help from all the neighbouring Guelf cities, and the reinforcements they thus obtained put them on a level numerically with the Bolognese. In Bologna itself the Geremei and all their party were opposed to the war. They opened secret negotiations with the Marquis of Este, so that the Lambertazzi, who had prepared to attack Modena itself, grew afraid that if they left Bologna their rivals would seize the gates and shut them out altogether. The projected attack on Modena was abandoned, and the Bolognese directed their energies against the turbulent cities of the Romagna. An attempt to seize on Forlì failed, this time because the Lambertazzi were opposed to it.

Matters came to a head in 1274. The Geremei again proposed to attack Forlì, which was the centre of the Ghibelline influence in Romagna. The Lambertazzi came forward with a counter proposition to attack Modena, and fell upon the Geremei. From all the neighbouring Guelf cities contingents hurried to help the Geremei; Forlì, Faenza, and the Ghibellines of Romagna hastened to the aid of the Lambertazzi. But the people of Bologna seized the gates and beat back the reinforcements of both parties. Then they turned on the contending nobles and forced them to lay aside their arms.

As soon as peace was made the Geremei brought the Carroccio into the great square, and called on the people to follow them against Forlì. The Lambertazzi rushed to attack the Carroccio. For forty days, according to one account, a battle raged in the piazza, and round the towers and palaces of Bologna. The majority of the people finally sided with the Geremei, and the Lambertazzi were forced to abandon the city. More than twelve thousand persons were driven into exile, and took the road to Faenza.

More than half the noble families of Bologna had been expelled; henceforth the people were supreme in the city. The remaining nobles were shut out from any share in the government. The "Sacred Ordinances"

passed in 1282 were intended to put a stop once for all to the private feuds of the nobles, and to the excesses of which they were still guilty towards the lower orders. The nobles were subjected to a special code of laws, under which their slightest misdeeds were rigorously punished. The Companies of Arms and the guilds were brought into close connection with one another, and the government of the republic passed entirely into the hands of their members.¹

Machiavelli says of a similar exclusion of the nobles from the government of Florence that it led to the decay of the martial spirit of the city. The nobles no longer cared to serve in war a fatherland which excluded them from all dignities and subjected them to a rigorous penal code. The people were forced to hire foreign mercenaries to fill up the ranks of the cavalry, which was rapidly becoming by far the most important arm in warfare. And as the smaller merchants, the shopkeepers and the artisans, who supplied the infantry, were naturally disinclined to leave their occupations to serve for any length of time in the field, the burgher infantry, too, was soon replaced by mercenaries.

In Bologna the expulsion of more than half the nobles was at once accompanied by a marked diminution of the fighting power of the Commune.² In a great battle at the bridge of San Procolo in 1275 against Forli and Faenza and the exiled Lambertazzi, the Bolognese cavalry were driven off the field. Most of the infantry then took to flight. Four thousand of the Bolognese foot, however, closed round the Carroccio and refused to fly. The victorious army brought their war machines to bear on them, and forced them to yield themselves prisoners. The Bolognese admitted to two thousand killed and wounded and five thousand five hundred prisoners. The

¹ At this time there were nineteen guilds (including bankers and merchants) and nineteen Companies. The bakers, tavern keepers, and many other trades were excluded from the privileged guilds in Bologna.

² One hundred and four Ghibelline and ninety-two Guelf families—all or mostly noble—are named by the chronicler.

chronicler of Forlì declares that more than three thousand Bolognese besides a great number of their allies lost their lives. In 1296 or 1297 Bologna lost more than two thousand prisoners in another disastrous battle with the Ghibellines of Romagna. The commanding position which she had held in that province was completely lost.¹

But though popular rule in Bologna led to disasters abroad, yet under it the city preserved its liberty longer than almost any other Commune in Lombardy. Not until 1337 was the popular constitution replaced by the rule of a despot.

The chief event in the general history of Lombardy during the next few years after Pelavicini's downfall was the attempt made by Charles of Anjou to establish himself as ruler of the Guelf cities. Piacenza, Parma, Reggio, Modena, Cremona, Brescia, and Alessandria chose him as "Signore," a title which in this case seems chiefly to have conferred on him the right of appointing the Podestà and directing the foreign policy of the state. His efforts to bring Milan under his sway led him into a certain opposition to the Torriani; but outwardly peace was maintained, and Milan, and no doubt other cities, enjoyed during these years a full share of the prosperity which such an unusual state of things brought with it.²

Meanwhile the war with the exiled Milanese nobles smouldered on. Archbishop Otto could not or would not venture within the walls of the city; and the efforts of Pope Gregory X., who passed through Milan in 1272, failed to bring about a pacification. Pavia, left without

¹ "Read your statutes, miserable populace!" cried the Count of Panico on one occasion, as he saw the burgher infantry flying in confusion. The Bolognese rarely were successful in pitched battles. Their wealth and population gave them predominance over their neighbours.

² A revolt of Lodi against the Della Torre was almost the only interruption to this tranquillity. The city was taken by storm, and two towers were built by the Torriani to hold it in check.

During the years after 1270 we read of important public works undertaken in several cities. In Milan Napoleone della Torre paved the streets; in Parma and Reggio public buildings were erected, bridges built, canals excavated.

allies, had been forced to sue for peace with the Guelf cities. Many of the Milanese nobles had come to terms with the Torriani ; Napoleone, the head of the family, had been recognised by the new Emperor Rudolf of Habsburg as his vicar in Milan ; and the situation of the exiles appeared hopeless, when a revolution in Como gave them a secure place of refuge, and brought about a change which enabled the Ghibelline faction once more to raise its head in the valley of the Po.

In Como, as we have seen, there had been a long-standing quarrel between nobles and people. This city, like Bergamo and Brescia, lies just on the edge of the Lombard plain, and the territory subject to these cities extended through a labyrinth of sub-alpine valleys right up to the high ranges of the St. Gothard and the Ortler. The feudal lords, if driven from the towns to their castles in these valleys, were able to defy with comparative impunity all the efforts of the people to subdue them ; hence a success of the popular party had for its immediate result the loss of practically the whole Contado. In these cities, therefore, the nobles succeeded in retaining great power, in spite of the support given by the Torriani to the popular party.

Now the Rusconi, chiefs of the nobles, once more seized on the government of Como, and that city became at once a rallying-point for the exiles from Milan.¹ Encouraged by this, Pavia once more appeared in the field in support of the Ghibellines ; so did Asti ; the Marquis William of Montferrat, abandoning the Guelfs, joined himself to them ; and in Novara, where the Torriani had selfishly allowed Guelfs and Ghibellines to fight out their quarrels unhindered, hoping to bring the city, weakened by feuds, more completely under their power, an unexpected victory of the latter lost that city, too, to the Guelf cause. The new allies soon got possession of Alessandria and Alba, which had of late been subject to Charles of

¹ In 1264 the Rusconi, at the head of the nobles, had tried to expel the opposite faction, the Vitani. Filippo della Torre had driven them out, and then ruled the city by means of his brother Raimondo, Bishop of Como, and the Vitani.

Anjou, and the Della Torre saw their power threatened from outside, while in Milan discontent with their rule was rapidly increasing.¹

The war that followed was at first unfavourable to the Ghibellines. In land and naval fights, around and on the waters of Lago Maggiore and in the district of Seprio, the Della Torre obtained several striking victories.

They abused their success by executing the Milanese nobles who fell into their hands. Amongst them was a nephew of Archbishop Otto; and this provoked the prelate, who of late had taken no active part in the contest, to come forward again as head of the exiles. His energy and his constancy, even after new defeats, gave fresh vigour to his party, while the Torriani were more and more losing the favour of the populace of Milan, who were suffering from the high taxation incident to the war. Finally, in 1277, undeterred by previous defeats, the exiles and the forces of Como advanced on Milan itself. Napoleone drew out a small force to stop them; for disaffection had reached such a point in the city that he dared not withdraw all his troops. Rendered careless by previous victories, he suffered himself to be surprised in the night at the village of Desio. The victory of the Ghibellines was complete; many of the Della Torre were slain, Napoleone himself with five of his near relatives were captured, and only Cassone, Napoleone's son, who had not been present at the fight, escaped to Milan.

Here he found all in uproar, and the mob engaged in plundering the palaces of the Della Torre. He slew many of these; but finding it hopeless to attempt to maintain himself in the city, he escaped at nightfall with such of his cavalry as still adhered to him. Lodi, to which he first fled, refused to receive him, so did Cremona, finally he found shelter in Parma.

The captured Della Torre were shut up by the Comasques in cages in the castle of Baradello, the lofty

¹ According to Leo the exact chronology of the revolt of Como from the Guelfs and the new uprising of the Ghibelline power is not very certain.

ruins of which are familiar to all travellers from Como to Milan. Archbishop Otto was received with loud acclamations by the people, and was chosen unanimously as lord of the city by the Great Council. For the first time in its history Milan was definitely Ghibelline.

The other Guelf cities seem to have given little or no support in these years to the Della Torre; but now the loss of Milan alarmed them all, and once more a general war ensued between the two factions in Lombardy. A brother of Napoleone, Raimondo, had some years before been made Patriarch of Aquileia. The Patriarchs of Aquileia, placed on the borders between the lands of the Italian and those of the German kingdom, had been specially favoured by the Emperors, who hoped, by their means, always to have an open road into Italy. They had become rulers of a most extensive territory, embracing the greater part of the modern Friuli; and as, unlike their brother prelates of Italy proper, they had to contend with no large cities in these regions, they had become the equals, if not the superiors, in power, not only of the ecclesiastical princes of Germany, but also of all but the greatest lay lords as well. Raimondo now actively helped his nephew Cassone; and the edifying sight was presented of the two leading ecclesiastics in North Italy at the head of the party of the Popes and of the Emperors respectively.

On the Guelf side were Cremona, Brescia, Piacenza, and the other cities south of the Po, including Bologna and Ferrara. A sudden attack gave them possession of Lodi in 1278, and this city and the neighbourhood were for the next few years the scene of operations between the two factions. At the head of the Ghibellines, alongside of Otto, stood William of Montferrat, who was elected in 1278 captain of the military forces of Pavia, Milan, Vercelli, Como, Novara, Asti, Casale, Alessandria, and Tortona. Besides these cities, where his power was chiefly military, he had been chosen as Signore of Turin, Ivrea, and Crema, and even the Ghibelline lords of Verona and Mantua appointed him as captain of their troops. Such an extensive power

had never yet been concentrated in the hands of one man in Lombardy.

By a curious change we now find Cremona, once so devoted to the cause of the Empire, the champion of the Guelfs, together with Parma, which had for long enjoyed internal peace under the wise rule of her middle classes, and which seems during this period to have been looked on as holding the chief rank among the cities of the Church party. Milan, always Papal till now, henceforth leads the Imperial party. But we must notice that these names had by this time lost nearly all significance, and served but as pretexts for enmity. Rudolf of Habsburg, elected Emperor in 1273, was on the most friendly terms with the pontiffs, to whom he had definitely surrendered all claims of the Empire to the lands included in the Donation of Pepin. In other words, he first definitely recognised the independence of the states of the Church. Moreover, the Popes who reigned from 1271 to 1280, and Nicholas IV., who reigned from 1288 to 1292, on the whole strove to reconcile the two parties, or at least to hold the balance even. Guelf and Ghibelline, then, now only meant in Lombardy the factions of Della Torre and Visconti.¹

In one way the war which ensued marks an improvement in Italian affairs. The hostile parties formed two fairly solid groups, on one side the cities of Piedmont and the west of Lombardy proper; on the other those south of the Po and from the Adda to the Mincio.² The flame of war was concentrated along one line; it was no longer sporadic over the whole country as in the days when Milan was at death-grips with her neighbours of Como, Lodi, and Novara, when Piacenza fought against Parma, Brescia against Bergamo, Mantua against Verona. The material gain of this new state of affairs it is evident must have been enormous.

It would be tedious to recount the war that followed.

¹ Giovanni Villani calls Nicholas IV. a Ghibelline.

² Verona and Mantua formed a detached Ghibelline group in the east; they seem to have been in a state of smouldering hostility to Parma and Ferrara.

It was at first centred round Lodi; then, after Lodi, early in 1282, had been forced to make peace with Milan, without, however, abandoning the party of the Church, operations were chiefly carried on in the districts of Crema and Cremona. Our old friend, Buoso da Doara, reappears for a short time as ruler of Crema, which he had captured, and also as master of Soncino in the Contado of Cremona.¹

The only noticeable event is a great defeat of the Torriani, near Vaprio in 1281, in which Cassone was slain, and which caused the effacement, for some time at least, of their family.

Already the two leagues had shown signs of breaking up. Archbishop Otto had been forced in 1278 to accept William of Montferrat as lord of Milan for ten years.² Now without William's consent Milan made peace with Brescia, Cremona, and Piacenza, and a few months later Otto expelled William's Podestà from Milan, and was himself once more chosen as Signore.³

The affairs of Lombardy seem again to relapse into confusion. Milan, Brescia, Cremona, and Piacenza form a league, neither strictly Guelf nor Ghibelline. As, however, the three latter cities still remained closely united with the other Guelf states, we may suppose that peace now prevailed over the east of Lombardy proper. On the other hand, Otto was now an enemy of Montferrat; and finally, in 1284, William openly declared himself on the side of the Torriani.

We have already had occasion to mention various acquisitions made by the Marquis William Longsword of Montferrat. His career, like those of Ezzelino and Oberto Pelavicini, offers a striking illustration of the

¹ Muratori, however, suggests that this Buoso was a son or nephew of the former lord of Cremona.

² William was given power of making war and peace at his pleasure, and was granted "la piena dominazione e signoria con mero e misto impero e omnimoda giurisdizione di essa città di Milano per x. anni" ("Corio," cit. by Salzer, p. 212).

³ The great tower of Cremona was built in commemoration of this peace.



Photo.]

THE GREAT TOWER OF CREMONA

[Aisnari.]

chances of self-advancement which Italy presented to those capable of seizing on them.

In the north-west angle of Italy feudalism had to a great extent held its ground against the encroachments of the cities. Already the House of Savoy, from the watershed between France and Italy, had begun that descent into Piedmont which was in our own day to lead it to Rome and Naples. Of minor princes, such as the Marquises of Saluzzo, of Ceva, of Carretto, the Lancia, there were many who held the mountains which separate Piedmont from the Ligurian coast.

The Marquises of Montferrat were the most powerful of all the feudal lords in these districts. The hill country, which rises like an island between the valleys of the Upper Po and the Tanaro, formed the nucleus of their territory, but their rule extended over many outlying regions. The cities to the north, Casale, Vercelli, and Ivrea, and to the west, Turin and Chieri, were none of them of sufficient power to interfere with the House of Montferrat. To the south the powerful Asti—which numbered in the thirteenth century some sixty thousand inhabitants—hemmed them in. The foundation of Alessandria at the south-east angle of their dominions, which was meant to hold them in check, served rather to increase their power, by weakening Asti. To the east lay the extensive territory of Pavia, but that city had enough occupation nearer home to prevent any desire for adventure in the hill country across the Po.

The Crusades brought great glory to the rulers of Montferrat. In the Fourth Crusade one of them acquired the kingdom of Thessalonica and some territories in the Balkan Peninsula remained to his descendants as late as 1284.

For long the Marquises of Montferrat had been partisans of the House of Hohenstaufen; but William Longsword, who, while still a boy,¹ had succeeded to the

¹ In 1253. His first wife was an English princess, daughter of Richard Earl of Gloucester. After her death he married, in 1271, a daughter of King Alfonso of Castille.

headship of the family, showed through all his life a facility for sudden changes of party which seems to prove that he had formed the idea, by helping both factions in turn, of becoming the arbiter of all the surrounding districts. In fact, he seems to have formed the plan of utilising the party strife which distracted the neighbouring cities in order to bring them all under his rule, and thus to found a feudal sovereignty comparable to that possessed by the great vassals of the French Crown. This policy might have succeeded if he had adopted the prudent course, afterwards so successfully carried out by the House of Savoy, of confining his efforts to Piedmont, and incorporating one city thoroughly with his dominions before attempting to absorb the next. But his ambition led him too far; he mixed himself in all the intrigues that distracted Central Lombardy, and his attempts to hold the great cities of Milan and Pavia only prevented him from achieving a lasting success nearer home.

His first opportunity came in 1260, when the Guelf exiles of Alessandria, the party of the Trotti, offered him the lordship of their city in return for his help against the dominant faction, the Ghibelline Lanzavecchia. He expelled the latter, and in return received the fealty of the Guelfs, who not only chose him as Captain of the city, but also made over to him the city and its territory, which he handed back to them, to be henceforth held by the burghers as a fief of Montferrat. Acqui and Tortona followed the example of Alessandria.

His first attempt on Alessandria was followed by failure, for in 1262 the Lanzavecchia recovered the city, and handed it over to Oberto Pelavicini, who also got possession of Tortona. At this time William appears on friendly terms with King Manfred; but in 1264 he joined himself more closely with the Guelfs and Charles of Anjou.

Two years later he won Turin from the Ghibelline House of Savoy; and in the same year Ivrea gave itself to him on much the same terms as Alessandria had done. On the fall of Pelavicini, Alessandria, after some years of

confusion, gave itself to Charles of Anjou¹; and as this prince seemed likely to bring a great part of Piedmont under his rule, William began to detach himself from his party and to approach the Ghibellines.

He had already recovered Tortona, but lost it again after a few years. Now he negotiated with the Lanza-vecchia, in order by their help to recover Alessandria. He regained this city, where the factions had been raging with peculiar violence, but it was by the help of his old allies the Trotti, and on terms more restricted than had been the case eighteen years before. He had now been for some time in close alliance with the Visconti and the Ghibellines of Milan, and he used the opportunity to recall the Lanzavecchia, so as to rule by the mutual jealousy of both parties. Pavia and Asti were his allies; in 1274 the Ghibellines of Novara had called him in against the Della Torre; he was fast becoming the most powerful personage in North Italy.

The general war which broke out between the Ghibeline cities and those which supported the Della Torre added immensely to his power. Vercelli chose him as war-captain for ten years; he recovered Tortona, Ivrea, and Acqui, and finally the confederated Ghibellines, Milan, Pavia, Asti, Novara, Como, Casale, and Genoa, chose him as war-captain for five years. The power conferred by this title differed, most probably, in the various cities; in some William was nearly absolute ruler, in others his authority was limited to military matters. But in one way or other he now ruled over all the cities from the western Alps to the Adda.

In Milan itself the exigencies of the war and the initial successes of the Torriani forced Otto Visconti to resign, outwardly at least, all power into his hands; and Alessandria first increased his jurisdiction, then made him hereditary lord. The acquisition of Crema extended his rule to the east; but in the same year (1280) he lost Turin to its rightful owner, the Count of Savoy. His operations as general of the Ghibellines brought him

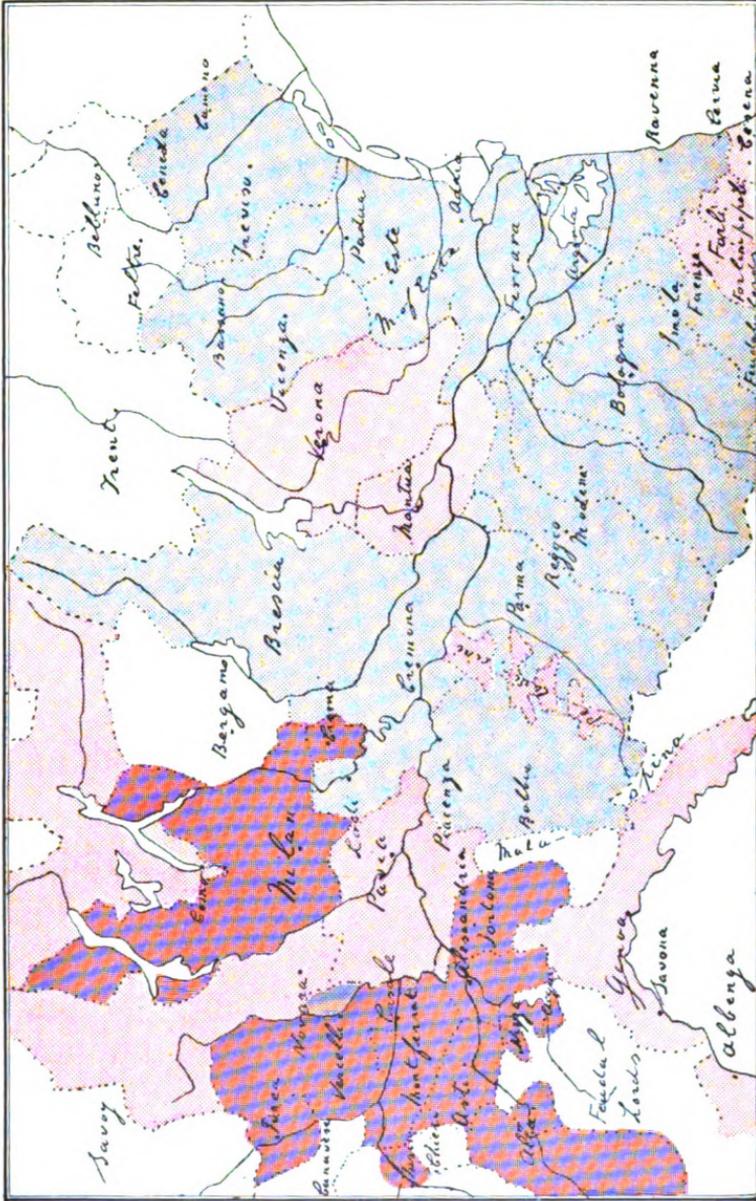
¹ In 1259 several small towns, Alba, Cuneo, Monteviso, Savigliano, and Chierasco had chosen Charles as Signore.

little credit ; indeed, he seems to have had no capacity as a leader of large bodies of troops in the field. In thirteenth-century Italy, far in advance of the rest of Europe, statecraft already counted for more than personal valour or military skill. His want of success against the Guelfs afforded Visconti a chance of getting rid of such a dangerous ally ; his Podestà and troops were expelled from Milan, as we have already said, and this naturally caused him to break away from Visconti.

Events in Como soon gave William a chance of aiming a blow at his former ally.

The traveller who from the Saint Gothard railway looks down at the present day at the cheerful little town, nestling peacefully between the hills at the extremity of its blue lake, finds it hard to realise the fierce passions which distracted Como in the Middle Ages and the warlike inclinations of its inhabitants. For some years the Rusconi had ruled the city as allies of Visconti and Montferrat ; now discord arose among the Rusconi themselves, and William saw in it a chance of revenge on Visconti. The escape from Barradello of one of the captive Della Torre, evidently with the connivance of some of the Rusconi, was the first evidence of the new state of affairs. Soon the mask was plainly thrown off. The surviving Torriani—two had died of the rigours of their imprisonment—were released ; Como became the headquarters of the Della Torre family, and at once entered into war against Milan.

We must feel surprised at the boldness with which small towns such as Como ventured to embark in war against vastly more powerful neighbours. But in reality the risks were not so very great. The strongly walled cities of the time were almost impregnable against assault. At any rate, we scarcely ever find examples of any such attempt in the Italian warfare of the time. In all probability the undisciplined city levies were not of any use for such purposes. Famine, then, was the only means—omitting treachery—of reducing a walled town. But until the introduction in the next age of standing mercenary forces, it was quite beyond the power of one city,



MAP IV.

LOMBARDY IN 1280.

Territory under Marquis William of Montferrat	...	Purple.
Ghibellines, allied with Montferrat	...	Red.
Gueffs	...	Black.
Uncertain or neutral	...	Uncoloured.

even if as great as Milan, to completely blockade another. The merchants and artisans who formed the bulk of the infantry could not remain in the field long enough to starve out a neighbouring town, without utter ruin to their business at home. Hence warfare between two cities at this period usually meant a series of raids on one another's territory, until one or both grew tired of the devastation suffered, and a peace of some kind was patched up.

The war which now ensued between William of Montferrat and the Visconti ran the usual course. The country parts were devastated, truces were arranged for longer or shorter intervals ; more than once peace was made, to be broken almost immediately. Nothing, in fact, can be more tedious than the story of the campaigns of this period. The main principle of strategy was not so much to attempt to overthrow one's enemy in a pitched battle. It was rather to avoid anything like a decisive engagement ; generals relied more on diplomacy than on arms to achieve any considerable success.

In this war we find a rather puzzling mixture of parties. The Visconti were helped by the Guelf towns of Piacenza, Cremona, and Brescia ; on the other side was Montferrat with the towns Alessandria, Como, Novara, Tortona, Vercelli, Ivrea, and other smaller ones which he ruled partly by the support of the Guelfs, partly of the Ghibellines, and the Guelf Della Torre. In 1289 matters seemed about to come to a decisive issue. Asti and Pavia, no longer subject to William, had joined the party of Visconti, and the combined Milanese and Pavesans drew out to protect the latter city from a threatened attack. Pavia had for some time suffered from the usual internal conflicts. The people here were ardent Ghibellines ; the nobles, headed by the family of Langusco, turned to the Guelf side, and entered into negotiations with Montferrat. While the two armies faced one another, the Languschi contrived to enter the city, and proclaimed William as Signore. The Pavesan troops hastened home, and the heads of the popular faction, the Beccheria, attempted to secure their position by proposing to extend the term of

William's rule from ten years, as proposed by the nobles, to a lifelong lordship. An attempt of the Milanese to seize the city in the confusion which prevailed had no success, and the Beccheria and their supporters found it prudent to take refuge in the open country, where they seized several castles, and helped by Milan and Piacenza carried on hostilities with the opposite party.

Next year William's career came to an end as sudden as unexpected. The people of Asti had raised a faction in Alessandria unfavourable to Montferrat; the Marquis hastened to the latter city to suppress the disaffection. The people suddenly rose against him. His heavy cavalry were useless in the narrow streets, he himself was captured and imprisoned in an iron cage, where in less than two years he died from shame and suffering. Readers of the "Purgatorio" will remember that Sordello shows to Dante in Canto VII. William the Marquis

"who occasion lent
To Alexandria that fell war to move
The Canavese and Montferrat lament."¹

The fall of William of Montferrat gave an immense increase to the power of Visconti. Novara and Vercelli chose Matteo Visconti, Otto's nephew, now the leader of the family, as lord for five years. In Como the Vitani rose against the Rusconi; and the latter, too weak to stand alone, called Matteo to their help. In 1292 he was made Captain of the People for five years, and seems to have ruled wisely, pacifying the rival factions. The young Marquis of Montferrat, Giovanni, was forced in order to save his dominions, threatened by Asti, Alessandria, and Savoy, to put himself under Matteo's guardianship; and Alessandria, still torn by factions, sought peace by choosing the ruler of Milan as Captain. From this period we may date the greatness of the House of Visconti.²

¹ Wright's translation.

² The Beccheria recovered Pavia, so that city became allied to Milan. In 1299 the Languschi again got the upper hand.

The next few years were, on the whole, years of quiet in Central Lombardy. The Visconti strengthened their position by obtaining from Adolph of Nassau, then German king, the title of Imperial Vicar. But Matteo, cleverer than the Della Torre, pretended to accept the office only at the petition of the Council of the city. At the same time he was re-elected for five years as Captain of the People.¹

Peace was broken for a time by a fresh attempt of the Torriani to recover their power, aided by Lodi and Cremona. The people of Lodi were soon forced to ask for peace, and the Torriani retired again from Lombardy.

More important was a quarrel between Padua and the Marquis of Este. Parma, Piacenza and Bologna, all Guelf cities, joined in attacking the Marquis. The old unity of the Guelf party was destroyed, and Bologna was brought into relations with the Visconti, who were allies of Parma and Piacenza.

In the meantime the Marquis Giovanni of Montferrat was growing up, and was eager to take up the quarrel of his house with the Visconti. He found an ally in Pavia, once more under the rule of the Guelf faction headed by the Count of Langusco. Aided by the Marquis of Saluzzo, he had captured and sacked Asti in 1296. Three years later he recovered Casale, and expelled the Ghibellines from Novara and Vercelli. A great league was now formed against the Visconti, in which Bergamo, Crema, Cremona, and Este joined. But Matteo was helped not only by the Ghibelline La Scala, but also by Parma, Brescia, Piacenza, and Bologna. His skilful diplomacy brought about a breach among his opponents, and the league came to nothing. Peace was made towards the end of 1299, and was cemented by a marriage between Matteo's son Galeazzo and Beatrice, sister of Azzo of Este. The greater part of Lombardy was now under the control of men who, while gaining power as heads of one party or the other, were for the moment all in

¹ Matteo carefully preserved the semblance of popular rule. His office of Captain of the People was prolonged from time to time by popular vote.

alliance. The next year passed without any conflict of importance.

Both Este and Visconti appear during the last ten years of this century in a curious double relation to the Gueft and Ghibelline parties. Azzo VIII. of Este, though a supporter of the Della Torre, was at war with the Gueft Padua, Parma, and Bologna. He allied himself with the Ghibellines of Romagna and the exiled Lambertazzi, and with their help gained a great victory over Bologna in 1296. Against Padua he was less successful. The old seat of his family, Este, was captured by the Paduans, as well as his other fortresses in the Euganean hills, and by treaty in or about 1294 he resigned to Padua his possessions north of the Adige.

The Visconti, both Otto, who died in 1295, and his nephew and successor, Matteo, were in close alliance with Parma and Piacenza, where the Guefts were supreme, and with the Rangoni and other Gueft families of Modena who were now in exile.

During these years Pavia had been steadily declining in power. In the early days of the Visconti rule in Milan we find the two old rivals leagued together, one may say for the first time, and at war with Cremona, now the bulwark of the Guefts. But soon factions between nobles and people, for a long time smouldering, broke out with violence; the nobles were expelled once and again, and sought aid from the Guefts; the people, headed by the Beccheria, were supported by Milan. We have seen how this led to the capture of the city by Montferrat in 1289.

The old enemies of Pavia the Piacentines seized the chance, under pretext of aiding the Beccheria then in exile, of inflicting great damage on their rivals. They wasted the territory, took many castles, and in one raid went so far as to seize the wooden bridge across the Ticino, the predecessor of the present picturesque roofed structure from which the visitor enjoys such a charming view of the old city, and towed it off down the river, meaning to set it up as a trophy in Piacenza. After dragging the bridge twelve miles they had to abandon it, and the Pavesans, unable to tow it home, burned it.



THE CASTLE OF ESTE.

Weakened by foes external and internal, the city seems now to have steadily declined, and from the rival to have become a mere satellite of Milan. It is hard to account for this decay: the situation is suited for commerce, the territory subject to the city was large and fertile. Milan, however, was more of an industrial centre; Pavia drew its wealth in great measure from agriculture. Constant warfare, with its accompanying depredations, would inflict more lasting damage on agriculturists, who would lose all their possessions in one raid,¹ than it would on a population living by their manufactures, in the shelter of the city walls. Even in the most troubled times outlets for manufactures would still be open; and as cities at this period were scarcely ever taken by force the artisan and merchant had only to dread civil war. Milan was on the whole free from this during the later thirteenth century; Pavia, on the other hand, suffered severely.

One can hardly imagine a greater contrast than that which presents itself at the present day when we take the train that in half an hour conducts us from Milan to Pavia. We pass from the bustling streets, the incessant clang of tram bells, the magnificent shops, the four hundred thousand people of the Manchester of Italy to a quiet country town, set about with trees, which seems to sleep by the side of its river. The streets are silent, almost deserted; everything speaks of repose. In one corner rise three gaunt, ungainly medieval towers, a relic of the days when Pavia boasted three hundred such, the pride and defence of her noble families, when there were more than one hundred and thirty churches within the walls, when the city could send out to war two or three thousand horse and fifteen thousand foot, when Messer Torello d' Istria feasted the Saladin.²

There is still one great hour reserved for Pavia. Like her sister Ghibelline cities Pisa and Siena, Pavia when power had slipped away from her at least knew how to

¹ The territory of Pavia suffered dreadfully from the ravages of the Piacentines in 1290. Finally, the Beccheria were restored and peace was made ("Chronicon Parmense," Muratori, vol. ix.).

² Boccaccio, novella 99.

die. Not hers the slow century long decay of Lucca, the tame sinking into slavery of Milan, the struggles, half frenzied half heroic, of Florence against the impending tyrants' yoke. When her time was come, when the knell of her freedom sounded, her citizens, men and women, stood forth and manned their walls as long as strength would last. They had to yield to unequal odds; but at least they might say with the king whose name is for ever coupled with their city, "Tout est perdu fors l'honneur."

But at the end of the thirteenth century every city, prosperous or declining, Guelf or Ghibelline, was threatened by the steady approach of an apparently irresistible fate. In each we see looming up the figure of the Tyrant.

CHAPTER XIII

THE RISE OF THE TYRANNIES—THE COMING OF HENRY OF LUXEMBURG

WE have seen more than once in the last chapter how some cities, to protect themselves from outside attack, or to secure internal peace, or else how a dominant faction to strengthen itself against its rivals, had entrusted for a longer or shorter period the supreme direction of affairs to one man. Such a head of the state, whether he held the office of Podestà, or of Captain of the People, or of leader in war, is constantly spoken of under the title of Signore or Lord, and his rule is called Lordship—Signoria.

Originally elected by the free choice of the people or a section of them, the invariable tendency of such a ruler was to gather all power into his hands, to dispense with popular approval, to prolong his term of office for life, and finally to transmit to his descendants the dominion he had thus acquired. The constitutional Signore shakes off all restraints and becomes the Despot.

The years remaining to be dealt with by our history are chiefly taken up with the extinction of all republican liberties in the Lombard cities. It will be well, then, to give here a brief survey of the rise of the despots during the later years of the thirteenth century.

Symonds has entitled the first volume of his "Renaissance in Italy" the "Age of the Despots," and has drawn in it a vivid picture of the Italian tyrants of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. He gives them the name of tyrants, using the word in its Greek sense; for as he says: "Their title was illegitimate—based, that is to say, on no

feudal principle, derived in no regular manner from the Empire, but generally held as a gift or extorted as a prize from the predominant parties in the great towns."

He distinguishes between six sorts of these despots. But two of these, the Condottieri or leaders of hired soldiers, and the nephews or sons of Popes, do not appear in Lombardy until the fifteenth century, and a third—wealthy citizens who gradually enslaved their country by the power of their riches—only appears in isolated cases in Lombardy.

His first class comprises feudal princes ruling over their dominions by hereditary right. Examples of this are the sway of the House of Savoy in Turin and Aosta, of the Marquises of Montferrat in Casale, of the Marquises of Este in Este and the district between Padua and Ferrara, to which latter city they soon extended their rule. But these rulers, few in number, cannot properly be called tyrants. They ruled by legitimate hereditary right; and it is to be remarked that their history is for the most part unsullied by the crimes which stain the annals of the other despotic rulers over Lombardy.

The two remaining classes as given by Symonds really embrace nearly all the rulers of Lombardy. They are first "those nobles who obtained the title of Vicars of the Empire, and built an illegal power upon the basis of Imperial right in Lombardy"; and second "Nobles (who) charged with military or judicial power, as Capitani or Podestàs, by the free burghs, used their authority to enslave the cities they were chosen to administer." Here we must observe that there was no real difference between these two classes. The Visconti, whom he cites as examples of the first, obtained supreme power in Milan as leaders of the aristocratic faction, before ever they received the title of Imperial Vicar. Besides, these rulers were by no means all nobles. The Della Scala in particular seem to have been of very low origin.

We can perhaps improve on Symonds by saying that despotism arose from supreme power being entrusted to one man, either a powerful citizen, or less often a foreigner, either to conduct a foreign war, or to secure

the predominance of one faction in the state, or—a very frequent case—to impose peace on contending parties. “The fount of honour, so to speak, was in the citizens of these great burghs. Therefore, when the limits of authority delegated to their Captains by the people were overstepped, the sway of the princes became confessedly illegal. Illegality carried with it all the consequences of an evil conscience, all the insecurities of usurped dominion, all the danger from without and from within to which an arbitrary Governor is exposed.” Symonds goes on to point out that “despotism in Italy as in ancient Greece was democratic. It recruited its ranks from all classes and erected its thrones upon the sovereignty of the peoples it oppressed.”

We must remember, however, and so remembering may explain the ease with which despotism established itself, that the tyrant at least gave internal tranquillity. Horrible as were the crimes of Bernabò or Filippo Maria Visconti, it is doubtful if they caused as widespread ruin as did the expulsion of twelve thousand people from Bologna by the victorious Guelfs in 1274, or the ten violent revolutions, each accompanied by massacre, pillage, and arson, which took place in Ferrara in the space of forty years.

Ferrari brings out clearly the dominant note in the character of the first Italian despots. “A party leader, soldier in a perpetual war, proscriber and devastator by necessity, he takes his rise at the moment of massacres, when palaces are rased by hundreds, when the city bell tower rings out the death of fugitives, when the goods of one-half of the citizens are confiscated, when war growing more fierce requires the victorious party to be disciplined more and more, steady in its ranks, one in its movements, and above all subject to a single head.”¹

A recent work by Salzer, “The Commencements of Despotic Rule in Upper Italy,” gives a clear and comprehensive account of the manner in which the rule of one man substituted itself for the older free institutions. According to him it was above all the

¹ “Révolutions d’Italie,” vol. iii. p. 4.

need for restoring order in communities torn by party strife that led to the concentration of all power in the hands of one person. But this ruler could only attain his end at first by standing forward as champion of one faction. "The first Signori attained power as leaders of one party, and were able to maintain themselves only by the complete overthrow of the opposite side." ¹ It is later on, when their authority rests on a firm basis, that the despots appear as fairly impartial rulers. At first they secure peace by the destruction of all opposed to their own faction.

Salzer traces the growth of despotism from four republican offices. They are that of Podestà of the Commune, that of Podestà of the Merchants, that of Captain or Ancient of the People—an office closely connected with the preceding—finally that of War-captain. These offices, originally all annual, began to be granted for a term of years, then for life, finally they were made hereditary, and all restrictions on their functions removed. The Signore also tried to legitimise his power by obtaining the title of Imperial or Papal Vicar; and, last step of all, came the grant of the title of Duke or Marquis with a regular feudal investiture by Emperor or Pope of his dominions, thus admitting the despot into the circle of the legitimate princes of the Empire.

Ferrara offers us the earliest example of a city coming under the rule of one man. Although the document which professes to record the grant of the hereditary and unlimited lordship of the city to Azzo VI. of Este in 1208 is most probably a forgery of later date, yet Ferrara seems to have been governed between 1195 and 1212 by Azzo and his rival, Salinguerra Torelli, in turn, according as one faction or the other obtained the upper hand in the much-distracted city. These leaders either held the office of Podestà themselves, or conferred it on one of their followers, while themselves keeping the real power. For a time, then, Salinguerra and Azzo's son and successor, Aldrovandino, divided the govern-

¹ Salzer, "Über die Anfänge der Signorie in Oberitalien," p. 26.

ment and together appointed the Podestà. Aldrovandino died in 1215; and thenceforth Salinguerra ruled, with some interruptions, till 1240. He seems to have held no municipal office during these years, contenting himself with the substance of power, directing the foreign policy of Ferrara, and selecting the Podestà and other officials. Later generations looked back to his rule as a golden age, when no direct taxes were necessary, when the surplus revenue was divided monthly among the burghers, when the rich and Salinguerra himself sold corn at nominal prices to the poor in times of scarcity. No doubt Salinguerra based his rule on the support of the lower orders, which he won by depressing some at least of the nobles.

The wild struggles in the Trevisan Mark produced the tyranny of Ezzelino. From 1236 to 1259 he ruled Verona, and from this city, as we have seen, extended his dominions over the whole Mark. His power, too, seems to have rested on popular support—the people in Verona were strongly Ghibelline; he filled no office himself, but appointed the magistrates, and seems to have introduced democratic modifications into the constitution. The other cities of the Mark he subdued by force of arms, and his authority was strengthened when Frederick II. made him his representative in the whole district—without, however, giving him the title of Imperial Vicar. He ruled *de facto* not *de jure*; his power was maintained by the terror inspired by his cruelties, and fell to pieces when these cruelties had drawn on him the general execration of his neighbours as well as of his subjects.

Salinguerra fell in 1240 before a combined attack by the Guelf league of "seventeen cities that uphold the Pope," and Azzo VII., brother of Aldrovandino of Este, succeeded in his stead. He ruled for the most part as Podestà, re-elected from year to year, no doubt by the influence of the now victorious Guelfs; but in some years he contented himself with directing affairs as a private person, designating others as Podestà. On his death in 1264 he named his grandson Obizzo as heir

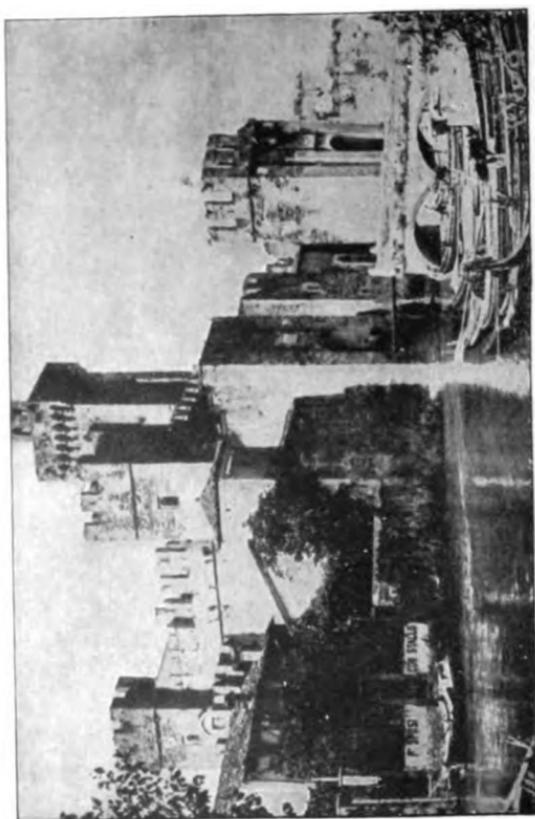
to his power, and this grandson, still a boy, was unanimously chosen by Podestà, Council, and popular assembly as hereditary "governor and ruler and general and perpetual lord" of Ferrara and its territory. Ferrara had definitely resigned her freedom.

Shortly before the downfall of Ezzelino the perilous situation of the Ghibelline cities of Central Lombardy had forced Piacenza, Pavia, and Vercelli to elect Oberto Pelavicini as perpetual Podestà and Lord, while Cremona was jointly ruled by him as Podestà of the Commune, and Buoso da Doara as Podestà of the Merchants. We have already traced the career and downfall of these rulers.

About the same time the people of Parma, weary of the struggle between the Guelf nobles in the city and the Ghibelline nobles in the country, conferred on a certain Ghiberto da Gente the offices of Podestà of the Commune, of the Merchants and of the People. At first this was to be only for five years, but Ghiberto soon contrived to have this term extended to ten, and a few days later he was made lifelong Podestà, Rector and Lord of the city, with right to transmit his power to his heirs. As well as Parma he brought Reggio under his sway, but only for a year or two. From Parma itself he was expelled in 1259, after a reign of only six years, and the republican form of government was restored.

All these despots, with the exception of the Estensi, were Ghibellines, and all except the Estensi failed to transmit their power to their descendants.

But already in 1251, after a conflict in Lodi, in which the Milanese aided the Guelfs, while Cremona and Piacenza sided with the Ghibellines, the former people being victorious had ordered that Succio dei Vistarini and his kinsmen—leaders of the Guelfs—should rule the society of the people in Lodi for the next ten years and longer at the people's wish. A few years afterwards, as we have seen, Martino della Torre established himself as ruler of Milan with the office of Ancient or Podestà of the People for a term of years. The Torriani



THE CASTLE OF SIRMIONE.
A FORTRESS OF THE SCALIGERS.

now ruled Milan, as already described, for eighteen years, and in that time established their authority over several of the neighbouring towns. In these two cases we have not so much the rule of a single man as that of a dominant family, by ability or influence the head of the prevailing faction. The head of this family appears as ruler of the city; but the republican form of government is maintained in theory at least, and the offices are probably divided among the members or close friends of the leading house.

So we find Como under the Vitani or the Rusconi, Pavia under the Beccheria or Languschi, according as one faction or the other gains the upper hand. Here we have a second step in the evolution of despotism—the rule of one family rather than of one man; and many of these families contrive to retain power for considerable periods.

The third step shows us leaders who rise to power, not so much by the aid of any one party, or by force, as by intriguing with all parties indifferently. They place their own interests before that of party, put an end to faction, base their power, in appearance at least, on popular favour, and, as a rule, transmit it to their heirs.

Ghiberto da Gente is the earliest example of this class, and we might include in it Otto Visconti. It is true that he got possession of Milan as leader of the Ghibelline nobles; but his advent was followed by no proscription of the Guelfs; and for a great part of his career he was allied with Guelf Piacenza and Cremona.

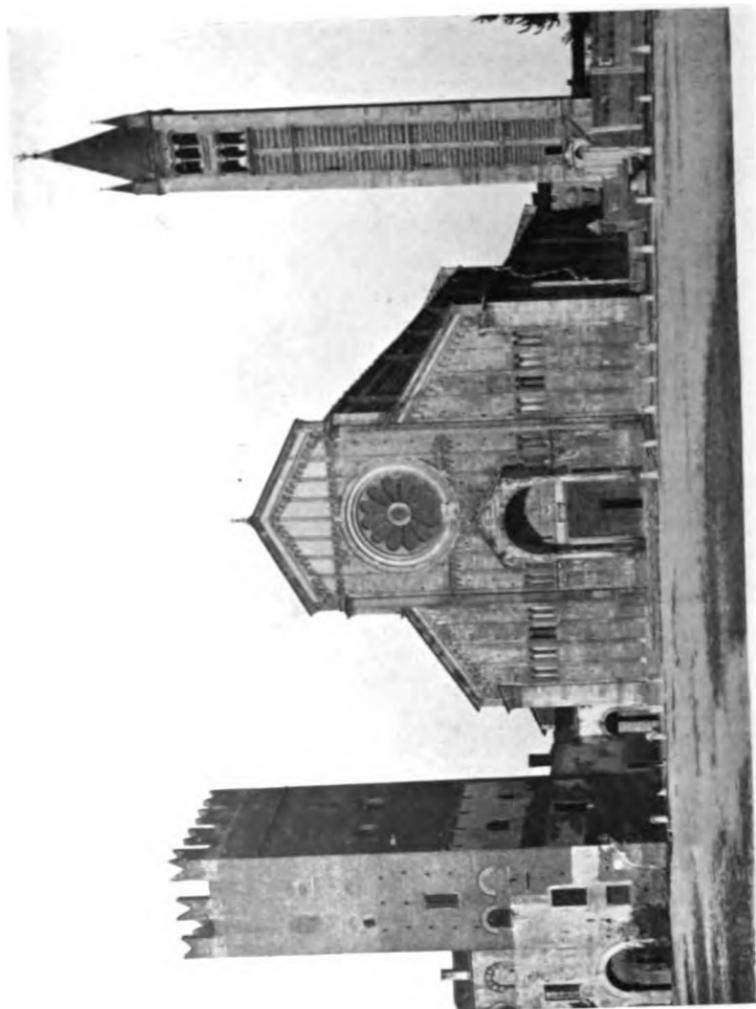
So in 1275 Mantua, after an unusually blood-stained series of convulsions, came under the dominion of Pinamonte Bonaccolsi, who first aided the Count of San Bonifazio to expel the Marquis of Este, then drove out San Bonifazio by the aid of the Count of Marcharia, and finally expelled the latter and got himself chosen for life as Captain of the People. Once in possession of the city he ruled as a Ghibelline. His descendants ruled Mantua for over fifty years. Modena and Reggio, utterly exhausted by civil war, gave themselves, in 1288 and 1290, to the House of Este. The House of Este was Guelf; but in

Modena it was the Guelfs, in Reggio the Ghibellines, who were responsible for the surrender of the city's liberty ; and in both cases the first act of the new lord was to recall the exiles and enforce a general pacification. Piacenza, which had been free since Oberto's overthrow, was induced in 1290 to choose Alberto Scotto, who had skilfully made use of the disgust excited by an unsuccessful campaign against Pavia to throw contempt on the existing government, as lord, with the title of "Perpetual Ancient, Protector and Defender of the Commune and People."

The attempt of William of Monferrat to found a dominion based on the office of War-captain, and involving the reconciliation of all factions, met with no success. In Romagna and Tuscany, however, many lordships of greater or less duration took their rise in the necessities of war which forced cities to confer supreme power on some capable soldier.

One cause of the ease with which republican institutions yielded to despotism lay in the change which had come about in military matters. The main force of an army became more and more concentrated in the heavy cavalry during the thirteenth century. Armour was made heavier and more impenetrable ; finally, horse and rider were completely ensheathed in steel, and no infantry had yet learned how to withstand the shock of their charge.

But to manage a war-horse, support the heavy armour, and wield the lance of the mail-clad rider required the training of a lifetime. The merchants and artisans who had at one time formed the mainstay of the burgher armies became utterly useless ; the towns had to fall back on the nobles who had leisure and inclination for military exercises, and on the professional soldiers who begin at this time to make their appearance in Italy. A leader of such soldiers—men whom he had hired by his wealth, or who were his hereditary vassals—found himself immensely powerful and courted by all the cities who needed his services. It was precisely as leaders of this nature that Oberto and Buoso and William of Montferrat



[Alinari.]

CHURCH OF SAN ZENO, VERONA.

[Photo.]

so rapidly brought city after city under their rule ; it was by employing their revenues to support such troops that the later despots so easily maintained their position. If driven from a city, their cavalry made them masters of the open country, and famine would soon cause the recalcitrant citizens to readmit their former masters.

To make our survey of the rise of the despots complete we must return to the affairs of the Trevisan Mark. Amid the general jubilation at the overthrow of Ezzelino, hopes were entertained of lasting peace and freedom. But the Guelf exiles who came back to Verona with the Count of San Bonifazio soon came into collision with the mass of the people, who here were strongly Ghibelline in sympathy. We may remember, indeed, that Ezzelino had made constitutional changes that favoured the people. A few months after Ezzelino's death the Guelfs were expelled again¹ ; and Mastino della Scala, a member of a family of low origin² who had acquired an influential position under the late tyrant, was chosen as Podestà del Popolo. Frequent tumults fill the next ten years ; but through them all Mastino maintained his ascendancy, sometimes holding office as Podestà of the People, sometimes as Podestà of the Merchants, more often, it would seem, governing as Ezzelino had done, without holding any special magistracy. He was assassinated by a band of conspirators in 1277 in the dark archway, still called the *Volto Barbaro*, which leads from the *Piazza dei Signori* to the *Piazza delle Erbe*. But he had established himself so firmly in the affections of the citizens that on the very next day the assembly of the people chose his brother Albert as Captain of the People for life. A fearful vengeance was taken on the murderers ; and from this on the House of La Scala ruled Verona for more than a hundred years. After Mantua came under the Bonaccolsi, it and Verona formed a Ghibelline faction in the Mark

¹ Count Lionisio or Ludovico di San Bonifazio was expelled from Verona in 1260, returned in 1263, was again driven out in same year, and never returned.

² The first of the name is said to have made ladders, *scale* in Italian (G. Villani quoted by Cipolla).

in constant antagonism to Padua and the Marquis of Este.

A few years after Vicenza had been rescued from Ezzelino's tyranny a Ghibelline party sprang up among the nobles. Expelled from the city, they seized on a large part of the Contado, and so harassed their opponents that these saw themselves forced to offer the overlordship of Vicenza to the Paduans. While retaining internal freedom, the city received its Podestà from Padua, and followed the lead of that Commune in external affairs.

Treviso was torn by the rivalry of the Ghibelline Castelli with the Guelfs, headed by the Da Camino. The former, in 1268, massacred thirty of the opposite faction, drove out the Bishop, and set up Gherardo Castelli as ruler. The next years were full of confusion, until Gherardo da Camino, supported by the Bishop, made himself master of the city. This was in 1283. In subsequent years he extended his rule to Belluno and Feltre. He was a wise and clement ruler, respected even by his enemies; and, almost alone of Italian despots, has won the approval of Dante, who speaks of him, without any farther surname, as the "Good Gherardo."

We have now reached the period when

". . . Le terre d' Italia tutte piene
Son di tiranni, ed un Marcel diventa
Ogni villan che parteggiando viene."¹

Dante puts the date of his vision in 1300; and it will not be without interest to take a general survey of the condition of Lombardy during the ten years or so immediately preceding this date.

Matteo Visconti held Milan, Vercelli, and Novara; Como, under the Rusconi, was once again entirely devoted to him; Pavia supported or opposed him according as the Beccheria, or their rivals the Counts of Langusco, gained the upper hand. Botticella Bonaccolsi ruled Mantua,² Alberto della Scala Verona. These

¹ "Purgatorio," Canto VI.

² In 1299 Bardelone and Taino Bonaccolsi were expelled from

despots were all Ghibelline, but we must notice that Matteo Visconti, following Otto's example, was not averse to allying himself with the Guelfs. The Guelf Parma, still free, and Alberto Scotto, the Guelf lord of Piacenza, were on friendly terms with Visconti.

Of Guelf despots, besides Alberto Scotto, we find Venturino Benzoni in Crema, Antonio Fisiraga in Lodi; the House of Camino held Treviso, Feltre, and Belluno, which last two passed in 1299 to the Scaligers. The Marquis of Este was master of Ferrara, Reggio, and Modena; and he, too, was not averse to an alliance with the Visconti. Brescia was ruled by its Bishop,¹ of a Guelf family, the Maggi, but himself inclining towards the opposite side.

The Marquis Giovanni of Montferrat, a strong opponent of Visconti, was lord of Asti, where he seems to have ruled by the help of the Ghibellines. The smaller towns of Piedmont, Alba, Chieri, Cuneo, and Mondovi were under King Charles of Naples; Turin was under the House of Savoy.

Of cities that still preserved their freedom we find, south of the Po, Tortona, Parma, and Bologna, the former Ghibelline, the others Guelf. Padua, now as ever, Guelf, was still free, and held its old enemy Vicenza.

Finally, Bergamo, Guelf on the whole, but torn by factions, and Cremona, Guelf and apparently more tranquil, make up, with Alessandria on the same side, the tale of cities not yet subject to one-man rule.²

Mantua by their nephews, who bore the curious nicknames Botticella, Passerino, and Butirone.

¹ The Brescian Guelfs expelled four other factions in 1295 or 1296. The exiles were recalled in 1298, and the Bishop was made ruler for five years. In 1303 he expelled the leading Guelf family, the Brusati, and the Griffi, formerly the leading Ghibellines. Henceforth he ruled as a Ghibelline in external affairs, but with the support of all parties in the city, till his death in 1308.

² In Bergamo the Soardi, Coleoni, Rivoli, and Bonghi fought for supremacy. In 1296 the Ghibelline Soardi expelled the Coleoni. The latter returned at the end of two months, and with the aid of the other two expelled the Soardi. In 1301 the Soardi were joined

It must be remembered that many of these early despots were wise and beneficent rulers. They established and preserved internal tranquillity, and did much for the material welfare of the citizens. The lord of Brescia, Bishop Maggi, promoted industry, especially the woollen manufacture, and surrounded the city with new walls. He governed impartially, was "mild, cautious, sober, sparing, firm in his designs."

Alberto della Scala improved the navigation of the Adige, also supported the woollen industry, and introduced the cultivation of the mulberry. Even the first of the Bonaccolsi, pitiless towards his rivals among the nobles, was a just ruler of the rest of the population, and attended carefully to their well-being.

With all this the position of none of the despots was secure. Except the Estensi, none of the ruling families had held power during half a century. In many cases the Signore had been given the government only for a term of years. In almost all the cities the spirit of republican independence still survived. The power of the Signore often depended on the predominance in the Commune of a particular faction, opposed to which was another faction having at its head a rival claimant to lordship, waiting until some turn of events should give him and his partisans the mastery.

This instability in the position of the Signori is strikingly shown by the sudden downfall of the two most powerful of the ruling families—the Estensi and the Visconti.

We have already noticed the blotting out of the sharp lines of demarcation between Guelfs and Ghibellines in the case of these two families. Matteo Visconti had repulsed the last great attack of the Torriani largely by Guelf aid, and had cemented his position immediately afterwards by the marriage of his son Galeazzo with Beatrice, sister of the Marquis of Este. This marriage,

by the Coleoni, Visconti was called to their help, and the Bonghi and Rivoli were driven out. They returned in 1302, and Alberto Scotto became Signore. He lost the city next year, and in 1304 the Guelf Bonghi and Rivoli expelled the Soardi and Coleoni.

which seemed to strengthen his position, led, however, to his overthrow. Alberto Scotto of Piacenza had been promised the hand of Beatrice for his son ; and, finding himself supplanted by his ally Matteo, he organised a new league against the Visconti. He found helpers in Filippone Langusco of Pavia and the Marquis of Montferrat. Novara, Vercelli, and Alessandria, all under the influence of the Marquis, the Guelf lords of Lodi and Crema, Cremona and even the Ghibelline Rusconi of Como united in recalling the Della Torre from Friuli. Early in 1302 the allies invaded the Milanese territory. In Milan itself signs of a revolt were apparent, and Matteo was forced to leave a considerable force under his son Galeazzo to hold the city. He himself with the rest of his troops and auxiliaries from Parma and Bergamo advanced against his enemies.

He found them superior in numbers ; provisions began to fail him ; disquieting reports as to the state of Milan reached him. He did not dare to stake all his fortunes on a battle, but sent to treat with his adversaries, and offered to abide by the award of Alberto Scotto, whom he still believed to be his friend. The conditions imposed were that he should renounce for himself and family the lordship of Milan, readmit the exiles, and restore their lands to the Torriani. Matteo submitted to these demands, resigned his authority and disbanded his forces. Then Alberto, throwing off all pretence of friendship, seized on him as a prisoner, and only released him on his surrendering the castle of San Colombano. Galeazzo withdrew with his mercenaries to Ferrara ; the Torriani entered Milan ; the populace rose and sacked the houses of the Visconti, and all the members of the family were forced to leave the city.

The fall of the Visconti made the Guelfs supreme in all Central Lombardy. The Ghibellines were expelled from Bergamo, which passed under the rule of Alberto Scotto, as did Tortona. The Rusconi of Como gained no advantage by their treachery to the Ghibelline cause. The Guelf party rose, and in the fighting that followed Corrado Ruscone, the head of that family, was killed.

The whole family of the Rusconi were expelled, and the Vitani became supreme in Como.

The Ghibelline party, however, was by no means extinguished. The Visconti found support in Mantua and Verona; a sudden revolution in Parma ranged that city decisively on the Ghibelline side; Alessandria also changed sides. Alberto Scotto, betraying all parties in turn, broke with the Torriani, who had foiled his efforts to become master of Milan. In September, 1303, Matteo Visconti was able to lead eight hundred horse and six thousand foot into the Milanese. Next year the Solarii of Asti drove out the Castelli, who had ruled by the help of the Marquis of Montferrat. The Solarii were Guelfs, but their fear of Montferrat led them to side with Visconti. The summer of 1304 saw two opposing leagues of Guelfs and Ghibellines in conflict in the territories of Parma and Piacenza.

More startling was the change in the attitude of Bologna. The majority of the Ghibelline exiles had been restored to that city by the peace made in 1299 with the Marquis of Este. Visconti and Della Scala had had a large part in arranging this restoration, and thus had acquired an influence in the city. In 1301 Bologna had made an alliance with Visconti, and with its former enemies Imola, Faenza, and Forlì. This change in the relations of Bologna is explained by the long-standing quarrel between it and Modena. The latter city being subject to the Marquis of Este, he became the natural enemy of Bologna; and as the House of Este, in spite of a temporary *rapprochement* with the Visconti, was the traditional head of the Guelf party in the districts round the lower course of the Po, it was inevitable that a quarrel with him would strengthen the hands of the Ghibelline faction in the city.

Two parties now appear in Bologna—the strict Guelfs in favour of an alliance with Este and the renunciation of all designs in Modena, and the restored exiles who were supported by all who wished to pursue the old feud with their western neighbour. In 1303 the latter party were strong enough to expel many of the leading parti-

sans of Este, on the pretext that they wished to give the lordship of the city to the Marquis. For the next few years Bologna, though nominally Guelf, is allied in foreign affairs with the Ghibellines.

The renewed alliance between Alberto Scotto and the Visconti led to the downfall of the former. The allied Guelf cities had twice invaded the territory of Piacenza, pushing their ravages up to the walls. The burghers, rendered desperate by their losses, rose against their Signore. Ghiberto da Correggio, the ruler of Parma, hurried with all his forces as if to the help of his brother despot. He perfidiously advised Alberto to withdraw to Parma; and as soon as he had gone Ghiberto had himself proclaimed Signore by his own troops. But the Piacentines, not wishing to replace a native despot by a foreigner, rose in arms to the cry of "Popolo! popolo!" and expelled the Parmesans. The exiles were recalled; and for a few years the republican institutions were restored.

We have already had occasion to refer to Ghiberto da Correggio, the new ruler of Parma. Like Alberto Scotto, he is a good example of the despot who rose to power by playing off one faction against the other, and who to maintain and extend his power was ready to betray all parties in turn.

Parma had enjoyed a long period of tranquillity under the rule of the Arti. But dissensions broke out afresh in 1295. A violent quarrel arose between the Houses of Correggio and San Vitale; and the former, having persuaded the people that the latter were conspiring against the liberty of the city, were able to expel their opponents. With the San Vitale were exiled all who were suspected of Ghibelline leanings. Since that time there had been a chronic state of war in the Contado between the exiles, supported by the Marquis of Este and the ruling faction. Ghiberto, head of the family of Correggio, saw his opportunity in this state of things. He came forward as the leader of a movement in favour of peace. This proposal nearly led to street fighting; but finally the citizens were brought to consent to readmit the exiles. They entered with garlands on their heads and without any

disturbance. But on the very same day, in concert with Ghiberto's partisans in the city, they began to run through the streets with the cry, "Viva, viva, il Signor Ghiberto!" Ghiberto was carried into the palace of the Commune, the Great Council was summoned, and proclaimed him lord, protector, and defender of the town, Commune, and people of Parma, and preserver of the peace with the exiles. Ghiberto had long been allied with the Visconti, now he began openly to declare himself a Ghibelline, and the Rossi, who, with the Lupi and da Correggio, had been the leaders of the Guelfs, left the city.

Ghiberto da Correggio soon entered into a close alliance with the Ghibelline lords of Mantua and Verona. These were traditional enemies of the House of Este. The marriage, in 1305, of Azzo VIII. with a daughter of the King of Naples caused all his neighbours to fear that the Estensi would attain to the same position in the eastern part of the Po valley that the Visconti had had in the centre. Ghiberto da Correggio accused the Marquis of supporting a conspiracy against his rule in Parma; Bologna, as we have seen, had fears that he was intriguing to get the lordship of the city. The result was a league of Bologna with the three despots to crush the House of Este.

The main object of the confederates was to expel the Marquis from Reggio and Modena. The Sessi, the chief Ghibellines of Reggio, and the Boschetti and Rangoni, the leading Modenese Guelfs, were in exile, and joined the attacking forces.

For a time the Marquis beat off assaults from without, and put down risings within the walls. But in January, 1306, the nobles of Sassuolo suddenly called the Modenese to arms, and shut Este's garrison up in the castle, where want of food caused them to capitulate. Next day an equally sudden revolt restored liberty to Reggio. The exiles were recalled, and the liberated cities gave themselves up to frenzied rejoicings.

"Such was the joy in the city of Modena," says the chronicler, "that during the whole summer and winter of

the same year the citizens and populace feasted continually together, and the old men as well as the young men went about day and night singing, wearing belts of gold and silver, purses and crowns of flowers, and doing other childish things, which I doubt not displeased God." ¹ X

The two cities, once more free Communes, joined the League against their late master. Brescia and Piacenza did the same.² The people of Ferrara were, however, thoroughly loyal to their lord; and though the confederates pushed their ravages to the gates, they saw no possibility of reducing the city. A sudden and violent revolution in Bologna freed the Marquis from the most powerful of his enemies.

The mass of the people in Bologna distrusted the Lambertazzi and other nobles, who by skilful diplomacy had recovered a great deal of influence in the state during the past few years. The dominant party had given shelter to the exiled Florentine faction, the Bianchi, moderate Guelfs whom circumstances had brought into alliance with the Ghibellines. The ruling faction in Florence secretly stirred up the Bolognese by the tale that the Lambertazzi were plotting to make Alboino della Scala Signore of Bologna.

A riot of unparalleled violence followed. A howling mob surrounded the Palace crying, "Death to the traitors! Send down the traitors to us, or we will burn the Palace and kill you all!"³ Those of the supposed traitors who fell into their hands were torn to pieces. The boys cut up the bodies and carried the pieces on hooks to their houses. A general rising followed. The houses of all suspected Ghibellines were attacked and plundered; many were utterly destroyed, the city was filled with bloodshed. The Lambertazzi, taken unawares,

¹ "Chronicon Mutinense."

² In May the Ghibelline Landi expelled the Fontana and other leading Guelfs from Piacenza.

³ The Latin of the chronicle is worth giving: "Morianitur proditores; mittatis ipsos proditores inferius; alias nos comburemus Palatium et interficiemus omnes vos."

were unable to offer any effectual resistance. They fled from the city, this time never to return.

Bologna at once made an alliance with Florence and the Marquis of Este. Thus strengthened, the latter was able to hold his own against the Ghibellines. Next year these turned their arms against Cremona, which had remained Guelf ever since the downfall of Buoso da Doara and Oberto Pelavicini.

From three sides the forces of Brescia, Verona, and Parma entered the Cremonese territory, while the Mantuans pressed up the Po with a great fleet, burning and destroying as they passed. The Guelf cities, Milan, Lodi, Pavia, Piacenza (where another revolution had expelled the Ghibellines), hastened to the help of Cremona. So did the Marquis of Este, who fell on the lands of Verono and Mantua, and in a naval combat captured or sank all the Mantuan warships.

Thus the fortune of war remained fairly even. It would seem, however, that Cremona received a blow from which she never recovered. Up to now she had held her own pretty successfully against Milan, and had taken the place of Pavia as the second city of Lombardy. Henceforth she sinks into a subordinate position, and her name will figure but seldom in the remainder of our history.¹

His victory on the Po was the last exploit of Azzo VIII. of Este. His death, in January, 1308, was followed by the eclipse of the fortunes of his house. He had quarrelled with his brothers Francesco and Aldovrandino, and, as a result, had made a will leaving the lordship of Ferrara to the young son of his illegitimate son Fresco. Fresco was to be regent, and on Azzo's death assumed the government of Ferrara. Francesco and his brother, who were in possession of Rovigo and other places, prepared to make good their claims to the whole lordship.

The people of Ferrara disliked Fresco, who found himself compelled to invoke Venetian help and to admit

¹ At this time Cremona finally lost Guastalla and Luzzara on the right bank of the Po.

a Venetian garrison into the city. The neighbouring lords, La Scala, Bonaccolsi, the Signore of Ravenna, and the Commune of Bologna, all saw a chance of seizing on the wealthy city. The Pope, too, to whom the lawful Marquis of Este had appealed, thought the occasion favourable for establishing his direct rule in Ferrara. Bernardino da Polenta actually succeeded in entering the city, and got himself elected Signore for five years. He held the lordship just a week, employing his time in plunder. Then he found that he could not maintain himself and withdrew, leaving Ferrara in possession of the Venetians.¹

The Pope had collected a large army in the meantime, which was joined by the Marquis Francesco. As soon as this force appeared before the gates they were thrown open by the people, who welcomed the Papal legate and the Marquis with cries of "Long live the Marquis Francesco!" But Francesco, though generally a man of courage, kept exhorting them to cease this cry, and instead to shout "Long live the holy Roman Church!" He had been tricked by the legate, who had promised to hand the city over to him if the Papal overlordship was first fully recognised. The Venetians still held the castle and poured in fresh troops. The legate showed no signs of handing over Ferrara to the Marquis, and the citizens were consequently not inclined to take a vigorous part in the struggle.

At first the Venetians prevailed. The Papal forces had to abandon the city, which had to agree to receive a Podestà from Venice, and to restore the exiled Torelli and other Ghibelline families. The Pope renewed the struggle in 1309. The Venetians were excommunicated, and all their goods in every part of the world declared forfeited. The Marquis Francesco, still trusting in the legate's promises, was at the head of a great army gathered from the Guelf cities, Bologna alone furnishing eight thousand men. After fierce fighting around and inside the walls, the Papal forces were victorious. The Venetian fleet was cut off by a bridge thrown over the

¹ The Da Polenta family ruled Ravenna.

Po, and destroyed after a conflict in which six thousand of the vanquished perished. The legate entered into full possession of the ravaged and weakened city, and then handed it over to King Robert of Naples, whose Governors held it by means of foreign mercenaries.

Francesco and Aldrovandino, their claims utterly disregarded, saw their dominions reduced to Rovigo and the adjoining districts, which they held as fiefs of the Empire. The former was murdered in 1312 by Robert's mercenaries. For eight years the House of Este was reduced to obscurity.

In the meantime the Della Torre were supreme in Milan. Nominally, the republican form of government was observed; the Della Torre were merely private citizens. But in reality they had complete control over the elections to the various magistracies, as well as over the internal administration and the foreign policy of the Commune. In 1307 Guido, the head of the family, was elected Captain of the People for a year; and in the next year this office was conferred on him for life. We have seen that even Matteo Visconti had never been elected to this office for more than five years at a time. This conferring of the Captaincy, which practically meant the lordship of the city, on Guido for his life may be said to mark the end of republican institutions in Milan.

Guido gained a farther accession of strength in 1307 when the Guelfs of Piacenza,¹ after a violent series of changes in the government, chose him for two years as "Captain, Defender, and Lord." Matte Visconti, finding all his efforts to shake the power of the Torriani useless, retired to a country house in the territory of Mantua. To a spy of Guido's, who asked him when

¹ In 1307 Alberto Scotto and the exiled Guelfs gained a victory in the Contado which led to their entry into Piacenza. The Ghibellines fled and in their turn won a victory which forced the Guelfs to appeal to the Della Torre. Alberto seems to have lost all authority. Della Torre recalled the exiles in 1308. In 1309 Alberto took advantage of a new outbreak to expel Della Torre's garrison. He then made an alliance with the Ghibelline cities, while the Landi got help from the Guelfs.

he expected to be able to return to Milan, he is said to have answered, "Tell your master that I shall return when his sins surpass mine."

During all these years Piedmont had been the theatre of a confused struggle in which the Counts of Savoy and their kinsmen, the Princes of Achaia, the Marquises of Montferrat and Saluzzo, the Communes of Asti and Alessandria, and their smaller neighbours Chieri and Alba all take part. A special source of conflict in this region was the acquisition by the Counts of Provence of many districts near their frontiers.¹ When by the conquest of Naples the House of Anjou had become head of the Italian Guelfs, they used this position to increase their power in the north-west of Italy. Hence long wars with Montferrat and especially with Asti. The latter city had greatly increased in wealth and power during the thirteenth century, and held in Piedmont the same predominant position as Milan in Central Lombardy or Bologna in Romagna.

We have a graphic picture of the time in the chronicle of Ventura, who himself played a leading part in the politics of his native city. He shows us the play of faction within the walls, in this case confined to the leading families. The mass of the people were ready to acclaim whatever faction was temporarily victorious, and to take the field in its favour against those who had lately been the masters or the allies of the Commune. He paints for us the hostilities which still went on in this part of Italy between the cities and the petty feudal lords who still kept their independence in the Ligurian Apennines. He shows us the Commune, no matter who ruled, always greedy to extend its territories; now rasing a castle, now buying a village, now seizing on a fragment of Montferrat, or compelling the Marquises of Ceva to swear fealty. The burgher militia goes out to war, full of enthusiasm, but liable to attacks of panic, or, if in difficulties, ready to turn on its leaders with the

¹ Chierasco, Savigliano, Mondovi, Cuneo, Alba were all at one time or another under the House of Anjou; Counts of Provence and Kings of Naples.

cry, "It is your business to sell pepper, instead of making the people of Asti die of hunger!"¹

We mark the growing inefficiency of the infantry of the Communes against the disciplined bodies of heavy cavalry which formed the main strength of the armies of Provence or Montferrat.

To Ventura the evils arising from the conflict of factions were clearly apparent. He sees the faults of both sides. He had personally witnessed the destruction caused by discord in most of the Communes. At Verona he saw the ruins of the houses of all the richest and greatest families expelled by the Scaligers. He was at Mantua and saw great ruin, at Cremona and heard of the expulsion of ten thousand men, and the ruin could not be estimated. He saw Ferrara, Modena, Brescia, Parma, and many more always in a bad state, "and they are so now." The simple prose of his narrative makes a fitting pendant to Dante's sonorous verse—

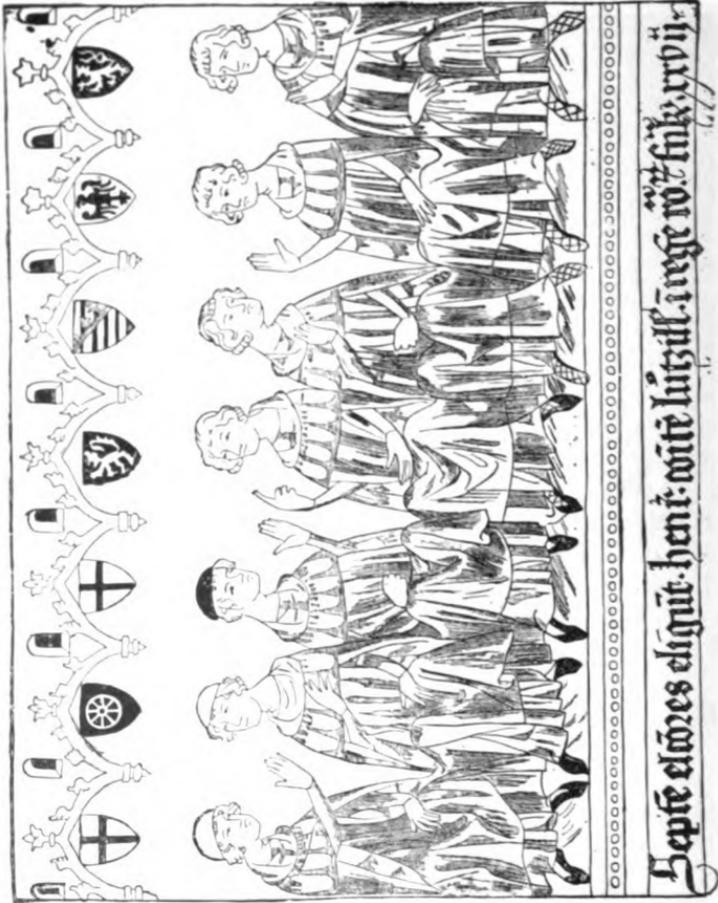
"Ah, servile Italy! abode of woe!
Bark without pilot in a stormy sky!
Queen once of fair domains—now fallen low!

While now thy living ones are constant foes,
And each one gnaws the other—even they
Whom the same moat, the self-same walls enclose.
Search, wretched one! thy sea-girt shores around;
Then inward turn to thine own breast, and see
If any part in joyous peace be found."²

To Italy, thus torn by factions and fast falling under the yoke of ambitious despots, there came, in 1309, the news that a German monarch was once again about to cross the Alps to restore the long dormant authority of the Empire. More than half a century had passed since the death of Conrad; and since that time no Emperor Elect had come to receive the Iron Crown of Lombardy and the Imperial diadem. The new sovereign, Henry

¹ This cry was raised against Ventura on one occasion when the burghers under his command were cut off from supplies by the enemy.

² "Purg.," Canto VI., Wright's trans.



SEVEN ELECTORS CHOOSE FOR EMPEROR HENRY OF LUXEMBURG.
 (From an illuminated MS. of *Historia of Luxemburg.*)

of Luxemburg, was a man of small possessions, a fact which probably recommended him to the electors, who, from selfish reasons, preferred to see the Empire weak rather than their own power curtailed. In character he was pious, brave, and clement, and inspired by lofty idealism which led him to aim at restoring the splendour of the Empire, without fully taking into account the difficulties in the way. Strange to say, he had been elected with the full approval of Pope Clement V., and was coming, in accord with him, to be crowned at Rome and to bring peace, as he hoped, to the Italian peninsula.

He had been elected towards the end of 1308, and in the next year arrangements had been made with the Pope, then residing in Avignon, for his coronation at Rome. In 1310 envoys were sent into Italy to make preparations for his journey, and in October of the same year Henry himself crossed the Alps and proceeded by way of Susa to Turin.

Times had changed since a German sovereign led with him on his progress to Rome forces sufficient to command obedience. In order to carry on his long struggle with the Lombards and the Church, Frederick II. had been forced to make concessions to his German vassals which had rendered them virtually independent. The interregnum, which had lasted until 1273, had still further contributed to make the Crown a mere empty dignity. The German king had now to depend for his power on the resources of his hereditary states; and these, as we have seen in Henry's case, were but small. Instead of the hosts which had followed Barbarossa across the Alps, or the smaller, but still considerable, army with which Frederick II. had entered Italy in 1236, only a thousand men-at-arms and as many archers formed the force which accompanied Henry of Luxemburg.

Yet such was still the prestige of the Imperial name, such were the expectations aroused by the lofty character of the new ruler, that he met at first with no open opposition. Guido della Torre had tried in vain to organise a Guelf League, in order to shut the Alpine passes against Henry. But the other Guelf leaders, headed by Antonio

Fisiraga, lord of Lodi, and Count Filippone of Langusco, lord of Pavia, declared that they would not be rebels to the king their lord.¹ The new sovereign, who came declaring his intention to do equal justice to all irrespective of party, to make peace everywhere, and to restore all exiles, had in his favour an irresistible current of popular approval. Besides, the Emperor was the undoubted fount of honour, and for the tyrants of the cities, no matter what their party, there was the prospect of winning the Imperial favour by diplomacy or gold, and seeing their usurped dominion turned by a diploma into a legal rule founded on the title of Vicar of the Empire.

The cities from Turin to Milan received Henry with becoming respect. In Asti he restored the exiled Ghibellines to their homes, in Vercelli he pacified the Tizzoni and the Avvocati, in Novara the Brusati, the Tornielli. In each city he set up an Imperial Vicar, according to the plan followed by Frederick II. Only Guido della Torre still refused his allegiance. In Henry's train was Matteo Visconti, as well as some exiled members of the Della Torre family; and Guido feared that their entry into Milan would mean his own ruin. Henry drew near to Milan, and summoned the whole population to meet him unarmed without the walls. In spite of Guido's commands to the contrary, the Emperor was obeyed. Nobles, people, magistrates, all streamed out to welcome their sovereign. Guido, left almost alone, saw himself forced to follow their example. He, too, came to pay his homage, which was accepted with a mild reproof.

Two days before Christmas Henry made his solemn entry into Milan. His first care was to pacify the contending factions. For this purpose he demanded and obtained the direct lordship of the city. Guido thus saw his fears come true, and the government taken from his hands. Henry saw himself, without striking a blow, in

¹ The Guelfs of Asti declared to the ambassadors of Robert of Naples, "We are the servants of our lord the Emperor, and in all the days of our life we will have no other lord but him" (Ventura).

peaceful possession of the mighty city which had twice defied all the power of his predecessors.

The pacification was carried out in a solemn assembly held before the venerable church of Sant Ambrogio. All exiles were restored; their property was given back to them; all leagues and associations for party purposes were dissolved; Matteo and Guido sat side by side at the Emperor's feet, firm friends to all outward seeming. Following on this ceremony came the coronation of Henry and his consort, which took place on January 6, 1311, in the presence of the deputies of all the Lombard cities, except Alessandria, Alba, and Ferrara, which were under the rule of King Robert of Naples. A curious detail is that the famous Iron Crown of Lombardy had been pawned by the Torriani in 1273 and never redeemed. It was necessary to manufacture a copy to supply its place.

So far unlooked-for success had attended Henry. But almost immediately after his coronation the real difficulties of his position began to show themselves. King Robert of Naples, head of the extreme Guelfs, had, from the first, done all he could to prevent any revival of the Imperial power. Florence and Bologna joined him in this course, and their emissaries were busily employed in stirring up the Lombard Guelfs to opposition. The task of pacification which Henry had undertaken was bound to excite hostility. Everywhere he restored the exiles and abolished party government, to the indignation of those who had profited by the former state of affairs. The despots who had climbed to power as party leaders were forced to resign their authority. The Guelf lords who had at first received Henry as their sovereign were induced by this to join themselves to Henry's open enemies as the surest way of recovering their power; the Ghibelline lords set all their hopes on the possibility of showing the Emperor that they alone could be counted on as his friends, and of bringing on an open rupture with the Guelfs. Moreover, Henry had placed Imperial Vicars in the cities, thus replacing the power of the Podestà or of the former despot by that of a royal official.

This, which was certainly a diminution of the Communal liberties, might well be considered an infringement of the Treaty of Constance ; and unfortunately the men chosen for the office were, in many cases, incapable and vicious, so that they quickly became more obnoxious than the native despots whom they replaced.

All Henry's efforts at impartiality broke down before the fierce Italian passions. The Ghibellines declared that Henry saw no one but Guelfs ; the Guelfs that he welcomed only Ghibellines. But he was forced, in spite of all his desire to hold the balance even, by sheer necessity to incline to the Ghibelline side. The exiled Guelfs were restored to Mantua, as they had been to Brescia and Modena ; but Henry was not strong enough to force Bonaccolsi to resign the lordship of the city ; while in Verona he was not able to induce Cane della Scala to consent to the return of the exiles.

The first open difficulties in Henry's way showed themselves in Milan. The citizens were requested to contribute a large sum of money to provide for his necessities ; and Henry announced his intention of choosing a hundred young nobles of the leading families, nominally to figure as an escort at his coronation in Rome, really to serve as hostages for the fidelity of the Milanese. These demands greatly irritated the citizens of all parties. News was brought to Henry that the whole city was in a ferment, and that Galeazzo, son of Matteo Visconti, had been seen in earnest conversation with one of Guido's sons outside one of the gates. He resolved on prompt action. His German troops were sent to search the houses of the Visconti and the Della Torre, where it was reported that armed men were assembling. They found Matteo sitting in the loggia before his palace, in every-day garments, quietly conversing with some of his friends. No signs of warlike preparations were discovered in the house. But the houses of the Della Torre were found filled with armed men, and almost immediately a conflict arose between them and the Germans.

The combat grew as more soldiers and partisans of

the Torriani hurried to the spot. The issue was doubtful, when Galeazzo Visconti suddenly appeared at the head of the partisans of his house, and joined his forces to the royal troops. The Torriani had been surprised before their preparations were complete. Their barricades and palaces were stormed, and the latter sacked and burned. The mass of the people remained quiet, until the issue of the combat was no longer doubtful, when they declared for the victors. The members of the Della Torre family escaped with difficulty from their dwellings, and fled from Milan. For six days the fury of the mob raged against the Torriani and their supporters.

It is said that the whole occurrence was the outcome of a deep-laid plot on the part of Matteo Visconti. He had pretended to join with the Della Torre in a plan to expel the Germans, meaning from the first to declare for Henry as soon as a conflict should break out. According to others, he had really intended to side with the Della Torre; and it was due to the pure accident that he had not yet begun to arm his followers that Henry's emissaries had found no suspicious preparations at his house. Then when the preparations of the Della Torre were discovered—the rising had been meant for the following day—he had quickly seen and taken advantage of the opportunity to crush the rival house once for all, and to figure in Henry's eyes as his loyal subject. Whatever the truth may be, the result of the upheaval was to leave the Visconti masters of Milan.¹ The Della Torre never returned from this their second exile. After a few years their name disappears from the annals of Lombardy.

Close following on the expulsion of the Della Torre came a revolt of the Guelf Communes of Lodi, Crema, and Cremona. But the instigators of the insurrection had no time to provision the cities or take other measures of defence, before the advance of Henry's

¹ It is true that Henry, as soon as quiet was restored, banished Matteo and Galeazzo from Milan. But they were recalled almost at once.

forces, aided by the Milanese, terrified them into submission. In his treatment of Cremona, the German monarch departed from his usual clemency. Acting on the advice of the leading Ghibelline noble, the city had sent three hundred of the chief of the nobles and people, barefooted and with ropes round their necks, to implore pardon. They were all cast into prison, where most of them perished. The walls of Cremona were broken down, the ditches filled up, the towers destroyed. A fine of 100,000 florins was imposed on the city, which was furthermore deprived of all its rights and finally given over for three days to the fury of the soldiery.

More serious was the revolt of Brescia. Matteo Maggi, lord of the city, had been the last of the Lombard rulers to make his submission to Henry and to restore the exiles. He acted thus, though a Ghibelline, because, as he declared to the monarch, no confidence could be placed in Tebaldo Brusati, head of the exiled Guelfs. Yielding at length to Henry's exhortations, he had agreed to receive back the exiles. A solemn act of pacification followed, and Matteo resigned his lordship into the hands of an Imperial Vicar. Scarcely had the exiles returned when the two factions were at each other's throats. Contemporary authors differ as to which party first broke the peace. But it would seem that Brusati, unmindful of what he owed to Henry, was the aggressor. The people and all the Guelfs sided with the Brusati, and after several days' battle in the streets the Ghibellines were expelled, along with the Imperial Vicar.

This was towards the end of February, and in May Henry appeared before the city at the head of a great army gathered from all parts of Lombardy. Then began another siege of Brescia as memorable as that undertaken by Frederick II. It is hard to understand why the burghers who had enjoyed internal peace for more than ten years under the mild rule of the Maggi should now have exposed themselves to utter ruin at the bidding of the Brusati. But we have already seen in the case

of Parma in 1247 how easily an impassioned orator or a dexterous party leader could work on the passions of an Italian multitude, and excite them to the highest pitch of enthusiasm.

Brescia, strong in men and fortifications, resisted with the utmost vigour.¹ Tebaldo Brusati, captured in a sally, refused the offer of life and honours if he would persuade his fellow-citizens to surrender. He was dragged to death at a horse's tail. The Brescians, only rendered more furious by his death, retaliated by hanging their prisoners from the battlements. All efforts to storm the fortifications failed. The burghers replied by sorties, in one of which the Emperor's brother perished.

In the meantime the besieging army was wasting away through sickness brought on by the summer heats. The Florentines, King Robert, and Henry's other enemies were gaining time to prepare a vigorous resistance in Tuscany. At last, in September, the mediation of the Cardinals, sent from Avignon to crown Henry at Rome succeeded in inducing the citizens to capitulate. They obtained terms sufficiently moderate considering the provocation they had given. Henry is, however, accused of not having kept his promises. The walls were broken down, the gates sent to Rome. A fine of seventy thousand florins was imposed on the citizens, and levied not only on the Guelfs but on the Ghibellines, many of whom had actually fought on Henry's side, and all of whom had suffered for their devotion to the Empire.

Once before the Brescians had stemmed the tide of Frederick II.'s successes after Cortenuova. Now they shattered Henry's hope of re-establishing the Imperial authority by peaceful means. The acute contemporary observer, Giovanni Villani, is of opinion that, if Henry had marched into Tuscany after the submission of Cremona, Florence and the other disobedient Communes would have made their submission. But the long siege

¹ It is said that the city and Contado could supply 100,000 men fit to bear arms.

of Brescia gave a breathing space to his opponents. King Robert and the Tuscan Guelfs were able to prepare for resistance. Henry's money was exhausted, his army diminished by battle and pestilence. Worst of all, he had been forced to rely for assistance on the Ghibelline leaders. Ghiberto da Correggio had given him valuable help, and had restored the Imperial crown which had been kept in Parma ever since the overthrow of Frederick II. at Vittoria. He received in return the title of Imperial Vicar. To Matteo Visconti, who had shown himself equally forward in his service, Henry gave the same dignity in July. Thus the *de facto* rule of the Visconti in Milan now was put on a legal footing.

In October, 1311, Henry left Lombardy for Genoa, on his way to Rome. His subsequent career, his coronation in the Basilica of Saint John Lateran (for after six weeks' fighting he was unable to dislodge the Guelfs from St. Peter's and Castel Sant' Angelo), his untimely death at Buonconvento, near Siena, in August, 1313, are outside the scope of our work.

CHAPTER XIV

VISCONTI AND DELLA SCALA

HENRY OF LUXEBURG had come to bring peace to Italy. After his first delusive successes the flame of party strife had burst forth more furiously than ever. He had set himself to destroy the power of the despots, who had founded their rule on the wrecks of the communal liberties. The net result of his enterprise was to establish these despots more firmly than before. He had striven to be impartial; but the hostility of the Guelfs had forced him to look to the Ghibellines for help. He saw himself obliged to rely on those party leaders, such as the Visconti and Della Scala, who were able to dispose of all the resources of the Ghibelline party.

The remainder of our story will show the growth of despotism and the final disappearance of republican institutions from Lombardy. A new feature marks the period following on the death of Henry VII. Up to now each city, whether free or under a despot, had preserved its external independence. It is true that Ezzelino had forcibly brought Vicenza, Padua, and other Communes under his sway, but this was a mere passing exception. The rule of Oberto Pelavicini, William of Montferrat, the Torriani, the Visconti (previous to their overthrow in 1302) over several Communes had been based on the predominance of one faction in these cities. It ended with the downfall of that faction.¹ Hence the continual variations in the extent of their power. Each

¹ The rule of the House of Este in Modena and Reggio from 1288 and 1290 to 1306 is an exception to this. Vicenza, too, had been subject to Padua for nearly fifty years before 1311.

Commune subject to them preserved its independence in external matters. But now we find the more able among the Signori subverting by force the communal institutions or the authority of the local despots in the neighbouring cities. An age of consolidation sets in. The smaller Communes were swallowed up one by one by the masters of the greater ones. By the middle of the fourteenth century the innumerable city-states of Lombardy had disappeared. Besides the feudal principalities of Savoy, Montferrat, and Saluzzo in Piedmont, we find five despotic dynasties who between them ruled the whole valley of the Po.

During this period of consolidation the Guelf and Ghibelline parties represent, to a great extent, the struggle between despotism and liberty. Before 1310 there are as many, if not more, Guelf Signori as there are Ghibelline. After that time those despots who held their own successfully did so as Ghibellines. Even the House of Este joined that party in order to recover Ferrara. Those Communes which made despairing efforts to preserve their freedom did so under the Guelf banner. Villani's remark that the Guelf party was that of liberty, and that every one who made himself tyrant of a city inevitably became a Ghibelline, is true of this period.

Henry had scarcely quitted Lombardy when everywhere the Guelfs rose against his Vicars. Ghiberto da Correggio, whom we have seen changing sides to suit his own selfish ends, caused Parma and Reggio to revolt. The Imperial favour had given him the title of Vicar in these cities; but Florentine gold proved stronger than gratitude. Asti, Vercelli, and Novara rose while Henry was still at Genoa. Philip of Savoy, who had been made Vicar in Piedmont, was foremost here in rebellion. In Pavia, Filippone da Langusco expelled or imprisoned the leading Ghibellines. The Brescian Guelfs, far from being intimidated by the recent siege, rose against the Ghibellines on the return to the city of seventy citizens whom Henry had carried off as hostages, and who had found means to escape. But in Brescia it was the Guelfs who were driven out. Joining the Cremonese exiles they

captured Cremona in March, 1312. About the same time Fisiraga seized on Lodi, and the Imperial Vicar with the Ghibellines was expelled from Piacenza. In the Mark, the Paduans, who up to now had not ventured on open opposition to Henry, declared against him. Their indignation had been kindled by the loss of Vicenza, which Cane della Scala had seized in April 1311. The brothers Alboino and Cane had been made Imperial Vicars in Verona, and to this dignity was now joined the vicariate over Vicenza.

The first efforts of the Guelfs were not successful. The Marquis Cavalcabò, head of the Guelfs of Cremona, was defeated by the forces of Milan and Bergamo, and taken prisoner along with Benzoni, formerly Signore of Crema. Cavalcabò, brought before the German Vicar-General whom Henry had sent to Lombardy, was killed by him with a blow of a mace. Benzoni, handed over to the leader of the Ghibellines of Crema, was strangled. The ablest of the Guelf despots, Antonio Fisiraga, fell into the hands of Matteo Visconti. Cast into prison, he remained there till his death, fifteen years later. The ever-inconstant Alberto Scotto put himself at the head of the Ghibellines of Piacenza, and restored them to that city after a month's exile.

The power of the Ghibelline despots grew. Henry was forced to rely entirely on their support. Already he had made Visconti Imperial Vicar in Milan, and the brothers Alboino and Cane della Scala in Verona. The Bonacolsi obtained the same title in Mantua by timely aid in money. Rizzardo da Camino, the Guelf lord of Treviso, abandoned the traditional policy of his house and purchased the same dignity.

A year had passed since Henry had, as he thought, brought peace to Lombardy; and now war raged everywhere with greater violence than ever. In Vercelli, Guelfs and Ghibellines fought in the streets for forty-nine days. Milan, Pavia, the Marquis of Montferrat, Philip of Savoy, all intervened in the quarrel. Help from Pavia decided the struggle in favour of the Guelfs; but in return the Pavesan territory was wasted far and wide by

Visconti and the Milanese. In Modena the Guelfs were discovered in an intrigue with Bologna. This was enough to excite popular fury against them. The plotters fled, to reappear with a Bolognese army. The Modenese went out to stop the advance, but were routed, and the city itself almost fell into the hands of her detested rival. The prompt aid of Cane della Scala and Passerino dei Bonaccolsi drove back the enemy from the walls. As the only means to secure themselves from Bolognese aggression, the dominant party in Modena renounced the liberty the recovery of which the burghers had saluted with such extravagant outbursts of joy six years before. Bonaccolsi was proclaimed lord of the city.

While Modena returned to the rule of a despot Treviso shook off the yoke of hers. Rizzardo da Camino, who had gone over to the Ghibellines, was assassinated by a man dressed as a peasant. The murderer was at once cut to pieces by the bystanders—Rizzardo was playing chess at the moment when he was struck—and it was generally believed that he was an instrument employed by some of these very persons who were displeased at Rizzardo's change of party. By killing the murderer they removed the only evidence against them. Rizzardo's brother and successor, Guecelo, at first sided with the Guelfs; but before eight months were passed he began to make overtures to the opposite party. This led to a widespread conspiracy against him, in which some of his own kinsmen joined. In December, 1312, the people rose and expelled him from the city, and Treviso was once more free.

While Treviso was torn by internal dissensions the rest of the Mark was the theatre of a violent struggle for the possession of Vicenza between Cane della Scala and the Commune of Padua. More than one peace was made between the rivals, to be broken before long. Its result was to increase the power of the lord of Verona, and to bring Padua, for the first time since the overthrow of Ezzelino, into the hands of a tyrant.

In February, 1312, the Guelfs of Piacenza rose and expelled the Ghibellines, along with the Imperial Vicar.

The ever-intriguing Alberto Scotto, who had been driven from Piacenza some eighteen months before, saw his opportunity. Suddenly reverting to the Ghibelline cause, he brought the exiles back to the city just a month after their expulsion. Piacenza again acknowledged Henry's authority. But there could be no durable peace between the Scotti and the Landi. Alberto had expelled the leading Guelfs in March in the interests of the Empire. In September he expelled the Ghibelline chiefs in his own, "and then the Lord Alberto," says the chronicle, "had for the third time the dominion over Piacenza."¹

Henry's death in August, 1313, and the change in the attitude of Clement V., who had begun to declare for the Guelfs, appeared at first to presage the total ruin of the Ghibellines. But once more, as in the years following the death of Frederick II., the latter found salvation in the abilities of their leaders. Matteo Visconti in Milan and Can Grande della Scala in Verona not only held their ground against all the efforts of the Guelfs but began the career of conquest which was to raise their houses high above all the despotic dynasties of Lombardy.

Matteo Visconti had to contend almost unaided with the cities west of Milan, which were now all Guelf, and of which the chief, such as Pavia, Asti, and Alessandria, had chosen King Robert of Naples as their lord. His seneschal, Hugues des Baux, headed, along with Filipone da Langusco and Philip of Savoy, the Guelf party in these districts.

To the east Cremona, Parma, and Reggio—the last two under Ghiberto da Correggio—belonged to the same faction.

¹ According to the "Chronicon Placentinum," the Guelf Fontana had driven out Guido della Torre's garrison, along with some Ghibellines, in May, 1309. Leo de Fontana was then elected Lord. But Alberto Scotto must soon have superseded him, for we are told that in 1310 he had ruled Piacenza for a year and four months. The advent of Henry VII. led him to recall the Guelf Arcelli and the Ghibelline Landi, both of whom were in exile. He promised them two-thirds of the offices. On the very day of their return they attacked Alberto, and next day expelled him. He retired to Castel Arquato, and Piacenza remained quiet until February, 1312.

Matteo, aided by a numerous band of talented and warlike sons, made head against all his enemies. The eldest of these sons, Galeazzo, had obtained from the Emperor early in 1313 the vicariate over Piacenza. The shifty Alberto Scotto, who now professed devotion to the Imperial cause, did not dare to oppose him. Galeazzo restored the exiled Landi; and then, on the pretext of maintaining public tranquillity, he arrested seven of the leaders of their party and seven of those of the Scotti, and sent them to his father at Milan. The Ghibelline Landi were at once released; their opponents, amongst whom were Alberto himself and his son, were retained in captivity. Piacenza was now entirely in the hands of the Ghibellines; and in September, 1313, the dominant party elected Galeazzo as perpetual lord. Alberto was soon released; but he never re-entered Piacenza. He had betrayed all parties in turn, seeking ever his own aggrandisement. His perfidy would have been less remarkable in the fifteenth century, when Italian despots had made of treason a fine art. But in the early fourteenth century Guelfs and Ghibellines still represented fixed principles. The despot could not yet afford to cut himself adrift from both. Alberto had three times gained the lordship over Piacenza; but, distrusted by all, his power never struck firm roots. He fell at last without a struggle. For some years his unquiet figure flits at times across our history, engaged in some intrigue against the Visconti. But in 1317 Castel Arquato, his chief stronghold, had to surrender, and Alberto retired to Crema, where, soon after, he died.

The Guelf cities made an attempt to capture Piacenza; but they were easily repulsed, and Filippone da Langusco, captured in the flight, was sent to end his days in the prisons of Milan. Undeterred by this, the forces of Asti, Alessandria, Pavia, Vercelli, and Cremona renewed the attack in 1314. Discord dispersed their host, when they were already pressing their attack against the walls. They retired in confusion, pursued by Marco, one of the most warlike of Matteo's sons. Following them up beyond the borders of Piacenza, he captured Tortona.

Besides Milan, Piacenza, and Tortona, Matteo now numbered Bergamo and Como among the cities under his control. The Rusconi, whom Henry VII. had restored to the latter city, had imitated the Visconti, and had driven out the Vitani, who had ruled the Comune for eight years. The Rusconi were in close alliance with the ruler of Milan. Ludovico, another of Matteo's sons, was Imperial Vicar in Bergamo. The Guelfs were expelled about this time, and, rallying in the open country, were defeated with the loss of a thousand slain.

The year 1315 saw the greatest triumph of Matteo's arms. In July he gained a great victory in the open country over King Robert's general, who had led into the field the forces of Pavia, Vercelli, Asti, and Alessandria, with the exiles from Milan. Several of the Torriani were among the killed and captured. In October, while the men of Pavia were on an expedition against a newly-erected castle of Matteo's, Stefano, another of the Visconti brothers, secretly approached the city, and at early dawn scaled the walls. The surprise was complete. Ricciardo da Langusco, son of Count Filippone, and his successor as ruler of Pavia, was slain as he tried to organise resistance. But resistance was hopeless. Visconti's troops easily became masters of a city almost devoid of defenders. For the first time in its history the proud capital of the Lombard kings fell into the hands of the detested Milanese.

Visconti did not abuse this great success. The city was plundered as a matter of course; but there was little actual bloodshed. The Beccheria, rescued from the prison in which they had lately languished, were put at the head of the government. But in order to make sure of their obedience Matteo built a fortress within the walls, and left his son Lucchino in command of the garrison.

Before the year was over Alessandria was also in Matteo's hands. His forces had approached the walls, bringing with them the exiled Lanzavecchia. But Tommaso del Pozzo, leader of the chief Guelf family, had become weary of the rule of King Robert of Naples. Instead of resisting the enemy, he rose in arms against

the general of the King, and opened the gates to Lucchino Visconti. Alessandria sought internal peace under Matteo's rule.

While Matteo was extending his power to the west, and had planted the Milanese banner on the walls of Pavia, Cremona—the other great rival of Milan in the past—was hard pressed by the arms of Bonaccolsi and Della Scala. Their army penetrated to the gates of Cremona. In its distress the city sought safety by proclaiming Signore the Marquis Jacopo Cavalcabò. There was, however, a considerable party in the city who were indignant at this surrender of their freedom. Headed by Ponzino dei Ponzoni, they left Cremona and fortified themselves at Soncino, and soon entered into negotiations with the Ghibellines. To restore peace the mediation of Ghiberto da Correggio was invoked. But the lord of Parma, who had secured his power by repeated treasons, saw here the opportunity of a new and advantageous breach of faith. He induced Cavalcabò to resign, so that Ponzoni and his party might return. Cavalcabò therefore laid down his authority, on which Ghiberto, instead of bringing back the exiles, had himself proclaimed lord. But Ghiberto had played the traitor once too often. Alarmed at his growing power, the Ghibelline leaders took measures to strike at him in Parma itself. They won over some of the nobles of that city in whom Ghiberto most trusted. These roused the city to arms with the cry of "Popolo ! Popolo !" and soon mastered Ghiberto's followers. Ghiberto found himself helpless, and withdrew to his castles in the Contado. And the parties of Cremona, uniting against the man who had betrayed them both, soon deprived him of his authority in that city also.¹ For some years more he plays a con-

¹ Cremona was then ruled as a republic under an Abbot of the People. In less than a year he, with fifty of the leading citizens, was assassinated by Cavalcabò, who again seized the government. Next year (1318) Ponzoni expelled him, and was chosen Signore. In 1319 Ghiberto da Correggio, at the head of a Guelf army, surprised the city by night, and committed horrible cruelties. In 1322 Galeazzo Visconti forced Cremona to surrender, and was

siderable part in the struggles of Lombardy as a leader of troops in the pay of King Robert and of the Guelf party. But he never recovered the dominion of Parma. Thus, one by one, the Guelf despots were falling before the more talented and more fortunate Ghibellines.

Parma now joined the Ghibelline League. On the other hand Crema went over to the Guelfs. So, too, did Brescia, where the Guelf exiles, who had been readmitted in 1313, rose in arms after nearly three years of peace, and, with help from Cremona, expelled their opponents after a struggle in the streets. Much more important was the recovery of Ferràra by the Marquises of Este and their subsequent going over to the Ghibellines.

Ferrara had been for some years under King Robert of Naples. The Catalan mercenaries, whom he placed in garrison there, grievously oppressed the inhabitants. Their tyranny became so insupportable that in 1317 the burghers rushed to arms, massacred all the soldiers they could find in the streets, and besieged the survivors in the castle. Rinaldo and Obizzo, sons of the Marquis Aldrovandino of Este, were sent for and proclaimed Signori. Under their guidance Castel Tealdo was stormed, and King Robert's mercenaries slaughtered to a man. Pope John XXII., who was entirely under the influence of King Robert, refused to recognise the new rulers of Ferrara. The city was put under an interdict, and the Marquises excommunicated.¹ Thus the House of Este was driven into the arms of the Ghibellines.

Four years had passed since the death of Henry of Luxemburg, and the Ghibelline cause, which had seemed lost beyond hope, was now predominant in Lombardy. Matteo Visconti ruled, directly or through his sons, over Milan and six lesser cities.² Lodi and Como were under the rule the one of the Vistarini, the other of the

elected Signore. Thus Cremona, like Pavia, was swallowed up by Milan.

¹ According to Muratori the sentence of excommunication was pronounced in 1320.

² Pavia, Piacenza, Bergamo, Tortona, Novara, Alessandria.

Rusconi, both allied to the lord of Milan. Can Grande della Scala held Verona and Vicenza, and was daily gaining ground on Padua and Treviso. Mantua and Modena obeyed Passerino Bonaccolsi. Parma was Ghibelline, so now was Ferrara. The Guelf Brescia was hard pressed by the exiles, who held a large proportion of the Contado. Cremona was helpless, torn by the rival factions of Ponzoni and Cavalcabò. Only in Piedmont, where King Robert's power was strong, did the Guelfs hold their own.

But it is an invariable feature in the struggle between the two factions that no sooner does the balance of success seem to incline decisively to one side than it begins to move back again in the opposite direction. The declining Guelf cause was revived by the action of the Pope.

Although the Guelfs called themselves the Party of the Church, yet for years no Pope had intervened in their favour in Lombardy. The Papacy, since the death of Conradin, had generally aimed at pacifying the contending parties. If the Popes had had any quarrel with the cities during the last forty-five years, it had been usually with the Guelfs. The Della Torre and the Guelf Communes of Parma and Bologna had more than once fallen under the censures of the Church. The Visconti, on the other hand, had never incurred such censures. The Della Scala, too, as a rule, had avoided a breach with the Papacy.¹ There had been peace between the Pope and Emperor under Rudolf of Habsburg and his successors; Henry of Luxemburg had, as we have seen, undertaken his Italian expedition in full accord with Pope Clement V.

Now, however, there comes a change. Once more

¹ Verona had been excommunicated in 1267, for supporting Conradin. The sentence was revoked after his death. In 1273 Mastino della Scala persecuted the heretical sects which flourished in Verona. In 1276 the city was laid under an interdict for supporting Alfonso of Castile. In 1278 it was reconciled with the Church, and there was no further quarrel for forty years (Cipolla p. 183).

There is a breach between the Empire and the Papacy ; and the quarrel gives fresh vigour (if possible) to the Italian factions. Now that the Popes resided at Avignon they had come under the influence of the Kings of Naples, whom, we must remember, were also Counts of Provence, and of their cousins the royal house of France. King Robert of Naples was aiming at the sovereignty of all Italy. The rights of the Empire were the chief obstacle in his path. To crush the upholders of these rights must then be his first object. Hence his opposition to Henry VII., and his hostility to all the Ghibelline party. He used the Pope as an instrument. Already, after Henry's death, he had induced Clement V. to name him Imperial Vicar in Italy. Clement was succeeded in 1316 by John XXII., who was entirely under Robert's influence.

A disputed election in Germany gave Pope and King a free hand south of the Alps. Pope John refused to recognise either of the claimants, Louis of Bavaria and Frederick of Austria, as lawful Emperor-elect. In acting thus he was obeying the orders of King Robert, to whom a protracted interregnum in Germany was all-important.

His first step in Robert's favour was to forbid any one to continue to use the title of Imperial Vicar in Italy without the leave of the Holy See. This measure, aimed at the Ghibelline despots, was followed in 1320 by a fresh nomination of Robert as Vicar over all the lands of the Empire in Italy. Matteo Visconti saw the danger of a more active Papal intervention on the side of the Guelfs. He so far respected the Papal commands as to lay aside the title of Vicar ; but instead he had himself elected by the people as lord of Milan with the title of " Dominus Generalis."

There was no intermission in his activity against the Guelfs. Early in 1318 he sent a strong force under Marco, the best general of all his sons, to lay siege to Genoa in concert with the banished Genoese Ghibellines. King Robert himself came to the help of the beleaguered city. Thanks to his valour and that of his followers, Genoa resisted all assaults. After a year of constant

fighting dissensions broke out in the Ghibelline camp, and their forces withdrew from before the walls. But in six months' time Marco was once more before the city, while twenty-eight galleys blockaded the port.¹

King Robert, bent on Matteo's destruction, had in the meantime left Genoa for Avignon, to stir up the Pope to active measures against the Ghibellines. On his side, he collected a large body of French and Provençal troops, and sent them into Italy under the command of his cousin, Philip of Valois, afterwards King of France. With Philip came the Cardinal Bertrand de Poiët, charged to order Matteo, under pain of excommunication, to lay down his lordship. The Visconti were forced to concentrate their forces for the defence of their own territories ; but the warfare round Genoa went on with varied fortunes for years.

On Philip's arrival at Asti he found the Guelfs of Vercelli hard pressed by the troops of Visconti and the exiled Tizzoni. His first move was to the relief of the city. Matteo sent against him an army said to have amounted to five thousand horse and thirty thousand foot—a force with which the French prince was utterly unable to cope. He remained for two days in a strongly fortified camp, and then, without striking a blow, retired and did not halt until he had reached France. He declared that he could attempt nothing with the forces at his disposal ; but the deluded Guelfs declared that he had been corrupted by Visconti's gold.

Worldly arms having failed, the Cardinal tried spiritual weapons. Matteo was ordered to resign his power over Milan, to recall all exiles, and to recognise King Robert as lord of the city. On his refusal he was excommunicated, together with the lords of Verona, Mantua, and Ferrara, and all his partisans.

Success still favoured the Ghibellines. In 1321 Vercelli was forced to surrender. In the same year

¹ The first siege lasted from February, 1318, until the following February. In July, 1319, the Ghibellines were again before the city. The Ghibellines had manned twenty-eight galleys, the Guelfs thirty-two. Peace was not restored until 1331.

Galeazzo Visconti laid siege to Cremona. Jacopo Cavalcabò, lord of the city, went to seek for help at Bologna. On his return he found the Po held against him. Turning aside into the territory of Piacenza, he was there defeated and slain by Galeazzo. Cremona, cut off from outside help, held out till January, 1322. Then it fell, and thus the second great rival of Milan passed under the yoke of its ancient foe.

Experience had shown how little effect the censures of the Church had on Italian minds. In the days of the Hohenstaufens, to be excommunicated or under an interdict had been, so to speak, the normal state of one-half of the cities of the peninsula. But Matteo Visconti was growing old. He had been all his life a God-fearing man; now, in his old age, he was profoundly affected by being shut out from the Church. He reopened negotiations with the Cardinal Legate, and sent twelve of the chief Milanese to treat for a reconciliation. The Cardinal insisted that Matteo should renounce his power. At the same time discontent began to show itself in the city. Many of the nobles were jealous of the Visconti, the people murmured at being shut out from the Church and exposed to the dangers of war, in order to gratify the ambition of one family. Matteo began to waver; a large party in Milan declared in favour of peace.

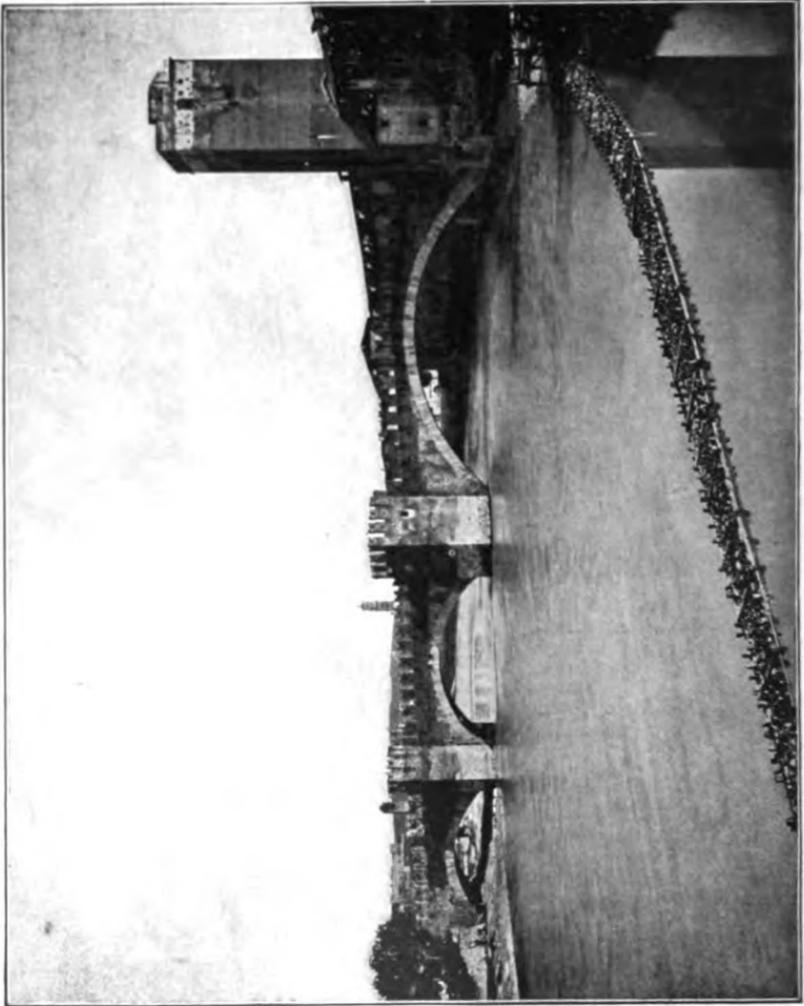
News of this was cried to Galeazzo at Piacenza. Hastening to Milan, he declared to the partisans of his house that age had weakened Matteo's intellect, and demanded that his father should abdicate in his favour. By his arguments, backed by those of his brothers, he persuaded the old man to give up his half-formed plan of submitting to the Church. Matteo laid down his power, but it was in favour of his son Galeazzo. The few remaining months of his life he spent in prayer and pilgrimages to the various churches in and round Milan, imploring God's mercy, and calling on all the faithful to bear witness to his belief in all the doctrines of the Catholic Church. While visiting Monza, where he had restored the church treasure and the Imperial regalia, pawned by the Della Torre during their ascendancy, he

fell ill and died in June 1322. With his last breath he exhorted his sons to make their peace with the pontiff.

The crimes of Matteo's descendants have made the name of Visconti odious. But though he himself was not exempt from faults, yet in his long career we find more to praise than to blame. He was clement, submissive to the will of God, constant in adversity, moderate in victory. He was a capable soldier; but it was to his political foresight and his profound knowledge of men, more than to his abilities in war, that he owed his power. His contemporaries called him *Il Magno*—the Great—Matteo. He established the rule of his family in Milan on what proved to be a durable foundation. We may regret the blotting out of Milan from the list of the free Communes, but we must remember that liberty had already disappeared without Matteo being responsible for its loss; and his rule at least gave internal peace. While Cremona was turned by her own citizens into a heap of ruins, and Pavia sank daily more and more to decay, Milan, under Matteo's wise guidance, was rapidly becoming the mistress of Lombardy.

While the Visconti in Central Lombardy were laying the foundations of the most extensive of the sovereignties which grew up on the ruins of the Communes, another house was rising to power in the Mark, which for a time was to play the leading rôle among the Italian despots. We have already seen how the people of Verona, to protect themselves from the Counts of San Bonifazio and their noble partisans, had chosen Mastino della Scala as their Podestà after Ezzelino's death. During the rest of his life he held *de facto* the lordship of the city, though in theory the republican institutions continued in force. After his murder in 1277 his brother Albert was chosen Captain of the People for life, and given power to amend the statutes of the Commune at pleasure, as well as to control the election of the Podestà and other magistrates.

Verona prospered under the rule of Mastino and Alberto. For a time, it is true, the Counts of San Bonifazio and their party harassed the Contado, or fomented conspiracies in the city. There were also



From Biermann's "Verona."

VERONA.
BRIDGE AND CASTLE OF THE SCALIGER.

occasional wars with Padua or Vicenza. But the acquisition of the lordship of Mantua by the Bonacolsi and the consequent adherence of that city to the Ghibellines put an end to the old enmity between Mantua and Verona. Henceforward these cities were in close alliance; the long south-western frontier of Verona was secure from attack, and the San Bonifazio were deprived of their chief base of operations. During the later years of Mastino's rule and during that of Alberto and his immediate successors the wars they engaged in were nearly all fought out at a distance from Verona; the lands of that city were practically unmolested. It would seem that the Mark, exhausted by Ezzelino's rule, sought a breathing space in which to recover from its sufferings. Compared with the rest of Italy, it enjoyed peace for nearly fifty years.

Alberto died in 1301, leaving behind him the character of a pious, merciful, and wise ruler. His eldest son and successor, Bartolommeo, is chiefly famous for the hospitality which he afforded to the exiled Dante, who celebrates him in the well-known lines—

"Lo primo tuo rifugio e'l primo ostello
Sarà la cortesia del gran Lombardo
Che in sulla scala porta il santo augello."

A more fictitious renown attaches to him as the ruler of Verona, in whose time the loves of Romeo and Juliet are said to have run their tragic course. He died, lamented by his subjects, in 1304.¹

His brother and successor, Alboino, increased his power by having himself elected perpetual Podestà of the Merchants, as well as Captain of the city and of the popolo. Dante speaks slightly of Alboino, who, however, seems to have played a creditable part in the wars of his time. In 1308 he associated with himself in the government his young brother Francesco, better known as Can Grande della Scala, the most famous man

¹ Cipolla, in his "Compendio della Storia Politica di Verona," gives what seem to be conclusive reasons for identifying Bartolommeo with Dante's "gran Lombardo." He declares against the authenticity of the legend of Romeo and Juliet.

of his house, and perhaps the most attractive figure in the whole series of Italian despots.

The average Italian party leader was first and foremost a politician. He ruled more by intelligence than by martial prowess. The chivalrous feelings, the sentiment of honour which inspired the warriors of the countries beyond the Alps were almost unknown to him. His own interests and those of his party were the chief guides of his conduct. The ruder men of the north despised the statecraft of the Italians, which they looked on—and not without cause—as duplicity. But Cane was not merely a wise ruler and a skilled diplomatist; he was also a soldier imbued with knightly ideals. An Alberto Scotto, a Ghiberto da Correggio would have been woefully out of place at the northern courts frequented by Froissart. But in Cane della Scala we find an Italian knight who might have figured honourably in the pages of that chronicler by the side of a Walter Manny or a Du Guesclin.¹

He was the first of the Lombard despots to enter on the road followed by so many of the later dynasties, and to give his patronage to letters and art. At his splendid court all the eminent men of the day found a cordial welcome. According to the testimony of one of his guests, Gazata of Reggio, "different apartments, according to their various conditions, were assigned to them in the palace of the lord della Scala: to each he gave attendants, and each had his table elegantly served in his own quarters. Their various rooms were marked by symbols and devices: triumph for warriors, hope for exiles, the Muses for poets, Mercury for artists, Paradise for preachers."

Among the exiles sheltered at his court was the great Ghibelline leader, Ugucione della Fagginola, some time lord of Pisa and Lucca. A curious example of the instability of the political life of the time is that he is said to have found there more than twenty other dispossessed despots.

¹ "He was always foremost in the fight," says a chronicler of Reggio of Can Grande.

Another distinguished visitor was Giotto, the father of modern Italian painting. Can Grande had keen artistic tastes, and under his patronage a local school of painting sprang up, which made Verona the centre of art in Upper Italy.

But the greatest of all Can Grande's guests was the Florentine exile, Dante. The nobles of the "Marca gioiosa" had long been famous for their patronage of poetry. The Troubadours of Provence, the epic writers of Northern France had found a cordial welcome in the castles of the San Bonifazio and the Camposampiero. More than one native of this part of Italy had won fame by his compositions in the Provençal tongue. This was before the vulgar tongue of Italy itself had been employed for literary purposes. Now that it had been so employed and had reached perfection in the works of the great Florentine, Italian poetry received an enthusiastic welcome at the court of the Scaligers. Its greatest representative had found with Bartolommeo "his first refuge and his first resting-place." He came again to Verona under Cane's rule.

He found a warm friend and admirer in the great warrior. Popular tradition, indeed, declares that the latter did not always appreciate at its full worth the severe and lofty genius of the poet. Yet their relations were always cordial. The last cantica of the "Divine Comedy" was dedicated to him ; the various cantos were forwarded to him from Ravenna as they were completed. A letter, about the authenticity of which there is still much dispute, is extant, purporting to give Cane an exposition of the poet's aim in composing the "Commedia." The best witness to their relations are, however, Dante's own words :—

" His deeds magnificent shall still proclaim
His praise so loudly, that his very foes
Shall be compelled to celebrate his fame."¹

Other lesser writers, some of them anonymous, bear witness to the splendours of Verona under Cane's rule.

¹ "Paradiso," Canto XVII.

"There you might hear Germans, Latins, Frenchmen, Flemings, Englishmen speaking together; there you might hear disputes on astrology, philosophy, and theology."

And another says, "Lament him, ye Veronese merchants; those from near and those from afar used to go secure through all his lands with all their goods."¹

Henry of Luxemburg found the Scaligers too firmly rooted in Verona to be treated like the other Lombard despots. He did indeed send an Imperial Vicar to the city, but the Scaligers were too strong for him, and in March, 1311, he was recalled and his office given to Alboino and Cane. Shortly after this a revolution in Vicenza gave the brothers the opportunity of greatly adding to their power.

Vicenza had been subject to Padua for forty-six years. There was, of course, a party in the city who resented this; and they, taking advantage of the scarcely veiled hostility of the Paduans to Henry, received help from him which enabled them to rise suddenly and expel the Paduan garrison. Can Grande had had a part in this enterprise, which led as a matter of course to hostilities between Padua and Verona and to a revolt of the former Commune against Henry. This was before Henry had left Genoa for Tuscany, and the Paduans, not yet feeling able to brave his anger, soon sent the historian Mussato to seek a reconciliation with the Emperor-elect. Mussato, one of the most learned men of his day, and the man in whom we may see the precursor of the humanists of the next century, was one of the chiefs of the moderate party in Padua which deprecated an open breach with the Empire. By his efforts peace was made and the freedom of Vicenza recognised.

"Many-domed Padua proud" had by this time completely recovered from the calamities it had suffered under Ezzelino. Alone among Italian cities it had been practically free from internal discord. From an early period the government had had a marked democratic form, and the nobles had been too completely beaten down

¹ Cipolla, "Storia di Verona."

by Ezzelino to be able to play any important part in the Commune after his downfall. The artisans had by now gained a large share in the administration. So popular was the form of government that the Senate consisted of a thousand men renewed annually. The fertility of its territory, its advantageous position near Venice, the renown of its university, had all added to the wealth of the city. Evidences of this wealth and of the public spirit of the burghers remain to us to this day in the marvellous roof of the Palazzo della Ragione, or Senate House, constructed in 1306 after the plans of an Augustinian monk, who copied a palace roof which he had seen during his missionary wanderings in India, and in the famous church of Saint Anthony, completed in 1307.¹ To tranquillity within we must add peace abroad. For all these reasons Ferreto, the contemporary Vicentine writer, claims that in the year 1311 (the commencement of a new era of discord in the Mark) the Paduans and their subjects of Vicenza were of all earthly peoples the most fortunate.

Alboino della Scala died in November, 1311, leaving Cane sole ruler. In the following spring war again broke out with Padua. Alarmed at the report that Cane had been made Imperial Vicar in Vicenza, the Paduans flew to arms. With their allies, Treviso and the Marquis Francesco of Este, the Guelf exiles from Verona, and the mercenaries whom they took into their pay,² they were able to put into the field ten thousand horse and forty thousand foot. But a capable general was wanting to this great army. Beyond ravaging the lands of Vicenza it accomplished nothing.

The war had important effects on the internal condition of Vicenza and Padua. In the former city Can Grande, under the pretext of the exigencies of war, was able to become absolute master. Seditions broke out in Padua, caused by the suspicions of the mob as to the

¹ Other monuments of this period are the church of the Eremitani, and the Capella dell' Arena with Giotto's frescoes.

² Two English leaders served among these mercenaries (Sismondi).

good faith of some of the leading citizens, or by discontent at the burden of taxation. In one such riot William of Camposampiero was murdered by the mob in the Palazzo Publico; in another more violent one in 1314 two demagogues, Ronco di Agolante and Pietro degli Altichini, who had practically acquired the control of the government, were torn to pieces with their sons or brothers by the infuriated multitude stirred up by the noble family of Carrara.

Ronco and Pietro had grown rich by usury and had made use of their political influence to enrich themselves still farther. Their private enemies, or those who excited their cupidity, were, it is said, accused of treason and imprisoned in loathsome dungeons in the palace of the Altichini until they died or gave up their property. Their oppressive conduct made them odious to the mob; the nobles and the more moderate Guelfs were disgusted at their influence in the state. Once popular fury was aroused the mass of the people were easily persuaded to believe them guilty of the most atrocious crimes. A terrible sedition ensued, and for three or four days the whole city was in the hands of the populace, who far outstripped the limits which the more elderly members of the House of Carrara strove to impose on their action. Many real or supposed partisans of the demagogues perished; the houses of others were sacked; in some cases advantage was taken of the confusion to satisfy private enmities. Among the sufferers was Mussato, accused of having invented a new system of taxation to oppress the poor. His house was attacked, and he himself escaped with difficulty from the city. The efforts of the magistrates at length restored tranquillity. The tumult added immensely to the influence of the Da Carrara family.

In the September following this tumult the Paduans under their Podestà, Ponzino Ponzoni of Cremona, the same who afterwards joined the Ghibellines and obtained for a moment the lordship of his native city, attempted to surprise Vicenza. The time had gone by when the burgher infantry of the Communes opposed their serried

ranks to the onslaught of the chivalry of Barbarossa or of his grandson. The merchants and artificers had become averse to long-continued service in the field, they had neglected more and more to train themselves to the arts of war. At the same time the armour and training of cavalry had improved, until finally they had reached such perfection as to enable horse to overcome all but the steadiest and best-trained foot. The strength of an army at this period consisted entirely in the mounted men, who were composed of the nobles, whose wealth and leisure enabled them to go through the arduous training necessary for the heavily armed horseman, or of professional soldiers trained to arms from childhood, who hired themselves out to the highest bidder.

The Paduans sent against Vicenza a large force of these mercenaries besides their own burgher levies. Of the efficiency of the latter we can judge when we hear that fifteen hundred carts were necessary to transport their provisions and baggage the nineteen miles which separate the two cities, and that most of them marched with their weapons piled up on the baggage train.

The army arrived before Vicenza at daybreak, and finding the sentries asleep, captured without a blow the suburb of San Pietro. But the city itself, separated from the suburb by the River Bacchiglione, was alarmed in time, and the Veronese Podestà exerted himself to secure the walls and to prevent any rising of the townsmen. The Paduans proved incapable of following up their first success. The burgher forces began to pitch a camp outside the suburb; the mercenaries who were left to guard the gate connecting the latter with the town fell to plundering. Soon they were joined by the dregs of the Paduan populace, come out to share in the hoped-for conquest. Their example infected the Paduan soldiers. Churches, monasteries, and private houses were sacked, and the provisions and munitions of war were taken from the carts and scattered on the ground to make room for the spoil.

Can Grande was in Verona when news of Vicenza's

danger reached him. Armed only with a bow he sprang on his horse, and followed by one squire reached Vicenza after a four hours' gallop. Stopping only to take a draught of wine offered to him by a woman of the people, he ordered one of the gates to be thrown open and at the head of less than a hundred mounted men rushed out against the enemy. Panic-stricken and in entire disorder, the besieging force fled. A few mounted nobles alone attempted any resistance. They were easily scattered, and the historian Mussato and Giacomo da Carrara, who were among them, were captured. As the number of those who first issued from the gates with Cane was so small, and the mass of the Paduans had not attempted to make the slightest stand, the number of prisoners was not very great, only about thirty nobles and seven hundred plebeians. But all their baggage train and arms fell to the victors. Significant of the way in which the Italian wars of the time were waged is the number of the killed, six nobles and thirty of the popolo.

This great exploit of the young Cane—he was then little more than twenty-three—led to peace. But three years afterwards war broke out again, this time occasioned by a fresh attempt on Vicenza by the exiles of that city, Verona, and Mantua, in league with a party inside the walls. Cane, instructed of the plot in time, allowed two hundred of the assailants to enter by a gate which they believed was opened by their friends. Then, closing this, he fell on them and killed or captured them all. The force outside the walls was attacked and routed, amongst the prisoners being Count Viciguerra of San Bonifazio, who died shortly afterwards of his wounds.¹

The Commune of Padua had not officially been engaged in this attempt on Vicenza; but the extreme Guelf party in the city had organised it and participated

¹ Thus, half a century after their expulsion from Verona, the family of San Bonifazio were still trying to recover their former position. According to the "Annales Mediolanenses," Viciguerra had been induced by Henry VII. to sell all his claims on the Veronese territory to Cane for £100,000 "of small money."



VICENZA.
CHURCH OF SAN LORENZO.

in it. Cane refused to listen to the excuses of the Paduan government and renewed the war. He soon made himself master of the strong fortresses of Montagnana, Este, and Monselice, and reduced Padua to sue for peace, which he granted on rigorous conditions.

The Paduans saw clearly that any peace with the ambitious lord of Verona could be little more than a truce. A faction in the city declared that their only hope of avoiding falling under a foreign yoke was to concentrate all power in the hands of one man. It is worth while giving the speech of one of the partisans of this measure as recorded by Ferreto, in order to see what were the arguments which caused so many cities to resign their liberties into the hands of a lord.

"The abuse of popular votes," said the speaker, or says Ferreto in his name, "brings us as we have seen towards certain ruin. Let us try whether the laws of a single man will not bring us a better fate. Everything on the earth is subject to a single will; the members obey the head; the flocks recognise a leader; if the whole universe depended on a just king we would see the end of carnage, war, rapine, and all shameful actions. Let us obey the voice of Nature, let us follow the examples she gives us: let us choose our prince from amongst us. Let him take on himself all the cares of government; let him guide the republic by his will; let him renew the edicts; let him do away with those which have become obsolete; let him be, in a word, the lord and protector of all we possess."

The man thus pointed out to the Paduans as their future lord was Giacomo da Carrara, head of a noble house which had suffered much from the tyranny of Ezzelino. Of late years this family had been head of the moderate Guelfs; and Giacomo, who had, as we have seen, been captured by Can Grande before Vicenza, was supposed by many to be secretly on the friendliest terms with his captor. In July, 1318, the Paduan people hailed him as their lord.

In the meantime Cane was prominently engaged in all the affairs of Lombardy. Brescia, Cremona, Modena

(which in 1318 had revolted from Bonaccorsi), Treviso, all in turn bore witness to his activity. At a convention of the Ghibelline leaders, held towards the end of 1318, he was named Captain-General of their League. Next year he pressed Treviso so hard that the burghers in despair turned to Frederick of Austria, one of the competitors for the Empire. He sent the Count of Gorizia as Imperial Vicar with a German garrison, and the Trevisans found that to escape an Italian they had given themselves a German master.

The supposed friendship between Cane and the new ruler of Padua did not save that city from a new attack in 1319. In concert with the Marquises of Este, now, as we have seen, Ghibellines, Cane laid siege to Padua. Giacomo was forced to follow the example of the Trevisans, and to offer his so lately acquired lordship to the Austrian Duke and his lieutenant. The offer was accepted; and in August, 1320, when practically the whole Contado had been conquered and the city itself was reduced to great extremities, a strong German force under the Count of Gorizia entered Padua by night, unperceived by the besiegers. Next day they sallied out and utterly routed Cane's forces. He himself fled alone towards Monselice, hotly pursued, and only a chance meeting with a countryman leading a fresh horse enabled him to escape.

This defeat led to a fresh peace with Padua early in 1321. But it imposed no permanent check on his activity. In the same year he captured Feltre, driving out Guecelo da Camino, who had tried to seize the town on the death of its Bishop. Following up this success he made himself master of Belluno.

During the next few years we find Cane attacking the Guelfs in the territories of Reggio, Brescia, and Piacenza. But none the less his chief efforts were directed against Padua and Treviso. The Count of Gorizia had died in 1323. To supply his place Padua and Treviso invoked in turn the help of Frederick of Austria, of his brother Henry, Duke of Carinthia, and finally of Louis the Bavarian, whom the decisive victory of Mühldorf in 1322

had left as undisputed sovereign of Germany. Thus these two Guelf cities had to turn to Germany, and even to the Emperor-elect, for protection against the Ghibellines !

Cane's diplomacy as well as his skill in war proved too much for all the efforts of the two cities. In vain they received a Vicar from Henry of Carinthia, in vain Louis confirmed him in the office, in vain now one, now the other prince obtained for them a truce. Dissensions among the citizens and among the members of the Carrara family still farther weakened Padua. In 1328 the city was so hard pressed that Marsilio, brother of Giacomo (who had died in 1324), saw nothing left but to make what terms he could for himself at the expense of the interests of his country. Terms were soon arranged. Marsilio was to govern Padua under Cane, and to receive the property of various wealthy exiles. Cane's nephew Mastino was to marry Taddea, daughter of Giacomo.

The lordship of the Carrara family had nominally come to an end when the German Vicar of Frederick of Austria had been received. But Marsilio, introducing large bodies of armed contadini into the city, had himself proclaimed Signore. Four days after the election he surrendered Padua, as he had promised, to Can Grande.

Thus Padua passed for the second time into the hands of a ruler of Verona. But Cane's government was very different from that of Ezzelino. By the mildness of his rule he sought to win the affection of his new subjects, and by his care to repair the damages caused by seventeen years of almost constant war. What is more remarkable in that age of perfidy, he kept faith with Marsilio.

Treviso soon shared Padua's fate. Cut off from all Italian allies, having no hope left of farther German aid, the city surrendered to Cane in July, 1329, after a siege which had lasted a fortnight. Can Grande had now attained to a degree of power greater than had ever been reached by Ezzelino. He was master of the whole Mark, as well as of Cividale in Friuli. The lord of Ferrara

was his ally, the lord of Mantua almost his vassal. But death cut him short at the height of his power. Four days after his entry into Treviso he died of a sickness, probably caused by the fatigues of the siege. He was succeeded by his nephews Alberto and Mastino, sons of Alboino.

If Cane had lived longer he might have founded a stable Power in North-east Italy, and even have attained to a royal crown. But the Scaligers were a short-lived race. Cane was only thirty-eight when he died. Five other despots of this family ruled Verona in the years between 1329 and 1387, in which latter year the House of La Scala fell before the all-powerful Visconti.

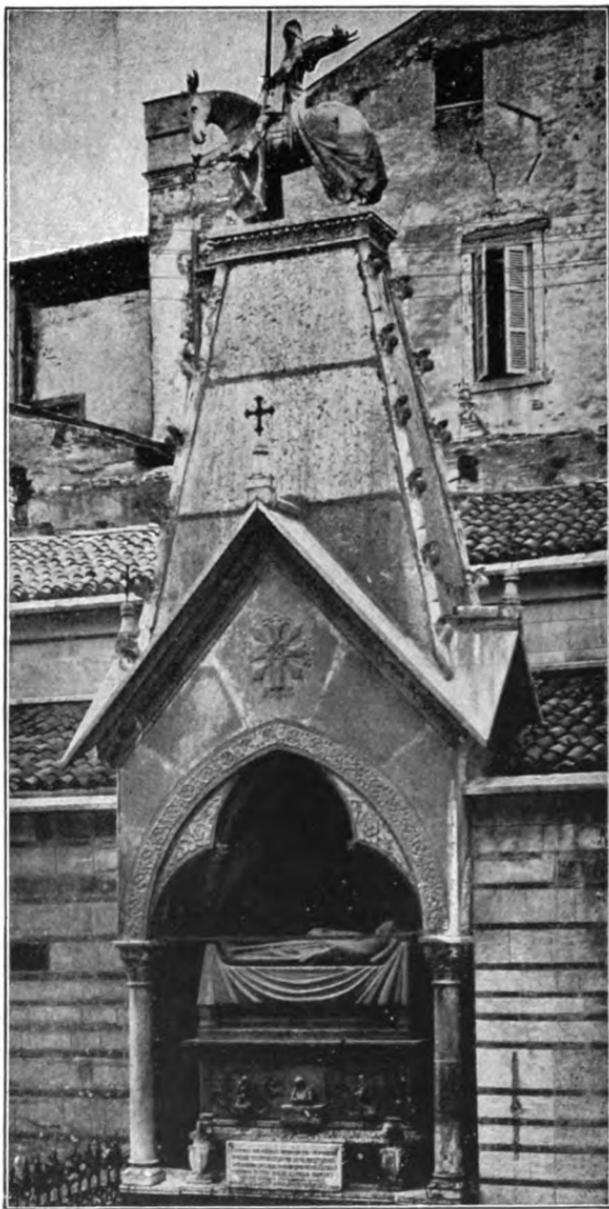
Can Grande's is the first in point of time of the wonderful series of monuments erected by the Scaligers in the little piazza which opens off the Piazza dei Signori.¹ It is of a simplicity remarkable by its contrast with the more elaborate tombs of his successor.

On the lid of the sarcophagus, which is placed over the doorway of the little church of Santa Maria Antica, the recumbent figure of the lord of Verona is carved, clothed in a long civic robe, the head bound round by a simple fillet. Four pillars support a lofty canopy; and on the top of this Cane's mail-clad effigy sits on a noble war-horse. Below the sarcophagus are carved some Latin lines which preserves an echo of Dante's line—

"Wondrous shall be his works."

As the power of the despots rested on no recognised legal basis there was no fixed rule of succession. Sometimes several brothers succeeded jointly to their father's heritage, sometimes the father named his heir, or one more energetic than the rest seized on all power—this last a fruitful source in later times of endless plots and countless fratricides. But Alberto della Scala, intent only on a life of pleasure, gladly resigned the government to his more energetic younger brother Mastino.

¹ The tomb supposed to be that of Alberto is a simple sarcophagus.



From Biermann's "Verona."

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TOMB OF CAN GRANDE DELLA SCALA.

The constitution of Verona at this time gives us an excellent illustration of how in some cases the old republican forms of government remained unchanged in theory under the rule of a despot. The old communal institutions seemed at first sight but little altered. There was still a foreign Podestà, guided by a Council of "Ancients," fifteen in number, of whom nine were taken from the heads of the Arti. There were still the smaller council of eighty, and the greater of five hundred members, besides various other councils, and, in theory, the direction of affairs was in their hands.

But in practice the Signore was absolute. He had the deciding voice in the choice of the Podestà, he elected the Great Council, in the selection of the other councils and of all the officials his wishes were paramount. The keys of the gates were in his hands, seven of the chief castles of the Contado were directly in his charge, the Commune having resigned all claim on them. Podestà, councils, magistrates, all swore fidelity to him. In addition to this he was lifelong Captain of the People and Podestà of the Merchants. And in the statutes of the Commune was inserted a clause providing that the lord della Scala might alter, annul, or add to the statutes at his pleasure. The Signore, like the Roman Emperors, is looked on as the ultimate source of all law.

The statutes of Verona give many interesting details as to the management of public affairs. Four foreign judges, elected yearly, decided important matters. Twelve others, called consuls, adjudicated in minor matters. Two friars of the order of the Umiliati managed the finances. They were assisted by officials, whose business it was to supervise the collection of the revenues and to devise means to improve them. There was careful provision for auditing all accounts. The public health, the roads, canals, rivers, public buildings, the public records, the poor, all had officials to look after them. Clerics were expressly excluded from all offices except the control of the finances.

Education, too, was provided for by the state. In the closing years of the thirteenth century there were public

chairs of law, physic, logic, grammar, canon law, and arithmetic in Verona, besides the ordinary grammar schools to be found in every Italian city. In civilisation Lombardy, at the opening of the fourteenth century, was, in spite of its never-ending feuds, far ahead of all other European lands.

CHAPTER XV

THE LAST STRUGGLES OF THE COMMUNES

WE must now return to the history of Milan and the adjacent cities. The death of Matteo Visconti in June, 1322, was followed by a sudden decline in the fortunes of his house. The Papal legate, Bertrand de Poiët, had assembled a large army in order to attack Milan in case of the failure of the negotiations which he had opened with many of the leading citizens. In September the Rossi, who in 1316 had united with the San Vitale to expel Ghiberto da Correggio from Parma, suddenly changed round, and joining with Ghiberto's sons expelled their former allies. Then they sent to the legate and gave the lordship of Parma to the Pope during the vacancy of the Empire. Reggio, which had been in Guelf hands since 1311, followed this example and received a Papal Vicar as Governor.

Thus strengthened by the adhesion of two important cities, the legate's power was still further increased in October by the capture of Piacenza. Galeazzo Visconti had grievously injured Verzusio, head of the Ghibelline Landi, and had driven him into exile. While Galeazzo was at Milan, trying to cope with the discontent prevalent there, Landi obtained a large force of cavalry from Cardinal de Poiët, rode secretly to Piacenza, and was admitted by a breach made by his partisans within the walls. Galeazzo's young son Azzo, who had been left at Piacenza, escaped owing to the presence of mind of his mother, Beatrice of Este, who delayed the attack on her palace by scattering coin from the windows. While the Papal soldiers were occupied in gathering up the wealth thus showered on them Azzo had time to

reach the gates and escape. His mother, who remained behind, was restored to her husband under honourable escort. Piacenza then followed the example set by Parma and gave itself to the Pope. Verzusio Landi gained nothing from his change of front, except revenge. He and the other Ghibellines were expelled shortly afterwards by the Guelf Scotti and Fontana.

In the meantime the legate was negotiating with some of the leading nobles of Milan who were jealous of the power of the Visconti, and disinclined to expose themselves to war and excommunication to satisfy the ambition of one family. The malcontents gained over Lodrisio Visconti, cousin of Galeazzo, as well as the German mercenaries whose pay was in arrears. In November an insurrection broke out; and Galeazzo, after a vain attempt at resistance, was forced to abandon the city and seek a refuge with his allies the Vistarini of Lodi.

But the Milanese, now for more than sixty years accustomed to the rule of one man, were incapable of setting up any stable form of government in its stead. The nobles who had organised the revolution relied on the legate to supply the sums necessary for the pay of the mercenaries, while at the same time attempting to preserve the Ghibelline predominance. A Frenchman, claiming kinship with the Torriani, was made Captain of the People, but the Della Torre and their partisans were not recalled. The legate, on his side, hoped to get full possession of the city, and withheld the promised money. The Guelfs in the Contado began to move, and seized Monza.

The German mercenaries soon repented of their action; and even Lodrisio Visconti began to see that by driving out Galeazzo he had only injured himself and all his family. The result was that Lodrisio invited Galeazzo back to Milan. He returned just a month after his expulsion, and was once more proclaimed Signore.

His difficulties were not at an end. Cardinal de Poiët, having failed to get possession of Milan by peaceful

means, now organised a great attack on the city. He possessed considerable ability as a diplomatist and administrator, and was soon at the head of a formidable army. The Pope had collected great sums of money from the clergy throughout all Western Europe for his enterprise against the Visconti and their partisans. Thus he was able to put in the field a large force of mercenaries from Germany and France. King Robert sent Provençals and Neapolitans, and a skilful leader, the Aragonese Raymond of Cardona, Florence, Bologna, the Emilian cities, and the Communes of Piedmont which were under King Robert sent their contingents. The Della Torre, Pagano, Patriarch of Aquileia at their head, came to the muster, as well as those Milanese nobles who had been most compromised in the rising against Galeazzo. In all the Papal army numbered eight thousand horse and thirty thousand foot.

Spiritual weapons were also made use of. The Visconti, Estensi, and other Ghibelline lords were accused of heresy, condemned, and sentenced to be deprived of all their possessions. To those who joined the legate's army the same indulgences were granted as if they had joined a Crusade.

In February, 1323, Tortona, in April Alessandria surrendered to Raymond of Cardona. The bulk of the Papal army had in the meantime entered the Milanese territory. By April a large number of the fortresses of the Contado, as well as the important town of Monza, were in its hands. By the middle of June it was in possession of the suburbs of Milan.

Galeazzo's forces were sufficient to defend the walls, and it would seem that in this emergency he was able to rely on the loyalty of the burghers. But an unexpected danger threatened him from his German mercenaries. The legate made them secret offers of great rewards if they would deliver up Galeazzo into his hands. There was little loyalty in the breasts of the mercenaries of that age, and the legate's proposals found a ready acceptance. The Germans rose suddenly and attempted to seize or kill the ruler of Milan. He,

however, escaped to his fortified palace, and was able to secure it against the first assault of the mercenaries. Before they could force an entrance, Giovanni Visconti, Bishop of Novara, and at a later date Archbishop and lord of Milan, hurried to his brother's help with all the Italian troops he could collect. The Germans saw themselves surrounded by overwhelming forces and throwing down their arms, they sought for mercy. Galeazzo pardoned them, and as a sign of their repentance they induced ten companies of Germans serving in the Papal army to come over to the side of Visconti.

Meanwhile Galeazzo had sent for help to Louis of Bavaria, whom the Pope had so far refused to recognise as lawful Emperor-elect. The danger of seeing Milan fall into the hands of the Pope, and so into those of King Robert, the most determined opponent of the rights of the Empire in Italy outweighed in Louis's mind the risk of an open breach with Rome. He sent to the legate, bidding him desist from his attack on a city under the Imperial protection, and followed this up by despatching a force of German cavalry, who successfully made their way into the beleaguered city.

While Galeazzo was thus strengthened, the Guelf army was weakened by an outbreak of pestilence, the almost invariable result in those days of keeping an army in the field during the heats of the Lombard summer. Seeing no hope of reducing Milan, the Papal forces withdrew, after a siege of six weeks. Monza, as well as a number of castles in the Contado, still remained in their power. Galeazzo, now strong enough to take the field, proceeded to recover these. In February, 1324, his forces gained a decisive victory at Vaprio, and before the end of the year Monza was forced to surrender.

During the next few years little of importance happened in Central Lombardy. Cane della Scala was, as we have seen, occupied with his projects for the conquest of Padua and Treviso. The Estensi

were extending their power around Ferrara. In 1324 they captured from the Archbishop of Ravenna the large town of Argenta, which in times past had formed a constant bone of contention between Ferrara and Ravenna. Next year Comacchio, buried among the marshes in the delta of the Po, gave itself to them, in order to put an end to the party strife within the walls.¹ Meantime Galeazzo was too weak, or too incapable, to attack the Guelf cities in his neighbourhood. The pestilence which had broken out in the Guelf camp before Milan had been carried by the soldiers into the cities of both parties; and its ravages, which were very great, had no doubt much to do with this cessation of hostilities. The legate, for his part, turned his chief attention to the affairs of Emilia and Romagna.

It was chiefly in the cities south of the Po, from Piacenza to Bologna, that the old republican spirit still survived. Bologna had never known the rule of a tyrant. Its liberties had indeed been menaced by the ambition of Romeo dei Pepoli, who had made use of his great wealth—he was said to be the richest man in Italy—in order to gain supreme power. But the men at the head of the Commune were staunch republicans; their prudence had taken the alarm in time, and Romeo was forced to fly from the city before his plans had advanced sufficiently for him to try any open stroke against the government.

The four Emilian cities had all passed for a longer or shorter period under the power of a despot, but all had shaken off the yoke. In these Communes which had recovered their freedom we mark a great increase of the power of the nobles. No doubt the popular organisations, the Arti, and the armed companies of the people had been abolished or restricted in their

¹ Besides Ferrara, the Estensi now ruled Argenta, Comacchio, and Adria, in addition to their fiefs of Rovigo, Lendinaria, and the district of the Polesine between the Po and the Adige, which they held from the Empire. Este itself and the rest of their lands north of the Adige belonged to Padua.

power by the tyrants. The nobles had played a chief part in recovering liberty, and were thus able to get from the start a preponderating position in the restored Commune. Besides, the importance in warfare of heavy cavalry was increasing all through the early fourteenth century, and, as we have seen, the Communes had to depend for this arm on mercenaries or on their own nobles. Infantry would no longer face heavy cavalry in the open field. The employment of mercenary troops had been shown to be dangerous to the communal liberties. Hence the nobles were indispensable to the Communes, and recovered in consequence the position they had lost during the second half of the thirteenth century.

We have already seen how Verzusio Landi's desertion of the Ghibelline cause had put an end to the rule of the Visconti in Piacenza, and how that city, having recovered its liberty, had placed itself under the protection of the legate. Parma had expelled its despot in 1316, and had been for six years Ghibelline, under the rule of two of the leading houses, the Rossi and San Vitale. These quarrelled, and the Rossi, going back to the Guelf party, to which they had formerly adhered, expelled the San Vitale and the Ghibellines, and recalled the sons of Ghiberto da Correggio from exile. The people in these changes seem to have blindly followed the lead of the nobles.

In Reggio the downfall of the Estensi in 1306 had been followed by the recall of the Guelf Manfredi, Fogliani, and Roberti, and of the Ghibelline Sessi, who had all alike been in exile. For the next few years Reggio had been Ghibelline, and in alliance with Ghiberto da Correggio, who at this stage of his career posed as a Ghibelline. In 1310, just before the arrival of Henry VII. in Lombardy, the Sessi attacked the family of Canossa, a house which, like them, was Ghibelline. All the other nobles took the part of the Da Canossa; the people, too, rose in arms on the same side; and the Sessi were driven out after a fierce struggle in the streets. Restored early in 1311

by Henry VII., they were attacked by all the other nobles, seventeen days after their return, and were thrown into prison. They were released by Henry's Vicar after a few months, but next year we find them again at war with the Commune, which was now under the control of the Guelf Fogliani, Roberti, and Manfredi. Since that time Reggio had remained Guelf, and the Sessi had been continuously, the Da Canossa occasionally, in exile. The chronicler of Reggio incidentally tells us that the hostility between the Sessi and Fogliani had arisen from a private insult, that it lasted fifty-four years, and caused the deaths of two thousand people.¹

Modena at this period was considered the most turbulent of the Lombard cities. Here again the nobles appear to have controlled the Commune after the expulsion of the Estensi. Three distinct factions meet us in this Commune. Besides the Aigoni, violent Guelfs, and the Grasulfi, Ghibellines, there were the nobles of Sassuolo and of Savignano and the Grassoni, which three families formed a party, Guelf indeed, but with Ghibelline leanings. The quarrels of these three factions kept the city in constant turmoil, increased by sudden outbreaks of dissension within the ranks of the parties, which led to frequent and puzzling changes of side on the part of individual families.

Henry of Luxemburg's efforts to restore peace were not more successful in Modena than elsewhere. The Aigoni and Grasulfi did indeed form a league in 1311; but the result was that the da Sassuolo, the Savignani, and the Grassoni, fearing that the alliance was directed against them, left the city. Next year the four leading houses of the Aigoni were detected in an intrigue to give up the frontier fortresses to Bologna. Fearing an outburst of popular fury, they fled, and left the city to the Ghibellines.

The two exiled factions were in possession of the chief castles of the Contado; and the Aigoni and the Bolognese defeated the Ghibellines in the open field.

¹ Gazata in "Muratori," vol. xviii.

These, then, as we have already said, handed Modena over to Passerino Bonaccolsi, tyrant of Mantua. His rule was oppressive, and in 1218 the same Ghibelline nobles who had called him in raised the city against him and drove out his garrison.¹ A distinctly oligarchic government was set up consisting of four Podestàs chosen one from each of the leading Ghibelline noble families, and four "judices," or trained jurists.

Concord did not last long. The moving spirit in the late revolution, Francesco Pico, lord of La Mirandola, expelled three of the chief families who had been among his supporters. They turned again to Passerino, and with him and Cane della Scala attacked the city, just six months after it had recovered its liberty. The Modenese repulsed the attack, but next year two more of the leading Ghibelline families left the city and rose in revolt. Francesco seems to have become now virtually despot of Modena, where his family were the only nobles whom successive revolutions had left within the walls. Pressed as he was on one side by Bologna and the Aigoni, on the other by Passerino and the Grasulfi, while the Da Sassuolo and their friends infested the plain from their strongholds of Sassuolo and Savignano, Francesco was unable to maintain himself.² He determined to make terms with Passerino; and in 1319 Modena, after nearly two years of liberty, or rather anarchy, was handed over once more to the lord of Mantua. Francesco had, as he thought, amply provided for his own safety by a treaty which Passerino had sworn to observe. But in 1321 he was seized, with two of his sons, and thrown into a dungeon, where all three perished of hunger.

This history of faction in Modena helps us to understand the severity of the laws by which Bologna and the

¹ Passerino soon exiled most of the Ghibelline nobles, following in this the policy pursued by his house in Mantua, where the nobles of all parties had been crushed by Pinamonte Bonaccolsi. They were readmitted in 1317.

² An amnesty had been proclaimed in 1318, but the Aigoni and Da Sassuolo had either not ventured to return, or had been expelled again.

Tuscan Communes strove to curb the power of the nobles. To be a noble in these cities was not only to be shut out from any part in the government, but to be subject to penal laws of the utmost rigour. Yet such was the vitality of the Italian noble houses, such the power gained for them by their wealth and skill in arms, that in scarcely any Commune except Florence were the nobles permanently kept under by the democracy.

We can see plainly, also, how the constant feuds arising from the turbulence of the nobles rendered the rule of a despot acceptable to the mass of the people. The rule even of a Pinamonte or a Passerino Bonaccolsi meant at least the cessation of street fighting, and the equality of all under the yoke of a tyrant was some compensation to the general body of the burghers for their vanished liberty.

Whether Modena was under a despot or free, under the rule of the commons or the nobles, the old feud with Bologna continued with unabated fury. The forces of the latter city, united with the exiled Modenese Guelfs, inflicted such damage to the border districts of Modena that Passerino in 1325 made a great effort to put a stop once for all to their ravages. Aided by a large body of cavalry and infantry from Ferrara under the Marquis Rinaldo of Este, as well as by auxiliaries from Verona and Milan, he advanced at the head of the Modenese and Mantuans against the army of Bologna, which was besieging Monte Veglio, a castle in the Bolognese Contado, which had lately come into his possession.

Accounts differ widely as to the numbers of the opposing forces. It seems certain, however, that the thirty thousand infantry of Bologna—this seems to be the number that that city habitually sent into the field—far outnumbered the foot-soldiers of Modena and her allies. In cavalry, then the most important arm, the two armies were more equal; indeed, it would seem that the auxiliaries from Verona, Ferrara, and Milan gave Passerino the superiority. As almost always, whenever Modena and Bologna met in a pitched battle, fortune favoured the former. The Bolognese were routed with

a loss of over two thousand slain, a number very great for Italian warfare, and one thousand five hundred prisoners and an immense booty fell into the hands of the victors. The Ghibelline army then advanced to Bologna, and devastated all the surrounding country. As a sign of victory three races were run under the walls of the city, one in honour of Azzo, son of Galeazzo Visconti, whose cavalry had had an important part in the fight, one in honour of Passerino, and one in honour of the lord of Este, who had held the supreme command in the field.

The battle led to peace early in the following year between Bologna and Modena. Passerino, insecure in his position both in Modena and Mantua, and perhaps already on bad terms with Cane della Scala, consented to terms very favourable to Bologna. Already a storm was threatening to break on him from another quarter.

The Papal legate, secure in the possession of Piacenza, Parma, and Reggio, determined to attempt the conquest of Modena. In his army were the Aigoni, the da Sassuolo and their two allied families, and the Ghibelline Pichi della Mirandola. Under Verzusio Landi, the Guelfs soon overran the Contado of Modena. Only the city and two castles remained in the power of Passerino. The Visconti and Estensi tried to bring help to the Modenese, but failed. Passerino was routed, and part of the Mantuan territory invaded. The result was that the Ghibelline nobles in Modena, seeing no help coming from outside, rose against Passerino's garrison, and in June, 1327, forced them to quit the city. Then sending to the legate they soon arranged terms of peace. Modena was to remain in the hands of the Ghibellines. The exiled "Plebeians" were to be readmitted, thirty only excepted. To the nobles their lands were restored, but they were not to come nearer than two miles to the city. The chronicler thinks it worthy of remark that this peace lasted two years and five months.

Louis of Bavaria had been excommunicated by the Pope and declared incapable of the Imperial crown immediately after the help given by him to Galeazzo

Visconti. The victory of Mühldorf had left him supreme in Germany, and the Ghibelline lords of Italy had since been urging him to come into the peninsula to defend them against King Robert and the Guelfs, and to be crowned at Milan and in Rome. In February, 1327, he reached Trent, where he conferred with the Ghibelline chiefs of Lombardy and Tuscany or their ambassadors. He reached Milan in May, and on the last day of the month received the Iron Crown from the hands of three excommunicated Bishops in the presence of a great assembly of Ghibellines. Not two months afterwards, to the astonishment of every one, he seized Galeazzo, with his brothers Lucchino and Giovanni, and his son Azzo, forced them by threats of death to surrender their fortresses into his hands, and imprisoned them in the dungeons Galeazzo himself had constructed in the castle of Monza. Then he set up a republican form of government in Milan, under twenty-four nobles, who were, however, controlled by a German Governor. The cause of this extraordinary procedure seems to have been the accusations brought against Galeazzo by his brother Marco and his cousin Lodrisio. Both were jealous of Galeazzo, and declared—it would seem with some foundation—that he was secretly negotiating with the Pope in order to betray the Ghibellines. The other Ghibelline despots, and notably Cane della Scala, would appear to have joined in the accusation. In fact Cane seems to have had hopes of obtaining possession of Milan.

The other towns which had been subject to Milan recovered their independence, under the rule of the leading Ghibelline families. The Beccheria of Pavia and the Torielli of Novara received the title of Imperial Vicar, as did also the Rusconi, who had ruled Como since 1311. Then Louis, having received large sums of money from the Milanese and the Ghibelline lords, departed for Rome, where he was crowned Emperor in January, 1328.

This same year, 1328, saw the downfall of two of the tyrant houses of Lombardy. The Vistarini of Lodi, who had expelled Antonio Fisiraga and the family of Som-

mariva in 1311, had since that date ruled the city with the utmost cruelty. Those who excited their jealousy were cast into the dungeons of their palace and left to die of hunger. The cries of the victims, which pierced to the banqueting hall of the tyrants, only excited their laughter.

Among the chief ministers of their cruelties was a man named Tremacoldo, originally a miller, whose wickedness had recommended him to their confidence. He had been promoted to be captain of the guard and entrusted with the keys of one of the gates. But the tyrants had set no limits to their vices, and one of them had violated Tremacoldo's niece. Unable to obtain justice he determined on revenge. One night he introduced a large body of armed partisans into the city, and with cries of "Viva il Popolo!" hastened towards the palace of the Vistarini. They were quite unprepared for attack, and six of them fell into his hands without resistance. He then cast them into their own dungeons and left them there to die of hunger like so many of their victims.

Equally sudden was the overthrow of the Bonaccolsi, who for more than half a century had ruled Mantua. Passerino, the then head of the family, had made himself odious by his tyranny. His sons surpassed him in vice; neither the honour nor the property of the citizens was safe from their attacks. An insult offered to the wife of one of the Gonzaga, an ancient noble family deep in the confidence of the tyrant, led to a conspiracy against him. Cane della Scala had for some time past been jealous of Passerino's power, or perhaps disgusted by his cruelties. He promised his help to the Gonzaga, and sent a force of eleven hundred men, who, along with a large body of peasants from the Gonzaga estates, entered the city by night through a gate which one of the conspirators had caused to be opened. Passerino endeavoured to summon his friends to arms, but was killed, together with one of his sons. Some other members of the Bonaccolsi family were handed over to Niccolo Pico della Mirandola, who starved them to death in the same castle in which his



MANTUA.
PALACE OF THE BONACCOLSI.

LIBRARY

father, Francesco Pico, had suffered the like fate by Passerino's orders. Luigi Gonzaga was then elected Signore of Mantua, and made Imperial Vicar by Louis. His descendants received from the Emperor the title of Marquis, and, and at a later period, that of Duke of Mantua, which city they ruled until the early eighteenth century.

Louis of Bavaria during his career in Germany had shown himself honourable and prudent. In Italy, however, his conduct was such as soon to alienate a large number of his supporters. He showed himself greedy of money, ready to sacrifice the interests of the future to a momentary advantage, and, above all, perfidious and ungrateful to his partisans. Contrary to his pledged word, he handed Pisa over to Castruccio Castracane, the celebrated despot of Lucca. He quarrelled with Bishop Guido Tarlati, the valorous Ghibelline lord of Arezzo. The first of the despots of the Papal states to declare in his favour was Silvestro dei Gatti of Viterbo. In return he was deprived of the lordship of the city, and tortured until he revealed to the Emperor the hiding-place of his treasure. But it was his treatment of the Visconti which Louis found hardest to justify in the eyes of his supporters.

At length, yielding to the prayers of Castruccio Castracani and other Ghibelline leaders, he ordered the release of Galeazzo and his fellow prisoners, and summoned them to join him in Tuscany. There Galeazzo took part in the siege of Pistoia ; but, weakened by his captivity, he was unable to bear the rigours of the campaign, and died a few months after his release, in August, 1328. Of all the Visconti he seems to have had the least capacity, and was certainly the most unfortunate.

Louis, after his coronation in Rome, found himself unable to effect anything of importance against King Robert or the Florentines. He decided, therefore, to return to Lombardy. His chief difficulty was want of money. Azzo, son of Galeazzo Visconti, who, with his uncles Marco and Giovanni, was with the Emperor in Pisa, offered him 60,000 or, as some say, 125,000 florins,

if he would name him Vicar in Milan. The bargain was concluded in January, 1329, and Azzo at once returned to Milan. Here he was received without any opposition by the citizens; and thus the metropolis of Lombardy came once more under the sway of the Visconti. The spirit of liberty was dead in Milan, which henceforward was ruled by the Visconti until the death of the last male descendant of *il magno Matteo*.

With the idea of strengthening himself in his contest against the Guelfs, Louis had proclaimed the deposition of Pope John, and had set up an Antipope of his own choosing. This measure, commonly employed two centuries before in the struggles between the Empire and Papacy, was useless in the fourteenth century. The time had long gone by when the theory that an Emperor could depose a Pope found a strong body of supporters in Italy. Louis's action met with but little approval from the Ghibellines—in fact, it alienated from him many of his partisans.

The most important defection from his side was that of the Marquises of Este. They had always professed their willingness to submit to the Pope if only he would recognise their rule in Ferrara. An embassy which they sent to Avignon in 1328 brought about a reconciliation. In return for the admission that they ruled Ferrara as Vicars of the Church, and the payment of an annual tribute of 10,000 florins, they were freed from all ecclesiastical censures. The final details of the treaty were not settled until 1332. Henceforward the House of Este ruled over Ferrara and the smaller cities of Comacchio and Adria with unquestioned authority.

The example of the Estensi was followed by Azzo Visconti. He was disgusted by Louis's treatment of his family, as well as anxious for a reconciliation with the Church. As soon, therefore, as he found himself secure in the lordship of Milan, he opened secret negotiations with the Pope. These did not bear full fruit until the next year; but when, in April, 1329, Louis of Bavaria again arrived in Lombardy, he found his authority openly defied by Azzo. In vain the Emperor endea-

voured to force him to submit. He advanced with his army to the gates of Milan, but a siege was impossible with the forces at his disposal. Azzo, however, had no desire to push matters to extremities. On payment of a large sum he was received again into the Emperor's friendship; and Louis withdrew first to Pavia, then to the district south of the Po.

Here another sudden change of front had brought Parma and Reggio again over to the Ghibellines. In every city which had come under a despot we find the old party lines more or less blotted out. The tyrant changed sides as best suited his own interests, the partisans of liberty became Guelf or Ghibelline in opposition to whatever side the tyrant favoured.

When Ghiberto da Correggio first got himself elected Signore of Parma, he, though of a Guelf family, had allied himself with the Ghibellines. His chief adversaries had been the Rossi, a noble family—one of those which had first started a Guelf party in Parma, and had brought about the revolt of the city from Frederick II. in 1247. When Ghiberto had revolted from Henry VII. the Rossi joined the Visconti and other Ghibellines. Together with the San Vitale they expelled Ghiberto in 1316. Then Parma was, as we have said, Ghibelline for six years, until, in order to get complete control of the city, the Rossi drove out the San Vitale, and went over to the Guelfs. Finding their authority hampered by that of the legate, who placed a Papal garrison in Parma, they changed sides once again. In August, 1328, they stirred up a tumult, and expelled the Papal Governor and his garrison.

Next day they marched on Reggio. The Papal Governor of that city—Reggio, like Parma and Piacenza, had given itself to the Church until the election of a lawful Emperor—had hanged a thief who was a dependent of the family of the Fogliani. In revenge they and the Manfredi assassinated the Governor in his private oratory, and then retired to their country castles. This was a few months before the revolution in Parma. Now the Fogliani and Manfredi joined the Rossi, and

seized Reggio without meeting any opposition. The third of the great Guelf families—the Roberti—was imprisoned, and Reggio too became Ghibelline.

On the approach of the Emperor the Modenese Ghibelines began to rejoice. One said to the other, "How happy are we to live at the present time! This is the day which our fathers waited for in vain. The men of Parma and Reggio, always hostile to the Emperor, now rally to his rule; much more ought we to call him in, we who have at all times been faithful to him; let us see him for an instant and then die. Our fathers move in their tombs, their hearts beat once more." One said, "I have two sons: I would give one of them if I might see the Germans;" another, still more carried away by his feelings, exclaimed, "Only to touch the garments of one of them, I would allow all that I have to be given over to headlong ruin." Many went out to meet the Germans, crying out, "Here is the day we have long wished for; here is the day our fathers long desired to see."

With such words does the chronicler of Modena bring before us the intensity of the devotion which the Emperor was still capable of inspiring in Italy. Louis placed German garrisons in the three Emilian cities. In Modena their outrageous conduct soon showed the people how mistaken had been their enthusiasm. This was his last act in Italy. In December, 1329, he went to Trent to arrange for fresh supplies of men and money from Germany. But the news he received from that country caused him to pursue his journey north of the Alps. He quitted Italy for ever, leaving behind him a name odious alike to both the factions of the peninsula.

We have now come to the last scene of our story. Liberty was extinct over most of Lombardy. The brothers Mastino and Alberto ruled over the four cities of the Mark and the lesser towns of Feltre and Belluno. Ferrara under the Estensi, Mantua under the Gonzaga, had definitely lost their freedom. Bologna, while retaining its republican institutions, had given itself in 1327 to the legate, Cardinal de Poiët. Bologna had always been

admittedly a part of the dominions of the Church ; but for centuries the Popes had had no authority over the Commune. From Bologna the legate extended his sway over the greater part of Romagna, the despots who had seized on the cities being expelled or forced to acknowledge his overlordship.

Modena, Reggio, and Parma were still nominally republican, and had formed a league against the legate. Piacenza was in much the same condition as Bologna. Tortona, Alessandria, and the smaller towns of Piedmont were more or less subject to King Robert of Naples. In Asti the Guelf nobles, the Solarii and their partisans, were supreme.

Almost all Central Lombardy was Ghibelline. Azzo Visconti, without abandoning that party, had been reconciled with the Pope in 1330. He resigned the title of Imperial Vicar, and to make up for this got himself elected in the same year lord of Milan for his life. Of the other cities some, under the rule of a leading family, such as the Tornielli in Novara and the Beccheria in Pavia, preserved some vestiges of freedom. Others were under despots. Tremacoldo ruled Lodi, Ravizza Rusca Como.

North of the Po Brescia alone was still free and still Guelf, under the protection of Robert of Naples. The Ghibelline faction, expelled in 1315, had maintained themselves in the Contado by the help of the neighbouring lords, Scaligers, Bonaccolsi, and Visconti. In 1330 they induced the lords of Verona and Milan to make a determined effort to restore them to their homes. The Brescian Guelfs, ringed round by hostile cities, saw no hope of effectual aid from King Robert, and but little prospect of resisting the forces brought against them. In their extremity they heard that King John of Bohemia was in Tyrol engaged in negotiations with the Duke of Carinthia, and sent to offer him the lordship of their city for life in return for his help.

John was the eldest son of the Emperor Henry of Luxemburg. He had married one of the daughters of the last native King of Bohemia, and he had obtained

the kingdom from his father as a vacant fief of the Empire, as well as by the choice of the Bohemians themselves. He was of a brave and generous nature, eager above all things to shine in tournaments and win glory as a knight. He preferred the brilliant courts of the West to his new kingdom, the administration of which he entrusted to his friend the Count of Lippe, while he himself wandered through the world in search of adventures.

King John accepted the offer of the Brescians; and entering their city with a force of cavalry on the last day of the year 1330, he was proclaimed lord of Brescia amidst general rejoicings. A sudden wave of enthusiasm passed all over Lombardy at this news. The courteous manners of King John, his noble bearing, his impartiality were everywhere extolled. As before in the days of his father Henry, so now city after city looked to a German prince to free them from faction. Not a fortnight after his arrival in Brescia Bergamo, torn by party conflicts, proclaimed him Signore. Cremona and Crema at once followed this example. In February Pavia, Novara, and Vercelli, without any solicitation on his part, put themselves under his rule. The lords of Como and of Milan itself felt forced to go with the tide, and took the title of his Vicars. In March he went to Parma, on the invitation of the citizens; from there he went to Reggio and Modena, and received the lordship of all three cities. Even distant Lucca, hard pressed by the Florentines, sought and found safety under his sway.

Thus, in a few months, King John had built up an extensive dominion. The Marquis of Montferrat and the Count of Savoy were his allies; ambassadors came to seek his friendship from the lords of Mantua and Verona. His rapid success recalled the early career of his father in Italy; like him he was to experience how unstable were the Italians.

The Pope had professed indignation at John's interference in the affairs of the peninsula, and had sent letters to protest against it. But it soon became known

that the King had had a private interview with the Cardinal de Poiët on the confines of Modena and Bologna, and that they had parted on friendly terms. It was rumoured that Pope and King were secretly in league. John was to build up a dominion in Lombardy, which was to put an end to the despots, form a barrier against Louis of Bavaria and be a counterpoise to the power of Robert of Naples, from whom the Pope was anxious to shake himself free. The Papal legate was, on the other hand, to bring all the cities in the states of the Church directly under the obedience of the Holy See. The despots were to be deposed and the Guelf and Ghibelline parties put down everywhere.

Guelfs and Ghibellines had united to welcome King John. Now the Italians saw with amazement Ghibelline lords, Guelf Communes, and the King of Naples all allied against him. The great Lombard lords—Visconti, Della Scala, Gonzaga, and Este—were the first to oppose him. They feared that he was building up a power in Lombardy which would bring about their ruin. Accordingly they entered into a league to bring about his downfall. The Florentines, angered at the loss of Lucca, and seeing in John above all the son of their old enemy Henry of Luxemburg, soon adhered to the League, and drew in King Robert, who saw his position in North Italy threatened. John's conduct made matters easy for the confederates. His proceedings had irritated many who had at first welcomed him. Brought up in the midst of German feudalism, he was unable to understand the spirit of the burghers of the Italian Communes. He conferred castles and lands belonging to the cities on the nobles who were his partisans or even on his German followers. He increased the power of the nobles within the walls, he exempted some of those outside from the jurisdiction of the Communes. Even the impartiality with which he strove to restore the exiles everywhere, though it pleased the more moderate, excited the resentment of the more factious. While opposition was thus springing up everywhere against him, John was recalled to Bohemia by an

attack made on that kingdom by Louis of Bavaria and all the neighbouring princes. He soon made peace with these, and then, instead of returning to Italy, went to Avignon to confer with the Pope.

His absence left free scope to his enemies. They drew up a regular treaty of partition to decide the fate of the cities which had given themselves to King John. By this arrangement Cremona and Bergamo were to fall to Azzo Visconti, Brescia and Parma to Mastino della Scala, Reggio to the lord of Mantua, Modena to the House of Este.

If John had remained in Italy, backed as he was by those Communes which feared to fall under the yoke of the despot of a neighbouring city, he might very probably have held his own against the confederates. His absence, however, allowed them ample time to organise their attack. His first loss was that of Brescia, the city which had been the first to call him in.

King John had recalled the exiled Ghibellines to Brescia, contrary to the terms on which the lordship of the city had been offered to him. He had also freed certain districts of the Contado from the authority of the Commune. These actions so angered the Brescian Guelfs that they opened negotiations with the Ghibelline Mastino della Scala, offering him the lordship of the city if he would give them vengeance on the Ghibellines. He accepted their offer ; and Italy saw with amazement a double infamy. The Brescian Guelfs sacrificed the liberty of their country in order to obtain a triumph over the adverse faction. The lord of Verona handed his own partisans over to the vengeance of their enemies in order to add one more to the list of his subject cities.

The gates of Brescia were opened to Mastino's troops in June, 1332, and a few weeks later King John's garrison surrendered the castle also. In accordance with his compact Mastino allowed the Guelfs to murder and plunder the Ghibellines for three days without any check. Public opinion was universally aroused against Mastino for his conduct, and his brother Alberto left

the city in indignation. This ineffectual protest is almost the only action that history records to the credit of Alberto, who usually devoted himself to pleasure, leaving all affairs to his brother. Thus ignominiously ended the long and glorious career of the Commune of Brescia.

The turn of Bergamo came in the following September. The factions were again at one another's throats when Azzo Visconti invested the city. It came into his hands, but whether by force of arms or by a treaty is uncertain. Thus one more was blotted out from the list of the Lombard Communes.

In the November of the same year the Beccheria stirred up a revolt in Pavia against King John's authority. Azzo hastened to the city and took possession of it, shutting up the royal garrison in the fortress which Matteo had constructed. The Beccheria once again controlled Pavia, recognising, however, Azzo's overlordship.

Azzo's power was still more increased by the acquisition of Novara and Vercelli. The latter city was handed over to him in 1334 by the dominant Ghibelline party. In Novara the Bishop, Azzo's uncle, Giovanni, overthrew by an ingenious stratagem the rule of the Tornielli, who had given the city to King John, and opened the gates to his nephew's troops.

Elsewhere the leagued despots were not so successful. Cremona, Modena, Reggio, and Parma, in close alliance with one another, made a valiant fight for liberty under King John's son Charles, whom he had left in Italy as his lieutenant. They were also leagued with the Papal legate, who had under him Piacenza, Bologna, and all Romagna. An attack on Modena made by the Estensi and Gonzaga, with help from Verona and Milan, failed. Nearly all the Modenese nobles were again in exile; but the people were enthusiastic in defence of their liberty, and gave loyal support to Manfredi dei Pii, who ruled the city for the King.

In November, 1332, the whole force of Modena, strengthened by reinforcements of horse from the legate,

and from Reggio and Parma, sallied out to attack the confederate lords who were besieging the castle of San Felice. After a long conflict the bravery of the Modenese infantry, who faced and overthrew the hostile cavalry, decided the victory. An immense booty, with many prisoners of importance, fell into their hands; and, as a consequence of the battle, the territory of Ferrara was given up to pillage.

When King John, in the early spring of the following year, returned to Italy, furnished with money and a large force of French cavalry, he was able to take the offensive. He failed, however, to raise the siege of the castle of Pavia, which surrendered in June to the Visconti, or to recapture Bergamo; and, though he laid waste a great part of the territory of Milan, he was unable to provoke Azzo to a pitched battle. In the meantime a great disaster had fallen on his ally the legate.

The latter, following up the victory of the Modenese, had laid siege to Ferrara. For nine weeks the city was hard pressed; but at last the allied lords succeeded in introducing a large relieving force within the walls. Then suddenly sallying out, they surprised the camp of the legate, who was quite unprepared for any attack. The besieging army was utterly routed; thousands were slain or drowned in the Po; most of the great lords of Romagna who were serving under the banner of the Church were captured.

The legate refused to advance the money required for the ransom of these prisoners, with the result that the Marquises of Este induced them to secede from his party. The Romagnol lords—Malatesta of Rimini, Da Polenta of Ravenna, Ordellaffi of Forli, to name the most important—were thereupon freed without ransom, together with their vassals and friends. One and all they set to work to recover the cities of which they had formerly been despots. In three months almost the whole of Romagna was in revolt against the Cardinal, and the cities had returned to the rule of their former lords.

This overthrow of the legate put an end to Lombard freedom. King John made a truce with his enemies. He had wearied of his Italian enterprise, and sought now only to raise as much money as possible by the sale of the cities still under his lordship. He sold Parma and Lucca to the Rossi, Reggio to the Fogliani, Modena to the Pii, Cremona to Ponzino Ponzoni; and in October, 1333, he quitted Italy, to resume elsewhere the quest for glory which led him when old and blind to meet his death in the *mêlée* at Crécy.

His departure left the confederate lords free to continue their project for the partition of Lombardy. The four cities which had continued faithful to John were, however, resolved not to resign their freedom without a struggle. For a time they held their own. The people of Reggio gained a considerable victory in the open country. The Rossi of Parma corrupted the German mercenaries serving with the confederates, and arranged that they were to seize the despots and hand them over to their adversaries. The plot was discovered, with, however, the result that the army which had invaded the territory of Parma broke up in confusion, and that a large body of Germans went over to the Rossi.

These advantages were more than counterbalanced by the revolt of Bologna from the legate. The intrigues of the Estensi with some of the leading noble families in Bologna seem to have brought about this revolt. It is noticeable that, in spite of the severity of the laws meant to curb their power, the Bolognese nobles had by now recovered a great deal of their former political importance.

While the legate had sent most of his mercenaries out of the city to resist an incursion from the side of Ferrara, the leaders of the plot called the people to arms with cries of "Long live the People! Death to the Legate!" All the French soldiers found in the streets were massacred. The legate and his officials shut themselves up in the strong fortress which he had induced the people to build for him under the pretext that the Pope intended to take up his residence in

Bologna if a fitting dwelling were provided for him. The Marquises of Este at once sent a force to support the rising and to aid in besieging the castle. This defied all their efforts until the Florentines, moved by respect for the legate, sent an embassy which secured for him a free departure with all his followers and treasures, and for the Bolognese the surrender of the castle. Bologna now joined the league of the Lombard despots. The revolt from the Church brought little good to the city. In two months' time the factions of the Scacchesi and the Maltraversi were fighting in the streets; fifteen hundred of the latter were banished, and the road was prepared for a tyrant.

In April of the same year, 1334, Azzo Visconti attacked Cremona with thirty thousand men.¹ The city was now under the rule of Ponzino Ponzoni. Constant dissensions had so weakened the old rival of Milan that the chronicler of Reggio tells us that in 1323 there were scarcely twelve hundred men able to bear arms in the city, whereas a few years before there had been ten thousand.² Some years of peace had partially repaired these losses; but Ponzoni saw no hope of resisting Azzo's forces. He offered to surrender if not relieved by King John before a certain day. King John had definitely turned his back on Italian affairs; no help came. July, 1334, saw the end of the independence of Cremona.

Next year it was the turn of Parma and Reggio. The Rossi, who ruled the former city and Lucca, saw that it was useless to contend with the forces against them. Accordingly they made a treaty with Mastino della Scala, yielding up the two cities to him, and retaining in full sovereignty Pontremoli and many castles. In June,

¹ From 1328 to 1330 Cremona had been free under an Imperial Vicar. Then Marsilio Rossi of Parma was Signore for a year. Then followed the rule of King John of Bohemia, who sold it to Ponzino Ponzoni.

² He also tells us that he had seen so many exiles from Cremona in Reggio that they could find no room in the houses, but had to live under the colonnades, where they were kindly tended by the people of Reggio.

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1335, the General Council of Parma was called together and elected Mastino as their lord. In December of the same year he took possession of Lucca.

The Fogliani had expelled or imprisoned their former lords, the Manfredi, in 1333, and had thereupon been elected lords of Reggio. Now, after the surrender of Parma, Alberto della Scala invaded the Reggian territory, sacking and burning everywhere.

The Fogliani saw that further resistance was impossible, and in return for a sum of money and the recognition of their independent rule over certain castles, they surrendered the city. According to the treaty Reggio was handed over to the Gonzaga, but Mastino forced them to acknowledge that they held it from him as a fief.

In the meantime Azzo Visconti was extending his rule. The Rusconi of Como, hard pressed by the Guelph exiles, and hated by the people, saw themselves forced to hand over that city to Azzo, retaining for themselves the lordship of Bellinzona and the lands round the northern end of Lago Maggiore. Then Azzo turned against Tremacoldo, the tyrant of Lodi. The citizens welcomed him as a liberator. Lodi was joined to the dominions of the Visconti, and Tremacoldo ended his days in Milan. We can form some estimate of what his government had been by the fact that Azzo now restored no less than three thousand exiles to this small city. In October of the same year Crema capitulated to the Visconti.

There still remained Modena and Piacenza. The former city was determined to resist. But one by one the castles of the Contado were taken by the Estensi. Nearly all the nobles had been exiled, and were in the ranks of the assailants. The city itself was closely blockaded. The Pii therefore resolved to treat for a surrender. In May, 1336, Modena opened its gates to the Marquises of Este. The exiles of all parties were restored, and the distracted city at last found internal peace.¹

¹ Eleven noble families, of all factions, came back from exile to Modena. To Reggio came back Ugolino dei Sessi and his five

The Pii retained, in accordance with the terms of surrender, their town and lands of Carpi as an independent lordship, and ruled there for some centuries with considerable splendour. In like manner the Pichi were recognised as sovereigns over their town of La Mirandola and its district. In this way some of the feudal lords who had been forced to submit to the Communes, now that the Communes were no more, recovered their liberty.

Francesco, son of Alberto Scotto, had in July, 1335, expelled the Fontana and other leading Guelfs, and made himself master of Piacenza. He had been helped in this by Azzo Visconti, who asserted that Francesco had promised to acknowledge him as lord. Francesco refused, and Azzo set to work to reduce Piacenza by force of arms. Personal interests had so far superseded the old party divisions that the exiled Guelfs joined Azzo's army. Piacenza fought bravely to preserve her independence. For eight months the city held out. Then, seeing all hope gone, Francesco surrendered. He kept for himself the castle of Firenzuola; Piacenza itself in December, 1336, accepted Azzo as lord.

In each city that the confederate Lombard despots had thus acquired they built a castle to keep down any attempt at revolt. To each city, too, they recalled the exiles. No longer basing their power on the prevalence of a faction, they ruled impartially over Guelf and Ghibelline. Liberty was gone; but in its stead the cities received the gift of internal peace and of an orderly government to which they had long been strangers.*

sons, who had been in exile time out of mind. The Sessi had been in almost continual exile for seventy years, but still remained rich and powerful.

* Many small lordships originated in this way during the fourteenth century. Thus, besides Mirandola and Carpi, Correggio, Guastalla, and Novellara, were all capitals of small independent states. The upper Val di Taro was ruled by the Landi as an Imperial fief: the Pelavicini held Busseto and the adjoining district.

* Azzo Visconti, by all accounts, was a pious, just, and clement prince, a lover of peace, making no distinction between Guelf and Ghibelline.

Of all the Communes which had united to resist Barbarossa, only Bologna and the cities of Piedmont still retained their freedom. But their hour, too, had come. In 1337 the mercenary soldiers in Bologna, corrupted by the gold of Taddeo dei Pepoli, rushed to the Piazza and proclaimed him Signore. Some attempt was made at resistance; the partisans of the Pepoli were, however, too powerful, and Bologna for the first time sank beneath a tyrant.

The cities of Piedmont, apart from the general current of Lombard affairs, had so far preserved their liberties, under the protection of King Robert of Naples. Now they were to share the common lot. Already, in 1316, Casale, which had more than once acknowledged that it formed part of the dominions of the Marquises of Montferrat, but which nevertheless had constantly striven for independence, definitely resigned its liberty to the Marquis Theodore, and became the capital of his states. In 1344 Ivrea, and three years later Valenza, a small town on the borders of Montferrat and Pavia, which had for a time managed to establish a Commune, gave themselves to the Marquis Giovanni. Both places adopted this expedient as the only means of securing internal peace. The historian of Montferrat gives a curious list of the nobles and commons who swore fidelity to the Marquis in the name of the Guelf and Ghibelline parties.

Asti had long been Guelf, under King Robert's protection. The leading Guelf family, the Solarii, so abused their power that their chief partisans deserted them, and plotted with the Ghibelline exiles to hand the city over to Montferrat. Accordingly King Robert's garrison and the Solarii were expelled, and the Marquis Giovanni added Asti to his dominions in 1339. The Solarii were so powerful in the Contado, where they held twenty-four castles, that the Marquis found he could not keep the city. Accordingly, a year or two after, he sold it to Lucchino Visconti, Azzo's uncle and successor.

About the same time as Asti, her old rival Alessandria sought internal peace under the rule of the lord of Milan.

The death of King Robert in 1343 was the final ruin

of the Guelf cause in Piedmont. Chieri and Alba, together with the small towns and districts which had for nearly a century been subject to the House of Anjou, came into the hands of the Counts of Savoy. Tortona and Bobbio, both of which had so far maintained themselves by Robert's help, fell to Lucchino Visconti.¹

The story of the Lombard Communes shapes itself at first round the rivalry between Milan and Pavia. It is perhaps fitting that we should end that story with the tale of the last despairing struggle of the capital of the Lombard kings against her Roman rival, although in point of time this final conflict lies outside the limits of this work. We have seen how, in the general absorption of the Lombard cities by the four families Visconti, Della Scala, Gonzaga, and Estensi, Pavia had preserved a considerable measure of independence. The Visconti had, indeed, the overlordship of the city; but the actual rule was in the hands of the family of Beccheria, whom, as we have seen, had long been the heads of the Ghibelline and popular party. Under their rule Pavia enjoyed peace, and recovered a great part of its former prosperity.

In 1356, at a time when the lesser despots of Lombardy and the Marquis of Montferrat had all leagued to put a stop to the ever-increasing power of the Visconti, the Beccheria broke off from their old allies and joined the confederacy against Milan. At once an army of forty-thousand men was sent to reduce Pavia, and blockaded it so as to cut off all supplies. Within the walls was a young Augustinian monk, Jacapo dei Bussolari by name, a man of great eloquence and inspired with an enthusiastic love for freedom. His preaching had already gained for him great influence, not only with the people, but with the heads of the Beccheria family. Now he turned his eloquence to encourage the Pavesans in their struggle against the Visconti, and so emboldened them that the burghers sallied out and utterly routed the besiegers, capturing their fleet on the Ticino and their fortified camp with all its stores.

¹ Alba and most of the rest were taken almost immediately from Savoy by the Visconti.



PAVIA AT THE BEGINNING OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

(After the "Cosmographie" of Belleforest.)

Frà Jacopo's influence in the city now became unbounded. Not only did he endeavour to bring about a reformation of manners, but he began to preach against the rule of all despots, foreign or native, and to incite the people to restore a popular form of government. The Beccheria took alarm at this, and plotted against his life. This was discovered, and the people furnished him with a guard for his person and began to reform the government, depriving the Beccheria of their power and restoring the Commune. The chief among the Beccheria were discovered in a plot against the new state of affairs, and left the city with their supporters.¹

In the meantime the Visconti, at first unsuccessful against the leagued Lombard despots, had held their own. The army of the League had been badly beaten in the field, and a want of unity in their plans had still farther weakened the confederates. Peace was made in 1358, leaving things much as they were before the war, but apparently containing no provision to secure Pavia against attack. The exiled Beccheria had, as a matter of course, gone over to the Visconti, and put them in possession of their castles. A pretext was soon found for hostility against the city, and in March, 1359, a Milanese army once more appeared before it.

To gain his aid the Marquis of Montferrat had been elected Signore—it is not clear whether before or after the expulsion of the Beccheria. At any rate, he was in full agreement with Frà Jacopo, recognised the institutions he had caused the people to set up, contenting himself with the name of lord and the military command and was zealous in the defence of the city.

Frà Jacopo's exhortations moved the burghers to sacrifices of every kind. The men gave up their plate, the women their jewels and costly stuffs, to provide pay for the army which the Marquis was sending to their assistance. The men capable of bearing arms manned the walls; the rest of the population, clad in sober garments, endeavoured by prayer and austerities to gain the favour of Heaven. Montferrat's troops succeeded in relieving

¹ Their palaces were destroyed to the very foundations.

the city, but in September a fresh army was before the walls. The greater part of the Contado had been overrun by the Milanese or had gone over to the Beccheria. The city was soon closely invested. Famine and pestilence broke out; the mercenaries raised by Montferrat were corrupted by offers of larger pay, and deserted to the Visconti. The Marquis was unable to pierce the besieging cordon or to attempt a diversion by attacking the Milanese territory. Still Pavia held out. The old days seemed to have returned when the footmen of Lombardy faced the German chivalry at Legnano, and the citizens of Crema and Brescia preferred death on the walls to surrender.

At last plague and famine did their work. Frà Jacopo saw that farther resistance was useless. He therefore offered to surrender on conditions. He stipulated for the internal liberties of Pavia, and for a general amnesty, the only person for whom he made no conditions being himself. The Visconti promised everything, and broke their promises as soon as they were in possession of the city. Frà Jacopo ended his days in confinement in a monastery at Vercelli; Pavia passed under the direct rule of the Visconti. Liberty had vanished from the valley of the Po.

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