

GARDNER EDMUND G.

THE STORY OF SIENA AND
SAN GIMIGNANO

Edmund Gardner

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PREFACE

THIS present volume is intended to provide a popular history of the great Republic of Siena, in such a form that it can also serve as a guide-book to that most fascinating of Tuscan cities and its neighbourhood. San Gimignano has been included, because no visitor to Siena leaves the “fair town called of the Fair Towers” unvisited; I have made special reference to it in the title of the book, to lay stress upon the point that, although for administrative purposes San Gimignano is included in the province (and in the *circondario*) of Siena, its history is practically distinct from that of Siena and is more intimately connected with the story of Florence.

The appended list of books and authorities, needless to say, is not a complete bibliography, nor even a catalogue of those quoted in the course of this work. It only represents some of those that my readers will find most useful and helpful, or that will supply further information upon many topics which the limits of this series of Mediaeval Towns have compelled me to treat somewhat cursorily and scantily.

The lamented death of Miss Helen M. James deprived us of her assistance in the illustration of the last three chapters, more especially of the two dealing with San Gimignano. Her work has been at the service of this series from the beginning; but it is, perhaps, especially those who have had the privilege of knowing her, and who have had the opportunity of appreciating her character and her personality, that will realise the greatness of this loss. My friend and publisher, Mr. J. M. Dent, associates himself with me in dedicating this volume to her memory.

E. G. G.

October 1902.

CHAPTER I

The Republic of Siena

SIENA remains the most perfectly mediaeval of all the larger cities of Tuscany. Its narrow streets, its spacious Gothic palaces and churches, the three hills upon which it rises enthroned, with the curiously picturesque valleys between them, are still inclosed in frowning walls of the fourteenth century. The Renaissance came to it late, gave it its enduring epithet of “soft Siena,” and blended harmoniously, almost imperceptibly, with its mediaeval spirit.

According to the more picturesque of the traditions respecting its origin, Siena was founded by Senius, the son of Remus, who brought with him the image of the *Lupa*, the she-wolf suckling the twins, which still remains the city’s badge. When he offered sacrifice to his gods, a dense black smoke arose from the altar of Apollo and a pure white smoke from that of Diana – in commemoration of which was made the *balzana*, the black and white shield of the Commune that we still see upon Siena’s gates and public buildings. There are two other shields associated with it: a blue shield with the word *Libertas* in gold letters; a red shield with a white lion rampant. According to other traditions, scarcely more historical, the first was granted to Siena by Charlemagne, the second (the arms of the People) by the Emperor Otto.

Siena was a place of very small importance during the dark ages. As in the case of its neighbour and rival, Florence, its epoch of greatness begins with the earlier decades of the twelfth century, in the confused period that followed the death of the Countess Matilda of Tuscany. Throughout the greater part of the twelfth century and at the beginning of the thirteenth, the Republic of Siena was nominally ruled by Consuls, who up to the middle of the twelfth century shared their authority with the Bishop. They were men of noble rank, usually three or sometimes six in number, elected by the people in the parliament that met either before the then Romanesque Duomo or in the Piazza di San Cristofano, to hold office for one year. At first the nobles were the greater power in the State; some at least were the descendants of the foreign invaders, the counts and barons of the Frankish and German Emperors, and the result of their prepotency was naturally combined with the territorial rivalry with Florence to make Siena throw in its lot with the Ghibellines, when the great struggle between Papacy and Empire, between republican ideals and feudal traditions, divided Italy. Gradually five noble families came to stand out pre-eminently as the *schiatte maggiori*, with special privileges from the Republic and a predominating influence in the State, names that we shall meet with again and again in Siena’s story; the Piccolomini, the Tolomei, the Malavolti, the Salimbeni and the Saracini. The Salimbeni were the richest and exercised considerable territorial sway in the contado; the Piccolomini claimed to be of pure Latin descent, and were undoubtedly of more democratic tendencies. These nobles were divided against themselves; there was bitter feud between the Salimbeni and the Tolomei, between the Malavolti and the Piccolomini. And presently the people took advantage of this to rise and claim their share in the administration of the city, and in the reformation of 1147 they obtained a third part of the government.

Gradually the Republic of Siena extended its sway over the neighbouring townlets and over the castles of the contado, whose feudal lords were forced to reside in the city for some months in the year, to fight for the Commune in war. In spite of internal factions and dissensions, the city increased in wealth and prosperity; its commerce was largely extended; fugitives from Milan, flying from the Teutonic arms of Frederick Barbarossa, introduced the Art of Wool; Siennese gentlemen, led by Filippo Malavolti – a noble whom we dimly discern as a great figure in those far-off republican days – sailed to Syria in Pisan galleys and shared in the capture of Acre. Notwithstanding its traditional support of the imperial cause, it was in this century that Siena gave to the Church the “great Pope of the Lombard League” – Orlando Bandinelli, who during his long pontificate as Alexander III. (from

1159 to 1181) knew how to uphold the rights of Italy no less than the claims of the Papacy against the mightiest of the Kaisers. And, indeed, the Ghibellinism of the Sienese was always of a patriotic Italian type. In 1186 they closed their gates in the face of Barbarossa, believing that he meant to deprive them of their contado, and hurled back his son Henry discomfited from the Porta Camollia. At the close of the century, Siena began to have a Podestà as chief magistrate, like the other cities of Tuscany, who was probably at the outset an imperial nominee, and the consular government appears to have ceased by about 1212; while the people became associated into Arts or Guilds, somewhat resembling the more famous Florentine associations, whose representatives sat in the councils of the Republic and had their voice in the affairs of State.¹ Already the glorious Duomo, though needless to say not in its present form, had been consecrated by Pope Alexander, and the Dogana stood on the site of the present Palazzo Comunale, a sign of increasing commercial prosperity. A great part of the public authority was now in the hands of the Camarlingo and the four Provveditori di Biccherna, the officials who presided over the finances of the Republic. Though for a few years we still find the names of consuls, the Podestà was from 1199 onwards the chief officer of the State; we find in 1200 and in 1201 that Filippo Malavolti held this office, but after 1211 it was invariably assigned to a foreigner. In 1208 the oldest of the Sienese palaces, the Palazzo Tolomei, was built; although burned by the people on at least two occasions, it still retains not a little of its early mediaeval aspect.

Throughout the greater part of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, Siena – usually more or less allied with Pisa, Pistoia and the Conti Guidi – was engaged in a series of wars with Florence, an intermittent struggle alternating with hollow, insincere treaties of peace. This was due to the antagonistic ideals of Guelf and Ghibelline, to the growing commercial rivalry between the two republics, each especially striving to get into the hands of its own merchants and noble bankers all the increasingly lucrative affairs of the Roman Curia, and, perhaps, more immediately to the fact that each was striving to extend its contado at the expense of the other. Poggibonsi, Colle di Val d'Elsa, Montalcino and Montepulciano – in which right was probably with Siena and might with Florence – were perpetual sources of contention, and the Sienese suffered severe defeats time after time. “Do not forget through eternity those that deny thee, that withdraw themselves from the homage they owe thee, that plot against thee and that bring shame to thee.” So runs the black book of the Commune, the *Memoriale delle Offese*, in which these things were recorded. “Be mindful of Montepulciano, that, though it be of thy contado, most proudly endeavours to withdraw itself therefrom.”² Grosseto was the first place of importance that, in 1224, fell permanently into the hands of the Sienese, a town previously swayed by the Counts Aldobrandeschi of Santa Fiora, those most potent nobles of the Sienese contado whose pride and whose imperialistic tendencies are recorded by Dante.

Within the city the factions raged furiously. The power of the nobles or *gentiluomini* was waning, even in Ghibelline Siena. It was laid to their charge that the wars with Florence had taken so unfavourable a turn, that the Florentines were ravaging the contado, had hurled donkeys into Siena with their catapults, and on one occasion had even penetrated into the city itself. By what appears to have been a comparatively peaceful revolution in 1233, the people obtained an increased share in the government; a supreme magistracy of Twenty-four was created, elected annually by the General Council, eight from each *terzo* of the city, half from each order.³ But their rule became irksome to the more conservative section of the nobles, who formed a rival party and strove to oust the *popolani* from power. In 1240 it came to blood, to adopt the Dantesque phrase. The opponents of the new regime, headed by the Podestà, Manfredi da Sassuolo, rose in arms; the people, led by a certain Aldobrandino di Guido Cacciaconti, who is described as one of the “grandi del popolo di Siena,” and who was of an

¹ Rondoni (*Sena vetus*, p. 53) notes that, in contrast to Florence, there was no distinction between the Greater and Lesser Arts in Siena.

² Printed in the *Archivio Storico Italiano*, series III. vol. xxii.

³ Siena is still divided into *terzi* or thirds; the Terzo di Città, the Terzo di San Martino, the Terzo di Camollia.

old feudal family, rallied round the Twenty-four. The battle began in three places in the city. There was fighting up and down the narrow streets; there was flaming of torches and clashing of weapons round the palaces and towers. The Palazzo Tolomei and the Palazzo Malavolti were burned, and after much devastation and bloodshed, when many had fallen on either side, the Twenty-four got the upper-hand, drove out a certain number of the nobles, and appointed Aldobrandino Podestà. He was a strong and prudent man, who put down disorder with a firm hand, and reconciled many of the leaders of either party. In the comparative tranquillity that followed, the streets and squares of Siena were paved for the first time. But the struggle with Florence proved disastrous. The Sienese were forced to make a disadvantageous peace, and, in 1255, there was an alliance concluded between the rival republics, in the epoch of Guelf predominance that followed the deaths of Frederick II. and King Conrad.

It was in this brief breathing space, of external peace and internal tranquillity, that a knight of Siena, Messer Folcacchiero de' Folcacchieri, wrote what was once thought to be the earliest extant example of a regular canzone, describing his own hapless plight through love: *Tutto lo mondo vive senza guerra*: "All the world is living without war, yet I can find no peace." The constitution at this time shows the usual bewildering number of separate councils that we find in mediaeval Italian republics. The four Provveditori di Biccherna with their Camarlingo still administered the revenues of the State, the executive was in the hands of the Podestà and Captain. Laws were discussed and approved in the General Council of the Campana, composed of "three hundred good Catholics, not excommunicated nor suspected of heresy." There was nominally a Parliament, which the Podestà and Captain could not summon without the consent of two-thirds of the Council of the Campana, and without previously explaining what they intended to propose. But "the Twenty-four were the informing soul of the constitution, and once a month they met in secret council without the Podestà and Captain."⁴

But it was not for long that the Lion shook hands with the Wolf, as we see them at a later epoch on the pavement of the Duomo. Florence was now the predominant power in Tuscany, fiercely democratic and strenuously Guelf; while Pisa and Siena alone clung to the discredited cause of the Ghibellines, the latter thirsting to recover Montalcino which had been lost in the last war. Away in the south, Frederick's heroic son, King Manfred, was upholding the claims of the imperial house of Suabia, and Siena looked to him. A band of exiled Florentines came to Siena in 1258, led by that tremendous Ghibelline noble whom Dante was afterwards to see rising from his fiery tomb as though he held all Hell in scorn, the man whom the triumph of the Guelfs would torture more than all the torments of his burning bed: Farinata degli Uberti. In spite of the express terms of the treaty, Siena turned a deaf ear to the remonstrance of her nominal ally, and refused to expel the fugitives. War being now inevitable, ambassadors were sent to Manfred to obtain his aid. The price of the royal assistance was that the Sienese should swear fidelity and obedience to him. This was done, and in May 1259, from Lucera, the King received the Commune under his protection. To a second embassy, praying him to take the imperial crown and to send a captain with an army into Tuscany, Manfred answered that he loved Siena above all the cities of Italy, and that he would shortly send to those parts such a captain of his own blood and so great a force of armed men with him "that he shall make the rough ways smooth, and rule that province in peace."⁵ And in December the Count Giordano d'Anglano, the King's near kinsman, appeared in Siena, with a small force of Germans. He at once took the field in the Maremma, where Grosseto and Montemassi had rebelled from Siena, and forced the former town to surrender in February. Hearing that the Florentines were making huge preparations, and were sending supplies to Montepulciano and Montalcino, another embassy was sent to Manfred in March, headed by the most influential citizen of Siena, Provenzano Salvani.

⁴ Rondoni, *op. cit.* p. 60.

⁵ Letter of August 11th, 1259, still preserved in the Archivio di Stato of Siena, quoted by Paoli, *La Battaglia di Montaperti*, p. 13.

No sooner had spring come than the Florentine army, headed by their Podesta, Jacopino Rangoni of Modena, entered the territory of the republic and advanced upon Siena by way of Colle and Montereccioni, forcing the Sienese to raise the siege of Montemassi, and to withdraw all their troops for the defence of the city. On the morning of May 18th, there was a smart engagement at Santa Petronilla outside the Porta Camollia. A small force of Germans and Sienese made a vigorous sortie, in which the Germans bore the brunt of the fighting, lost the greater part of their number killed, and the royal banner fell into the hands of the Florentines, who retired to their encampment, having suffered severely in killed and wounded. They broke up their camp and retreated on the 20th, almost simultaneously with the return of Provenzano and his colleagues to Siena followed by a strong force of German and Italian mercenaries from the King.⁶ The war was at once renewed with activity, Provenzano Salvani being the leading spirit throughout. Montemassi was taken and Montalcino rigorously blockaded.

The critical condition of Montalcino combined with Ghibelline intrigues to bring the Florentines again into the field. Farinata and his fellow exiles gave the *anziani*, who then ruled in Florence, to understand that Siena was thirsting for a change of government, for the overthrow of the Twenty-four, and the banishment of Provenzano, “who was the greatest *popolano* of Siena,” and that the nobles were prepared to sell the city to the Florentines. In spite of the strenuous opposition of Tegghiaio Aldobrandino and the Conte Guidoguerra, the Florentines decided instantly to resume hostilities – nominally to relieve Montalcino, in reality to destroy Siena. They called the people to arms to follow the standards of their companies, summoned aid from Lucca and Bologna and all the Guelf cities of their league. At the beginning of September the army of Florence with the Carroccio or battle car of the Republic, over which floated the red and white standard of the Commune, entered the Sienese contado, where it was joined by the men of Perugia and Orvieto. Without counting these, there were at least 3000 horsemen and more than 30,000 infantry; but there were traitors in the army, in secret understanding with the enemy. From their camp beyond the Arbia, the captain and commissaries of the Florentines sent ambassadors to the Sienese, to demand their instant and absolute submission. “Straightway throw down your walls,” they began, “in order that we may enter your city at whatever place likes us best.”

Forthwith the Twenty-four of Siena summoned the council to meet in the church of San Cristofano. There was some wavering at first. The worthy burghers knew nothing of the secret dealings of the Florentine exiles (to which, probably, Provenzano alone was privy), but had heard much of the might and fierceness of the invading forces, and several of the council urged a compromise. At once Provenzano Salvani sprang to his feet and bade them summon the Count Giordano. The Count came and, with the sixteen German constables, his seneschal and an interpreter, stood before the council. There was no thought of surrender then; the Germans shouted with delight at the prospect of double pay and speedy fighting, and Salimbene Salimbeni at once hurried to his palace and returned with the money, driving through the piazza in a cart covered with scarlet and decked with olive. Through his mouth the Twenty-four gave their reply to the Florentine herald: “Go back to your captain and the commissaries, and tell them that we shall answer them by word of mouth on the field.” The whole city was arming; before the church, the piazza of the Tolomei and all the streets leading to it were packed with a wildly expectant and ever increasing crowd. While away in the Duomo the Bishop assembled the clergy and religious, with bare feet moving in solemn procession to implore the divine aid against “the impious appetites of the Florentines,” the Twenty-four had elected Buonaguida Lucari *sindaco* with full powers – practically Dictator.

⁶ The documents cited by Paoli prove conclusively that the story, told by Giovanni Villani, of Farinata contriving that the Germans should be annihilated at Santa Petronilla and the royal standard lost, in order that Manfred might be induced to send a larger force, has no historical foundation. Neither is it a fact that the Sienese were forced to induce the Florentines to resume hostilities because the Germans had been hired for only three months.

“Men of Siena,” cried Buonaguida from the steps of San Cristofano, “ye all know how we have recommended ourselves to the protection of King Manfred; let us now surrender ourselves, our goods and persons, our city and our contado with all our rights, to the Queen of Eternal Life, to our Lady and Mother, the Virgin Mary. Follow me now, all of you, with purity of faith and freedom of will, to make this offering.”

Bareheaded and barefooted, clad like a beggar with a halter round his neck, the Dictator solemnly carried the keys of the city to the Duomo, followed by the people, barefooted too, and crying continually, *misericordia, misericordia*. There all the clergy met them, and at the foot of the choir the Bishop and Dictator solemnly embraced, in pledge of the complete union of Church and State, while hereditary foes fell into each other’s arms. Then after silent prayer, prostrate before the altar, the Dictator in an impassioned harangue formally made over the city and contado of Siena to the Mother of Heaven, while the Bishop mounted the pulpit and solemnly exhorted the people to mutual forgiveness and to approach the sacraments. The next day there was a long procession through the streets, the keys were blessed and given over to the keeping of the Gonfalonieri (the elected heads of the three terzi). All night the churches had been thronged by crowds approaching the confessionals, by enemies seeking reconciliation with each other, and at daybreak the Twenty-four sent three heralds with the banners of each terzo to call the people to arms in the name of God and of the Virgin Mary.

It was Friday, September 3rd. The whole army consisted of a little more than 20,000 men. There were 800 Germans and other royal horsemen with the imperial banner, under Count Giordano and the Count of Arras; 400 more horsemen, partly Germans and partly noble Sienese, under the Count Aldobrandino degli Aldobrandeschi of Santa Fiora and Niccolò de’ Bigozzi, seneschal of the Commune. The Florentine and other Ghibelline exiles, under the Count Guido Novello and Farinata, were partly with Giordano, partly with Count Aldobrandino. There were 19,000 citizen infantry from the three terzi of the city and the contado, under the Podestà, Francesco Troghisio, and their three Gonfalonieri, with the Carroccio of the Republic over which floated a white standard “that gave right good comfort, for it seemed the mantle of the Virgin Mary.” A number of priests, some of them armed, accompanied the army; the rest with the Bishop, old men and women, spent the day fasting, going in procession from church to church throughout the city reciting litanies and the like. They marched out of the Porta Pispini and occupied the hill of Monteropoli beyond which, in the plain of the Cortine between the Biena and the Malena (little streams that join the Arbia), and on the opposite hill of Monteselvoli, lay the Guelf army – its leaders confidently expecting a revolution in Siena in their favour and the speedy surrender of one of the gates of the city. All during the night the Sienese harassed the Florentine camp, and on Saturday morning, September 4th, the battle began.

The Count of Arras, with some 400 horse and foot, advancing along the Biena, moved round Monteselvoli to fall upon the Florentine left flank; while the rest of the army left their hill, crossed the Arbia and approached the enemies’ position – the Florentines in the valley hastening up their own side of Monteselvoli to join the main body. The German heavy cavalry commenced the assault, dashing like dragons into the ranks of the men of Prato, Arezzo and Lucca, horse and men falling in heaps before their terrible lances. The Count Giordano led his *tedeschi* straight for the centre of the Guelfic army, where the “martinella” rang continuously over the Carroccio of Florence, round which the flower of the burgher army stood. The Count Aldobrandino with his cavalry and the eager Sienese followed up the German onslaught; but the resistance was long and stubborn. At last Bocca degli Abati, the traitor in the troop of Florentine nobles, *hostis e cive factus* as Leonardo Bruni puts it, struck Jacopo Pazzi with his sword on the arm that upheld one of the standards of the Republic; a portion of the cavalry went over to the enemy; the rest, seeing themselves betrayed, took to flight. Simultaneously the Count of Arras with the reserve, shouting “San Giorgio! San Giorgio!” burst furiously upon the Florentine flank. Then came, in Dante’s immortal phrase, “the havoc and the great slaughter that dyed the Arbia red.” The Sienese, writes the chronicler Niccolò di Giovanni Ventura, “seemed like unchained lions rushing upon their foes; little did it avail these to call on San Zanobi or

Santa Liperata for aid, for they made a greater slaughter of them than do the butchers of their beasts on Good Friday.” The infantry were driven from their position down into the valley, only to be ruthlessly massacred. A band of Florentine burghers – the flower of the Primo Popolo – stood to the end in heroic desperation round the Carroccio and the standards, and fell in their places, resisting to the last, embracing and kissing the blood-stained wood of the car as they died. A number of the fugitives took refuge in the little castle of Montaperto and held out there till later in the day, when it was stormed and they were all put to the sword. It was not until evening had come that the Count Giordano and the Gonfalonieri of the Sienese bade that quarter should be given and prisoners accepted. The number of the slain Guelfs probably lies somewhere between 10,000, which is the Sienese estimate, and the 2500 given by Villani. The Carroccio had been taken; the *popolo vecchio* of Florence was “broken and annihilated,” in Villani’s terribly expressive phrase; every house in Florence had lost members, and the allied cities suffered only slightly less. Twelve thousand prisoners are said to have been taken.⁷

We should visit the battle-field to-day, for the walk or drive is one of the pleasantest in the neighbourhood of Siena. About four miles beyond the Porta Pispiri we cross the Bozzone, and then, to the left, ascend the long, low hill of Monteropoli. This was the Sienese position before the battle. Opposite is Monteselvoli, and at our feet the Arbia, and between the two long hills the valley. The contadini take an uncanny pleasure in showing us the way, in pointing out and naming the various sites that witnessed the struggle. Away to the left, above the Malena – nearly an hour’s walk from the small railway station of Arbia – is the spot where the battle ended. A steep little hill, the lower part of which is a vineyard, is crowned with olive trees and cypresses, surrounding a pyramid of rough brown stone. The view that it commands is grand and sweeping; the black and barren hills to the south east; Santafiore hid in clouds to the south; and westwards the blood-stained valley of the battle-field, beyond which rises Siena itself with its towers, behind which the sun was already sinking when the Florentines made their last stand.

From the tower of the Marescotti (now of the Palazzo Saracini), Cerreto Ceccolini had watched the whole fight, beating his drum in signal to the people in the streets below, telling them of the course of the struggle, bidding them cry to God and the Madonna while the event hung in doubt, to shout in exultation when the day was won.

The victorious army rested that night on Monteropoli, with their prisoners and booty. They made their solemn entry into Siena the next day by the same gate through which they had passed out to the war, the German nobles and soldiers crowned with garlands of olive, singing songs in their own tongue as they made their way in triumphant procession to the Duomo. Three days of general supplication and thanksgiving followed; to the title *Sena vetus* was added by solemn decree *Civitas Virginis*, to the litany an *Advocata Senensium*. According to Malavolti, not more than 600 Sienese had fallen on the field of battle, but among them were many young men of the noblest families in the city. It is needless to re-tell in this place the familiar story of the triumphant entry of the Count Giordano with the Ghibelline exiles and his German mercenaries into the desolate Florence, and how that short-lived despotism was set up which the people themselves – those strenuous burghers and artisans of the Florentine Guilds – overthrew six years later. Montalcino, the original cause of the war, had surrendered to Siena a few days after the battle, and had been cruelly humiliated. According to the Sienese chroniclers, the people of Montalcino came through the Porta Romana in penitential robes, with halters round their necks, crying *misericordia*, and were forced to go to the field of battle to bury all the abandoned dead. A similar fate befell Montepulciano, which Manfred granted to the Commune of Siena on November 20th. In the following year Provenzano was made Podestà

⁷ The Sienese accounts of the battle by Domenico Aldobrandini and Niccolò di Giovanni Ventura (in which, says Prof. d’Ancona, the narrative has “una grandezza veramente epica”) are in Porri’s *Miscellanea Storica Senese*; for the Florentine version see Villani, vi. 75-79, and Leonardo Bruni, *Istoria Fiorentina* II. (vol. i. pp. 215-225 in the edition of 1855). Cf. Villari, *I primi due secoli della Storia di Firenze*, ch. iv., and especially C. Paoli, *La Battaglia di Montaperti*, already referred to. *Il Libro di Montaperti*, edited by Prof. Paoli (Florence, 1889), is “the only official document of Florentine source which remains to us of that war.”

of Montepulciano, and with him went Don Ugo, the Camarlingo di Biccherna, to arrange for the building of a fortress there.

But this epoch of Ghibelline prepotency in Tuscany was brief. The victory of Charles of Anjou over Manfred at Benevento, in February 1266, was followed by the restoration of the Guelf supremacy in Florence. Siena and Pisa now stood alone.

Siena had not long remained united. There was still a Guelf faction within the walls, headed by the Tolomei, and the nobles were daily growing more estranged from the people. There was fighting in the Piazza Tolomei in 1265, when the people fired the palace; and again, in 1267, when, after the fall of Manfred, the Guelfs commenced to raise their heads anew. It was in these years that Provenzano Salvani became the ruling spirit of the State, and, in Dante's words, "in his presumption thought to bring all Siena into his own hands." It was mainly through his influence that Siena joined with Pisa in aiding Corradino, the youthful grandson of the great Frederick, in his designs upon Italy. Corradino came, a victim marked for the slaughter; and in August 1268 he rode into Siena with his army, and was received with the utmost joy as true Caesar. It was during his stay here that his troops, united with the Sienese, gained a slight victory in the Valdarno, and the prisoners brought into the city seemed to the exulting Ghibellines an augury of the complete triumph of the imperial cause. In the utter overthrow of these aspirations on the disastrous field of Tagliacozzo, "where without arms the old Alardo conquered," a friend of Provenzano's had fallen into the hands of the Angevin victor, who set a heavy ransom as the price of his life. Then was it that Provenzano appeared in the guise of a supplicant in the Campo, as Dante tells us in the *Purgatorio*, begging money of all that passed by, till the sum was made up "to deliver his friend from the torment that he was suffering in Charles' prison."

In the very next year a more bitter fate was Provenzano's own. With Florentine aid, the Guelf exiles were threatening the Sienese frontier, and Provenzano Salvani, with Count Guido Novello, led a mixed force of Tuscan Ghibellines and Spanish and German mercenaries to attack Colle di Val d'Elsa. Here, in June 1269, they were surprised by a smaller force of French cavalry under Guy de Montfort, "routed and rolled back in the bitter paces of flight," the Florentines and Guelf exiles taking ample vengeance for the slaughter of Montaperti. More than a thousand Sienese fell. Provenzano himself, to whom before the battle it had been foretold that his head should be the highest in the field, was taken prisoner, and murdered in cold blood by Cavolino Tolomei, who rode through the host with his head upon the point of his lance. Among the Guelf exiles in Colle was a noble lady named Sapia – the wife, it is said, of Ghinibaldo Saracini – who waited in agonised suspense in a tower near the field, declaring that she would hurl herself down from the window if her countrymen were victorious. When she saw them routed, and watched the furious Guelf pursuit, she broke out into the paroxysm of delight recorded by Dante, "crying to God, Henceforth I fear thee no more."⁸

The battle of Colle di Val d'Elsa closes the period of Ghibelline supremacy in Siena. In the following year Guy de Montfort, as vicar of King Charles, forced the Sienese to take back their Guelf exiles, who soon drove out the Ghibellines. Instead of the Twenty-four, the chief power was now vested in a Thirty-six, who included both nobles and *popolani*. The long struggle with Florence was over for the present, Siena being forced to join her rival in the Guelf League under the suzerainty of the Angevin king. And as was inevitable when the Guelfs got the upper hand in an Italian state, in 1280 the nobles, or *gentiluomini*, were excluded from the Government, which was now put into the hands of the "Fifteen Governors and Defenders of the Commune and People of Siena." A daring, but unsuccessful attempt of the Ghibelline exiles and their adherents within the walls to recapture the city in 1281 only resulted in strengthening the new democratic government. In 1285 the Fifteen were reduced to Nine, the famous magistracy of the *Signori Nove*, "the Lords Nine, the Defenders of the Commune and People of the city and district of Siena, and of the jurisdiction of the same," in which no members of noble houses could sit (though still eligible for the other offices of the State,

⁸ *Purg.* xiii. 115-123.

such as those of the Provveditori di Biccherna). Their term of office was two months, during which they lived at the expense of the State in one or other of the palaces of the city, rented for the purpose, until the present Palazzo Pubblico was built. The Nine were chosen from the *popolo di mezzo*, the rich and enlightened merchant class, that came between the nobles and the plebeians. Throughout the story of Siena we find the word *Monte* used to denote the faction or order that held sway, and this was the beginning of the *Monte dei Nove*, whose adherents were afterwards known as the *Noveschi*. The order that had previously held the supremacy is henceforth known as the *Monte de' Gentiluomini*.

The Siena of this epoch of Guelf predominance is that luxurious city of the *gente vana*, the “vain folk,” that Dante knew, the city whose paths he trod in the early days of his exile. Senseless extravagance reigned side by side with hectic devotion and mystic enthusiasm. Typical, indeed, of this time are two figures of whom we read in the *Divina Commedia*; the young nobleman, Lano Maconi, who, having squandered all his substance in riotous living, joined in the unsuccessful expedition of the Sienese and Florentines against Arezzo in 1288, and, when the Sienese fell into an ambush at the ford of Pieve del Toppo, instead of saving his life by flight, dashed into the middle of the Aretines and found the death he sought; Pietro Pettignano, Franciscan tertiary and combseller of the Terzo di Camollia, who saved the soul of Monna Sapia by his prayers, saw visions and wrought miracles, and after a life of humility and righteousness died in 1289, and was venerated as a saint.⁹ Magnificent processions, gorgeous ceremonies of church and state, sumptuous balls and banquets, celebrated the bestowing of the order of knighthood upon the nobles of city and contado – each aristocratic house striving to eclipse the other in lavish hospitality and brilliant display. Amidst it all we hear the voice of that realist of the Trecento – Cecco degli Angiolieri, who “anticipates Villon from afar”¹⁰ – singing of the three things for which he cares, *la donna, la taverna, e' l dado*, celebrating his sordid passion for Becchina, the shoemaker's daughter, pouring venomous abuse upon his own father, who persisted in living on and thus keeping him out of his heritage, railing against all mankind in half furious, half humorous style, daring to break a lyric lance even with the divine Florentine, Dante Alighieri himself. More characteristic of Siena is Cecco's contemporary; Folgore da San Gimignano, in his *corona* of fourteen sonnets addressed to the *brigata nobile e cortese*, a club of twelve extravagant young Sienese nobles. Month by month through the year he sets forth a round of pleasures of every kind, feasting and hunting, music and jousting (the latter, in spite of a reference to Camelot, of a very harmless, carpet-knight description), dallying in pleasant places with lovely women. Nowhere else shall you find so perfect a picture of the splendid life and delicate living of courtly circles in “soft Siena” — *Siena l'amorosa madre di dolcezza*, as another poet called her – with her gay young gallants —

“Who as King Priam's sons might surely stand,
Valiant and courteous more than Lancelot,
Each one, if need should be, with lance in hand,
Would fight in tournament at Camelot.”

It was from these glittering, luxurious scenes that one of Siena's proudest nobles, Bernardo Tolomei, fled to the desert, in 1313, to found the great convent of Monte Oliveto Maggiore, and to return to the city in 1348 with his white-robed companions, to lay down his life for his fellow-countrymen during the pestilence.

Until the advent of that terrible pestilence of 1348, the epoch of the supremacy of the Nine is the brightest in the history of Siena. “In that time,” wrote Fra Filippo Agazzari, a few years later, “the city of Siena was in such great peace, and in such great abundance of every earthly good, that

⁹ *Inf.* xiii. 120; *Purg.* xiii. 128.

¹⁰ J. A. Symonds.

almost every feast day innumerable weddings of young women were celebrated in the city.”¹¹ It is the epoch in which most of Siena’s noblest buildings were reared, the epoch in which its three supreme painters – Duccio di Buoninsegna, Simone Martini, Ambrogio Lorenzetti – for a brief while raised the school of their native city to an equality with that of Florence. Trade flourished, the university prospered; the Republic remained Guelf, though it retained a certain Ghibelline element within its core that kept it from an aggressive policy, and led the more strenuous Florentines to a proverb touching their neighbour: *La lupa puttaneggia*, “the she-wolf plays the harlot.” In 1303 the Sienese purchased Talamone – which they fondly hoped to make into a valuable sea-port whereby they might become a great maritime power to rival Genoa or even Venice – from the Abbot of San Salvatore. Henceforth, to their mocking neighbours, they became the “vain folk that hopes in Talamone,” upon which they spent enormous sums of money with no result, owing to the unhealthiness of the situation and the impossibility of keeping the harbour clear. They joined the Italian league against Henry of Luxemburg, sent men and money to the defence of Brescia, and, by their prompt assistance to the Florentines, helped in forcing the Emperor to raise the siege of Florence in 1312, when his army wasted their contado. A little later, when Uguccone della Faggiuola was upholding the imperial cause, 400 Sienese cavalry and 3000 infantry were in the Guelf army that was annihilated at Montecatini in 1315. But in 1326, when Duke Charles of Calabria came to Siena on his way to Florence, and demanded the lordship of the former city as well, they rose in arms against him, barricaded the streets with chains, and forced the proud Guelf prince to accept their terms. The Duke of Athens, in 1343, having made himself tyrant of Florence, attempted to get Siena into his hands, by stirring up the nobles against the Nine; the Nine retaliated by arranging the conspiracy that caused his overthrow and his expulsion from Florence. “For three days,” writes Bindino da Travale, “the *balzana* floated over the Tower of the Commune of Florence, alone, without any other banner.”

The external wars of this epoch, mainly against Pisa, were unimportant. Within Siena itself the harmony was by no means unintermittent. A passage that we read in the *Cronica Senese* under the year 1314 is only too typical: “On the sixteenth day of April there was great tumult and battle in Siena, between the Tolomei and the Salimbeni, and all the city was up in arms.” And, in addition to the never ending feud between these two great houses, there were political interests at stake. The Tolomei, with whom were other houses of the magnates, were opposed to the Nine, and adopted the cause of the lower classes of the people, the *popolo minuto*, who were excluded from the Government by the burgher oligarchy. In 1318 the Tolomei, with certain of the Forteguerrri and other nobles, plotted with the notaries and butchers and a number of artisans, to overthrow the Nine; but the attempt was easily repressed. A prolonged vendetta between Salimbeni and Tolomei kept the whole city disturbed between 1320 and 1326, while similar feuds, accompanied by ferocious murders and sanguinary riots, between the Malavolti and Piccolomini, Saracini and Scotti, enlivened the two following decades of the century. In 1346, a section of the Tolomei, allied with the *popolo minuto*, attempted a rising in the contrada of the Porta Ovile; several of their plebeian adherents were hanged, but the Captain of War was afraid to lay hands upon the nobles. In 1347, the Pope’s legate and the Nine succeeded in reconciling the Piccolomini and the Malavolti.

The terrible pestilence, known as the Black Death, that swept over Europe in 1348, devastated Siena for nearly six months. Even when we remember Boccaccio’s pages, we still read the account in the *Cronica Senese* with a fresh thrill of horror.¹² It raged from May to October. Men and women felt the fatal swelling, “and suddenly, crying out, they died. The father hardly stayed to see his son; one brother fled the other; the wife abandoned her husband; for it was said that this disease was caught by looking, and in the breath.” So great was the mortality that none could be hired to bury the dead. No sooner was a man’s breath out of his body, than his friends took him to the church and buried

¹¹ *Assempro* II.

¹² Agnolo di Tura, *Cronica Senese*, 122-124.

him, without any funeral service, as best they could. Huge trenches were dug in different parts of the city, and the dead thrown in, indiscriminately, in great heaps. "And I, Agnolo di Tura called Grasso, buried five of my sons in one trench with my own hands; and many others did the like. And also there were some that were so badly covered up that the dogs dragged them out, and ate many bodies in the city. No bells tolled, and no one wept at any misfortune that befel, for almost every person expected death; and the thing went in such wise that folk thought that no one would remain on live, and many men believed and said: This is the end of the world. Here no physician availed, nor medicine, nor any defence; rather it seemed that the more precaution a man took, the sooner he died." About three quarters of the inhabitants of city and contado perished, though the "more than 80,000 persons" of Agnolo di Tura must be an exaggeration. While the pestilence raged most fiercely, Bernardo Tolomei and his white robed Olivetani came down from their cloistered retreat to tend the stricken people of their native city, and almost all, including Bernardo, died with them. In the following year the Sienese who survived gave themselves up to feasting and riotous living. They all behaved for a while like brothers and relations, says the chronicler; each one felt as though he had won back the world, and no one could settle down to doing anything. And for a long while Siena seemed uninhabited, *per Siena non pareva che fusse persona*.

The order of the Nine fell in 1355, and thirteen years of tumultuous, perpetual change followed. The Emperor elect, Charles IV. – "di Lusimburgo ignominioso Carlo," as Fazio degli Uberti calls him – was on his way from Pisa to be crowned at Rome; the Sienese ambassadors, headed by Guccio Tolomei and Giovanni di Agnolino Salimbeni, had sworn fidelity to him at Pisa on behalf of the Nine, and he had sworn in return to preserve the liberties of Siena, and to make the Nine his vicars. With a thousand knights and barons, the Emperor and Empress entered Siena on March 25th, each under a baldacchino gorgeous with gold, with music playing and banners flying, and were greeted with enthusiasm. No sooner had the Caesar dismounted at the palace of the Salimbeni, than a cry arose throughout the city: "Long live the Emperor and death to the Nine!" The Piccolomini with the consent of the other magnates (excepting only Giovanni di Agnolino Salimbeni) began the rising, and the *popolo minuto* on the following day rose in arms at their call. When night fell, on the 26th, the chains of the city were cut, and the keys brought to the Emperor; the Nine, helpless and terrified, lurked in the Palace of the Commune, while the people sacked and burned their houses. The next day all Siena was in arms. The Emperor rode through vast acclaiming throngs in the Campo to confer with the Nine in the Palace, while louder and louder rose the deafening roar, "Long live the Emperor and death to the Nine!" – the nobles instigating the populace to further efforts. In the Palace the Caesar received the abdication of the Nine, forced them to renounce all the privileges he had granted them, to annul the oath he had sworn to their ambassadors – while the younger nobles, shouting and cheering, led the populace to sack the palaces of the Provveditori di Biccherna and Consoli di Mercanzia, and the houses of the wool merchants, to release the prisoners, to hunt out the luckless Podestà and War-Captain. The books of condemnation, the papers of the Nine, were burnt before the Emperor's eyes in the piazza, and their official chest was dragged through the city at the tail of an ass. Though Charles had sufficient decency to refuse to surrender the persons of the Nine to the fury of the mob outside, he let the nobles and populace avenge themselves on their houses and property, and it was not until the evening had come that he sent his soldiers to guard the Dogana del Sale, and to order every one to lay down their arms. But such was the general alarm that no one would receive any of the adherents of the luckless Nine; their servants deserted them, the very priests and religious shrank from them as though they had the plague. The Emperor caused a certain number of citizens to be elected – twelve nobles and eighteen of the *popolo minuto* to "reform the government," and went on his way leaving his vicar, the Patriarch of Aquileia, in charge. A supreme magistracy of twelve *popolani* was elected, henceforth known as the *Signori Dodici*, four from each terzo of the city, holding office for two months, one of them to serve as Captain of the People; there was further to be a kind of subsidiary council of six *gentiluomini*, who were not to reside with the Signoria in the

Palazzo, but without whom the Twelve could undertake nothing of importance nor open letters that concerned the state. When the Emperor returned from Rome at the beginning of May and passed through Siena again, he was received with great honours and renewed acclamations, as the Deliverer of the People, and made about sixty knights, nobles of Siena and plebeians alike – many of the latter carried bodily to him on the shoulders of the populace and knighted, amidst the wildest clamour and confusion, against their own will and to the great disgust of the imperial barons.

Hardly had the Emperor left the city than the six nobles – with the consent of their leader, Giovanni di Agnolino Salimbeni, who appears prominently during these years as a powerful influence in the Republic on the side of peace and moderation – were forced to lay down their office. The whole government now remained in the hands of the Twelve, who were mostly petty tradesmen and notaries, and whose rule was corrupt and incapable. A number of the subject towns refused to acknowledge them; Montepulciano gave itself to Perugia, and the Sienese, in revenge, persuaded the governor of Cortona to revolt against the Perugians. A fierce war between Siena and Perugia followed. The Sienese gained a creditable victory outside the walls of Cortona. The light armed cavalry of Perugia harried the Sienese contado, and even approached the gates of the city itself, and the Sienese retaliated by taking the mercenaries of Conrad of Landau into their pay – who were, however, intercepted and severely cut up by the Florentine mountaineers of the Val di Lamone – and ravaged the Perugian territories up to the walls of Perugia. Peace was made at the end of 1358, much to the advantage of Siena, who kept Cortona, while the Perugians had to set Montepulciano free at the end of five years. At the beginning of 1365 the latter town made Messer Giovanni di Agnolino their Podestà, and returned to the obedience of Siena.

During these years of the rule of the Twelve, the contado was perpetually threatened by wandering bands of mercenaries – the Compagnia Bianca, mainly Englishmen, but led by German captains; the Compagnia della Stella; the Compagnia del Cappello of Italians, under Niccolò da Montefeltro; the Compagnia di San Giorgio, which is associated with the great name of John Hawkwood. These had to be compounded with, to be guarded against by enrolling other mercenaries, to be played off against each other. In October 1363, the Sienese, led by their Conservatore or War-Captain, Ceccolo di Giordano Orsini, and stiffened by a strong force of Germans and Hungarians, overtook the Compagnia del Cappello, which was devastating the contado, in the Valdichiana, and gained a complete victory, taking its captain and other leaders prisoners. But when, in March 1367, they tried to play the same game with John Hawkwood and his company of Englishmen, near Montalcinello, there was a very different tale to tell; the Sienese were driven back to Siena in headlong rout, their Conservatore was taken prisoner, and peace had to be purchased at a goodly rate of golden florins. Within the city there was restless plotting against the Twelve, followed by banishments and executions – for this government was by no means so reluctant to lay hands upon the nobles as the Nine had been. Realising that the feeling of the city was turning against them, the Twelve sent a splendid embassy to receive Pope Urban V. when he landed at the Port of Talamone (on his way to Rome in that ineffectual, because premature, attempt to heal the leprosy of Avignon), entered into league with him, sent horsemen under Sozzo Bandinelli and Piero Piccolomini to support the cause of the Church at Viterbo and Bologna. This was good so far as it went, but it did not avert the storm that burst upon Siena in 1368.

The Twelve had split into two factions – the “Canischi” and the “Grasselli.” The Canischi sided with the Tolomei, with whom were Piccolomini, Saracini, and Cerretani; the Grasselli were allied with the Salimbeni. The Emperor was expected in Tuscany, and the most honoured citizen of Siena, Giovanni di Agnolino Salimbeni, had come from Montepulciano to head the embassy that went from Siena to greet Caesar in Lombardy. Although even the magistrates in the Signoria were at daggers drawn, Giovanni’s influence had delayed the catastrophe; but, on his return from the Emperor, he was killed by a fall from his horse on the way from Siena to Rocca d’Orcia. The nobles rose in mass, united with the adherents of the Nine, and *senza colpo di spada*, at the beginning of September,

forced the Twelve to surrender the Palace and the entire control of the State. A new magistracy of thirteen consuls was established; one from each of the five Greater Families, five representatives of the lesser nobles, three to represent the Nine. An embassy was dispatched by this new government to the Emperor; but, in the meanwhile, the Salimbeni had made common cause with the adherents of the Twelve, and sent ambassadors on their own account. On September 24th the Salimbeni, shouting for the People and the Emperor, rushed out of their palace and gardens in arms, joined forces with the Twelve, broke open the Porta di San Prospero, and admitted Malatesta de' Malatesta, the imperial vicar, who with 800 horse had been lying in wait. From street to street the people and nobles struggled desperately with each other; during the three weeks of their rule, the latter had fortified their houses and enrolled soldiers for this emergency, which enabled them to hold their own at first even against the trained cavalry of the imperial vicar, while their overbearing and tyrannous conduct had exasperated the people to madness. A last stand was made in the Campo round the Palazzo, where there was a grim struggle, *grande e aspra battaglia*, until Malatesta carried the place by storm, and the populace, rushing in after the imperial soldiery, sacked it. The nobles fled from the city with their families, carrying with them all the goods that they could save from the wreck. Malatesta fortified himself in the Poggio Malavolti, from which, until the following January, he practically ruled the city as imperial vicar; while in the Palazzo a popular council of 124 plebeians met, which was called the *Consiglio de Riformatori*, and created a new supreme magistracy of twelve, composed of five of the *popolo minuto*, four of the Twelve, three of the order of the Nine; the Signori Dodici Difensori del Popolo Senese. The same proportion of the three *ordini* or *Monti* was to hold in the general council of 650 *popolani*. To reward the Salimbeni for their services to the People, or, as Malavolti, the aristocratic historian of Siena, puts it, "for the perfidy they had used against the other nobles," they were given five castles in the Sienese contado and declared *popolani*, so as to be eligible for the chief magistracy.

The Emperor came back to Siena on October 12th, with the Empress. He entered at the Porta Tufi, where the Twelve and the Salimbeni met him, all crowned with flowers and bearing olive branches. He alighted at the Salimbeni palace, while his followers were quartered in the deserted houses of the exiled nobles. The next day, after Mass in the Duomo, he knighted Reame and Niccolò Salimbeni – "and very little pleasure did any one take in that," says the Sienese Chronicle grimly. An enormous present of money was made to him and the Empress, as also to Malatesta, and when the Emperor left on the 14th, the Empress remained behind for some days to induce Siena to redeem the imperial crown which had been pawned in Florence. In the meanwhile the nobles were making alarms and excursions in the contado, almost up to the gates of the city. There was another revolution in December. The lowest portion of the populace, or at least lower than those hitherto represented in the administration – "verily plebeians and entirely new men," as Malavolti has it – assailed the Palazzo, forced their way in, hunted out the representatives of the Twelve and Nine alike. Finally by a sort of general compromise a council of 150 *riformatori* was appointed, who reformed the State by the creation of a supreme magistracy of Fifteen Defenders, composed of eight of the *popolo minuto*, four of the Twelve, three of the Nine. This was the origin of the *Monte dei Riformatori*, because the name was retained in the families of those *popolani* who took a part in this regime, the names of Nine and Twelve (*Nove* and *Dodici*) being retained in those families who belonged to these two orders and shared their fortunes. The Monti of Riformatori, Dodicini, and Noveschi were likewise known as the People of the Greater Number, the People of the Middle Number, and the People of the Lesser Number respectively.¹³

The Emperor rode again into Siena, with the Empress and a long train of knights and nobles, on December 22nd. He dismounted as before at the Palace of the Salimbeni. The nobles were still ravaging the contado and, by means of the Marquis of Montferrat, Charles made some sort of attempt to effect a reconciliation between them and the people, which was cut short by the intrigues of the

¹³ Malavolti, ii. 7. p. 132.

Salimbeni and Dodicini, who had gained the shallow Caesar's ear. The arrival of a papal legate, the Cardinal of Bologna, with armed men at the end of the month increased the general alarm: it was rumoured that Charles intended to sell Siena to the Pope. The Emperor demanded the surrender of the fortresses of Massa, Montalcino, Grosseto, Talamone and Casole, and implied that he meant to reform the State; the Fifteen summoned a general council of more than 800 citizens, and returned an absolute refusal. Then the Salimbeni thought that the time had come to strike. On January 18th, Niccolò Salimbeni rode furiously through the street with armed followers, shouting "Long live the People! Down with the traitors who want the nobles back!" Malatesta with his cavalry entered the Campo, drew up in front of the Palace, calling upon the Signoria in the name of Caesar to surrender, and to expel the three representatives of the Nine. Instantly the alarm was sounded from the Mangia Tower. The armed forces of the people poured into the Campo, and their captain, Matteino di Ventura Menzani, with the gonfalone in his hand, led them against the foreign cavalry. The bells were ringing *a stormo* from churches and palaces, clashing and clanging over the heads of republicans and imperialists, when Caesar himself, his royal helmet crowned with a garland, appeared upon the scenes. With the Salimbeni and a long train of horsemen he was making his way to the Palazzo, when the victorious people, having routed Malatesta, burst upon him at the Croce del Travaglio. The imperial banner was struck down and the imperial forces broken. At the Palazzo Tolomei "there was an incredible battle," the imperial escort fighting desperately to cover the Caesar's retreat. One of the Salimbeni, with an olive branch in his hand, came into the Campo in the name of Caesar to implore the Captain to grant a cessation of hostilities, but was promptly sent about his business. By the time that the unfortunate Emperor got back to the Salimbeni Palace, he had lost more than 400 killed – including two of his nephews – and all the hospitals were full of his wounded.

Before the fight had ended the Defenders sent a solemn procession to bring back the three of the Nine who had left the Palace; "with a goodly company, preceded by the trumpets, with garlands on their heads and with olive branches in their hands; they put them back in the Palace in their place, embracing them and kissing them with the greatest tenderness and craving pardon." The Captain of the People issued a proclamation that no one should sell nor give any food to the Emperor and his folk. "The Emperor remained alone with the greatest fear that any rascal ever had. The people stared at him; he wept and made excuses, embraced and kissed every person that went to him, and said: 'I have been betrayed by Messer Malatesta and by Messer Giovanni and by the Salimbeni and by the Twelve.'"¹⁴ Half starved and altogether terrified, the unfortunate man promised anything the Sienese wanted, in order to get away from the dreadful city. He made the Defenders his vicars in perpetuity, granted the Sienese all conceivable privileges, pardoned everybody everything, accepted a handsome sum of money, and went. Many of the Salimbeni and others tried to escape disguised among the knights of his train, but several were detected and handed over to the Captain of the People. It was said that there had been a conspiracy to make over the lordship of Siena to Malatesta with an annual tribute to the Emperor, to give the Salimbeni and the Dodicini two days of complete vengeance over their foes, to allow the soldiers three days' sack of the city. But the matter was hushed up and the prisoners released, to the indignation of the populace.

A few months of anarchy followed. The Salimbeni and the Dodicini were at the throats of the Noveschi in the city, while the banished nobles maintained a state of war in the contado. The Defenders and the Council of the Riformatori appointed an *esecutore* to maintain order and execute justice, and formed a new association known as the Casata Grande del Popolo, with the white lion for arms, to preserve the popular constitution of the State. In July, 1369, by arbitration of the Florentine Republic, peace was at last made, and the six exiled families – Piccolomini, Malavolti, Saracini, Tolomei, Forteguerra, Cerretani – were reconciled with the Republic and restored to their country, with the right of sitting in all the magistracies of the State, saving only those of the fifteen Defenders,

¹⁴ Neri di Donato, *Cronica Senese*, 202-206.

the three Gonfalonieri, and the Councils of the Riformatori. The treaty was received with universal satisfaction – but the peace was of brief duration. Although the Salimbeni had previously made terms with the other nobles, they continued to hang the banner of the People out of their windows “come consorti del Popolo.”

Among the lowest degrees of the *popolo minuto*— men of the *infima plebe*, workers and carders of the Art of Wool, who lived in the narrow lanes up and down the Costa di Porta Ovile – an association had been formed which afterwards came to be known as the Compagnia del Bruco, from the badge of the contrada. In July 1371, induced partly by hunger, partly by the oppression of the Masters of the Arte della Lana, a number of them rose, took grain by force from the houses where it was stored, and made a disturbance in the Campo. The Senator (as the Conservatore and Capitano di Guerra was now called) arrested three of their ringleaders, put them to the torture and sentenced them to death. They were wool-combers of the Art, all belonging to the association. At once the whole Compagnia rose in arms, and with tremendous uproar, on July 14th, assailed the Palace of the Senator, demanding that the three should be released or else they would burn the place down. Hearing this, the Captain of the People, Francesco di Naddo, left the Palazzo del Commune with the gonfalone and the trumpets before him, and forced his way up to the Senator's Palace. He induced the Senator to surrender the three prisoners – with the sole result that the whole Compagnia, roaring “Out with the Nine and the Twelve,” “Long life to the People,” led by a certain Ferraccio swept through the streets, tore down the banner of the People from the Salimbeni palace, seized the gonfaloni of the terzi, drove headlong before them a band of nobles who had tried to stay their march, and finally – with the aid of the greater part of the populace – captured the Palazzo and expelled the four of the Twelve and the three of the Nine from the Signoria, substituting seven of the “Popolo del Maggior Numero.” There was a short breathing space in which the Council of the Riformatori attempted a sort of compromise. But in the meanwhile the leaders of the Dodicini, with some of the Salimbeni and others of the people who disliked what had happened, gained over the Captain and the three Gonfalonieri to their side. It was arranged that the Captain should secretly introduce armed men into the Palazzo, that each Gonfaloniere should secure his own terzo, and that the Salimbeni should march in from the contado with all their forces and seize the city gates, after which there should be a general massacre of all their opponents and the whole State should be reformed. The plot was to take effect on August 1st; but some inkling of what was intended reached the Signoria. Many arrests were made, and the conspirators resolved to precipitate matters. But on the night of the 29th, hearing the clash of arms in the Captain's apartments, the Defenders were put upon the alert, and succeeded in taking the Captain red-handed in the act of opening the gate. When day broke, the whole city was in an uproar. The three Gonfalonieri and the Dodicini had armed their adherents to the number of nearly two thousand men; they had occupied the mouths of the Campo and the Croce del Travaglio. A horrible massacre commenced in the quarters of the carders' association. The conspirators, armed with crossbows, lances and swords fell upon the unarmed populace, hunting them up and down the narrow lanes along the Costa d'Ovile, breaking into the houses, murdering men, women and children alike. Then they turned to assail the Palace. But the shrieks and the cries for aid of the fugitives had roused the nobles and certain of the Noveschi, who armed themselves and moved to the support of the Signoria. There was fierce fighting in the Campo and at the foot of the Palace, and in each terzo; but at last the victory was complete on the side of the government, and the soldiery of the Salimbeni only moved up from the contado to find that all was over. There was a large number of executions. On the 1st of August, the day on which the conspiracy was to have taken effect, the Captain of the People himself, dressed in scarlet, was led out into the Campo and solemnly beheaded upon a scaffold covered with scarlet cloth. The Gonfaloniere of the Terzo di Città was taken in hiding near San Domenico, and executed at the Porta Salaia; his two colleagues, who had escaped, were declared rebels, with many others. In the new reformation of the State, the popolani of the Middle Number (*Dodicini*) were excluded, the Fifteen being composed of twelve popolani of the Greater Number

(*Riformatori*) and three of the Minor Number (*Noveschi*), while almost all the artisans, *minori artifici*, were added to the number of the *Riformatori*.

The government of the *Riformatori* lasted till 1385. It was practically a government of artisans; though patriotic and energetic, their rule was extremely oppressive, and burghers and nobles alike murmured. There were continual plots, followed by banishments, torturings, executions. The Salimbeni were expelled in 1374, their houses and possessions wasted; but they gathered together in the contado, captured many castles, and carried on a formidable war against the State. In the stormy years that followed the return of the Popes from Avignon and the consequent schism in the Church, Siena suffered greatly from the bands of mercenaries who appeared at intervals in the territory of the Republic, ravaging the country with great damage. In June 1384 the army of the Sienese, engaged in a war in the Papal States against the Prefetto di Vico and Hawkwood, was completely defeated, and the *Riformatori* compelled to purchase an ignominious peace. This shook their power. Shortly afterwards a futile attempt to get possession of Arezzo by purchase from Enguerrand de Courcy, who had occupied it for Louis of Anjou – in which they were forestalled by the diplomatic skill of the Florentines – brought things to a climax. The Malavolti with the Piccolomini, Cerretani, and other nobles joined the Salimbeni in arms, and made war upon the Republic, cruel reprisals being committed on either side, men's tempers embittered; the *Riformatori*, in despair, were ready to admit the Dodicini and Noveschi and all the people into their order. The Florentines secretly fanned the flames. By the beginning of March the *Riformatori* no longer dared to leave the city, while the nobles threatened the gates of Siena itself. "Although I am not one of the *Riformatori*," says the chronicler,¹⁵ "yet do I say that the *Riformatori* were more thoroughly artisan than any other government ever was, and also the most loyal men towards their Commune; and they were more courageous against their neighbours than any other government." According to him they were undone by Florentine intrigue, and by the fault of a few bad men among them. On March 23rd, 1385, certain of the Dodicini forced the Bargello to release a prisoner whom he had arrested near the Porta Salaia. This was the occasion of the rising. The *Riformatori* called their partisans to arms, while the Dodicini and Noveschi, led by the Saracini and Scotti, assailed them furiously in the Campo. For the greater part of the day the struggle raged through Siena. The masses of the people were desperately excited, but divided and disposed to support the *Riformatori*. Then said a Jew to one of the Saracini: "Do you wish to conquer? Now cry, *Viva la Pace!* And at that word all the people will hold with you." The rabble, *tutta la gente minuta*, at once turned upon the *Riformatori*, and the rout was complete; and on the following day the nobles and their allies entered Siena in triumph. "Thus," writes our chronicler,¹⁶ "the city was despoiled of all the Arts, and the Kingdom benefited thereby and all the Marches and the Patrimony, and Pisa grew populous with them. And I, the writer, who am not one of the *Riformatori*, judged that it was ill done; for the city of Siena was ruined and wasted, seeing that successively more than four thousand good artisans, citizens of the city, were driven out, of whom not the sixth part ever returned."

¹⁵ In the continuation (wrongly ascribed to Agnolo di Tura) of the *Cronica Senese*.

¹⁶ *Op. cit.* 294.

CHAPTER II

Saint Catherine of Siena

THE closing years of this great republican epoch are lit up by the genius and the inspiration of one of the most wonderful women in the history of Italy: Caterina Benincasa, now more generally known as St Catherine of Siena. She was born on March 25th, 1347, the youngest of a large family of sons and daughters that Monna Lapa bore to her husband, Giacomo Benincasa, a dyer of the contrada of Fontebranda. The family of the Benincasa belonged to the Monte de' Dodici. Until the death of Giacomo in 1368, his children all lived together with him in the house still shown – one of the most revered sanctuaries of Siena – in the valley below San Domenico.

In her childhood Catherine began to see visions, to practise almost incredible austerities. Her talk already seemed full of a wisdom and a prudence not her own. "It would have been enough," writes one of the friars of San Domenico, who frequented Giacomo's house, "for any of the wisest servants of God." For a long while her family opposed her abnormal mode of life; but they were at last overcome by her sweetness and perseverance. Her father especially, who had seen a white dove hovering over her head while she knelt at prayer, was convinced that she was acting in accordance with the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and bade the others leave her in perfect liberty to live as she chose. At the age of sixteen or seventeen she took the habit of the Dominican Sisters of Penance – the white robe of purity and the black mantle of humility in which we still see her clad on the walls of so many of Siena's churches and palaces. She still remained in her father's house, though for the next three years she lived apart from her family and utterly severed from the outer world: "Within her own house she found the desert, and a solitude in the midst of people." She never left the house save to go into San Domenico – especially that chapel known as the Cappella delle Volte, so full still of the aroma of her sweet spirit. Wondrous revelations came to her of the Divine Beauty; she smelt the fragrance of unearthly lilies, and heard the celestial music of Paradise, led by Mary Magdalene, singing *con voce alta e con grazia di singolar dolcezza*. In her visions Christ stood continually by her side; with Him she walked familiarly; with Him she talked as friend to friend, or recited the psalms in her little room, as one religious is wont to do with another. At last the divine voice spoke in her heart: "I will espouse thee to Myself in perfect faith." On the last day of the carnival, while all Siena was riotously feasting and making merry, Christ appeared to her as she knelt in prayer in her cell, and the voice in her heart spoke again: "Now will I wed thy soul, which shall ever be conjoined and united to Me with most sincere faith, as I promised thee before." Then seemed it to her that the Blessed Virgin came, gloriously attended, to give her in mystical marriage to her Divine Son, who, "gladly accepting, espoused her on the finger with a most noble ring, which had a right wondrous diamond set in the midst of four goodly pearls." "When this most certain vision passed away, the virgin saw continually this ring when she looked at her finger, albeit to us it was invisible."¹⁷

After this vision, Catherine, being now about twenty years old, joined once more in the family life of her home, and began to mix with men and women of the outer world. She chose for herself all the menial offices of the house, was assiduous in the service of the poor and in tending the sick. She became, to adopt her own phrase, *serva e schiava de' servi di Gesù Cristo*. "Catherine," writes the best of her modern biographers, "possessed of that magnificent gift, the perfection of faith, beheld in each poor sufferer to whom she ministered nothing less than the person of her Lord. She sought Him then in the streets and broadways of her native city, and she found Him in the hospitals of the lepers, and wherever sickness had assumed its most terrible and repulsive forms."¹⁸ Her ecstatic

¹⁷ *Leggenda minore*, i. 12.

¹⁸ Augusta Drane, vol. i. p. 83. I think that this author unquestionably deserves to be called the best of Catherine's modern

trances grew more prolonged, her wondrous visions more continuous; she suffered intolerable pains in all her frame, and appears gradually to have come to live without nourishment of ordinary food and drink. All that approached her were struck by her mirthfulness and never-failing bright spirits; “ella è sempre lieta e ridente,” wrote one that saw her. The Benincasa were prosperous then, and her father allowed Catherine to dispense to the poor, at her own discretion, all that was in his house. But Giacomo died in 1368, and in the revolution of the following year his family suffered heavily. The three sons only saved their lives by the intervention of their sister, who led them in safety, through an armed mob of their enemies, to take refuge in the Spedale on the opposite hill. Shortly after, the three left Siena for Florence, where they became Florentine citizens.

The same year that her brothers left Siena, 1370, marks an epoch in Catherine’s life. “Do you not see, father,” she said to Frate Tommaso della Fonte, “that I am no longer she who I was, but that I am changed into another?” Praying as usual in the Cappella delle Volte in San Domenico, her Divine Spouse had appeared to her in vision, and drawn forth her heart from her side, placing His own, *uno cuore rubicundo e lucidissimo*, therein instead. Meditating upon the Passion, she began to endure in her body and in her soul what Christ had endured for man. A little later she seemed to be dying, or actually dead. In this suspension of her life or mystical death – call it what you will – she beheld the spiritual lives of Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise, and was bidden to return to the world, to convince it of sin and error, to warn it of impending peril. “The salvation of many souls demands thy return,” said the voice of the Divine Spouse in her heart, “nor shalt thou any longer keep that way of life that up to now thou hast kept. No longer shalt thou have thy cell for dwelling-place; nay, thou shalt go forth from thy own city for the utility of souls. I shall be ever with thee: I shall guide thee, and lead thee. Thou shalt bear the honour of My name, and shalt give spiritual teaching to small and great, to the laity no less than to clerics and religious; for I shall give thee such speech and wisdom that no one shall be able to resist. I shall bring thee even before Pontiffs and before the rulers of the Church and of the Christian people, to the end that, as is my wont, I may by means of the weak confound the pride of the strong.”¹⁹

Henceforth her work was done in the light of the world. Incurable sinners, like that *singolare ribaldo* Andrea di Naddino Bellanti, were moved to repentance by her prayers; felons, dying in torments under the red-hot pincers of the executioners (*attanagliati* in the horrible phrase of the epoch), turned their despairing blasphemies to words of joy and comfort; fierce faction leaders, like Giacomo Tolomei, laid aside their fury and went humbly to confession. When the pestilence raged in Siena in 1374 and many fled the city, Catherine was foremost in tending the stricken, in encouraging the dying, preparing them for death, even burying them with her own hands. “Never,” writes one of her friends, “did she appear more admirable than at this time.”

Gradually a little band of followers and disciples, of both sexes, gathered round her. At first these were mainly Dominican friars, headed by Frate Tommaso della Fonte, her confessor and a friend of her father’s family, and Frate Tommaso Nacci Caffarini, who wrote the beautiful book known as the *Leggenda minore*; and, a little later, the famous Frate Raimondo delle Vigne da Capua, a strenuous labourer in God’s vineyard and a man of apostolic spirit, who succeeded Frate Tommaso della Fonte as her confessor, and wrote the famous life of her, the *Leggenda*, of which Caffarini’s book is in the main an abridgement. There were devout women too, who robed themselves in the same black and white habit of penance, some of them from the noblest families of Siena: Alessia Saracini and Francesca Gori, the two whom we see with her in Bazzi’s frescoes; several of the Tolomei; and, later, Lisa, the widow of Catherine’s brother Bartolommeo. Presently there were added to these several young men of noble birth, who acted as her secretaries and legates, united to her by what seems a wonderful blending of religious enthusiasm and spiritualised affection: Neri di Landoccio de’

biographers; but the reader must be warned against her historical inaccuracies and her treatment of some of the Saint’s political letters.

¹⁹ Raimondo da Capua, *Leggenda*, p. 226.

Pagliaresi, a scholar and poet; Francesco Malavolti, a somewhat unstable youth who at first relapsed at times into his former worldly life, and whom she recalled to herself in one of her sweetest and most affectionate epistles, addressing him as “carissimo e sopracarissimo figliuolo in Cristo dolce Gesù;” Stefano Maconi, who headed a furious feud of his family against the Tolomei and Rinaldini, until converted by her to be the most beloved son of all her spiritual family, and ultimately the sainted prior of the Certosa of Pavia.

One famous episode of this epoch in her life has been perpetuated in a letter of Catherine’s own, that is one of the masterpieces of Italian literature, and in a famous fresco of Bazzi’s. A young nobleman of Perugia, Niccolò di Toldo, attached to the household of the Senator of Siena, was sentenced to be beheaded for some rash words against the government of the Riformatori. In his prison he abandoned himself to desperation and despair – he was a mere youth, thus doomed to death in the flower of his age – refused to see priest or friar, would make no preparation for his end. Then Catherine came to him in his dungeon. Let her own words that she wrote to Frate Raimondo tell what followed: —

“I went to visit him of whom you know; whereby he received so great comfort and consolation that he confessed and disposed himself right well. And he made me promise by the love of God that, when the time for the execution came, I would be with him. And so I promised and did. Then, in the morning, before the bell tolled, I went to him; and he received great consolation. I took him to hear Mass; and he received the Holy Communion, which he had never received again.²⁰ His will was attuned and subjected to the will of God; and there alone remained a fear of not being brave at the last moment. But the boundless and flaming bounty of God passed his expectation, creating in him so great affection and love in the desire of God, that he could not stay without Him, saying: ‘Stay with me, and do not leave me. So shall I fare not otherwise than well; and I die content.’ And he laid his head upon my breast. Then I felt an exultation and an odour of his blood and of mine too, which I desired to shed for the sweet spouse Jesus. And as the desire increased in my soul and I felt his fear, I said: ‘Take comfort, my sweet brother; for soon shall we come to the nuptials. Thither shalt thou go, bathed in the sweet blood of the Son of God, with the sweet name of Jesus, the which I would not that it ever leave thy memory. And I am waiting for thee at the place of execution.’ Now, think, father and son, that his heart then lost all fear, and his face was transformed from sadness into joy; and he rejoiced, exulted and said: ‘Whence cometh to me so great grace, that the sweetness of my soul will await me at the holy place of execution?’ See how he had come to such light that he called the place of execution holy! And he said, ‘I shall go all joyous and strong; and it will seem to me a thousand years before I come there, when I think that you are awaiting me there.’ And he uttered words of such sweetness of the bounty of God, that one might scarce endure it.”

She waited for him at the place of execution, with continual prayer, in the spiritual presence of Mary and of the virgin martyr Catherine. She knelt down and laid her own head upon the block, either dreaming of martyrdom or to make herself one in spirit with him at the dread moment. She besought Mary to give him light and peace of heart, and that she herself might see him return to God. Her soul, she says, was so full that, although there was a multitude of the people there, she could not see a creature.

“Then he came, like a meek lamb; and, when he saw me, he began to smile; and he would have me make the sign of the Cross over him. When he had received the sign, I said: ‘Up to the nuptials, sweet brother mine! for soon shalt thou be in the eternal life.’ He placed himself down with great meekness; and I stretched out his neck and bent down over him, and reminded him of the Blood of the Lamb. His mouth said nought, save *Jesus* and *Catherine*. And, as he spoke so, I received his head into my hands, fixing my eyes upon the Divine Goodness and saying, ‘I am willing.’”

²⁰ *I.e.*, since his first Communion – that at least seems the more obvious meaning of *la quale mai più aveva ricevuta*.

As she knelt with the severed head in her hands, her white robe all crimsoned over with his blood, Catherine had one of those mystical visions which she can only tell in terms of blood and fire. She saw the soul received by its Maker, and saw it, in the first tasting of the divine sweetness, turn back to thank her. "Then did my soul repose in peace and in quiet, in so great an odour of blood, that I could not bear to free myself from the blood that had come upon me from him. Alas! wretched miserable woman that I am, I will say no more. I remained upon the earth with very great envy."²¹

Gradually we find Catherine becoming a power in her own city, a factor in the turbulent politics of Italy, a counsellor in what a sixteenth century Pope was to call the Game of the World. She dictates epistles, full of wise counsels, to the rulers of the Republic – to her "dearest brothers and temporal lords," the Fifteen, Lords Defenders of the city of Siena, to her "most reverend and most dear father and son" the Podestà, or to her "dearest brother in Christ sweet Jesus," the Senator. At Rocca d'Orcia – the chief fortress of the Salimbeni – she reconciles the rival branches of that great clan with each other, makes peace between the head of the House, her friend Agnolino (the son of the great Giovanni di Agnolino Salimbeni) and his factious kinsman Cione. While staying at the Rocca, she appears to have learnt to write – it is said by a miracle.²² Be that as it may, the greater part at least of her extant letters (and, so far as the knowledge of the present writer extends, all those of which the original autographs have been preserved), were dictated to her secretaries. We possess nearly four hundred of them, these epistles "al nome di Gesù Cristo crocifisso e di Maria dolce," written – to use her own phrase – "in the precious blood of Christ" to persons of both sexes, and of every condition of life from the King of France and the Roman Pontiff to a humble Florentine tailor, from the Queens of Naples and Hungary to a courtesan in Perugia. Her philosophy is simple, but profound: strip yourself of self-love, enter into the Cell of Self-Knowledge – that is the key to it. And all alike, in appearance at least, pause to listen to her inspired voice, bow before her virginal will.

There is grim war preparing between Pope Gregory XI., in his luxurious exile at Avignon, and the tyrant of Milan, Bernabò Visconti. To the Cardinal Legate of Bologna, who is to direct the campaign, she writes: "Strive to the utmost of your power to bring about the peace and the union of all the country. And in this holy work, if it were necessary to give up the life of the body, it should be given a thousand times, if it were possible. Peace, peace, peace, dearest father! Do you and the others consider, and make the Holy Father think of the loss of souls rather than the loss of cities; for God requires souls rather than cities."²³ Bernabò and his wife Beatrice each send ambassadors on their own account to gain her ear. To the tyrant she writes of the law of love, of the vanity of earthly lordship in comparison with the lordship of the city of the soul, of the necessity of submission to the Head of the Church, "the Vicar who holds the keys of the blood of Christ crucified."²⁴ She bids the proud lady of Lombardy robe herself with the robe of burning Charity and make herself the means and instrument to reconcile her husband "with Christ sweet Jesus, and with His Vicar, Christ on earth."²⁵ Her prayers are effectual, and a truce is proclaimed. The Vicar Apostolic in the Papal States writes to her for counsel in the name of the Pope. She bids him destroy the nepotism and luxury that are ruining the Church. Better than labouring for the temporalities of the Church would it be to strive to put down "the wolves and incarnate demons of pastors, who attend to nought else save eating and fine palaces and stout horses. Alas! that what Christ won upon the wood of the Cross should be squandered with harlots."²⁶ Then comes the news that the Sovereign Pontiff is meditating a crusade. She throws herself heart and soul into the undertaking. She addresses Queen Giovanna of Naples, the

²¹ Letter 273.

²² Letter 272.

²³ Letter 11.

²⁴ Letter 28.

²⁵ Letter 29.

²⁶ Letter 109.

Queen Regent of Hungary and many other princes, all of whom answer favourably and promise men and money. She cherishes the design of freeing Italy from the mercenary companies, and sends Frate Raimondo to the camp of Sir John Hawkwood, with a letter urging the great English condottiere and his soldiers to leave the service and the pay of the devil, to fight no more against Christians but “take the pay and the Cross of Christ crucified, with all your followers and companions, so that you may be a company of Christ to go against those infidel dogs who possess our holy place, where the first sweet Verity reposed and sustained death and torment for us.”²⁷ It is said that Hawkwood and his captains, before the Friar left them, swore upon the Sacrament and gave him a signed declaration that, when once the crusade was actually started, they would go.

In February 1375, Catherine left Siena for Pisa, charged with negotiations on the Pope’s behalf with the latter republic. Here she stayed, with a band of her disciples, some months, so enfeebled with continual ecstasies that they thought her at the point of death. Here, on the Fourth Sunday of Lent, she is said to have received the Stigmata – the wounds of Christ’s Passion – in her body, in the little church of Santa Cristina on the Lungarno. Be this as it may, a new epoch in her life begins at this date – the epoch of her two great struggles for the Church and for Italy.

Since Clement V. removed the papal chair to France in 1305, the Popes had resided at Avignon. Their court had become a scandal to Christendom; Rome was abandoned to ruin and ravage. Previously to this date, the temporal sovereignty of the Popes had been little more than a nominal suzerainty over the cities of the Papal States, many of which were either swayed by petty despots or governed themselves as free republics. But now things were changing. While the Roman Pontiffs remained beyond the Alps, their legates were attempting to fuse these various elements into a modern State. At the head of foreign mercenaries they were subjugating city after city, and building fortresses to secure their hold. Florence, though forming no part of the Papal States, saw her liberties threatened. The refusal of the Legate of Bologna, although he had letters to the contrary from the Pope, to allow corn to be sent from his province into Tuscany in time of famine – followed, as it was, by the appearance of Hawkwood in the territories of the Republic – precipitated matters. War broke out in the latter part of 1375. The Florentines appointed a new magistracy, the Eight of the War, to carry it on, and sent a banner, upon which was *Libertas* in white letters on a red field, round to all the cities, offering aid in men and money to any who would rise against the Church. Città di Castello began; Perugia followed; and in a few days all central Italy was in arms against the Temporal Power. “It seemed,” wrote a contemporary, “that the Papal States were like a wall built without mortar; when one stone was taken away, almost all the rest fell in ruins.” The republics of Siena and Arezzo promptly entered the league; Pisa and Lucca wavered. Conciliatory overtures from the Pope, who offered to leave Città di Castello and Perugia in liberty and to make further concessions for the sake of peace, were cut short by the expulsion of the Papal Legate from Bologna. Florence was solemnly placed under the interdict, and an army of ferocious Breton soldiers taken into the pay of the Church, under the command of the Cardinal Robert of Geneva, for the reconquest of the Papal States.

Even at this moment the more moderate spirits on either side looked to the dyer’s daughter of Siena for light and guidance. Her eloquent appeal – which has fortunately been preserved to us – secured the neutrality of Lucca and Pisa.²⁸ Her whole heart was set upon the reconciliation of the Pope with Italy, to be followed by the return of the Holy See to Rome, and a complete reformation of the Church. She addressed letter after letter to the Sovereign Pontiff, calling him *dolcissimo babbo mio*, claiming to write “to the most sweet Christ on earth on behalf of the Christ in Heaven.” The wickedness and cruel oppression of evil pastors and governors have caused this war. Let him win back his little rebellious sheep by love and benignity to the fold of the Church. Let him uplift the gonfalone of the most holy Cross, and he will see the wolves become lambs. Let him utterly extirpate these

²⁷ Letter 140.

²⁸ Letter 168.

pastors and rulers, these poisonous flowers in the garden of the Church, full of impurity and cupidity, puffed up with pride, and reform her with good pastors and governors “who shall be true servants of Jesus Christ, who shall look to nought but the honour of God and the salvation of souls, and shall be fathers of the poor.” The Divine Providence has permitted the loss of states and worldly goods, “as though to show that He wished that Holy Church should return to its primal state of poverty, humility, and meekness, as she was in that holy time, when they attended to nought save to the honour of God and the salvation of souls, caring only for spiritual things and not for temporal.” Let him come straightway to Rome, “like a meek lamb, using only the arms of the virtue of love, thinking only of the care of spiritual things;” for God calls him “to come to hold and possess the place of the glorious shepherd St Peter.” He may claim that he is bound to recover and preserve the treasure and the lordships of the cities that the Church has lost; far more greatly is he bound to win back so many “little sheep, who are a treasure in the Church.” Let him choose between the temporal power and the salvation of souls; let him win back his children in peace, and he will surely have what is due to him. He can conquer only with benignity and mildness, humility and patience. “Keep back the soldiers that you have hired, and suffer them not to come.” Let him come as soon as possible, *come uomo virile e senza alcun timore*; but “look to it that you come not with a power of armed men, but with the Cross in your hand, like a meek lamb.”²⁹ But to the Signoria of Florence she wrote in another strain: “You know well that Christ left us His vicar, and He left him for the cure of our souls; for in nought else can we have salvation, save in the mystical body of Holy Church, whose head is Christ and we are the members. And whoso shall be disobedient to Christ on earth, who is in the place of Christ in Heaven, shareth not in the fruit of the blood of the Son of God; for God hath ordained that from his hands we have communion, and are given this blood and all the sacraments of Holy Church, which receive life from that blood. And we cannot go by another way nor enter by another gate.” “I tell you that God wills and has commanded so, that even if Christ on earth were an incarnate demon, much less a good and benign father, we must be subject and obedient to him, not for his own sake, but in obedience to God, as he is the vicar of Christ.” Let them hasten to the arms of their father, who will receive them benignly, and there will be peace and repose, spiritually and temporally for all Tuscany, and the war will be directed against the Infidels under the banner of the Cross. “If anything can be done through me that may be to the honour of God and the union of yourselves with the holy Church, I am prepared to give my life, if need be.”³⁰

Catherine had already sent first Neri di Landoccio and then Frate Raimondo to the Pope, and she herself was summoned to Florence. This was in May 1376. This pale *estatica*, who was believed to live solely upon the consecrated Host of the Blessed Sacrament, and who seemed already of the other world, was bidden by the Signoria and the Eight to plead their cause before the Sovereign Pontiff. In June she reached Avignon – that city of luxury and corruption, that *nido di tradimenti* upon which Petrarch had invoked the rain of fire from heaven. The Pope received her graciously. “In order that thou mayest see clearly that I desire peace,” he said, “I put it absolutely into thy hands; but be careful of the honour of the Church.” The embassy was a complete failure; the Florentines threw her over contemptuously. No trace of personal resentment was seen in the saint, and she continued to intercede for them with the Pope, to whom she spoke plainly concerning the infamy of the place in which he stayed, and the corruption of the Roman Curia, until even Frate Raimondo was astounded at her temerity. In one respect she was more successful. Her impassioned pleading overcame the pusillanimity of Gregory, and in September he left Avignon for Rome. Catherine – in spite of the paintings that you may still see in Rome and Siena – did not accompany him to the Eternal City. She met him again at Genoa, where her indomitable will prevailed over the counsels of the Cardinals, and prevented him from turning back. Then he went on his way, and she saw him no more.

²⁹ Letters 185, 196, 206, 209, 218, 229. She has no thought of the Pope's return as a temporal sovereign. (Cf. letter 370.)

³⁰ Letter 207.

At Genoa, many of her company fell sick. Neri di Landoccio was despaired of by the physicians and Stefano Maconi seemed dying. Both believed that their spiritual mistress and mother healed them miraculously. Seldom did Catherine seem sweeter and more loving than at this time, watching by the bedside of her young disciples, comforting Monna Lapa by letter for her delay, for “with desire have I desired to see you my true mother, not only of my body but also of my soul.”³¹ And to her “dearest sister and daughter in Christ Jesus,” Monna Giovanna Maconi, the mother of her Stefano, she writes: “Take comfort sweetly and be patient, and do not be troubled, because I have kept Stefano too long; for I have taken good care of him. Through love and affection I have become one thing with him, and therefore have I taken what is yours as though it were mine. I am certain that you have not really been distressed at it. For you and for him I would fain labour even unto death, in all that I shall be able. You, mother, have given birth to him once; and I would fain give birth to him and you and all your family in tears and in toil, by continual prayers and desire of your salvation.”³² She was back at Siena in November, sending another of her flaming letters to Gregory, who had reached Corneto on his way to Rome, exhorting him to constancy, fortitude and patience, urging him to obtain peace by making concessions, recommending her native city to him. “I have no other desire in this life save to see the honour of God, your peace and the reformation of Holy Church, and to see the life of grace in every creature that hath reason in itself.”³³

In January 1377, the Pope made his solemn entry into the Eternal City, received with a perfect delirium of joy by nobles and people alike. Then a thrill of horror ran through Italy. The papal forces – the Breton mercenaries of the Cardinal Robert, with the English companies of Hawkwood – burst into Cesena, butchering men, women, and children, committing hideous atrocities of every kind that cannot be set down in this place. The Pope is said to have kept silence. One more affectionate letter did St Catherine write to him in her own familiar style, pleading for peace and the reformation of the Church. Then he turned against her. “Most holy Father,” she wrote to him through Raimondo, “to whom shall I have recourse, if you abandon me? Who will aid me? to whom shall I fly, if you drive me away? If you abandon me, conceiving displeasure and indignation against me, I will hide myself in the wounds of Christ crucified, whose vicar you are, and I know that He will receive me, because He wills not the death of the sinner. And if He receives me, you will not drive me away; rather shall we stay in our place to fight manfully with the arms of virtue for the sweet Spouse of Christ.”³⁴ Her last extant letter to Gregory, pleading for peace with the Italians and for the punishment “of the pastors and officers of the Church when they do what they should not do,” recommending to him the ambassadors of Siena who came to treat for the restitution of Talamone, which the papal troops had occupied, is in a colder and more formal tone.³⁵ Other sorrows came upon her. The Sienese distrusted her intimacy with the Salimbeni, accusing her and Frate Raimondo (*poverello calunniato*, as she called him) of plotting, whereas she declared that the only conspiracy in which she was engaged was for the discomfiture and overthrow of the devil. One of her own disciples conceived a guilty passion for her and fled from her circle, writing that he had become a vessel of contumely, that he was now “cut off, extinguished and blotted out of the book in which I felt myself so sweetly fed.”

Once more, early in 1378, did Catherine go to Florence to labour in the cause of peace. She addressed the Signoria in a solemn meeting in the Palazzo Vecchio, and induced them to meet the Pope half way by respecting the interdict. “The dawn is come at last,” she cried exultingly: *l’aurora è venuta*. And she prevailed upon the captains of the Parte Guelfa to offer a firm resistance to the war policy of the Eight, while endeavouring, through Stefano Maconi, to prevent them from abusing

³¹ Letter 240.

³² Letter 247.

³³ Letter 252.

³⁴ Letters 270, 267. These have obviously been transposed in chronological order.

³⁵ Letter 285.

the power that their right of “admonishing” put into their hands. She was still in Florence when Gregory died, and the Archbishop of Bari, Bartolommeo Prignani, was elected Pope amidst the furious clamours of the Roman populace, as Urban VI. To him Catherine wrote at once, in the same way as she had done to Gregory, urging him to check the corruption and wickedness of the clergy, to make good Cardinals, to receive the Florentines back into the fold of the Church, and above all (for she knew something of the character of the man with whom she had now to deal) to take his stand upon true and perfect Charity.³⁶ A few weeks later the terrible rising of the populace, known as the Tumult of the Ciompi, burst over Florence. The adherents of St Catherine, as associated with the hated Parte Guelfa, were specially obnoxious to the mob, and her own life was threatened. A band of armed men came into the garden where she knelt in prayer, crying out that they would cut her to pieces. She prepared for martyrdom as for a joyous feast, and wept bitterly when she was left unharmed, declaring that the multitude of her sins had prevented her from being suffered to shed her blood for Christ. She wrote in this strain to Frate Raimondo, saying that she would begin a new life that day, in order that these sins of hers might no longer withdraw her from the grace of martyrdom; her only fear was lest what had happened might in some way influence the Pope against a speedy peace.³⁷ At the end of July peace was signed; Florence and the other cities of Tuscany were to be reconciled to the Holy See, and Catherine returned to Siena. “Oh, dearest children,” she wrote, “God has heard the cry and the voice of His servants, that for so long a time have cried out in His sight, and the wailing that for so long they have raised over their children dead. Now are they risen again; from death are they come to life, and from blindness to light. Oh, dearest children, the lame walk and the deaf hear, the blind eye sees, and the dumb speak, crying with loudest voice: Peace, peace, peace! with great gladness, seeing those children returning to the obedience and favour of the father, and their minds pacified. And, even as persons who now begin to see, they say: Thanks be to Thee, Lord, who hast reconciled us with our holy Father. Now is the Lamb called holy, the sweet Christ on earth, where before he was called heretic and patarin. Now do they accept him as father, where hitherto they rejected him. I wonder not thereat; for the cloud has passed away and the serene weather has come.”³⁸

Not long did *il tempo sereno* hold. While it lasted Catherine remained quietly at Siena, dictating to her secretaries, Neri, Stefano, and a certain Barduccio Canigiani (a young nobleman who had joined her spiritual family at Florence), her book – the famous *Dialogue*. It consists of four mystical treatises on Discretion, Prayer, Divine Providence, and Obedience, in the form of a dialogue between God and a soul “panting with greatest desire for the honour of God and the salvation of souls.” This Dialogue and her Letters represent St Catherine’s literary work.³⁹ It was finished in October. Already the tempest had burst upon the Church, of which the first rumblings had been heard during her stay at Florence, and Catherine was now to be summoned to Rome to fight her last great battle.

Urban VI. had a high reputation for zeal and virtue; he was, in addition, a good Italian. From the outset he announced his intention of reforming the Roman Court, of extirpating simony and luxury in the Church. “They say,” the Prior of the Certosa of Gorgona had written to Catherine on the first news of his elevation, “that this our Holy Father is a terrible man, and frightens people exceedingly with his acts and his words.” The abrupt violence with which he began his work enraged and alarmed all the Curia, and within a few months of his election he was left alone. The French Cardinals fled to Anagni, and took the Breton mercenaries into their pay. When the Pope nominated twenty-six new cardinals, they held a conclave at Fondi, and, on the plea that the election of Urban had been extorted by force and fear of the Roman mob, and was therefore invalid, they raised the infamous Cardinal

³⁶ Letter 291.

³⁷ Letter 295.

³⁸ Letter 303.

³⁹ The Dialogue, *Il Dialogo della Serafica Santa Caterina da Siena*, will be found in Gigli, vol. iv., and has been translated (somewhat freely) into English by Mr Algar Thorold. To the Dialogue and the Letters, we should add the *Trattato della Consumata Perfezione* and a short collection of prayers, also printed in Gigli, *L'opere*, etc., vol. iv.

Robert of Geneva to the Popedom as Clement VII. All Christendom was now divided in its spiritual allegiance between two men, each claiming to be the Vicar of the Prince of Peace; any earthly prince would have dismissed the one with ignominy from his service, the other was soon to fall hopelessly and shamefully from his fair beginning.

But Catherine believed passionately in Urban, threw herself heart and soul into the struggle. “I have heard,” she wrote to him, “that the incarnate demons have raised up an Antichrist against you, Christ on earth; but I confess and do not deny that you are the Vicar of Christ, that you hold the keys of the cellar of Holy Church, where the blood of the Immaculate Lamb is kept.”⁴⁰ And in the twenty months of life that remained to her she battled for him to the death. Letter after letter did she send to him, full of evangelic counsels, urging him – in the boldest possible language – to begin the reform of the Church in his own person. Savonarola himself hardly surpasses the passion of her invective against the corruption of the ecclesiastical world. Urban is at first offended by her frankness, rebukes her messengers, and will not listen to her. Then his heart is touched, and he summons her to Rome. “Pray for me,” she writes to Suor Daniella, a nun of Orvieto, “to the supreme eternal goodness of God, that He may do with me what shall be to His honour and the salvation of souls; and especially now that I am to go to Rome, to accomplish the will of Christ crucified and of His Vicar.”

Catherine reached the Eternal City at the end of November 1378, with a band of her disciples of both sexes, including Alessia, Francesca and Lisa, Neri di Landoccio and Barduccio Canigiani. Stefano Maconi remained at Siena, but Frate Raimondo was already in Rome. The city was in a parlous state. Sant’ Angelo was held by the soldiery of the Antipope, who kept Urban out of the Vatican; the Breton mercenaries threatened the gates, and there were savage tumults in the streets. Urban would have Catherine address his new cardinals assembled in the Consistory, after which he “praised her much in the Lord.” In these first few months of his pontificate, while she yet lived, he seemed an utterly different man to what he afterwards became. He realised to the full the moral value of her support, and would not suffer her to leave Rome. On his behalf she dispatched fiery epistles all over Europe, declaring that he alone was the true Pope, the Vicar of Christ. To simple nuns she wrote imploring them to storm Heaven with prayers for his cause; to monks and hermits, bidding them leave their cells and convents, rally round the Sovereign Pontiff in the Eternal City, or do battle for him in the haunts and abodes of men. “Ye fools,” she wrote to the three Italian Cardinals who were striving to remain neutral, “fools, worthy of a thousand deaths” – but the epistle must be read in its entirety, for it is one of the most amazing documents of the epoch.⁴¹ Other epistles secured the adhesion of the Republics of Siena and Florence, of Venice and Perugia. To the Queen of Naples, as chief supporter of Clement (whom she presently received as Sovereign Pontiff on his way to Avignon), she pleads Urban’s cause with calm reason, turning off the arrows of her words to strike the hostile Cardinals; and in like manner to Onorato Gaetani, Count of Fondi, who had protected the schismatic conclave with his hired troops. “Where is the just man that they have elected for Antipope,” she writes again to the Queen of Naples, “if in very sooth our supreme pontiff, Pope Urban VI., were not true Vicar of Christ? What man have they chosen? A man of holy life? No: a man of iniquity, a demon; and therefore he does the office of the devils.”⁴² In December the adherents of the Antipope were lying in wait to take Frate Raimondo, whom the Pope was sending on a dangerous mission to France, and the good friar’s courage failed him. Catherine, with her mystic longings for shedding her blood for the cause, was amazed at his pusillanimity, and sent him letters of characteristic remonstrance, reminding him that he need have no fear, because he was not worthy of the grace of martyrdom, exhorting him to be a man and not a woman, laying all the blame on herself (as she invariably does in her severest letters), pleading love as her excuse for rebuking him.

⁴⁰ Letter 306.

⁴¹ Letter 310.

⁴² Letter 317.

In the meanwhile Urban had hired the Italian mercenaries of the Company of St George, commanded by Count Alberico da Balbiano. On April 29th Alberico gained a complete victory over the Breton and Gascon soldiery of the Clementines at Marino, and the French governor of Sant' Angelo surrendered to the Senator of Rome, Giovanni Cenci. Catherine is said – and a passage in one of her letters seems to confirm it – to have been the means of effecting the surrender. At her instigation the Pope went barefooted from Santa Maria in Trastevere to San Pietro in solemn procession, to give thanks before returning to take up his abode in the Vatican – an act of humility that aroused astonishment (strange reflection on the pomp of the Curia!) as something that had not been seen for ages. To the magistrates of the Roman Republic she wrote a letter on behalf of the victorious soldiery, which Tommaseo characterises as “worthy of the name of Rome.”⁴³ Then, flushed with victory, she addresses the King of France, in hopes that he may still be won over; she makes one more flaming, impassioned appeal to the Queen of Naples, and then – sole blot, I think, in all this blameless life – co-operates with Urban, in her letters to the King Louis and his cousin, Charles of Durazzo, in his attempt to raise the power of Hungary and Poland upon Giovanna's head.⁴⁴ Her last extant letter to Urban himself is to urge him to adopt a mild and generous policy towards the Roman People. “You must surely know,” she says, “the character of your Roman children, how they are drawn and bound more by gentleness than by any violence or by harshness of words; and you know, too, the great necessity that is yours and Holy Church's, of preserving this people in obedience and reverence to your Holiness; for here is the head and the beginning of our faith.”⁴⁵ A furious riot broke out at the beginning of 1380. The Roman populace rose in arms and assailed the Vatican, threatening the Pope's life. Catherine interposed and stilled the tumult. This was her last public action.

She was spared the sight of Urban's fall, and was not doomed to witness the shame, the blood and the madness in which “her most sweet Christ on earth” ended his unhappy pontificate. Fearful visions of demons began to assail her, mingling with the celestial visitations of her Divine Spouse. Her bodily sufferings became unendurable. She cried to God to receive the sacrifice of her life in the mystical body of the Church. Praying in San Pietro on Sexagesima Sunday, it seemed to her that the *Navicella*– the Ship of the Church – was laid upon her shoulders, and that it crushed her to death. The few weeks of life that remained to her were one prolonged martyrdom, out of which we have her last letter⁴⁶– written on February 15th, 1380 – her farewell to Frate Raimondo, full of mystical exultation in her own sufferings, *tanti dolci tormenti corporali*. But all who approached her wondered at the tranquillity and the sweetness with which she spoke, and “albeit she was excessively afflicted in her body, her face remained always angelical and devout with a holy gladness.”

At last on April 29th, 1380, the Sunday before the Ascension, she passed away, surrounded by her spiritual family and leaning upon Alessia Saracini, uttering “certain most profound things,” writes Barduccio, “which because of my sins I was not worthy to understand.”⁴⁷ To Stefano Maconi, who had hastened from Siena to stand by her side; to Monna Lapa, who had taken the habit like her daughter and daughter-in-law; and to each of the others, she gave a separate charge as to their mode of life after she should be dead. “And she prayed with such great affection that not only our hearts as we listened, but the very stones could have been broken. Finally, making the sign of the Cross, she blessed us all; and so to the last and most desired end of life she drew near, persevering in continual prayer and saying: ‘Thou, Lord, dost call me, and I come to Thee; I come not through my own merits, but through Thy mercy alone, the which mercy I ask from Thee in virtue of Thy blood.’ And then, many times, she cried: *Sangue, sangue!* At last, after the example of the Saviour, she said:

⁴³ Letter 349.

⁴⁴ Letters 350, 362, 357, 372.

⁴⁵ Letter 370.

⁴⁶ Letter 373.

⁴⁷ Barduccio's letter to a nun at Florence, describing every detail of Catherine's death, will be found in the Appendix to the *Leggenda*.

‘Father, into Thy hands I commend my soul and spirit.’ And so, sweetly, with her face all angelical and glowing, she bowed her head and gave up her spirit.”

CHAPTER III

The People and the Petrucci

AFTER the expulsion of the Riformatori in March 1385, a new supreme magistracy was instituted to rule the Republic. It was composed of ten citizens – the “Signori Priori, Governatori della Città di Siena” – who held office for two months. Four of these priors were of the Nine, four of the Twelve, and two of the People. A new order – the *Monte del Popolo* – was formed to include those plebeians, or Popolani of the Greater Number, who had not shared in the government of the Riformatori; and it gradually rose in importance, reinforced in later years by families of nobles who became *popolani* and by others of the lower classes who had come to Siena from elsewhere.

A turbulent and unsettled period followed, of incessant plots against the new government and of disastrous wars. In November 1385, Siena joined in a league, offensive and defensive, with the Communes of Bologna, Florence, Pisa and Lucca, against the wandering companies of mercenaries. But presently that never-healed wound, the question of Montepulciano, opened again, and a prolonged war with Florence followed in consequence. Both Cortona and Montepulciano were lost to Siena. In 1389 the Sienese allied themselves for ten years with Giovanni Galeazzo Visconti, who had dethroned his uncle Bernabò and was now manifestly intending to conquer all northern and central Italy. A Sienese poet, Simone di Ser Dino Forestani (“il Saviozzo”) hailed him as the coming deliverer of the Italian nation in a noted canzone, which Carducci has called the last cry of Ghibellinism. A number of the Malavolti and Tolomei, headed by Messer Orlando Malavolti, chose exile in the following years rather than see their country fall into servitude. Giovanni Galeazzo was created Duke of Milan by the Emperor Wenceslaus in 1395; and, when the end of the term of the alliance drew near, the Sienese found themselves so exhausted with war, famine and pestilence that in 1399 they formally surrendered the independence of their city, with its contado and district, to the Duke and his successors, swore obedience and fidelity to him in the persons of his ambassadors, and hailed their new yoke with wild festivities. The Duke died in 1402; he had just taken Bologna and intended, as soon as Florence fell into his hands, to be crowned King of Italy. His newly acquired dominions fell to pieces. In November 1403, the Salimbeni (who, in opposition to the Malavolti and Tolomei, had been among the foremost in introducing the ducal sovereignty into Siena) and the heads of the Dodicini, probably instigated by the Florentines, called the Sienese to arms to recover their liberty. The Noveschi and People opposed them. There was a struggle in the Campo, an attempt to capture the Palazzo; but Francesco Salimbeni was killed and the Dodicini expelled from the government. In the following year the liberation of Siena was peaceably effected. Peace was made with Florence in April, and, the ducal lieutenant having left the city, the Sienese annulled the suzerainty and all the authority that had been given to the Duke of Milan and his successors, and commanded that his arms, wherever they had been set up in the dominions of the Republic, should be completely obliterated. But Orlando Malavolti returned to his native city only to die. On his way to salute the Signoria he was treacherously murdered in the streets by the hirelings of those who had seized upon his possessions, which they hoped thus to keep in their hands.

In the meantime the form of the chief magistracy had undergone various alterations. Not only had the Dodicini been expelled, but the Riformatori had been readmitted. It now consisted of nine Priors, three of the Monte del Popolo, three of the Monte de’ Nove, and three of the Monte de’ Riformatori; with a tenth, the Captain of the People and Gonfaloniere of Justice, chosen from each Monte and from each terzo of the city in turn. But throughout the period that follows, and indeed down to the end of the Republic, we shall find the real authority vested in what was known as the *Balia*. This originally simply meant the power or authority committed to certain citizens for some special purpose; but it gradually became converted into an ordinary magistracy, distinct from the

Signoria or *Concistoro*. From 1455 – when it was specially instituted in this form to superintend a prolonged and dangerous war – until the fall of the Republic, the *Collegio di Balìa* had the supreme control of the State, with authority over the laws and government of Siena, although the outward appearances of supremacy were left to the Signoria, the members of which (the *Signori*) were still, nominally, the chief magistrates of the Republic.

The first three-quarters of the fifteenth century in the history of Siena are a medley of somewhat inglorious wars with incessant faction. We find Siena allied with Florence against King Ladislaus of Naples (the son of Charles of Durazzo), then at war with Florence again, then allied with Pope Calixtus III. against the great condottiere Jacopo Piccinino, in a war more famous for the stern penalty that the Republic knew how to exact from a treacherous general than for any action in the field.⁴⁸ There were alarms and excursions from the *fuorusciti* in the contado; there were conspiracies within Siena itself, especially one most formidable in 1456 to subject the Republic to King Alfonso of Naples (who had substituted an Aragonese dynasty for the House of Anjou in that kingdom), in which certain families of the Monte de' Nove – headed by Antonio Petrucci, Ghino di Pietro Bellanti and Marino Bargagli – were deeply involved. But, all the while, great personalities are moving across the Sienese stage.

San Bernardino Albizzeschi, born of a noble family in 1380, the year of St Catherine's death, may be said to have carried on, in part, her work during the first half of this century. A zealous reformer of morals, for forty years this Franciscan friar wandered over Italy from city to city, preaching repentance, healing schisms, rebuking tyrants, stilling the bloody tumults of political factions, reconciling peoples and princes. "He converted and changed the minds and spirits of men marvellously," writes a contemporary, Vespasiano da Bisticci, "a wondrous power he had in persuading men to lay aside their mortal hatreds." He has left his mark upon almost every street of his native city, of which he refused the bishopric. In a place where he had wrought many conversions, a maker of dice represented to the saint that he and his fellow-craftsmen were being reduced to beggary, by reason of his denunciation of gambling. Bernardino bade him make tablets with the letters I.H.S. instead. This devotion to the Divine Name grew apace, above all in Ferrara and Siena; and when, worn out with his apostolic labours, Bernardino died in 1444 at Aquila, there was hardly a town through which he had passed that had not placed upon its gates and palaces, no less than on the private houses of its citizens, the sacred sign of the Name in which he had overcome the world.

A young nobleman stood listening in the Campo when Bernardino preached there in 1427. "He moved me so much," he wrote in after years, "that I, too, very nearly entered his order." This was Enea Silvio Piccolomini, who, born at Corsignano in 1405, was then a student in the city and a rising poet. Two imperial visits during this epoch have left their mark in Sienese art. Sigismund III. came to Siena in 1432, on his way to be crowned in Rome, and stayed some while in the city that then, as ever, professed unalterable loyalty to the Holy Roman Empire. Memorials of his visit are the curious graffito picture of him enthroned, on the pavement of the Duomo, and a most unedifying love story, *De Duobus Amantibus*, describing an intrigue between one of his barons and a lady of Siena – written a little later by this same Enea Silvio, who had left his native city to seek his fortune elsewhere, and was now poet laureate. Frederick III. came at the beginning of 1452 to meet his bride, Leonora of Portugal. A fresco in the library of the Duomo and a pillar outside the Porta Camollia still record the event; and "all the resources of that festive art in which the Italy of the Renaissance so excelled were displayed for the entertainment of the noble pair during their stay in Siena."⁴⁹ Our poet laureate was now the Emperor's secretary and the Bishop of Siena itself. Six years later Enea Silvio Piccolomini was elected Pope in 1458, to succeed to Calixtus III., and took the title of Pius

⁴⁸ See pp. 144, 145.

⁴⁹ Pastor, II., p. 147.

II. "Shall we raise a poet to the Chair of St Peter?" asked a rival cardinal, "and let the Church be governed on pagan principles?"

It will be better to speak of the character and deeds of Pope Pius II. when we stand before the frescoed story of his life in the Duomo. Suffice it now to say that there was great festivity and rejoicing when the news of his elevation reached Siena, but coupled with some mistrust. The Pope was suspected of being a partisan of the *gentiluomini*, who were still rigorously excluded from the Signoria, the Balìa, the Council of the People and all the chief offices of State. To please him, the Piccolomini were qualified to enter the government (*messi nel Reggimento*), by being distributed among the three ruling Monti; while Nanni Todeschini, the husband of the Pope's sister Laodamia, together with his four sons, Antonio, Francesco, Andrea and Giacomo (to whom Pius had given the arms and name of Piccolomini), was similarly qualified for the Signoria and Council of the People, and received into the Monte del Popolo. The Pope, however, demanded that all the nobles should be made eligible to all posts in the government; he told the Sienese envoys that, unless his request were granted, he would withhold the favours that he had intended to confer upon his native city. In spite of the intervention of the Duke of Milan, the Sienese remained obstinate, until the Pope threatened to go to Florence without passing through Siena. Then the Balìa yielded in part, and Pius came to the city in February 1459. He had a magnificent reception from all orders in the State; but Malavolti tells us that on the part of the chief men of the Republic the rejoicing was more simulated than real, for that they bitterly resented his attempted insertion of the nobles into the popular government of the city. Nevertheless, during his stay Pius loaded the Sienese with favours, gave the Golden Rose to the Commune, and raised the See to the rank of an archbishopric. His attempts to allay the factions and to obtain the admission of the nobles were only partly successful; and what little share in the government had been granted to the latter was taken away from them (exception being still made for the Piccolomini), after his death in 1464. To this day Siena bears more of the stamp of Pius II. than of any other single man. Everywhere in her streets the arms of the Piccolomini are as much in evidence as the sacred monogram that San Bernardino had set up. The Loggia that Pius raised to his family, the palaces that his kinsfolk built, still stand, while the Library of the Duomo gleams still with the gorgeous frescoed pageant of his life. And away to the south, in the district of Montepulciano, the little village of Corsignano, where he had been born in 1405, and was transformed by him into a city, is still called from his name Pienza, and still bears the imprint of his genial and splendid spirit in the noble buildings, secular and religious alike, that his munificence reared.

A potentate of a very different character now for a while overshadows the Republic – Alfonso, Duke of Calabria, son of King Ferrante of Naples. The Duke meditated the acquisition of all Tuscany, and between 1468 and 1480 he made Siena the basis of his operations. The Republic joined the King and Pope Sixtus IV. in the war against Lorenzo de' Medici, and had the one real battle of the campaign of 1479 depicted in fresco in the Palace of the Commune. Gorgeous pageants and dances greeted the visit of any member of the Royal House to Siena. The Duke "became the centre of the extravagant, pleasure-loving Sienese society; and the cruel, passionate Alfonso, who recognised no scruples in matters human and divine, became the popular godfather to the babies of the Republic."⁵⁰ There was a strong party within the city itself that would gladly have accepted him as their suzerain, and he still lingered at Buonconvento after the peace had been made with Florence. On June 23rd, 1480, the Noveschi and some of the Monte del Popolo, together with the mercenaries left by the Duke in charge of the city, occupied the Campo early in the morning, and expelled the Riformatori from the government. The Duke returned to Siena the next day, and was received with enthusiasm at the Porta Romana. There was a wild demonstration in the Campo, as the people, all armed, with frantic cheering and deafening uproar, brought him to the Palace. "When he got to the door of the Palace," says Allegretto, "all the people rejoiced with such sounding of trumpets and of bells that

⁵⁰ Armstrong, *Lorenzo de' Medici*, p. 178.

rang *a gloria*, and with such firing of guns and shouting, that it was a jubilation.” In the place of the suppressed Monte of the Riformatori, a new Monte of the *Aggregati* was formed – composed partly of nobles, partly of those Noveschi who had been excluded from the government for the conspiracy of 1456, partly of popolani who had never held the priorate, and to these were added a few of the Riformatori at the Duke’s request. But the capture of Otranto by the Turks, in August, recalled the Duke to his father’s dominions, and in the following year the decision of King Ferrante (*la iniqua sentenza*, as Allegretto calls it), compelling the Sienese to surrender certain towns and castles to the Florentines, destroyed the last remnants of his popularity.

Seven years of tumult and faction followed the departure of the Duke of Calabria. The annulling of the new Monte of the *Aggregati*, the re-admission of the Riformatori and the Dodicini, were accompanied by a series of furious battles in the streets. In July 1482 there was a general rising of the people – Popolani, Dodicini, Riformatori – against the Noveschi, who, headed by the Bellanti, Petrucci, and Borghesi, assembled in arms in the Postierla. The Noveschi swept down the Via di Città, but were hurled back to the Postierla, and their leaders forced to take refuge in the palaces of the Pecci and Borghesi, which, after a fierce contest of more than three hours with crossbows and guns and long lances, surrendered, at the persuasion of the Cardinal Archbishop, Francesco Piccolomini (the nephew of Pius II.), and the arms were laid down for a while. It is on this occasion that the name of Pandolfo di Bartolommeo Petrucci first appears prominently as a leader of the Noveschi.

At the beginning of 1483 the Balia was entirely composed of Popolani, and the Noveschi were deprived “for ever” of any share in the government. Luzio Bellanti, with a few daring spirits, occupied Montereccioni, and held it for some weeks against the Republic – which was made an excuse for arresting the leading Noveschi in Siena. The Papal Legate, Cardinal Giovanni Battista Cibo (afterwards Innocent VIII.), came from Rome as a peace-maker; and in March it was decided to reduce the four Monti to one, “di far di tutto il Reggimento un Monte,” which should be called the Monte del Popolo, and in which some Noveschi were to be admitted. But on April 1st a furious mob burst into the Palace, seized four of the imprisoned Noveschi – Agnolo Petrucci, Biagio Turchi, and two others – with a plebeian of their faction, and hurled them out of the windows, to be dashed to pieces on the pavement below. Disgusted and disillusioned, the Legate at once left the city. The Noveschi, headed by the Petrucci and Bellanti, together with others of other orders, at length retired from the territory of the Republic, and watched for the opportunity of recovering their state by force of arms; while, on August 7th, the Council of the People carried unanimously a resolution “that Siena should be given and presented to our Lady.”

The exiles had not long to wait. New factions broke out in the city, with plotting and counter-plotting, rioting and executions. Numbers of each order were banished. The Noveschi, supported by the King of Naples and the new Pope Innocent, collected troops under Giulio Orsini, and threatened the contado. Their first attempts were unsuccessful; but at length certain of the Riformatori and Dodicini, ousted from the administration and oppressed by the government, opened negotiations with the chosen representatives of the Noveschi – Niccolò Borghesi and Neri Placidi in Rome and Leonardo Bellanti in Pisa – probably with the knowledge of the Cardinal Francesco, who, throughout these turbulent and blood-stained years, had acted strenuously, though not always successfully, as peace-maker. The Noveschi and other exiles assembled at Staggia, and, with a small force of Florentine soldiers, arrived at the Porta Fontebranda before dawn on July 22nd, 1487. Pandolfo Petrucci is said to have been the first to scale the walls. Leaving a small guard to hold the gate and secure their retreat if unsuccessful, they pressed up to the Croce del Travaglio, and then rushed through the streets, shouting “People and Nine! Liberty and Peace!” After a brief resistance, the Captain of the People was forced to surrender the Palace, and there was practically no opposition elsewhere. Camillo Venturini – a young man of the Monte del Popolo – killed with a bill-hook a certain Messer Cristoforo di Guidoccio to avenge his father, Lorenzo di Antonio Venturini, who had been beheaded in the previous year, and the Captain of the People was likewise put to death. But

otherwise there was little or no bloodshed, save by way of private vendetta in the first confusion. Bartolommeo Sozzini, one of the Dodicini who had worked the scheme at Pisa, where he held a chair, returned with a party of mounted crossbowmen to share in the new regime. The two most honoured citizens of Siena – the Cardinal Francesco and his brother Andrea Piccolomini – came in, a day or two later, and the revolution was complete.

The government was, of course, reformed in the interests of the conquerors, but the other factions were not entirely excluded. There were the inevitable tumults, conspiracies, executions and banishments, accompanied by various changes in the constitution, but all tending to the ultimate preponderance of the Monte de' Nove, whose government was styled "the government devout and consecrated to the glorious Virgin Mary, the patroness and defender of our Republic." On the last day of 1494, there was a solemn reconciliation between the Popolani and the Noveschi. The former assembled in the Spedale, the latter in the Vescovado, and then in the evening they went separately to the Duomo. The Noveschi occupied the gospel side of the altar and choir, the Popolani the epistle side, and the Cardinal in full pontifical vestments came out of the sacristy and took his seat between the two parties in front of the high altar. "This is the day which the Lord hath made," began his illustrious and most reverend Lordship, "let us rejoice and be glad in it;" and he proceeded to deliver an impassioned oration in favour of concord, expressing his conviction that the peace and quiet of the city were at last secured. Then a notary stepped forward and read the articles of the peace, with a most fearful string of curses and excommunications against any who should offend against them or break any of them – "in such wise," writes the diarist, "that I, Allegretto di Nanni Allegretti, who was present at these things, do not believe that there was ever made nor heard a more stupendous and a more horrible swearing than this." It was already night, and beneath the flaming torches the notaries on either side inscribed the names of the citizens, who all swore upon the Crucifix of the Missal; and while they swore and while they solemnly kissed each other, the bells rang and the choir with the organ burst out into *Te Deum Laudamus*. "Now may it please God," continues Allegretto, "that this be the peace and the quiet of all the citizens; but I doubt it."⁵¹

In the following March, it was decided that the government of the city should be equally divided among three Monti; the Monte de' Nove; the Monte del Popolo; the Monte of the Gentiluomini and Dodicini; and that those of the Riformatori who were admitted should be distributed among these three Monti. A number of exiles were recalled. Then the Signoria with all the Council went to the Duomo, to return thanks to God and to the Virgin Mary, the *Te Deum Laudamus* was sung, the bells rang *a gloria*, and they returned to the Palace. But the real authority was still vested in the Balìa. A special magistracy called the *Consiglio dei tre segreti* had been instituted in 1492, the three being chosen from the members of the Balìa, and wielding, up to a certain point, the authority of the Balìa. By means of this special Council – suppressed at intervals by the enemies of the Noveschi, but almost always soon re-established – the Monte de' Nove swayed the State. The government was rapidly becoming an oligarchy, in the hands of certain families of Noveschi.

Writing of the factions of Siena, Machiavelli calls the Noveschi the "nobili." They were in fact a kind of burgher nobility, risen out of families of merchants in the course of the previous century. We find their parallel in Florentine history in the *ottimati*, the *nobili popolani*, whose prepotency had been overthrown by the Medici more than half a century before. They were men of wealth and influence, munificent patrons of art and letters; several of them must rank among the most enlightened men of their day. Prominent among them, the heart and soul of the new regime, are the Petrucci, Salvetti, Borghesi, Bichi and Bellanti. The more violent spirits are Giacoppo and Pandolfo Petrucci, Luzzo and Leonardo Bellanti; but the noblest is Niccolò di Bartolommeo Borghesi, an ardent patriot and a profound scholar, whom Professor Zdekauer regards as the most important personality in the story of Siena during the second half of the Quattrocento. Niccolò had taken a leading part in the return of the

⁵¹ *Diari Senesi*, 836, 837.

fuorusciti in 1487, and in the September of that year he was appointed professor for five years at the Studio to read “Opus Humanitatis ac moralem Phylosophiam,” and at the same time made Secretary of State “with the charge of writing the annals and the deeds of the Sienese from the foundation of the City itself.”⁵² But he showed more desire to make history than to write it, married his daughter Aurelia to Pandolfo Petrucci and plunged into the turmoil of the political conflict.

“Pandolfo Petrucci returned with other exiles to Siena,” writes Machiavelli in the famous chapter of his *Discorsi* dealing with conspiracies, “and the custody of the piazza was put into his charge, as a mechanical thing and one which the others refused; nevertheless those armed men in time gave him so great a reputation that, in a short while, he became prince of the city.” Pandolfo was born in 1452, and was therefore still under forty when the Noveschi returned. He was a man of little culture or education. At first he played the second part to his brother Giacoppo, but it was in the general alarm and confusion that accompanied the arrival in Italy of Charles VIII. of France that he found his opportunity. A force of 300 mercenaries, *provvisionati*, was brought to Siena in June 1494, to guard the city and maintain order, and Pandolfo was placed in command. This is evidently what Machiavelli meant. In October, Filippo Valori, one of the Florentine ambassadors to the King, wrote to Piero de’ Medici that His Majesty had been informed that the said Pandolfo was a daring and most dangerous person, *persona animosa e scandalosa da precipitare*. Nevertheless, when Niccolò Borghesi was sent from the Balìa to greet the King at Pisa, he was graciously received and returned with a letter making Pandolfo and Paolo Salvetti knights for the royal service. Charles entered Siena on December 2nd, with his bodyguard of 300 archers, 200 men-at-arms, and 100 mounted crossbowmen, “right graciously so that it seemed he were at home,” writes Allegretto – though his soldiery, especially the Swiss, committed numberless excesses in the contado. He marched onwards on the 4th, and there was much passing to and fro through Siena of soldiers and ambassadors in those months, stormy and disastrous for Italy, that followed. In the general dissolution of the Florentine dominion, Montepulciano rose in insurrection and declared that she would live and die with Siena. Even the women and children shouted “Lupa! Lupa!” The Sienese promptly dispatched Antonio Bichi as commissary with troops to the spot. The French King sent letters bidding both cities let Montepulciano alone, for he would judge the matter. The growing feeling of the Popolani and especially the Riformatori against the presence of the mercenaries – the outward sign of the prepotency of the Nove – came to a head, and, on the approach of the French army on its return march through Tuscany, the French ambassador forced the Balìa and Pandolfo to send them away. The King stayed a few days in Siena in June 1495, interviewed representatives of all factions, took the Republic under his perpetual protection, “saving the rights of the Empire,” and made a number of knights, including the infant son of Pandolfo. He left a captain with a French garrison behind him. Next month the Riformatori and Popolani rose, headed by Giovanni Severini and Giacomo Buoninsegni, drove Pietro Borghesi out of Siena, fought Niccolò Borghesi and Pandolfo Petrucci with their followers in the Campo. But on July 28th, before daybreak, Luzio Bellanti and Pietro Borghesi with all the dismissed mercenaries and the soldiers from Montepulciano burst into Siena by the Porta Tufi, drove an armed mob of Popolani and Riformatori in headlong flight down the Via di Città, occupied the Campo and all the strong places of the city. The Dodicini and the Gentiluomini made common cause with them, but the intervention of the French captain and Messer Andrea Piccolomini prevented a pitched battle in the Campo or a massacre in the streets. Pandolfo and others made a pretence of retiring to Buonconvento, but were recalled next day, and the French captain with his garrison was peaceably and honourably sent about his business.

The events of the next few years confirmed the power of Pandolfo. In revenge for the affair of Montepulciano and for the assistance that the Balìa had given to Piero de’ Medici, a Florentine army led by Piero Capponi approached Siena in January 1496, and even penetrated so far as the

⁵² Zdekauer, *Lo Studio di Siena nel Rinascimento*, pp. 119-124.

Palazzo de' Diavoli. With them were Lodovico Luti and a number of other Siennese exiles. They were in secret understanding with the disaffected within the walls, who hoped to introduce them together with enough Florentine soldiers to change the government. But the Florentines were in stronger force than had been anticipated, and the conspirators shrank from betraying their country. "The city of Siena," writes Machiavelli in the second book of the *Discorsi*, "has never changed state with the favour of the Florentines, save when these favours have been small and few. For when they have been many and strenuous, they have merely united that city for the defence of the existing government." And so it happened now. "We were all disposed," said Allegretto, "to defend ourselves from our most cordial enemies the Florentines. We wanted our exiled fellow citizens back, but in another way." The Florentines retreated. Luzio Bellanti had deserved as much as Pandolfo from the Monte de' Nove, but he now found himself ousted from the command of the *provvisionati*. Possibly he had been in the plot with the Florentines; at least he now plotted to admit them and the *fuorusciti* and to murder the two Petrucci, Neri Placidi, Antonio Bichi, Niccolò Borghesi and others of their faction. A peculiar feature of the conspiracy was that one of Luzio's agents pretended to have visions of the Madonna who, he said, wished the Siennese to go in solemn procession to a church beyond the Porta Tufi – the idea being to leave the way clear for the entry of the exiles. The plot was discovered, and Luzio Bellanti in September fled with a price upon his head.

Pandolfo Petrucci was now practically without a rival, and, in all but the name, tyrant of Siena. Pandolfo Petrucci, wrote the Venetian diarist Sanudo, *al presente in Siena è il tutto*. In the following year, 1497, the Balìa largely increased the number of the mercenaries, who were still under his command, and the death of his brother Giacoppo left him alone at the head of his own family. In theory the Balìa was still equally divided between the three Monti; but it was entirely controlled by the Noveschi, and a number of hostile families were "admonished" and for ever excluded. The Balìa of forty-five – fifteen from each Monte – that was elected in November in this year, for five years, by successive reappointments continued in power till 1516, and in it Pandolfo sat to the end of his life. His strong personality, coupled with his lavishness and backed by the mercenaries, secured the compliance of the high and dazzled the low. While not openly interfering with the republican forms of government, and merely taking the comparatively humble title of "magnifico," which every petty noble used in the aristocratic circles of Ferrara or Mantua, he kept in his own hands the whole thread of Siennese policy. Allied to France and never openly breaking with Florence, he plotted with Duke Lodovico Sforza of Milan until the latter's fall, kept in touch with the exiled Medici, and maintained intimate relations with the petty tyrants of Umbria and the Patrimony. His chosen confidant was a Neopolitan of humble birth, who had once held a chair at the University of Siena, a certain Antonio da Venafrò, exalted by Machiavelli as the typical secretary of a tyrant, "a serviceable villain" in the Shakespearian sense, who stuck at no crime for his patron's sake nor hesitated to whisper bloodier suggestions into his ear.

Much use did Pandolfo make of secret assassinations. The exiled Lodovico Luti was murdered by his emissaries in 1499. Luzio Bellanti, earning a precarious living as a man of letters in Florence, lived in constant apprehension. "The liberty of my country," he says at the end of a book on astrology which he published in 1498, "is ever in my mind. Even whilst I write, a messenger breaks in to warn me that assassins are at hand to slay me; everywhere I find snares prepared, so that my friends may call me Damocles or Dionysius. And although I am by now become callous, nevertheless the pen drops from my wearied hand." A little later his apprehensions were verified; but in the meanwhile Leonardo Bellanti (Luzio's brother) and Niccolò Borghesi (Pandolfo's father-in-law) showed signs of resenting the Petruccian supremacy, and Antonio da Venafrò urged his master to make away with Niccolò, who was dreaming republican dreams. An alleged conspiracy against Pandolfo's own life was the pretext – but, some months before this, he had communicated to Lodovico Sforza, through his serviceable secretary, his intention of freeing himself from the Bellanti and the Borghesi. In June 1500, Niccolò Borghesi was set upon by six armed men in Pandolfo's pay, as he was returning from

Mass at the Duomo, and mortally wounded. He lingered on for a few weeks, spending what of life remained to him in finishing his life of St Catherine, in dictating a Latin epigram commending Siena to her protection. Then he died, freely forgiving Pandolfo for his death. On July 20th he was buried in the vaults of San Domenico.

Pandolfo professed the most sincere repentance, and sent a Franciscan friar to the murdered man's son, Bernardino, to propose a conference at the convent of the Osservanza. Leonardo Bellanti, who had fled from Siena at the news of Niccolò's death, wrote a vigorous letter to Bernardino urging him not to go. "The ground still runs with the blood of thy excellent father, the father of our common country," he said; "I know not how thou canst even think of having to speak to him who with his own hands – nay, much more than with his own hands – so deliberately and abominably, with such cruelty, hath killed thy father, and but yesterday. Alas! Art thou not a rational man? Hast no spirit? Hast not blood? Hast no heart or stomach? For, certes, the vilest of men would not listen to his messengers, much less speak to this man who is devoid of any faith or love, but most abounding in good words and tears."⁵³ Nevertheless the Borghesi were reconciled to Pandolfo, and Leonardo himself soon returned to the city.

A new danger now threatened Siena and Pandolfo alike. Cesare Borgia, with the aid of his father, Pope Alexander VI., was building up a great state for himself in central Italy. He had conquered the Romagna, added Piombino to his dominions in September 1501, and was casting eyes upon Siena. In the spring of 1502 the Pope invited Pandolfo to meet him at Piombino; but the Magnifico, pleading excuses and delays, did not go. In August Pandolfo purchased the protection of King Louis XII. of France, with the moneys of the Republic. He sent ambassadors to congratulate Cesare on his conquests, but plotted against him with the petty tyrants who led his mercenaries and began to suspect that their own turns were coming. In the autumn took place the famous meeting of the conspirators at La Magione, to ally against Cesare – "for the salvation of all, and not to be, one by one, devoured by the dragon," as their leading spirit, Giampaolo Baglioni of Perugia, put it. Pandolfo was represented by Antonio da Venafro and Guido Pecci, and hoped for Piombino as his share of the spoils. At the same time he tried to treat with the Borgia, using Antonio da Venafro as a go-between. "This man," said Cesare to Machiavelli (who was with him as ambassador of Florence), "sends me every day either letters or special envoys to make me understand his great friendship towards me, but I know him." It is needless to repeat the tale here of how Cesare – when his forces were temporarily defeated at Fossombrone – waited until the time was ripe, and then crushed the wretched conspirators at the famous *tradimento* of Sinigaglia. Pandolfo had kept out of the trap. Perugia surrendered on January 6th, 1503; Giampaolo Baglioni fled with his followers to join his Sienese ally.

Siena now "felt the Hydra's fiery breath." "This Signore," wrote Machiavelli of Cesare to the Signoria of Florence from Gualdo on January 6th, "is leaving here to-morrow with his army and is going to Assisi, and thence he will advance upon Siena to make of that city a state to his own liking." At Assisi the Sienese ambassadors met him. Cesare assured them that he had no quarrel with the Republic, but was at war only with his *inimico capitale*, Pandolfo. Let them send him away and there would be peace. Otherwise he would come with his army, "impelled by necessity and by a reasonable indignation against the man who, not content with tyrannising over one of the first cities of Italy, wished also by ruining others to be able to impose laws upon all his neighbours." Machiavelli thought Pandolfo's position fairly strong, seeing that he was "a man of much prudence in a state held by him with great reputation, and without having external or internal enemies of real importance, since he has either killed them or reconciled them, and with a large force of good troops, if Giampaolo has taken refuge with him, as they say, and not without money." The Balìa sent to assure the Duke that he was mistaken about Pandolfo, who was no tyrant but had always conducted himself as "a most modest citizen," and to remind him that Siena was under the protection of France. "The master of the

⁵³ Letter of August 18th, 1500, published by F. Donati in *Miscellanea Storica Senese*, i. 7.

shop, who is the King of France,” quoth Cesare with pleasing frankness to Machiavelli, “would not be content that I should take Siena for myself, nor am I so daring that I should think of such a thing. That community should trust me; I want nothing of theirs, but only to drive away Pandolfo. And I would have thy Government bear witness to and publish this intention of mine, which is only to assure myself of this tyrant. I believe that that community of Siena will believe me; but in case it should not, I shall march on and plant my artillery at the gates.” Pandolfo, he said, had been the *cervello*

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