

Little Cities of Italy



André Maurel

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By *André Maurel*

Little Cities of Italy

2 Vols. 30 Illus. Maps

A Month in Rome

115 Illus. 30 Maps

A Fortnight in Naples

120 Illus. 16 Maps



Photo by Alinari

Giotto's portrait of Dante in Galleria Nazionale, Florence

*"Dante held me in Tuscany . . . when I took refuge in art
to escape him . . . I met Giotto, his friend"*

Little Cities of Italy

By

André Maurel

Translated by

Helen Gerard

Author of "The Story of the Thirteen Colonies,"

With a Preface by

Guglielmo Ferrero



Florence—San Gimignano—Monte Oliveto—
Pisa—Lucca—Prato—Pistoia—Arezzo—Lecco
—Bergamo—Brescia—Verona—Vicenza—
Padua—Mantua—Arqua.

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TRANSLATOR'S NOTE



CELT from Oxford and the Hill of Saint Genevieve, and a very plain person, of mixed British extraction, found themselves one pleasant day on the highway of Monsieur Maurel's "artistic and sociological journey in Italy." Here in still vigorous Tuscany, and over there in languid Venezia, thanks to his *Little Cities of Italy*, we began to observe with more sympathy and intelligence than ever before the life, the beauty, the mysticism of this enchanting country, and, above all, her centuries-long struggle for self-government, the love of which we, too, cherish before all other loves as the foundation and inspiration of every form of greatness.

In Florence, we have counted the jewels in the girdle of Venus, and, in Venice, we have enumerated the precious stones of Aphrodite. We have stood in the "great, venerable hall" of San Gimignano, where Dante "took the word." After a day with the shades of San Bernardo Tolomei and his

rigorous brotherhood, among the frescoes of Signorelli and Sodoma, we have strolled through the Lizza of Siena, and, from the ramparts of that old fortress, still blazoned to the glory of Duke Cosimo I., we have pointed out to one another the cradles of the saints and the soldiers who were concerned in the far-reaching effects of the wars sustained by succeeding generations until the Florentines were supreme over the artistic and civic independence of all rivals. We have watched many a sunset again stain red the rivers, which, like the Arbia described by Dante, once ran with Guelph and Gibelline blood among the round-topped hills that "bristled with defences," when this vine and olive grown plain, between the Apennines' "severe band of cloudy snow," and the double peaks of volcanic Amiata, was the scene of the eternal tragedy, the fight on the one hand for freedom and for oppression on the other. We have remembered how Etruscans and Romans fought for the same causes on the same field, and we have wondered with Monsieur Maurel if their lessons have yet been learnt.

From Milan to the lagoons of the Adriatic, we have read the same stories in other phases, under

Gothic kings, Germanic emperors, Italian *condottieri*, popes and tyrants, and under the Venetian Republic.

All Italy has become so much more wonderful to us,—her art more beautiful and significant, her past more interesting and significant too, her present and the character of her people so much better understood,—that we have ventured to put these essays into English, hoping that the author might lend us his genius, as he says of Saint Augustine and Gozzoli.

The translator's gratitude to the learned Celt, Miss Elizabeth Mary Browne.

HELEN GERARD.

SIENA, April, 1910.

PREFACE

TO MONSIEUR ANDRE MAUREL

TURIN, April 10, 1906.

MY DEAR FRIEND:

I send you my warmest felicitations upon your beautiful book, *Little Cities of Italy*, which has been the source of particularly exquisite enjoyment to me. I began to read it in Paris, in the midst of the delightful entertainments that the kindness of the French people had prepared for me. On returning to my hotel in the evening, very happy, very much moved, very tired, my mind full of the innumerable and agreeable impressions of the day, you cannot imagine the pleasure I had in reading some of the chapters of the first part of your book, those in which you describe Tuscany in such vivid colours! In my little room, surrounded by the great, silent building, you evoked, by your clear-cut, and picturesque phrases, the beautiful country and the noble monuments, in the midst of which my first youth unfolded. In an instant, you carried me away from the intense life

of the metropolis to those now distant days in that sweet and beautiful Tuscany, where my venerated father, with his great love, watched over my intellectual and moral development.

You cannot know what tender memories you have awakened in my mind! The reading of your book has been for me one of the charms of Paris.

But it is not necessary to have been raised in Tuscany to enjoy your work. I finished the reading at Turin. The interest increases as one proceeds. These impressions of a journey, apparently detached thoughts upon a wide range of subjects, form a grand and unique picture. In it you have mingled historical associations, impressions of art, descriptions of the country, with Social and philosophical theories.

As a historian, I should be tempted to seek a quarrel with you on several points, and I must make some reserves upon certain rather too bold theories. But as an Italian, and as a man of letters, I cannot but congratulate myself and you upon the consummate ability with which you have given form and life to the diverse elements of which your material is composed, art and history,

description and philosophy. I know few books on Italy so interesting as yours.

I have read the last chapter with especial attention; the philosophic view of Italian history suggested to you by the tomb of Petrarch. You are, in my opinion, partly right and partly wrong.

You place yourself, in order to look the situation of Italy in the face, at the point of view of the Federalists, so dear to Giuseppi Ferrari, our great historian. It is certain that Italy, by its geographical configuration, by its ethnological composition, and by its history, is less adapted than any other country of Europe to a centralised and united form of government. Its elongated form, the chain of the Apennines that cuts it into two parts, do not lend themselves to the requirements of a great modern State, whose nerves are its railways. Modern civilisation needs, above all else, a country round in form, and with few mountains, a country where railways can be easily laid. Moreover, Italy's entire history shows that it never has been possible to make Northern Italy and Southern Italy march side by side on the road of progress. When the one prospers the other decays. They are the two scales of a balance: one rises and the

other falls. The Valley of the Po is a part of the system of Central Europe; Southern Italy is the beginning of the Orient. Naples is an Asiatic city, the peristyle of the East, the sister of Constantinople. Now they want to make it an industrial city. What Eutopianism!

If you consider this state of things, you are right, from a philosophical standpoint, in being a Federalist.

These difficulties explain why it has been so painful for Italy to form itself into a single State, with one capital. They also explain why the life of the new régime has been so stormy.

Foreigners do not always fully appreciate these difficulties, and on that account often judge our errors and defects too severely. Yes, we have committed very grave errors, and we have great defects; but it should never be forgotten that, in our country, modern civilisation has found the obstacles to its development more numerous than in all the other countries of Continental Europe.

You are wrong, however, when you think that in the future the centralised rule can be put aside and replaced by a federal government. That I do not believe.

Even if the monarchy should one day fall, the Italian republic would be a centralised republic. Notwithstanding all the inconveniences caused by it, a centralised government will be necessary until the period in the history of civilisation in which we live shall have passed away.

All the economic, intellectual, and moral life of Italy for forty years has been closely bound to centralisation. To change it, we should have to have a general upheaval, comparable to, and even greater than, that which the French Revolution produced with you. But nations do not resignedly submit to these upheavals, except when it is absolutely impossible for them to live under their existing governments.

Such is not the case with Italy. Do not allow yourself to be influenced by the so frequent and so violent recriminations against the present monarchy, which no doubt you have heard in the course of your travels in Italy.

In all classes there is much complaint against the present rule; and justly, for it has many defects. But, at bottom, the country is not insensible to this truth, so clear to a mind accustomed to study the life of nations: a change in the form

of government would be possible only upon the condition of destroying the social edifice to the foundations, and entirely reconstructing it.

So, Italy, having no wish to throw itself into any such uncertainties, adapts itself, with many complaints, and seeks to ameliorate as much as it can the government under which our present state of civilisation obliges it to live.

No doubt, one day, this political and social organisation will disappear. Nothing is eternal in this world. The day seems to me still distant. Neither you nor I will see it, at least if the peace of Europe endures. Only great wars like those which were provoked by the French Revolution could shake to its base the political policy founded by the Piedmontese dynasty in 1859. That explains to you why Italy is on the side of peace.

Again I felicitate you, and I beg you to believe me,

Yours faithfully,

GUGLIELMO FERRERO.

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Part I
Tuscany

To
My Brother Henry

I

THE GIRDLE

Florence



FROM the time of Charles VIII., the discovery of Italy has been for the French a sort of mania. And, wonder of wonders, this mania has always been enduring! Italy is so rich that discoverers may for a long time continue to come, sure at least of finding new sensations.

Has this domain of sensations, then, no boundaries? May one hope, outside of art criticism, wherein ingenuity is without limit; can one hope, after Stendhal, old indeed now, but still so enchanting; after Taine; after Mr. Paul Bourget; to say nothing of the travellers of the eighteenth century, who are innumerable; can one still hope to meet a sensation that these predecessors have not experienced or exhausted?

Literary and artistic emotions differ according to the individual, and they differ still more according to the epoch. There are sentiments

that can be born only in such a generation, even on such a day, of such a year.

Does any one think, for example, that the traveler in Italy in 1903 does not find his understanding of the past clarified by the political events which have overturned France for the previous five years, and by those which are still brewing, so serious and so fruitful? And does not that very clarification of the past throw light upon his perceptions of the future? We, also, have had, and shall have, our Guelphs and our Gibellines, our nationalists and our revolutionists. But, these factions of former times, if held under scientific restraint, always remain somewhat apart from our hearts. We do not feel them. No writer of the past has entered the Palazzo Vecchio or looked upon the Marzocco benefited by the experience of these recent years. How these stones of the Ponte Vecchio shudder to-day, when I project the reflection of my own understanding upon the spirit of those who reared this structure, and, who, upon its parapets, cried murder. From those discords of yesterday, what lesson shall I learn for our quarrels of to-morrow?

In making my notes, it is these fugitive ideas



Photo by Alinari

“ No writer of the past has seen the Palazzo Vecchio . . . and the Marzocco in the light of our recent experiences ”

of a unique moment that I hope to seize in their flight. The keen actuality of my journey is due to the recent events in France and in Italy. I have started on a journey for art, and here, at my first step upon this sacred soil, historical and social problems take possession of me. When, during my first morning in Florence, I had seen the Duomo, the Baptistry, then San Michele and the Palazzo Vecchio, and had drunk deep of sublimity and splendour, I had but one thought: what were these people, who, in such a short time, almost all at the same time, brought into being so many marvellous things? And, in my mind, the historical associations mingled themselves inseparably with the artistic sensations. Besides, who could flatter himself that he could rightly analyse the second without the help of the first? And who would refuse to raise the latter by the philosophical significance which the former alone brings to it.

My route will have two sign-posts, art and history. Both point in the same direction and will guide me safely. And I should call this trip an *artistic and sociological journey in Italy* if that were not to make ill use of the right

that every traveller has to discover the world at every step.

Shall I, by inexcusable superfluity, add ridicule to this wrong? Let us study Florence; but let us refrain from wishing to discover her. To see her inspires prudence. With a little insight into Florence and into her history, one perceives, at long range, that a lifetime would not give years enough to comprehend her phases. If, on the contrary, one wishes to secure a clear and general impression during the swiftly passing hours of a journey, what a mistake it would be to sacrifice all his attention to the centre alone, to the "star"! If one aspires to understand Florence, aspires to depart from her not dazzled by her art but bearing away some true conception of her, one must, following the example she sets, radiate in her sphere.

The city of Fiorino, the second by order of dates in the admirable trinity of intellectual communities, of which Athens and Paris are the other two, cannot be studied separately from the neighbouring cities that she fought and absorbed, upon which she imposed her customs and her laws, and whose tragic resistances afforded the most beauti-

ful pages of the great Florentine Book. More than a morning at the Medici Chapel, and an afternoon at Santa Maria Novella, what will initiate us farther into the strength of the country of Machiavelli than a few hours at Lucca, Pisa, Pistoia, Prato, and Arezzo?

When you have looked at the walls and the paradoxical tower of the Palazzo Vecchio, how, if you know nothing of the rivals that stirred up the rages of the Marzocco, who, with paw raised, proudly sits before the door that he defends, how can you hope to understand such transports of anger? You know but the effects, not the causes. And, if Lucca and Pistoia were taken and retaken twenty times by their terrible neighbour, what will arouse your feelings, if you cannot comprehend the why and wherefore of these antagonisms, and this rancour? It is not enough for me to know that Florence was pitiless; I must know also to what law she responded in so being. And, since the fame of her civilisation could be only the result of her political and social development, I must know, to sum up, why it was she that developed, and not Pisa, or Lucca, or Arezzo, all which promised so much.

Let us question the walls of the neighbouring cities, the stones of the road and the country roundabout. These will answer us eloquently.

And, when we have recorded, in this *procès-verbal*, the results of our examination of her neighbours, surely we shall be better acquainted, in spite of the streets or palaces, or neglected treasures, with the incomparable city in all her expressions of life: art, statecraft, and society.

Like Venus, Florence is adorned with a girdle on which are embroidered all the joys and all the sorrows. He who unfastened the cestus had nothing more to learn of the goddess, he had only to delight in her. Let us gain possession of the girdle of Florence in order to attain the enjoyment of her pleasures.



Photo by Alinari

Florence from S. Miniato

II

THE DOLEFUL CITY

San Gimignano



HIS is the city of Dante.

In Florence, I have never met the man in the red hood, except, perhaps, in the Piazza della Signoria; and then he has passed so quickly! How could a heart so sad as his have been born in this city of grace and love? Giotto and the other painters of Santa Croce and the Spanish Chapel are in harmony with the City of Flowers and its voluptuous country; but it is hard for me to imagine the poet of the *Inferno* going up to San Miniato to enjoy the sunset, lasting joy as it must have given to him.

The Florence of to-day, which has, out of the three hundred in the time of Dante, but two towers remaining, those of the Palazzo Vecchio and the Bargello, is no longer the Florence of old. The streets, enlarged, are no longer barred by

chains, and, where the Mercato Vecchio used to be, where the strife in heart of the Florentines raged furiously, rises the statue of a big man with short legs and ridiculous moustaches. And, in the high air, the dome of Brunellesco is all that now stands for the beauty of the adorable city.

Of the Florence of Arnolfo, there exists nothing but a few palaces. From the terrace of San Miniato, I never can see the tragic gardens of the Inferno. And the country surrounding this city, softly couched on the river bank, with its horizon of sweetness and charm, helps me even less than its narrow streets to understand the austerity of her son.

Nevertheless he was her son. Moreover she was the mother of the terrible discords which he sang. He was no monster. On the contrary, he was the sublime and logical fruit of his century.

That which Florence cannot tell me, I have come here to ask. Shall I find the answer to this question: How, in the century of Giotto, at the moment when the genius of Boccaccio was ripening, when the divine flower of the spirit of the fifteenth century—of the Italian Quattrocentism

—was budding, how was it possible for that age to bring forth Dante?

San Gimignano is situated on the highroad from Empoli to Siena, dominating the delicious valley of the Elsa. The country here is fresher and smoother than anywhere else. It resembles our own peaceful valleys. Who would ever think, to see these fine hills, so delicate in line, so soft and gay in colour, that the Val d'Elsa was for centuries the theatre of the bloodiest of struggles? It is here that Florence and Siena, more than a hundred times, met with clash of arms. This is the great road from Rome to the Arno, from the Rhine to the Tiber. The Val d'Elsa witnessed the passing of all the imperial, the royal, and the mercenary armies. The sweet Val d'Elsa is a land that has been abundantly sprinkled with blood.

The moment that one leaves the valley proper, going westward toward San Gimignano, he is under the spell of new enchantment. Slowly he mounts from hill to hill through a prodigious confusion of pleasant mountains. Mingling together, pushing one another, the peaks mass themselves like the clouds in the sky. They

intersect, they pile up, and they gather into groups. They seem to be climbing on the backs of one another like a struggle of giants. An entire country in miniature is spread about me. It might be all France with its basins and its Alps. One thinks of God looking at the world from the heights of his Paradise.

And on all the hills and hillocks, down the rapid descents, in the tiny valleys, at the foot as well as on the brow of the crags, on the declivities as well as on the summits, in the bottom lands as well as on the banks of the streams, on slope, on level, on precipice, on crest, the olive and the vine grow and wax strong, invading everything with their silvered foliage and their festoons. High on the horizon, far away, the Chianti display their imposing bulk, fruitful and superb. They have sent their stock and shoots even as far as this.

The long uphill drive to San Gimignano, in the light and creaking little carriage, is a transport of delight. As one goes up, all these mountains and hills, that push and crowd one another, seem to become more peaceful, and to settle each into his own place. It is like a storm on the ocean seen from a cliff; the higher the point from which one

looks, the less the waves seem to be agitated. Little by little, each one makes its nest and sleeps. In the gradually expanding horizon there remains at length but one bar, the Chianti, extending gently, paternally. All the brown mass of hills sinks in the peace and harmony symbolised by the olive, whose silver leaves tremble and rustle over it like silk floss and lace. And festoons of vine sway lightly from one *pioppo* to another, like the arms of children dancing their "ring-around-a-rosey." Soon it all merges into a green immensity, a sea of gentle, laughing waves as far as one can look. Everything is green. There is no blemish. The earth is rich here. The same field yields olives, grapes, and wheat. Now sturdy little trees no longer stand in profile against the sky. They spread themselves over the verdant grain, blending with it. The white roads alone furrow the undulating green. But over there towards the north the Apennines stretch out their severe band of cloudy snow.

At a sudden turn of the road, San Gimignano appears on the summit of an isolated hill, the highest for ten leagues around, whose olive-covered sides form the silver green, velvet cushion

of the crown. For the city really looks like a crown, the thirteen towers gleaming as its jewelled points. Her walls, in sombre and rusty circle, do not brighten under the radiant sun that pours over them. They cling to their austere majesty like deposed kings, who insist on maintaining the dignity of their former state. San Gimignano is too self-conscious, feels herself too much in the public eye to smile.

For a long distance, the road winds about the ramparts as if seeking to enter them by surprise. At last, at a turn, it attacks, and mounts into the town by a narrow street entirely paved with large flagstones.

At the top of this street, is the square of the Collegiate Church. It is a little piazza, but yet impressive with its three monuments, the church at the head of a majestic flight of steps, the Municipal Palace, and the Palace of the Podesta; impressive in what it tells us of the violence of the days long past, those days which the useless old towers seem to regret.

I wanted to go up into the Palazzo Comunale at once. In every Italian city the first visit should be to its heart. When municipal life has been

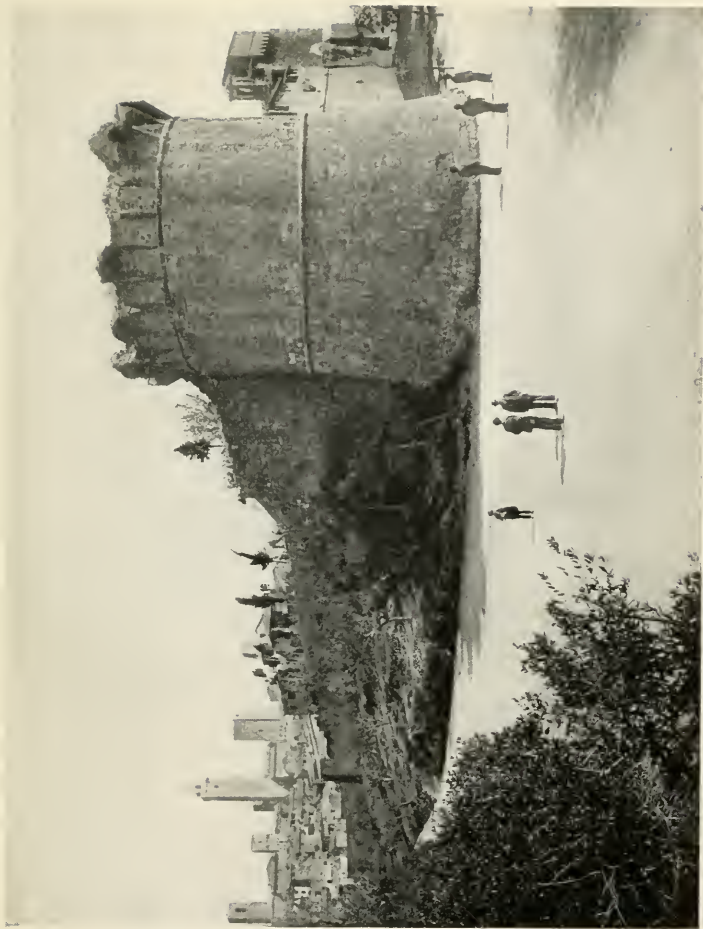


Photo by Alinari
“The road winds about the walls of S. Gimignano as if seeking to enter them by surprise”

so intense as it was in this ardent Tuscany, in the chambers of the town halls one still hears its pulsations. Sad palace, tattered and forlorn, but how dignified still in its tatters! A fresco by Lippo Memmi now solemnly presides over the taking of the oath, or deliberations upon taxes; the same fresco which heard the tragic words that decided whether this city should give herself to Siena or to Florence.

There is no cause to smile. The souls of the men of to-day are as noble as were those of their ancestors; and in this great, venerable hall, where the dignity of their benches, and their care of Memmi's strong and rugged frescoes are sufficient evidence of their delicacy of feeling, they teach an eloquent lesson by the simple inscription they have set into the wall.

The laziness of the moment prevented me from making a copy of the marble. Yet how worthy it is to cross the Alps!

"In this chamber, Dante, sent by the Republic of Florence, took the word." That is enough. So, then, this city was important and strong. Florence, the great Florence, negotiated with her, not disdaining to send the most noble and most

eloquent of her sons to treat with this rival. "All ye who come here,"—so the inscription reads,— "salute this place with respect. Not only do these walls retain the echo of the voice of Dante, but this palace was that of a city so strong, so intelligent, and so rich that Florence sent hither the most able of her advocates. With such a past, it is impossible to fall into decay, impossible not to merit the eternal respect of the nations."

Any one who can keep up such pride as that: *Here Dante took the word . . .* is not near his end; and it will be with humility and veneration that I shall pass through the poor, silent streets by and by, as through the deserted corridors of an old, uninhabited castle, whose every door shuts upon a room wherein has died a hero.

I have not turned over the manuscripts of the town library. Their treasure must be vast indeed to be sufficient to resuscitate the city of the old days. But can one, with elementary notions, not make an effort at this renaissance? Alas! everywhere in Italy it was the same pitiful state of things! The Guelphs and the Gibellines, understanding differently the grandeur of their country killed her in their dispute over it. But the



Photo by Alinari

“Impressive little square. . . . The Collegiate Church at the head of majestic steps and the poor palace of the Podestà . . . dignified still in the glory that ‘Here Dante took the word’ ”

struggle was long, and, at moments, wearied of striking their poor mother, they paused, and covered her bruised breast with cloth of gold and precious stones. The history of all the cities is in these few words. Read, in ten lines, that of San Gimignano.

In the thirteenth century she was free. But, being on the road from Siena to Florence, she could not escape the discords which poured blood over the plains extending at her feet. Florence and Siena each had their partisans within her walls. Should the gates be opened to the rivals on the north or to the rivals on the south? San Gimignano had her Guelphs and her Gibellines. The Ardinghelli held for Florence, the Salvucci for Siena. And, within the walls, as in the country, the adherents took up the war, all the wars. The armed warfare raised over the city fifty towers, Guelph or Gibelline, wherefrom the citizens defied one another from house to house, from which they riddled one another with murderous engines.

The Guelph party finally prevailed, and San Gimignano submitted to Florence in 1353; but the citizens did not give up their rivalries for all

that. They opened a pacific war, fighting with masterpieces of art.

To whom do we owe the Benozzo Gozzoli of San Agostino, the Ghirlandajo of the Collegiata? Was it the Ardinghelli who called the pupil of Angelico? Was it the Salvucci who brought hither the painter of Santa Maria Novella? The archives of the library can tell us no doubt, but it would be a most interesting historical work that would inform us to which party were due such and such artistic productions in all the Tuscan cities.

Each town, or each party, or each family, must needs show its supremacy and its wealth, to prove that its pomp, or its piety, was without a second. No sooner did one, for vanity, politics, or devotion, resolve to offer a decorated chapel to God, than another, out of jealousy, or self-interest, or simply emulation, immediately decorated another chapel. Hence, in all the churches are these innumerable chapels, covered with the masterpieces that human vanity has bequeathed to us. We no longer have Guelphs or Gibellines, but do we never see the same sentiments and the same results in our own day? The wife of the Registrar having given a

pyx to the Curate, the Collector's wife will have no peace until she has given him a tabernacle.

One day the Ardinghelli—or the Salvucci—wished to prove that they were the greatest and the richest people in San Gimignano, and that, even if arms were laid aside, the grandeur of their family still existed. So the interior of the Collegiate Church was covered with immense frescoes. The cold walls were illuminated from the top to the bottom on both sides of the church by two Sienese painters. On the right Barna tells the life of Christ. On the left Bartolo di Fredi realises the Old Testament.

The Salvucci—or the Ardinghelli—bore the affront bravely. And one fine day, summoned by them, Benozzo Gozzoli entered San Gimignano. Mysteriously hidden in the Chapel of the Choir of San Agostino, he worked from morning till night for the greatest glory of that family. And, when he had finished, the donors exulted. The walls of the Collegiata might be covered from floor to ceiling, from portal to altar, and much credit might it reflect on them that did it. Benozzo had painted one chapel only, but had left a marvel.

The rivals were eclipsed. San Agostino possessed the sceptre of art.

Before coming here, I had seen a great many frescoes: but none, even to this day, have given me such profound and lasting emotion. Gozzoli may be, according to the critics, a facile and impersonal painter; he may be of little faith. What does it matter? Saint Augustine, in this chapel, lends him his genius. Let those who complain of the too decorative richness, the coldness, and desire to please, in the frescoes of the Ricciardi Palace, come to San Gimignano. They will see what can be obtained by intelligence united to a most delicate craftsmanship. Augustine, the man of sorrows, the strong and tormented brain, the doctor who has drunk from all the cups of this voluptuous and vain world, who has gone to the bottom of things, and returned from them with indelible bitterness in his heart and on his lips, the Augustine of the *Confessions*, is here before me.

As he is here, I shall always see him. Benozzo has put in his face all the despair, all the moral calvary of a great saint. Ah! what he must have suffered, that passionate genius! And, also, how

intensely he must have enjoyed life, whose every perfume he had breathed!

When before these paintings, I am very sure that Gozzoli was a great artist. Whether or not he was a great painter I do not care. His was a chosen spirit, who understood his hero, and in spite of the works of the centuries that have rolled away, the presentation that he gives us of the great Augustine is the most intense, the most penetrating, the most exact of all.

The blow was a hard one to the rival family, which had donated the painting of the Collegiata. They bore up and retaliated. Ghirlandajo came. In the Chapel of Santa Fina, Domenico di Tommaso Bigordi has attained the summit of his art. Others have spoken of these two frescoes, their fine colour, their clear composition, their purity of taste, their nobility.

As for myself, I do not scan the Tuscan walls to pick to pieces the art of their painters, to examine into its nature and origin, its tendencies, its tricks, or its craft. I stand confounded before the death of this saint, so strikingly real in its devout solemnity, so keen, so intense in its comprehension of the human heart. Perhaps the

critics find a higher art in the frescoes of the Novella. Certainly they cannot find in them more grace, more simplicity, more delicacy, or, above all, more emotion.

This is what the Guelph and Gibelline struggle has produced in this little city. Apply similiar results to other towns; in place of Salvucci and Ardinghelli, put Florence, Pistoia, Lucca, etc., and you will have the secret of the prodigious outburst which is known by the uncouth name of Quattrocentism.

The century of Dante was simply the century preparatory to this epoch, which is to say that the fourteenth century was the century of heroism. The social conditions that permitted artists to live and flourish were not occasioned by mere chance. Such fruits are ripened slowly under the sun of generations. This madness for the beautiful, this craze for art, this exasperation in the peaceful contest, was, and could only be, the outcome of concentrated energy. This ardour, this fire of enthusiasm, assumed a martial form, in taking possession of the fathers of the Quattrocentists—middle-class citizens and artists. War

having been suppressed, or having become the affair of mercenaries, in which the citizens no longer took part, they fought with frescoes, with masterpieces.

From 1250 to 1350, there was, preparatory to the Quattrocentism, a full period of fighting and bloodshed. All about the battlefield of Monte Aperto, Tuscany blossomed like a glowing grenade. Every hill bristled with defences. All the walls were battlemented. Every house ran up a tower. Even Certaldo in the sweet Val d'Elsa, the smiling city, home of Boccaccio, was fortified.

Here at San Gimignano, I feel all this so clearly and strongly. From the heights of the ramparts I see the rich and fair country. It has always been a happy land. Such long years of toil were given to master it. Outsiders who wanted to gain possession of it were repulsed. The struggle went on and on, until both victors and vanquished hurled themselves into Florentine servitude. That is why San Gimignano, which might be so laughing, is so glowering. And that is why Florence was so rough. That which San Gimignano has remained, Florence was in the thirteenth century; but more intensely, being a great city even then,

an ardent city, a proud city, a free city, a turbulent city, a wild city, a city desired of her rivals, a suspicious city, in short a city where one *lived*.

Dante was of that moment when the Quattrocentism was budding. He was of the epoch that is sometimes called the most beautiful of Florence, because it was his and Giotto's. He was born but five years after the battle of Monte Aperto. Florence was raging at heart. She was quivering, champing the bit, dreaming only of vengeance and retaliation. The atmosphere of the city must have been charged with pitch. The ramparts were too high for any one to think of looking at the peacefulness of Monte Morello. And, if any one contemplated heaven, it was to raise the clenched fist at it. Dante was of that grand epoch when the life was all within, all centred upon one fixed idea, upon one anxiety: the humiliated city must be raised again. And for that her people worked in silence. Family conversations recalled only the shame, at the memory of which fathers and sons bit their nails.

One day, however, Dante saw, in the features of Beatrice, the sun enter Florence. He loved her; and the hills of Fiesole revealed their beauty to

him. *La Vita Nuova* has come down to us. But the mark, the scar, the early training remained at the bottom of his heart. And, when the factions redoubled their intrigues, all the old leaven fermented. Dante pulled down his hood, which he had raised an instant to look upon Beatrice. He descended into the hell of exile, and all the mud of the Arbia rose in his gorge.

San Gimignano gives us this incomparable page of history. Modernised Florence—outside the Piazza of the Signoria perhaps—leaves us rather dissatisfied. It is here that one seizes the real signification of Tuscany, and her so widely differing children. San Gimignano shows herself to us ingenuously in her rustic frame, behind her robe of russet stone which hides the radiant treasures of her bosom. History and art are made clearer by this intact city, attractive and forbidding, citadel and reliquary.

III

AN OPULENT DESERT

Monte Oliveto



AFTER leaving Siena, the train, coasting rapidly down the hill, runs toward the Arbia, whose foam still hides, along its banks, dried pools of Florentine blood. In the distance, is seen Monte Aperto, that tragic mountain where Farinata dei Umberti, as he buckled on his armour, swore to vanquish his brothers, who had driven him out of Florence, but, also, if he was victorious to pardon them. Is this landscape as potent to evoke the past as my imagination makes it? Would the passer-by, to whom the name of the Arbia stands but for a rippling stream, be conscious, as he crossed it, of poignant, tragic emotion? Perhaps not; but, at least, let us allow the pleasure of their memories to those who can people the landscape.

To travel for the mere splendour or horror of

things is a way that has its reward, and often a fertile one. The other way, which is to look at the countries visited in the light of the memorable events of which they have been the stage, is at least instructive. And, if, a few moments ago, *I saw* Farinata shove a Buondelmonte into the river, does not my conscience receive a good lesson, is not the citizen that I am instructed in a way that he cannot forget?

Suddenly the country has changed; instead of smiling it has become stern. Vegetation has almost ceased. Here and there, in this convulsively undulating earth, the poor peasants have wrested a few brownish corners from the clay that covers the region. Their ploughs have made a furrow or two that look like the rails of a switch-back. One might say that the oxen had drawn their laborious trails over the surging sea,—over the waves. A hundred square metres of this desperate cultivation, and then again desolation prevails for leagues. Here and there only, in a corner of tilled soil, where a group of olives have been planted, and some weeds grubbed up, are the efforts of man evident.

Gradually, the desolation becomes absolute.

The waves of grey clay spread far and wide, and sweep the entire horizon; and for fully an hour past, by the time the train arrives at the station of Asciano, where the carriages are waiting to take us to Monte Oliveto, the outlook has been but an extent of country convulsed and buried in cinders.

Have you seen at the Louvre the relief by which M. and Mme. Dieulafoy represent the places where they have carried on their excavations at the Acropolis of Susa? You have seen the grey earth somewhat like the colour of a pigeon's breast? You have seen the sharp cuts, the dust-like sand that seems to run as if it were water, and then form precipices? Imagine that relief a country of many thousand square kilometres, and you will appreciate this region.

A road is cut through this land of excavations. It winds obediently around the smallest sand hillocks, and skirts the edges of the steepest precipices. Precipices? A fall down one of them would be serious; but the fear of this is somewhat relieved by the knowledge that, though the fall itself be severe, the shock at the bottom would be broken by a soft cushion of heavy, pasty earth.

This soil is, in fact, exceedingly friable. The

lightest rain makes it run, and alters its contours. Hence these continual grooves that interweave, and so create the basins of inland seas, peaks, hills, and mountains in miniature! But there are so many of them, they extend so far, as far as eye can see, that, in going along this road, the country gradually seems to become impossible, unreal. Nothing but the grey clay, and the fleecy masses of these cinders. The wind blows furiously, threatening to overturn the carriage; for it is free in this plain. It bloweth as it listeth, an impetuous vagabond.

In the distance, we see upon the road some human forms, with their backs against a corner of rock. Immediately the painful sensation that has pursued us from the beginning of our drive takes definite form. Who are these men? Brigands? We smile; but the impression remains unchanged. These men, as we shall soon see, and already surmise, are peaceful road-labourers. If, however, our driver should turn toward us to warn us politely that we must empty our pockets, and if two muskets should be aimed at us, we shall not be in the least surprised.

If there are no brigands, no doubt we shall see

famished bands of voracious wolves jump over the quagmires, and bound from rock to rock. Here it was that Siena saw roaming and heard howling the gaunt she-wolf, with the long, hanging teats, which she has placed upon her coat-of-arms; and it was here that she trapped it to use as the symbol of her courage, her independence, and her pride.

Alone, on this road, which without end winds on ahead of us, we seem to be in the midst of the most forgotten of deserts, remote from all humanity, drawn, by I know not what stroke of madness, into an impossible exploration. This cannot be a frequented road. This country cannot be inhabited; it is the country of the dead, and of the terrible.

Along the horizon I look in vain for the volcano that has thrown out its lava here. I imagine a Tuscan Pompeii, ten times as large as Paris, which perhaps is sleeping under this soil apparently so light that the wind must carry it away. Let spades disembowel this impalpable dust, and a splendid new-found city will be revealed to us.

But no! no summit emerges. Nothing sleeps under this. This is, then, perhaps, the once

muddy bottom of a prehistoric lake, or the humus of an ancient forest brought to light?

These senseless hypotheses haunt us in spite of our reason; this country has always been what it is, isolated, refractory, wild. *This* the landscape of the Inferno! Dante, by this frontier of the Maremma, was inspired to describe to us the circles into which Virgil guided him. I recognise them. Now I see the places which he evoked with a sublime horror. At Florence, even at San Gimignano, I asked myself where Alighieri had been able to find the inspiration of such savage nature; and I attributed the imaginations of his bruised heart to exile, and to the walls and proud towers of his city. That was because I never had been here, never had crossed this clay. As are the borders of the Inferno, such is this Tuscan region of death.

And when at length my companion and I descend from the little carriage, it seems to me that we are the two insignificant pilgrims of a journey definitively described, the weak and stunted Virgil and the Dante of a depopulated Inferno.

Below a miserable village, upon an isolated

peak, in the midst of cypresses and a few olive trees, a sombre red mass seems crushed under the mass of a huge clock-tower. It is Monte Oliveto. All about, lies the abomination of desolation, the profound abyss of the clay precipices and ravines. How is it possible to reach that species of *burg*? To all appearances, one must climb along the grey walls to the level whereon it stands. But there is a road. The peak of Oliveto is connected with the chain of clay mountains over which we have come by a narrow ridge. This ridge has been grooved out the entire length, and the base of the cut forms the road. To the right and the left of the ruts worn by carriage wheels, there is sufficient space for a foot passenger, and beyond that the drop.

You commit yourself to this road; you pass through the gateway under a sort of battlemented tower, which bespeaks the temporal power of the monks, and asserts their sovereignty; you follow a road bordered with cypresses, and you arrive at a little paved space from which rises the apse of the church.

The abbey is a great two-story quadrilateral of brick. The windows of the cells look upon the

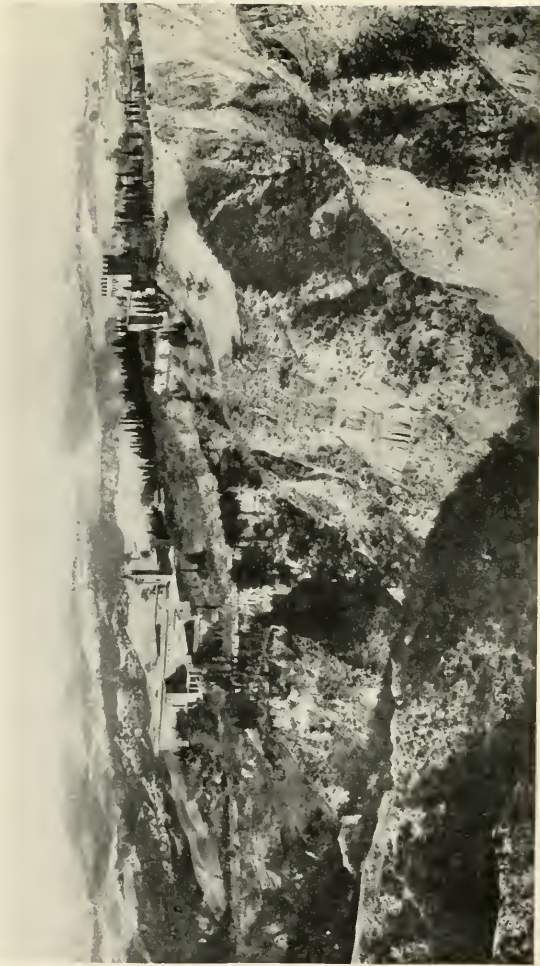


Photo by Altinari

“In the landscape of the *Inferno*, on an isolated peak, in the midst of cypresses and rare olive trees is the red bulk with massive belfry of Monte Oliveto.”

desolation of the sea of clay, which, on the west, loses itself to sight in the Maremma. On the eastern side, the walls are perpendicular, sustained by thick buttresses, beyond which is a narrow little road. From there, you perceive the small village that seems to watch over and protect the monastery. To the north, between a double range of cypresses, lies a path which leads to some old chapels, and to some "points of view" from which you discover the towers of Siena.

A man, a peasant, conducts us into a low, vaulted hall, where we are welcomed by a long table covered with white linen. By what banquet is our tale of brigands in this gloomy desert to be prolonged? A few minutes ago this desolation in the heart of fruitful Tuscany was able to bring us hallucinations. Now what demon is to continue our dream by offering us, in this solitude, a goblin love-feast? The country is haunted, they are going to serve us a banquet after the manner of Pantagrue before the pillage. I begin to hope for some adventure of the Scudéri order; a trap set by modern malefactors, by civilised brigands. Ah! what a bit of colour it would add to this scene! A ransom gently solicited, obsequiously imposed!

Alas! After having left us a moment,—that is it, they are preparing their stroke!—the man returns. And gravely he brings us back to the reality of things: he can give us nothing for our sustenance.

A little water to drink only. . . . And, defeated, we devour some chicken bones between crusts of bread; these had been thrust into our pockets at Siena.

The man then tells us that the monastery has been suppressed. The State has taken possession of, and maintains it. Monte Oliveto belongs to the Academy of Fine Arts of Siena, which takes care of its walls, of its library—so bare and gloomy,—and of its paintings. Artists and scholars who wish to stay here must make their application in Siena. There are rooms, plenty of them, bright with sunshine. And, if the visitor for a day wishes to be welcomed by a few flasks and some hasty-pudding, he must give notice of his coming. The chief of the brigands is the guardian, innkeeper, functionary, and cook.

Our drum-sticks picked, the man opens a door for us, and turns us loose in the convent. First there is a little cloister, then another door, and

we enter the great cloister, the illustrious cloister of Sodoma, for the glory of which the provident administration has made a desert of this flourishing monastery.

All along the tragic road and up to this moment, when the cloister was opened to us, I had rather forgotten these paintings of Sodoma, which were, nevertheless, the object of our Faust-like excursion into the desolation of the dead land and infernal wind; but here they are. And the entertaining illusion, just now our plaything, flies away for ever. This is indeed still Tuscan ground. Here still glows the incomparable soul of the Renaissance. An incomparable museum unfolds under these deserted arcades abandoned in the midst of the terrible.

It would be unjust to demand of a Sodoma the faith of a Giotto. The frescoes of Santa Croce and of the Spanish Chapel delighted me by the purity and the fervour which they revealed in the souls of their authors. And, if Angelico remains the ray of luminous joy, the grace, and the spiritual delicacy of Tuscan art, can one demand a virtue equally simple of those who lived a hundred years later?

The heroic times are over. Benozzo, too, has passed away. He frequented the Medici palace, and if he kept his probity, he did not his innocence. His frescoes at San Gimignano are those of an artist who understood and who aspired; they are not those of a believer.

After him, Sodoma appears like a marvellous virtuoso, but a simple one. Never, perhaps, has what painters call "le morceau" attained, or will it attain, this amplitude and this beauty. But I have always believed that I see in these monks' figures the irony, or, at least, the indifference of their painter. How could he be sufficiently detached from the world to move us by the mental tortures of Saint Benedict, tortures all of faith and holiness, he who so voluptuously caresses the forms of those disquieting young men we see around the saint?

Benozzo was able, in expressing the sadness of Augustine, to lift his genius to the profound humanity of the son of Monica, even to his doubts, his errings, and his ardour; but is that a reason why Sodoma should understand the torments of Benedict, the founder of a monastic order, so out of the world, and entirely for divine contemplation?

It matters not whether the accusation of Varari, from which Antonio dei Bazzi received his nickname of Sodoma, be true or false. He belonged enough, in any case, to his own century; and young men of this period were sufficient voluptuaries to have been notorious as such. Who would contend that an artist so sensual that certain of his nude women, seen at Siena, already give an advance taste of Rubens, even if he were not a sodomite, could so purify his heart and mind as to understand San Benedetto? As a natural consequence, the impression of reality is ended. Ah! if the frescoes of Novella could but be transported hither, and set in this unique frame, so well suited to them!

The Sodomas, on the contrary, carry me back violently into the midst of men, into the radiant and flowering city.

I have forgotten the terrifying desert that I have just crossed. Monte Oliveto is no longer a lost and abandoned convent. It is no longer the most savage and desolate place in the world. It is the pleasant shelter of the most fastidious civilisation, where some one has been pleased to put the greatest amount of worldliness possible into the representations of the most sacred and legendary of events.

By the hand of Sodoma, Monte Oliveto becomes an incomparable museum of pure art, detached from all creed. How far we are from San Marco! Florence, the Florence of the Magnificent, and of Benvenuto, is here. And, just as this morning it was necessary to make an effort in order to accept the reality of nature, so now it is necessary to force one's belief in order to frame these masterpieces of humanity in this fantastic monastery. This is, indeed, the most affirmative testimony of the artistic splendour of this painter, but only of that. The art between these deserted walls is the most incongruous thing about them.

I admire these squires and pages of Sodoma, and their creator was great among the men of his time. But, should I not admire them more, and would not Sodoma seem to me greater in Rome or at Florence? At the court of Julius II., I see these same pages, covered with silk and lace, with graceful and languid arms, pouring wine into cups. These squires in the highly polished armour, whose well-kept hands never have held a heavy sword, except with a thick glove, I see at Careggi, mingling in the philosophical jousts of the gardens. Here, they are strangers to every-

thing, and to everybody. On these severe walls they startle one; possessing naught of the holy ardour of these times that produced them.

We have started on the return journey through the furious wind across the precipices, and we have nodded a friendly salute to the peaceful road-makers. The charm is broken. And it is utterly dispelled by the conversation of the *vetturino*, intended to persuade us that his *buona cavalla* is the best in the country, and that, therefore, we ought to double the sum promised.

We are in the train, nerves are relaxed, and I have read the history of Monte Oliveto. The guide-books give it succinctly. The pamphlet written by Father Gregory M. Thomas and bought of the guardian is within the reach of every one. Æneas Sylvius Piccolomini, Pius II., also tells us of the splendours of the monastery. Besides, is there not the account of the visit of Charles V.? Before the frescoes of Sodoma, the suspicious Emperor must have been, like ourselves, convinced.

Monte Oliveto, formerly Accona, was founded in 1320 by Bernardo Tolomei, a Sienese, and

placed under the patronage of Saint Benedict. Tolomei, his monks and their successors, cleared the desert there, and planted it, infusing a little life in this death of nature. The convent for a long time was one of the most prosperous. Then it fell into jeopardy, and was secularised by the government in order that the masterpieces of Sodoma and Signorelli should not suffer the fate of the church of 1350, which was demolished in the eighteenth century by the stupid monks. To-day it is nothing but the paradoxical roof of great works of art.

A few moments ago, when the sun was setting behind Monte Maggio, I was wandering in the gardens of the Lizza, from which Siena spreads out her ancient ramparts, whence one sees San Dominico, where lies the sacred head of Saint Catharine and where the Sienese earth reddens under the brilliant spring flowers.

He was truly of this austere and rugged city, that Bernardo Tolomei, who wished to people the desert of Accona. He was the brother of the little Catharine, whose stone pillow may be seen in the cellar that served her for a bed. He sprang



Photo by Alinari

St. Benedict's miraculous restoration of the broken sifter, with
portrait of the painter accompanied by his pets

from this fierce and ardent soil. At the hour when most of the Tuscan people, with the Sienese at their head, struggled desperately in the fratricidal wars for their independence, the supremacy of their clock-tower, or power of their party, those who were tormented by piety and possessed by the fires of penitence, must needs choose Accona for a refuge.

Could they pray to God in some delightful valley, while their brothers, remaining in the world, wielded their massive arms so terribly at every hour of the day and night? Could they, at such a time, conceive a life of prayer that was not also a life of struggle? Children of those who fought on the Arbia, contemporaries of those who threw themselves through the Val d'Elsa upon Florence risen again, and dragging the Republic in the blood of the Nine and the Twelve, they could not understand penitence otherwise than in the roughest work, the most impossible tasks. They must glorify the divine majesty, but in places where He inspired terror. They must contend madly with stones, with the stalks of dried weeds, with the most ungrateful soil. They must dig cisterns at Carthage. They must defy nature in honour of

the friendly God, who permitted the arrogant city to starve Charles IV. in his palace.

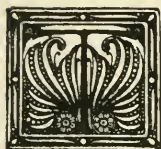
The other day, San Gimignano made me understand the Tuscan soul of the heroic times. But I saw only the civic testimony. At Monte Oliveto I have just been seeing the divine testimony. From Dante to Tolomei, there is but the distance between a great citizen and a great monk. At bottom, they are the same. They were moulded out of the same clay. And if Dante, when he wished to listen to his heart, could only understand its beating by descending into the infernal regions, Tolomei, when he wished to realise his conceptions of the renunciation, could do so only in the horrors of Accona.

At Monte Oliveto, I have heard the vibration of the second string of the Tuscan lyre of the century of Dante and of Farinata. Monte Oliveto is the perfect religious expression of this sublime century, when hearts were mad and when mouths, even in prayer, spoke only in violence.

IV

THE HEART OF THE PEOPLE

Florence, Holy Saturday



TO-DAY there is a great popular festival. And how characteristic it is of this city and this country!

Ever since eleven o'clock this morning the narrow square of Santa Maria del Fiore has been black with people. The streets of the city are emptied as if by enchantment, and the late comers one meets are all going in the same direction, toward the Duomo. The sun is shining brilliantly. In the fresh, light air we are flooded by an ardent, white light, a light unknown in our country; so pure, so radiant that it seems as if the sun were going to crack the stones. It is a curious sensation for us Northerners that we are to stand still under this sun without suffering, receiving only benefit from it.

The crowd, little by little, grows more dense and more jubilant. What is happening? I approach

and see the entire centre of the square completely empty. From the doors of the Duomo to the doors of Ghibert, a large space is respected. The crowd stops at an imaginary barrier, neither turbulent nor afraid. It is waiting with deference for a divine manifestation.

A strange mass stands in the centre of this empty space, a wooden chariot, an enormous octagon of chocolate brown, truncated at the top, hung with garlands of all colours, with bizarre and awkward volutes. From some point about mid-height an iron wire runs out from the chariot, passes through the wide-open doors of the Duomo, and is lost to sight. The eager crowd looks with tenderness and veneration at this shapeless chariot; the beloved *carro*, that enormous, ancient, ridiculous, and touching fetich.

Where does the wire end? I follow it into the Cathedral. There people are moving about, walking up and down under the vaulted roof as if they were in the street. They talk aloud; they laugh. The nave is an amusement hall. And once again, I find the Italian crowd what I have seen it during the week that I have been visiting the churches. Might this be because, for cen-

turies, the churches have been museums, visited by all the world? Certainly not. On reflection, the care with which they are left disencumbered of benches, chairs, and all that could impede movement, or invite repose, indicates clearly the character of the national mind. His prayer finished, the Italian is no longer aware of the sacred enclosure. The other evening, at San Lorenzo, a child was "rolling hoop" in the nave. At Pisa, a horse, which was nibbling the grass on the square, entered the Duomo, in order to stand in the shade, and was allowed to stay there. This morning, in Santa Maria del Fiore, the crowd has gathered to see the *colombina* set fire to the *carro*. The Duomo is no longer the church to which one comes to God, it is only the place that shelters the bird with the fire.

Every other consideration is forgotten. No one thinks of making the sign of the cross on entering. As the church is cold, some of the men wear their hats. The entire length of the nave from the choir to the door, on both sides of the wire,—which, coming in from the chariot, is attached to a wooden post standing at the foot of the altar,—a dense and noisy throng comes and

goes, climbing upon chairs, upon benches that have been brought for the purpose, and upon the shoulders of one another, as if the king or a procession were passing by.

At the same time, the divine office proceeds, the priests intoning, the choir-boys singing, and the poor organs, lost in this immensity, roaring pitiously. The people, who are here for such a touching act of faith and tradition, neither see nor understand anything of their ancient religion. Is it not God who, to make Himself manifest, has to-day taken the form of the *colombina*?

Meanwhile, the hour approaches. Necks turn towards the altar, toward the sacred post, to which the dove that is soon to be effulgent still clings inert.

Midday strikes. "*Gloria!*" cries the voice of the celebrant. The dove quickens. Its fire is alight; it makes a crackling sound, opens its wings, and flies. There it goes along the wire, a golden sheaf sputtering behind it. Between the two ranks of the jostling crowd, it passes, proudly conscious of its divine mission. Hands are held out to it during its flight, bare arms reach out toward it in supplication. Every one wishes to be

touched by the fire of the *colombina*, so that the year may bring him good fortune.

The magic bird goes on his way and when he appears outside the church, is frantically welcomed by the crowd in the piazza. He has crossed the narrow square, and has struck the immobile chariot, which immediately shivers through all its form. The bizarre flowers take fire and burst, and while the *colombina*, returning to the altar, scatters his golden sheaf on the way, the *carro* roars in a glorious outburst of fireworks. It seems to disjoint itself at every angle. It thunders terribly. Bombs, "runaways," rockets, spring from it, and explode noisily in the trembling air. And the crowd applauds,—their cries are heard between the explosions of the fireworks,—while in the church, the people laugh, speak loudly, gesticulate, and pass out, heedless of the triumphant song of the officiators at the altar, all joyous that the *colombina*, *brava colombina*, has done his duty well: there will be a good harvest, the vines will be loaded with grapes.

After about a quarter of an hour of cracking bombs, four white oxen are harnessed to the chariot. It is drawn to another square of the city,

near the Pazzi palace—since the construction of the trolley lines, it is not possible to go quite up to the palace,—and there the fireworks begun at the Duomo in honour of God are finished in honour of the Pazzi family, which was by turns so beneficial and so baneful to its country.

This is how the *Festa dello scoppio dello carro* is celebrated to-day. This is how it has been celebrated for eight hundred years. Listen to its short and simple history. All Florence is revealed in it.

Godefroy de Bouillon had opened the Crusade, eager to snatch the tomb of Christ from the Infidels. Christianity trembled with rage and hope: Florence, the Guelph city of to-morrow, even more than the rest. The Pisan galleys bore a veritable Florentine army, which was commanded by *Pazzo* or *Pazzino dei Pazzi*, appointed by Urban II. Superintendent General of the Tuscan Crusaders.

Pazzino, from the first, had, be it understood, but one desire: to rescue the tomb of Christ from the Unbelievers. But, he aspired also, with a still higher ambition, not to leave this sacred stone in Jerusalem, exposed to the contumely of the

Infidels. He planned to carry the divine sepulchre to Christian land, and make a gift of it to the most beautiful and most worthy city of Christendom: to Florence, his own city.

Though Pazzino covered himself with military glory, in his own heart he was filled with mortification. When he arrived before the tomb of Christ, he soon perceived the illusion of which he had been the victim, in dreaming of placing that stone on his shoulders, and carrying it away to Florence. What humiliation he must endure on his return to his palace, where he would be the laughing stock of his own people! The red of shame mounted to his visage, anger maddened him, he raised his sword, and—sacrilege?—made two stones spring away from the holy tomb.

When it was known in Florence that Pazzino was bringing from the Holy Land fragments of the Divine Sepulchre, unbridled joy and pride spread abroad. A triumphal reception was prepared for this meritorious and devout citizen. Pazzino entered the city in a chariot, built especially for the occasion at the expense of the Signoria, blessed by the Archbishop, and ornamented with paintings representing the exploit.

And the Signoria instituted a public festival which should perpetuate the glory of Florence, and the great hearts of its sons.

Every year, on Holy Saturday, a Pazzi should, with a spark struck from the sacred stone, relight the fire of the Sanctuary and, while the officiant should intone the *Gloria*, he should light the *colombina* charged to carry the flame to the chariot covered with fireworks.

So took place, in 1099, *la festa della colombina della casa Pazzi*, as it has been held to this day. Even under the Magnificent, on the morrow of the conspiracy of the Pazzi, when Julius was killed, and Lorenzo himself so miraculously saved, the ceremony was not omitted. The pride of Florence was stronger than her love for the masters she had given herself.

The whole character of this admirable people is drawn in this simple and touching history; their pride, their Christian humility, their independence, their hero-worship, their tradition, and their *fronde*.

At the time when the sepulchre of Christ was the object of bloody struggles between Christians and Infidels, the thought that his city alone was

worthy to shelter such memorial of the Saviour, must have come to the Florentine, as later the idea came to his sons that Florence must possess the most beautiful church in the world. The exploit of Pazzino was one that every man wished to have done, a little for himself, no doubt, but also for his city, beloved of God.

The possession of such a relic could only bring good fortune to Florence, make her harvests prosper, and swell the number of her grapes and olives. Florence would be eternally favoured of the Lord, in virtue of the lofty deed of one of her children.

But let it be avowed that every citizen has the heroic soul of a Pazzino. Let all the world see that Florence knew how to honour and to recompense him; that his personal glory reflected entirely on the city wherein he had been born and, in fact, that without her, he could not have accomplished anything. And let the centuries to come, let the children of our children, every year, commemorate this lofty deed, for their own instruction—let the entire world be brought hither to see what Florence was and what she still is, to admire the valour of her citizens, and the grandeur of the city.

Was it not in this wise, that just now, seated high in a window of the Bigallo, the Colonel Count of Turin, indifferent to the reality, but conscious of the history of this city and of this people of whom his family is sovereign, understood the festival of the *Carro*?

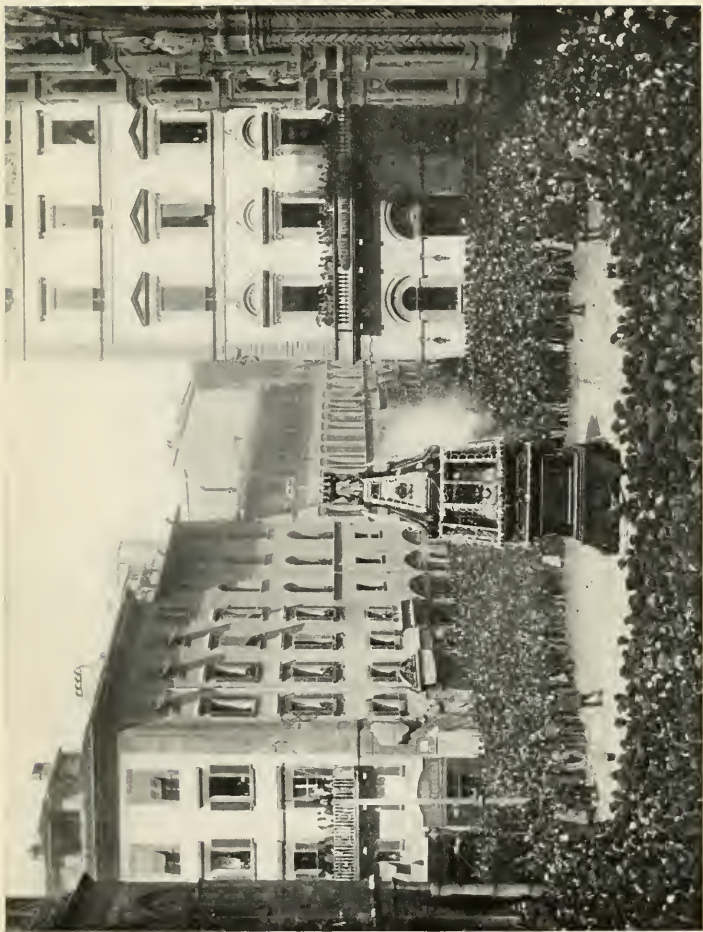


Photo by Alinari

Lo Scoppio del Carro

V

IN MEMORY OF MICHELET

Pisa



DO you remember Michelet's cry of pain upon the entry of Charles VIII. into Pisa? One hundred years will soon have passed, during which this unhappy city has groaned under the paw of the Marzocco; and her sufferings are as intolerable now as they were on the first day of her bondage. She throws herself at the feet of the King, imploring him to restore her liberty. This sacred word tore the heart of Michelet. In accents of tragic bitterness, the poet impeached the King of France, who, intoxicated with love and glory, never dreamed of shaking off the Guelph yoke which had been placed upon his shoulders by the Papacy. And Michelet shed burning tears over the Gibelline Pisa, who, for an instant, had believed that she would live again, only to fall back for ever to her servitude.

This ardent page of Michelet accompanies me

under the arcades which lead to the Piazza dei Cavalieri. It is still the lament of this sorrowful city that even to-day dreams of her defunct grandeur. The curiosity of the entire world does not console the sad Pisa. She expiates her fault every day, and although Michelet may have been touched by her unhappiness to the point of forgetting in it the implacable severities of historical laws, the city of Adrian herself does not forget; she still shows us a ravaged visage. And, like Michelet, we are filled with pity.

Like her tower, Pisa is so leaning! Her poor head is so tired upon her emaciated body! The treasures she displays on her skeleton serve but to show it the more lamentable. One sees only her poverty.

And, in the Piazza dei Cavalieri, I no longer think of the Pisans as the conquerors of Amalfi; there is nothing before my eyes but the victim of Genoa and of Florence.

When Vasari demolished the old dwellings that surrounded this square, and built the palace (one still sees, when on the site of the Tower of Hunger, where Ugolino della Gherardesca was subjected to the horrible torture that made Dante call Pisa "the shame of the beautiful country

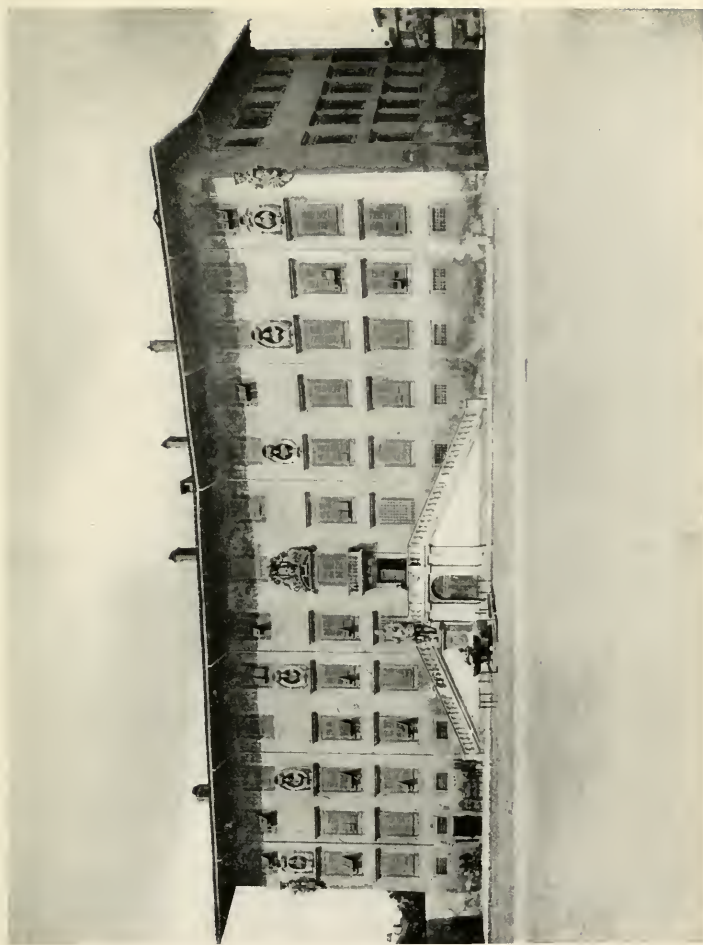


Photo by Alinari

“On the Piazza dei Cavalieri I no longer think of the Pisans as the conquerors of Amalfi
... only as the victims of Genoa and Florence”

where the *si* resounds”), when he built this mean little palace with the flat roof, was he obeying exclusively his own taste for the decadence, his bad taste, to speak plainly, his artistic conception, the ideal of his time?

Those most deplorable restorations in the Santa Croce and the Duomo forbid malevolent suppositions. If Vasari exercised his destructive mania upon the buildings, even of his own city, if his taste for the decadence, his bad taste, profaned the sanctuaries of Florence, it is indeed difficult to see, in his “embellishments” of Pisa, any other intention than that of the architect sincerely convinced of the excellence of his age.

Nevertheless, there must have been in him something of the obscure which guided his pick, something of the old ancestral passions, whose imperious mandates forbade to leave standing any monument of a former civic strength. To embellish was, before everything, to change, to efface the traces of a past that could not be born again. The statue of the Grand Duke Cosimo I. was planted before the restored Palace of the Cavaliers. That effigy sealed with its massive stone the city’s unquestionable slavery.

So understood, this ornamented square teaches the most serious lesson. It is the real Campo Santo. It speaks much more strongly to our imaginations than any other vision that is purely Pisan. It tells us of the death of the city. The painted walls that surround it but illustrate an obituary.

Let us, then, look for what Genoa and Florence have killed. Let us go where still exists the mark of this city which missed her destiny. Beginning life wreathed with honour and beauty, Pisa saw her flowers fade when they were scarcely opened. And she died at her dawn, under the blows of her executioners, on the edge of a ditch, still holding in her shut hand, so strongly that no one has dared to snatch them from her corpse, the sumptuous jewels which, across the ages, attest her fugitive but unequalled grandeur.

Quite at the end of the city, in a field, standing almost against the walls, four monuments proclaim the Pisan majesty, strength, and genius. If it is ill becoming, after so many masters have done so, to detail their marvels, it is permitted at least that one demand some instruction of them.

To those who cannot separate the works of art

from the epoch that produced them, and who believe in intimate connection with the political and social life of the people, how eloquent is the page of Pisan history written by Rainaldus and Nicolas Pisano!

In the eleventh century, Florence was still a wailing infant, while Pisa was creating Tuscan art. The Duomo of Pisa is the first work of Tuscan architecture. Modern sculpture dates from the birth of Nicolas Pisano.

Would not this simple fact satisfy us, even if we knew nothing of the political history of the city, even if the chroniclers did not tell us that Turks, Libyans, Parthians, and "other monsters of the sea," landed their most varied products in her port, and made, with the brilliant colours of their cloaks and their robes of fine gold tissue, a "tumultuous movement in her streets"?

In those times, Pisa was strong, rich, and free. She covered the Tyrrhenian Sea with her vessels. She disputed with Genoa and Venice the trade established on the Asiatic shores, and even to the mouth of the Borysthenes. She vanquished the Saracens in Sicily. The Normans and the Greeks on the Neapolitan coast were decimated and laid

under tribute by her. When Christian soldiers were to be transported to the Holy Land the Pisan galleys were the first to turn their prows towards the Orient.

For an instant, the space of a century—so brief,—Pisa was the greatest, and the strongest. And, in this open and prosperous city, the flower of art grew vigorously. The proof is not only found in the chronicles and the memory of men, it is above all inscribed in the field where bloomed the Duomo and the Baptistry. Such marvellous works could not be the product either of barbarism or of lethargy.

What destiny did not seem to be promised her! The sea washers, and the land paid her tribute. She had, to become the new Athens, to be what Florence grew, only to develop according to the general laws of life, and to the particular laws of her constitution. Yet despite all that, suddenly she sank. Her struggles to remain afloat were terrible, but she never rose again. Was this sudden death then an accident? No; it was because Pisa, when the political game brought all Italy to the cross-roads where it was necessary to choose between two ways, Pisa, with so many

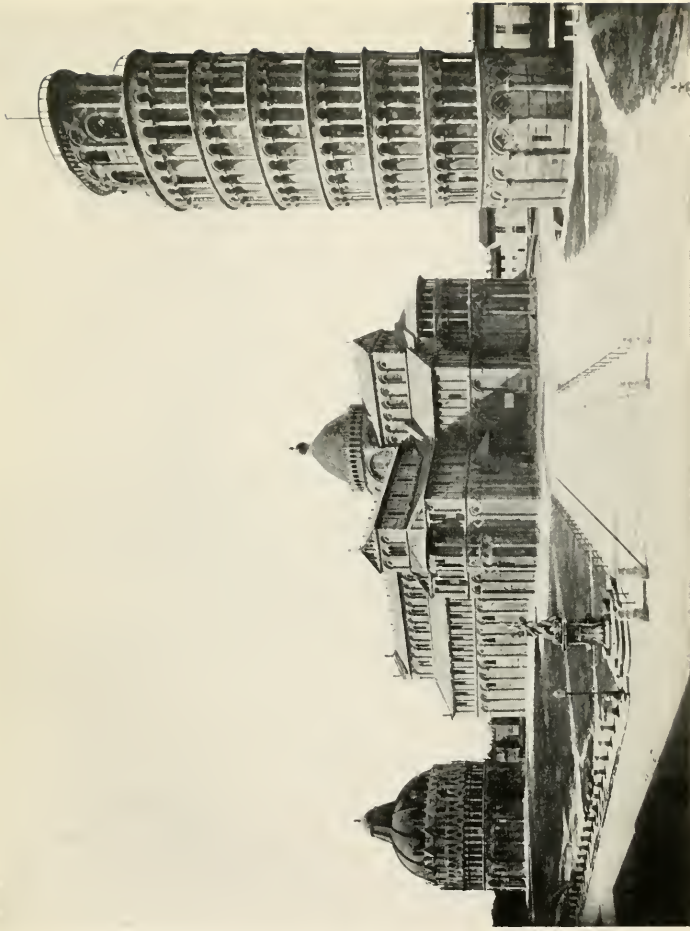


Photo by Alinari
"In the field where Cathedral and the Baptistry bloomed . . . Pisa invented architecture"

others that perished as she did, took the wrong road, and was irrevocably lost.

In the fantastic list of seven thousand and odd revolutions that, from the time of Otho I. to that of Charles V., ravaged the peninsula, Pisa figures in more than a hundred wars.

First Lucca harassed her; then Genoa; then Siena; then Florence; and the long list goes on almost without end.

But, when one studies the causes of these struggles, history always responds with proofs of Pisa's egotism, and her complete indifference to the rules that govern the life of peoples.

When her position at the mouth of a river should have made her the port and warehouse of the Italian world, she not only dreamed of independence and isolation, like Genoa and Venice, whose geographical position imposed such conditions, but she wished to make her sisters submit to her domination.

Lucca, already declining as it was, excited her miserable jealousy. Pisa always felt that proud city behind her, and her heart was set upon its destruction, even though she had only to let it die of atrophy.

Then, it was Genoa, with which she was not willing to share the empire of the sea, even though the valleys of the Arno and the upper Tiber offered her outlet for all the activity of this sort of which she was capable.

Later, it was Florence, whose rising prosperity had need of an overflow to the sea, and which, Pisa consenting to open her port only on too exorbitant conditions, excavated that of Leghorn.

At length, it was with Venice that she entered into hot dispute over the coasts of the Greek Empire.

Everywhere and always, in the history of Pisa, you see but avidity and jealousy. Having been pre-eminent for an instant, she would not admit a rival. When the Emperors descended into Italy, far from comprehending that the moment of invasion was one for concord and union, she made herself the ally of the German. Because of hate for Florence she became the bulwark of the Gibellines.

She marched always in this wise, out of time with the logical development of the Italian municipalities. And the lower she fell the more inarticulate arose the cries with which she filled the air,

the more madly she waved her skinny arms. Little by little, she lost all decorum, one day inviting a tyrant to come and rule over her, only to deliver him to the most atrocious tortures the next. She made herself the ally of Milan, to fight her on the morrow; joined herself to Florence against Lucca, then to Lucca against Florence, letting the sovereignty of the sea pass to Genoa and to Venice; and finished by losing even her independence, which Florence snatched from her.

From one end to the other of her history, there was nothing but disorder, incoherence, and sacrilege. Pisa did not appreciate the admirable part she might have played in rising Tuscany. She ought to have been the outlet and the source of its life. She would have reigned over the exchange. And, as the Duomo and Baptistry demonstrate, that material royalty would have been the fountain of her intellectual royalty.

Greed caused her ruin. Nothing could save her, not even Cæsar, who could not save the other cities that gave themselves to him, any more than did Charles VIII. The latter at least did not aggravate her misery.

If the walls of the Duomo attest the error of

Pisa, how much more intensely still does the Campo Santo tell us of it! When, in the middle of the twelfth century, the Lorenzetti, Andrea da Firenze, Spinello Aretino, and the Gozzoli, arrived at Pisa, it was to mark for ever her decay and her end. Death had entered into this city which *invented* architecture and sculpture, and which, through Giunta Pisano, almost *invented* painting. Now, her heart beats only mechanically. The blood still circulates, but the cells which should nourish it are already hardened.

To decorate the walls raised by the creators of the city, it was necessary to seek elsewhere for genius to pick up the torch fallen from their hands. The Campo Santo is not Pisan, it is, O bitter sadness! Florentine!

VI

THE GREATNESS OF SERVITUDE

Lucca



HAPPY Pisa! Miserable as was her later condition, she at least had won an earlier glory that left her immortal. Life was not given to her entirely unsweetened. Although she perished from the effects of her mad arrogance, boundless avidity, and political aberration, at least she knew how to profit by her early days. Her infancy was fruitful and perpetuates her memory. As faulty as her neighbour, she is forgiven because she was beautiful for an hour.

Pisa is one's first thought upon reaching Lucca and mounting to the top of the ramparts for a view of the entire city.

When the Lombards invaded fruitful Tuscany, they were so charmed by the beauty and wide command of this site that they chose Lucca for their residence. There is no place more pleasing.

Between the Apennines and the Pisan Mountains, which spread their fertile sides under her eyes, Lucca, seated on the banks of the Serchio, seems like a proud matron who rests her old age in the sweetness and peace of a fresh and silent country.

But the city herself never smiles, she who formerly was always scolding. She is, however, calm and silent now, and, having stripped off all the military accoutrements that used to bedeck her, she has knotted about her loins a green sash. Her ramparts are crowned with foliage, and from their shade she watches the play of colours across the fertile plain and the pleasant mountain.

Does she still see, as in the times of Dante, her rival, Pisa, across Mont Saint Julian? Her eyes are too weak, no doubt? Why were they not so always? Because of that vision, because of that habit came all her misfortunes. Gazing first to the right, then, later, after Pisa had fallen, to the left, toward Florence, Lucca never thought to look at herself; and when, one day, the Pisans, by way of reprisal, set up great mirrors before her walls, her people paled at the sight of themselves. The Pisans, however, when they had seen

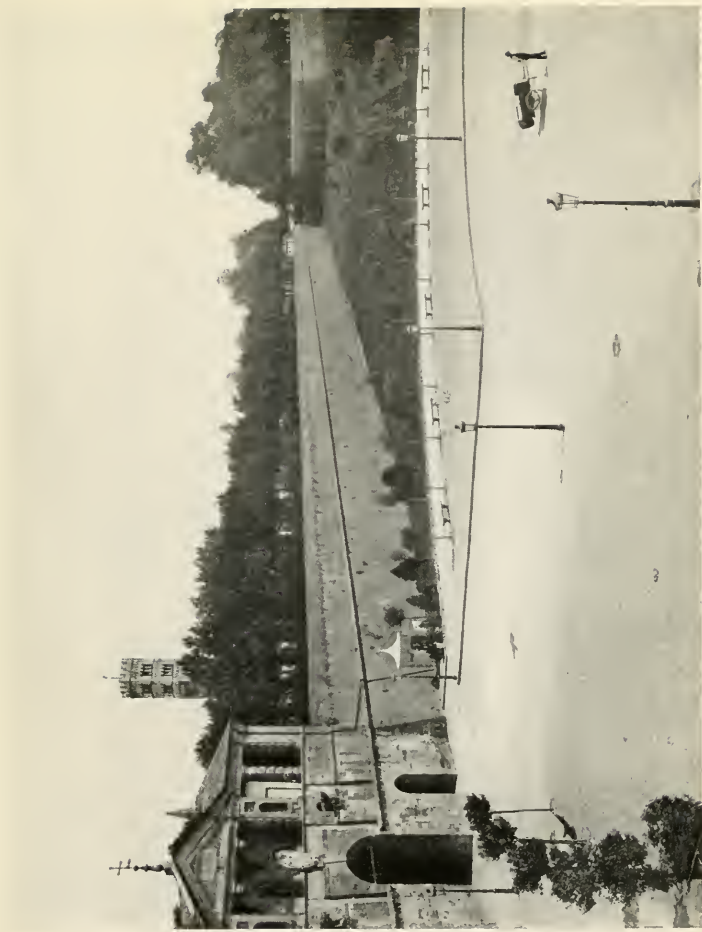


Photo by Alinari

“Lucca has wound a green sash about her loins . . . her ramparts crowned with trees”

the mirrors planted by the Luccan army on the towers of Asciano were still able to contemplate themselves therein with satisfaction.

When we go into the city, we see at once that her monuments are not the products of an art conceived in her own bosom, but clearly the works of artists educated in the schools of Pisa or Florence.

San Martino is, in its façade, an exact reproduction of the Cathedral of Pisa. Here are the same colonnaded storeys, one above the other, unmodified by any personal thought. We see only a childish fondness for luxury and ornamentation—as if mosaics or sculptures could constitute an architectural style! They make the Pisan influence only the more evident. Although the Luccans added a charming porch of elegant proportions, they hastened to call upon Nicolas Pisano to decorate it; and although we praise the rare Gothic beauty of the nave and the transepts, this word “Gothic” is a reminder of other borrowings, and recalls the Florentine and Sienese origins of that style in Italy.

At San Michele there is more of the same thing. Arriving on the square of Saint Michael, one is

dazzled by the richness of this many-coloured façade, on which the marbles, white of Carrara, red of Siena, and green of Prato, illuminate the little columns of rutilant arabesques. Certain of them are sculptured entirely in human or animal forms. Garlands representing lions, dogs, eagles, or storks, crown each storey. But how heavy and disproportioned it all is! And I experience here the same sensation as in France, at Reims, where the splendid portal, incomparable masterpiece as it is, awakens a regret, a regret at seeing it so detached from the building, so independent, as if it were laid on and could be removed without marring its beauty. At San Michele, in Lucca, this impression is still more vivid. The projection of this façade above and before the church is extreme, extreme to exaggeration, and is rendered still more noticeable by the lower columns, which touch the main wall at the bottoms, but which, in growing smaller toward the top, depart from it. I am always finding Pisa again, and Pisa corrected, ornamented, enriched; that is to say, a Duomo of Pisa without the simplicity or the majesty, which constitute all the grandeur of the original.

Nor does the civil architecture give me the impression, so eagerly looked for, of a personal art. When I turn my back on San Michele, if I look at the Palazzo Pretorio, it is to Alberti that I must forthwith give the credit; and when I wander about the melancholy Ducal Palace, it is Vasari who rigorously imposes himself upon me.

And yet if Lucca had wished! San Frediano is there to tell us that she also could be original, and bequeath to future ages monuments of her intellectual independence. Restored as this basilica has been, at the time of the invasion of the Pisan art, the magnificent remains of a personal grandeur are to be distinguished on its façade and its lower sides. Brunellesco did not disdain to borrow the style of the latter for the Badia near Fiesole. What more striking testimony could we find of that which Lucca might have been, had she been able to foresee her true destiny?

She always obstinately shut her eyes to it. A premature grandeur prevented her from surrendering herself to her true genius. There was a time when she took the lead in Tuscany. Under

the Lombards, under the ephemeral kings, Lucca was the capital of this province. She was the haughty and powerful queen until the devout Matilda abandoned her for Mantua.

When the Emperor Arnolphe talked about her, he believed her to hold the richness of a realm. From that time, she became inordinately proud. Accustomed to dominate, she imagined that the only glory worth coveting was that of power. Like the children born on the steps of a throne, she did not comprehend that there was any nobility other than that conferred by the sceptre. She did not see, like so many others, that she would have been able to live free. Pisa, who understood her weak point, imposed upon her one day the domination of the Marquis Inglebert. Only her hatred of Pisa could make her feel the bitter ridicule of that tinsel, make her understand that the intention was to crush her under the weight of honours.

For a space of more than three centuries Lucca pursued a fleeting mirage, the reconquering her royal dominion. She lived in a continual daze of jealous ferocity. Indifferent to aught but herself, ignoring the most sacred principles of



Photo by Alinari

“S. Frediano tells us that if Lucca had wished she also might have left monuments of her intellectual independence to future ages”

life, each day she abjured that which she had done the day before, now allying herself with Florence, now with Siena, now with the Pope, now with the Emperor, now even with Pisa, doing nothing but in the hope of regaining her crown. She lost all conscience and deserved what Dante said of the city: "there every man is a rogue; for money, they make no of yes." She besmirched herself, became a prostitute with the fury of a noble girl who throws herself into the gutter because she has been violated by a brute.

She was possessed in turn by the most notorious bandits, who after having seated her for some days beside them upon their bloody thrones, cast her back again into the mud. At length, she could not even say to whom she would give herself. Radiant as her poor body had been, she could no longer choose the mud in which she would roll. She was sold like a slave. Three times the tyrants from across the mountains bartered her for money; and, finally, ravaged and withered, she suffered the depths of shame in seeing herself offered to Florence by Mastino della Scala, and hearing Florence answer, "Keep her!"

One may follow her thus through the centuries, every day falling lower, rising now and then with some prince whom she could still beguile by her knowing caresses, her prestige, and, it must be said, her courageous tenacity. She was an admirable instrument to spread unrest, and Jean Galéas, among others, made use of her. Sometimes she ransomed herself from servitude, but it was only to sell herself again: to Florence against Pisa, to Genoa against Florence, or even against her own sons.

Together with Florence and all Tuscany she succumbed for ever under Charles V.; having become so thoroughly numbed and insensible from her bondage to others that she did not even feel the insult when the bed whereon Beatrice used to watch was slept in by Elisa Bacciochi, and when, in the church where Matilda used to kneel, a seat was given to Marie-Louise de Bourbon.

If I needed still another proof that Lucca failed to develop according to her natural gifts and her native fertility, because she had achieved greatness too early in her youth, would I not have it in that perfect artist, refined and delicate,

Matteo Civitali? To him she owes it that the passing stranger is still attracted for a few hours to her.

His "Tempietto" is a monument of most skilful and pure architectural art. The altar of Saint Regulus pleases by the simplicity and the purity of its figures, even if its general arrangement, its architecture seems less happy. And what celestial charm, what juvenile grace is in the angels of the Chapel of the Holy Sacrament!

He, Civitali, at least, is a true son of Lucca, of that rich and very pleasant country, of those mountains of abundant and rustling foliage. The little Matteo must have wandered often about the Luccan country, drinking in the sentiment of its freshness and grade. In his marble, the flesh, the draperies, modelled with such true feeling, perfect technique, suppleness, and line, bear witness to the surrounding mountains, and the undulation of the Serchio, where he used to bathe as a child.

What Civitali was able to do tells us well enough what his fathers might have done, if they had had the leisure that was bequeathed to him. At the time when he was born, Lucca,

for the moment, had a breathing spell, Pisa having been dead long since, and Florence being occupied inaugurating the tyranny of the Medicis. No one thought of her any more; the disdain of the world gave her a little peace.

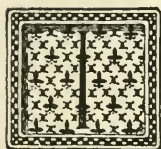
The genius of her son, the last flower of the tree of such great roots, could open freely. The Luccan sap, so long repressed, at length produced a last branch: this charming artist whose creations are among the purest and the most exquisite of the Renaissance.

In the golden chain that each Italian city forged, in the miraculous times of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, Lucca beat out only the first and the last rings. San Frediano and Civitali, at the two poles of the Luccan art, eloquently attest the social paradox and the deplorable servitude of this city, which should have been able, then, when all around her and in her were encouraging her, to shine with a radiance all her own; whereas her madness condemned her light to be but a reflection.

VII

THE LIFE OF A GREAT PAINTER

Prato



IN the midst of this fratricidal land, which is Tuscany, among these bloody souvenirs that are the attraction and the lesson of our wanderings, Prato stands for repose, calm, and innocent gentleness.

Prato has no particular history. Suburb of Florence, so to speak, she shared, naturally, the destinies of that city. She became subject to her in the first years of the twelfth century. About 1350, she made a great effort to shake off the yoke, with no result but loss. She resigned herself then, and understood what an admirable part she had to play beside her powerful mistress. She played it in an inimitable manner.

There is no stain of blood, or of mud, on the escutcheon of Prato. Dante scorns her. In compensation, upon it flowers the Renaissance

in its purest bloom. Envidable glory! Upon her walls are fixed the two most perfect works of a new art; from which dates a memorable stage of the Florentine career, the definite progress of painting and sculpture.

It is the eternal pride of Prato to possess the outside pulpit of Donatello, and the fresco of Filippo Lippi, the two masterpieces of the first period of the Renaissance, that is to say of that epoch when art, freed intellectually by Giotto, rid herself of the last scholastic chains, drew her inspiration from nature, looked at men, animals, the world, and painted what she saw as she saw it.

From the station, a narrow street leads us to the square of the Duomo, spacious, and with no stern palace, but containing a marble fountain that has its laughing baby and its voluptuous swans, and the church of the white and green portal—of the famous green marble of Prato that is almost black. Nothing of the military, nothing of the aggressive on this square. And that is the first amazing thing in this Tuscany bristling with red walls and proud towers. Prato seems an amiable little provincial city, a big country



Photo by Alinari

“The spacious square of the Duomo with the fountain, the church, and the outside pulpit”

town without a history. One sees here nothing but peaceful works.

On this account, Prato has put on a grand air, the air of welcome, of elegance, and of simplicity. The eye looks in vain along the high walls for parsimonious windows. The only edifice of imposing structure exhibits the friendly sign of an inn where a succulent *risotto con piselli* is smilingly offered you. Prato has the exact sentiment of the masterpieces that she holds. She has renounced all other display, for her keen, entirely Florentine sense of the beautiful has told her that, in keeping to this part of sanctuary, she would occupy one of the first places in the minds of men.

We have seen the Palazzo Comunale thoroughly. Its very composition indicates sufficiently that nothing tragic took place there. A modest tower has been welded, an after-stroke, to a slender *palazzino*. A fine battlement runs around the summit of the two edifices, an ornament much more than a defence. The interior is reached by a narrow and steep stairway impracticable for attack, still more so for sortie. The dignity of the priors demanded this somewhat severe general

aspect. The details show clearly that Prato possessed the sentiment of dignity, that she knew nothing of discord.

A little farther on, the church of the Madonna delle Carceri, of the end of the fifteenth century, has one of the most perfect specimens of the art of the Robbia that is offered to our admiration. An elegant and graceful frieze, of that varnished terra-cotta, which is indeed the most charming decoration that man has been able to invent, garlands the base of the cupola. It sets off the grave Evangelists of the pendentives, forming with them a whole that has charm, grace of line, and a restrained richness, that cannot be forgotten.

We have seen, too, the little Museo, where Filippo is represented by an altar picture in whose features of Mary I should like to recognise Lucrezia.

In the street of Santa Margharita is Filippino's Virgin, poor virgin, sinking in the dust behind her grating, clinging to the old hovel that owes its life to her, but still of such a vivid expression under her protecting penthouse, herself protector of the street games, the sports of the children in the gutter.



Photo by Alinari

“It is the eternal glory of Prato that she possesses Donatello’s
outside pulpit”

I look at her, that pure head, with the gentle smile, indulgent and melancholy, bent toward the *bambino* held by her frail hands. In spite of the sacrilegious plaster which holds together the disjointed fragments of *tempera*,—or was it indeed because of them?—she seemed to me also, this sweet and delicate Mary of Filippino, to be of the race of the Lucrezias and the Spinettas, those amorous nuns whose adventures filled the gardens of Careggi with sonorous laughter, and inspired Æneas Sylvius with kindly pity.

But does not all that, all these fine details which, as a whole, contribute to the general peaceful and elegant effect of this smiling and charming city, must not all that disappear before the two masterpieces: the pulpit by Donatello, and the frescoes by Fra Filippo?

Against the brilliant background of the sky, at the corner of the Cathedral, the pulpit rises, so blended with the edifice that it seems to be cut out of its very wall, and so light, at the same time, that it appears as if it might be delicately hung upon its flank.

On seven marble panels there are children singing and dancing. Their movement, the freshness

and the vivacity of the faces I have already seen on the incomparable Choir which is at Florence. Is it the circular arrangement of these bas-reliefs, is it because they are left to the brilliant sun exactly as they were conceived and set here, that they appear to me gifted with such intense life, with such vigorous youth, with an art so moving and so truthful?

Life, truth, these are the two words that apply to this great Donatello, who was the first to know how to express the beauty of the human body in all its rapidly changing expressions, its warm contours, its vibrating lines, its ideal nobility, and the reality of its material. The ancient chain is coupled again, and complete. Donatello has taken the tradition of Greek beauty, but adds to it, by the force of his modern genius, the feeling of truth and expression. His Magdalen, his Saint John, occupy in the art of sculpture a place as important as the pulpit of Nicolas Pisano. He was the Filippo of that Giotto.

These gifts of life and truth, that Donatello put to the service of his chisel, Fra Filippo, who had them in part from his master, Masaccio, applied to his art of painting. His frescoes in

the choir of Prato have been too often described, too much has been said of their artistic and historical importance, in all the histories of Italian painting, in all the essays on that subject, for one to feel himself permitted to describe them again. All the emotions experienced, when before them, by the great travellers and specialists have been expounded by all those who love Italy.

What should I be doing here to celebrate again the banquet of Herod, to commemorate the death of Saint Stephen? The ease of the attitudes, the invention of the decoration, the richness of the undulating drapery, the expression of the faces, the skilful composition, the variety of the subjects, the rough strength, the supreme grace and elegance, all that, I saw and felt.

Filippo Lippi marks a great date, one of the greatest, in the history of painting. He has brought into his art observation of life and nature. Before painting faces, he looked at them, which was a new thing. And it is by that, perhaps, that I am the most touched; as I was a few moments ago before his little picture in the Museum, in which I wished to recognise Lucrezia. He was a great painter because he was a man.

And, whereas, in the other cities visited, I have looked for the political and social signification of the times that they illustrate, in this peaceful Prato, which is an important stage in the history of art, I shall look for the intellectual signification, that is to say, the customs that produced those heroic times and the heroic times that produced those customs. How did men live in Tuscany, in the midst of those epic struggles, whose ardour and ferocity are revealed to us by Pisa, Lucca, and Pistoia, in the days when, instead of being the wild beasts of which Dante speaks, they were men; how did they show their humanity?

Donatello and Lippi have just been telling me, by the splendour and the novelty of their ideals which were brought forth by strong and sane minds in the course of these violent years. The simple narrative of the life of Filippo, his adventures, and the conditions under which he worked, serve to complete this excursion into the Florentine country whose epic grandeur we have just seen, and whose intellectual colour, exuberance of spirit, and radiant youth we are now about to see.

Then, perhaps, having seen a great artist live, we shall the better understand his works, himself, and his warlike brothers.

Filippo was born upon the left bank of the Arno, at Florence, under the shadow of that Carmelite Church where, at twenty years of age, he painted his first picture. It was in 1406. Florence had attained the crest of her prosperity; in that very year, Pisa was definitely made subject, and the Milanese forced into an attitude of respect. The factions, by the overthrow of the *Ciampi*, resigned themselves to the triumph of the merchant aristocracy. Cosimo dei Medici, with a firm hand, guided the destinies of the city, which entrusted him with its hopes and its safety. Brunellesco covered Florence with his audacious works, the cupola of the Duomo, San Lorenzo, the Pazzi Chapel, and finally was determining the plans of the formidable Pitti, whose grandeur is achieved by the massive accumulation of strong and heavy lines.

Filippo, as a child, ran about among these unfinished works, and it was not until he had attained the age of six years that his aunt, who had

taken him an orphan at four, gave him to the religious brothers of the Carmine that he might be made a holy man. In 1421, he took the habit. He had scarcely put it on, when Masaccio was charged with the decoration of the Brancacci Chapel in the church of the convent. Fra Filippo saw the master work. He took fire, and his ardour touched the good Masaccio, who put a brush between his fingers. He never laid it down.

But it was not in vain that the little Filippo had run about Florence, a wide-awake urchin.

Fra Filippo felt in a confused way that, if he remained shut up in the convent, his art would not develop. He was under imperious need to see, in order to be able to interpret; and he obtained from his superiors permission to leave the convent, still wearing the habit. As soon as he was free, he began to roam about the city where moved the brilliant and light society of the court of the Medici. He roamed so much that out of his vagabondings in search of emotion from nature and life, there was born the legend, controverted to-day it seems, of the kidnapping on the seashore by pirates, and his sojourn "in the

Barbary States." The Barbary States were, no doubt, Fiesole, San Miniato, the friendly houses, discreet and joyous, where Filippo studied the luminous landscapes, the specimens of delicate architecture, the sweet-faced men and women, his models.

An altarpiece that he made for the monks, the Coronation of the Virgin, now at the Academia, attracted the attention of Cosimo, who summoned him. Cosimo, who loved the arts, must have been surprised, he who knew only such monk-painters as Angelo, to find a young Carmelite, alive, awake, interested in life, observing and independent. Fra Filippo probably did not dissimulate his tastes nor his appetites. Cosimo smiled and, having ordered some pictures, gave him full liberty. Filippo did not wait to be told twice. Strong in the protection of his patron, he abandoned himself to excesses. So much so that Cosimo was obliged to shut him up in a room to make him work. A few days later the sheets of his bed were found twisted in a rope, hanging from his window. Cosimo was not at all angry. He sent out searchers for his effervescent monk, found him, pardoned him, and,

resolving henceforth to let an artist, whose inspiration came entirely from without, live in his own way, he occupied himself only to furnish him with the means to work according to his mood. Under his protection, no doubt, Fra Filippo was appointed chaplain of Santa Margherita at Prato. The wolf entered the sheepfold.

In this convent there lived, wearing the habit, two sisters, Lucrezia and Spinetta Butti, both of them beautiful and charming. One of them especially, Lucrezia, was remarkable for the mischievous frankness of her delicate features. Was Filippo smitten at first sight, and did he resort to stratagem to ask her to become his model, as Vasari tells us? It is more probable that Filippo, a realist, already aware of his true art, incapable of painting without a model from which he could seize life and feeling, chose her from the other nuns to be the Virgin in his work; and that which was bound to happen happened.

A few days later she followed the chaplain to his house, where they loved one another openly, and where, some time later, Lucrezia gave birth to a son, whom they called Filippino.

There was no scandal. Their example, even, was emulated. Soon Spinetta went to join her sister at the house of the chaplain. Three others followed; and for two years, the nuns and the lovers, Filippo and Lucrezia, devoted themselves peaceably to their amours in indulgent Prato, under the friendly eyes of Cosimo and of Florence.

At the end of a certain time, however, ecclesiastical authority tried to recover its ewe-lambs. It succeeded. Every one went back to the convent, but not for long. Lucrezia and Spinetta escaped again, returning to the chaplain, who, annoyed at being disturbed by the monks, grew angry and valiantly appealed to the Pope!

Cosimo, who had laughed till he cried when he was told of the abduction, took the part of the protector of the rebel and libertine chaplain with Pius II., and the large-hearted Pope forgave. He freed Filippo and Lucrezia from their vows, and authorised their union.

But, liberated, what was going to become of Filippo? Deprived of his ecclesiastical benefice how was he to live? The question in Prato, then, was who should provide for the needs of the ex-chaplain. The defrocked monk, the sacrilegist,

the husband of a nun, was solemnly called to paint the choir of the Cathedral. For four years, Filippo Lippi worked peaceably under the kindly eye of priests and nuns in this church that he had profaned.

There is still more. Vexed that they had taken away his pupil, Fra Diamante, Filippo refused to finish his work. Consternation swept throughout the city. Every one was indignant with the Carmelites who dared to deprive Lippi of his helper. They called loudly upon the Medici, who restored Fra Diamante to his master. A year later, in calmed and still protective Prato, Filippo finished his imperishable work.

But once more the terrible problem arose. With the meagre resources of his art, Lippi vegetated. When he painted, he was paid, poorly but paid. Who, then, was going to take an interest in him? Again the Medici came to his aid. Cosimo was dead, but his son, Pietro, watched, and, upon his recommendation, Filippo was charged with the decoration of the choir of the Cathedral at Spoleto.

In 1469, three years later, aged more than sixty years, Filippo Lippi died in that city, poisoned,

it was said, by a jealous husband. To the end Filippo loved life, his inspiration. And Lorenzo ordered to be raised by his son Filippino a marble monument under the vaulting of the Cathedral of Spoleto, a monument which cost a hundred ducats in gold, and for which Angelo Poliziano composed a noble epitaph.

The Guelph prince raised in that holy place, by the hand of the son of a nun, a monument to the glory of the ex-chaplain.

It is to be seen there to this day.

VIII

THE POLITIC CITY

Pistoia



THE city of Cino is laughing and charming to look upon. Situated on the banks of the Ombrone, which is as celebrated in the wars of Italy as is the Rubicon in the Roman wars, Pistoia bears no resemblance to Lucca, her fruitful neighbour. She is less verdant. The Apennines offer to her view no shady slopes. Nevertheless, she is still more prepossessing. She invites you with friendliness, and courteously displays her delicate favours. Her broad streets seem to be swept by a lighter wind; the sun seems to take more pleasure in caressing her walls, in which the windows abandon themselves to him; and the façades of the palaces, pierced by many openings, decorated with sculptured and painted ornaments, offer the most cordial welcome to the passer-by.

How sweet and pleasant the Piazza of the Duomo, where, nevertheless, as in Pisa, in Siena, as everywhere, tragedies have been enacted! There is no bitterness, rather a pride and joy, in the display of *blasons* that hang between the ogre-like windows of the Palazzo Pretorio. They are arms of the different *podestas* who commanded the city in the name of the citizens, but their abundance and the respect in which they are held indicate clearly enough the harmony and if not the peace at least the community of ideals that existed between the commanders and the commanded. The court is sombre, but it, decorated with similar trophies, and the bench of justice, are also intact. It was respected by a people who, though hot-headed and impetuous, nevertheless retained their sense of right and duty.

At one side, is the Cathedral, with its campanile, whose base is the tower of a strong castle, and whose top is lost to sight in a Pisan colonnade of three storeys. One must not be too severe; the porch is similar to that at Lucca, but ornamented with frescoes, and with Robbias.

In the interior, rise the funeral monument to Cino, the friend of Dante, who taught equity and

the love of liberty to Petrarch; the monument of Forteguerra, which is one of the most exact representations of the serious and ideal manner of Verocchio; and the altar-front, notable in the toreutic art, which forms a fraternal link between the artists of Pistoia and Florence.

Further on, gleams the rich and brilliant frieze of the *Ospedale del Ceppo*, of the art invented by the great Lucca della Robbia, and cultivated with masterly skill by two or three generations of nephews. This art must be seen in luminous Tuscany to understand its decorative strength and the profound sentiment, which in spite of some rudenesses, triumphs by the harmony and the vigour of its primitive colours.

Some distance farther on, are San Andrea, with its pulpit by Giovanni Pisano, which would be a masterpiece if it did not copy that of Niccola; San Francesco, with its Giottesque frescoes; San Giovanni, with the severe walls, and still other churches of pleasant attractiveness, calm simplicity, of modest and peaceful art.

Here everything seems to be bursting with health and joy. Not once are you under the subjection of that feeling so well known to the



Photo by Alinari

“How pleasant the square of the Duomo is”

traveller in Tuscany, the painful feeling of fratricidal souvenirs. We are in a continual struggle between impressions and recollections. Names gallop across the memory, re-echoing their cries of war. Panciatichi, Cancellieri, Tedici, Ricciardi, Sigobaldi, Vergolesi, sing us incendiary hymns. Vanni Fucci and Carlino remind us that, at Pistoia, the *Whites* and the *Blacks* were born. And Dante, who was *white*, Dante, the inseparable companion of our route, booms his strophes of imprecation:

“I am Vanni Fucci the brute, and Pistoia was my worthy den. . . . Ah! Pistoia! Pistoia! Why do you not resolve to burn yourself till you exist no more, since your sons, from day to day, only go deeper into evil! In all the obscure circles of hell I have not seen a mind more arrogant before God! . . .”

Is it possible that such a laughing city merits such maledictions? It is the first time that I have not been made sad, when I hear the implacable anathemas of the prophet. What mysterious or incomprehensible charm emanates from this city, whose memories are sanguinary, yet whose aspect is all of pleasantness and kindness?

I have come back to the Piazza of the Duomo to look for the answer to this seeming paradox. Once more I gaze at the church, always pleasing, the Palazzo Pretorio, always blooming with its coats of arms. And, opposite, I now see the Municipal Palace that I neglected before. It is less open in appearance than the Pretorio, and not at all illuminated; but above the principal window stands out, in black marble, a clean-cut, energetic head. It is that of Filippo Tedici, one of the most synthetic personages of active, healthy Pistoia. And, as a sleeping bell caressed by the wind awakes soft melodies in its trembling bronze, the name of Tedici gently evokes the most distinct memories which throw the light of day over Pistoia the blonde, and her merry children.

Filippo Tedici, and his uncle the abbot of Pasciana before him, imposed themselves as tyrants upon the city. In view of what was taking place elsewhere, the citizens accepted them. They were not, for all that, these citizens, any the less jealous of their independence. It was because the tyranny of the Tedicis was not like other tyrannies. Shut up between Lucca



Photo by Alinari

“There is pride and joy in the display of the blazons between the open windows of the Pretorio”

and Florence, but having more to fear from the latter, Pistoia was Gibelline. How far out of his reckoning, however, would the man have been who had thought himself able, without risk, to offer her to the Emperor! Filippo Tedici, and his uncle before him, understood that; and his Gibellinism became tinted with Guelphism. He conspired with Florence, but, being, by a skilfully prepared *confetto*, separated from his wife, who had no alliances, he married Rialta, the daughter of the tyrant of Lucca, Castruccio. He deceived every one, or rather he deceived all the enemies of Pistoia. To what end? To the end, and that was the important one, of keeping his city free.

Tedici understood that the city of Pistoia, by joining either party, would be absorbed by Florence, if not as an enemy then as a friend. In order not to be absorbed, she must manœuvre; and if the people clamorously objected, not appreciating the finesse, the confusion of their sentiments would save them from irreparable actions. They did not always understand, but they felt very clearly that the measures taken by Tedici conformed to their aspirations. It

was but an amusing masquerade to be for the Pope or for the Emperor. The simple truth was, they wanted only to be free, cost what it might.

Over this military ground, in this ancient, royal city, the Gibellines swarmed, seizing and acquiring everything they desired. But see the admirable fertility of a free people, liberty mad. The Cancellieri, Guelphs, when they were triumphant, hastened to split. One party must not dominate the other. Harmony could be maintained only by opposition; and the Cancellieri, no longer having any Gibellines to cleave asunder, invented a quarrel amongst themselves, and separated into the Blacks and the Whites.

The Cancellieri thus creating a new division of the parties, and Tedici exciting Guelph and Gibelline conspiracies: there are the two poles of the history of Pistoia. And the events which took place between them are but exact repetitions of the first proposition. The formula is mathematical. What flexibility and what daily re-creation. If the Whites triumphed, the Blacks flocked together, and vice versa. And as the parties were equal, the result was invariable: all

were reconciled in proclaiming the independence of the city. The problem was solved.

But could peace endure? Is that possible with such terrible neighbours as Lucca and Florence? Both of them besiege the city; she succumbs; the women are sold; the judges of Florence give justice to the highest bidder. Pistoia, indignant, raises heart-rending cries that are heard by Henry VII., of Luxembourg, the hope of Dante. Is she then to become Gibelline?

Still again Pistoia turns back. The Emperor being there, she is Guelph at once. The Pope is far away, has little or no army. That is the master she wants! Does Henry VII. go away? Then the Pope is more powerful. Quick, let us become Gibellines again, or Whites!

The game is clear, dazzling. No city like Pistoia shows, with so much evidence, what there was at the bottom of the quarrels, the accounts of which arouse in us such amazement, and often make us despair of comprehending them.

Cities, Guelph or papal, cities, Gibelline or imperial, all ask of the Pope, or of the Emperor, only the nominal protection which they need to be independent and free. If they are agi-

tated on the surface, if they contradict themselves at times it is because these two chiefs wish to profit by the protection that they give in order to become their masters. They deceive themselves with such simplicity. They abjure, they banish, they recall the man they exiled the day before, and when he wishes to attain power he is swept away again. The great question is not the restoration of the Roman Empire, or the creation of a theocracy. It is that the city may keep free.

That is why Pistoia is so peaceful, and has this air of health and joy that I have seen.

No city but Pistoia presents such an epitome of the quarrels of the Italian Middle Ages, when the land of Æneas, although seemingly tainted with madness, was, as one sees upon close examination, but merely working out a harmonious social development.

In an epoch when the entire world was covered with darkness, there was one nation that possessed the purest and highest sentiment that people can possess, the sentiment of independence. Everything starts from that, everything leads to that, in this epic struggle. Liberty was van-

quished, it is true, but the Italian cities did not struggle in vain; at the end the triumph was theirs.

Pistoia, to-day, carries on her face an expression of a legitimate pride; she laughs and holds out her arms gracefully, because she has always been full of strength and poise. Pistoia, with her palaces and her churches, a miniature of Guelph and Gibelline Tuscany, gives a healthy impression of truth. She illuminates history and manners; she resumes in her happy bosom the Italian life of the time of emperors and popes, that life in which the children of one mother destroyed one another, with, however, the sacred purpose of keeping intact and free her who nursed them, of making her proud and independent, their glory and their joy.

IX

THE VOICE OF PETRARCH

Arezzo



HE gorges of the Arno, followed from Florence, form the most skilfully devised approach to Arezzo. The river here is an impetuous torrent which has torn an angry route across rocks and landslides. He has torn and ravaged the edges of this tortured ground, wherever he has not submerged them. It seems as if, not being able to overpower them, he has been eager to avenge his own weakness by mutilating them. The railway, turning incessantly in daring curves, spanning his torrent or sounding his depths with bridges or hardy culverts, itself seemed overwhelmed a short time ago by the massive rocks that it has serrated, but suddenly, wearied, at the moment when the Arno again turns toward the north, entering deeper into the impenetrable mountains, it abandons him and runs toward the

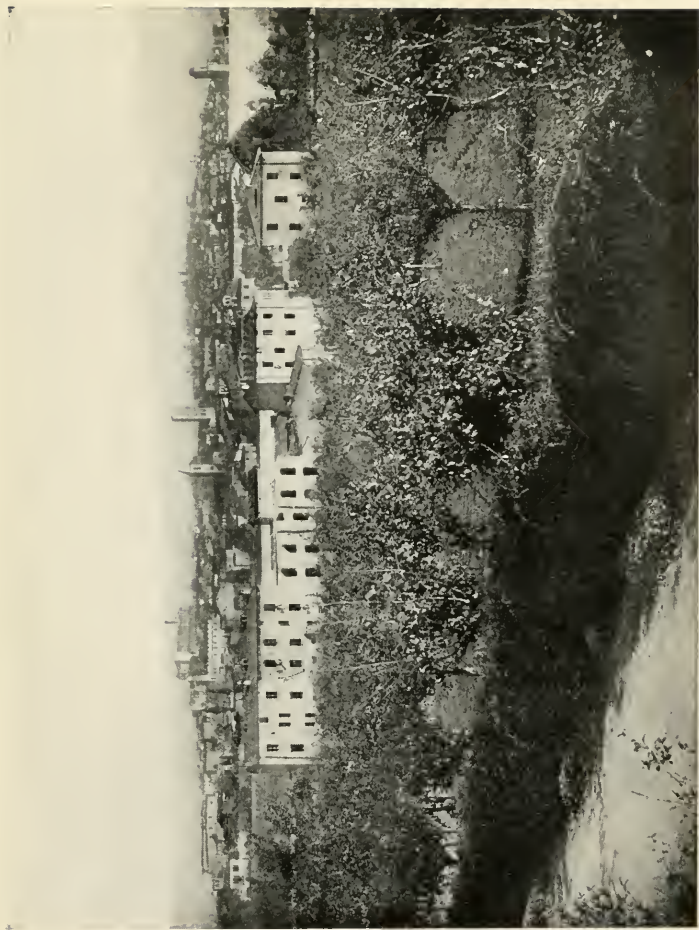


Photo by Alinari

Arezzo, Panorama

quiet plain, and the wide-mouthed valley of Chiana.

In past years swamp fever hung over this blooming valley. Dante says: "If, in the month that separates July from September the hospitals of Valdichiano, of the Maremma, and of Sardinia, were brought together in one single ditch, it would be a spectacle of pain like that which I saw."

Up to the middle of the last century, over this land, to-day fertile and verdant, desolation reigned. Arezzo presides majestically at the regeneration. From the height of a buttress of the Apennines, she seems to watch over the human labour that has put prosperity and life where there used to be but death and misery. She is the advance guard of this inundated land, that Fossombroni has made fertile. She is the watchful guardian of this country that her son has created. Seated on her eminence, she looks upon the olive and the vine growing vigorously, and the beneficent canals draining off the too-abundant waters. On the hillside, she rests in contemplation of his work of humanity, his great social work.

If Arezzo, at first glance, imposes herself upon

us with this tutelary aspect, the ordinary course of our thoughts before long resumes its troubled current. In Tuscan history, Arezzo, it is true, does not occupy a place of great originality. She has followed, in their vicissitudes, her strong neighbours, Florence, Siena, and Perugia. But it is she who gave birth to a man who had the glory of being the conscience of Italy. It was not in vain that Mæcenæus was born there. Petracco, son of Parenzo, notary of the Republic of Florence, banished with the Whites, among whom was Dante, took refuge at Arezzo, where his wife gave to the world a son who received the name of Francesco, and whom all mankind calls Petrarch. This man impresses himself upon us with a strength that excludes all impartiality and a vigour which holds us to him.

Without doubt the son of Francesca, a poor woman of the people, whose name he bears, the great Pietro has left upon the walls of a modest church, the most beautiful trace of his exact and forcible genius. The frescoes of San Francesco mark an epoch in history, because Pietro della Francesca was one of the first to carry into the art of painting the principles of perspective

and foreshortening, and the first to formulate for it mathematical and geometrical laws. Was it not from him, moreover, that Leonardo and Raphael copied that gradation of light, strong at inception but fading out to die sweet and soft; that effect which has been called *chiaro-oscuro* and to which those great painters owe their happiest masterpieces?

Vasari, also born at Arezzo, has left there one of his most conspicuous works, those famous loggias or arcades, upon the style of his loggia in the Uffizi. Why was it necessary for an evil curiosity to drag me to the Museum, that I might look up the paintings of that good architect and still greater writer? Indulgent for all mankind as one is made by the History of the Painters, it is not possible to forget the murders that he committed at Florence, chiefly at Santa Croce. The Museo of Arezzo furnishes a clear explanation of them.

What the most conventional, the most false, the wickedest art can inspire, Vasari has realised abundantly in these pictures, that a blind devotion has gathered together in this little museum. Vasari covered the walls of Santa Croce with a

sacrilegious badigeon, and, having thus covered the frescoes of Giotto or his pupils, he raised against those sacred walls chapels, whose flimsiness was intensified by iron supports, embedded in the eyes and the breasts of the first children of Tuscan genius.

What pity could the painter of those dramatic attitudes, that bloated flesh, those discordant colours of the Museo at Arezzo, have for the tranquillity, the transparency, and the pallid tints of the Giottesque! If Vasari had not left an immortal book, posterity would have dealt with him in all severity.

Why do I delay? Petrarch calls all my attention. In going up toward the Duomo I look at the interesting façade of Santa Maria della Pieve, with its superimposed colonnades, which seems the entrance to a Venetian palace; the Palazzo Publico, blossoming, as that at Pistoia, with coats of arms; the Duomo, where five admirable Robbias convince me finally of the pure, serene genius, and the impeccable rightness, of the art created by the great Luca; and in the little Via dell' Orto, close to the Duomo, I find the house where the little Francesco was born.

When, covered with laurels bestowed by the people of Rome, Petrarch stopped at Arezzo, his compatriots tenderly showed him this house where he first saw the light. It is with the same reverence we look at it, more moved by it than he was himself, he whose heart was on the banks of the Rhone, and whose soul was on the banks of the Tiber.

But is it not precisely because of the Roman soul of Petrarch that we look with so much emotion at these sacred walls. If they touch us so deeply, it is because he that was born behind them knew how to forget them, and make himself the son of all Italy.

Arezzo counted for little in the life of Petrarch; for no more than a unit of the great Italian realm that, until he drew his last breath, he endeavoured to call back into existence.

Toward Florence, herself, really his native city, he never felt any tenderness; and when she wished to put him at the head of the University that she had founded, he thanked her with gratitude, but hastened to regain his house at Vacluse.

It seemed to him that if he allowed his emo-

tions to be stirred over his birthplace, or permitted himself to settle in the great city of his ancestors, he would run the risk of forgetting his high mission as the prophet of Italy, the regenerator of liberty. At Avignon, at least, he kept his soul perpetually on guard. The scandals of that *sink of vice*, as he called the court of the Popes, fed his avenging ardour every day.

If Laura, pitiless, filled his heart with bitterness, and made him weep over his own misfortunes, the simony and the saturnalia of Benedict XII. and Clement VI. quickly recalled him to himself, and turned him back to his destiny. He saw Italy the better from a foreign land. If all his life Petrarch kept very pure his feelings of the Italian aspirations, if he was able to formulate them definitely, and give them a body and a soul, it was by keeping himself at a distance. In the peace of the Sorgue, he felt the needs of Italy better than at Parma, or at Milan, or at Padua.

To be the conscience, the synthetic voice, of an entire people, requires an attention that is distracted by disputes. Also, it does not seem to me seriously presumable that a disdainful woman was able, by herself alone, to prevent

this citizen of Italy from returning to the parental roof,—this apostle of the federation, for whose every sonnet there was a vehement letter to the Pope, to the Emperor, to the King of Naples, to Rienzi, to the Scala, to the Colonna, and to all the tyrants of his country,—if the awakened sense of his mission had not indicated very clearly the necessity of his exile. If he refused to associate himself at Florence, he refused also to attach himself to Parma, or to Pavia, or to Milan. Moreover, and this alone is certainly supreme proof, he would not, either, attach himself to Avignon! Twice, he was offered the important post of Secretary to the Papacy. Twice he declined that offer. In order to accomplish his work, Petrarch needed to remain independent, just as independent as he wanted Italy to be.

The court of the Pope would have been as deadly to his prophetic mind as the courts of the Visconti or of the Ursini. It was not until he saw death approaching, that he felt himself permitted to return to his own country to stay. A long time previous, he had drawn up the Italian formula. Italy had been able to raise her united cry; the great schism of 1378, one may say, was

the work of Petrarch: *Romano Papa volemo! O almanco italiano!*

In the eyes of posterity, Petrarch has been severely punished for his human weaknesses. He loved a woman who had a dry heart, who never saw in him anything but a "wooer," and never imagined what a profound nature was proffered to her rule. And we forget the great citizen, the great reformer, the political genius, to dwell sentimentally upon the whinings of genius. In this Tuscan land justice should be rendered.

All Italy was rushing into carnage, shouting cries whose meaning she hardly grasped, shedding blood for ideas that were only vague and fleeting. The Guelph or Gibelline movement was drawing the cities into a mad riot, of which no one understood the significance. Petrarch bore the divine mission to co-ordinate these scattered and confused elements, and to say to them, "That is why you argue, and why you fight! That is why you call upon the Pope, and upon the Emperor!"

While at Cologne, he saw a spectacle that filled him with wonder. All the women of the city, their heads crowned with flowers, were gathered

on the bank of the river, and, chanting words of incantation, were washing their arms and hands in the mysterious waters. He was told that this ceremony, which took place annually, was for the purification of the city; the belief being that this *lustration* was necessary to cleanse the city of its crimes and to keep far from her the return of calamities.

“Happy people of Germany,” cried Petrarch, “since the river thus carries away all their impurities! Why have not the Tiber and the Po the same virtue?”

When he climbed Mont Ventoux, he exclaimed, “I love it when I should like to hate it!”

At Vacluse, in his dear retreat, in the midst of his manuscripts, he was indignant (it is his own expression) that there was anything so beautiful outside of Italy.

There are more than a hundred incidents of this sort in the life of Petrarch. These, at least, are enough to indicate his character.

What, then, did he desire for his country that he loved so passionately?

When Benedict XII. died, Petrarch wrote to his friend the Bishop of Cavailon a burning

letter, in which he anathematised that Pope who had committed the crime of not loving Italy. Clement VI. was hardly nominated when he begged him to return to Rome, imploring him to allow himself to be escorted thither by the embassy of the Roman people, with Rienzi marching at their head.

Upon the death of Clement VI., as soon as Urban V. was raised to the pontifical throne, he wrote to him, "And Rome, what are you going to do about that?" When that Pope started on the road toward the Eternal City, a cry rose from the breast of Petrarch, the cry of the deliverance of the Hebrews on going out of Egypt, the tragic *In Exitu!*

From all his mass of letters, or from his odes, is the inference clear that Petrarch took sides in the great quarrel; that Petrarch, like his city of Florence, was Guelph? Was it, then, towards the pontifical sovereignty that Italy, seeing that Petrarch was her word-bearer, was reaching out?

Charles of Luxembourg having asked Clement VI. to consecrate him Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire at Rome, Clement consented to do so, on the formal condition that he did not

remain in the city more than a day. "O infamous day! O shameful oath!" cried Petrarch.

In 1350, being at Padua, and despairing of seeing the Pope come, he wrote to Charles, begging him to descend into Italy. And in 1353, he again implored him to do so; and when, at length, the following year, Charles IV. entered Milan, he radiated with enthusiasm; and when the Emperor crossed back over the mountains he covered him with invective.

From all his mass of letters, or from his odes, is the inference clear then that Petrarch took sides in the great quarrel; that Petrarch was Gibelline? Was it then towards the Germanic sovereignty that Italy, seeing that Petrarch was her word-bearer, was stretching out?

Rienzi, when he attempted his magnificent enterprise, did not dare to hope that the voice of Petrarch would lend him its strong support. Yet never was revolution more generously sustained, than was that one by a man whose words resounded to every corner of Italy.

He wrote to Rienzi, *tribune of liberty, of peace, and of justice*. He compared him to Brutus. He upheld his cause at the court of Avignon, and

was prodigal to him with counsel and warning. His heart was wounded, no doubt, by the exile of the Colonna, his friends and protectors, but his mind did not waver. He never ceased to preach the sanctity of the Roman revolution, until he saw Rienzi dragging himself in blood, multiplying exactions, making himself a tyrant. Then he wrote to him from Genoa, "I blush for you!" When the Pope, after the lamentable tribunate of Rienzi, asked Petrarch's advice upon reforms to be worked in Rome, he answered:

From the time that Rienzi formed the project of re-establishing the freedom of Italy, I determined to reverence him above all others. And I tremble with indignation when I think that any one dares reproach the Roman people for having wanted their liberty. Restore, if you will, the power of the nobles, but on the condition of calling together the people to govern with them!

A few years later he allowed to escape him these luminous words, "What does it signify whence liberty comes, so long as it is enjoyed!"

Petrarch was neither Guelph nor Gibelline; he was Italian. What he longed for was the absolute independence of the nation. He went

impartially to all those who would promise him that, or whom he believed capable of realising it; and his tenderness for the Visconti came from the fact that he saw in their ambition and their force, a possibility of union, of Italian federation. Pope, emperor, archbishop, or *condottiere*, all seem right to him if instrumental in instituting municipal autonomy.

For it is this autonomy that Italy reclaims, by the voice of Petrarch. Since the descent of Otho, she has never ceased to seek it, and to rend open her breast to obtain it. For two hundred years after that time, she must struggle with the chains that had been imposed upon her, but it was in the middle of the sixteenth century that she found the man of genius who spoke for her. Some asked for this independence under pontifical guardianship, others under imperial military power, but all wanted it to the point of frenzy.

Others before Petrarch, to be sure, had cried out for liberty; but always imperfectly, and without being in complete accord with the desires of the people. Tolomei of Lucca, completing the thought of Saint Thomas, proclaimed the necessity of a monarch, who would be the Pope. Dante

formulated the Gibelline answer to this theory in saying, Yes, a monarchy, but civil. And he goes farther, "I accept, certainly, the progress of the Guelph democracy, I abjure nothing of the past. What I want is, with all our particular franchises, the Germanic legality stripped of feudal barbarity." Dante demanded an Empire, but a federal Empire.

To Petrarch was the glory of seeing still farther than Dante, who stopped midway. Only the genius of Dante could have conceived the audacious formula of asking for the federation in 1300. He made the mistake of not consummating the thought, which Petrarch was to complete fifty years later. The work of the latter is but one long cry of love, a hymn to communal autonomy. In that he sums up the Italian sentiment.

Thanks to him, Italy, wasted by the imperial wars, harassed by internal struggles, and disheartened by the thousand ambitions brought forth by these troubles, became aware of what she was doing, and understood, at length, to what her convulsions were leading.

Liberta dolce e disiato bene!
Mal conosciuto a chi talor no'l perde.

These two lines of Petrarch contain all of the Italy of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. She had known liberty, and she lamented at no longer tasting the flavour of that precious blessing. For seven hundred years of the most commendable revolutions she had sought to regain it. And when Petrarch died she trembled all over. Four years later the great schism broke out which at last aroused the Italian anger. When the Emperor abandoned her, she recalled a Pope, who could take his place, and confirmed Urban VI. The great schism had come.

If Petrarch had died discouraged, he, in his tomb at Arqua, must have trembled with joy at seeing this awakening of his people.

"God alone," he said, "is capable of healing the hearts and stopping the blood which runs in floods under the sword of the foreigner."

Is that all that Petrarch says? What vanity, what sterile amusement, to question the past if one draws from it no contemporaneous enlightenment, no vision for the future! What Petrarch adds I well know how to understand. Let us follow our course. Truth is near; she

makes me a sign; she holds out her hand to me. . . .

I cannot seize it yet—I do not dare to. The French had to go down three times into Italy in order to learn their lesson. Let time ripen our fruits. Soon, after a few months, I shall come back. Before touching the terrible Rome, I shall once more go over the sacred land of the cities that were in rebellion against her or crushed under her foot. I will ask them for new proofs of what I believe; from to-day on, I have a presentment. The Florentine Venus has confided her girdle to me to count its jewels. I will ask the Venetian Venus to let me enumerate her precious stones. If the Aphrodite of the lagoons, one evening when I am treading the ardent marble of the Piazzetta, throws me such a girdle as that which the Aphrodite of the Arno held out to me the other morning, when I was crossing the arcades of the Ponte Vecchio, then I may arrive at a conclusion. I shall go across the Euganean Mountains, to bend over the tomb of the apostle, the child of Arezzo, the man of Avignon, the old man of Arqua, the citizen of all Italy. Arqua—Petrarca, scorned, forgotten village, where, in a

bare place, lies the man whose genius seems to me to shine still in the mind of all the subjects of the Savoyard. Mecca, Compostella, Westminster, Pantheon, what more have you? Bending over the marble I will ask of Petrarch his last lesson—I will ask him if his heroic gestures, his furious cries, his anger, his supplications, and his tears, have obtained at last that which he called for. In his little house at Arquà, just before his death, Petrarch caressed his Homer, which he could not read. From the depths of his tomb, his hands rigid, he still sees his children. Does he smile at them at last?


Part II
Venetia

To
My Brother Pierre

I

THE SECOND STEP

Lecco

“ F they had dragged me to Rome on the wheel of Ixion, I should not have complained.”

Every time that I try to think how I can best express the joy I felt at the moment when I set foot on the edge of Lecco, these words of Goethe come to my mind. Months have passed since my first visit. They have but intensified my regrets and my desires, my enjoyment and my longing. I am sure that those who, in olden times, set forth for the holy places, could not have burned with more glowing ardour; and enchanting Jerusalem could not have appeared to them in greater glory than that in which I see the “Beavers’ Republic,” that radiant Venice, which Montesquieu depreciates so unjustly, shining on the horizon at the end of my journey.

I shall never again find the freshness of my

impressions of Tuscany, the delicious wonder of the first visit, the amazement, before so many beauties, of charms foretold, but not foreseen. I know now to what I am going. I am prepared for everything. A confident gravity, an informed self-assurance, a sort of touching, and ridiculous, vanity of the man who knows things, undermines all my real joy.

The route that I have laid out, beforehand, opens to me as I go on. It winds along at the foot of the Alps, lazily and rapidly, at the same time, according to my haste and my curiosity. Here lies the mythological girdle, whose jewels rival fires, trying to see which one will captivate me the most: Bergamo, where Lotto, and the Colleoni Chapel, smile at me with all their charm and brilliancy; Brescia, where the melancholy nobility of Moretto seems the fruit of the massacres to which legend and science owe Tartaglia; Verona, where I shall meet the undeceived shade of a great Celt, come to seduce kings, whom he conquered, in fact, the great soul of the Viscount de Chateaubriand in repose; Vicenza, where await me the smiles of the Villa Valmarana, the grave, noble serenity of him who realised exactly

the idea of the Renaissance, the architect of the Olympic Theatre, Palladio; Padua, where I have made a tryst with all my Florentine souvenirs, my memories of Umbria, with Giotto, master of all masters, the sole ancestor of all the painters, the Giotto of the Santa Croce and of San Francesco; Mantua, where I shall see the sublime and pure art of Michael Angelo and Raphael decomposing in general mouldiness and bad taste of artists, fallen into the hands of the Gonzaga and the pupils of Giulio Romano, eaten by worms and mosquitoes; Arqua, at last, Arqua-Petrarca, where in Euganean peace sleeps the fierce Italian conscience of Petrarch. Venice! Then, Venice, I shall go dreaming over thy lagoons, rocked in thy gondolas, dreaming of all thy dead, immortal like thyself, who in the modest frame of their little city, watch over that wealth of beauty, of radiance, if not of splendour, which thou wilt offer me! Besides, shall I not find them, with thyself, in thine own eager and generous bosom? San Giorgio Maggiore will complete the lesson of Vicenza, the Labia Palace will give me again the song of the Villa Valmarana, the Frari will ring the Gothic bell heard at Verona, Verocchio and

his *condottiere* will lead me back to the hill of Bergamo, where Colleoni rests at last. Having possessed Aphrodite of the lagoons, thanks to the girdle she confided to me, and whose jewels I shall have counted, I shall refasten the belt around the divine waist, and recross once again these serene Alps, whose white peaks, gleaming in the sun, now smile at my fever, here on the shore of the lake, where I linger an instant, this lake of which Bellagio is the insipidity, and Como the nobility.

I know well that, unlike Florence, who sowed her grain so generously upon the lands of her domain, Venice received from others the sacred deposit that fertilised the soil of her lagoons. The wind of the Italian storms even carried the Florentine pollen to the shores of the Adriatic, and there sprang up the Bellini, Jacopo, the pupil of Gentile da Fabriano, Giovanni, the master of Titian. And, if the Colleoni Chapel at Bergamo recalls to my mind the façade of San Bernardino at Perugia, if the Signoria, wishing to glorify Gattamelata, had to call upon Donatello, if Sansovino came from Florence, shall I be able to feel, on the mainland of Venice, any emotion as



Photo by Alinari

Portrait of Petrarch (painter unknown), in Laurenziana
Library, Florence.

*" Whenever I have wanted to seize the full meaning of Italian history
I have been obliged to turn to Petrarch "*

pure as that in which I exulted in the land of Tuscany?

I had wished to make sure of my intoxication by knowing something of this heady land before treading it. And I have found that its flowers, at least the most beautiful of them, did not grow there naturally. They were transplanted, acclimatised. Here, as at Rome, the art of the Renaissance is of Florentine origin. Then, I am coming here to find still further testimony to the greatness of Tuscany. My first visit is to be prolonged into a second period of one single journey. Am I not indeed still in the country where the *si* resounds? Am I not going to meet on the Piazza dell' Erbe, and before the Santo, the sublime exile, guest-errant of the Scala and the Carrara?

Why have I not put Dante into my travelling bag this time as before? I used to like so much to pick him up in the evening, and read his imprecations where the book happened to open! While I was wandering about Pistoia, or Lucca, the verses with which he set his mark on those mad cities would sing in my memory, which is lame enough to leave me the joy of the struggle and of the

victory. Why is Dante not a part of my luggage?

I am afraid of his dominion. He has fixed my eyes too firmly on his sufferings, his hatreds, his friendships, and his joys. The exploits of which he sings have held my attention almost exclusively. At his call, I have looked at Guelphs and Gibellines cutting one another's throats. At Pistoia, I could scarcely free myself from the Whites and the Blacks sufficiently to rise to a general idea of the two parties. And when I wished to seize the full meaning of them, to find the continuity of their discords, which could no more have fallen from the heavens than they could return to them with a single bound, it was Petrarch whom I had to ask for the connecting links, and for the philosophy.

On this mainland of Venice, where Dante put but the foot of an exile, I can the more easily shake off my subjection to him. Here he has not the power over one that he has in his own Tuscany, where even attempt at escape leads back to him. When, to flee from him, I took refuge in art, was it not, indeed, his friend Giotto whom I found imperious? In Venetia, the wild passions,

that are celebrated by the poet of the *Inferno*, are no longer the only ones that appear before me. My mind free from his constraint, I can look around the Poem, extend my sympathetic devotion by the study of that which precedes and follows, what he has fixed in the memory of men as exclusive facts. The history of Italy is long, if it is one history. Its periods are diverse, if they are distinct. Each is equally important, and has its precise significance. The ideal, dreamed of by Petrarch, was not constructed upon one period alone, the fruit of a passing emotion, of anger, or of tenderness. Not only the Guelph and Gibelline epoch, but all the past of Italy, had combined to engender the thought of Petrarch, which was, when he gave it out, long considered, profound, and ripe. And the subsequent history of Italy seems to have shown that he was right.

All the cities of the Peninsula have participated in the same movements. Lombardy followed Tuscany, Venetia imitated Umbria, Campania, herself, entered the circle, and even remote Sicily, and Sardinia, were agitated by the same convulsions, and passed through the same phases.

I am going to ask Bergamo, Verona, and Padua for the particular lessons that they can furnish. I am going to look closely into the problem worked out by Petrarch, and see if he solved it correctly. With mind unprejudiced, I will ask the cities of the North the lessons that each one can teach me. The invasions of the Goths, and the Lombards, the domination of the bishops, and that of the nobles, the power of the *condottieri*, the weakening, or the fall, of the cities, all these are as important, in the history of the Italian development, as the heroic struggles, of which the Tuscan land furnishes the synthesis. Then, when I go to bend reverentially over the tomb of Arqua, Petrarch, who knows everything, will not tell me things that I cannot understand. If the stones of the cities that Venice absorbed possess the same voice as the cities dishonoured by Dante, if their language is the same upon the other political and social evolutions, if from those crumbling walls rings the same echo, I shall be able to formulate what I now have a presentiment of, what I do not dare to state precisely. . . .

Let us then take the chances of a systematic route in gleaning souvenirs, harvesting beauty.

There will always be enough of the latter, when the former are wanting. What matter from whence it comes! The great plain of the Po, and of its rivers, and swamps, is so rich, that it has fertilised the most diverse plants. Lucullus brought there the Asiatic cherry tree. Atticus returned to Italy with the Greek masterpieces in his baggage. The Italian earth received these gifts, assimilated them, and gave them to us with a new splendour and significance. Sansovino bent his Tuscan art, which might have made of him the rival of the classic Palladio, to the sumptuous taste of the Venetian merchants, to their predilection for the Arabesque, for garlands, and for colour. Nevertheless, he knew how to retain all his fundamental grace and primitive delicacy. Is not this example enough to attest the adaptability and fruitfulness of this obliging land?

I leave these silent shores full of good spirits and confidence. All things smile upon enthusiasm and boldness. Mount Resegone seems to nod his head, wishing me good fortune. The Adda, before spreading out into the plain, murmurs a friendly good-bye. Italy! Italy! Passionate

woman, radiant woman, beloved woman, I have crossed the Alps in order to taste once more thy sweet lips. Grant me thy unforgettable and life-giving kiss.

II

COLLEONI-THE-WISE

Bergamo



LOWLY, the train has looped the last buttresses of the Alps. It crosses the Brembo, and Bergamo appears upon a summit, drowned in a verdure that is gaily pierced by red belfries, aigrettes, and pointed hoods. The protecting ramparts of other days are crowned with welcoming trees, which attest the change that has come over the children of the Soardi and the Rivoli. Osio tells, that, in the time of the civil wars, everything stood for a party sign, even to the manner of walking, of snapping the fingers, of yawning, of cutting an apple, either lengthwise or crosswise. Nowadays, the *bambino* who plunders the gardens of the lower city no longer troubles himself as to how his teeth bite into fruit, and the rich manufacturer of the Seriana, taking his stroll about town, does not ask himself if he is

making known his political opinions, by beginning his walk on the left side. These ramparts shade nothing of an evening now, but love-making. In their obliging shadows, Columbine and Harlequin, speaking the Bergamese dialect, must often have laughed at Truffaldin. These old walls are peaceful. They are calmly and serenely happy. Is not their mission always tutelary? They smile at the Lombard plain; they smile at the mountains. The doors, and the towers, are covered with a fluttering green mantle; their brown flesh, shining through, is draped like the beautiful body of a woman of Campania. *La citta alta* of Bergamo, full of amenities, has even renounced her watch over the lower city, that extends wide and noisy, at her feet.

The latter welcomes me when I leave the train, with the same leafy smile. There offers itself to my feet a long avenue solemnly bordered with a double row of trees, that meet overhead, like Gothic naves. To one whose associations with Italy are particularly of the South, these sumptuous vaultings, moving gently under the wind of the mountains, immediately recall to mind our French Riviera. When Virgil puts Tityre to

sleep under the shelter of an oak, he places both of them in his Mantouan, in this Italian North, always fresh under the rain of the Alps, in these plains of the Po, the Mincio, and the Adda, where the hay is said to be cut as many as twelve times a year. How pleasant, brilliant, and coquettish these sister-cities are; the elder a little the more serious in her maturity and her finery, the younger with open arms; both of them prepossessing, and "brave," as they say in that Provence to which they carry me for an instant.

Harlequin and *moussou* Pantaloon, of whom I was thinking just now, were they born here at the *Fiera*, which, every year, at the feast of San Alessandro, has seen, and still sees, perhaps the most beautiful cloths and silks of Italy spread out in its booths? They must have amused themselves to their hearts' content among this trivial lot of people, at whom Bandello, in his *Novelle*, snaps his fingers. There is no one, even to Donizetti, who by his vulgar and brawling style, does not confirm the judgment of the story-teller. But it is not they whom I have come to seek. Nothing is more painful, when one is asking things to awaken high and pure sentiments, than the

importunities of these paltry recollections, these common souvenirs.

Lorenzo Lotto will deliver me from them. I follow him into the three churches, for which he has painted his three greatest works. Vasari, whose scruples are sometimes childlike, tells us, wishing to be truthful, that Lotto for a time imitated the manner of Bellini and then that of Giorgione. If one adds, with Burckhardt, that Lotto approaches Correggio, and that he gives indications of being the precursor of the Parmesan, it certainly will be permissible, in this country of Italian farce, to conclude with, behold Lotto, well lotted out! *Voilà Lotto bien loti!*

I am not a scholar, and I cannot affirm that Lotto imitated so many masters. Certainly he is not one of those of whom one asks, and who give us, the exaltation of feeling, the amazement that seizes one before a Giovanni, or *il Concert*. But how one feels the charm of his Virgin, and his saints! Lotto had all the pictorial science of his art. That is seen clearly enough in his *chiaro-oscuro*, so clever and so tender, in his colouring, so soft, and, at the same time, so brilliant. This science he has put to the service of a keen intelli-

gence. His heads have a reposeful charm, that is all his own. The arrangements of the groups, and their relation to the central figure, have a beauty full of delicate feeling. In the altar-screen of San Bartolomeo, I like the serene modesty of the Mother of Christ, in the midst of the saints, who are respectful, without humility. And, in my happy recollections, I shall long see the angels of San Spirito.

I hasten, however, after this salutation to a pleasant painter, to reach, by streets at last tortuous and ugly, the old city of the Count Grandulf, the Arian city that was sacked by Theodelinda. The Gate of San Agostino opens its black mouth at the end of a narrow road, bordered with flowering acacias. I pass before San Michele, with the frescoes diluted by the rains. I come into a large square, where Torquato Tasso rises, glorious, and I am intoxicated at finding, once again, the familiar spectacle of the Italian cities, this majestic and smiling group of civic and religious monuments with the life bubbling about them.

Opposite, is the Broletto, the ancient Communal Palace, of eloquent Gothic style. The Broletto is the signature of Bergamo, at the bottom of the

treaty which gave her to Milan. At the right, in a corner, a dismantled, flat-roofed ruin angrily persists in the defence of the primitive personality beside the Gothic slavery, this by the design of its ladder-staircase, by its massive tower, ornamented by a multi-coloured clock, torn away, it seems, from the sunny back of Truffaldin to be hung there.

Nevertheless, through the open arches of the Broletto, sparkles the tomb of the *condottiere*; Santa Maria reddens, and two jaunty lions, which gaily carry the ogives, and bell-turrets, of the Gothic porch, beckon to me. The square is small and skimpy. Your elbows touch the walls. You are at the bottom of a well. The shadow of the Broletto even falls over the chapel. Only the Baptistery on the right, standing in its little garden, seems to be at ease. It is proud of its freshness, of its apparent youth, and, also, of having kept, in spite of its recent scraping, all the graceful line of the time in which it was built. So many things, in such small space! Nor is this all. Here at the left, still another building comes forth. Oh, very modestly! It scarcely dares to show the nose of its porch; although it also would like to have one see that it has lions to

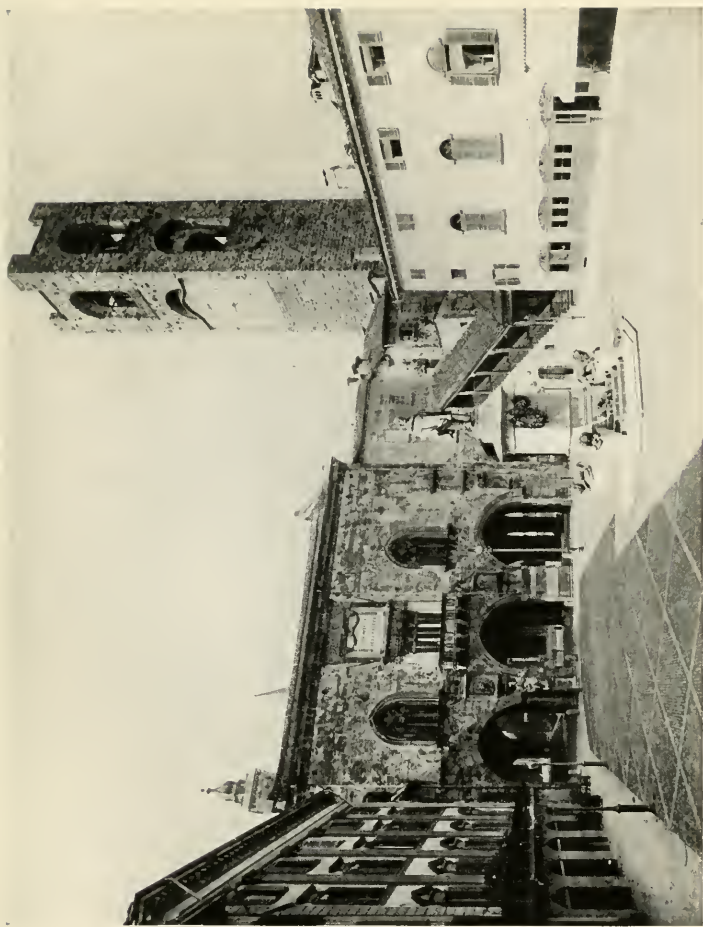


Photo by Alinari

“ The Piazza Garibaldi, a noble square, where Torquato Tasso stands . . . the majestic and smiling group of buildings about which the life of the city surged ”



defend it. But it draws back at once, fearing to be indiscreet; it is enough for it to have made known its presence. And a minute later, it scarcely will dare to murmur, "Enter me, Sir, I will show you my Bellini!"

"By-and-by, my good man." And, leaving the cathedral, which deserves better treatment I acknowledge, neglecting the marqueteries, and the rather noble amplitude of the nave of Santa Maria Maggiore, I hasten toward the ostentatious tomb of the haughty captain.

Under a dome that has no heaviness, the Colleoni Chapel presents a narrow, and extremely pure, Renaissance façade. The windows, which are rectangular, are surmounted by a small rounded pediment. A rose is carved above the door. At the angles, are attached columns topped with pinnacles. On each side of the pediments are small statues. Above, in front of the dome, hiding its base, a gallery betrays the delicate hand of Amadeo. The whole is sprinkled with gold-dust, with green, with red, with white, mingling and conflicting, which seem to play among themselves for our pleasure. The white marble of Carrara, the red marble of Siena, the

green marble of Prato, are found here again, and, under the chisel of the master of the Chartreuse, in this Gothic North, it is a joy to receive this Tuscan and Perugian salutation. It is childish, a bit toy-like, and affected, this art of the Renaissance, when it is seen in small work; but what grace, what charm, and, above all, what harmony under this glorious sky and in this chatoyant landscape!

Within, it is a palatial hall, not at all a retreat for prayer. God has noticed this, for he has taken refuge in a rotunda, to the right, on a low and modest altar in his corner. The Tiepolos, on the ceiling, are nothing less than false sugar plums. Along the walls are marqueteries and marbles. The tomb of Colleoni occupies the entire end of this hall. It also does not attempt to be devout. The sarcophagus—that, too, supported by four lions, the back of each one pierced by a column—is covered with bas-reliefs, whose modelling is somewhat dry. They represent the scenes of the Passion to be sure, Christian scenes, but Amadeo was quick to crown them with a frieze of chubby-cheeked children, dancing amid garlands. Colleoni had lived in Venice, he wished to repose in the same effulgence. One does not have the

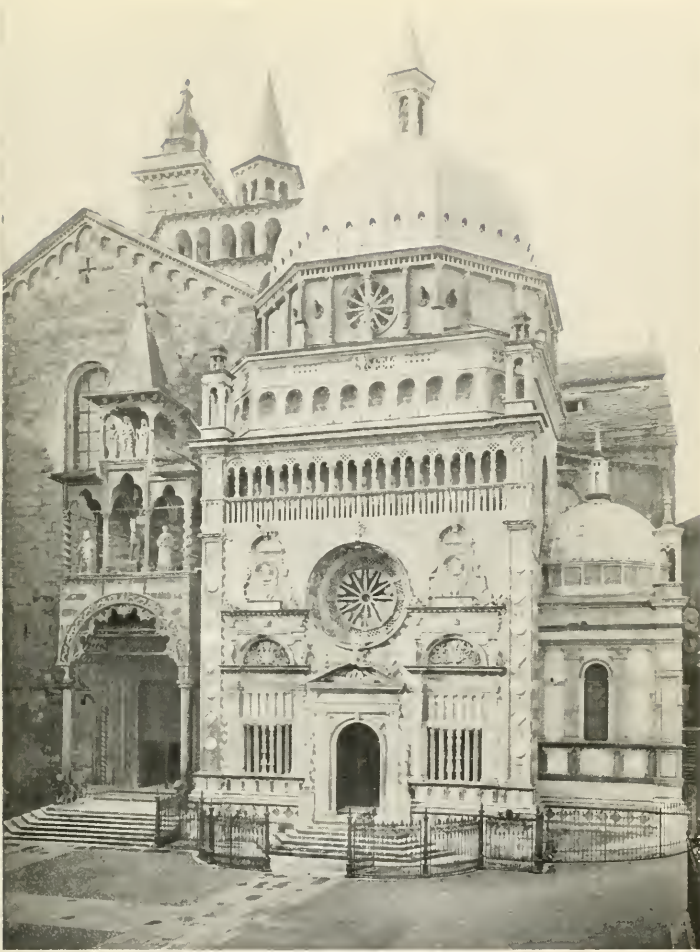


Photo by Alinari

“The Colleoni Chapel shows a narrow façade of very pure Renaissance under its dome”

feeling of being in a sepulchre here, but in a palace on the Grand Canal.

I look at the stern face of the *condottiere*, whose gilded statue surmounts the sarcophagus, and forthwith am carried into his camp.

The family of the Colleoni were Gibelline. Serious fault in this Roman city so near to Milan, in whose steps Bergamo followed. The Soardi lost no time in driving out the Colleoni, who took refuge at the Rocca di Trezzo, on the banks of the Adda. There, they found nothing but massacre. Only Bartolommeo and his mother survived, to fall, later, into the hands of the tyrant of Cremona.

By a miracle, that tyrant did not have Colleoni strangled. After some time, not knowing what to do with him, he even released him. Bartolommeo did not go far. He entered, as a page, into the service of the tyrant of Plaisance, and, at the age of twenty years, he was in the school of Braccio di Montone. Near that great captain, Colleoni soon put himself into shape, and recruited on his own account. He hired himself out, became the companion of Carmagnola, of Francesco

Gonzaga, and of Gattamelata. We find him, among others, at the head of eight hundred lances in the army of Venice, under Sforza, against Milan, defended by Piccinino and Gonzaga. He was not more surprised than were his companions of a day to find Gonzaga in front of him; nor did it seem unnatural to him to be marching by the side of Sforza, whom he had fought the year before. That was the lot, as we know, of those brave men, who sold their strength, without troubling themselves about the cause. It does not appear, however, that Colleoni distinguished himself by such violent "turns of coat" as characterised Sforza, for, after encountering the Visconti, one fine morning, for a mere nothing, a little for the pleasure of it perhaps, or for the sake of intimidation, this future Duke of Milan passed over to the service of Venice. Colleoni seems to have been faithful, so far as his trade permitted, to the republic of the lagoons. Colleoni was a wise man. He was not long in showing it. The day came, when, having by pillage re-established his ruined house, he aspired to repose. Without pushing aversion to his profession to the point that, four hundred years later, the Count of Lauraguais

pushed it, who, having asked his men, after the battle, if they were satisfied with him, and having received testimony that they were, answered, "I am very glad of it; but I am not of the trade that I follow, and I leave it"—without being so indifferent to warfare as that, Colleoni did not possess the sacred fire that devoured a Piccinino or a Malatesta. Still vigorous, he threw away his lance, and, leading with him six hundred veterans grown old in his service, he returned to his native Bergamo, which had ceased to banish its citizens.

How intoxicating, and magnificent, must have been the entry of the old soldier, son of former exiles, into his own city, where he had come to finish his days. He lived there eighteen years, surrounded by his old companions at arms, and by an entire court of learned men and artists. And, at last, nobly avenging his ruined family, he built this chapel, the tomb of the Colleoni; which should for ever within these ramparts make this one name resound in the ears of men. To the Republic of Venice he bequeathed his silver, his furniture, his horses, and a sum of two hundred and sixteen thousand florins in gold, with a

request to the Signoria to raise an equestrian statue to him. It is the statue we see now, before the Scuola San Marco. The name of Colleoni is illustrious in the whole universe.

This certainly was a destiny less brilliant than that of a Sforza, who became Duke of Milan. Piccinino, for his part, had Bologna. Carmagnola hesitated too long in choosing his lot. That hesitation took him to the scaffold. Malatesta did not hesitate, and Italy never knew a greater scoundrel. Colleoni withdrew from affairs, without wishing to push his way to a throne. We must admire his moderation. But is that not making a virtue out of what was simply lack of audacity, or genius? Let us judge.

Nothing was easier, in reality, to the *condottieri* than to take possession of the cities that they defended for hire. Let us deduct the philosophy from the facts, bring forward the social actions of the mercenary bands, and we shall see that a Sforza, for instance, must necessarily have taken possession of Milan. In the first place, it was just that he should do so. The ambition of Milan had been one of the causes that had made the *condottiere* grow on Italian soil. It was just that

the *condottiere* should become master of Milan. But that is not all.

At the time when Colleoni returned to Bergamo, this city, bought by Venice nearly thirty years before, had ceased to tear her bosom. The cycle of internal factions was ending. It was, or it was beginning to be, somewhat the same everywhere. First, the harassed cities were sleeping under the gentle and hypocritical hands of the nobles. They, sons of former tyrants or *podestas*, had learned that the only way of maintaining themselves was to manœuvre between the factions, and to pose in impartial arbitration. Immediately, the people were for raising the noble to another part. By force of the Italian thought, the noble became on all sides the defender of the civic liberties, against the Emperors, and against the Pope, who was always feared. The noble became the representative of independence and liberty. And, carried along by the cities, the nobles supported one another. For the first time, there were no disputes between the cities nor in the cities.

The people breathed. Had they not their autonomy? No doubt, if Milan had never

coveted the little republics, the imperial ambition, or simply the exactions of the nobles, already strong enough, would have unchained new revolutions. And either the people or the noble would have called in the services of bands of men at arms. It was Milan, at any rate, that precipitated the desolation. To defend herself against Visconti, or to aid him to conquer Italy, the nobles call upon the *condottiere*; and the successful *condottiere* likewise calls upon the Emperor. Always the same Gibelline illusion. The war finished, the Emperor sets off again. Besides, what is there to do? The nobles have kept their promise; they have brought peace; the citizens of the cities will not arm themselves again for a long time. Who will fight while they trade and work? The *condottiere*. In him the people put their hope of independence. Soon they put all their hope in him. And the *condottiere* is not long in becoming the champion of the cities, of the citizens, the champion against the conqueror, and, soon, against the noble himself, who, under the pretext of paying for the war, crushes the people with taxes, and strangles them.

The *condottiere* becomes the unique, and sov-

ereign, arbitrater of his own destiny; his own master, free to install himself in place of the noble. Sforza, Piccinino did so. Why did Colleoni never imitate them? Because he had learned the vanity of this conquest of the *condottiere*, of this brusque rise, of the gain, not stipulated; he understood the fragility of it.

Where did the *condottiere* recruit his bands? Not in the middle classes, as Rome did in former times, or among the proprietors, or among the artisans. In the time of the barbaric invasions, a man defended his own property. At this time, he pays to have it defended. He who pays does not wish to fight also. It is the lowest people, the very lees, without counting the fugitives of other countries, jail-birds, assassins, and plunderers, who make up the troops of the *condottiere*. They win battles. They grow in importance with their chief, and become the masters with him. From that, a new tyranny develops, and imposes itself; the most terrible of all, the military tyranny, which exerts itself for the benefit of the worst, the social rabble. What does it risk, that which has nothing, and which can do everything?

It can do too much, it abuses its power, and the artisan who pays revolts, one fine day. Admirable energy of the Italian sentiment, still perennial, ever being born again! Under the military heel, the cities rise again, and, in the game of see-saw, eternal, mathematical, so to speak, with them, they turn toward him whom they have just been fighting, the noble. He has delivered them from a factional and internal tyrant. The *condottiere* has delivered them from him. Now let him deliver them from the *condottiere*! He, having now made his nest, had no scruple against doing so. The one drives out, the other butchers his old companions, until the next day, when the King of France and Charles V. crush those who want to resist, and make the others their valets.

Colleoni judged that he had done enough in raising his fallen house. Taught by the past of his own race, he did not wish to have his descendants see such abominable days as he had known in his youth. The invasion of 1494 was not so far in the distance, that a keen mind like his could not foresee it. Only fifty years after the death of Colleoni, Charles V. took entire possession of

Italy. When Colleoni retired, all the North, except Milan, was already in the power of Venice.

Torn between Venice and Milan, torn between these two powers who had let loose the *condottiere*, ground down by their nobles, and ravaged by their soldiers, enfeebled by centuries of struggles, perishing with hunger, and with vermin, the cities are at the last pass. There is but one resource left to them, to sell themselves. Venice buys them, and gives them security. Of course, the lion of Saint Mark is set up on the square; but the Signoria knows how to spread prosperity. Men work for it, and work hard, but they are paid, and they have peace. The cities slumber in the blessedness of well-being, and of the profits of their toil. Colleoni sees them, and it appears to him wise to do as they do, instead of running greater risks, of seeking a throne, on which no one will have any interest in keeping him and which every one will envy him. Disdainful of false grandeurs, of ephemeral kingdoms, he watches the construction of his tomb, puts order into his glory, divides his time "between pious exercises, and military exercises, surrounded by his double militia of warriors and monks, his old, and his young guard, which repre-

sent to him his memories and his hopes"; and, peacefully, before dying, he waits until Amadeo shall have finished his work.

Six months after the chapel was finished, Col-leoni-the-Wise consented to die.

III

THE LESSON OF SOLFERINO

Brescia



LIKE Bergamo, Brescia is built at the foot of the last buttresses of the Alps, and, like Bergamo, she has given her name to the mountains that protect her, and fertilise her with their living waters. The Brescian Alps are as proud, as bright, as the Bergamese Alps. The citadel, however, planted on the last of the Brescian peaks has no such charm as that of the *citta alta* of Bergamo; and the city that extends at its feet, with its narrow streets, with the houses that press against one another, welcomes the traveller with no smile. The dome of the Cathedral, and the tower of the people, which flanks the Broletto, are the only points that emerge from these compressed roofs. There is nothing attractive about them. Brescia is rough and severe. She has a distant and

surly appearance,—which attracts me. I like, above all, forbidding natures, those from whom friendship must be forced, with whom, to know them and to love them, it is necessary to break in the door. To make one's way in this town, it is necessary to push ahead with perseverance and tenacity. When one has been through it one feels for it the well considered and profound esteem that is cherished for a discreet man whose reserve one has wished to penetrate.

According to the system I followed in Tuscany, I set out upon this conquest from the very heart of the city. A jolting tramway takes me rapidly to the Piazza Vecchia. And, at once, I become well acquainted with persons and things. With a knowing air of what to do, I look at the order of the houses, where the necessary monuments are placed according to the immutable law of Italian civic centres. The municipal building, and the archives, are at the farther end, opposite the clock-tower; to the left, are the old prisons, charmingly ornamented by a *loggetta*. Then I feel at home. Sure of making the entire city my own, I am reading it to my liking. My mind buoyant, indulgent, and friendly, I go along slowly,

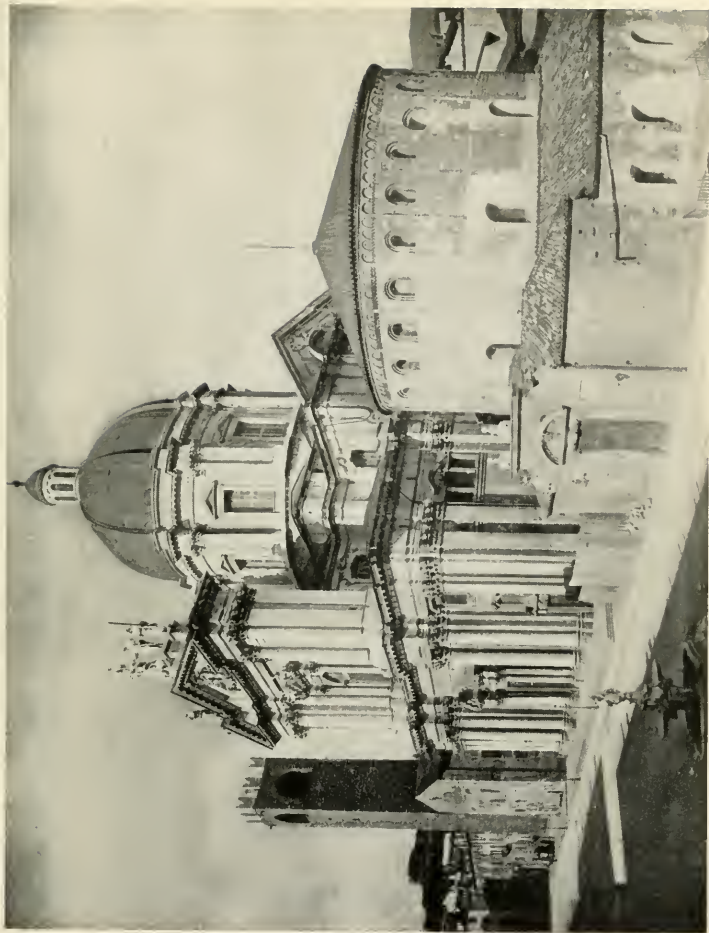


Photo by Alinari

“The real Cathedral of Brescia is not the massive Duomo, but the Duomo Vecchio with the round tower, its back to the square, its gates shut.”

as a man who, having the key in hand, does not hasten to enter the door.

The *municipio*, standing unattached, dominates the whole square by its grace and peaceful splendour. When it was built, in the beginning of the sixteenth century, Brescia had ceased its struggles, both internal and foreign. It was just rising from the earth, when Gaston de Foix sacked the city, and hopelessly scarred the face of a child, with the nickname of Tartaglia ("he who stammers"), by cutting open his mouth from ear to ear. The *municipio* presents to the eye a ground floor with an open gallery, in three tiers, separated by heavy pillars, which at the top carry Corinthian columns; the arcades flanked with busts in the lunettes. Above the semicircles, a gallery forms the base of an upper storey, which is set back. How I should love to see that storey, with its pure windows, where the hand of Palladio is discernible, with its frieze of children by Sansovino, how I should love to see it under the protection only of its galleried cornice, set with statues!

The eighteenth century has here, as all over the world, dishonoured the pure work of the Renais-

sance. It has crowned this beautiful building with a pediment, whose uselessness vies with its ugliness and absurdity. Changing the angle of my hat, I hide the importunate fronton from view, and surrender myself to the full enjoyment that the least work of Palladio brings to those in whom the antique art can awake emotion. Perhaps, without this pediment, this upper part of the palace would appear somewhat low; and probably those who added it must have had the thought of lifting the entire storey. Instead of this they crushed it. Palladio intended to afford the necessary relief when he surmounted the gallery of the cornice with statues, flanking it with two pyramidal columns. Here is the monument of a city that rests at last in happiness and prosperity, evident in its characteristic industry, energy, and pride. The mad Brescia of former times has turned her fighting spirit to profitable account in times of peace by the manufacture of the tools of war.

The small *loggetta* of the *prigioni* certainly pales somewhat beside the *municipio*. Let us look at it, nevertheless. It is one of the witnesses, rare to-day, to the first Renaissance, born so free and spontaneous. The decoration is a little overdone;

Venice must have passed by, and inspired the small central balcony, as well as the frieze. But it possesses the indefinable charm of those things which hesitate, and do not yet dare to risk themselves in eloquence. This *loggetta* foretold Palladio, as the dome of Brunellesco announced the dome of Bramante.

Treading my confident way under the arcades, I soon reach the Cathedral square. This Cathedral, also, dates from the time of repose, from the time that was corrupted by a too-long security. The Baroque style shocks one the most, in these cities that used to be so violent. Too many flowers! Too much outline patchwork! They laugh too much here. It is like a house of mourning, after the funeral ceremony; the table is spread and the smile goes round at dessert, there, where the dead of to-day was seated yesterday. The real cathedral of Brescia is not the rutilant and massive dome, but rather the old rotunda, crouching below at its right, the *Duomo Vecchio*, turning its back on the square, as if it was shocked by so much display in such places, and pitilessly closing its gates.

Leave to enter it must be asked of the prudent

and jealous new Cathedral. In the interior of that, there is a staircase leading to the old church. Was it there that Tartaglia was struck in the arms of his mother? Was it there that Arnaldo came to pray, and to ask God, since the Popes sold His pity, to give it to him for nothing? He will remember it. The solitude of this necropolis is striking and noble. How alone it is, and how dignified!

Although, to enter the church, we have had to descend, once in it we must descend again. Under the cupola, the floor sinks suddenly. It is dug out, like a great well, into a fantastic baptistry, where all the children of the city could be made Christian at the same time. Around this circle is an arcaded gallery, offering passing glimpses of chapels, crumbling altars, effaced frescoes, and mangled pictures. The light, falling from above, brings day into this phantasmagoria of ambiguous shadows. A sepulchral silence envelops me. I have the sensation of being in a tomb, that wherein sleeps Charlemagne: the door of the vault must be at my right. . . . To assure myself that life is close at hand, I must raise my eyes to that part of the church which is the least low, that

which is still embellished, in the taste of the other, the proud one there near by. Brescia of the *municipio* could not pray here, in this funereal air, under this crushing cupola, at the bottom of this well. The old church, like an exiled prince, haughty in his misery and his fall, who dies without noise or regrets, the old church, draped in its memories, shuts its door to the world, lives in the august silence of its past, does not deign, I feel, even to look at those who, like myself, visit it with tenderness and respect.

The *Broletto* raises its brown walls, and its primitive tower, in keeping with the old and touching rotunda. The court, half ancient, half Renaissance, still retains some grandeur. One must cross it to reach the picturesque ruins of the ancient Roman temple, where are kept, reverently, behind a brick wall, against which stand out the shafts of still solemn columns, some relics found in the Brescian soil; most notably, an admirable winged Victory in bronze, one of the most precious works of antique statuary, Victory, in the attitude that we know, the memorable attitude, with the right hand writing on the shield that is supported by the left and with the knee raised.

This statue, and this temple, attest the antiquity of the city, and give a firm base to my interest in its history, and its customs. Before the heroic times, which touch me the most, Brescia was great and prosperous. Rome made it the envied centre of her colonies.

The *Museo Cristiano*, with its souvenirs of the Lombards, and of the kings of the time of Berengario and of Matilda, is the link which connects the old Brixia of the Celts to the Brescia of the two little palaces, where Moretto, whom I now am going to follow both thither and to the other churches, of which he is the sole beauty, reigns, and sings his intoxicating song. It is one of the charms of these journeys in Italy, that we meet, in such and such a place, such and such an artist and his work that we would look for in vain elsewhere. The cities of Italy had a life so personal, so particularly their own, that the soil of each one blossomed with a distinct originality. They were, besides, wide-awake enough to keep in their own bosoms and maintain the children of genius that their originality produced. Lucca has Civitali; Pisa glories in Niccolo Pisano; Bergamo possesses Lorenzo Lotto. At Vicenza I shall see Palladio;

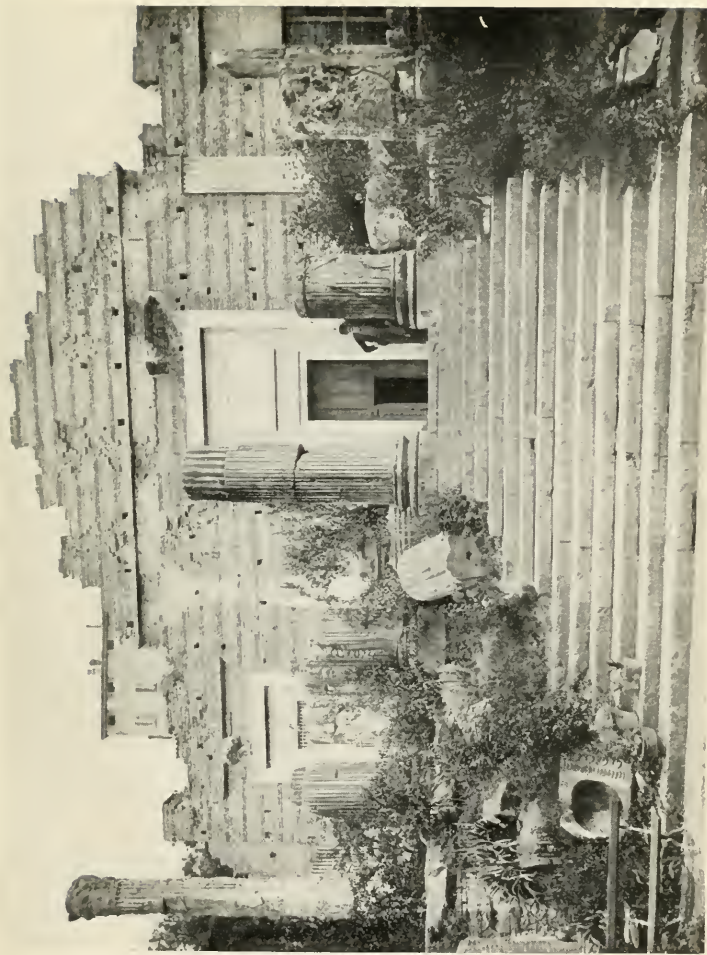


Photo by Alinari

“The Museo Cristiano, with its memories of the Lombards, the times of Berengario and Matilda, is the link between the Brixia of the Celts and the Brescia of Moretto”

at Padua, Mantegna; and Brescia retains all the work, or nearly all, of Alessandro Bonvicino; it is the city of *Il Moretto*. Its six or seven churches contain, each one, at least two of the pictures of this master, who lacked nothing, perhaps, but the being born at Venice to be called Palma or Titian. As to the museums, they show more Morettos than one can count.

From the paintings of all the Virgins and all the saints that I have just been contemplating, I retain first the silvered grey tint through which breaks a burst of colour that cedes to nothing, and which is the particular mark of Moretto, his signature. Then, if I force myself to reconstruct in memory these pictures that I have followed up through all these streets, and on all these walls, the personages that rise before me are always in stately attitudes, full of nobility and dignity. Either in the saints, surrounding the crowned Virgin, or in Saint Nazarius and Saint Celsus, or in the Virgin upon the clouds in the Martinengo Palace, or in the portrait in the Tosio Palace, I find in all these figures a majesty of force and beauty which allies itself to the most noble attitudes, chosen with the most profound and exact taste.

And, above all that, is it the effect of this grey tint which produces the general air of distinction, which would make of Moretto, to-day, the painter of all the Americans anxious to appear blue-blooded?

Moretto has taken from Romanino the colours of the Venetian masters, of which the school of Brescia is the heir. He has to thank his master for the ample forms, this large and imposing decoration, even these audacious colours. But between the picture of San Francesco and that of Saint Clement, there is all the difference that exists between instinct and reason, when they give rise to the same acts. The same result does not come from the same impulse.

And if I should apply to these two painters the scientific method that Taine followed in this same land, I should see in Romanino the son of the ancient Brescia, in Moretto the child of the new. Brescia succumbed because of having won too much. She threw herself into the arms of Venice, and, once in that embrace, she did not wish to leave it. The fervour that she formerly made use of to remain independent she now applied to resist Louis XII. and Maximilian, who wanted

to deliver her from the Republic. Into this defence in favour of servitude, she carried the same energy that she had shown in the days when she would not submit to any one. The melancholy of Moretto is not the regret of the past, but the tender recollection of those who, accepting subjection, content themselves in dreaming of past days that they do not at all regret, even if they dream of them with a peaceful pride. They do not disown their personal glory even if they refuse to renew it.

Like all her sisters, Brescia has long struggled against those neighbours or barbarians, who wished to take her. She has struggled with a ferocity, the only example of which I find in Tuscan Lucca. It is the same apparent excess, the same infrangible will. There was, however, a moment when Brescia attained the height of her violence, an important moment in the history of the Italian cities, the most edifying moment in the instruction I seek to draw from my wanderings.

The Lombard league has driven out the Emperor. The cities are going to be able to develop themselves freely, as the treaty of Constance has

recognised their right to do. A new danger, however, threatens them. The city is independent, and acts of course as she likes. But she remains confined within her walls. The country, of which the city has need for her nourishment and prosperity, is covered with a network of castles and fortresses. The vanquished Emperor has not been able to drive out the nobles of all sorts who have been left on this rich soil by the Lombard, Frank, and German invasions. Cost what it may, the cities must take possession of the castles, or, at least, annihilate the power of the nobles who hold them. The effort is a great one. They make it. But how will the cities divide among themselves the fortresses sown broadcast over the country? Here is a castle that is as near to Bergamo as to Brescia. To which shall it belong? Rivalries begin again between the cities; and the nobles profit by them. Upon the chance of their interests or their passions, they put themselves under one to escape another.

Soon a new complication arises. The example of the cities excites the villages, the market-towns, in the midst of, or at the side of, which the castles stand. Why, they say, let Brescia or Verona

take what is under our own hand? And they are the first to attack the nobles, who have to ask some one for support. They prefer the tyranny of the distant city to that of the market-town near by. Still the great Gibelline illusion, which called the Emperor against the Kings, or against the Pope. Great sentiment of liberty, imperishable, always found under the pick the moment one strikes this heated soil. Liberty at any price—even at the price of a servitude, that one is willing to endure temporarily, and from which, later, if it is necessary, one can cut free. Let us run to the most urgent! Let us call upon the Emperor, let us call upon the city! And the Brusati sell their fiefs of Volpino, Cerrettillo, and Coalino, to the neighbouring Bergamo, while the Calepio of Bergamo sell to Brescia the fiefs of Calepio, Merlo, and Sarnico.

The war against the castles ends in this manner; the nobles become the allies of the cities, or, more correctly, their servitors. They become their captains, and conquer territory for them. But, the cities intend to watch them. They compel them to reside in the cities; to live in the midst of the citizens. They do not wish them to

return to the country, where they might take advantage of opportunities to regain possession of their former possessions.

There are the nobles living in the midst of the people whom they scorn, of whom they make allies only in order to escape other domination. They have chosen their masters, but they are masters. They are impatient of the yoke. Without arms, and without troops, how can they deliver themselves? By becoming the masters, in their turn, of the cities where they are prisoners. Is it not logical that they, without occupation, intelligent, accustomed to command, should direct the affairs of all? Since they live within the walls, the municipal patrimony is common to them and to the people. They have prestige; they are listened to; they are admitted into the council; and, little by little, they gain power, and when they are strong enough, they again drag the cities into their old quarrels.

The old enmity, which is not yet extinguished, between the cities of the Lombard realm and the Roman cities—between Milan and Pavia, for instance—exists to a still greater extent between the nobles of different stock, either those stranded by

the war against the kings, or those cast up from the Roman cities by the democratic wave. Besides, in these Roman cities, such as Brescia, are not the citizens fundamentally enemies of all democracy, of all liberty? And there they are, those who, naturally, when they are strong in the cities, make all their efforts to prevent the latter from marching against the last ramparts of the realm.

Nowhere is this struggle more violent than at Brescia. It is a savage fury that breaks everything, destroys everything, carries everything away. When Brescia perceives that the nobles she has gathered together wish to prevent her from marching to the aid of Milan, she drives them out. The nobles return to the country. There they form the Company of Saint Faustino where the Golalto, the Martinengo d'Asola, the Griffi, and the Gonfalonieri reconstruct the old feudal bands of the heroic times of Berengario, of Conrad II., and of Matilda. The Pope, playing the saint, wishes to make peace. He sends a legate, who imposes a truce. The nobles all return to Brescia, and massacre the citizens. So they are masters of the city, of which they make a forti-

fied castle. But not for long. They cannot all command at the same time. War among the nobles reopens in the city. But the citizens possess a force that can be utilised, and immediately a party of democratic nobility is formed against the unallied nobles. Chaos reigns. Driven out, retaken, driven out again, received and repulsed a hundred times, at length the nobles see their palaces razed by the people, who perceiving that they are but the stake, even of those whom they aid, make every one agree to cast out all. The nobles, then, becoming reconciled with one another, form a new company, called the Bucella, and besiege Brescia, which they take for the last time.

Is it finished? Brescia is vanquished, then? The sentiment of liberty is always there. It is that which directs all these blows, incoherent in appearance, so harmonious in reality. The nobles install themselves again. The people accept them. What are they going to do with them? They are going to assimilate them, bind them, by their own interests, to the spirit of popular liberty. What is there, in fact, at the base of these sanguinary quarrels? It was seen a short time ago: the needs of the cities to prosper by work and to

eat. In this fertile mainland, the fields are the first instruments of wealth. To whom do they belong? Who will cultivate them? The compact makes itself. The nobles give their ground; the citizens give their strength; and the ideal union of capital and labour is founded. Let us work! That is the cry of Brescia. It is the cry of all Italy at this memorable moment.

To be sure of working in peace, so that daily friction may not revive the murderous quarrels, the assimilated nobles and the artisans come to an understanding upon the matter of establishing in Brescia an independent government. The impartial master that they have refused at the hands of Barbarossa, they now give themselves: that is the *podesta*. Once more there appears the eternal Italian thought, which presides over individual acts as well as over the great general movements of the particular liberty and unity of each city. What is wanted by the artisans and shop-keepers is the development of their prosperity without a master, neither foreigner, nor even Italian. Each city wishes to be its own mistress, and now no more wants a noble than she had wanted a Lombard king, or an emperor, German, or Frank; than she

will want, later, when throwing herself into the arms of Venice, a Visconti or a Maximilian. The cities always run headlong; then they return to the sacred ideal of their independence and liberty. The hobbles that they put on the feet of the *podesta* and the precautions with which they tie up his power, are only the expressions of this spirit. And, later, when this *podesta* becomes the ridiculous officer that Boccaccio shows us in the *Decameron*, or the *podesta*-tyrant, they will rid themselves of him with the same determination that they now bring to his installation; and if needs must they will summon the Emperor, to whom, afterwards, they will be useful if he will deliver them. That will bring us to the era of the Guelphs and the Gibellines, which I have seen in Tuscany. The same movement of independence and liberty repeats itself, untiringly, and mathematically.

I should like to follow here, too, in these streets, so well adapted to civil war, the Guelph and Gibelline outbreaks, to look for the footsteps of the Malisardi, of Eccelino, and of Griffo, and to discover the last stones of the fortresses of Pelavicino, mutilater and poisoner, who hunted out

the women and children hidden in the tombs. Up to her last day, Brescia carried into the struggle this raging bitterness, that makes her so attractive and so repellent at the same time. The circle grew smaller little by little. Finally, to escape from Milan, Brescia sold herself to Venice, to which, loyal as she always was through all appearances of treachery, she remained faithful.

I wished to finish my day at the Campo Santo. At the end of a majestic alley of cypresses, the galleries and the rotunda spread out the wealth of their monuments. It is a beautiful field, set with crosses, and encircled with sumptuous marbles, in the shelter of the arcades of a giant cloister. My memory full of souvenirs, I look at the inscriptions which cover the walls, mechanically seeking the name that will awaken in me some recollections of the time of the Magi. And, suddenly, these strange syllables written in the French language strike my eyes: *Lemoine, of the Third Light, . . . Guy de Malipois, Captain of the Ninth Horse. . .* Sadly, the familiar consonants ring in my mind. This is the cemetery of Solferino. How many of our men, but

fifty years ago, perished not far from this city in that task of Sisyphus entered upon by Charles VIII.!

Once more, Italy has called the foreigner to deliver her. And here is the most striking of testimony. The French have again crossed the Alps, as the German Emperor has so many times. Will it be the last descent, and has Italy, who owes all her misfortunes to these appeals for help from over the mountains, at last found the perfect and ideal form of independence that she has always been looking for? Were not my brothers, who lie here, deceived in the unification of Italy, deceived in giving to all these cities a single master, descended from Germany in the time of the Othos? These dead of my race and of my blood, do they not shudder under the grass that I tread reverently, asking themselves if they have not worked, if they have not fallen under the bullets, in vain?

IV

MAD FOR LOVE

Verona



THIS morning, on opening my window, I saw the Arena, the top bathed in sun, the great toothless mouths of the arcades opening in black holes. Alone, a woman, wrapped in a shawl, made the one bit of variegated colour in these morning shadows. The sumptuous and harmonious periods of the great, wearied Celt arose in my mind:

The eye is attracted by a Tyrolese who seated under the arcades of the arena has come down from the mountains, bathed by the lake, celebrated by a line of Virgil, and by the names of Catullus and of Lesbia. Like Nina, mad for love, this pretty creature, with her short skirts, her charming slippers, abandoned by the hunter of Monte Baldo, was so impassioned, that she wanted nothing but her love; she passed the nights in waiting, watching till the crowing of the cock. She spoke sadly because she was suffering.

How happy the noble Viscount of Chateaubriand must have been here while he pursued his dearest work of seduction! Then I dream of another genius who was moved before this same spectacle, and who found but one ridiculous phrase to express his pleasure, the naive words of which I amuse myself in pronouncing aloud:

“The amphitheatre is the first important monument of antiquity that I see; how well preserved it is! . . . I was surprised to see anything so grand, and at the same time to see nothing properly speaking.”

Is this Perrichon indeed, the same lyricist who entered Rome on the wheels of Ixion, and of whom I was reminded at Lecco? The imperious Goethe let his genius slip away from him in the conquering intoxication of the German, despot of Italy. Chateaubriand comfortably bathed his Latin heart in the air in which he nourished his youth and his maturity. The one came here by his force of will, and participated in this grandeur but by effort of culture; the other came, impelled by instinct as one is drawn to a mother from whom one is exiled. Chateaubriand is at home here, Goethe is a guest. His dry and practical mind



Photo by Alinari

“The Arena . . . the top bathed in sunshine and the arcades opening their great black mouths.”

sees but the exterior of the things which Chateaubriand penetrates to the soul. Goethe remains the intendant of the grand ducal pomp of Weimar, whereas the child of Combourg again becomes the poet of the Roman nights. Even when holding the dying Pauline in his arms, he was conscious of enjoying, among the ruins of the Coliseum, the splendours of the stars.

This souvenir accorded to genius, I, in my turn, wish to question the Nina of to-day, and to assure myself that the ancient monument is well preserved. But, Nina, tired of waiting, has flown, I like to think, along the Adige toward Monte Baldo, to look for her hunter. I go to the top of the Arena, and over the Castel Vecchio I seem to see her hurrying along the road. Her dear little slippers raise a small cloud of dust that is dispersed by her short skirts. May your hunter welcome you at last, Nina!

Then, lowering my eyes, I look at the circle of stone, where Rome, in her decline, held the people under her yoke by gorging them with blood. Goethe is right, it is very large, and one sees nothing of it—nothing but souvenirs of bloodshed, the spectre of the Roman decadence.

On these bare and scorching steps, I feel myself taken possession of by funereal thoughts. Nothing? On the contrary, I see too much; but ruins, ruins of things and of beings that no longer exist, except as they are evoked by our Latin minds, or the classic inventions of our poets and our artists. We have saved all that is worth saving of the Roman civilisation. This reminder of the sanguinary violences committed by those among whom we have chosen Seneca and Virgil, gives us the modesty of a son of Noah.

I have left those sterile scenes, and have come to the *Piazza dell' Erbe*, the Vegetable Market, to renew the thread of life. What colour, what splendour, what motion, and what joy! A whole active people move about, and lift their voices. Around the fountain, over the waters of which presides a statue of Verona robed in antique drapery, around the little civic pulpit, from which Venice, under the eye of her stern lion on the top of this column, announced her decrees, along the walls, overflowing into the streets that come into the narrow rectangle, playfully disport a great tribe of merchants, toymen, and venders of trash. They shelter themselves under their



Photo by Alinari

“The Vegetable Market; what colour, what life, what movement, what joy!”

tents, the red and green canvases flapping in the wind. In the bright sun, before the tumbled mass of vegetables, of unfolded stuffs that flutter their sashes under the noses of the passers-by, of popular jewels made of coarse glass and outlandish stones, the crowd gathers noisily, going from fruit to necklaces, from cotton cloth to shining copper vessels. A little girl, with bare feet, looks longingly at a string of pearl beads, and thinks of the play of their iridescent tints on her bronzed neck. I offer her some made into a necklace, and she runs away aghast. In this land that has been the prey of all sorts of covetousness, the popular instinct will not admit that any good fortune can come from the hand of a foreigner.

Above all this movement and colour, the same forms and the same tints illuminate and animate the walls of the old palace. Upon the Casa Mazzanti, first residence of the Scala, enormous hips and abundant breasts have resisted all badigeons, all debasement, leprosy itself, implacable on the old walls. Is it Laocoön, whose loins I see, or, better still, some Armida offering herself to Rinaldo? Those half-obliterated washes of tempera are not there for intellectual entertainment,

but to rejoice the eye. Here, too, opposite these nudities, are other frescoes, still more effaced, less pagan also. They are said to be the Virgin with the saints. In the matter of joyousness and gaiety, they render the same service as their neighbours. On all sides here, everything is flamboyant. The Casa dei Mercanti rutilates with all its restoration, the clock-tower flames its eighty metres of red stone in the sunlight.

Here, indeed, is a festival without rival for warmth to the eye, for laughter, for healthfulness; this concert of cries, this loose and motley crowd, these green vegetables, these crude stuffs, these multicoloured walls, replastered a hundred times by masons of fantastic imaginations, who mixed ochres and carmines with their plaster, and then spread them out according to some lascivious dream or facetious inspiration.

Three steps from it all, how peaceful and solitary is the little *Piazza dei Signori*, from which the moving crowd seems to be kept away by the *loggia* de Fra Giocondo, so calm and discreet it is. It even imposes some sweetness upon the *Palazzo della Ragione*, whose tower exerts itself, in vain, to crush us, and whose court lights up with a

variegated staircase. In the distance, two palaces come together at the *loggia*, and smile with it. These are two old houses of the Scala. It is there that Dante, "a very illustrious man," says the chronicle, "who charmed the noble lords of the Scala by his genius," found his first asylum, and there he put into cadences the new harmonies of the *Divina Commedia*.

All my affection, however, is for the *loggia*, with the light arcades, with the lance windows, with the fine columns, illuminated by diverse marbles, with the laughing medallions, and the narrow frieze, crowned by marble statues. It is the freshest and noblest smile of the Renaissance that I have seen. I want to bask in it. Shall I find another such in this rugged city which until the later days of her life did not desire to be gracious? Just now, upon the *Piazza dell' Erbe*, I resolutely put aside a recollection brought up by the Casa Mazzanti, which was that even if Mantegna and Gulio Romano did renew this art of painted houses, none the less was the fashion brought into Italy by the men of the North. Will not the tomb of the Scala speak to me of the same invasion? And, willing or no, shall I not be forced by

San Zeno, Santa Anastasia, and the Duomo, to follow Theodoric as far as I can trace him? When, in the twelfth century, the Gothic style crossed the Alps, it was in memory of her first masters that Verona adopted it with so much zeal. All day, I have been raising the dust of the North. Outside of San Micheli,—who tried, he also, to create a style, if not in monuments at least in palaces and doors; a style that he made an effort to perfect at San Giorgio in Braida, and in two or three churches,—outside of this artist, everything speaks to me of the Germanic domination. There is nothing here, apart from the two squares and the works of San Micheli, which is not the fruit of German fertilisation. To-day, all the Germans who come down into Italy halt at Verona—and there are so many of them. The Englishman, himself, is drowned in the flood. They only imitate their ancestors, who shook their sandals on this threshold. Theodoric, the Lombards, and the Emperors deposited upon the Veronese land such an ooze, that five hundred years later it still bears fruit in their image.

What, then, is this sepulchre of the Scala, if it is not the unruliness of a straying instinct at the

service of the most insensate pride? At the first swift glance, these tombs, by their gracefulness, and their delicate openwork, are certainly interesting, and catch the eye of the least interested. But these cavaliers, perched high on their needle points, defy all indulgence. There is nothing, even to the names inscribed on the tombs, that reminds one of logic and proportion. Mastino I. and Cane Grande repose in simple sarcophagi which do not offend good sense, and they were really the only ones whose genius might have made us indulgent toward this excess of posthumous worship. Their successors, who raised these monuments to themselves, had no excuse, as no one ever has, for making themselves ridiculous by too much grandeur; they had not the little taste that is necessary to prevent people from climbing steeples on horseback!

I left this madness, and went to ask a little simplicity of the churches: Santa Anastasia and the beautiful proportions of her majestic nave, the Duomo, with the rich portal all flowering with statues, San Fermo and its façade of terracottas, and, last, San Zeno, whose manly grandeur holds me longest.

The old church of San Zeno stands at the bottom of a large square, flanked, on the right, by a campanile, on the left, by a warlike tower, the residence of Pepin, it is said. The façade, although in three parts, has but one portal, which is commanded, like that at Bergamo, by lions, with columns for handles. A rose surmounts the porch. Two bronze doors, touching attempts at an art in which Ghiberti has made us hard to please, open to let me enter the solemn edifice, where I am going to walk from contrast to contrast, from surprise to surprise, where I am going to meet the supreme expression, beautiful in the manner of its achievement, of that art from across the mountains, with which Verona was contaminated.

The moment has come, before this masterpiece of the Germanic art in Italy, to define, at last, the reason for the revolt that has disturbed me since I cursed the tombs of the Scala, and, since, in going from church to church, the most sincere admiration has left me dissatisfied. If San Zeno itself runs foul of my Italian eyes, how much will my anger be justified against the perverted city!

Let us scorn all excuse. Under this pure sky, under this glorious sun, in this air, where everything is washed clean of trickery, our art of the North is at enmity with all outburst of spontaneous expression of the heart, as of the reason. It does not come out naturally from this luminous soil, from this earth where everything grows thick-set and smooth. It has been brought here illegitimately, has never become acclimated, but belongs still to that misty country where plants mount to seek the light across the eternal clouds. Everything here invites latitude, not height. The soul need not raise its head to see the heavens; it can look about it. What are they doing here these pinnacles, these exaggeratedly large windows, these roses, this lace-work, even these columns which extend their multiplied arms toward the beneficent sun? I do not fail in the least to recognise that this art has in itself grandeur, nobility, and intrinsic beauty. That which is so striking in it here, however, is that its character is foreign to this country. And that which appears with equal force is the mad struggle of the natural element with the imported element. The battle between the genius of the race Italic with the

conceptions Germanic is tragic. The awkwardness with which the Gothic idea is realised is testimony to the Italian resistance. Lace-work and ornaments are spread about haphazard, outside of all law of harmony; ornaments are lugged in, fastened on the surface, not even forming an audacious whole, shaped to a precise and desired end. Italy has submitted to these details. She never has considered them in the end of her work, never has co-ordinated them. This façade of San Zeno, a Roman portal before a basilica, what does it mean, by not announcing the vaulting that it contains? The windows of the Duomo have been pierced as an afterthought, and the sun, falling into the low nave, is astonished at his own abundance. The cupolas hesitate to set themselves upon columns, even when the latter are gathered into clusters. Even the crypt, as at San Zeno, aspires to daylight, showing itself at the level of the floor, raising the choir. And the frescoes on the walls, so logical in a building inundated by the sun, protest against this choir within its carved stone enclosure, whose white reliefs and far-reaching shadows go so well with the eternal twilight of our cathedrals. San

Zeno, the Duomo, Santa Anastasia, San Fermo, have been able to mingle the two terms only in places, and are only to a limited extent works capable of arousing any real feeling. Italy refuses them full adoption.

Let the Renaissance come! The solid walls will push away the buttresses. They will have base enough to support the cupola, aided as they will be by solid pillars, and no longer by these clustered columns whose essence is lightness and not force; the cupola will be the binding tie of the edifice. Then the vaulting, resting well, and well supported, can enlarge and extend itself; the windows can open largely to a generous daylight; the façades can do away with these useless towers, since the sun idles in the fields. Palladio will raise their harmony to the key of the whole monument. The North will have invaded the South. Italy will repel this invasion of art, as it repelled that of men. And the only monument of this art, finished, without mixture, the tombs of the Scaliger, will always offend our eyes, as our ears would be offended at Bayreuth by *Norma*, or by *Traviata*.

At nightfall, I come up the slopes of the Giusti

Gardens. Among the cypresses, around the singing fountains in the midst of the flowers making themselves ready to perfume the night, I slowly reach the high terraces from which Verona is seen, at the foot of the mountains, on the border of the plains, pressed by the Adige, which encircles her closely. I look at the curve of this yellow ribbon which the city seems to hold out and put about her waist. I see the impetuous river come down from Monte Baldo. Was he, thoughtless hunter, coming at last to find his patient Nina? He embraces her an instant, caresses her with a great hug, assures her of his constancy and his love, and, a flower between his teeth, departs again across the fields, where other loves, volatile like his own, are waiting for him, and disappears, at last, in the muddy softness of the lagoons. The embrace that he has given Verona seems to have exhausted him. Though turbid and passionate in his ardour, though strong and rapid he came, he has but barely left Nina's side when he is pale and languishing. His strength is broken. The turn and the halt that the faithful city demands of him has sapped his virility.

Indifferent and serene, the Alps watch their fickle child and receive Nina with pity. Bathed with sunshine, rose-coloured still, they are beginning already to raise over their shoulders the veil of mist that will soon protect them against the freshness of the night. Verona, at my feet, mad for love, she, too, wraps herself in her mantle. I see the top of the Arena, in the shelter of which she is going to sleep. The old Roman bridge slowly shuts its one eye. The dome of San Giorgio in Braida sends back the last fires of the sun. The *Castello* will watch alone from its pointed battlements. Its dominating bridge still reddens in the twilight. And, below, away by itself, San Zeno and its campanile rise in their field. My gaze meets them again above the medley of clock-towers and roofs, and I ask Verona, San Zeno, the Adige, Monte Baldo, the faithless hunter, and Nina, why Verona, so ample, so noble, so strong, at the foot of these mountains, surrounded by this powerful river, so soon abdicated her throne and gave up living her own life. Theodoric, is it not you who are the ungrateful hunter? Nina, why did you open your arms to him? It would have been better for your glory had he violated

you as he did your sisters. You would have risen, stern, indomitable, to begin life again, you would have redeemed yourself.

The Goths, in Italy, merely passed through without leaving any real impression except in Ravenna, where Italy penned them in and where Boethius and Cassiodorus make excuses for them to our hearts. They passed through Verona also. Why was Verona irremediably scarred by them? The kiss that she received from them was the kiss that René gave to Celuta. Celuta, thou wilt remain a widow! And when the cities, united by the pontifical tie, had swept out the Arians, she had become fond of servitude and looked with the eye of satisfaction upon the Lombards, who reminded her of her spouse. We never shall see her participate in the heroism to liberate Italy. Charlemagne drove out Desiderio[†] and installed the Franks. Italy thinks at once about driving them out. She has called them to deliver her, not to give herself to them. Verona puts herself on the side of the stranger, of the abhorred Frank, hoping he will

[†] Desiderio, the last of the Lombard kings.

restore her Gothic splendour. In the great movement that ends in the installation of the autochthonic kings, of Berengario, in the course of these rapid times in which Italy soon sees the error and the trap, Verona, with Luitprand, quivers with joy and pride. She will weep forever with him.

In order to assure the execution of the treaty, the Pope and Charlemagne have installed marquises and dukes on the frontiers of the pontifical and the imperial, domains. The Pope has no army. The Emperor is far away. The marquises grow impatient of these foreign suzerains. When Charlemagne dies, the division of the Empire affords the occasion for the outbreak of revolt. Why should Italy be the fief of the Franks? The marquises, gathered together at Pavia, enter into a struggle against the Pope who wishes to impose a king of his own making. The marquises and the dukes wish to control the kingdom, under an arrangement of their own, which will insure their independence. A king named by them will protect them. Berengario, Duke of Verona, is at the head of this bold enterprise, and, after a series of struggles in which are entangled Charles the Bald, Louis II., Carloman,

Charles the Fat, the Pope, and even the Popess Joan, the marquises meet once more at Pavia, and name Berengario king. But what! Was Berengario going to reconstitute the kingdom of Desiderio? The marquises at once entered into a struggle against Berengario, inciting against him Guido and Lamberto. It is a race to see who will assassinate the quickest and the best. The Lamberti pass like the shadows on the transparency of Séraphin. Three times Berengario is driven out; three times he returns. He succumbs at last under the coalition of the marquises, who had sought him that they might shake off the yoke of the Franks, and not give themselves a master. He is assassinated at Verona.

His successor does not lose time in responding to the wishes of those who choose him. Scarcely installed, he crushes the marquises. They rise again, and call Berengario d'Ivrea, grandson of the other.

The follies and the crimes of Berengario d'Ivrea soon arouse all Italy. The cup overflows, and, when the King wishes to compel Adelaide, the widow of Lothario,¹ whom he had assassinated, to

¹ Lothario, son of Ugo of Provence.

marry his son, the cities gather close under the walls of Canossa, where the Bishop of Reggio has offered a refuge to the outraged widow. Death to the kings!—since the kings pretend to be something else than a mounted police to watch over the country's independence. Otho II. is called. He comes running. The kingdom of Berengario has lasted seventy-four years.

To Verona it will last for ever. Celuta remains the widow of René. She looks for him everywhere and each time that a master offers himself she immediately sees in his face those well remembered features. The Lombards were of the race of the Goths. Berengario had the same soul. He was strong, he was severe; he raised his loved one to the throne with him. To be queen! Twice, Verona tasted the poisoned fruits of domination. Her blood is corrupted for ever. Her barbaric struggle against Mantua, in the course of which three thousand Veronese had their noses cut, so that Verona should remember, was born of the jealousy that possesses her, and always will possess her, for those who render more and more improbable the return of the kings. The power of the crafty Matilda was insupportable

at Verona, and, if, later, we saw Verona enter the Lombard League, let us not be deceived by this semblance of Guelph independence. Verona always hoped to regain by her sacrifices and by her strength the first rank, which she had once occupied. With Gregory VII. she again met with disaster, under the walls of Canossa, twice fatal Canossa. When Eccelino presented himself she received him with shouts of triumph. A master had come! And what a master! Was he not already the lord of powerful cities: Vicenza and Padua? But Verona was stronger, and more beautiful. Eccelino established himself at Verona; the ancient capital of Berengario was going to be revived! Verona made herself Gibelline, from love for the prince who promised her the beautiful days of Berengario. Moreover, was that not the dream of that bandit, who exclaimed in his pride, "I will surpass Charlemagne"! Indeed, he did surpass him, but in his crimes and in his vices. Eccelino, who felt Italy in agitation all about him, whose every step was upon ground that had been mined under him, was seized with a furious madness. He cut the throats of entire families, castrated or blinded the children, and

imprisoned right and left accused and suspects, culpable and innocent.

Verona could not contain her pride in having such a powerful chief, who would bring back her splendour. The *Cento Vecchie Novelle*, in which Eccelino is represented as one of the greatest geniuses of the thirteenth century, must have been but the echo of the happiness of the Veronese. And, when Eccelino disappeared, punished for having wished to reconstitute the kingdom, when he died on the Bergamo road, after having imprisoned, mutilated, blinded, the women, the old men, the children, even the nuns, of Brescia, while he was marching upon Milan, Verona threw herself at the feet of Mastino della Scala, who was offered her by the Gibellines. The Scala might personify the invasion, they might march against the Italian aspirations, but they need only call themselves the implacable enemies of the Guelph democracy and Verona would support them, and declare herself happy under their yoke. Who knows, they said, whether one day, perhaps, when the Scala have worked well for the Emperor, he will not reconstitute the kingdom in their favour—unless, invincible and strong, they found one themselves?

In Tuscany, I have already seen a city that bore promise of a most beautiful destiny, and which, scarcely born, missed the consummation of her life by having worked against the Italian sentiment, and by having made herself the champion of the foreign servitude. Like Pisa, which fell under the yoke of Florence, so Verona falls into the hands of Milan, to be, to her shame, retaken by Padua, which sells her to Venice! Ever since the first days of the fourteenth century, Verona has lain fallen, destroyed by her envy and greed.

That is why Verona remains Germanic. The bite left on her shoulder, the kiss of Theodoric, she has not tried to heal, but, instead, has lovingly cherished. The art that the Germans brought into Italy, six hundred years after Theodoric and four hundred years after the death of Desiderio, made her remember the dawn of an unfulfilled glory. It kept up the mirage. The art, called Gothic, come from the North, was the symbol of that Germanic domination by which Verona was exalted, and still exalts herself. Like Nina, she is still awaiting the truant Tyrolean hunter, wanting nothing but his love. If her speech is sad, it is because she still cherishes her grief.

V

THE PALLADIAN LARK

Vicenza



IN leaving Verona, Chateaubriand, in allusion to the work he had just accomplished in the interests of Alexander and Francis, exclaimed, "Fascination of genius! Our discourse around the table of Prince Metternich will be forgotten; but no traveller will ever hear the lark sing in the fields of Verona without remembering Shakespeare!"

I have just been experiencing here this "vanity of the things of earth." I wanted to put to this little city, some of those questions that I like so much to ask here, because nothing splendid or entrancing comes here to cover with its thunder the discreet voice of the things that have finished living, because here the social game presents itself in striking perspective, and opens out clearly on a

limited ground. I wished to ask of Vicenza that which she might be able to bring me in reply to these inquiries. I thought of the Rocani, of Eccelino, of the Maltraversi, of thaumaturgic John, of the Abbot Giordano of Padua, of Azzo d'Este. I meditated on the unhappy lot of the little city, crushed between Padua and Verona, and I recalled the great heroic days of 1848, of 1849, and those of 1866, in which the name of Fogazzaro first became glorious. I was preparing myself to draw from these walls the exact information that they could give me, upon one of the Italian epochs, whose beads I am telling, like a rosary, upon the thread of days and of monuments, not chronologically but with method. But as soon as I heard the Palladian lark sing in the fields of Vicenza, I fell under the spell of genius.

Vicenza is nothing if not the city of Palladio. When one has seen, after an hour's looking about, the Basilica and the Olympic Theatre, one is seized and carried away by the continual wonder of the works of Palladio. All other interest is lost. One is transported into some magic island, outside of the world, with neither neighbour nor any connection whatever. One single desire possesses you.

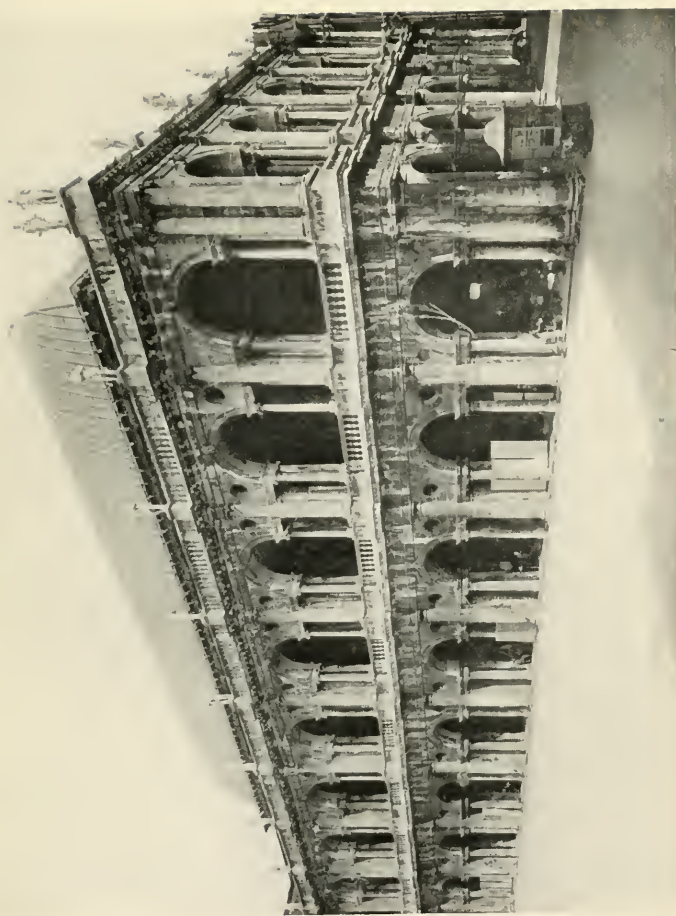


Photo by Alinari

“The Basilica Palladiana stretches its regular arcades along the side of a great square”

to see, to see more, and still to see the walls raised by the indefatigable hand of the great artist, whose magnificence seems to be lowered in calling him an architect! A fever carries you all over the city, looking for the most modest *cortile*, the smallest doorway. It is a passionate hunt, impassioned for more masterpieces, for an exalted sensation. Ah, what are the civic acts of the tenacious and courageous city to me! Palladio has gathered together here the very essence of all his art, except the religious essence; but do not San Giorgio Maggiore, and the Redentore, await me on the shore of the lagoon? Let us run, let us run to see him in those profane works, where his grandeur, his nobility, and his taste are displayed! My guide-book is run over nervously, and the pages devoured with anxiety, to make sure that nothing has been omitted, that we have seen everything. Merciful heaven! Supposing Baedeker, for once, had been negligent! The race for discovery starts again. I scan the details of every wall for the venerated signature; to the very copies or bungled inspirations of his followers I look for traces of the primitive master.

Why has Palladio thus taken possession of me?

No doubt his ancient soul, into which Greece had entered, though by way of Rome, awakens in me all that I love and admire most, that which is alone beautiful to my eyes and to my mind: the Greek genius and the Latin genius. There is another thing, however, at the foundation of my enthusiasm. Ever since I have known how to look at things, not a day has passed that I have not suffered in our solemn and laughing Paris, over the meanness of those monuments which are the boast of the masons of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In the last hundred years the architectural art has fallen to the lowest level. At every corner of the street and in every square, stands some monstrosity, defiant, not only to reason, but to simple good sense. The most contradictory styles are mingled; orders swear at one another; they vie to astonish, not to please. A cupola, exactly like a cap, is raised upon the tower of a citadel; a railway station is ornamented like a public ball-room; an inn is given the appearance of a fortress; a villa is tricked out like a man-of-war; and, to rest one's eyes, one must look upon some restricted building, such as the Gare de l'Est, a mere railway station, because its arrangement

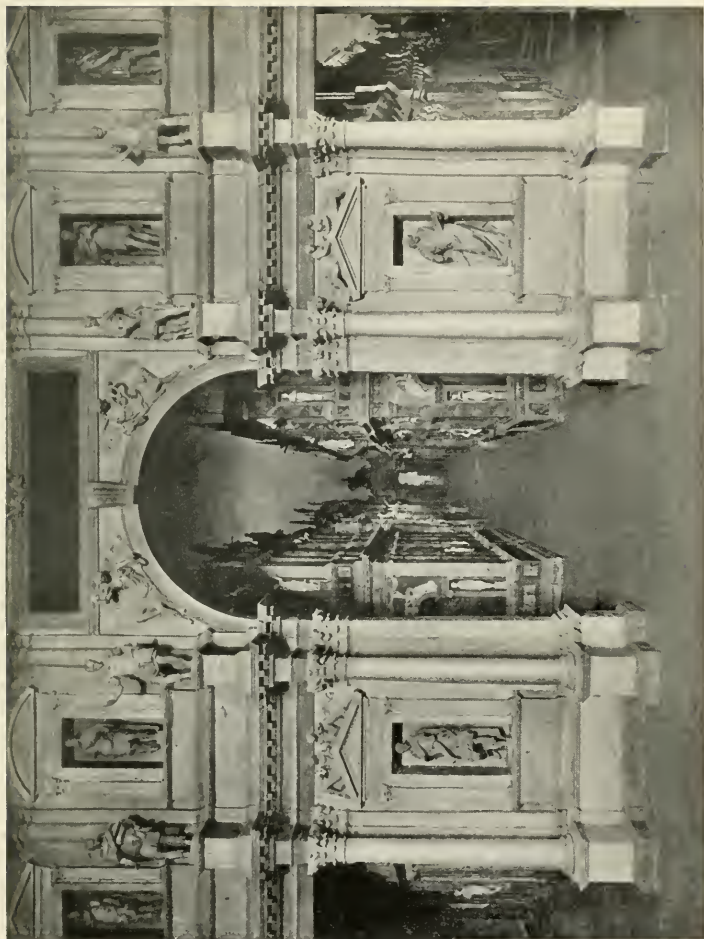


Photo by Alinari

“Can I express the impression of calm and nobility given me by the Olympic Theatre?”

and its simplicity correspond to its use. In the century when all the plastic arts have taken such prodigious flights, in the century of Puvis de Chavannes, and of Rodin, architecture has fallen into the morass of bad taste and ignorance. If Paris had not her Gothic monuments, her Renaissance, her Gabriel, her verdure, and the majesty of her spaces, people of taste would resign themselves to wait for the finishing of the Metropolitan Underground to see her palaces and her museums.

There is then much of contrast and of comparison in my happiness over Palladio. And if any one finds it excessive, may he pardon it because of the feelings from which it arises. If I could only stir up an exodus of French architects to the city of Vicenza, I would consent to all the ridicule, all the pity, my crusade might bring upon me.

I do not think, however, that the most intoxicated admiration could be exaggerated appreciation. It is not that the art of Palladio gives me the nervous thrill, the joyous alacrity, that one receives from the *loggia* at Brescia. The conceptions of Sansovino, for instance, have something more exciting, more convincing, more stirring;

and before them the soul is aroused, elated, and made to sing. The joy that Palladio gives is more of happiness than of pleasure. It is a deep joy, not at all severe, but serious, not at all calm, but noble.

The work of Palladio is an achievement, a consummation. It is to him, to his efforts on behalf of simplicity and reason, that all the marvels born in Italy have led, from Brunellesco and Alberti to Bramante. It is by this comprehension, so complete, so intelligent, and so varied, so purely Latin in character, and woven of the spirit of the antique and of the Renaissance that the artistic reform of Italy and the world must be completed. Palladio—with the exception of Michelangelo who had enough to do to command his own genius without looking about for lessons—Palladio is the last and the most perfect, if not indeed the greatest, of that line born at Florence, and dying at Venice, and at Rome. Let us look at him, let us hasten to allow his spirit to enter our own being. Already Sansovino has passed, so fine, so charming, and so pleasing, but almost too flowery. Here is Bernini; here we are drowned in the Baroque, which is nothing but Sansovino gone

wrong, and exasperated. When Palladio appeared Charles V. had finished his conquest, the harassed cities had given up the struggle, Leo X. had opened his century. His work was the last flower of this soil, where art was nourished by civic passions. When this flower faded, Italy had no more energy, no more purity, no more taste. In the prosperity without jealousy in which she has since lived, she has grown soft; yielding to servitude and exhausting pressure, she has produced only the mediocre, the blustering, and the pretty. Palladio was the last ornament of that crown which Italy created for herself. Others after him have sought to enrich this crown. The eighteenth century even succeeded in brightening it with some glittering stones. But they have not embellished it, even though they did not mar it, and Palladio remains the very synthesis of that soaring of genius inaugurated by Arnolfo and Brunellesco.

The city, herself, welcomes the stranger with good grace, offering him the surprise of the greenest of little valleys. Vicenza, between the Retrone and the Bacchiglione, whose waters make the trees of her avenues worthy of our own forests,

lies sheltered at the foot of the Berici Mountains, which are but the last prolongations of the Alps. They advance their extreme spurs toward the south, and, between their sweetness and majesty, the little valley of Vicenza nestles in an opening, looking toward the east and the north. The slope of the Berici toward Vicenza is the greenest in the world. There is nothing but grass and thicket, with white dots made by the villas. This freshness looks down into the city, stretching out in her plain. She is a rich and fruitful city. On this generous soil, the vine and the olive vie with the rich pasturage, which hides mines and marble quarries, extending under the Berici.

Beyond the high gate, there presents itself a long, narrow street, entirely lined with palaces. The festival of Palladio is beginning. In fact, on the Castle square, a square which backs up against the ramparts, it has already begun, with the *Casa del Diavolo*, invested with a Corinthian colonnade, and crowned by a sumptuous cornice. The character of Palladio's work is apparent at once. I am going to find it the entire length of this roughly paved street, the effect of whose deadly flints I shall not feel until later. If Pal-

ladio's art was most versatile, it was most harmonious in each separate work. According to the building that he was making, temple, palace, town house, or country villa, he chose his style, Doric, Ionic, or Corinthian; and he created, even when he turned the torrent of antiquity into the bed of Bramante and of Raphael. But style adopted, or style created, there is never a mixture of two orders. We shall never see, under the square of Palladio, the Gothic mixed with the Byzantine, the Ionic with the Corinthian. If, for instance, he adopts the Ionic order for the Tiane Palace, or for the Porto Palace, he maintains it in every part of the edifice treated, and the upper storey will be left simply practical, with no artistic pretensions. And what honesty, what frankness, in the bases! The ground floors are but the stones, taken from the earth upon which the house is built, upon which the art is reared. Boldly, with the superior logic of his admirable instinct, Palladio makes use of the Florentine conception,—which is also the conception of San Micheli,—making the ground floor of unpolished, rough-quarried stone; upon that he raises his antique order. And here, in these profane times,

is realised Palladio's great invention, the excellence of antiquity mingled with recent windfalls of the Renaissance adapted to our own times, bent to our customs, and all assimilated and presented with originality.

Vicenza, her streets thus lined with palaces, varied, but each true to itself, has an appearance of nobility and distinction that I have not yet seen in any other city of Italy. It is a joy to walk in the midst of such harmony. Antiquity, whatever be the particular order adopted, always dominates, like alcohol in perfumeries.

Go where I would, from palace to palace, and even from church to church, and I still have the faculty to shudder before a Bellini or a Palma,—all doors open upon Venice, and, however moving the walk may be, it is, inevitably, dry, enumerative, and inventorial. Nevertheless, does not Vicenza contain two imperishable masterpieces, that one should come to see in the middle of a desert, as one goes to see the Temple of Pæstum? The Basilica and the Olympic Theatre sum up all the civic art of Palladio. If I understand what they can say to me, I shall understand everything.

The *Basilica Palladiana* extends the line of its

equal and regular arcades on a large square. One single artistic thought is eight times repeated in its breadth, and five times in its length; then renewed upon the upper storey. In two storeys of arcades, one placed exactly above the other, each has its own existence, but one so resembling the other that they form one single block. Once again the genius of Palladio appears in the treatment of the columns. His great law is unity of style. But he knows that the upper storey must give an effect of lightness, lest it crush the lower storey. How will he escape from these two contradictory laws? By giving to his engaged columns of the upper storey the Ionic capital, while the capitals of the columns below remain Doric; in both storeys the bases of the columns are the same, Ionic, both of them, saving the great principle of the Ionic order. As to the arcades which unite the pillars, they rest upon columns of the same order as the engaged columns, and are doubled. Lunettes lighten the massive portion, there where the line inflects to mark the arcade. At the bottom of each arcade of the first storey a gallery forms a balustrade, and the same gallery is repeated above, finished over the

engaged columns (that is, on each pillar) with statues.

How happy that lover of the antique must have been to raise this Basilica! He, the Roman devotee, then had his opportunity to treat the stone after the manner of the ancients, to put up these galleries, where the Eneides would reassemble to discuss the Roman patria! He was given a Gothic ruin to enlarge. Immediately his genius conceived the old basilica of the Forums, of which Christianity took possession for use as its temples, appropriating also the name. He kept the joyous pagan character of the old building which is severe in its peacefulness and grace. Surrounding the ruin with Roman solemnity, he made of it a monument, before which one stands, fascinated by its majesty and by the simplicity that produced the most grandiose effect, by means of bare line, and the least ornamented grouping. No decoration, nothing but the capitals at one single volute of the upper columns, and, at the key of the arcades, a masque that holds the arch. Magnificence is obtained by bareness, richness by severity. It is a silk mantle, made all of one piece, thrown over a torso; it is the

well-draped toga; it is the kyton, falling from the bare shoulder.

Can I give that impression, so calm and so noble, which the Theatre, in its turn, has given to me? With a glance at the Chierigati Palace, where there is the same disposition of Doric and Ionic columns as in the Basilica I enter the Theatre by the shaded lobby. An immense awning, which is very thick, covers it, giving a fresh and pleasant shade. Let us speak softly. Some god should be asleep here; Zeus or the Leader of the Muses. An amphitheatre of seats, without ornament, rises to a Corinthian portico, which is crowned by a gallery, where statues rest upon columns. Between the columns are niches, alternately rectangular, or rounded, where stand great personages of the theatre, unaffected blocks of stone,—but what more is wanted here than the mark of nature, the evocation, the atmosphere, the line? Stepping carefully, as in a sacred place, I climb the steps of the ellipse, and come under the portico. I contemplate the scene with an exalted emotion. The floor is narrow, rectangular, like a paved street. At the end, runs a wall, and this wall is the sumptuous façade of a palace. Here,

in the middle, is the great door, the central arcade for carriages and processions. It is framed by Corinthian columns, surmounted by statues placed upon the socles. On either side, are niches in the form of windows, where statues preside over the entrance; then, a smaller door, and another niche.

The second storey is in the same order; always this Palladian repetition, which has no fear of monotony, because it knows that beauty is in harmony, and not in diversity. Palladio is like the exquisite women who dress from the hat to the little boots in the same tone, and do not plant, as the peasants do, an entire garden on their heads. For the women, no doubt, there is a proper way to do it. Palladio, also, has it. With him, as with them, it is in line and proportion. Look at these details, the little fronton, where lean the draped nudes; the cornice, so delicate and so light; and the attic, with the ancient bas-reliefs, treated like pictures, each one framed by a garland. I see that this wall is a little heavy; Palladio's pupils, who, after his death, built it, from his designs, wished to do a little too well. Perhaps he was opposed to some of the details that surcharge it; no doubt he would have slightly

modified the upper storey, whose exact resemblance to the lower is the cause of this heaviness. But a certain amount of reflection is necessary to see this defect. And what does it matter? The hand of Palladio, alone, was able to trace upon this public square, which is like a scene in a theatre, this rich façade of a palace. I shall see the interesting, illusive decoration of bedizened processions come down the streets that open upon it, and where other palaces of the same style make a background in a striking perspective. I shall see pass "the Bishop, preceded by a guard in Greek dress, like the janissaries, drawn in a coach of gilded ebony, followed by two others, like it; to all of which are harnessed, horses of the greatest beauty." A fine turnout. Looking about me at my neighbours, I shall see the women's "heads covered with three or four thousands of great tin-headed pins, giving them the appearance of a lemon studded with cloves."

I am alone, the streets are deserted, the silence is profound, and, having smiled at these memories of the humorous De Bosses, I bathe myself in the voluptuousness of this city, where no one is passing, in this uninhabited palace. . . . The

watch, on the top of the tower of the citadel, has just announced that the hordes of the enemy are in sight. Every one takes flight, leaving treasures behind. Women, old men, and children, have run to the camp to find protection, and the abandoned city, intact, without a stain, still awaits the threatened ruin, with resignation. And now, at this late day, the old city offers her treasures, their value enhanced by silence and abandonment, to the old beggar of beauty that I am, and who has not had the strength to flee.

I wished to terminate my Palladian pilgrimage by a visit to the Villa Valmarana. I was led into it by a glorious portico. Here it was that, in 1848, the bold citizens of Vicenza struggled against the abhorred Austrian. The companions of Danielo Manini died upon these slopes, and upon this Monte Berico, whose convent boasts a Veronese who had the honour to fall under the vengeance of a Gibelline: he was lacerated by the rage of the vanquishers. I pause an instant on the platform. Vicenza is at my feet, on the undulating plain, verdant and pink in the full flower of spring. Everything is on a large and

noble scale. The rivers wind lazily. The olives stand in close order. The grass of the pastures waves gently. Over there, the first hills of the Alps are soft and tender. The footpath where I stand is all bordered by hedges, sprinkled with brilliant flowers.

Soon, the path narrows between two walls. I am on the crest of a hill, and, at the right, I perceive a deep and narrow hollow, a real French orchard, while at the left stretches an infinity of vigorous and fertile valleys. The Villa Valmarana proudly dominates these two views. On the one hand, terraces mount the sides of the fresh hollow. On the other, along the valley, the garden is bounded by a low wall with grotesques in stone from time to time. The garden extends in lawns dotted with corbels, and surrounded by alleys of gilded sand. From it the high steps of the *perron* lead to a long terrace, upon which stands the house. The building is one storey above the ground floor. The projecting roof, lightly relieved in the centre by a pediment, is crowned by a statue at each of the three angles. At one side is a small wing, covered by a miniature dome. And, separated from the house, there is a

sort of orangery with simple rusticated pillars. That is all. And it is a thing of inexpressible beauty.

Here again Palladio triumphed by harmony and line. The long *piazza* formed by the lawns, the wall with the grotesques, the orangery, the bare house, with the symmetrical windows, in which the uplifting of the roof, like a skirt in the wind, is the smile and the welcome, the grandiose plain, and the hidden dale, form as a whole the most laughing and ravishing scene. He who conceived this arrangement, in this place of contrasts, who has thus furnished space, knowing how to arrest the eye at the exact point where it is going to lose itself, and how to avoid attracting it by some grandiloquent or vain detail, he, in fact, who has sealed his work by this fantasy of the uplifting roof, the only one that he permitted himself, he, only, has understood beauty as antiquity understood it. He understood beauty in ordered grouping; in natural movement, as the rivers marry the hills; in the strict submission to the needs of men, as the beavers build their huts. Nothing of the useless, nothing of the prettifying, nothing crowded, and nothing overcharged. This unity

of things, these lawns, where a single palm rises, these walls, without any ornamentation, this last terrace, forming a part of the house, a prolongation and not a decoration, have a beauty so pure that, as one stands looking at them, one is filled with a profound emotion, gentle and lingering, because before the most perfect production of a conscious genius. Palladio has raised monuments, without doubt, in which his ingenuity has served his taste in the most miraculous manner. I ignore nothing of the majesty of the Basilica, and what I know, before having seen it, of San Giorgio Maggiore tells me its incomparable magnificence. But the Villa Valmarana furnishes me a definite proof of his genius, and of his marvellous wisdom in this: Palladio disdained the hyperbolic and the flowery, and confined himself to build for the proper usage of things. In the Olympic Theatre, a place of pleasure, he abandons himself to the most joyous fantasies; the Corinthian capitals, and the statues, overflow with good spirits, and laugh at the comedy before it is begun. But this is a place of repose, of pure air, of peace and relaxation. Then let nothing come here to fatigue the mind by any quest whatever. Large

spaces, smooth plan, all for utility, arms extended! Only the grotesques of the wall, and the pediment, which lifts itself like a smiling lip, have accent: there must be cheerfulness for him who comes, friendliness and welcome for him.

It is not until returning from the Rotunda, a curious, rather than an interesting creation, whose least defect is not its aspect of a temple, when it was built for a villa—it is not until the return from that, that I decide to cross the threshold of the Villa Valmarana. I knew what was waiting for me there. I was afraid of Tiepolo, in the decoration of such a classic purity. I wanted to wait for Venice to see him in the most becoming frame, in the midst of the palaces of the rich merchants. What I had seen of him at Wurtzbourg, showed him to me thus: a man of go, with swing, a fantasy of untarnishable and lively imagination; a man of pagan taste, full of charm and outburst. He makes a certain strain after the difficult, even the impossible, vanquishes it, and laughs like a coquette at the temerity of his sport. He has a predilection for the nude in motion, which a gesture of covering or uncovering makes still more voluptuous. He produces the golden tints,

which, without giving warmth to the chosen scenes, at least make them vibrating and gay. He has a facility that rarely falls into an abandon of himself; a little uncertainty of design, perhaps, figures a trifle inflated, but such a universal grace, such a perpetual vibration, such an indefatigable throwing of the brush over all the range of imagination, all skies and all epopees! Tiepolo appeared to me always as the real painter of sumptuous license, of rich boudoirs and drawing-rooms, of ostentatious pomp, but solid footing; the painter of an epoch in which, during one year, as many as nine hundred requests for the nullifications of marriages were taken before the patriarch, an epoch in which the patricians in their robes, with faces uncovered held the bank in the gaming houses, the speculators pledged against the masqued players. He was the painter of the Venetian Ninos de Lenclos, and Samuel Bernard. How was he going to appear to me in this tranquil villa, made for family life, not for the life that burns and is burnt?

I did wrong to doubt Tiepolo. He who so often failed in fitness and in tact is the best of company here, having an intelligent delicacy that is almost miraculous.

Five rooms of restricted dimensions, five rooms where children must have run about with their work and play, where the sons of the heroes of the Lombard League, and the fathers of the heroes of 1848, that is to say men of the indestructible Italian sentiment, must have relaxed the tension of their great souls; five rooms were offered to his brush. At once his frivolity rises to the sacred destiny of education. The *Æneid*, *Jerusalem Delivered*, *Orlando Furioso*, and *Iphigenia*, are the subjects of his inspiration. Magnificent illustration of the grandeur of Italy, allied to the sublimity of sacrifice, Agamemnon offering up his child to his country, as did the Vicenzians! A spectacle to feed Italian souls. And how well Tiepolo knew how to keep those souls joyful in spite of all this gravity! Upon the entirely white background of the walls, radiant, gay, he brushes in wide porticos and garlanded landscapes. Here Rinaldo, resolved and desperate, tears himself from the arms of Armida, who knows herself powerless, and displays her charms in vain. Here is *Æneas* asleep, dreaming of the race that he is going to found. Here is Ruggiero at the knees of Bradamante. Here,

Agamemnon, with a monkey-like face, plunging his sword into the beautiful and resigned body of Iphigenia. And here, in all the corners, above the doors, are infantine scenes. Loves, chub-cheeked and without wings, playing together, mounted on perches, teasing an eagle, drawing chariots, covering their heads to terrify one another! At last, in the orangery, is a succession of dazzling Chinese ornaments, made to inspire the guests of a few nights with gilded dreams, to carry them far away from the daily servitude, and to give them, in this place where the body had come, for rest, a relaxation of the mind also, carrying it away from its affairs, its anxieties.

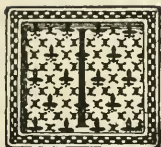
Elsewhere, Tiepolo may be more brilliant, may give freer reign to his inexhaustible fancy, may be more effervescent; nowhere can he be more intelligent, more comprehensive, more delicate. In this villa, the work of Tiepolo takes an exceedingly noble significance; I should say austere, if Tiepolo could have anything that resembled austerity. Believe, at least, that he tries to know what there is of moral force, of dignity, in that sentiment. He never succeeds in it, of course; Tiepolo cannot be other than voluptuous and

light. But he strives for it, and, out of the effort, comes a sort of wisdom that makes him charming and circumspect. And here in this heroic landscape, in this classic villa, before these legends in frescoes, do I not see, as if they were brought together under my hand, the most significant stages of the Italian conscience? The civic virtue and the taste for the voluptuous is what I am shown by Vicenza, Palladio, and Tiepolo. What are these ideals if they are not Italy from beginning to end? The Villa Valmarana at Vicenza will rest in my mind as the most synthetic souvenir of the Latin cradle.

VI

AT THE HOUSE OF THE MERCHANTS

Padua



IF one wishes, before entering Padua, to have a general view of it, let him arrive by the line from Bologna, and not by that from Milan. The former railway runs over the plain, and Padua appears in the distance with its domes and its belfries. Little by little, the city grows larger, the buildings come out in detail, the ramparts rise, the moats sink into the earth, and the towers leap into the sky. It gives of Padua just the idea that the great historian Giuseppe Ferrari has conceived of the moral city, and which is strictly applicable to the inanimate city, when he called the birthplace of Luigi Cornaro, the devout philosopher-patriarch, "the heavy Padua."

In the arms of the Bacchiglione, like Venice in her lagoons, Padua is seated in the midst of a plain, broadly watered by that river, and by the

Brenta, on which her life so long depended. Thus situated in the midst of an abundant fertility, she has assumed an ample seat, swelling herself out, her thick limbs extending with the strength and pride of a big merchant citizen. The breadth of the ramparts is considerable, the doors are massive, and when the citizens of Padua wished to crown the head of their city (that is, to place domes upon their churches), as at Santa Giustina, they did not think of putting on less than eight at a time. Add to them the domes of the Santo, those of the cathedral, the roof of the Salone, and still others, and you will have the physiognomy of a city, fat, rich, grossly showing the adipose paunch of a proprietor. Padua is a city where, before everything else, one must think of doing good business, of making a great deal of money, of eating well, and drinking well.

This materialism dates from far back. Under the Romans, Padua was already an important centre. Cæsar respected it, and its industries ranked among the greatest of Upper Italy. Under Augustus it was, after Rome, the richest city of the entire Empire.

When the Goths invaded the country of the

Venetians, the Paduans took refuge in the lagoon, about the island of Rialto, where they had a port and warehouse. Attila soon compelled the children of those who had fled under Alaric to seek the same shelter. The Lombards forced the last descendants of the latter to rejoin their fathers. So, little by little, by the emigrations of the province, Venice was founded around the island of Rialto, in the midst of the children of Padua, which always considered herself the venerable mother of the people of the lagoons.

Such an illustrious maternity swelled the pride of Padua, already made haughty by prosperity, and, well nourished and arrogant, she settled herself into the fluffy wool, in whose manufacture she excelled, even as early as the time of Cæsar.

To-day, one is not, as in the time of the Romans, constrained to kiss the door of the city and to uncover before entering. An insolent tramway carried me through the Porta Cadalunga. But, what am I going to do, to precipitate myself thus toward the Santo, when Giotto is there, close by?

It is to him that I wish to go first, before losing myself under the porticos of the Via dei Servi. No one except Giotto can create that atmosphere

indispensable to him who travels for something else than appearances, form, or pleasure, for ideas.

It is in the Capella Madonna dell'Arena, at the bottom of an abandoned garden, enclosed by the crumbling walls of a Roman circus, that Giotto has painted these immortal frescoes which all painting ought to venerate as the source of its very life. When Giotto began to draw on the rocks the outlines of the goats that he watched, the art of painting, after having passed through the hands of Margaritone, was in those of Cimabue. To paint, was to lay on, in congealed contours, without relief, without movement, some idols on a background of gold, in an unchangeable arrangement of threes, and in which the entire effort consisted in a resemblance to the Byzantine divinities, without the splendour. We recall Assisi, where Giotto has carried on the work already begun by Cimabue. We seize at once the extent of the Giottesque revolution. After monotony, diversity; after stiffness, movement; after night, light; after death, life. Giotto created life. He had the prodigious idea of thinking about the human body, before representing it. He made note of it in his brain, of its nature and its simplicity, and

tried to portray what he had in his memory. Extreme audacity! He did not believe that, to exalt the saints, it was necessary to galvanise them. He believed that they were more edifying as they had lived, as one might still meet them. And, miracle! The personages painted began to walk, to sleep, to laugh, and to weep!

It has been said that Giotto lacks certainty in the realisation of his conception, which is in itself excellent. Indeed, it is true that the brush of Giotto fails between his fingers, when it comes to fixing one of those bold movements, one of those living expressions, of which life is not prodigal, and of which, in consequence, to seize it in drawing required a hundred years and more of study. He commits then what professionals, with the innocent, or rather pretentious, superiority that the twentieth century gives them, call clumsiness. Instead of making a wry face over his work, they ought much rather to fall on their knees before these awkward attempts. First of all, they are the necessary, inevitable consequences of the effort that Giotto made to free himself, and art with him. He has nothing to guide him, he knows nothing, he must invent everything, draw,

paint, create, with his own genius. He has this temerity, and so strong is his genius that he obtains striking and clear-cut figures, as, for instance, this Judas that I have here under my eyes on the wall of the Arena. And when his hand is uncertain, it is, by natural consequence, from one of the most sacred errors into which man can fall. I have looked for the moments when the brush of Giotto weakened, and I have found them when, by a supreme effort, he wishes to push still farther the expression he has endeavoured to obtain, even to the extreme limits of truth. Holy failure, happy fall! His effort fails sometimes. It succeeds always, in the proof that it carries something of that, the full attainment of which has been possible to others, others more fortunate than he, because they have had his work for model and instruction. Moreover, the inexperience of a Giotto was necessary to the revolution that he undertook. A wise and prudent student, an impeccable draughtsman, would never have possessed, in the age of Cimabue, the audacity necessary for this attempt. He would have painted beautiful Christs, surrounded by the Virgin and saints, under God the Father. And

painting, that is to say the art of rendering life by colour and line, would not have existed. When one knows too much of things, one no longer dares. This man who created the whole of painting, in opening infinite life to its exploitation, who demonstrated that one can paint everything, even the most extraordinary movements, like those of this Last Judgment, or of the Inferno of the Campo Santo at Pisa, from which Michelangelo profited, this man, if he had possessed instinctively the pencil of Raphael, would have smothered his genius. His audacity was the logical fruit of his very ignorance. To wish to bow before one, without respecting the other, is to admire Prometheus, without respecting Æschylus.

What would Mantegna say, he whose frescoes at the Eremitani must recall what he owes to the divine master of the Arena? He is solid. He knows everything. He knows, above all, that Giotto opened the great window on the world, through which no one before him had ever looked. And when Filippo Lippi grasped the idea, since one painted men, of observing them at the moment when the brush is fixing their contours and their rounds, the great creation of Giotto was

completed. Mantegna learned in that school, and, with us, bows before the unique ancestor, the father of all the painters. How at times he must have been lost in thought here at the Arena, before these sublime figures, before that, among others, of the Christ grave and deeply pained, receiving the kiss of Judas, of a Christ who has penetrated all the human soul, and who, in his clairvoyance, has obtained strength to pardon, even if his heart still bleeds! He saw the prodigious effort of the venerable master, and said to himself, as we repeat it to-day, that the most able, the most perfect of all painters never could be capable of that grandeur.

The Eremitani furnish the brilliant proof of the good work of Giotto. If one thinks that Mantegna did as did Palladio, studied ancient art, one understands the beauty of the effort emanating from the Arena. Even if Mantegna's bodies owe their life to Giotto, his draperies, and his decoration, so substantial, so ample, so nobly undulating, have the appearance of being borrowed from the antique statues and bas-reliefs, from which worked the pupils of Squarcione, among whom was Bellini.

Through Giotto, Mantegna holds out his hand to Rome and Greece, and, thus, is the great chain linked again. Instead of seeing "the bad taste of the century reign in this painting," as did the President of De Brosse, I see in it an exceedingly pure taste, the taste of the century of Mantegna, of Angelico, of the Lippi, of Signorelli, and of so many others; the glorious quattrocentism to which Giotto gave life. Let Italy alone! Fertile and plethoric land, a scant hundred years will suffice her to throw herself in full force through the door opened by Giotto. She will soon arrive at a Leonardo, and a Titian. Before that, she will have passed by this Mantegna, so exact, so true, so magnificent in his decorations, so gifted in his correct drawing, in his rich colour, whom it is necessary to see in the atmosphere of this gross city before seizing the full significance of his work. Mantegna is indeed the painter of heavy Padua, material, practical, rich, and ostentatious city. He is the painter of this strange city, where the most realistic sentiments, the most of the earth earthy, and often the lowest, mingle with a high intellectual interest, with a reaching out for the ideal that the pride of the wealthy merchant

strives for, no doubt, but of which the roughest toil cannot diminish the price.

It is toward this disconcerting Padua, attractive and repellent at the same time, that I now turn. By way of the arcades I have come to the Piazza Cavour, where modern Padua is so proud of her café. I have been in the court of the University, where Sansovino already shows himself carried away by his clients into the decorative excesses from which art will be suffering before long. What illustrious souvenirs! These blazons attest the grandeur of the Paduan instruction. All the great names of Italy are inscribed on these walls. It is here that Northern Italy has formed her mind. From here have gone forth many of the strong and fertile ideas on which the world prides itself. Dante left the Scala to come to Padua, where he knew he should meet the independent minds and lofty souls who could understand his language. Petrarch made of Padua the solace of his old age; he wished to die here. The Bellini studied here. Donatello was called here. Luigi Cornaro preached mediocrity here. He did so without hypocrisy—and men listened to him without being convinced. And here appears the

other face of Padua, her immeasurable vanity and grossness. She boasted of having been founded by Antenor, brother of Priam. She has the bones of Livy. She has given birth to an Emperor, Henry IV. She founded Venice. And when Palladio was inspired by her Salone for his Basilica at Vicenza, she could not contain her self-satisfaction. Having resolved to rebuild her Duomo, she did not think that she could do less than demand the architect of Saint Peter's, Michelangelo, to call upon his inspiration for the plans.

Two structures sum up marvellously the curious mixture of grandeur and puerility that Padua offers to all eyes: Santa Giustina and the Santo.

Here at Santa Giustina for the puerility: the cradle-shaped vaulting of the lateral aisles has no connection with the central nave; the choir, and still more the cupolas are out of all proportion. The latter were put up much more to attract than to please the eye. Each vaulting of the aisles has one, and that of the centre is accompanied by three others which cut it, enter into it, make it heavy, and plunge into one another. Two others are stuck on haphazard. Must one not be more lavish

than Venice? As for the grandeur of Santa Giustina: the general proportions are well calculated to produce an effect of majesty; the arrangement of the spaces shows a profound acquaintance with visual exigencies; the deep chapels, the grandiose and harmonious transepts, and, above all, these rounded backgrounds that everywhere meet the eye with nothing but hemispheres. If one lifts the head or looks about, the perspective is everywhere gently closed with curves. It is the triumph of amplitude, of noble distribution, of richness. These domes call for the gold of the Venetian mosaics. Did Padua think of that?

It was of San Marco that she was thinking, at any rate, when she built the Santo. I am sure that idolatry had a great deal to do with the profusion of this tomb, which was to be the Santo. The anxiety to equal Venice is not less manifest. The daughter of Padua had raised a magnificent tomb to her patron, Saint Mark. Since Padua had her great saint, Antony, she wished to show herself as generous as her child. Venice was drawn upon to lend, not only her conception of Saint Mark, but her conception of the Frari.

The result was a mixture of the Byzantine and the Gothic, which produced the strangest effect. The four cupolas, accompanied by belfries, astonishing, but do not move us. The thinness and bareness of the façade are not the least of the surprises the work gives us. If ever there appeared flagrant the want of logic in a façade, which announces nothing of that which it conceals, it is evident, indeed, when one enters the Santo. The Byzantine porches crossed, one sees a Gothic church; these bare porches crossed, one is dazzled by a prodigious mass of riches. Here, too, no doubt, piety has done its work. Was it that alone, though, which called upon Donatello, Sansovino, and Falconetto? Devotion is more accustomed to express itself in gold and amulets than in marble and works of art. It really is the spirit of competition and ostentation, that hides behind religion, in order to enrich the remains of Saint Antony in a manner worthy of so opulent a city. When Donatello raised his Gattamelata before this tomb, when he triumphed over perilous and rebellious bronze, and succeeded in raising a masterpiece, the model of the equestrian statue, the first since antiquity that man had had the temerity to

cast, he, child of delicate Florence, must have suffered, more than all the others, at so much inharmonious show. The compliments with which the Paduans drenched him, when he had finished the bas-reliefs of the choir, neither elated nor deceived him. He exclaimed that if he would not lose his reason under the adulation with which they covered him, he must return to his native city. Donatello, so simple in his grandeur, so true, escaped from these excesses. The stern Antony, under his stone, must carry the entire weight of them.

Padua, who prided herself on having the greatest and most learned citizens, wished also to have the greatest saint. She had him at once. Fifty years after his death, Antony was no longer recognisable. What he was in his life is well known, an avenger of the God of the poor and the humble, the implacable enemy of the rich and the powerful. No noble of Florence was treated by Savonarola as, two hundred and fifty years before, Antony had dared treat Eccelino. During the mad and bloody tyranny of the Romani, Italy had, for her conscience, the heart of Antony, for her voice, his cursing thunder. He risked his life

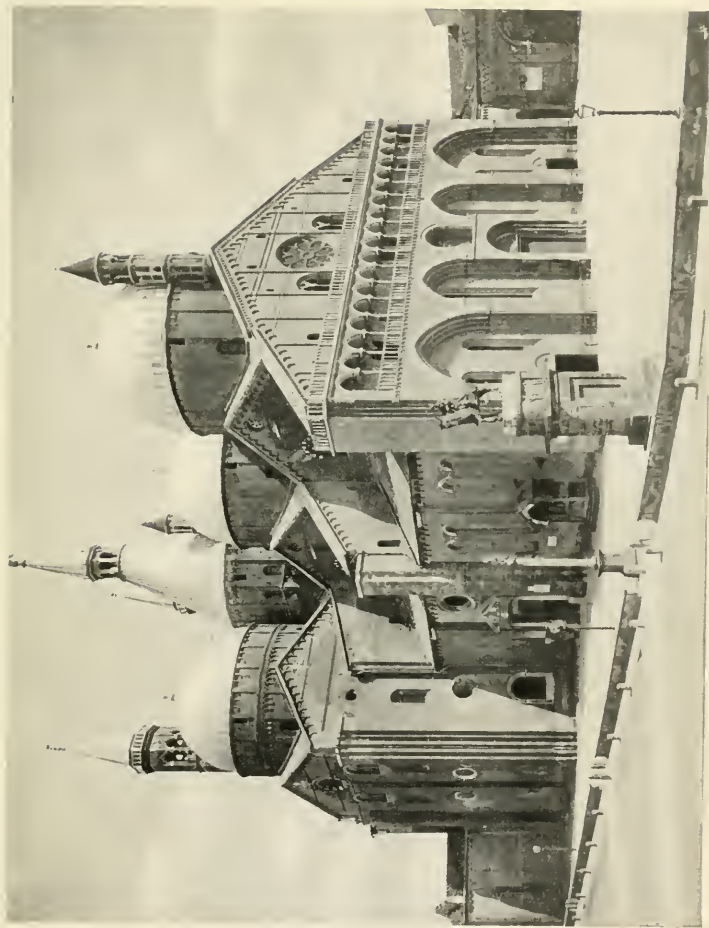


Photo by Alinari
Donatello's Gattamelata before the Basilica of Saint Antony

a hundred times, by the boldness of his anathemas and his excitations to revolt. Padua rang with his maledictions, which went far enough to awaken Vicenza and Verona. And when the Pope raised a crusade against Eccelino, it was in the name of Antony, dead for twenty years, that it set forth. The ardent Franciscan did not spare the Paduans either. Those rich merchants, traffickers, and speculators, hard on the poor, pitiless for the weak, made his great heart revolt. Antony never ceased to preach the pure Christian doctrine of brotherhood and renunciation. There was never in the Roman Church a more revolutionary soul than his. Is it to revenge themselves upon him that the Paduans have made of him what he has become? Their natural meanness of soul must have sufficed to this task. At the epoch of the crusade against Eccelino, Antony's tomb already worked miracles. To obtain a solicited favour it was enough to touch the marble of it. I have just seen twenty women, crowding, arms outstretched, and fingers touching the bronze plate which seals the sarcophagus. Little by little, Antony was employed in more intimate service. "In the most happy city of Padua,"

says Ferrari, "where events always take a retired and domestic character . . ." Antony took this aspect. He was attached to the masts of boats, to give them a good wind, and the Paduans, careful men, practical and good managers, painted his image at the base of the walls of their houses, to protect them against the indiscretions of blackguards. So many unreligious dogs have passed by, that I was not able to discover any Antony at the corners of the streets.

That is what happened, and that is what remains of the implacable adversary of tyranny and lucre. Happy Antony! His spirit of sacrifice was so grand that it ought to rejoice in God over the humiliation into which he has been dragged. He offers himself every day to expiate the sins of the Paduans, their idolatry, their littleness, their envy, their wealth, and their pretensions.

What was this Eccelino, against whom Antony raged? His legend has remained terrible. His history, by a miracle, is none the less so than his legend. The family of the Romani was feudal, one of the survivals of the foreign alluvials, which

we have studied more particularly at Brescia. Their castle rises at the north of Vicenza, near Bassano. The first Eccelino, called the Stammerer, accompanied the Emperor Conrad III. on the crusade, and obtained, as the price of his services, the government of Vicenza, then Gibel-line. The usual game of Italian revolutions made Vicenza Guelph, and the Stammerer entered into the Lombard League against Barbarossa. His son Eccelino, called the Monk, inherited his power. Naturally, Vicenza, which enlisted herself with him against the Gibellines, became Gibelline when the danger was passed, and drove out the Monk, who returned with the help of the Guelphs of Padua and Verona. Then, in 1215, touched by grace, he retired from the world, and after having divided his States between his sons, Alberic, who obtained the Trevisan, and Eccelino III., who kept Verona and Vicenza, and was named Podesta of Padua by the Emperor Frederic, he embraced the Paulist heresy. Eccelino III. is the Eccelino, called the Fierce, who was attacked by Antony as the instrument of popular and divine vengeance.

Let us see him at work. But first, what is a

podesta? After the nobles had become reconciled, had been absorbed by the cities, and had associated with the artisans and citizens, it was necessary to create a power which would tend toward preventing the reawakening of old hatreds. If the government were confided to a noble or a citizen the struggle would begin again. Joubert has stated, with fine distinction, that the word liberty has two meanings, the one antique, the other modern. The ancients interpreted it: I wish to take part in the government of the city. Moderns employ it with this significance: I wish to be independent. It was in the modern sense that the Italian republics understood it. And, in order to remain independent, they confided their government to a stranger, whether it was one that they chose themselves, as most of them did, or whether they accepted him from the hand of the Emperor, as was the case of Verona, Vicenza, and Padua. The power of this magistrate was discretionary, inasmuch as it was impartial by definition. Besides, precautions were taken. He was chosen for a year, and when he went out of office he was obliged to render account of his administration. He could not even leave the

city until after his accounts had been audited. He was forbidden to have his relatives about him. He must live alone and never receive presents. Out of this game soon grew the ridiculous *podesta* of the *Decameron* or else the tyrant. The Emperor helped the latter—not at all in sustaining him; on the contrary in combating him. Is not the *podesta* the representative of the independence of the city? And when the Emperor came down, uneasy over this independence, the terrified cities gathered about their *podestas*, who soon became first tyrants, then nobles, and then founded dynasties. We shall see them again at Mantua.

Here, then, is Eccelino III., already virtual master of Verona, and of Vicenza, Podesta of Padua. He will develop logically, according to the law of the *podesta*. He is strong. He controls an important part of the Italian domain. The Emperor has given him his daughter. He begins at Verona by showing himself just and humane. A good captain, though he is Arian, a cautious politician, though he is something of an astrologer, he tries to govern wisely. Pushed on by Verona, who is always desiring to recover her royal rank,

he dreams of adding to his domination the mastery of all Lombardy. "Mantua prevents me from doing it," he cries. The Guelphs also. Amazed at so much resistance, he goes mad, and kills. The funeral pyre blazes everywhere. He sees his brothers and his children slaughtered. He retaliates in the same coin. At length, one fine morning he enters Padua under the imperial protection against which he had raised the siege only at the words of the old Paulist: "The day is not yet come in which we can rule over the multitude of Padua; we must wait!"

Gross Padua had not the energy to repulse him, and he does not wait long before the Emperor supports him. He enters with the Germans. Once in the place, he drives out his benefactors, and installs his own lieutenant. The Guelph people, however, complain. There are stranglings, quarterings, burnings, hangings. The contestants, on both sides, reach a point where they throw themselves from the windows without knowing why. The magistrates, chained at the foot of, and menaced by, the gallows if they do not judge according to orders received from Verona, give up their prisoners. The dead and the living rot

together indiscriminately in the Tower of Malta. The Gibellines triumph. But not so much as one might think. They are only strong because the soldiers of Verona are there. And when the crusade against Eccelino raised by the Pope arrives before Padua, the lieutenant of Eccelino, himself, is obliged to patrol them. The terrified merchants implore him to capitulate. He pierces them through with his sword. At length the Guelph army forces entry into Padua and sacks everything for eight hours. Not a Gibelline remains, nor are the Guelphs especially numerous. Eccelino feels the blow and condemns Amedisio Guidotti to die of hunger for not having known how to vanquish the crusade. At Verona he butchers twenty thousand Paduans, his own soldiers, to punish their native city. Then, he himself lays siege to Padua, which resists! He turns against Brescia, marches upon Milan, and dies on the Bergamo road. His brother, Alberic, although Guelph, is, with all his family, immediately assassinated in his castle of San Zenone.

The Romani have disappeared, drowned in the blood that they have shed. Have the *podestas*, then, missed their mark? No doubt, but the law

by which a *podesta* becomes first a tyrant, then a noble still exists and operates. At once the Carrara replace the Romani and continue their fatal evolution. They take up the lordly part left by the tyrant. They place themselves between the parties, at length receiving Padua, with the consent of Verona, to which they make the most beautiful promises, and that of the merchants of Padua, who groan and weep over the beautiful years when they made so much money. The Carrara, born arbitrators, like all nobles, do as do all arbitrators: they aspire to become masters; they try to maintain an equilibrium which will preserve their power. The cities respect the nobles, astute politicians, clever to put aside all foreign interference, clever, as will be seen too late at Mantua, and elsewhere, to found their dynasty. At the moment when the Carrara establish themselves at Padua, and supersede the Romani, they represent independence against the Emperor, and the jealous neighbour. The Carrara play this part marvellously against Verona at first, and afterwards against Venice. They even go so far as to assassinate Alberto, brother of Mastino II. of the Scala, who governs Padua under their protection.

The moment is indeed a good one to rid themselves of those Scala, to whom, in fact, the Carrara have rented Padua. The ambition of Milan has tightened the federative cords of those cities which are menaced by that powerful neighbour. The nobles, synthesis of independence against the kingdom, against the Gibellines, and even against the Guelphs, become the rampart against the ambitions of Milan or of Venice. They call upon Charles IV., then, frightened at what they have done, they repulse him. And since the people no longer wish to fight, they summon the *condottiere*, with whom Bergamo has made us acquainted.

That is, in two words, the entire history of the Carrara. They passed their lives in giving themselves, and Padua with them, now to Milan and now to Venice. Verona only kept them enemies. Weak, lethargic as the Paduan was, he could not endure Verona. Besides, Verona was too much occupied in defending herself against Venice,—who took her at last,—to wish to throw in her lot with Padua.

The Carrara, however, were perplexed. Were they doomed to the fate of the Scala? Venice, at the time of the crusade, had been the first to

march against Eccelino, "that son of perdition, that man of blood, reproved by the Faith." The siege of Padua must have given her a taste for it. If difficulties that would distract Venice were stirred up against the Venetian government, would that procure tranquillity for the Carrara? Francesco Carrara conspired at once against the Signoria, and his hand is found in the plot of the Gobba. He thought of poisoning the waters of the Brenta, and thereby the entire city of Venice. Venice grew impatient at last, and with the admirable decision and tenacity which are the secrets of her greatness, she decided to take possession of Padua. The war lasted thirty-five years. Its vicissitudes were many. It was in the course of this war that Carrara went to ask pardon of Venice, and read a discourse written by Petrarch. The Venetians did not like his words. They excited the Emperor against the Carrara, and they even patched up a peace with their rival, Milan, who was sustaining the Carrara. That saved the latter for a moment. Milan, in fact, was quite willing to betray her ally, Carrara, but only for her own profit. Venice understood the mistake that she was making in bringing Milan

to her gates, and became reconciled with Francesco Carrara, to whom she gave up Padua. On the death of Galeazzo,¹ Carrara, to avenge himself for the abandonment of Milan, allied himself to Florence, against Visconti's widow. Venice marched on Padua at once, and summoned Carrara to raise the siege against Vicenza, which the widow of Galeazzo had given to the Republic as the price of its co-operation. Venice took Verona and Vicenza, and laid siege to Padua. Carrara ran to Mestre to negotiate with the Signoria. While he was thus occupied, the merchants of Padua, who always had an eye turned toward Venice, and wished to participate in the fortune of their cousins and nephews of the Venetian isles, gave up the city. Carrara and his sons were strangled in their prison of San Giorgio. Padua was happy at last. Her merchants exulted. They wanted to be able to grow rich in peace. Venice rules them, but were they not her father?

No city except Padua permits the study of the evolution from the time of the civil wars between the feudal power and the cities on till the time of the nobles. In this, one sees clearly the develop-

¹ Galeazzo Visconti, of Milan.

ment of the *podesta*, the *condottieri*, who installed themselves as nobles, or were driven out by the latter, their brothers. The result is the same, in fact, for the cities; that is, servitude, which Charles V., or Venice, came definitely to consecrate. The cities accepted this, and resigned themselves to ask of slavery the municipal independence that war had not been able to obtain for them, since each defender summoned by them had betrayed them, turn by turn.

At whatever epoch one takes them, that which pushed them, agitated them, roused them, and tortured them, is the need to work in peace and liberty, to retain their autonomy. Padua, in spite of its stolidness and its materialness, was herself agitated by these harmonious somersaults, logical and unified. Even the League of Cambrai, Bayard, and La Palisse, did not wake her from her Venetian beatitude; she accepted every blow as long as they permitted her to enrich herself. Luigi Cornaro, in his *Eulogy of Mediocrity*, naïvely tells us what she became. She no longer thought of anything but to eat well, and to drink well, to sleep in the cool air, to procreate abundantly, and to exploit Saint Antony. And so she lives to-day.

VII

THE PANGS OF DEATH

Mantua



ANTUA! Cool and caressing name!
It calls up visions of verdant landscapes, of shaded lakes where sails the bird devoted to Virgil, lakes with low-descending shores, and deep gardens; visions of a languid peace, a serene joy, a sweet life without storm, on rivers of milk, a life in the midst of flowers and perfumes; visions of Paradise and the land of plenty. The noises of the world ought to stop outside her gates. Her broad and animated streets should be thronged with a happy people, all in the harmony of an easy and prolonged existence. The squares should be planted with venerable trees of thick foliage, under which nude children laugh and play. Her buildings should be full of grace and prettiness, pink and white, crowned by pinnacles and bell-fries. And the names of Giulio Romano, of

Gonzaga, and of D'Este, which flit across the memory, together with that of the grave, and undeceived, Eugene de Beauharnais, add to this impression of softness, delicacy, and elegance. Cannot one understand why the Viceroy of Italy showed no ambition after having resided at Mantua? He must have always pined for that easy and charming life that he led among these landscapes and light mists, transparent waters, and groves. Is not Mantua made for gallantry like Sylvia's Pavilion? built like Bagatelle for the suppers of a prince, a Sorrentine villa, a palace on the Golden Horn, the enchanting Trianon?

And this is what I saw: a city with narrow and dirty streets, lonesome squares, sombre arcades, corroded by leprosy, fine old buildings, fallen into ruins, houses, all leaning awry and shored up, shops, bare and poor, seeming to foretell imminent catastrophe. The inhabitants, when one meets them, seem to have come out of cellars, where they hide, no doubt, in fear of epidemic, and pillage. Whence come these two phantoms in baggy trousers, French coats, and cocked hats, who carry on their shoulders long tubs filled with a reddish liquid? It seems that

they are "wine porters." This city fell into such profound sleep, under the Austrian boot, that she sleeps still. She plays the "Sleeping Beauty" every day. But, is it not, rather, discouragement, resignation, apathy? The climate of Mantua is terrible. It depresses the inhabitants, and devours their zest of life. This city appears to be eaten by worms. The innumerable mosquitoes must have nibbled away the houses that the waters have undermined. Gnawed above, eaten below, they gradually lean over, resigned to their own fall. They sink, or they give way. They tumble all at once, or in pieces. The walls have the appearance of sinking insensibly, or of being no thicker than a piece of paper. The wind constantly carries away particles of the disintegration, finishing the work of the insects. It is like an old arm-chair, left forgotten in a corner of the garret, whose upholstery still glows in the shadows, but whose wood is nothing but holes. Do not touch it! It will crumble at once, and become a mere heap of débris. The Piazza dell' Erbe and the Piazza Sordella still have beautiful faces, with their towers, and their palaces; but go lightly, the pavement is likely to sink under your feet;

do not lean against that wall, this partition is going to fall. Do not trust yourself under the arcades of the streets, even if they are still supporting a few storeys, they are now made of nothing but agglomerated mouldiness. The Church of San Andrea is completely surrounded by houses, which sustain it, and cling to it, the solidity of misfortune.

And yet, this ravaged appearance is nothing compared to what one sees behind these walls of paper. The interior of the palaces is desolation itself. It is a haunting nightmare. The very invasion of rats brings out some grandeur, in the resistance to it made by the things that do not wish to die, and cry out at each stripping. Here everything is falling into dust by itself, without anything visible to pull or to push it. Things are melting, as if a mysterious hand were continually letting fall everywhere drops from an inexhaustible supply of water,—all the water of the lakes revived. The mosquitoes, imponderable and imperceptible, methodically detach, day by day, a grain of each object, one of the thousand atoms of which everything is composed, and the thing, the object disappears, grain by grain, atom by

atom. The wood, the stucco, the marble, even, one might say, diminishes, and soon flies away in the wind that whistles under the door, and in at the ill-fitting windows. Nothing resists, everything lets itself go in the discouragement, in the resigned indifference. One has the feeling of implacable fatality, tragic and maddening.

Suppose that to-morrow Versailles should be shut, that some savage hand should turn the key of the palace, and throw it in the mud of the Grand Canal; the years would pass, time, and rime, would do their work; suppose that two hundred years afterward some one should re-enter. What he would see then is what I have seen at the Corte Reale, the castle of the Gonzaga. Yet, at Versailles, the bronzes, and the marbles would be victorious against wear and decay. Here there is neither bronze nor marble. Nothing but things ephemeral, of wood, of stucco, of plaster, of frescoes, furnishing nests for mosquitoes, who add their incessant biting to neglected oozing grottoes, which the damp blackens, and the fog liquifies.

Did you ever ask yourself how ruins are made? How a city, Susa, for instance, could fall into dust,

and form nothing but the tumulus under which Mme. Dieulafoy went to find the admirable friezes which we see at the Louvre? Come to Mantua, and you will understand. You will see ruins in their first stages. The walls are still standing. There are still stairways, doors, windows, partitions, and ceilings. But look nearer. Do not, however, keep your eyes looking upward too long, your nose will be covered with dust from the wood. The pretty compartment-ceilings are in the way of disintegration. Do not stand under that cornice, it will fall on your head; two pieces of it are here at your feet. This statue raises an arm not larger than a cane, coming from the torso of a bull. These panels are as if they had been scraped, in readiness for a restoration; they are nothing but rot. Do not open that door too quickly, it will remain in your hand.

Every day Death carries on his work, slowly, surely, *piano ma sano*. In fifty years, the ceilings will have fallen; the stairways will have tottered away from their axes; the windows will no longer shut, the wind will have carried off the last strips. And in a hundred years, all will be destroyed; a cloud of dust, all that will remain

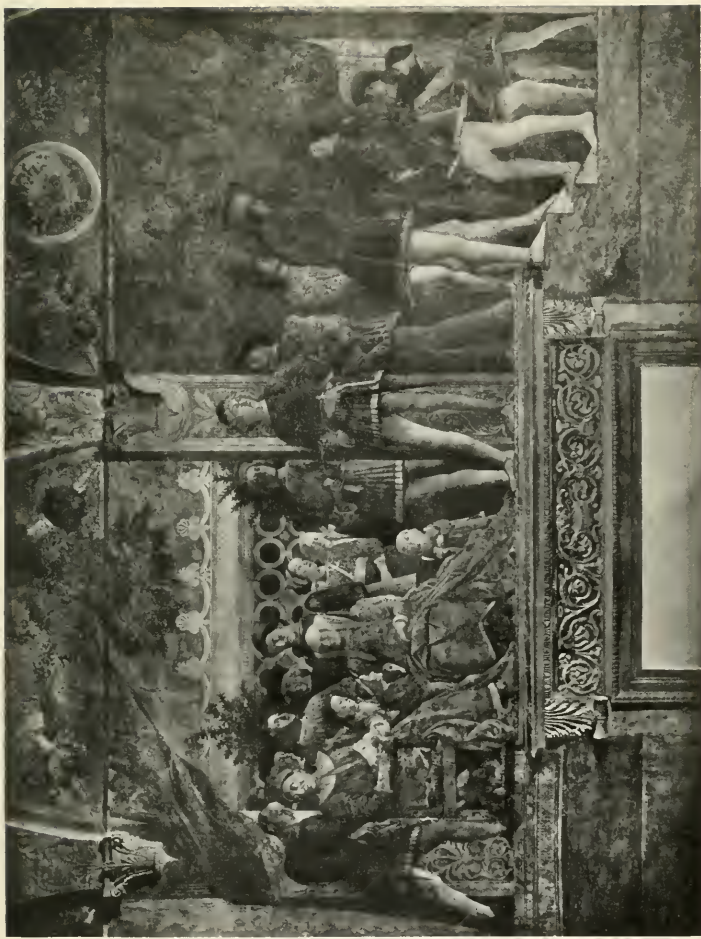


Photo by Altinari

Mantegna's fresco of the return from exile of Federigo, son of Lodovico II., in the Gonzagas' Corte Reale

of the work of Gonzaga, will be wafted over the city; the insects will whistle their victory into the ears of the last Mantuans.

One cannot describe a corpse. Decomposition escapes method. I have been walking for two hours in decay. This palace is immense. It must be more vast than a Compiègne, or a Fontainebleau. And nothing, almost nothing, but dust, dilapidation, and death, afoot.

After one has stumbled over this débris for an hour, the guide asks ingenuously if one would like to see "the ruined apartments." The horrible attracts. I follow on, and the same story repeats itself. I abandon my pencil, my notes; one would have to have almost the strength of soul of a Dante to record scrupulously all the abominations that he meets. Look, though, at this *camerino* of Isabella d'Este, wife of Gian Francesco Gonzaga, sister of Alfonso di Ferrara, who married Lucrezia Borgia, mother of Federigo II., patroness of Ariosto, of Mantegna, and of Giulio Romano. The door—there were two, there is only one now—trembles in the frame. The wainscoting is splitting, and coming away from the wall, from which cakes of plaster have fallen,

leaving the stone bare. The ceiling, in little squares, still holds, all discoloured. The device "*nec spe, nec metu*" is scarcely discernible. Above the wainscoting, are great square holes, old frames, widowed of their canvases. There one used to see—is it there, or in another room, the lesson is the same—*The Triumph of Cæsar* by Mantegna, which has been carried away to London. Men have helped nature. The "Paradiso" opens on the lake. You see the great vaulted hall, majestic, and rich. Rich! It was! The statues, perched upon the cornice, which joins the curve of the ceiling, have lost, one its head, another its arms, the third everything but arms and legs. The floor trembles; let us pass on quickly. . . . Poor little hanging garden, where even the guardian, his powerless arms falling at his side, gives up trying to grow a few cabbages, abandoning it to the mad weeds! Sad *Cortile di Cavallerizza*, where the stones of the rusticated walls lie about among brambles. Melancholy *loggia*, with such a tranquil view; the balconies shake under the hand that rests on them! From time to time, there is a flash of life that increases the terror of death. The bed-chamber of Eugene

de Beauharnais, where stands the bed, where the silk hangings, of marvellously fine texture, spread out their symbolic dead leaf; the *Scala degli Spechi*—glass holds well against worms; the *Sala di Troja*, with the brick-coloured nudes, of which Giulio Romano was so lavish, without ardour, and without conviction; the ball-room; and the Hall of the Zodiac which is being repaired—why that one only? Beyond them, desolation reigns again, fantastic and terrifying. There is one more corner intact, however. And it is sad enough to bring tears. It is the apartment of the dwarfs, little child's toy, two storeys, built in an *entresol*; the rooms are as vast as cupboards; the steps of the stairway as high as a doll's bench; the chapel as large as a niche for a statue. All that remains of so much bravery, beauty, culture, and love, is a plaything, a Punch and Judy box.

Will the *Palazzo del Tè* deliver me from this nightmare? Place of pleasure, fancy of the prince who amuses himself, caprice of an hour, if it falls under the fate of the light things that should not live longer than the flash in which they are born, I shall not be surprised. Its ruin will be logical; the *Tè* may well have perished with its master,

and his passing pleasures. Trinkets do not last, they have so many enemies, children and dusters!

But the palace of the *Tè* is not destroyed. And for good reason. It is a massive building, of true red granite. It is not a palace. It is a riding-school, with rusticated walls and twisted columns. Built for a stud, it was transformed into a pleasure pavilion by Giulio Romano, who worked over the undertaking. The great decorator, and the mediocre painter, which Giulio Romano was, let himself go here. For a moment one feels an agreeable surprise, almost charm, in the profusion of the decorations, their unity, this harmonised whole, the absolute finish of each part, of each piece, different from the others, but of a corresponding style, and full of ingenious distribution of light. The state of preservation is good. The paintings are still fresh. The stuccoes keep form. There are signs of decay, here and there, however, a beginning of decomposition. But the whole stands brilliant. Around one square court, the Court of the Cavalry, a suite of large rooms open from one to the other. All are decorated, from top to bottom, with arabesques, with garlands of flowers. It is the madness of

illusionary arrangement; one thinks himself in a grove in spring. All the colours are light and gay; there is nothing but festoons, fillets, volutes, little birds, pink clouds, and nude figures. It is the triumph of pink and blue. One looks down about his feet to see if there are not some Easter daisies painted on the floor.

After leaving the *Corte Reale* there is a momentary illusion over this silliness. One enjoys the freshness of it, but, as soon as one is calm, common sense prevails. An examination of the details arouses disgust. I smiled on going into the first room; I come out of the last almost indignant. Federigo II. wished to have the portraits of his horses. Giulio Romano was all eagerness—nothing better. But was it necessary for his docility to go so far as to paint these portraits above the doors, the four feet on the frame? Even to please a client, should he have done this other room like a shell, which in our day would be scorned by a bathing establishment? Is it possible that Giulio Romano could have had any sincere inspiration for this room of the giants, and confided its execution to Rinaldo?¹ It is a sort of

¹ Rinaldo Mantovano.

vault, with the angles rounded in such a manner as to form a surface without joinings, a panel for Veronese himself. On this "canvas" rise figures of some five yards high, rocks, which in the middle of a field measure at least twenty-five yards in circumference. Around this a cistern of twelve yards square at most! It precipitates, rolls, twists, throws its arms and legs in the air with impeccable perspective—how different, how far different from Giotto—grins, howls, and writhes on a blue background, a blue, after seeing which, one would never dare look at the pure sky. Yet he who conceived this saw the beginning of the Sistine. The strength, the splendour of Michelangelo end in this derision, this profanation of a magnificent brush fallen into the fingers of a journeyman whom even the easiness and the lack of conscience of a Giulio Romano could not moderate, direct, or hinder.

I amuse myself, for an instant, in trying to find what Rubens, who passed eight years at Mantua, could have acquired from these associations. And I believe I found out in the Sala di Troja of the Corte Reale, and in the Sala di Psyche of the Palazzo del Tè. He took from here the decora-

tions, the twisted columns among others, of his mythologico-realist compositions, his Medician works, and the taste for the abundant forms, and the abandoned bodies, the voluptuous nudes, that he brought forth when he had the Flemish models under his eye. He also took a lesson in proportion on seeing this lawlessness. The portraits of these horses over the doors cannot have put him in an indulgent mood. And when he saw himself condemned to accompany the Duke Vincenzo into the Casino della Grotta, all garnished with little river shells, mingled with pebbles, it must have been with relief that he received the order to leave for Spain.

My thought carries me back then to the Corte Reale, that I ran away from a short time ago. The *Tè* is the Reale that has lasted. And I do not know, now, whether I do not prefer the death of the one to the life of the other. The Corte looms the less funereal in my memory. Compared to this conservation, its ruins have grandeur. At least I can imagine that its arabesques had beauty, its stuccoes had gorgeousness, its plasters had gaiety, and its wainscoting had fulness. Just now, after my walk through the devastation, I

cursed the want of reverence that left an entire palace, of exceptional unity, to fall to dust. I asked myself by what want of foresight the authorities at Rome had abandoned such an example, which, even though of bad taste, was instructive after all. Besides, what is taste? The art of putting on one's cravat in things of the mind, says Goethe. What is more changeable than the fashion of tying the cravat? And I was thinking that the keeping up of those cravats, if it must swallow an entire budget, imposed itself upon intelligent statesmen, who should occupy themselves with historical and artistic instruction.

But, when at the *Tè* palace, I see clearly that Rome does well to let the worms finish their task on the Reale. If it is absolutely necessary to keep a model of these arrangements, the *Tè* is sufficient. Nothing here, strictly speaking, merits preservation against ruin. This is not a palace, it is a hall of amusement, it is the gambling hall of a casino, even though it was lived in by princes, friends of the arts, and scholars. They were princes who searched out artists, cajoled them, enriched them, lived with Mantegna, Giulio Romano, Ariosto, Torquato Tasso, Rubens,



Photo by Alinari

“The Cortes Reales are less funereal than the Té in preservation”

Alberti, Aretino, princes who hung upon their walls Bellinis, Vincis, Francias, Correggios, Raphaels, Palmas, Andrea del Sartos, Titians, Veroneses, works which to-day are the pride of the museums of Vienna and of Paris. Isabella d'Este lived here, in the midst of an amiable and intelligent court. Vincenzo,¹ good-looking, chivalrous, gallant, well-read, released Torquato Tasso from his prison, and consoled him; Vincenzo, the sumptuous, prodigal, whose comic troupe was so celebrated that the King of France asked him to take it to Fontainebleau; Vincenzo who had married a Medici, Eleanora, the sister of our Catherine; Vincenzo, who, between two experiments in alchemy, opened work shops for weavers, for embroiderers, miniaturists; who bought pictures with frenzy, in Rome, at Ferrara, at Verona, even as far as in Flanders; Vincenzo, who sent Rubens into Spain on the discreet pretext of making him carry presents to the King. Wily cardinals, Francesco and Ercole, looked with childish eyes upon these garlanded walls. The vanquisher of Florence, Ferdinando, first Duke of

¹ Vincenzo I. dei Gonzaga obtained from Alfonso d' Este the release of Tasso from prison.

Guastalla, was the brother of Duca Federigo. Francesco Gonzaga was an illustrious *condottiere*. Ludovico II. gave to Mantegna the order to paint the "Bridal Chamber." They, and many others, lived here, all cultivated, really great nobles, with all the vices of their time and their rank, but having also all of their virtues.

What principle of death, then, was at the bottom of this race? What worm, like the things that they built, had they hidden at the root of their being, to make them disappear, as their work has disappeared; their existence also putrifying and ending in Ferdinando-Carlo, he who sold Monteferrato to Louis XIV., that he might go to Venice for the Carnival, and whose debaucheries were so bad that the Senate of the Republic forbade its patricians to associate with him?

As Eccelino was succeeded by the Carrara, so the Gonzaga, feudal nobles of the country of Mantua, were substituted by the *podesta*-tyrant of the city, Passerino dei Bonacossi, who was the cousin and brother-in-law of Ludovico dei Gonzaga. The Gonzaga were, then, like the Carrara, products of the same evolution from the cities towards the nobility. They implanted them-

selves at first by crime. The sons of Ludovico killed Passerino. And the family of the Gonzaga developed according to the general law. It was synthetic of the Italian movement. It was the living symbol of what the nobles were, and of their end.

The Gonzaga were Gibelline; from the earliest days of their strength, they leaned on the Emperor. At first, simple feudal lords, they became marquises in 1407, less than a century after the murder of Passerino. They had struggled against Milan, which they hated. Conjugal quarrels, reciprocal accusations of adultery and concubinage were the pretext between them and the Visconti for this enmity, of which political jealousy was the real source. The first marquis, Gian Francesco, founded the grandeur of his house in the midst of these family abominations. Luigi or Ludovico II., son of Gian Francesco, forgot these injuries, when his interests commanded him to do so. He profited by the promotion of Sforza to efface unpleasant memories, and allied himself to the powerful *condottiere*, then become lord of Milan. It was this Luigi who, in 1463, called Mantegna

to Mantua and commissioned him to paint the "Bridal Chamber," which one yet may see at the Castello. He had a taste for science and letters. Vittorino da Feltre was the teacher of his children. The latter were educated in a celebrated school, to which all the nobles in the neighbourhood sent their sons, and which, by its agreeable manner of instruction, won the name of the "happy house." See this happy and touching family, as Mantegna shows it to us. Below her husband, is seated Barbara of Brandenburg, crowned with children, a heavy matron with thick lips, but full of goodness. Luigi turns with benevolent *ennui* toward an obsequious messenger. Around them, a court of nobles and footmen. It is the patriarchal family in all its tranquillity, and all its tenderness. Now for the other side. Gonzaga, on this panel, returns from the hunt, and welcomes his brother, the Cardinal. It is no longer a father, shown in the midst of his family life. It is a great noble, who has just accomplished a duty and renders to the minister of God a deferential, but worthy, homage. Let us look at him, while he fulfils his functional duties; we may read his character perhaps. The neck, with a thousand

wrinkles, supporting a pointed head; a disproportionately large nose, long narrow ears, prominent eyes. These broad and heavy shoulders are those of a bull, of a solid animal, who does not allow himself to be taken; ready for attack, still better for defence. It may well be the man who has stripped his second brother, and given him up to Sforza, but it is also the discriminating protector of Vittorino da Feltre and Mantegna. This long hand, with the gentle and timid gesture, this thin arm, these fine legs, could belong only to a cultivated prince, a friend of letters, studied with enthusiasm. Strange mixture, so common in those times when Italy was bent against the grain of her destiny.

Francesco III., pupil of Vittorino, inaugurated the most brilliant period of the Gonzaga. He presided over the epoch of Isabella d'Este, and of the alliance with France against Venice, who, having made him prisoner, released him (touching accord!) upon the request of the Pope and Bajazet. Read the *Cortigiano*, by Baldassare Castiglione, and you will know the court of the Gonzaga, in the time of Isabella. All the characters in it are taken from the people surrounding Isabella and Francesco.

The manners, in general, are light, but the noble couple is respectable, and united. They tolerate the freedom which they do not practise. Moreover, one cannot doubt the empire of Isabella over her husband, as well as the influence that the friend of Ariosto exercised over all about her until her death, even during the entire reign of her son, Federigo II. The latter continued the court life of Francesco III., Isabella living near him for twenty years after the death of her husband, and preceding her son to the tomb only by a few months. Federigo II. summoned Giulio Romano, and, under the inspiration of Isabella, commanded him to paint the works of the Corte Reale, of the *Tè*, and gave him the entire city to decorate. A man of taste, educated, amiable, and, in fact, for his times, paternal, he saw his court sought by the greatest scholars, the greatest artists, and the most powerful men of his age. The letters of Aretino describe him and Mantua to the life, the letters, and a comedy, *le Marèchal*, as terrible in its *naïveté*, as in its malice.

It was upon Federigo that Aretino first tried his forces. No one knew how to exploit human vanity like Aretino, drawing his very subsistence

from it. No one has known better than he how to dispense platitudes and insolence and make an income out of them. It was at Mantua that he polished his pen. After his first visit at the Corte, he saw what he could draw out of Federigo. On his return to Rome he sang the praises of the Marquis to every one he met, principally to his protector, the Pope, Clement VII., Giulio dei Medici. And he sang of Federigo in obsequious verses. The song was so beautiful that Federigo immediately sent the singer two shirts embroidered in gold, two of silk, and two gold caps. After the death of Giovanni delle Bande Nere,—whom he assisted to his last breath, drawn at the gates of Mantua,—Aretino came to take refuge with Federigo, and made himself feared at once, by composing his satires against the court of Rome, to which he owed almost everything. Federigo understood and covered Aretino with presents. Not enough, however, to please the latter, who heaped further insults on the popes; so much so that he wearied Federigo, who had little desire to make trouble for himself at Rome. Aretino was driven out, and left for Venice, fully informed on the art which he continued to exploit, with master-hand, for twenty-five years.

And yet, what was not Federigo ready to do for Aretino, when we know, from a letter, that he went so far as to interpose, and force the little Bianchino to yield to "the magnificent and most learned friend who is so dear." This negotiation was then less repugnant, no doubt, than it seems to us to-day. Even reduced to an effeminate value, it still is sufficient to show us the manners of the times, and of the most civilised, the most intelligent, and the most artistic court of its day.

Ten years before his death, in 1530, Federigo had been made Duke of Mantua, by Charles V. Supreme glory, shameful glory! Gonzaga gave Mantua over to the Emperor; sold her to him for a title. All the struggles, all the blood spilt, all ended in a nominal vainglory, in baseness, and subjection. Mantua might be enlarged by Monteferrato, she might join herself to Italy! Mantua was no longer anything but a citadel of the Empire, a wedge driven into Italy, by Germany, which was to remain until the nineteenth century, the last of all. Mantua paid dear for her first throw under the Countess Matilda, who contributed to the creation of the theocracy and led a crafty and angry struggle against the independent cities.

Mantua was proud of her Matilda. Like Verona, she believed that her nobility was going to renew the times of her splendour. Both of them were promptly undeceived, and both succumbed. Mantua had the satisfaction of seeing her marquises raised to dukes, and of receiving Charles V., who stayed nearly a month at the Corte; but the dukes of Mantua were merely footmen. For almost two hundred years they clutched the Germanic throne, until the Emperor decided to send them away, exactly as one dismisses a bad servant. Vincinco I., the patron of Rubens, found in his veins a few drops of the blood of Isabella and Francesco; the arts distracted him from his uselessness. That flame gone out, darkness reigned, without intermission. The last Gonzaga, cast off by the Emperor, died at Padua, in 1708. The Duke of Guastalla claimed the inheritance. The grandson of Charles V. disdainfully rejected the demand of the grandson of Ferdinando Gonzaga, the vanquisher of Florence, on the score of his ancestor. And when Alfred de Musset, in his comedy, set up his ridiculous prince of Mantua, no one blushed in thinking of Federigo and Francesco.

Of all the marvellous things amassed at Mantua, I have seen all that remains to-day—crumbling plaster, and mildew. The decorative work of Giulio Romano is disappearing in dust and in water. If Vienna carried away the pictures from another motive, she, and Paris, at least saved them. Faded, torn, ripped, and crumbling, Mantua, after one has awakened the phantoms of the ostentatious nobles in these dripping halls, is symbolical of the race of the Gonzaga, she synthesises their thought and their deeds.

The work of the Gonzaga at Mantua could not be durable. It must disappear, in its turn, as they themselves had disappeared. The Gonzaga, like all their kind, grew on the Italian soil by violating it against its natural trend. They established themselves by treachery, not toward Passerino, who had given them the example, and would have done as they did, but towards the aspirations of the people. They profited, to establish their tyranny, by the general lassitude, of the need to work in peace. Accepted for what was expected of them, protection, and wise administration, they transformed this tutelary part into despotism and exaction. Their work could not endure.

Charles V., on one side, the Pope, on another, and Venice, on a third, make that clear.

The moment they came, they put the counters in the bag, and established the most arrant thieves as guardians of them. The filibuster became a mounted policeman. He preferred to work for others, rather than not to work any more, that is to say, to enjoy everything. Italian paradoxes! The illogical nobles could only build in the vain, the superficial, and the ephemeral.

The deliquescent Mantua of to-day is the miraculously prolonged image of Italy in 1530, and of her survival in our own times. It is no longer the Corte Reale that I see, it is all Italy, stranded in her magnificent work of emancipation. Palazzo del Tè, Gonzaga, Italy are but one. The harmony is prodigious. And if I was so deeply moved, it was not without reason. If the melancholy mirth of the *Paradiso*, if the bitter smiles of the Sala di Psyche, have stirred me so strongly, it is not only on account of their own decomposition, and their corpse-like splendour, it is because they are the very expression of the instruction that I have come to seek in Venetia, and in Tuscany. This is what the efforts of the Italian communes have

led to. The struggle against the Goths, against the Lombards, against the Kings, against the Pope, against the Emperor, against the feudal nobles, against the *condottieri*, against the *podesta*, against Venice, against Milan, and the struggle against themselves, all the struggles of madmen for independence and for liberty, end in this exhaustion. The Italian soul gives way, breaks down, sinks, crumbles, like Mantua. Ashes, nothing but ashes; that is all that remains, ashes and mud.

Pietro Bembo, in the *Sarca*, tells us that the River Sarca, when celebrating its marriage with the nymph, Garda, in a grotto of Monte Baldo, heard with ecstasy the prediction of Mento, daughter of Teresias, which announced the birth of Mincius, founder of Mantua, and father of Virgil. This is what perjury and self-abandonment have made of a destiny so glorious, and at first so perfectly realised. Petrarch, stern citizen, surprising seer of visions, enlightened prophet, what do you say of this?

VIII

THE VOICE OF PETRARCH

Arqua-Petrarca



HIS is my last stopping-place before Venice. At last I am going to put an end to my quest. When Petrarch has furnished the moral of my journey into the country of Venetia, as he did that of my Tuscan journey, I can go in freedom toward San Marco, and his devouring lion. I will know why Venice absorbed the cities that I have just been through, as at Arezzo I understood why Tuscany fell. With no undercurrent of anxiety, I shall have a clear eye for all the light and beauty of the incomparable city, which I do not know when most to admire, when looking at her surroundings, or when marvelling at her masterpieces. For ten years, I have lived but in this hope: to finish my task, undertaken without having really been desired, and perhaps the dearer because it imposed

itself upon me, gradually, with the force of inevitable necessity. Now, that done, I need think of nothing but the happiness of living in the quiet of the lagoons, and in the majesty of the Giudecca. Mind free, I may abandon myself to the voluptuousness of bathing in harmonious and vigorous beauty. When I shall have seized the full sense of the moral Italy, and of her history, no further search for the social significance need restrain my pleasure in her. I shall not have worked in vain. Knowing the causes, having drawn from them, at least for myself, a philosophy of their grandeur, then of their fall, at length of the re-*arising* of Italy, I shall walk firmly on the soil, and each vision of art will awaken the conscience I have received from Dante and Petrarch with no greater effort on my part than a light stroke on the bell. Well seated in my saddle, knees down, I shall ride across the Latin fields, with no anxiety about my balance since I am sure to keep it, and wholly given up to the joy of looking, admiring, and feeling.

So, I promise myself innocent and intoxicating pleasures, while the little carriage which takes me toward Arqua bruises my back, the last strain

upon my steadfastness. In passing, I have thrown a glance at the ruined fortress of Monselice, from which the colonists of Malamocco set forth at the time of the exodus of the Venetians toward the lagoon. It was included in the gift of Charlemagne, but it was not until 1509 that the Venetians took possession of it. I recall what Daru tells of that memorable siege, when the Germans, rather than yield, let themselves be burnt, unless they jumped from the battlements, to be received on the points of the besiegers' pikes. On my right, meantime, the Euganean Mountains mingle their summits and slopes. The hermit of the Sorgues, when he saw their freshness and their freedom, wished to die in the midst of their sweetness and tenderness. Attractive and benign Euganio, where one would like to let one's days slip by! Little mountains, gentle valleys, delicate greens, you are the calmest and most charming of refuges! Grown there, like a wild flower, far from the Alps, of which they seem the last offshoot, the Euganean Mountains have lost all ruggedness. They have no more monstrous peaks, no more snow, no more massive rock; but undulating lines, well rounded summits, olives, and vines.

Some cataclysm must, one day, have raised the ground, and left it here as them. Liking the peace and the freshness of the surroundings, they settled themselves. They are a troupe, a little society of tranquil mountains; no jealousy amongst them, not seeking to dominate one another, each one content with his share of the springs. They work together, an ideal republic, always laughing, happy, growing their fruits every year. They exchange with one another the pollen of their flowers. They watch over one another, in mutual protection against the frosts of the North, and the heat of the South. Like the islands of the lagoon, the Euganean Mountains are federated, and, without ambition, as without laziness, they gaily accomplish their common task. Wise and moderate in their desires, they lend themselves generously to those who come to fertilise them; and their green mantle, extending at their feet, forms a shelter for the poor man who wishes to beg their tranquillity, and stretch himself out, paying no other price than his pleasure and his gratitude. They are good, simple, and modest. They are happy.

The road gradually leaps the streams, pierces

the hedges, penetrates the mountain, and soon is but a ribbon fallen from a shoulder. The way skirts a high and bushy hedge. Suddenly, there is a gap in the shrubs, and Arquà appears before me. Upon a summit, small among its brothers, youngest of the Euganean family, the church gathers its flock of cottages around its stout walls. At the left, beyond a depression that one must imagine, the houses climb the slopes, which are finally crowned with a belfry, an old, abandoned tower. All about, is the gentleness of the valleys and the flowering hills, the grey foliage of the olive, the solemn and dark cypress. Arquà, on its hilltop, is inundated with green, hidden from prying eyes, but proud of her beauty, like the faithful wife who does not show her enviable treasures to any one but her loving husband.

I have left, to my right, the church, and the little square where rises the tomb of the great citizen, and I hasten toward the sacred house above, near the abandoned tower. I wish to follow the same route that was followed by the softened—spirited old man, when he mounted the hill of his repose, which latter he left, feet foremost, to lie near the white church. I am led there by a

steep road, a veritable Road of Calvary. As I approach,—is it emotion, or is it the mounting?—my heart beats quicker. A passionate flood of confused thoughts surge through my mind; a sort of intoxication, that I force myself to quiet, in which I strive to restore order. I know well that I can abandon myself entirely to joy, and that the little house where Petrarch finished life will have nothing but the charm of intimacy for me. The familiarity of rooms never engenders grave deductions. The house of Petrarch must stir only my affection for him. The moment that I enter the gate of the bushy little garden, overflowing with eglantines and mimosas, whose bunches scarcely permit me to see the flat roofs, I pick a little rose that I put in the corner of my mouth, in sign of conquest. Am I not almost at home here? I have walked about this little place so long in my thoughts, that I could almost find my way blindfold. Along the path with firm tread I go, to the venerable steps where Petrarch put the foot of a tired old man.

There is a modesty of places. This produces, not the fear of profaning them, but rather a deep apprehension lest, in realising it at last, you pro-

fane your own dream. Will the place vanish the moment your hand touches it like the phantoms of the fable? And, if it resists that contact, can it hold against so many other enemies? You can never find yourself alone with it. Men live in it. See all these people, how they come out to meet you! You are afraid that they will watch you, read in your face the grief or the joy that moves you. You are fearful for the purity and the fulness, for the fine effluvia of your communion, you fear these witnesses, men, like you, and who, perhaps, will pity you.

A long time ago, at Combourg, I felt this annoyance. When I went into the little room of the cat tower, I asked Chateaubriand, under my breath, to forgive this invasion. The noise of the voice of the caretaker, forcing his task upon me, made a bewildered tourist of me. I should have liked to bow my head, and dream, but I had to look at the walls and exclaim. If I stayed in my corner, I should have scandalised the good man, and the batch that entered with me. I feared, also, that my presence, devoted and reverent as I knew it to be, would annoy the errant soul behind the curtains. His delicacy, and his *ennui*, would

reproach me for disturbing his sleep. Brutus was not ashamed of his crime until at night he heard the *Tu quoque*, and blushed.

Here I am in the grip of the same pain. At the price of not going in myself, I would like to have the house shut, that no one be allowed to importune the sacred memories. Am I then going to make a spectacle of my feeling? After having gone up the steps, I merely put my hands on the stone of the *loggia*, stifling the desire to touch it with my lips. At my feet, lies the garden full of shrubs. Farther away, the village raises its red houses; the mountain spreads its slopes and opens its valleys. There, indeed, is the serenity, and the peace, that suited the tired old man. Small horizons, small garden, small house, the place for an exalted spirit bowed under the weight of age; a spirit which, in the gentle sweetness of a pretty landscape, is preparing itself for death. Everything remains as Petrarch loved it. My fingers caress the same stone that his caressed, my eye looks upon the same horizons that he saw. This rose that I am chewing is the sister of one whose perfume he breathed, the same perfume delightful to both of us.



Photo by Alinari

“In the little house that Petrarch chose for his last days, everything is left as he loved it.”

I have come into the house. It is made up of five rooms. One large one is flanked on each side by two small ones. Touching souvenirs are arranged upon the walls, and under a glass are some leaves of manuscript, some pens, the dust of familiar objects. Farther on, is a portrait of Laura, a Laura with the smile and the glance of a coquette. Again, a portrait of Petrarch in a hood, with melancholy and benevolent lip. At the bottom of the frame, are painted a book, an inkstand, a lyre, a wreath of laurels, a trumpet—all his life; work, action, glory. I have seen many illustrious homes. At Combourg, at Frankfurt, at Tréguier, I have walked among the things that have surrounded the men who stand for all my religion, all my faith. Why in this house, so modest, and so bare, does my blood run quicker; why does my hand tremble, when I take the pen and sign my name on the register? Though I have a special tenderness for Petrarch among heroes, yet he is not my master, nor my life! I am moved because I come here at the evening of my research, as he came at the evening of his labours. I have gone hither and thither, as he went about, to ask of stones and souvenirs the reason of their

existence, and the memories attached to them. He hastened to this tranquillity in order to arrange his thoughts, and to finish his days in dignity. I come in the interest of morality. Like him, I wish, at Arqua, to go to the bottom of the ideas that spring up under my steps. I wish to classify them, as he classified his precious manuscripts; and as he carried his baggage to Venice, I wish to make a bundle of my sensations to deposit them to-morrow in the discreet lagoon. Arqua is not the house where the man awoke, where he developed himself, and took the indelible form that he wore before the indifference or jealousy of men; it is the house where the man wished to sleep. Combourg, Tréguier, Frankfurt, mark their children with an eternal imprint. One understands Chateaubriand, Renan, and Goethe, by merely going into the atmosphere of their infancy. Here, I do not understand Petrarch, but I feel him intensely. The least city of Italy tells me more about his work than these poor and decrepid walls. But, no one of them puts me nearer to his heart, not at all the broken heart that a loving posterity has credited him with, but the valiant heart that history remembers.



Photo by Brogie

Petrarch

The little house, that he chose when full of years and of renown, is like the clear twilight after a stormy day. Arqua, in its serenity, its remoteness, and its sweetness, is like the coronation of an indefatigable, and fruitful, labour. He who chose thee, modest house, came to shelter, under thy roof, the last days of a passionate existence. He had, in coming here, the consciousness of work done. Thou wert to him the station of the tomb. Among thy roses he wished to wait until the funereal bark, that carries emperors and popes to the other shore, came to take him away in his turn. Nothing but his will, and his conscience, imposed thee upon him. Refuge, chosen among all, thou art eloquent by this election alone! The great Italian, the soul of Italy, he who gave to his brothers the guiding torch, the directing idea, and summed up in his heart the aspiration of the sons of Æneas, he, having seen Rome, Florence, Milan, Verona, Padua, Avignon, Vacluse, left those walls, whose stones prided themselves on his attachment, without regret, left those visions whose fidelity his laurels sing. Thou, in the midst of thy rustic landscape, wert mysterious and peaceful, the sigh of an old

man, whose arm had no more strength, but whose soul still glowed with passion for his country. Thou art the retreat. He hid under thy simple roof, that he might die in silence, among the shimmering of the olives and the grapes. Under thy shelter, he wished to exhale his last breath, little by little, and to give himself back to the mother earth he dominated from the top of thy hill. With thy perfumes, his breath still breathes over his country, nourishing it, when his own life is no more. Little house of Arqua, I love thee among all, because he chose thee to teach the universe. One learns, under thy little *loggia*, that there is nothing true, nor great, but the idea, but the ideal, that faith is in reason and beauty. Thou art bare, almost as he was in coming here, but I adorn thee as he adorned himself in his fertile work. And thy rays extend to the infinite, as the rays of his light are imperishable. When his body appeared at the top of the steps of the *loggia*, to descend them for the last time, the people who had gathered here gave a great cry and wept.

The little rose, already faded, falls from my trembling lip, at the moment when I take the



Photo by Brogie

Laura

road followed by his coffin, and I leave it to mingle with the earth pressed by his last steps. Let it be my homage to him, with whom I have been living so many days, whom I have followed to his very sepulchre, and whose lesson I make my own in holding that rose between my lips.

On the hillock where the church spreads out its low walls, rests on four feet the red marble sarcophagus. The hooded mask of the poet dominates it; and the Latin inscription laments that it shelters nothing but the cold bones. *Suspice virgo parens animam!* Some children, who play around me, seem not to understand this injunction of the epitaph. Little by little, they approach the tomb in their screaming playfulness, and one of them, with a bound, is over the fence that protects the eloquent stone, and hides between the pillars. The others follow him, with a shout of laughter and, soon, warm youth is playing over the cold bones. I look at them, these *bambini*, for whom Petrarch so often apostrophised the universe. To them, as to their fathers, he is indulgent, and tutelary. He must be smiling at them under his marble; he smiled at his hope in them, at his faith in them.

A priest comes out of the church, and, with gentle words, drives away the innocent profaners. He turns toward me, pulls his cap to me, and shaking his head, lets fall the words, *Sic transit gloria mundi!* and goes away, justly satisfied with himself.

No, Padre, the glory of that man will not pass away. It does not spring from respect but from affection. It grows every day, and I see the hour coming when the Italian conscience will break the stone which holds it captive, and restore the youth of the beloved old country. I hear it awakening already. Its formidable voice will resound. May it speak to me at last!

In the first ages of Rome, the Republic did not form a unified State. Rome presided over the general destiny of the Peninsula, but she left to each commune its internal independence. Italy formed, as has been so well understood by the historian Ferrero, a federation of rural republics, to which Rome was a bond, but not a mistress. But Rome deviated from her federative work, in the direction of the unity at length realised by the Empire. Then, Italy, whose primitive genius was for federation, and not for unity, became agitated, and revolted. The proclamations of

the Emperors, by the legion, were but the expression of this genius. The Italian republics protested against the imperial unity, and it was they who gained the victory when the Empire was divided. The Pope became the champion of federation. The support of Italian democracy, and the success of the Guelph idea, of which he was the agent, was born of the conformity of Guelphism with the popular aspirations. This confusion of the Christian cause with the popular cause made the grandeur of the Church. Twice the Pope galvanised the republics against the foreigner, once against the Guelphs, and once against the Lombards, who wished to resuscitate the Empire in establishing the Kingdom. The fault of the papacy was to call upon the Franks for this liberation. The Church did not see that it also tended to reconstruct either for the benefit of the Emperor, or for its own profit, that which it had just destroyed. In place of constituting herself the guardian of the Italian federation, the Church, in fact, allowed herself to be led, under the pretext of barring the route of the covetous Emperor, to make sure of her own despotic power, to which she was but too predisposed by her dogma. She was indeed the

Church which, two years after obtaining the edict of Milan, which authorised her religion on the same footing as the others, demanded the prohibition of all other religions.

The temporal ambition was born of the compact made by Charlemagne. The Church made every effort to maintain that. Otho came down to renew it, at the expense of the autochthonic kings, whom Italy wanted no more than she wanted the conquering kings. If she accepted the compact, it was because she felt that the Pope was alone in his domination, and that the Emperor was too far away to hold her in subjugation for long at a time. We have seen this play at Verona, in looking at the kings Berengario and Ugolino. And we have seen the communes reconstruct themselves, according to their origins or their ambitions; some claiming to be for the Empire, others for the Church.

Let us never think, however, that they accepted from the Pope that which they refused from Otho, or the kings; that they accepted from the Othos, or the Henrys, that which they refused from the Pope. If they called upon the one or the other it was with an eye to their independence, their

autonomy. They had no bashfulness in passing successively from the first to the second, and from the second to the first, when the protector of the moment became too strong. And if the Guelph communes were the strongest, the most numerous, it was because they were all daughters of the old rural republics. They were essentially Latin. It was they who, in the year one thousand, asked the bishop to sustain them in their final struggle against the last débris of the monarchy. The Emperor was anxious about this destruction of the old remains of unity. What was going to become of it, in the presence of these impalpable, because multiple, communal powers that the Church federated? Then came the savage conflict between Henry IV. and Hildebrand. The Pope triumphed. Was the unity, then, constituted for the benefit of the Church? Italy no more wished a Catholic unity, than a Germanic unity. The Pope had scarcely delivered her, before she turned against him, logically. And the election of the bishops, that was disputed by the Emperor and the Pope, was obtained at last by the communes.

The bishops, as soon as they were chosen as the

chiefs of the cities, became tyrants. The cities shuddered, and cast out their bishops. The Emperor might come down, seize the occasion to re-establish his power; but he remained impotent. The cities kept their autonomy and their liberties under their consuls. But these cities, which were of two sorts, the Latin cities, and the cities founded by the kings, were jealous of one another. The latter, at the head of which were Pavia and Verona, dreamed continually of the resurrection of the kingdom. Were the Latin cities going to let themselves be dominated? Barbarossa pretended to make peace. His descendants had but one result: the treaty of Constance, which recognised the right of the communes to develop themselves, in their own way, in full municipal independence. Four centuries had passed since Charlemagne, four centuries employed entirely in that long effort of the Italian communes to constitute themselves in entire liberty, full autonomy. They founded their right, sometimes with the aid of the Pope, sometimes with the aid of the Emperor, and while the Pope and the Emperor, alternately victorious, disputed with one another the benefit of their intervention, the cities swept

in the stake, which was their life; then, thanking their allies of a day, they went on to their solitary destiny.

The commune, however, to prosper, was obliged to work. She had arms, but she no longer had the lands that the Roman colonists formerly cleared. Those lands were in the hands of the feudal nobles, outcome of the Gothic, Lombard, and Frankish conquests. Brescia has told us clearly what of the obscure Italian conscience there was in the struggle between the nobles of the castles and the cities, the struggle which terminated in the victory of the latter. The general philosophy of this phase is found in the change that had come over the land. The question was no longer to win independence against the Pope, or against the Emperor. That was won. The question was only to live at home, and to live well. The hostility was no longer between the cities, it was in the city itself, between those who wished to dominate the commune, and the commune herself who wished to remain mistress of her own evolution. The cause of the combat is the axiom of Joubert on the two liberties.

With the *podesta*, chosen by the citizens to

maintain the factions, was born also the great quarrel of the Guelphs and the Gibellines, whose entire game, so varied and at the same time so uniform, Tuscany has spread out under our eyes. What prodigious monotony! Nothing changes in this diversified Italy! The old republics of the Roman colonies follow their federative road. Having traced it out, in spite of the Barbarians, of the Church, and of the Germans, they wished to finish it, in spite of their own wayward citizens. With what dangers was the commune not surrounded? The Emperor was always ready to come to its aid, playing the saint. The Pope, unctious, offered it his thunderbolts. The parties allowed themselves to be taken in by these mirages. But, heavens! Every time one of them won, in the name of the Pope, or the Emperor, it was always to pass at once into the opposite camp. Was the fatal law of autonomy not obligatory? And when the conquest was made, the helping arm fell under the suspicion of dominating, was thanked, and beaten off.

At Padua and at Verona, we have seen the *podesta* gradually establish his power, in the midst of these quarrels. He quickly founded a

dynasty, and became a noble. Was not the eternal dream to be realised at last? Each city independent, under a personal master, should have been able to develop. . . . The memory of the kingdom kept the cities in distrust of the new tyrant. He was well aware of it. He almost always made himself agreeable at the beginning. But the genius of tyranny won him before long, and between families and between dynasties there arose jealousies, sprung from a common father, the *podesta*. The communes believed what their new master told them. They believed that their sisters were jealous of them. They believed that the neighbouring nobles wished to re-establish the kingdom. At this abhorred name, they rose, roared, and set forth for war. They marched against one another, they did battle furiously, fell, and, when they got up, they found themselves in chains, which the noble vanquishers would not loosen. Then, they made a last effort, a sublime dawn after so many nights, of the republican conscience, and hastened to ask the *condottiere* to deliver them, just as formerly they had begged their salvation of the Pope, or the Emperor. Bergamo shows us this: the *condottiere* was born of the

ambition of the nobles, and of the general misery; he was born of the sentiment of liberty. Like the noble, he was not long in establishing his absolute power. By a supreme effort, the cities turned once again, calling back the noble. Mantua tells us what became of him. Florence and Venice, the Emperor and the Pope, threw themselves headlong on the palpitating corpses, dividing them amongst themselves. It was not until after three hundred years that they came to life at the call of Savoy.

One day, Otho III., having started upon a journey with his beloved nephew, Berold the Saxon, discovered, on the first night, that he had forgotten his relics. He sent back Berold, at once, to fetch them. Berold rode all night, and, at dawn, arrived at the imperial palace. Intimate there, he entered without hesitation, or without disturbing attendants, and came upon the Empress in the arms of a lover. Sword drawn, Berold fell upon that Yseult, and killed her. Then he hastened to throw himself at the feet of Otho, who thanked him. But the father of the Empress came upon the scene. He insisted that Berold

should be, if not killed, at least banished from the Imperial Court, as he did not wish to meet the murderer of his child.

Death in his soul, Otho separated himself from his dear nephew, and, in order to render the exile less sensitive, he sent him into Italy, where he constituted for him an important frontier holding, Savoy. Humbert-of-the-White-Hands, who is considered as the founder of the House of Savoy in the eleventh century, commonly passes for the son of this Berold.

At first, the nobles of Savoy showed themselves faithful defenders of the Empire. Placed behind Piedmont, in order that they could watch over that which did not constitute the kingdom, they conscientiously fulfilled their mission. Then, for greater security, they enlarged it. Piedmont, Valais, Susa, and Nice gradually fell into their hands, and their skill was recognised by the title of Duke which in the fifteenth century the Emperor bestowed upon them. They were clever people. Without great faith, without scruples, and without high views, they grew, little by little, by their suppleness, their treachery, and their "small profits." And the day came at length when one

of them entered into conflict against the Germanic Emperor, who, in times past, had created the Counts and Dukes of Savoy. Victor Emmanuel took the title of King of Italy, and Italy was unified.

Nothing was, and almost nothing is still so touching as the love of the Italian people for the dynasty that has delivered them from the Germanic, and papal, yokes. At the supreme hour, when Italy was going to die at last, after she had been in the agony of death for three hundred and fifty years, under the boot, and under the cross, a liberator offered to take the last chance, risked all, and won. The joy was so great, that no one perceived that the House of Savoy, in reality, had re-begun the old play of the *condottieri* or the *podestas*. They also promised independence and liberty. But Italy had worked for the glory of Savoy. She was subjugated with gratitude. Nothing could undeceive her respecting those princes who resuscitated her when everything seemed lost. Italy was so low that independence seemed to her the supreme benefit. Those who gave it to her, subtle and adroit men, were careful not to refuse her all liberty. The little that they granted

her seemed to come from the heights of the blue heavens. The unity that they brought was no doubt inferior to the Italian ideal—and it is in the comprehension of this double necessity, independence and liberty, that one can see the profound genius of a Garibaldi—but it was so superior to the condition out of which the country had just emerged, as by miracle, that the most devoted blindness was in all hearts. Never was king so adored by his people as was that Victor Emmanuel, who picked the pocket of liberty. Italy fifty years ago re-awakened Guelph. Where were the Gibellines, those who thought about liberty? Poor fools, revolutionaries, republicans they were! The great dream, the reunion, was realised. What more were they crying for?

They cried in vain that what they were demanding, in the name of all the past, was not unity, but federation; no one heard them or understood them. It seems that, to-day, little by little, they are being heard and understood. Savoy cannot succeed better in this land than the models it has in Rimini, in Mantua, or in Milan. Whatever may be the intoxication of gratitude, it cannot make anything of Savoy but an Eccelino

who has succeeded. It is a Sforza, a Gonzaga, a Malatesta, that is to say, a prince who grew as a parasite on this Italian soil, profiting by services rendered, as did also the Carrara and the Visconti. Already the awakening can be seen in the movements that disturb the Peninsula. Already the deceiving mirage of unity is beginning to disappear. There are those who divine, and who say that the House of Savoy was but an instrument; the tool, become useless, ought to be rejected. Have no fear of seeing that done. Italy delivered from the German yoke, and from the papal yoke, has not yet realised all its ambitions. The Prince is Italian! says the Guelph.—But we are subject to Rome! answers the Gibelline. And Italy wants neither stranger nor Roman. Lombards, Venetians, Tuscans, Romans, Neapolitans, are united in the joy of being delivered from the German, from the soldier of the Pope, and from the Bourbon, but they are united also in the need of being restored to themselves, of being their own masters in their own land, in their provinces and in their cities. To form a unity, is but the first act of the complete enfranchisement. The second act should be to render to each one the free com-

mand of its internal and communal destinies. Independence won, it is important to win liberty.

The Savoy monarchy does not respond to this end. It has understood but the first part of the task, independence. It refuses the second, liberty. It has made the union, and not the federation. Like the Guelphs it believed that it had won everything and that the day that the German was driven out the times were accomplished. It has seen only one face of the problem. Italy is neither Guelph nor Gibelline. Guelphism has never been anything but a means, not an end. Gibellinism was a flag, not an ideal. Instead of being purely Italian, the monarchy is constituted as the champion of one party. The need of it was urgent. On account of that necessity, it was established upon the conquest, as the nobles were installed in the old times. Italy now begins to see that she has been duped by the monarchy. She will be long, no doubt, in fully recognising her mistake. She is bound to it by a thousand ties of material prosperity, of gratitude, and of vanity; but these will give way under the pressure of the general conscience, ancestral and republican.

What will the House of Savoy do when that

time comes? Everything points to the thought that born of an evolution, analogous to that of the *condottieri* and the nobles, the House of Savoy will imitate their conduct. It will always be either Guelph or Gibelline. That is proved superabundantly by the reign of Humbert, and by that of the young Victor Emmanuel.

The country was scarcely delivered from the German, when the dynasty, in fear of being swept away by liberty, ran to ask the support of the Germanic Emperor. The difference in the heads which wore it prevented the people from seeing that help had been asked from the same foreign crown. But the far-seeing Italians who know their country's history were not deceived. Umberto I. must have fatally put Italy back under the German boot, as the nobles of old after being installed against the Empire, hastened to be reconciled with it. The crime of Bresci, who killed Humbert, shows clearly that the sentiment of liberty was still alive. The crime of Bresci is execrable. Yet the horror which it aroused in us cannot hinder us from looking for its political and social significance. In order to keep its own supremacy, the necessity arising when its growth

was at variance with the Italian aspirations, the House of Savoy, under Humbert, crushed under its feet the very principles to which it owed its fortune. After having delivered Italy from the German yoke, it was about to cast it again under the Germanic rod. The Triple Alliance is but a new vassalage of the land of the Consuls. It is the Roman Republic put back under the hand of the Emperor. Carrying upon its shoulders the weight of this alliance, Italy lives again the bad days of the Frederics and the Charles V.'s. The dagger of Bresci synthesised the protest of Italy; abominably, and with an outburst that never will be too severely reprov'd but with an outburst whose meaning is irresistibly brought home to us. Bresci's dagger is a Guelph dagger.

The young King seems to understand no better than his father did the soul of those whom he calls his people. He also is being carried along by the monarchical, signorial fatality. Not, indeed, that he did not grasp, in part, what was said by Bresci the Guelph. But he grasped it only from his dynastic point of view. And here he is to-day, making himself Guelph, and running to throw himself into the arms of the Church. Like

William, the sponsor of Humbert, Victor Emmanuel II. asks the priests, the Catholic party, to consolidate his throne. The Church, school of resignation, and servitude, gives to the monarchies its strength of depression and submission. In all Europe, she is, for those who possess her, the safeguard against socialism. Victor Emmanuel knows that, and has changed from Gibelline to Guelph, to insure his crown against the awakening of a disillusioned people. The game—that is his peril—seems to him logical and natural. All Italy has played it for centuries. Is not continuing the game but following the national tradition? To him who has studied history, there is no doubt that the clerical movement which Victor Emmanuel is now indicating will continue, and become accentuated. Like all the cities in former times, the Savoy monarchy will swing between the two poles of Guelphism and Gibellinism. It is not less certain that it will fall.

It will fall, because the will of Italy is to be neither Guelph nor Gibelline under a nobility, but to be independent and free. Independent, that is to say, delivered from the foreigner. If the Napoleons have not met with all the gratitude

that they expected, it is because each has been "the foreigner"; him whom the Italians have called so many times as a deliverer, but under whom the people do not want to remain as subjects. Italy of the nineteenth century was afraid of the French Empire. It wanted to be free, that is, to enjoy its own municipal franchises, provincial franchises at most, without any bonds between the communes but the bonds of federation. The North is growing tired of working to nourish the South. Genoa despises Venice from the height of her recovered greatness. Florence never ceases to look at herself with a disdainful smile, in the masterpieces with which she has flooded ancient Rome. It was possible for unity to exist among all the cities at the moment of throwing off the two yokes. That done, Italy wants to go on her way, and conquer her municipal autonomies, her separate franchises. So long as a new treaty of Constance is not signed, she will not stop her course.

Federation, and not unity, that is the future. But could not that federation exist with Rome the capital, as in the times of which Livy has left us the immortal testimony? Could it not exist

under the direction of the House of Savoy? That would be the realisation of Dante's ideal; a federated civil monarchy. That would not at all be the ideal of Petrarch, and I believe in Petrarch. The Savoy race is too deeply imbued with the monarchical idea, its dynastic interest is too great, its Germanic origin is too powerful, its peculiar development has been too long unbroken, for it to perceive the necessity before which it will stand. And if, one day, the Church should lose all power over the souls and minds of the Italians, we should see the kings of Savoy asking the support of some other European monarchy, we should see them calling in the foreigner as they called in Napoleon III. against Austria. They will never be purely Italian.

The last term of Italy will be the republican federation. That will be the return to former ages, to the ages of the little republics under the nominal prestige of ancient Rome. Rome must never again show herself too arrogant.

"Federation," says Ferrari, "presupposes, settled in advance, all question of superiority and precedence; it presupposes the central power suppressed, the capital annihilated, the people

levelled, and on the footing of equality; it presupposes all territorial questions solved, all national jealousies abolished."

That is the desire of Petrarch: the communes as absolute mistresses of their destinies, with Rome, herself municipal, synthesising their liberty to the eyes of the world. Rome could be the seat of a common parliament which would resolve the general interests, the residence of a *Podesta*-General—the *Podesta* of the *Decameron*, not Eccechino—charged with representing these interests to other nations, the Rome of the Tarquins and the Gracchi, but never that of the Cæsars.

The day in which Italy shall at length attain this ideal, which I have followed from the fall of the Empire till Charles V., this tomb of Arqua over which I bow my head to-day will open and the great soul of Petrarch; still oppressed, will take flight in happiness.

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