were degraded by servitude," though he affirms that "this had no connection with the feudal tenures"; and he is forced to decide that "the peace and good order of society were not promoted by this system. Though private wars did not originate in the feudal customs, it is impossible to doubt that they were perpetuated by so convenient an institution, which indeed owed its universal establishment to no other cause."[1] The latter judgment sufficiently countervails the others; and the claim that feudalism was a school of moral discipline, which gradually substituted good faith for bad, will be endorsed by few students of the history of feudal times. A more plausible plea is that of Sismondi, that the feudal nobles of Italy, finding themselves resisted in the cities, which they had been wont to regard as their property, and finding the need of retainers for the defence of their castles, affranchised and protected their peasants as they had never done before. There resulted, he believes, an extension of agriculture which greatly increased the population in the tenth and eleventh centuries.[2] This is partially provable, and it gives us the standpoint most favourable to feudalism; which on the other hand is seen in the main to have soon reached its constructive limits, and to have promoted division no less than union.[3]

It is important here to realise how in the new civilisation, with its new language, there subsisted simultaneously all of the forms of spontaneous aggregation which had been evolved in the older Roman life. The aristocratic families in their very nomenclature exhibited anew the old evolution of the system of *gentes*, men being named "of the Uberti," "of the Buondelmonti," and so on. At the same time the industrial groups formed *their* communities, as the *scholæ* of workers had done of old; and in the political history of Florence we see constitution after constitution built out of political units so formed. First came the primary patriotism of the family stock; then that of the trade or industrial group; and only as a balance of these separate and largely hostile interests did the City-State subsist. Thus the new Italian civilisation was on its political side fundamentally and organically atomistic, civic union being never a primary

[1] *Europe during the Middle Ages*, ch. ii, pt. ii, *end*. Compare Hodgkin on "the Feudal Anarchy which history has called, with unintended irony, the Feudal System," and on the fashion in which, in the capitularies of Charlemagne, "we have imperial sanction given to that most anti-social of all feudal practices, the levying of private war" (*Italy and her Invaders*, viii, 301–2).

[2] *Short History*, p. 15. "The liberated agricultural classes multiplied rapidly, and brought vast tracts of abandoned soil under cultivation" (Boulting, p. 27). It probably needed such an expansion, we may note, to make possible the Crusades.

[3] Sismondi finally decides that in the tenth century feudalism had induced in the main rather a dissolution than an organisation of society (*Républiques*, i, 85–91). Cp. Guizot, *History de la civ. en France*, as cited, iii, 103, 272–75, iv, 77–79; *Essais*, v; and Boulting, p. 17.

but always a secondary adjustment among groups whose first loyalty was to the primary fraternity. It was hard enough to evolve out of all this a common civic interest: to rise yet higher was impossible to the men of that era. And all the while the separate corporation of the Church, despite its inner feuds, tended to seek its separate interest as against all others.

As regards Italy, then, the value of the imperial feudal system, operating through the machinery of the bishoprics, was that it freed the energies of the cities, where alone the higher civilisation could germinate; but on the other hand it fostered in them a spirit of localism and separatism[1] that was ultimately fatal. The old Roman unity had been completely broken up by the invasions, by the strifes of Goths and Byzantines, by the sheer need for individual defence; and the empire, warring with the Papacy, fixed the tendency. Genoa, Pisa, Florence, Milan, and the smaller cities alike felt and acted as independent States, each against the other, forming occasional alliances only as separate nations or kings might do. In the ever-changing conflict of nobles, emperor, pope, cities, and bishops, all parties alike developed the spirit of self-assertion,[2] and wrought for their own special incorporation. At times prelates and cities combined against nobles, as under Conrad the Salic (1035–39), who was forced to revise the feudal law and free the remaining serfs; later, members of each species sided with pope or emperor in the strifes of Hildebrandt and Henry IV and their successors over the question of investitures, till the general interest compelled a peace. During these ages of inconclusive conflict the cities, thus far acting mainly in conjunction with their bishops or archbishops, developed their militia; their *caroccio* or banner-bearing fighting-car; and their institution of public election of consuls. Here the very name tells of the power of the Roman tradition, as against the supposed capacity of the Teutonic races for spontaneous free organisation and self-government—tells too of the survival of a majority of Roman-speaking people even in the upper and middle classes of the cities. We may readily grant, as against Savigny and his disciples, that the Roman institution of the *curia* had not been preserved in the cities of Lombardy. There was no reason why it should have been, even if the Longobard kings had been inclined to use it as a means of extorting taxation; for in the last ages of the Empire it had become detestable to the upper citizens themselves.

[1] Cp. Sismondi, *Républiques*, i, 105–14.

[2] See Neander, *Church History*, Eng. tr., vii, 128 *sq.* and Milman, *Hist. Latin Christ.* iv, 61 *sq.*, as to Hildebrandt's efforts to win public opinion to his side against clerical marriage, and the resulting growth of private judgment.

[Savigny's proposition seems to be sufficiently confuted in a page or two by Leo, *Geschichte von Italien*, 1829, i, 82, 83. Karl Hegel later wrote a whole treatise to the same effect, *Geschichte der Stadtverfassung von Italien*, Leipzig, 1847. See also F. Morin, *Origines de la démocratie*, 3e ed. 1865, pp. 34–35, 59, 94, 122, etc. Guizot uncritically followed Raynouard, who held with or anticipated Savigny. As to the general revolt against the *curia*, cp. Leo, i, 47, and Guizot, *Civilisation en France*, i, 52–63. As to the theory of a Roman basis for the early civic organisation of Saxon Britain, cp. Pearson, *History of England during the Early and Middle Ages*, 1867, i, 264; Scarth, *Roman Britain*, App. i; Stubbs, *Constitutional History of England*, 4th ed. i, 99; and Karl Hegel, *Städte und Gilden der germanischen Völker im Mittelalter*, 1891, Einleit. pp. 10, 33, 34.]

But other Roman institutions remained even in the Lombard cities, in respect of the organisation of trades and commerce;[1] and apart from the Roman survivals at Ravenna,[2] the free cities of the coast, which had remained nominally attached to Byzantium, had *their* elective institutions, not specially democratic, but sufficiently "free" to incite the Lombard towns to similar procedure.[3] Venice in particular was moulded from the first by Byzantine influences. "Industry, commerce, economic methods, and financial institutions were affected as much as manners, the arts, and even religious life. Greek was the language of eastern trade, and served many Venetians as a second tongue."[4] Venice and Genoa alike developed a national police on Byzantine lines, prescribing the shape, construction, and manning of vessels[5] in the very spirit of late imperial Rome. And the cities of the peninsula could not but be similarly influenced. At all events it was in the train of these earlier developments, and perhaps in some degree on stimulus from papal Rome, that the new organic life of the Lombard and Tuscan cities began to develop itself in the tenth and eleventh centuries. The first seats of new commerce were in those cities to which, as we have seen, numbers of the old Italian population had fled before the Gothic invaders. Amalfi was such a seat even in the ninth century; and to its

[1] "Die Abtheilung in Zünfte und die daran sich anknüpfende Markt-polizei mögen die einzigen Institute aus römischer Zeit sein, die sich auch unter den Longobarden erhielten" (Leo, i, 85; cp. p. 335). Cp. Villari, *Two First Centuries*, Eng. trans. pp. 95–99.

[2] Leo decides (i, 335) that in Ravenna between 1031 and 1115 there appear "gar keine Stadtconsuln in Urkunden, aber wohl Leute, die sich *ex genere consulum* nennen." Cp. Boulting-Sismondi, p. 58.

[3] As the general governor elected by the Venetians to stay their dissensions (697) bore the title of doge or duke, which was that borne by the Greek governors of Italian provinces, the influence of imperial example must be admitted, especially as Venice continued to profess allegiance to the Greek empire. The cities of Naples, Gaeta, and Amalfi, again, while connected only nominally and commercially with Byzantium, gave the title of doge to their first magistrate likewise (Sismondi, *Short History*, pp. 25, 26).

[4] Nys, *Researches in the History of Economics*, Eng. trans. 1899, p. 61.

[5] *Id.* p. 59.

merchants is credited the first traffic with the East in the Saracen period, as well as the first employment of the mariner's compass in navigation.[1] Next flourished Pisa, where also, perhaps, the ancient commerce had never wholly died out;[2] then her successful rivals, Genoa and Venice. And always commerce formed the basis of the revival.

Once begun, the new life was extraordinarily energetic on the industrial and constructive side, the independence and rivalry of so many communities securing for the time the maximum of effort. Already in the seventh century, indeed, their industry stood for a new era in history.[3] Where before even the men of the cities had gone clad in skins after the manner of the barbarian conquerors, they now began to weave for themselves woollen cloths like the civilised ancients.[4] Soon the art of weaving the finer cloths, which had hitherto been imported from Greece in so far as they were used at all, followed the simpler craft of wool-weaving.[5] It was in these cities that architecture may be said to have had its first general revival in western Europe since the beginning of the decay of Rome. Walls, towers, ports, quays, canals, municipal palaces, prisons, churches, cathedrals—such were the first outward and visible signs of the new era in Italian civilisation.[6] On these foundations were to follow the literature and the art and science which began the civilisation of modern Europe, the whole presided over and in part ordered and inspired by the recovered use of the great system of ancient Roman law, which too began to be redelivered to Europe early in the twelfth century from Italian Bologna.

Note.

[The public buildings of the eleventh century are to this day among the greatest in Italy. Cp. Sismondi with Testa, *History of the War of Frederick I against the Communes of Lombardy*, Eng. trans. p. 101. Before the tenth century the houses were mostly of wood, and thatched with straw or shingles (Testa, p. 11). It seems highly probable that the great development of building in the eleventh century was due to the sense of a new lease of life which came upon Christendom when it was found that the world did not come to an end, as had been expected, with the year 1000. That expectation must have gone far to paralyse all activity towards the end of the tenth century.]

[1] Cp. Pignotti, *Hist. of Tuscany*, Eng. trans. 1823, iii, 256; Hallam, *Middle Ages*, 11th ed. iii, 328, 332. It is clear that the polarity of the magnet was known long before the practical use of it in the compass.

[2] Hallam, iii, 441; Pignotti, iii, 256–58.

[3] Sismondi, *Républiques*, i, 384, 385.

[4] Pignotti, iii, 262–64; Dante, *Paradiso*, xv, 116.

[5] Pignotti, iii, 265.

[6] "The citizens (900–1200) allowed themselves no other use of their riches than that of defending or embellishing their country" (Sismondi, *Short History*, p. 23).

And whereas the common political path to independence had been originally by way of the headship of the bishop as against the count, that headship in turn disappears during the eleventh century without any visible or general cataclysm. It would seem as if, when the obsessing fear of the end of the world with which men entered the year 1000 had passed away, the secular spirit recovered new life; and the intimate tyranny of the feudal representative of the military monarch being no longer a danger, the hand of the bishop was in turn thrown off. For a time the combination of city and prelate was politically valid, as in the case of Archbishop Aribert of Milan, under whose nominal rule the civic *caroccio* seems to have made its appearance; but even Aribert was shelved before his death, in the course of a civil strife between the people and the nobles. Thenceforward, for an age, the great Lombard city practically ruled itself, the nobles being included in a compromise brought about by Lanzone, who, himself a noble, had led the faction of the burghers. Fresh strifes followed, in which the succeeding archbishops bore part; but the virtual autonomy of the city remained.[1]

A similar evolution took place throughout northern Italy, in a sufficiently simple fashion. The bishops were still in large measure elected by the people, and rival candidates for vacant sees were always ready to outbid each other in surrendering political functions which were becoming ever harder to fulfil.[2] Beyond this, the course of the final stage of the emancipation of the cities is not traceable. "All that we can say is that at the opening of the eleventh century the bishops exercised in the cities the authority which had formerly been vested in the counts: at the close the cities have reduced the prelates to insignificance, and stand before us as so many free republics."[3] "The power of the bishops was the calyx which for a certain time had kept the flower of Italian life close-packed within the bud. Then the calyx weakened and opened, and Italian civic life unfolded itself to the eye to form and bear fruit."[4]

To this, however, we should add that in Florence the process was somewhat different. Under the Franks, Florence was ruled, like other cities, by a count, who replaced the Longobard duke; and under the later Germanic empire all Tuscany, and some further territory, is found ruled by a Marquis, or Markgraf, Ugo, in the tenth century. In the latter part of the tenth century his descendant Matilda sided with Hildebrandt against the Emperor. At this period Florence was a centre of the papal movement of monastic reform;

[1] Butler, *The Communes of Lombardy*, pp. 58–70.
[2] *Id.* p. 71. [3] *Id.* p. 55. [4] Leo, as cited, i, 417.

and the people actually rose against a simoniacal bishop, whom they fought for five years[1] (1063–68). Here, under the rule of Countess Matilda, the republic or "commune" is seen growing up rather of its own faculty than by help of the bishop; it already calls itself *Populus Florentinus*;[2] and after Matilda's death in 1115, it speedily develops the self-governing functions which it had partially exercised in her lifetime.[3] And Florence, be it noted, was the most democratic in population of the northern cities from the beginning.[4] Note.

In no case, however, should we be right in supposing that "republic" or "commune" or "free city" meant a population united in devotion to a civic ideal. The eternal impulses of strife and repulsion had in no degree been eliminated by the formation of new State units. In Florence we find all the elements of Greek *stasis* at work in the first century of the commune.[5] Among the *grandi* were men who had risen from the people, and men descended from old feudal houses; and these spontaneously ranged themselves in factions. Such a division furthered imperialism by inclining groups to take the side of the emperor, who, wherever he could, set up his *Podestà* (*potestas* or "authority") in the cities.[6] Imperialistic nobles further formed groups called "Societies of the Towers," each of which had its common defensive tower or fort, communicating with the houses of neighbouring members; the officials of these societies were at times called consuls; and from these were usually chosen, in the early days, the consuls of the commune.[7] At times they were also consuls of trade guilds, a state of things proving a certain amount of assimilation between the trading and the noble class, who together formed the enfranchised "people," the town artisans and the rural cultivators of the surrounding *contado* or "county" being excluded.

The close community thus formed exhibited very much the same political tendencies as had marked that of early republican Rome. The cities, constantly flouted and menaced by the castled nobility of the surrounding territory, who blackmailed passing traders, soon learned to use the iron hand as against these, who in turn sought the emperor's protection; and cities wont to put down nobles were prompt to seek to coerce each other. On the death of the Emperor Frederick I (1197), Florence set on foot a League of the Tuscan cities, which, while primarily hostile to the Empire, repelled the claim of the Papacy to overlordship as heir of the Countess Matilda.

[1] Villari, *Two First Centuries*, p. 74 *sq.*
[2] *Id.* p. 79.
[3] *Id.* pp. 84–92.
[4] *Id.* p. 91.
[5] *Id.* p. 142.
[6] *Id.* pp. 143, 148, 151, 153.
[7] *Id.* pp. 119, 121.

On such a basis there might conceivably have arisen a new and strong national life; but soon Florence, like old Athens, was oppressing her allies, who gave their sympathy to a town like Semifonte, the refuge of all who fled from places conquered and taxed by her. To individual allies like Sienna, Florence was substantially faithless, and so strengthened from the first the fatal tendency to separatism—this while the inner social sunderance was steadily deepening.[1]

None of the forces at work was remedial on this side; the regimen of the *Podestà*, even when he was actually a foreigner, furthered instead of checking strife between communities;[2] and the more "aristocratic" cities were at least as quarrelsome as the less. Bologna played the tyrant city as vigorously as Florence.[3] Rome was among the worst governed of all. In the thirteenth century, under Innocent IV, we find the fighting factions of the nobles using the Coliseum and other ancient monuments as fortresses, garrisoned by bandits in their pay, who pillaged traders and passengers; and not the Papacy, but the "senator" chosen by the people—a Bolognese noble—put them down, hanging nobles and bandits alike.[4]

Such was civilisation at the centre of Christendom after a thousand years of Christianity. The notable fact is that through all this wild play of primitive passion there *was* yet growing up a new Italian civilisation; and it is part of our task to trace its causation.

[1] Villari, *Two First Centuries*. pp. 158–72.
[2] *Id*. p. 173.
[3] Sismondi, *Short History*, p. 77.
[4] *Id*. p. 82.

Chapter II

THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL EVOLUTION

§ 1

In the twelfth century, then, we find in the full flush of life a number of prosperous Italian republics or "communes," closely resembling in many respects the City-States of ancient Greece. The salient differences were (1) the Christian Church, with its wealth[1] and its elaborate organisation; (2) the pretensions of the Empire; and (3) the presence of feudal nobles, some of whom were first imposed by the German emperors on the cities, and who, after their exodus and their life as castle-holders, had in nearly every case compromised with the citizens, spending some months of every year in their town palaces by stipulation of the citizens themselves. All of these differentia counted for the worse to Italy, in comparison with Hellas, as aggravations of the uncured evil of internal strife. The source of their strength—separateness and the need to struggle—was at the same time the source of their bane; for at no time do we find the Italian republics contemplating durable peace even as an ideal, or regarding political union as aught save a temporary expedient of the state of war.

On the familiar assumption of "race character" we should accordingly proceed to decide that the Italians, by getting mixed with the Teutons, had lost the "instinct of union" which built up Rome. Those who credit "Teutonic blood" with the revival never think of saddling it with the later ruinous strifes of cities and parties, or with the vices of the "Italian character." The rational explanation is, of course, that there was now neither a sufficient preponderance of strength in any one State to admit of its unifying Italy by conquest, nor such a concurrence of conditions as could enable any State to become thus preponderant; while on the other hand the Empire and the Church, each fighting for its own hand, were perpetual fountains of discord. The factions of Guelph (papal) and Ghibelline[2]

[1] Leo estimates that as early as the reign of Louis the Pious the Church owned about one-third of the land of Italy. Cp. B. iii, cc. 1, 3, as to the process.

[2] Names derived from the German Welf (or Wölf) and Waiblingen; Italianised as Guelfo and Ghibellino. Waiblingen was the name of a castle in the diocese of Augsburg belonging to the Salian or Franconian emperors, the descendants of Conrad the Salic,

(imperial) stereotyped and intensified for centuries every proclivity to strife inherent in the Italian populations.

All the cities alike were at once industrial and military, with the exception of Rome; and for all alike a career of mere plunder was out of the question, though every city sought to enlarge its territory. Forcible unification could conceivably be wrought only by the emperor or the Papacy; and in the nature of things these powers became enemies, carrying feud into the heart of every city in Italy, as well as setting each on one or the other side according as the majority swayed for the moment. At times, as after the destruction of Milan by Frederick Barbarossa, hatred of the foreigner and despot could unite a number of cities in a powerful league; but though the emperor was worsted there was no excising the trouble of the separate interests of the bishops and the nobles, or that of the old jealousies and hatreds of many of the cities for each other. Pope Innocent IV, after the death of Frederick II in 1250, turned against the Papacy many of the Milanese by his arrogance. They had made immense sacrifices for the Guelph cause; and their reward was to be threatened with excommunication for an ecclesiastical dispute.[1] The Christian religion not only did not avail to make Italians less madly quarrelsome than pagan Greeks: it embittered and complicated every difference; and if the cities could have agreed to keep out the Germans, the Papacy would not have let them. Commonly it played them one against the other, preaching union only when there was a question of a crusade.

> Some writers, even non-Catholics, have spoken of the Papacy as a unifying factor in Italian life. Machiavelli, who was pretty well placed for knowing where the shoe pinched, repeatedly (*Istorie fiorentine*, l. i; *Discorsi sopra Tito Livio*, i, 12) speaks of it bitterly as being at all times the source of invasion and of disunion in Italy. This is substantially the view of Gregorovius (*Geschichte der Stadt Rom*, B. iv, cap. iii, § 3) as to the process in the city of Rome to begin with. So also Symonds: "The whole history of Italy proves that Machiavelli was right when he asserted that the Church had persistently maintained the nation in disunion for the furtherance of her own selfish ends" (*Renaissance in Italy: The Age of the Despots*, ed. 1907, p. 75).

As a civilising lore or social science the religion of professed love

Welf was a family name of the Dukes of Bavaria and Saxony, who constantly resisted the predominance of the emperors, both of the Franconian and the Hohenstaufen lines. The names seem to have become war-cries in Italy about the end of the twelfth century. In Florence they appear first in 1239. Villari, *Two First Centuries*, p. 181, *note*.

[1] Sismondi, *Short History*, p. 81.

and fraternity, itself a theatre of divisions and discords,[1] counted literally for less than nothing against the passions of ignorance, egoism, and patriotism; for ignorant all orders of the people still were—more ignorant than the Greeks of Athens—in the main matters of political knowledge and self-knowledge.[2] Yet such is the creative power of free intelligence even in a state of strife—given but the conditions of economic furtherance and variety of life and of culture-contact—that in this warring Italy of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries there grew up a civilisation almost as manifold as that of Hellas itself. The elements of variety, of culture, and of competition were present in nearly as potent a degree. In the north, in particular, the Lombard, and Tuscan, and other cities differed widely in their industries. Florence, besides being one of the great centres of European banking, was eminently the city of various occupations, manufacturing and trading in woollens and silks and gold brocades, working in gold and jewelry, the metals, and leather, and excelling in dyes. In 1266 the reformed constitution specified twelve *arti* or crafts, seven major and five minor, the latter list being later increased to fourteen.[3] Pisa, beginning as a commercial seaport, trading with the East, whither she exported the iron of Elba, became the first great seat of the woollen manufacture.[4] Milan, besides silks and woollens, manufactured in particular weapons and armour. Genoa had factories of wool, cotton, silk, maroquin, leather, embroidery, and silver and gold thread.[5] Bologna was in a special degree a culture city, with its school of law, and as such would have its special minor industries. But indeed every one of the countless Italian republics, with its specialty of dialect, of life, and of outward aspect, must have had something of its own to contribute to the complex whole.[6]

In the south the Norman kingdom set up in the eleventh century meant yet another norm of life, for there Frederick II established the University of Naples; and Saracen contact told alike on thought and imagination. All through these regions there

[1] As to the relations of successive popes in the Dark Ages—each cancelling the acts of his predecessor—see Sismondi, *Républiques*, i, 142; Gregorovius, as last cited, and *passim*.

[2] Prof. Butler (*Communes of Lombardy*, p. 231), credits the Italians with having acquired, as a result of the perpetual wars of the cities, "a breadth of view and a vigour of mind unknown among the urban populations of other lands." How can "breadth of view" in politics be ascribed to communities whose unending strifes finally brought them all under despotism?

[3] Machiavelli, *Istorie fiorentine*, l. ii. The seven major *arti* were (1) the judges and notaries; (2) the dealers in French cloths; (3) the money-changers; (4) the wool traders; (5) the physicians and apothecaries; (6) the silk dealers and mercers; and (7) the furriers.

[4] Pignotti, *Hist. of Tuscany*, Eng. trans. iii, 260.

[5] H. Scherer, *Allgemeine Geschichte des Welthandels*, 1852, i, 337, 338.

[6] Cp. Symonds, *Age of the Despots*, ed. 1897, pp. 26–27.

now reigned something like a common speech, the skeleton of old Latin newly suppled and newly clothed upon; and for all educated men the Latin itself was the instrument of thought and intercourse. For them, too, the Church and the twofold law constituted a common ground of culture and discipline. On this composite soil, under heats of passion and stresses of warring energies, there gradually grew the many-seeded flower of a new literature.

Gradual indeed was the process. Italy, under stress of struggle, was still relatively backward at a time when Germany and France, and even England, under progressive conditions quickened with studious life;[1] and there was a great intellectual movement in France, in particular, in the twelfth century, when Italy had nothing of the kind to show, save as regarded the important part played by the law school of Bologna in educating jurists for the whole of western Europe. For other developments there still lacked the needed conditions, both political and social. The first economic furtherance given to mental life by the cities seems to have been the endowment of law schools and chronicle-writers; the schools of Ravenna and Bologna, and the first chronicles, dating from the eleventh century. Salerno had even earlier had a medical school, long famous, which may or may not have been municipally endowed.[2] To the Church, as against her constant influence for discord and her early encouragement of illiteracy,[3] must be credited a share in these beginnings. After the law school of Bologna (whence in 1222 was founded that of Padua, by a secession of teachers and students at strife with the citizens) had added medicine and philology to its chairs, the Papacy gave it a faculty of theology; and in Rome itself the Church had established a school of law. The first great literary fruit of this intellectual ferment is the *Summa Theologiae* of St. Thomas Aquinas (1225–74), a performance in which the revived study of Aristotle, set up by the stimulus of Saracen culture, is brought by a capacious and powerful mind to the insuperable task of philosophising at once

[1] Villari, *Two First Centuries*, p. 310; Hallam, *Introd. to Literature of Europe*, ed. 1872, i, 8, 16, 19, 71, 77, 78. But see p. 74 as to the stimulus from Italy in the eleventh century. Cp. Gregorovius, *Geschichte der Stadt Rom*, B. viii, Kap. vii, § i (Bd. iv, 604–605), as to the primitive state of mental life in Rome in the twelfth century, and the resort of young nobles to Paris for education.

[2] In the previous edition I accepted the still current statement that Salerno drew its first medical lore from the Saracens. But Dr. Rashdall has, I think, sufficiently shown that there is no basis for the theory (*The Universities in the Middle Ages*, 1895, i, 77–86). Salerno seems rather to have preserved some of the classic lore on which the Saracens also founded. Arabic influence in the Italian schools began in the twelfth century, and was in full force early in the fourteenth, when Salerno was in complete decline (*Id.* p. 85).

[3] As to the attitude and influence of Gregory the Great see Hallam, *Literature of Europe*, as cited, i, 4, 21, 22; and Gregorovius, B. iii, cap. iii, § 2 (ii, 88). As to the reforms of Gregory VII in the tenth century, see also Gregorovius, B. vii, cap. vii, § 5 (iv, 288). See the latter writer again, B. vii, cap. vi (iv, 242–46), and Guizot, *Civilisation en Europe*, leçon vi, ed. 1844, pp. 159–60, as to the effect of Hildebrandt's policy in dividing the Church.

the Christian creed and the problems of Christendom. Close upon this, the Latin expression of accepted medieval thought, comes the great achievement of Dante, wherein a new genius for the supreme art of rhythmic speech has preserved for ever the profound vibration of all the fierce and passionate Italian life of the Middle Ages. In his own spirit he carries it all, save its vice and levity. Its pitiless cruelty, its intellectuality, its curious observation, its ingrained intolerance, its piercing flashes of tenderness, its capacity for intense and mystic devotion, its absolute dogmatism in every field of thought, the whole pell-mell of its vehement experience, throbs through every canto of his welded strain. And no less does he incarnate for ever its fatal incapacity for some political compromise. For Dante, politics is first and last a question of the dominance of his faction: his fellow-citizens are for him Guelphs or Ghibellines, and he shares the Florentine rabies against rival or even neighbouring towns; his imperialism serving merely to extend the field of blind strife, never to subject strife to the play of reason. Exiled for faction by the other faction, he foreshadows the doom of Florence.

§ 2

With Dante we are already in the fourteenth century, close upon Petrarch and Boccaccio; and already the whole course of political things is curving back to tyranny, for lack of faculty in the cities, placed as they were, to learn the lesson of politics. Their inhabitants could neither combine as federations to secure well-being for all of their own members, nor cease to combine as groups against each other. Always their one principle of union remained negative—animal hatred of city to city, of faction to faction. It is important then to seek for a clear notion of the forces which fostered mental life and popular prosperity alongside of influences which wrought for demoralisation and dissolution. Taking progress to consist on one hand in increase and diffusion of knowledge and art, and on the other in better distribution of wealth, we find that slavery, to begin with, was substantially extinguished in the time of conflict between cities, barons, and emperor. N. B.

Already in the fifth century the process had begun in Gaul. Guizot treats the change from slave to free labour as a mystery. "Quand et comment il s'opéra au sein du monde romain, je ne le sais pas; et personne, je crois, ne l'a découvert; mais.....au commencement du V^e^ siècle, ce pas était fait; il y avait, dans toutes les grandes villes de la Gaule, une classe assez

nombreuse d'artisans libres; déjà même ils étaient constitués en corporations.....La plupart des corporations, dont on a continué d'attribuer l'origine au moyen âge, remontent, dans le midi de la Gaule surtout et en Italie, au monde romain" (*Civilisation en France*, i, 57). But a few pages before (p. 51) we are told that at the *end* of the *fourth* century free men commenced in crowds to seek the protection of powerful persons. On this we have the testimony of Salvian (*De gubernatione Dei*, lib. v). The solution seems to be that the "freed" class in the rural districts were the serfs of the glebe, who, as we have seen, were rapidly substituted for slaves in Italy in the last age of the Empire; and that in the towns in the same way the crumbling upper class slackened its hold on its slaves. Both in town and country such detached poor folk would in time of trouble naturally seek the protection of powerful persons, thus preparing the way for feudalism.

At the same time the barbarian conquerors maintained slavery as a matter of course, so that in the transition period slaves were perhaps more numerous than ever before (cp. Milman, *Hist. Lat. Christ.* 4th ed. ii, 45–46; Lecky, *European Morals*, ed. 1884, ii, 70). Whatever were the case in the earlier ages of barbarian irruption, it seems clear that during the Dark Ages the general tendency was to reduce "small men" in general to a servile status, whether they were of the conquering or the conquered stock. Cp. Guizot, *Essais*, as cited, pp. 161–72; *Civilisation*, iii, 172, 190–203 (leçons 7, 8). The different grades of *coloni* and *servi* tended to approximate to the same subjection in Europe as in the England of the twelfth century. But in France and Italy betterment seems to have set in about the eleventh century; and the famous ordinance of Louis the Fat in 1118 (given by Guizot, iii, 204) tells of a general movement, largely traceable to the Crusades, which in this connection wrought good for the tillers of the soil in the process of squandering the wealth of their masters. Cp. Duruy, *Hist. de France*, ed. 1880, i, 291.

The process of causation is still somewhat obscure, and is further beclouded by *a priori* views and prepossessions as to the part played by religion in the change. The fact that the Catholic Church everywhere, though the last to free her own slaves,[1] encouraged penitents to free theirs, is taken as a phenomenon of religion, though we have seen slavery of the worst description[2]

[1] Cp. Boulting-Sismondi, p. 9; Muratori, *Dissert.* xv, cited by Lecky, *Hist. of European Morals*, ii, 71; Milman, as last cited, ii, 51.

[2] We know further from Salvian, as noted above, p. 119, that the Christians of Gaul treated their slaves as badly as the pagans had ever done (*De gubernatione Dei*, l. iv). As to the whole subject, see the valuable researches of Larroque, *De l'esclavage chez les nations chrétiennes*, 2e éd. 1864, and Biot, *De l'abolition de l'esclavage ancien en Occident*, 1840.

flourishing within the past century in a devoutly Protestant community. Pope Urban II actually reduced to slavery the wives of priests who refused to submit to the law of celibacy, handing them over to the nobles or bishops.[1] The rational inference is that the motives in the medieval abandonment of slavery, as in its disuse towards the end of the Roman Empire, and as in its later re-establishments in Christian States, were economic—that (1) nobles on the one hand and burghers on the other found it to their advantage to free their slaves for military purposes,[2] by way of getting money; (2) that the Church in the Dark Ages actually had to enrol many serfs as priests, the desire of freemen to escape military service by taking orders having made necessary a prohibitory law;[3] and (3) that the Church further promoted the process,[4] especially during the crusading period, because a free laity was to her more profitable than one of slaves—as apart from her own serfs. Freemen could be made to pay clerical dues: slaves could not, save on a very small scale.

See Larroque, as cited, ch. ii. The claim of Guizot (*Essais*, p. 167; *Civ. en Europe*, leç. 6) that the religious character of most of the formulas of enfranchisement proves them to have had a specially Christian motive, is pure fallacy. Before Christianity the process of manumission was a religious solemnity, being commonly carried out in the pagan temples (cp. A. Calderini, *La manomissione e la condizione dei liberti in Grecia*, 1908, p. 96 *sq.*), and there were myriads of freedmen. It appears from Cicero (*Philipp.* viii, 11, cited by Wallon, *Hist. de l'esclavage dans l'antiquité*, ii, 419) that a well-behaved slave might expect his liberty in six years. Among the acts of Constantine to establish Christianity was the transference of this function of manumission from the pagan temples to the churches. Thus Christianity took over the process, like the idea of "natural equality" itself, from the pagans. N. N.

And the principle goes farther. In Adam Smith's not altogether coherent discussion of the general question,[5] the unprofitableness of slave labour in comparison with free is urged, probably rightly, as counting for much more than the alleged bull of Alexander III (12th

[1] Lea, *Hist. Sketch of Sacerdotal Celibacy*, 2nd ed. pp. 242–43.
[2] Cp. Sismondi, as before cited, and Testa, as cited, p. 92. Testa's book, like so many other modern Italian treatises, is written with the garrulity of the Middle Ages, but embodies a good deal of research. The pietistic passage on p. 93 is contradicted by that on p. 92.
[3] Hardwick, *Church History: Middle Age*, 1853, p. 58 and refs. Manumission was the legal preliminary to ordination; but it was often set aside, with the object of having the serf-priest more subject to discipline. Cp. Tytler, *Hist. of Scotland*, ed. 1869, ii, 255, as to bondmen-clerks in Scotland in the thirteenth century.
[4] As in the war of cities against nobles under Conrad the Salic. See above, p. 203.
[5] *Wealth of Nations*, bk. iii, ch. 2.

century); while the interest of the sovereign as against the noble is noted as a further factor. As regards the "love of domination" to which Smith attributes the slowness of slave-owners to see the inferiority of slave labour, it is to be remembered that the Roman slave-owner was fixed in his bias by the perpetual influx of captives and cheap slaves from the East; that this resource was lacking to the medieval Italians, who had to take the costly course of breeding most of their slaves; and that in such circumstances the concurrent pressure of all the other causes mentioned could very well suffice to make emancipation general.

While the lowest stratum of the people was thus being raised, the state of war was for a time comparatively harmless by reason of the primitiveness of the fighting. The cities were all alike walled, and incapable of capture in the then state of military technique;[1] so they had periodical conflicts[2] which often came to nothing, and involved no heavy outlay; even the long struggle with Barbarossa was much less vitally costly to the cities than to Germany. Frederick's eight variously devastating campaigns, ending in frustration, were the beginning of the medieval demoralisation of Germany,[3] to which such a policy meant retrogression in industry and agriculture; while the Lombards, traders and cultivators first, and soldiers only secondarily, rapidly made good all their heavy losses.

It was when the practice of war grew more and more systematic under Frederick II, and the policy of cities became more and more capricious for or against the Emperor, that their mutual animosities became more commonly savage. Thus we read that in 1250 "the Parmesans were overthrown by the Cremonese, losing 3,000 men. The captives were bound in the gravel-pit near the Taro.....the whole population seemed to have been captured. The Cremonese tortured them shamefully, drawing their teeth and ramming toads into their mouths. The exiles from Parma were more cruel to their countrymen than the Cremonese were."[4] And, indeed, the Parmesans a century before had burned Borgo San Donnino and led away all its inhabitants as prisoners.[5] Now the Cremonese threw into prison 1,575 of their Parmesan enemies; and when after a year the dungeons were thrown open, only 318 remained alive.[6] Thus

[1] Cp. Butler, pp. 224, 229.

[2] As to these see Testa, p. 56. Compare the accounts of the later bloodless battles of the *condottieri*, which were thus not without Italian precedent. Between 1013 and 1105 Pavia and Milan had six wars. Butler, *The Communes of Lombardy*, p. 58.

[3] Cp. Heeren, *Essai sur l'influence des Croisades*, Villers' tr. 1808, p. 101; Bryce, *Holy Roman Empire*, 8th ed. pp. 199, 211, 213, 223; Stubbs, *Germany in the Middle Ages*, 1908, pp. 105, 197.

[4] *Memoirs of Fra Salimbene*, tr. by T. K. L. Oliphant, in same vol. with *The Duke and the Scholar*, 1875, p. 120.

[5] Butler, p. 98.

[6] *Id.* p. 314.

civilisation in effect went backwards on several lines at once, the spirit of internecine strife growing step by step with the economic process under which the community divided into rich and poor, as formerly into noble and plebeian.

Up till the end of the thirteenth century, however, the growth of capital went on slowly,[1] and the division between rich and poor was not deep, the less so because thus far the middle and upper classes held by the sentiment of civic patriotism to the extent of being ready to spend freely for civic purposes, while they spent little on themselves as compared with the rich of a later period. So that, although the republics were from the first, in differing degrees, aristocratic rather than democratic—the *popolo* being the body of upper-class and middle-class citizens with the franchise, not the mass of the population—and though the workers had later to struggle for their political privileges very much as did the plebs of ancient Rome, the economic conditions were for a considerable period healthy enough. A rapid expansion of upper-class wealth seems to have begun in the thirteenth century, in connection, apparently, with the new usury[2] and the new monopolist commerce connected with the Crusades; and it is from this time that the economic conditions so markedly alter as to infect the political unity and independence of the republics without substituting any ideal of a wider union.

Much of the wealth of Florence must in early republican times have been drawn from the agriculture of the surrounding plains, which had a large population. Machiavelli (*Istorie fiorentine*, l. ii) states that when at the death of Frederick II the city reorganised its military, there were formed twenty companies in the town and sixty-six in the country. Cp. Hallam, *Middle Ages*, iii, 365. Dante (*Paradiso*, xv, 97–129) pictures the Florentine upper class as living frugally in the reign of Conrad III (d. 1152). Borghini and Giovanni Villani decide that the same standards still prevailed till the middle of the thirteenth century. (Cited by Villari, p. 200, and Testa, pp. 89–91: cp. Riccobaldi of Ferrara, there cited from Muratori; Pignotti, *Hist. of Tuscany*, Eng. tr. iii, 293; Trollope, *History of Florence*, i, 34; and Hallam, *Middle Ages*, 11th ed. iii, 342–44.) If these testimonies can be in any degree trusted, the growth of wealth and luxury may be inferred to have taken place in part

[1] Wealth-accumulation first took the form of land-owning. At the beginning of the twelfth century the Florentine territory was merely civic; at the end it was about forty miles in diameter. (Trollope, *History of the Commonwealth of Florence*, 1865, i, 85.) The figure given for the beginning, six miles, is legendary and incredible. See Villari, *Two First Centuries*, pp. 71–72.

[2] As everywhere else in the Middle Ages, interest at Florence was high, varying from ten to thirty per cent. Pignotti, *Hist. of Tuscany*, Eng. tr. 1823, iii, 280. Cp. Hallam, *Middle Ages*, 11th ed. iii, 337.

through the money-lending system developed by the Florentines in the period of the later Crusades, in part through the great commercial developments.

The wool-trade, in which Florentines soon surpassed Pisa by reason of their skill in dyeing, was a basis for capitalistic commerce, inasmuch as the wool they dyed and manufactured was mostly foreign, the Tuscan region being better suited for the growing of corn, wine, and olives than for pasture. Already in 1202 the Florentine wool trade had its consuls. (Villari puts these much earlier. He traces them in 1182, and thinks they were then long established. *Two First Centuries*, pp. 124, 313.) Woollen-weaving was first noticeably improved by the lay order of the Umiliati at Milan about 1020; and this order was introduced about 1240 into Florence, where it received special privileges. Thenceforward the city became the great emporium for the finer cloths till the Flemings and English learned to compete. (Pignotti, *Hist. of Tuscany*, as cited, iii, 265–70.)

The silk manufacture, brought into Sicily from the islands of the Archipelago by Roger II in 1147, and carried north from Sicily in the reign of Frederick III, seems to have existed in Florence at the beginning of the thirteenth century, but to have flourished at first on a larger scale at Lucca, whence, on the sack of the town by Uguccioni della Faggiola in 1315, most of the Lucchese manufacturers fled to Florence, taking their trade with them. (Pignotti, iii, 273–74; Villari, *Two First Centuries*, p. 323.) Many had fled to Venice from the power of Castruccio Castracani, five years earlier. (Below, p. 243.) Being much more profitable than any other, by reason of the high prices, it seems to have speedily ranked as more aristocratic than the wool trade; and when that declined, the silk trade restored Florentine prosperity. (Villari, as cited.)

The business of banking, again, must have been much developed before the Bardi and the Peruzzi could lend 1,500,000 florins to Edward III of England (G. Villani, xi, 88; xii, 54, 56; Gibbins, *History of Commerce*, 1891, pp. 47, 48; Hallam, *Middle Ages*, iii, 340. Pignotti, iii, 279, Eng. tr., estimates the sum lent as = £3,000,000 of modern money). This function, in turn, arose on the basis of commerce, and the *cambisti* are subjects of legal regulation in Florence as early as 1299. (Pignotti, iii, 276.) On this line capitalism must have been developed greatly, till it became the preponderant power in the State. Even as the kings and tyrants were enabled, by borrowing from the bankers, to wage wars which otherwise might have been impossible to them, the republican statesman who could command the moneyed interest was destined to supersede the merely military tyrant. In Genoa the bankers coalesced in a corporation called the Bank of St. George, which controlled politics, traded, and even made conquests, thus giving a historic lead to the Bank of

Amsterdam. (Cp. Hallam, *Middle Ages*, iii, 341; J. T. Bent, *Genoa*, 1881, ch. ii.)

Summing up the industrial evolution, we note that about 1340 there were 200 cloth factories in Florence; and a century later 272, of which 83 made silk and cloth-of-gold. At the latter period there were 72 bankers or money-changers, 66 apothecary shops, 30 goldbeaters, and 44 of goldsmiths, silversmiths, and jewellers. The artisan population was estimated at 30,000; and gold currency at two millions of florins (Pignotti, iii, 290–91). Concerning Milan, it is recorded that in 1288, a generation after it had lost its liberties, it had a population of 200,000 (certainly an exaggeration), 13,000 houses, 600 notaries, 200 physicians, 80 schoolmasters, and 50 copyists of MSS. (Hallam, *Middle Ages*, i, 393, citing Galvaneus Flamma; cp. Ranke, *Latin and Teutonic Nations*, Eng. tr. p. 111.)

§ 3

We can now generalise, then, the conditions of the rise of the arts and sciences in medieval Italy. First we have seen commerce, handicraft, and architecture flourish in the new free cities, as they did at the same time in Genoa, Pisa, and Venice. In the south, again, in the Two Sicilies, under the reign of Frederick II, prosperous industry and commerce, in contact and rivalry with those of the Saracens, supplied a similar basis, though without yielding such remarkable fruits. There, however, on the stimulus of Saracen literature, occur the decided beginnings of a new literature, in a speech at once vernacular and courtly, as being accepted by the emperor and the aristocracy. The same conditions, indeed, had existed before Frederick, under the later Norman kings; and it is in Sicily about 1190 that we must date the oldest known verses in an Italian dialect.[1] Some of them refer to Saladin; and the connection between Italian and Arab literature goes deeper than that detail; for there is reason to suppose that in Europe the very use of rhyme, arising as it thus did in the sphere of Saracen culture-contact, derives from Saracen models.[2] In any case, the Moorish poetry certainly influenced the beginnings of the Italian and Spanish. About the same time, however, there occurs the important literary influence of the troubadours, radiating from Provence, where, again, the special source of fertilisation was the culture of the Moors.[3] The Provençal speech, developed in a more

[1] Bartoli, *Storia della letteratura italiana*, 1878, tom. ii, cap. vii.
[2] Sismondi, *Literature of the South of Europe*, Eng. tr. i, 61, 85, 86, 87, 89; Bouterwek, *History of Spanish and Portuguese Literature*, Eng. tr. 1823, i, 22. 23; Bartoli, i, 94.
[3] Sismondi, as last cited, i, 74, 76, 80, 242; Bartoli, tom. ii, cap. i, and p. 165.

stable life,[1] took literary form before the Italian, and yielded a literature which was the most effective stimulus to that of Italy. And, broadly speaking, the troubadours stood socially for either the leisured upper class or a class which entertained and was supported by it.

Here, then, as regards imaginative and artistic literature, we find the beginnings made in the sphere of the beneficent prince or "tyrant." But, exactly as in Greece, it is only in the struggling and stimulating life of the free cities that there arises, after the period of primary song, the great reflective literature, the great art: and, furthermore, the pursuit of letters at the courts of the princes is itself a result of outside stimulus. It needed the ferment of Moorish culture—itself promoted by the special tolerance of the earlier Ommiades towards Jews and Christians—to produce the literary stir in Sicily and Provence. Again, while the Provençal life, like the Moorish, included a remarkable development of free thought, the first great propagation of quasi-rational heresy in the south occurring in Provence, it was in the free Italian cities, where also many *Cathari* and *Paterini* were found for burning, that there arose the more general development of intelligence. That is to say, the intellectual climate, the mental atmosphere, in which great literature grows, is here as elsewhere found to be supplied by the "free" State, in which men's wills and ideas clash and compromise.[2] In turbulent Florence of the thirteenth century was nourished the spirit of Dante. And it is with art as with literature. Modern painting begins in the thirteenth century in Florence with Cimabue, and at Siena with Duccio, who, trained like previous Italian painters of other towns in the Byzantine manner, transcended it and led the Renaissance.

The great step once taken, the new speech once broadly fixed, and the new art-ideal once adumbrated by masters, both literature and art could in differing sort flourish under the regimen of more or less propitious princes; but not so as to alter the truth just stated. What could best of all thrive was art. Architecture, indeed, save for one or two great undertakings, can hardly be said to have ever outgone the achievement of the republican period; and painting was first broadly developed by public patronage; but it lay

[1] "The union of Provence, during two hundred and thirteen years, under a line of princes who.....never experienced any foreign invasion, but, by a fraternal government, augmented the population and riches of the State, and favoured commercial pursuits..... consolidated the laws, the language, and the manners of Provence" (Sismondi, as last cited, i, 75).

[2] See above, p. 135 *sq.*, as to the theory of the culture-value of the despot.

in the nature of the case that painting could find ample economic furtherance under the princes and under the Church. For the rule of the princes was not, save in one or two places at a time, a tyranny of the kind that destroys all individuality; the invention of printing, and the general use of Latin, now maintained a constant interaction of thought throughout all Europe, checked only by the throttling hand of the Church; and the arts of form and colour, once well grown, are those which least closely depend on, though they also thrive by, a free all-round intellectual life. The efficient cause of the great florescence of Italian art from the thirteenth to the sixteenth century was economic—the unparalleled *demand* for art on the part alike of the cities, the Church, the princes, and the rich. From the tenth to the thirteenth century the outstanding economic phenomenon in Italy is the growth of wealth by industry and commerce. In the same period, Italian agriculture so flourished that by the fifteenth century Italy would on this ground alone have ranked as the richest of European countries.[1] From the thirteenth to the sixteenth century the outstanding economic fact is the addition to this still increasing wealth of the foreign revenues of the Church.[2]

In the sixteenth century all three sources of wealth are almost simultaneously checked—that from agriculture through the miserable devastation wrought by the wars[3] and by the Spanish and papal rule; and then it is that the great art period begins to draw to its close. While the revenue of the Church from the northern countries was sharply curtailed by the Reformation, which in rapid succession affected Germany, France, Holland, Switzerland, England, Scotland, and the Scandinavian States, the trade of Italy began to be affected through the development of the new sea route round the Cape of Good Hope by the Portuguese; and though that gradual change need not have brought depression speedily, the misrule of Leo X, raised to an unprecedented secular power, and the crowning blow of the Spanish Conquest, following upon the other and involving government by Spanish methods, were the beginning of the end of Italian greatness.

Prof. Thorold Rogers repeatedly generalises (*Six Centuries of*

[1] Sismondi, *Républiques*, xii, 38–41. The land was already cultivated on the *métayer* system, half the crop going to the tenant—a state of things advantageous all round. Villari (*Two First Centuries*, p. 315) pronounces that the Florentines looked sagaciously to trade, but harassed agriculture. This does not seem to be true of Italian polity in general.

[2] As to these, consult M'Crie, *History of the Reformation in Italy*, ed. 1856, pp. 23–25.

[3] See Sismondi, *Républiques*, xii, 39, as to the utter ruin of the Pisan territory by Florence.

Work and Wages, p. 157; *Holland*, p. 49; *Economic Interpretation of History*, p. 11) that the Turkish conquest of Egypt (1517) blocked the only remaining road to the East known to the Old World; and that thenceforth the trade of the Rhine and Danube was so impoverished as to ruin the German nobles, who speedily took to oppressing their tenants, and so brought about the Peasants' War, while "the Italian cities fell into rapid decay." Whatever be the truth as to Germany, the statement as to Italy is very doubtful. The Professor confessedly came to these conclusions from having observed a "sudden and enormous rise in the prices of all Eastern products" at the close of the first quarter of the sixteenth century, not from having ascertained first the decay of the Italian cities. Now, H. Scherer expressly notes (*Allgemeine Geschichte des Welthandels*, 1852, i, 336), that Selim I, after conquering Egypt, made terms with his old enemies the Venetians (who were then the main Eastern traders in Italy) and "bestowed on them all the privileges they had under the Mamelukes." Prof. Rogers states that "the thriving manufactures of Alexandria were at once destroyed." Scherer states that Selim freed from imposts all the Indian wares brought into his States through Alexandria, while he burdened heavily all that came by way of Lisbon. Heyd sums up (*Histoire du commerce du Levant*, éd. fran. 1886, ii, 546), that "under the new régime as under the old, Egypt and Syria remained open to the Venetian merchants." It is hard to reconcile these data with the assertions of Prof. Rogers; and his statement as to prices is further indecisive because the Portuguese trade by sea should have availed to counteract the effect of the closing of the Egyptian route, if that *were* closed. But the subject remains obscure: Prof. Gibbins (*History of Commerce in Europe*, 1891, pp. 56, 57) follows Rogers without criticism. The difficulty is that, as Scherer complains (i, 272), we have very few records as to Italian trade. "They have illustrated nearly everything, but least of all their commerce and their commercial politics." The lack of information Scherer sets down to the internecine jealousy of the cities. But see the list of works of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries given by Heyd, i, p. xvii *sq.*, and his narrative, *passim*.

So superficially has history been written that it is difficult to gather the effect thus far of the change in the channels of trade; but there seems to be no obscurity as to the effect of papal and Spanish rule. What the arrest of trade began, and the rule of Leo X promoted, the desperate wars of France and Spain for the possession of Italy completed, and the misgovernment of the Spanish crown from 1530 onwards perpetuated. Under sane rule

peace might have brought recuperation; but Spanish rule was ruin prolonged. Destructive taxation, and still more destructive monopolies, paralysed commerce in the cities under Spanish sway; while the executive was so weak for good that brigandage abounded in the interior, and the coasts were raided periodically by the fleets of the Turks or the Algerine pirates. The decline of the art of painting in Italy (apart from Venice and Rome) being broadly coincident with this collapse, the induction is pretty clear that the economic demand had been the fundamental force in the artistic development. The Church and the despot remained, but the artistic growth ceased.

Always in need of money for his vast outlays, Leo administered his secular power solely with a view to his own immediate revenue, and set up trade monopolies in Florence and the papal estates wherever he could. As to the usual effects of the papal power on commerce, see Napier, *Florentine History*, 1845, ii, 413. "The Court of Rome, since it had ceased to respect the ancient municipal liberties, never extended its authority over a new province without ruining its population and resources" (Sismondi, *Short History*, p. 319). Roscoe (*Life of Leo X*, ed. 1846, ii, 207) speaks of a revival of Florentine commerce under Leo's kinsman, the Cardinal, about 1520; but this is almost the only glance at the subject of trade and administration in Roscoe's work.

Under Pope Gregory XIII (1572–84) there was for a time fair prosperity in States that had formerly suffered from more precarious tyrannies; but ere long "the taxes laid upon persons, property, and commerce, to replace the lost revenues of Christendom, dried up these resources"; and many cities fell into poverty. Ancona in particular was so crushed by a tax on imports that her Mediterranean trade was lost once for all. (Zeller, *Histoire d'Italie*, 1853, p. 406.) Sismondi's charge is substantially borne out also by Ranke's account (*History of the Popes*, Eng. trans. 1-vol. ed. 1859, pp. 118–19) of the ruinous impositions of Pope Sixtus V (1585–90), who taxed the poorest trades and the necessaries of life, besides debasing the coinage and raising further revenue from the sale of places at exorbitant prices, leaving the holders to recoup themselves by extortion and corruption. Cp., however, Zeller, pp. 409–10, as to his municipal improvements.

As to Spanish misrule, see Cantù, *Storia degli Italiani*, cap. 139, ed. pop. ix, 512; Sismondi, *Républiques*, xvi, 71–76, 158–59, 170, 217; Symonds, *Renaissance*, vol. vi, pt. i (Catholic Reaction), pp. 52, 65; Procter, *History of Italy*, 1844, pp. 218, 219, following Muratori and Giannone; Spalding, *Italy*, ii, 264–72, citing many other sources. "The Spaniards, as a

Milanese writer indignantly remarks, possessed Central Lombardy for 172 years. They found in its chief city 300,000 souls; they left in it scarcely a third of that number. They found in it seventy-five woollen manufactories; they left in it no more than five" (Spalding, ii, 272). Agriculture suffered equally. The decay of manufactures might be set down to outside causes, not so the rise in taxation.

Yet the decadence does not seem to have been universal, or at least was not continuous. In Sicily, it is alleged, though the statement is hardly credible, the revenue, which in 1558 was 1,770,000 ducats, was in 1620 5,000,000 (Leo, *Geschichte von Italien*, v, 506, 507); and at the latter date, according to Howell, Naples abounded "in rich staple commodities, as silks, cottons, and wines," from which there accrued to the King of Spain "a mighty revenue," which, however, was mostly spent in the province, being "eaten up 'twixt governors, garrisons, and officers" (Letter of October, 1621, in *Epistolæ Ho-elianæ*, Bennett's ed. 1891, i, 130). Thus there would seem to have been marked fluctuations, for in the time of Pope Gregory Naples is described as sinking under oppression and Milan as prosperous (Zeller, p. 407). The inference seems to be that some governors learned from the failures of their predecessors to handle trade aright.

The case of Florence after 1587, finally, shows how a wise ruler could so profit by experience as to restore prosperity where misrule had driven it out. Duke Ferdinand (1587–1609) was technically as much a "tyrant" as his brother and predecessor Francis, but by wise public works he restored prosperity to Leghorn and to Pisa, whose population had latterly fallen from 22,000 to 8,000 (Zeller, pp. 406, 411), and so increased both population and revenue that he even set up a considerable naval power. The net result was that at 1620, even under less sagacious successors, Florence "marvellously flourished with buildings, with wealth, and with artisans"; and the people of all degrees were declared to live "not only well but splendidly well, notwithstanding the manifold exactions of the Duke upon all things" (Howell's Letter of November, 1621, ed. cited, i, 136).

We are in sight, then, of the solution of the dispute as to whether it was the republics or the "tyrants" that evoked the arts and literature in medieval and Renaissance Italy. The true generalisation embraces both sides. It may be well, however, to meet in full the "protectionist" or "monarchist" view, as it has been very judiciously put by an accomplished specialist in Italian culture history, in criticism of the other theory:—

"The obliteration of the parties beneath despotism was needed,

under actual conditions, for that development of arts and industry which raised Italy to a first place among civilised nations. We are not justified by the facts in assuming that, had the free burghs continued independent, arts and literature would have risen to a greater height. Venice, in spite of an uninterrupted republican career, produced no commanding men of letters, and owed much of her splendour in the art of painting to aliens from Cadore, Castelfranco, and Verona. Genoa remained silent and irresponsive to the artistic movement of Italy to the last days of the Republic, when her independence was but a shadow. Pisa, though a burgh of Tuscany, displayed no literary talent, while her architecture dates from the first period of the Commune. Siena, whose republican existence lasted longer even than that of Florence, contributed nothing of importance to Italian literature. The art of Perugia was developed during the ascendency of despotic families. The painting of the Milanese school owes its origin to Lodovico Sforza, and survived the tragic catastrophes of his capital, which suffered more than any other from the brutalities of Spaniards and Frenchmen. Next to Florence, the most brilliant centres of literary activity during the bright days of the Renaissance were princely Ferrara and royal Naples. Lastly, we might insist upon the fact that the Italian language took its first flight in the court of imperial Palermo, while republican Rome remained dumb throughout the earlier stage of Italian literary evolution. Thus the facts of the case seem to show that culture and republican independence were not so closely united in Italy as some historians would seek to make us believe.

"On the other hand, it is impossible to prove that the despotisms of the fifteenth century were necessary to the perfecting of art and literature. All that can be safely advanced upon this subject is that the pacification of Italy was demanded as a preliminary condition, and that this pacification came to pass through the action of the princes, checked and equilibrated by the oligarchies of Venice and Florence. It might further be urged that the despots were in close sympathy with the masses of the people, shared their enthusiasms, and promoted their industry.....To be a prince and not to be the patron of scholarship, the pupil of the humanists, and the founder of libraries, was an impossibility. In like manner they employed their wealth upon the development of arts and industries. The great age of Florentine painting is indissolubly connected with the memories of Casa Medici. Rome owes her magnificence to the despotic popes. Even the pottery of Gubbio was the creation of the ducal house of Urbino."[1]

The criticism of this well-marshalled passage may best be put in a summary form, as thus :—

[1] J. A. Symonds, *The Age of the Despots*, ed. 1897, pp. 61–62.

I. (*a*) The despot promoter of arts and letters is here admittedly the pupil and product of a previous culture. That being so, he could avail for fresh culture in so far as he gave it economic furtherance. He might even give such furtherance on some sides in a fuller degree than ever did the Republics. But he could *not* give (though after the invention of printing he could not wholly destroy) the mental atmosphere needed to produce great literature. None of the above-cited illustrations goes any way to prove that he could; and it is easy to show that his influence was commonly belittling to those who depended on him.

(*b*) The point as to pacification is unduly pressed, or is perhaps accidentally misstated. It is not to be denied that the despot in the Italian cities, as in old Greece and Rome, did in a measure earn popular support by giving the common people relief from the strifes of Guelphs and Ghibellines. But the despots did not pacify Italy, though they to some extent set up local stability by checking faction feuds.

(*c*) The popes were in the earlier Middle Ages a main cause of the ill-development of Rome. Their splendid works were much later than many of those of the Republics. St. Mark's at Venice, a result of Byzantine contact, was built in the eleventh century, as was the duomo of Pisa, whose baptistery and tower belong to the twelfth. The Campo Santa of Pisa, again, belongs to the thirteenth and fourteenth, and the Palazzo Vecchio of Florence to the end of the thirteenth. And the great architects and sculptors of the thirteenth century were mostly Pisans.[1]

II. The point as to the lack of the right intellectual atmosphere under the princes can be proved by a comparison of products. The literature that is intellectually great, in the days before printing equalised and distributed cultures, belongs from first to last to Florence. Dante and Machiavelli are its terms; both standing for the experience of affairs in a disturbed but self-governing community; and it was in Florence that Boccaccio formed his powers. "Florentine art and letters, constituting the most fertile seeds of art and letters in Italy, were essentially republican; many writers, and most of the artists, of Florence were the offspring of traders or labouring men."[2] What the popes and the princes protected and developed was the literature of scholarship, their donations constituting an endowment of research. If the revival of classic

Note.

[1] Sismondi, *Républiques italiennes*, iv, 174–77.
[2] Villari, *Two First Centuries*, p. 239. So Perrens: "Its glory belonged to the democratic period" (*Histoire de Florence*, Eng. trans. of vol. vii, p. 171).

learning and the rapid growth of art after the middle of the fifteenth century be held, as by some historians, to be the essence of the Renaissance,[1] then the Renaissance is largely the work of the despots. But even the artists and scholars patronised by Cosimo de' Medici were formed before his time,[2] and there is no proportional increase in number or achievement afterwards. On the other hand, it was *mere* scholarship that the potentates fostered: Lorenzo Valla, welcomed for his *Elegantiae latinae linguae*, had barely escaped exile for his *De falsa donatione Constantini Magni*;[3] and it is impossible to show that they promoted thought save in such a case as the encouragement of the Platonic philosophy by Cosimo and Lorenzo. For the rest, the character of the humanists whom the potentates fostered is admittedly illaudable in nearly every case. Pomponius Lætus, who almost alone of his class bears scrutiny as a personality, expressly set his face against patronage, and sought to live as a free professor in the University of Rome.[4] And it is open to argument, finally, whether the princely patronage of the merely retrospective humanists did not check vital culture in Italy.[5] It is true that when "despotism" has been so long acquiesced in as to mean a stable social state, there may take place under it new forms of intellectual life. The later cases of Galileo and Vico would suffice to prove as much. But it will hardly be suggested that monarchic rule *evoked* such forms of genius, any more than that the papacy was propitious to Galileo. In both cases the effective stimulant was foreign thought.

III. (*a*) The case of Venice has to be explained in respect of its special conditions. Venice was from the first partly aloof from ordinary Italian life by reason of its situation and its long Byzantine connections. It was further an aristocratic republic of the old Roman type, its patrician class developing as a caste of commanders and administrators; and its foreign possessions, added to in every

[1] Cp. Zeller, *Histoire d'Italie*, 1853, p. 309.

[2] Roscoe (*Life of Leo X*, ii, 318) attributes to the rivalry of Leonardo and Michel Angelo at Florence (in 1500, while the Medici were in exile, and the city was self-governed) the kindling of the art life of the greatest period. And see Perrens (*Histoire de Florence*, Eng. trans. of vol. cited, p. 457, also as cited below, p. 249) on the decay of architecture and the check to art through the policy of Lorenzo. "Art under the grandfather," he declares (p. 434), "*completed* a remarkable evolution which has no equivalent under the grandson." Previously (p. 200) he had noted that "many works of which the fifteenth century gets the glory because it finished them, were ordered and begun amid the confusion and terrible agitation of the demagogy." As to Cosimo's expenditure on building see p. 166, and on letters p. 168.

[3] Zeller, p. 310. The *De falsa donatione* was certainly an abusive document. See Hallam, *Literature of Europe*, pt. i, ch. iii, sect. i, par. 7, *note*.

[4] Burckhardt, as cited, p. 279. Another estimable type was Fra Urbano. See Roscoe, *Leo X*, i, 351, 352. On the character of Poliziano see Perrens, trans. cited, p. 441.

[5] Cp. Burckhardt, pp. 203, 204, 291; Zeller, p. 330; and von Reumont, *Lorenzo de' Medici*, Eng. trans. ii, 18. Lorenzo expressly cut down the scope and the resources of the Florentine *Studio* for selfish personal reasons. Perrens, trans. cited, pp. 436–37. It was Bernardo Nerli, not Lorenzo, who bore the cost of printing Homer. *Id.* p. 443.

century, reinforced this tendency.[1] The early usage of civic trading, carried on by means of fleets owned by the State, was habitually turned to the gain of the ruling minority. The use of the fleets was generally granted to monopoly companies, who paid no duties, while private persons did; the middle classes in general being allowed to trade only under burdensome restrictions.[2] Here were conditions contrary in effect to those of the progressive days of Greece. Contrasted with Florence, the Italian Athens, Venice has even been likened to Sparta by a modern Italian.[3] It has been more justly compared, however,[4] with Rhodes, which, unlike Sparta, was primarily a commercial and a maritime power; and where, as in Venice, the rich merchants patronised the arts rather than letters. From the first Venice achieved its wealth by an energetically prosecuted trade, with no basis of landed property to set up a leisured class. In such a city the necessarily high standards of living,[5] as well as the prevailing habit and tradition, would keep men of the middle class away from literature;[6] and only men of the middle class like Dante, or leisured officials like Poggio and Boccaccio and Machiavelli, are found to do important literary work even in Florence. Hence the small share of Venice in the structure of Italian literature.

Note

The same explanation partly holds good of art. Venice, however, at length gave the needed economic furtherance; and men of other communities could there find a market, as did Greek sculptors in imperial Rome. Obviously a despot could not have evoked artists of Venetian birth any more than did the Republic, save by driving men out of commerce. But it is in Venice, where wealth and the republican form lasted longest, that we find almost the last of the great artists—Titian, Tintoretto, Veronese. After these the Caracci, Guido, and many others gravitate to Rome, where the reorganised Church regains some riches with power. We are to remember, too, that the aristocratic rulers saw to the food supply of the whole Republic by a special promotion of agriculture in its possessions, particularly in Candia; besides carefully making treaties which

[1] See the estimate of Venetian ideals in Burckhardt, *Civilisation of the Renaissance in Italy*, pt. i, ch. vii.

[2] Nys, *Researches in the History of Economics*, 1899, pp. 66–67; Frignet, *Histoire de l' association commerciale*, 1868, p. 78.

[3] Prof. Giacomo Gay, *Dei Carattere degli Italiani nel medio evo e nell' età moderna*, Asti, 1876, p. 8.

[4] By Prof. Mahaffy, *Greek Life and Thought*, p. 97.

[5] Compare these as described by Ranke (*Latin and Teutonic Nations*, Eng. tr. p. 248) with those of old Athens.

[6] Burckhardt (Eng. tr. ed. 1892, pp. 71, 72) gives some illustrative details. See also H. Brown in *Cambridge Modern History*, 1902, i, 284. But cp. Geiger, *Renaissance und Humanismus in Italien und Deutschland*, Berlin, 1882, pp. 265–66, as to the *per contra*.

secured its access to the grain markets of Sicily, Egypt, and North Africa.[1] Here again we have to recognise a form of civic self-preserving resource special in origin to republics, though afterwards exploited by autocracies, as earlier in the case of imperial Rome.

The fact that Venice *did* maintain great artists after the artistic arrest of Tuscany and Lombardy, is part of the proof that, as above contended (p. 221), it was papal and Spanish misrule rather than the change in the channels of trade that impoverished Italy in the sixteenth century. Venice could still prosper by her manufactures when her commerce was partly checked, because the volume of European trade went on increasing. As Hallam notes: "We are apt to fall into a vulgar error in supposing that Venice was crushed, or even materially affected [phrase slightly modified in footnote], as a commercial city, by the discoveries of the Portuguese. She was in fact *more opulent*, as her buildings themselves may prove, in the sixteenth century than in any preceding age. The French trade from Marseilles to the Levant, which began later to flourish, was what impoverished Venice rather than that of Portugal with the East Indies." As the treatise of Antonio Serra shows (1613), Venice was rich when Spanish Naples was poor (*Introduction to the Literature of Europe*, ed. 1872, iii, 165, 166).

(*b*) As regards Genoa, the explanation is similar. That republic resembled Venice in that it was from the beginning a city apart from the rest of Italy, devoted to foreign commerce, and absorbed in the management of distant possessions or trade colonies. When we compare the intellectual history of two such States with that of Florence, which was not less but more republican in its government, it becomes clear that it was not republicanism that limited culture in the maritime cities. Rather we must recognise that their development is analogous with that of England in the eighteenth century, when the growth of commerce, of foreign possessions, and of naval power seems to have turned the general energies, hitherto in large proportion intellectually employed, predominantly towards practical and administrative employment.[2] The case of Florence is the test for the whole problem. Its pre-eminence in art and letters alike is to be explained through (1) its being in constant touch with *all* the elements of Italian and other European culture; and (2) its having no direct maritime interests and no foreign possessions.[3]

Note

IV. With the patronage of the princes of Ferrara, history

[1] Nys, *Researches in the History of Economics*, 1899, pp. 64–65, and ref.
[2] Cp. *The Dynamics of Religion*, by "M. W. Wiseman" (J. M. R.), 1897, pp. 175, 176, 181.
[3] "Non partecipavi Firenze nelle faccende d'Europa così largamente, come Venezia e Genova, sì per essere continuamente straziata dalle fazioni e sì per non avere dominio di

associates the poetry of Ariosto and Tasso, though as a matter of fact the *Orlando Furioso* seems to have been written before Ariosto entered the ducal service. But even if that and the *Gerusalemme* be wholly credited to the principle of monarchism, it only needs to weigh the two works against those which were brought forth in the atmosphere of the free cities in order to see how little mere princely pay can avail for power and originality in literature where the princely rule thwarts the great instincts of personality. Ariosto and Tasso are charming melodists; and as such they have had an influence on European literature; but they have waned in distinction age by age, while earlier and later names have waxed. And all the while, what is delightful in them is clearly enough the outcome of the still manifold Italian culture in which they grew, though it may be that the influence of a court would do more to foster sheer melody than would the storm and stress of the life of a Republic.

> Sismondi (*Républiques italiennes*, iv, 416–18), admits the encouragement given to men of letters by despots like Can' Grande, and the frequent presence of poets at the courts. But he rightly insists that the faculty of imagination itself visibly dwindled when intellectual freedom was gone. It is interesting to note how Montaigne, writing within a century of the production of the *Orlando Furioso*, is struck by its want of sustained imaginative flight in comparison with Virgil (*Essais*, B. ii, 10; éd. Firmin-Didot, vol. i, p. 432). Compare the estimate of Cantù, *Storia degli Italiani*, cap. 142, ed. pop. x, 180–86.

In fine, we can rightly say with Mr. Symonds himself that the history of the Renaissance is not the history of arts, or of sciences, or even of nations. It is the history of the attainment of self-conscious freedom by the human spirit manifested in the European races.[1] And *this* process, surely, was not accomplished at the courts of the despots. Nor can it well be disputed, finally, that the Spanish domination was the visible and final check to intellectual progress on the side of imaginative literature, at a time when there was every prospect of a great development of Italian drama. "It was the Inquisitors and Spaniards who cowed the Italian spirit."[2]

Equally clear is it that the republican life evolved an amount of

mare. Dal che nasceva, che niun cittadino potesse sorgere in lei di nome e di appichi esterni tanto possente che potesse stabilirvi da per se o la libertà o la tyrannide" (C. Botta, *Storia d' Italia*, 1837, i, 124). But Genoa also had countless strifes of faction, so that the *vera causa* of the greater inner development of Florence must be held to be her lack of external dominion and occupation.

[1] Vol. cited, p. 3. Cp. Burckhardt, *Civilisation of the Renaissance in Italy*, pt. iv, ch. iv, p. 309. Both writers adopt the language of Michelet.

[2] Burckhardt, p. 317. The Counter-Reformation, of course, must always be taken into account in estimates of the latter period of Italian history. The regeneration of the Papacy after the Reformation is to be credited jointly to Spain and the Reformation itself.

expansive commercial energy which at that period could not possibly have taken place under a tyrant. The efforts by which Florence developed her trade and power—efforts made possible by the mere union of self-interest among the commercial class—will compare with any process of monarchic imperialism in respect of mere persistency and success. Faced by the jealous enmity of Pisa, their natural port, and suffering from the trade burdens laid on them by the maritime States while they lacked a marine, the Florentines actually opened up trade communication with China when shut out from Egypt by the Venetians; traded through the port of Talamone when the Pisans barred their traffic; took Provençal and Neapolitan galleys in their pay when the Pisans and Genoese tried to close Talamone; and, after becoming masters of Pisa in 1406, not only established a well-ordered marine, but induced Genoa to sell to them the port of Leghorn. They could not, indeed, successfully compete with the Genoese and Venetians till the fall of the Greek Empire; but thereafter they contrived to obtain abundant concessions from the Turks, while the Genoese were driven out of the Levant. Commercial egoism, in fact, enabled them to tread the path of "empire" even as emperors had done long before them; and they hastened to the stage of political collapse on the old military road, spending on one war of two years, against Visconti, a sum equal to £15,000,000 at the present time; and in the twenty-nine years of struggle against Pisa (1377–1406) a sum equal to £58,000,000.[1] Thus they developed a capitalistic class, undermined in the old way the spirit of equity which is the cement of societies, and prepared their own subjection to a capitalist over-lord. But that is only another way of saying that the period of expansive energy preceded the age of the tyrant, wise or unwise.

When all is said, however, there can be no gainsaying of the judgment that the strifes of the republics were the frustration of their culture; and it matters little whether or not we set down the inveteracy of the strifes to the final scantiness and ill-distribution of the culture. Neither republics nor princes seem ever to have aimed at its diffusion. The latter, in common with the richer ecclesiastics, did undoubtedly promote the recovery of the literature of antiquity; but where the republics had failed to see any need for systematic popular tuition[2] the princes naturally did not dream of it. It would

[1] Pignotti, *Hist. of Tuscany*, Eng. tr. iii, 282–92.

[2] Study suffered in Florence particularly from the faction troubles. The *Studio* or college, founded in 1348, was closed between 1378 and 1386; reopened then, shut in 1404, again opened in 1412, and so on. Cp. Napier, *Florentine History*, 1846, iv, 75; Perrens, *Histoire de Florence*, Eng. tr. of vol. vii, pp. 172–77; and von Reumont, *Lorenzo de' Medici*, Eng. tr. i, 428–30.

be a fallacy, however, to suppose that, given the then state of knowledge and of political forces, any system of public schooling could have saved Italian liberty. No class had the science that could solve the problem which pressed on all. The increase and culmination of social and political evil in Renaissance Italy was an outcome of more forces than could be checked by any expedient known to the thought of the time. It must never be forgotten that the very dividedness of the cities, by maximising energy, had been visibly a cause of their growth in riches;[1] and that, though peace could have fostered that when once it had been attained, anything like a federation which should secure to the satisfaction of each their conflicting commercial interests was an enormously difficult conception. It would be a bad fallacy, again, to suppose that there was lacking to the Italians of the Renaissance a kind of insight or judgment found in other peoples of the same period. There is no trace of any such estimate in that age; and we who look back upon it are rather set marvelling at the intense and luminous play of Italian intelligence, keen as that of Redskins on the trail, so far as the realisation of the self-expressive and self-assertive appetites could go. The tragedy of the decadence, here as in the case of Rome, is measured by the play of power from which men and States fall away; for the forces which next came to the top stand for no mental superiority. The problem, in fact, was definitely beyond the grasp of the age. It remains to realise this by a survey of the process of decline from self-government to despotism.

[1] Mr. Symonds notes (*Age of the Despots*, p. 34) how Guicciardini argued this (*Op. Ined.* i, 28), as against Machiavelli's lament over the lack of Italian unity.

Chapter III

THE POLITICAL COLLAPSE

§ 1

GIVEN the monarchic and feudal environment, the chronic strife within and between the Italian cities can be seen to be sufficient in time to undo them;[1] and some wonder naturally arises at their failure to frame some system of federal government that should restrain their feuds. It was their supreme necessity; but though the idea was now and then broached,[2] there is no sign that the average man ever came nearer planning for it than did the Ghibelline Dante, with his simple theory that Cæsar should ride the horse,[3] or than did the clear brain of Machiavelli, with its longing for a native ruler[4] like Cesare Borgia, capable of beating down the rival princes and the adventurers, and of holding his own against the Papacy. One of the statesmen who harboured the ideal was Rienzi; but he never wrought for its realisation, and his devotion to the Papacy as well as to the headship of Rome would have made it miscarry had he set it on foot.[5] The failure of Cesare Borgia, who of all Italians of his day came nearest to combining the needed faculties for Italian unification, is the proof of the practical impossibility of that solution. But a federation of States, it has been reasoned, was relatively feasible; why then was it never attempted? As usual, the question has been answered in the simple verbalist way, by the decision that the Italians did not strike out a political philosophy or science because they were not that way given. They lacked the "faculty" for whatever they did not happen to do; whereas the ancient Greeks, on the contrary, did theorise because that faculty was theirs, though they had not the faculty to work out the theories.

[1] Burckhardt (as cited, p. 94) agrees with Ranke that, if Italy had escaped subjugation by the Spaniards, she would have fallen into the hands of the Turks.
[2] Burckhardt, p. 82. Freeman, from whom one looks for details (*History of Federal Government in Greece and Italy*, ed. 1893, pp. 558, 615), gives none.
[3] *Purgatorio*, canto vi, 91–93.
[4] Machiavelli, however, had special schemes of constitutional compromise (see Burckhardt, p. 85, and Roscoe, *Life of Leo X*, ed. 1846, ii, 204, 205); and there were many framers of paper constitutions for Florence (Burckhardt, p. 83).
[5] See Gibbon, ch. 70. Bohn ed. vii, 398, 404.

E.g. the reasoning of so intelligent a thinker as Heeren: "Among those countries in which [political speculation] might have been expected to give the earliest sign of life, Italy was undoubtedly the first: all the ordinary causes appear to have united here; a number of small states arose near each other; republican constitutions were established; political parties were everywhere at work and at variance; and with all this, the arts and sciences were in the full splendour of their revival. The appearance of Italy in the fifteenth century recalls most fully the picture of ancient Greece. And yet in Italy, political theories were as few as in Greece they had been many!—a result both unexpected and difficult to explain. Still, however, I think that this phenomenon may be in great part accounted for, if we remember that there *never was* a philosophical system of character or influence which prospered *under the sky of Italy*. No nation of civilised Europe has given birth to so few theories as the Italian: none has had less genius for such pursuits. The history of the Roman philosophy, a mere echo of the Grecian, proves this of its earlier ages, nor was it otherwise in its later." (Essay "On the Rise and Progress of Political Theories," in *Historical Treatises*, Eng. tr. 1836, p. 118.)

To say nothing of the looseness of the generalisation, which ignores alike Thomas Aquinas and Vico, Leonardo and Galileo, Machiavelli and Giordano Bruno, it may suffice to note once more that on this principle the Germans must be pronounced to have been devoid of theoretical faculty before Leibnitz. On that view it does not become any more intelligible how "they" acquired it.

Seeking a less vacuous species of explanation, we are soon led to recognise (1) that the case of medieval Italy was to the extent of at least two factors more complicated than that of ancient Greece; and that these factors alone might suffice to explain their non-production of a "theory" which should avail for the need; (2) that the theories of the Greeks did not avail to solve their problem; and (3) that the Italians all the while had really two theories too many. At the very emergence of their republics they were already possessed or wrought upon by the embodied theories of the Empire and the Papacy, two elements never represented in the Greek problem, where empire was an alien and barbarian thing suddenly entering into the affairs of civilised Hellas, and where there was nothing in the nature of the Papacy. These two forces in Italian life were all along represented by specific theories; and their clash was a large part of the trouble. Their pressure set up a chronic clash of parties; and the theorist of to-day may be challenged to frame a theory which could have worked well for Italy otherwise than by setting

those forces aside—a thing quite impossible in the Middle Ages. If mere system-making on either side could have availed, Thomas Aquinas might have rendered the service.[1]

The economic and political destiny of the Church may be said to have been determined in the eleventh century, when, after a desperate struggle, begun by Pope Hildebrandt, celibacy was forced on the secular clergy. The real motive to this policy was of course not ascetic but economic, the object being to prevent at once the appropriation of church property by married priests for family purposes, and the creation of hereditary titles to church benefices. An evolution of that kind had actually begun; and there can be no question that had it not been checked it would have been fatal to the Papacy. Naturally the married clergy on their part resisted to the uttermost. Only the desperate policy of Hildebrandt, withdrawing popular obedience and ecclesiastical protection from those who would not give up their wives, broke down the resistance; and even thereafter Urban II, as we saw, had to resort to the odious measure of making priests' wives slaves.[2] From that period we may date the creation of the Church as a unitary political power. Sacerdotal celibacy took many generations to establish; but when once the point was carried it involved a force of incorporation which only the strongest political forces—as at the Reformation—could outdo, and which since the Reformation has kept the Church intact.

It is true that the monk Arnold of Brescia, burned alive by the Papacy in 1155, fought a long battle (1139–55) against the papal power, creating an immense ferment in Lombardy, and rousing a strong anti-papal movement in Rome itself (Sismondi, *Républiques italiennes*, i, chs. 7, 8; Gibbon, ch. 69); and that, as noted by M'Crie (*Reformation in Italy*, p. 1), "the supremacy claimed by the bishops of Rome was resisted in Italy after it had been submitted to by the most remote churches of the west"; but once papalised, Italy necessarily remained so in her own pecuniary interest. Cp. Rogers, *Economic Interpretation of History*, p. 79. Arnold's movement led even to a revolution in Rome; but after he had ruled there for ten years, overbearing two successive popes, one of greater energy, Adrian IV, excommunicated the city, so expelling Arnold. Adrian then, making a bargain with the emperor Frederick Barbarossa at his coronation, got the republican leader in his power; and the movement ended with Arnold's life. The Papacy was now an irremovable element of division in Italy; and disunion was thenceforth the lot of the land.

[1] Cp. Burckhardt, pp. 6, 7.
[2] Lea, *Historical Sketch of Sacerdotal Celibacy*, 2nd ed. pp. 145–47, 212–20, 224–36, 242–43.

If we seek to localise the disease, however, we find that no one factor is specially responsible. The alien emperor, coming in from outside, and setting city against city, Pavia against Milan, and nobles against burghers, is clearly a force of strife. Again, whereas the cities might on the whole have combined successfully against the emperor, to the point of abolishing his rule, the Papacy, calling him in to suit its own purposes, and calling in yet other aliens at a pinch, is still more a force of discord. At times the emperors, in the worst days of Roman corruption, had to choose among the competitors nominated to the Papacy by the intrigues of courtesans and nobles and the venal votes of the people, thus identifying the man they chose with their cause. Hildebrandt, again, after securing that the popes should be elected by the cardinals, became the fiercest of autocrats. By his strife with Henry IV he set up civil war through all Italy and Germany; and when in his despair he called in the Normans against Rome, they sold most of the people into slavery.[1] Later, in the minority of Frederick II, Innocent III so strengthened the Church that it was able by sheer slaughter to crush for a generation all Provençal heresy, and was able to prevail against Frederick in its long struggle with him; in so doing, however, deepening to the uttermost the passion of faction in all the cities, and so preparing the worst and bloodiest wars of the future.

Yet, on the other hand, if we make abstraction of pope and emperor, and consider only the nobles and the citizens, it is clear that they had among them the seeds of strife immeasurable. The nobles were by training and habit centres of violence.[2] Their mutual feuds, always tending to involve the citizens, were a perpetual peril to order; and their disregard of law kept them as ready to make war on citizens or cities as on each other. Again and again they were violently expelled from every Lombard city, on the score of their gross and perpetual disorders; but they being the chief experts in military matters, they were always welcomed back again, because the burghers had need of them as leaders in the feuds of city with city, and of Guelphs with Ghibellines. So that yet again, if we put the nobles out of sight, the spirit of strife as between city and city was sufficient, as in ancient Greece, to make them all the

[1] Sismondi, *Short History*, p. 20.

[2] Trollope notes (*History of the Commonwealth of Florence*, i, 31) how Dante and Villani caught at the theory of an intermixture of alien blood as an explanation of the strifes which in Florence, as elsewhere, grew out of the primordial and universal passions of men in an expanding society. Villari (*Two First Centuries*, p. 73) endorses the old theory without asking how civil strifes came about in the cities of early Greece and in those of the Netherlands.

prey of any invader with a free hand. They could not master the science of their problem, could not rise above the plane of primary tribal or local passion and jealousy; though within each city were faction hatreds as bitter as those between the cities as wholes. Already in the twelfth century we find Milan destroying Lodi and unwalling Como. Later, in the thirteenth century, Genoa ruins the naval power of Pisa,[1] then under the tyranny of Ugolino, in a war of commercial hatred, such as Pisa had before waged with Amalfi and with Lucca; in the fourteenth, Genoa and Venice again and again fight till both are exhausted, and Genoa accepts a lord to aid her in the struggle, Pisa doing likewise, and so recovering strength on land;[2] in the fifteenth and sixteenth, Florence spares no cost or effort to keep Pisa in subjection. This fatal policy, in turn, was the result of the frequent attempts of the Pisans to destroy Florentine trade by closing their port to it.[3] All along, inter-civic hates are in full flow through all the wars of Guelphs and Ghibellines; and the menace of neither French nor Spanish tyranny can finally unify the mutually repellent communities.

We may, indeed, make out a special case against the Papacy, to the effect that, but for that, Italian intelligence would have had a freer life; and that even if Italy, like Spain and France and England, underwent despotism in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, her intellectual activity would have sufficed to work her recovery at least as rapidly as the process took place elsewhere. It has been argued[4] that the liberating force elsewhere in the sixteenth century was the Reformation—a theory which leaves us asking what originated the Reformation in its turn. Taking that to be the spirit of (*a*) inchoate free thought, of developing reason, or (*b*) of economic revolt against the fiscal exactions of an alien power, or both, we are entitled to say broadly that the crushing of such revolt in Italy, as in Provence and in Spain, clearly came of the special development of the papal power thus near its centre—the explanation of "national character" being as nugatory in this as in any other sociological issue.

Heeren naturally rests on this solution. The "new religion," he says, "was suited to the north, but not to the south. The calm and investigating spirit of the German nations found in it

[1] Which, however, was probably already being weakened by the silting up of the Pisan harbour. This seems to have begun through the action of the Genoese in blocking it with huge masses of stone in 1290. Bent, *Genoa*, pp. 86–87. Sismondi notes that, after the great defeat of 1284, "all the fishermen of the coast quitted the Pisan galleys for those of Genoa." *Short History*, p. 111. As to the Pisan harbour, whose very site is now uncertain, see Pignotti, *Hist. of Tuscany*, Eng. tr. iii, 258, *note*.

[2] After destroying Ugolino, the Pisans chose as leader Guido de Montefeltro, who made their militia a formidable power.

[3] Pignotti, as cited, iii, 283–84.

[4] Heeren, as cited, pp. 69, 120, etc.

the nourishment which it required and sought for.....The more vivid imagination and sensitive feelings of the people of the south.....found little to please them in its tenets.....It was not, therefore, owing to the prohibitions of the government, but to the character of the nations themselves, that the Reformation found no support among them" (vol. cited, pp. 58, 59). The two explanations of climate and race can thus be employed alternatively at need. Ireland, though "northern," is to be got rid of as not being "German." For the rest, the Albigenses, the *paterini*, the reforming Franciscans, and the myriad victims of the Inquisition in Spain, are conveniently ignored. Heeren's phrase about the "almost total exclusion" of the southern countries from the "great ferment of ideas which in other countries of civilised Europe gave activity and life to the human intellect" can be described only as a piece of concentrated misinformation. And a similar judgment must be passed on the summing-up of Mr. Symonds that "Germany achieved the labour of the Reformation almost single-handed" (*Renaissance in Italy*, 2nd ed. i, 28). There is far more truth in the verdict of Guizot, that "la principale lutte d'érudition et de doctrine contre l'Eglise catholique a été soutenue par la réforme française; c'est en France et en Hollande, et toujours en français, qu'ont été écrits tants d'ouvrages philosophiques, historiques, polémiques, à l'appui de cette cause" (*Civilisation en France*, i, 18). Motley, though an uncritical Teutophile and Gallophobe, admits as to Holland that "the Reformation first entered the Provinces, not through the Augsburg but the Huguenot gate" (*Rise of the Dutch Republic*, ed. 1863, p. 162). As to the spirit of reformation in Italy and Spain, the student may consult the two careful and learned *Histories* of M'Crie, works which might have saved many vain generalisations by later writers, had they heeded them. The question of the supposed racial determination of the Reformation is discussed at some length in *The Saxon and the Celt*, pp. 92–97, 143–47, 203, 204. Cp. *The Dynamics of Religion*, 1897, pt. i; *Letters on Reasoning*, 2nd ed. 1905, pp. 20–24; and *A Short History of Freethought*, vol. i, chs. ix, x, xi.

N.B.

The history of Italian religious life shows that the spirit of sheer reformation in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries was stronger there than even in France in the sixteenth, where again it was perhaps positively stronger than in Germany, though not stronger relatively to the resistance. And in Italy the resistance was personified in the Papacy, which there had its seat and strength. When all is said, however, the facts remain that in England the Reformation meant sordid spoliation, retrogression in culture, and finally civil war; that in France it meant long periods of furious

strife; that in Germany, where it "prospered," it meant finally a whole generation of the most ruinous warfare the modern world had seen, throwing back German civilisation a full hundred years. Save for the original agony of conquest and the special sting of subjection to alien rule, Italy suffered in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries less evils than these.

The lesson of our retrospect, then, is: (1) generally, that as between medieval Italian development and that of other countries—say our own—there has been difference, not of "race character" and "faculty," but of favouring and adverse conditions; and (2) particularly, that certain social evils which went on worsening in Florence and are in some degree present in all societies to-day, call for scientific treatment lest they go on worsening with us. The modern problem is in many respects different from that of pre-Reformation Italy; but the forces concerned are kindred, and it may be worth while to note the broad facts of the past process with some particularity.

§ 2

The central fact of disunion in Italian life, complicated as we have seen it to be by extraneous factors, analyses down to the eternal conflict of interests of the rich and the poor, the very rich and the less rich, or, as Italian humour figured it, the "fat" and the "lean." For Machiavelli this is the salient trouble in the Florentine retrospect, since it survived the feuds of Guelph and Ghibelline; though he sets down to the Papacy the foreign invasions and the disunion of the cities. The faction-feuds, of course, tell of the psychological conditions of the feud of rich and poor, and were to some extent an early form of the feud,[1] the imperialist Ghibellines being originally the more aristocratic faction; while the papalist Guelphs, by the admission of Machiavelli, were the more friendly to the popular liberties, that being the natural course for the Papacy to take. The imperial cause, on the other hand, was badly compromised by the tyranny of the terrible Ezzelino III, the representative of Frederick II in the Trevisan March, who ruled half-a-dozen cities in a fashion never exceeded for cruelty in the later ages of Italian tyranny.[2] Whatever democratic feeling there was must needs be on the other side.

After Florence had recast its constitution at the death of

[1] Cp. Trollope, *History of Florence*, i, 105; Villari, *Two First Centuries*, pp. 95, 100.
[2] Cp. Sismondi, *Short History*, pp. 88–90.

Frederick II, establishing twelve *anziani* or magistrates, replaced every two months, and two foreign judges—one the upper-class *podestà* and the other the captain of the people[1]—to prevent grounds of quarrel, matters were in fair train, and the city approved its unity by the sinister steps of forcing Pistoia, Arezzo, and Siena to join its confederation, capturing Volterra, and destroying several villages, whose inhabitants were deported to Florence. But new plots on behalf of Manfred led to the expulsion of the Ghibellines, who in turn, getting the upper hand with no sense of permanence, reasoned that to make their party safe they must destroy the city, a purpose changed, as the familiar story goes, only by the protest of the Florentine Ghibelline chief, Farinata degli Uberti. They then tried, in obvious bad faith, the expedient of conciliating the people, whom they had always hitherto oppressed, by giving them a quasi-democratic constitution, in which the skilled workers were recognised as bodies, to which all citizens had to belong.[2] But this scheme being accompanied by fresh taxation, the Ghibellines were driven out by force; and once more the Guelphs, now backed by Charles of Anjou (1266), organised a government of twelve magistrates, adding a council of twenty-four upper-class citizens, called the *credenza*, and yet another body of 180 popular deputies, thirty for each of the six quarters of the city, making up with the others a Council General. To this, however, was strangely added yet another council of 120, charged with executive functions. The purpose was to identify the Guelph cause with that of the people—that is, the lower *bourgeoisie* and skilled artisans; and the property of the exiled Ghibellines was confiscated and divided among the public treasury, the heads of the ruling party, and the Guelphs in general. At this stage the effort of Gregory X, at his election, to effect a restoration of the Ghibellines and a general reconciliation, naturally failed. Yet when his successor, Nicolas III, persisted in the anti-French policy, he was able through his northern legate to persuade the city, suffering from the lawlessness of the Guelph as of old from that of the Ghibelline nobles, to recall the latter and set up a new constitution of fourteen governors, seven of each party,

[1] *Podestà*, as we have seen, was an old imperialist title. In Florence it became communal, and in 1200 it was first held by a foreigner, chosen, it would seem, as likely to be more impartial than a native. Cp., however, the comments of Villari, *First Two Centuries*, p. 157, and Trollope, i, 84, 94; and the mention by Plutarch, *De amore prolis*, § 1, as to the same development among the Greeks. In the memoirs of Fra Salimbene (1221–90) there is mention that in 1233 the Parmesans "made a friar their *podestà*, who put an end to all feuds" (trans. by T. K. L. Oliphant, in *The Duke and the Scholar*, 1875, p. 90). The Florentine institution of the *priori delle arti*, mentioned below, is traced back as far as 1204 (Cantù, as cited, viii, 465, *note*). The *anziani*, during their term of office, slept at the public palace, and could not go out save together.

[2] Thus Dante and Lorenzo de' Medici belonged to the craft of apothecaries.

all nominated by the Pope—a system which lasted ten years. Then came another French interregnum; whereafter, on the fall of the French rule in Sicily in 1282, there was set up yet another constitution of compromise. For the council of fourteen was set up one of three *priori delle arti*, heads of the crafts—a number immediately raised to six, so as to give one prior to each ward of the city, with a change in the title to *signoria*. These were to be elected every two months. The system, aristocratic in respect of its small governing body, yet by its elective method lent itself peculiarly to the new *bourgeois* tendencies; and thenceforward, says Machiavelli, we find the parties of Guelph and Ghibelline in Florence supplanted by the simpler enmity of rich and poor. Soon many of the nobles, albeit Guelph, were driven out of the city, or declared disqualified for priorship on the score of their past disorders; and outside they set up new feuds.

While Florence thus held out, other cities sought safety in one-man-power, choosing some noble as "captain of the people" and setting him above the magistrates. Thus Pagano della Torre, a Guelph, became war-lord of Milan, and his brothers succeeded him, till the office came to be looked on as hereditary, and other cities inclined to choose the same head. And so astutely egotistic was the action of all the forces concerned, that when the Guelph house of Della Torre thus became unmanageably powerful, the Papacy did not scruple to appoint to the archbishopric of Milan an exiled Ghibelline, Visconti. "Henceforward," says Sismondi, "the rivalry between the families of Della Torre and Visconti made that between the people and the nobles almost forgotten." The Visconti finally defeated the other faction, made Milan Ghibelline, and became its virtual rulers.

On the other hand, the entrance of a French army under Charles of Anjou, called in by a French pope to conquer the Ghibelline realm of the Two Sicilies (1266), put a due share of wrong to the account of the Guelphs, the French power standing for something very like barbarism. Its first achievement was to exterminate the Saracen name and religion in Sicily. On its heels came a new irruption from Germany, in the person of Conradin, the claimant of the imperial succession, to whom joined themselves Pisa and Siena, in opposition to their big neighbour and enemy Florence, and the people of Rome itself, at quarrel with their Pope, who had left the city for Viterbo. By Conradin's defeat the French power became paramount; and then it was that the next pope, Gregory X, sought to restore the Ghibellines as counterpoise: a policy pursued by his

successor, to the end, however, of substituting (1278) papal for imperial claims over Italy. Even Florence at his wish recalled her Ghibellines. But then came the forced election of another French pope, who acted wholly in the French interest, and re-exiled everywhere the Ghibellines: a process speedily followed in turn by the "Sicilian Vespers," involving the massacre and expulsion of the French, and introducing a Spanish king as representative of the imperial line. Again the Papacy encouraged the other power, relieving Charles II, as King of Naples, from his treaty oath, and set him upon making a war with Sicily, which dragged for twenty-four years. Such were the main political features of the Italy of Dante. The Papacy, becoming a prize of the leading Roman families, played a varying game as between the two monarchies of the south and their partisans in the north; and the minor cities, like the greater, underwent chronic revolutions. Still, so abundant was the Italian outflow of intellectual and inventive energy, so substantial was the general freedom of the cities, and so soundly was the average regimen founded on energetic agriculture and commerce, that wealth abounded on all hands.

With the new French invasion (1302) under Charles of Valois, called in by Boniface VIII to aid him against Sicily, a partially new stage begins. Charles was received at Florence as the typical Guelph; but, being counselled by the pope to pacify Tuscany to his own advantage, allied himself with the ultra-Guelphs, the *Neri*, gave up to plunder, the proceeds of which he pocketed, the houses of the other or pro-Ghibelline faction, the *Bianchi*, and enforced the execution or exile of its leading men, including Dante. Then came the election of a strictly French pope and his establishment at Avignon. A new lease being now given to faction, the cities rapidly lapsed into the over-lord system as the only means of preserving order; and when in 1316 a new emperor, Henry VII, presented himself for homage and claimed to place an imperial vicar in each city, most were well disposed to agree. When however Henry, like Charles, showed himself mainly bent on plunder, demanding 100,000 florins from Milan and 60,000 from Genoa, he destroyed his prestige. He had insisted on the recall of all exiles of either party; but all united against his demands, save the Pisans, who had sent him 60,000 florins in advance. His sudden death, on his way to fight the forces of Naples, left everything in a new suspense, save that Pisa, already shorn of maritime power, was soon eclipsed, after setting up a military tyranny as a last resort.

The *régime* of the local tyrant now rapidly developed. On the

fall of the Pisan tyrant rose that of Lucca, Castruccio Castracani, the great type, after Ezzelino, of the Italian despot-adventurer of the Renaissance. Such a leader was too dangerous an antagonist to such a corporation as that of Florence—once more (1323) reconstructed on an upper-class basis, with a scrutinised franchise, election by ballot, and a more complicated system of offices than ever.[1] To command them against Castruccio, they called in the Catalonian general Cardona, who utterly failed them. He took the course of so handling and placing his troops as to force those citizens in the army who could afford it to buy leave of absence, and was finally defeated with his wilfully weakened army. Florence was driven to call in the King of Naples, at the price of conferring the *signoria* on his son. Meanwhile the new emperor Ludwig, called in by Castruccio, plundered the Milanese and imprisoned their lords, the Visconti, who had been of his own party; extorted 150,000 florins from the Pisans; tortured, to extort treasure, a Ghibelline who had given up to him a fortress in the papal State; and generally showed the Italians, before he withdrew, that a German tyrant could beat even a native at once in treachery, cruelty, and avarice. Castruccio and the son of the King of Naples, who had proved a bad bargain, died about the same time as did the reigning Visconti at Milan, the reigning tyrant at Mantua, and Can' Grande of Verona, the successor of Ezzelino, who had conquered Padua. Again the encouraged middle class of Florence recast their constitution (1328), annulling the old councils and electing two new: a Council of the "People," composed of 300 middle-class citizens, and a Council of the Commune, composed of 250 of both orders. Elsewhere the balance inclined to anarchy and despotism, as of old. A new emperor, John of Bohemia, offered (1330) a new chance of pacification, eagerly welcomed, to a harassed people, in large part shaken by military dangers in its devotion to republicanism, and weary of local tyrannies. But against the new imperialism Florence stoutly held out, with the aid of Lombard Ghibellines; the new emperor, leaving Italy, sold his influence everywhere to local tyrants, and once more everything was in suspense.

At length, in 1336, there occurred the new phenomenon of a combination between Florence and Venice against a new tyrant of Padua and Lucca, who had betrayed Florence; but the Venetians in turn did the same thing, leaving the Florentines half a million of

[1] See Trollope, ii, 179, as to the endless Florentine devices to check special power and to vary the balance of the constitution.

florins in debt; whereupon they were attacked by their old enemies the Pisans, who heavily defeated them and captured Lucca, for which Florence had been fighting. It was in this stage of demoralisation that the Florentines (1342) suddenly forced their *signoria* to give the war-lordship to the French Gaultier de Brienne, "Duke of Athens," formerly the right-hand man of the son of the King of Naples, who had now been sent to them as a new commander by that king, on the request of the Commission of Twenty charged with the war. The commission elected him to the sole command in order to save themselves[1] and pacify the people; and his natural associates, the old nobility, counselled him to seize the government, which he gradually did, beheading and exiling the discredited middle-class leaders, and so winning the support of the populace, who, on his putting himself for open election to the *signoria* for one year, acclaimed him to the function for life. To this pass had come the see-saw of middle class (*popolo*) and upper class, with a populace held in pupilage.

Sismondi, in his *Short History*, pp. 147, 148, seems to represent the episode as wholly one of wanton popular caprice and venality, even representing that Duke Gaultier was only by chance in the city. The narrative of Machiavelli explicitly sets forth how he came through the appeal of the Commission of Twenty; how the nobility and some of the *bourgeoisie* conspired with him; and how the populace were worked upon by the conspirators. The public acclamation, bad as it was, had been carefully subsidised. The middle class, whose war policy, however, had brought the city into such danger, were far more guilty than the mostly unenfranchised populace. Sismondi had latterly an undue faith in the principle of middle-class rule. (Cp. Mr. Boulting's Memoir in his recast of the *Républiques*, p. xxiv.) In his *Histoire des républiques italiennes* (v, 329–53) he sets forth the financial corruption of the middle-class rulers (p. 330), and recognises that they and the aristocrats were alike dangerous to liberty. Cp. as to his change of front, F. Morin, *Origines de la démocratie*, 3e édit. 1865, introd. pp. 17–18.

Within a year, partly on the sudden pressure of a scarcity, the tyrant was overthrown, after having wrung from Florence 400,000 florins and infuriated all classes against him and his race. Not the least of his offences was his conclusion of a peace with Pisa, by which she for a given period was to rule over Lucca. The rising

[1] Two years before a feebler attempt had been made to set up a military tool, named Gabrielli.

against him was universal. Three of his henchmen were literally torn to pieces with hands and teeth: a madness of fury which was only too profoundly in keeping with the self-abandonment that had placed the tyrant in power. The political organism was beginning to disintegrate. A new constitution was set up, with a leaning to aristocracy, which was soon upset by the middle class, who in turn established yet another. The nobles, believing the populace to be hostile to the *bourgeoisie*, attempted anew a revolution, and were utterly crushed. And now began, according to the greatest of the publicists of the Renaissance, the final enfeeblement of Florence, in that the ruin of the nobility, whose one merit had been their fighting power, led to the abandonment of all military exercise.[1] Yet Florence a generation later made vigorous war under a "committee," and in the meantime at least the city tasted domestic peace and grew in civilisation. And though we doubtless exaggerate when we conceive of a transition from what we are apt to figure as the fierce and laughterless Florence of Dante to the gay Florence of the Medici, it is hard to hold that life was worsened when men changed the ways which made them collectively capable of rending with their teeth the carcases of those they hated, and which left the Viscontis of Milan capable of torturing their political prisoners to death through forty days.

Still the process of disintegration and reintegration proceeded. The tyrants of the smaller cities usually established themselves by the aid of professional mercenaries, German and other, whom, when their funds failed, they turned loose to shift for themselves, having in the meantime disarmed the citizens. These companies, swelled by others disbanded after the English wars in France, ravaged and plundered Italy from Montferrat to Naples, and were everywhere bought off save by Florence. Only the Pope and the greater tyrants could keep them regularly in pay; and by their means the Viscontis became lords of sixteen cities of Lombardy, while the Papacy began to build up a military power. Naples, on the other hand, continuously degenerated; while Genoa and Venice exhausted each other in deadly strife for the commercial monopoly of the East; and Pisa leaned to the Viscontis, who ultimately obtained its headship.

Rome, popeless, and domineered over by warring nobles, had its brief vision of a republic under the dreamer Cola di Rienzi, who at last fell by the hand of the masses whom he had for a brief space hypnotised. Neither he nor they were meet for the destiny they fain

[1] Machiavelli, *Istorie*, end of l. ii and beginning of l. iii.

would have fulfilled; and had people and leader alike been worthier, they would ultimately have failed to master the forces joined against them. Rienzi's brief, and on some sides remarkably vigorous, administration in 1346–47 was not wholly unworthy of his ideal of "the good estate"; he seems, indeed, to have ruled the Roman territory with an efficiency that recalled the ancient State; and his early successes against the nobles tell of unexpected weakness on their side and energy on that of the people. His dream of an Italian federation, too, remains to prove that he was no mere mob-leader. But had he been as stable in purpose and policy as he was heady and capricious, and had the Roman populace been as steadfast as it was turbulent, the forces of division represented by the nobles and the Papacy would ultimately have overthrown any republican polity. What Florence could not compass, Rome could not maintain. Two centuries before, Arnold of Brescia had fallen, after fifteen years of popularity, as soon as pope and emperor joined hands against him; and the papalism of Rienzi was as fatal to him as anti-papalism had been to Arnold. Had Rienzi had his way, the Pope would have at once returned to Rome; and where the Papacy was, no republic could endure, however strong and sober were its head. And Rienzi was not sober. After his overthrow in 1347 and his seven years of wandering exile, he was restored solely by the choice and as the agent of the Pope at Avignon; and his death in a tumult after four months of renewed office was the end of his cause.

In Florence the disintegration went on apace. A new emperor, Charles IV, charged the city 100,000 florins (1355) for her immunities, leaving all men hopeless as ever of the Empire as a political solution; and when the crimes of the Viscontis drove cities and Papacy to call Charles in against them (1368), he did but use the opportunity to levy blackmail wherever he went. Later (1375), the Papacy combined with Florence against the reigning Visconti, but only to betray its ally. And now occurred what for a time must have seemed a vital revolution in Italian affairs; the infuriated Florentines suddenly allying themselves with Visconti, the enemy of the day before, against the treacherous Pope, and framing a league with Siena, Lucca, and Pisa against the Church that Florence had so long sustained. Eighty towns in ten days drove out their legates; and furious reprisals broke out on all hands, till the very Pope at Avignon was fain to come to stay the universal warfare. Now, however, an aristocratic and papalist party in Florence bitterly opposed "The Eight" who managed the war, the aristocracy having gravitated to the papal side; and at length exhaustion and the

absolute instability of all alliances brought about a peace in which most of the cities, freed from the Papacy—now become an affair of two mutually anathematising heads—fell once more under local tyrants. In the hour of extreme need the Papacy was, if possible, a worse influence than the emperor; nowhere was to be found a force of stability save in the tyrannies, which were merely unstable with a difference.

Florence, still republican and still obstinately prosperous, stood as a strange anomaly in the general transformation. But she had now reached the stage when the long-ignored populace—the multitude beneath the *popolo*—made up of handworkers with no nominal incorporation or franchise, was able to press its claims as against the other orders, which in turn were divided, as of old, by the jealousies between the major and minor middle-class guilds and between the new nobility of capital and their former equals. Refused the status of incorporation, the *ciompi* ("chums" or "mates," from the French *compère*) made *their* insurrection in turn, finding for the nonce in a wool-carder a leader of the best quality the time could show, who carried his point, was chosen head magistrate, enforced order among his own partisans, and established a new magistracy, with three representatives of the major arts, three of the minor (1378).

Among other things, the *ciompi* demanded that interest should no longer be paid on the public debt; that the principal be paid off in twelve years, and that no "small people" should be sued for debts under fifty florins for the next two years (see Trollope, ii, 216). The trouble was that the brains in the movement, good as they were, could not permanently control the spirit of riot. Sismondi, after arguing (*Short History*, p. 182) in the Whig manner that "those who have not learnt to think, those to whom manual labour leaves no time for meditation, ought not to undertake the guidance of their fellow-citizens," amusingly proceeds (p. 185) to point to the capacity of Lando as showing "how much a free government spreads sound sense and elevated sentiments among even the lowest classes of society." Immediately afterwards he has to record how the upper classes fell into fresh disorders.

But where the educated burgesses and nobles had failed in the science of self-government, the mass of untrained toilers[1] could not succeed. Suborned doubtless by the other classes, they rebelled against the man whom they had made leader, and were by him promptly and capably suppressed, many being exiled; whereupon

[1] According to Giovanni Villani, in the fourteenth century there were schools only for 8,000 children, and only 1,200 were taught arithmetic.

in due course he was himself deprived of his post by the old parties, and the new order was annulled (1382). After fresh strifes and proscriptions among the aristocracy themselves, all traces of the popular rising were effaced, and the aristocracy of wealth was definitely re-established.

What had happened was the attainment of the capitalistic stage and the enthronement of capital in the republican State. In place of strifes between wealth and nobility there had arisen the strife of capital and labour, the new aristocracy of wealth having in large part taken the place of that of descent. The latter transition had occurred nearly simultaneously in the other remaining Republics. Genoa had substituted factions with the names of new wealthy families for the old. In Siena, where the *bourgeoisie* dispossessed the nobles, they were in turn assailed by "reformers" of the lower class, who were finally defeated in battle and exiled wholesale (1385). Meantime the hereditary tyrants of Milan, the Visconti, with their singular continuity of capacity, had grown stronger than ever, had built up a native and scientific military system, and more than ever menaced all their neighbours. Florence called in aid successively from Germany and France (1390–91); but the Milanese army triumphed over all; and the skilled adventurer Sir John Hawkwood, the hired general of the Florentine troops, could not hold his ground. The Emperor, as usual, was satisfied to take payment for non-intervention; and the reigning Visconti, Gian Galeazza, invested by the Emperor with the titles of Duke of Mantua and Count of Pavia, and the lordship of twenty-six cities, had by the year 1402 further compassed, by all manner of fraud and force, the mastery of Pisa, Perugia, Genoa, Siena, Lucca, and Bologna, dying of the plague at the height of his power. His sons being boys, his power broke up among his generals, to be in large part recovered later, however, by his second son, who first assassinated the elder.

At this stage Venice once more intervenes, taking up the cause of Verona against the tyrant of Padua, whom, having defeated him by her carefully-chosen and supervised mercenaries, she put to death (1406). He had been the ally of Florence; but Florence let him fall, being now wholly bent on reconquering Pisa, her natural seaport. Pisa, in turn, always invincibly opposed to Florentine rule, was on commercial grounds backed by Genoa, now under the nominal rule of a representative of the King of France, who, however, sought to sell Pisa to the Florentines, and did receive from them 200,000 florins. Still resisting, the Pisans recalled an exile to lead them; and he in turn sold them for 50,000 florins, this

time to their complete undoing. Refusing all Florentine favours, the bulk of the ruling middle-class abandoned the city for ever, taking much of its special commerce with them. Meantime, the kingdom of Naples, under an energetic king, Ladislaus, had acquired most of the States of the distracted Church, menaced Florence, and was pressing her hard, despite French support, when Ladislaus died (1414). By this time the new Visconti was establishing himself at Milan by means of mercenaries, commanded for him by well-chosen captains. Six times were the Florentines defeated by his forces; till his capable general, Carmagnola, whom he had disgraced, revealed to the Council of Venice his master's intention to attack them; and Venice joined Florence to crush the tyrant. Carmagnola, acting slackly, met ill success, and was therefore executed by his Venetian masters. But the Visconti too finally died defeated, leaving his power to a new adventurer, Francesco Sforza, who had married his daughter, and had fought both for and against him in the endless imbroglio of Italian conspiracy.

Florentine republicanism was now near its euthanasia. By the fatal law of empire, the perpetual enterprise of destroying other men's freedom left Florence unfit to use or to defend her own; and the tyrants of Pisa became meet for the yoke of tyranny. The family of Medici, growing rapidly rich, began to use the power of capital as elsewhere less astute adventurers used the power of the sword. From the overthrow of the *ciompi* party in 1382 to 1434, the Republic had been ruled by a faction of the new commercial aristocracy with substantial unity; and the period is claimed as the most prosperous, intellectually and materially, though not the most progressive, in Florentine history.

See above, p. 226–27. Perrens (*Histoire de Florence*, trans. cited, pp. 171–72, 202) thinks otherwise, but does not blame the oligarchy. Sismondi, in his larger and earlier work (*Républiques*, ed. 1826, xi, 2), represents that Florence *ceased* to be great under the Medici; cp. however, xii, 52, and the different note in the reactionary *Short History* (p. 224), where he deems that in this period were born and formed "all those great men" whose glory is credited to the Medici. This holds good of Brunelleschi the architect, Masallio the artist, and Ghiberti the sculptor, as well as of Poggio and other scholars. Cp. Zeller, *Histoire d'Italie*, 1853, p. 309, and the list given by Perrens, *Histoire de Florence*, trans. cited, p. 456. M. Perrens pronounces that under Lorenzo "the decadence of sculpture is visible, and still more that of architecture," both being too rapidly produced from motives of gain (*La civilisation*

florentine du 13e siècle au 16e, 1893, p. 190). Here he follows Romohr (see *Histoire de Florence*, last cited). Lorenzo, he notes, had the reactionary belief, odd on the part of a merchant, that only nobles could produce perfect work, they only having the necessary leisure. He accordingly ignored all plebeian genius, such as that of Leonardo da Vinci.

Cosimo de' Medici, descendant of a democrat, was grown too rich to be one in his turn; and between him and the Albizzi, who led the ruling faction, there grew up one of the old and typical jealousies of power-seekers. Exiled by a packed *balia*, Cosimo's wealth enabled him to turn the tables in a year and exile his exilers, taking their place and silently absorbing their power. "The moment was come when the credit of the Medici was to prevail over the legal power of the Florentine *signoria*." Thus when the Visconti died, Cosimo and the doge of Venice combined their forces to prevent the recovery of the republican independence of Milan, whose middle class, divided by their own jealousies, speedily succumbed to the fraud and force of Sforza, the Visconti's heir.

For thirty years Cosimo maintained at Florence, by the power of capital, prosperity and peace under the semblance of the old constitution, the richer of the ever-renewed capitalist class accepting his primacy, while the populace, being more equitably governed than of yore under the old nobility, and being steadily prosperous, saw no ground for revolt. Capital as "tyrant" had in fact done what the tyrants of early Greece and Rome are presumed to have often done—favoured the people as against the aristocracy; Cosimo's liberality giving employment and pay at the same time to the artisans and to the scholars. Under Cosimo and his political colleagues, doubtless, the subject cities were corruptly governed; but Florence seems to have been discreetly handled. Attempts to break the capitalistic domination came to nothing, save the exile or at a pinch the death of the malcontents.

[Under all of the Medici, it appears, "the fiscal legislation adhered to the principle of burdening the old nobility of the city" (Von Reumont, *Lorenzo de' Medici*, Eng. tr. i, 33). They however built up a fresh public debt, and their finance had very crooked aspects, especially under Lorenzo, who lacked the mercantile faculty of his grandfather (*id.* pp. 31–33. Cp. Perrens, *Histoire de Florence*, trans. cited, pp. 55–60, 288, 408–13, 416–17). Lorenzo was even accused of appropriating the dowries of orphan girls; and it seems clear that he defrauded the *monte delle doti*, or dowry bank.

As regards fiscal policy, it may be interesting to note that

in Florence taxes had been imposed alternately on capital or income from the thirteenth century onwards, both being taken at the lowest values, and rated at from one-half to three per cent. according to the *estimo* (Esquiron de Parieu, *Traité des impôts*, 2e édit. 1866, i, 417). These taxes in turn were probably suggested by the practice of ancient Athens, where extraordinary revenue for war purposes was obtained "partly from voluntary contributions, partly from a graduated income or property tax." In 1266 a fresh income-tax of ten per cent. on an already heavily taxed city incited the decisive rising against the rule of the Ghibelline Count Guido. The earlier historians of Florence, like most others, pay little attention to the history of taxation; but details emerge for the later period.

In 1427 Giovanni de' Medici imposed on Florence a tax called the *catasto*—apparently not, like earlier taxes of the same name, based on a survey of land, but on disposable or movable capital—and also one of ½ per cent. on income over what was necessary to support life. Further, he levied a super-tax, which was paid by 1,400 citizens out of the 10,000 who came under the *catasto*. At a pinch, the *catasto* was levied several times in the year. Yet further, a regularly graduated income-tax was imposed by Cosimo de' Medici, in 1441, and raised in 1443; but, in this case, the salutary principle of sparing the amount of income necessary to sustain life seems to have been departed from, since incomes of from one to fifty florins paid 4 per cent., the rate gradually rising thereafter to 33⅓ per cent. for incomes over 1,500 florins. By reason of bad finance, further, taxes had now to be levied even ten and fifteen times a year. Cp. Perrens, as last cited. It is yet further noteworthy that, from 1431 to 1458, traders were required to show their books to the revenue officers for the purpose of fair assessment. The abandonment of this provision seems to have been partly due to the evasions practised by the traders, partly to the irritation and the abuses set up by it.]

At Cosimo's death there was dynastic strife of capital, as elsewhere of blood; but the blundering financier Pitti went to the wall, and the invalid Piero de' Medici kept his father's power. At his death the group of his henchmen kept their hold on it; and in time his son Lorenzo ousted them and engrossed all, escaping the plot which was fatal to his brother. The failure of that and other plots, in Florence and elsewhere, sufficed to prove that the artisans, well employed and protected by the laws, had no concern to upset the orderly and business-like "tyranny" either of one great capitalist or of a prince, in the interest of an oligarchy which would rule no better, which gave them no more of political privilege than did he, and which was less ready than he with public gifts. Thus he had

little difficulty in cutting down every institution that restricted his power, whether popular or oligarchic.[1] Italian republicanism had always been a matter of either upper-class or middle-class rule; and when the old upper class of feudal descent was superseded by one of commercial descent, the populace had nothing to gain by supporting the bourgeoisie. A capitalistic "lord," most of whose wealth was in its nature unseizable, was thus a more stable power than any mere swordsman among swordsmen; and Lorenzo de' Medici not only crushed all the conspiracies against him, but held his own against the dangerous alliance of the republican Pope Sixtus IV and the King of Naples—the menace of Turkish invasion helping him. When, early in his reign, he joined in and carried through the plot for the confiscation of Volterra, chiefly in order to secure a hold on its rich alum mines, his popularity at Florence was in the ratio of the baseness of his triumph. As always, imperialism and corruption went hand in hand, and the Florentines ensured their own servitude by their eagerness to compass the fall of others.[2]

After Lorenzo's death (1492) only the incompetence of his son Piero at the hazardous juncture of the new French invasion under Charles VIII could upset the now hereditary power of the house; but such incompetence at such a crisis was sufficient, Savonarola having now set up a new democratic force, partly analogous to that of Puritanism in the England of a later age. The new party, however, brought no new political science.[3] Republican Florence in its interim of self-government proceeded as of old to make war on indomitable Pisa, with which it could never consent to live on terms of equality. Time after time, vanquished by force and treachery, the Pisans had again cast loose, fighting for independence as fiercely as did their fathers of a previous generation. Savonarola, who had no better light for this problem than was given to the other Florentines of his age, "staked the truth of his inspiration on the recovery of Pisa"; he had not a grain of sympathy for the Pisans, and punished those who had;[4] and though his party had the wisdom to proclaim a general amnesty for Florence (1495), the war against Pisa went on, with the French king insensately admitted as a Florentine ally. Savonarola in his turn fell, on his plain failure to evoke the miraculous aid on the wild promise of which he had so

[1] Details in Perrens' *Histoire de Florence*, Eng. trans. of vol. viii, pp. 268, 284–88, 291, 307, 310.

[2] Cp. Perrens, trans. cited, pp. 276–80.

[3] M. Perrens indeed pronounces the two Councils set up by Savonarola's party to be much superior to the former bodies (*La civilisation florentine*, p. 61); but he admits that "at bottom and from the start the system was vitiated by the theocracy which presided over it."

[4] Cp. Armstrong, in *Cambridge Modern History*, 1902, i, 171.

desperately traded; his party of pietists went to pieces; and the upper-class party which succeeded carried on the war, destroying the Pisan harvests every year, till, under the one-man command of Loderini, Florence triumphed (1507), and the staunch sea-city fell once more. Even now the conquering city consented to pay great bribes to the kings of France and Aragon for leave to take her prey. And once more multitudes of Pisans emigrated, refusing to live in subjection, despite all attempts at conciliation.[1]

Slowly the monarchic powers closed in; France, after several campaigns, decisively defeated and captured Lodovico Sforza, lord of Milan, and proceeded by a secret treaty with Spain to partition the kingdom of Naples—a rascals' bargain, which ended in a quarrel and in the destruction of two French armies; Spain remaining master of Naples and the Sicilies, while France held the Milanese and Liguria, including Genoa. For a few years Cesare Borgia flared across the Italian sky, only to fall with his great purposes unfulfilled; and still the foreign powers encroached. France, with Swiss support, proceeded in turn to make war on Venice; and the emperor, the pope, Spain, and the smaller neighbouring despots, joined in the attack. Against these dastardly odds the invincible oligarchy of Venice held out, till Pope Julius, finding his barbarian friends worse than his Italian enemies, changed sides, joined the republic, and after many reverses got together an anti-French league of English, Swiss, and Spanish. Finally the emperor betrayed his French allies, who were once more driven out of Italy, leaving their ally, Florence, to fall into the hands of the Spaniards (1512).

Now came the restoration of the family of Medici, soon followed by the elevation of Giovanni de' Medici to the Papacy as Leo X; whence came yet more wars, enough to paralyse Italy financially had there been no other impoverishing cause. But Leo X, now the chief Italian power, misgoverned in secular affairs as badly as in ecclesiastical; and the wars, so barbarous in themselves, were waged upon dwindling resources. Venice, pressed afresh by Maximilian, made alliance with Louis, who was defeated by the Swiss, as defenders and "lords" of Milan; whereupon the Spanish, papal, and German forces successively ravaged the Venetian territories. Francis I zealously renewed the war, grappled with the Swiss in the desperate battle of Marignano in such sort as to get them to come to terms,

[1] The constancy of Pisa in resisting the yoke of Florence, and the repeated self-expatriation of masses of the inhabitants, is hardly intelligible in view of the submission of so many other cities to worse tyrannies. It would seem that the sting lay in the idea that the rule of the rival city was more galling to pride than any one-man tyranny, foreign or other.