
The Story of Milan
Ella Noyes

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The Story of Milan

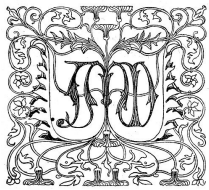


S^t. Roch.

Fresco by Borgognone.

The Story of Milan

by Ella Noyes, Illustrated by Dora Noyes



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"La cognitione del tempo preterito e del sito della terra è ornamento e cibo delle menti umane."

LEONARDO DA VINCI.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

PAGE

The Ambrosian City 1

CHAPTER II

The Patarini 26

CHAPTER III

The Free City 42

CHAPTER IV

The Reign of Faction 62

CHAPTER V

The Visconti 86

CHAPTER VI

From Visconti to Sforza 116

CHAPTER VII

The Opening of the Gate 147

CHAPTER VIII

The Sorrow of Milan 189

CHAPTER IX

Art in Milan 208

CHAPTER X

The Duomo 224

CHAPTER XI

The Basilica of St. Ambrogio 256

CHAPTER XII

San Lorenzo. Romanesque Buildings 278

CHAPTER XIII

Gothic and Renaissance Buildings 302

CHAPTER XIV

The Brera Picture Gallery 335

CHAPTER XV

Other Galleries and Museums 352

CHAPTER XVI

The Castello 368

Table of the Visconti 392

Table of the Sforza 393

Appendix 395

Index 397

ILLUSTRATIONS

		PAGE
St. Roch, Fresco by Borgognone (Brera)		*Frontispiece*
The Duomo from Hotel Europe		3
Atrium of St. Ambrogio		57
Chiaravalle		70
Via del Pesce		73
Tower of S. Gottardo from the Cathedral		93
The Snake of the Visconti		115
Galeazzo Maria Sforza, by Piero Pollaiuolo (Uffizi, Florence)	*to face page*	138

Bridge over Naviglio near San Marco 141

Canal, Via San Marco 155

Canonica of St. Ambrogio 157

Lodovico il Moro, by Boltraffio (Trivulzio Collection) *to face page* 176

Scopetta of Lodovico il Moro 188

Cupola of the Duomo, from the Roof 232

Within the Duomo 237

Putti, Guglia di Amadeo 249

Giant Statues on the Duomo 251

Side Aisle of Atrium, St. Ambrogio 262

Capital in Atrium of St. Ambrogio 263

Capital in Atrium of St. Ambrogio 264

Ciborium, St. Ambrogio 267

Sculpture on Pulpit in St. Ambrogio 273

Chimney, Canonica of St. Ambrogio 277

The Old Porta Ticinese 281

Houses on the Naviglio 284

Exterior of Portinari Chapel, St. Eustorgio 286

Interior of St. Eustorgio 288

Statue of Oldrado da Tresseno 298

Palazzo dei Banchieri 300

Doorway of Palazzo Borromeo 303

Cortile of Palazzo Borromeo 305

Last Supper, by Leonardo. Detail, Figure of Christ *to face page* 314

Last Supper, by Leonardo. Detail, St. John, St. Peter and Judas *to face page* 316

San Satiro 321

Palazzo Visconti di Modrone—Garden on the Naviglio 331

Putto, Fresco by Bramantino (Brera) *to face page* 336

Madonna, by Mantegna (Poldi-Pezzoli) *to face page* 356

Portrait of an Unknown, by Ambrogio de Predis, (?) (Ambrosiana) *to face page* 363

The Rocchetta, Castello 375

PREFACE

Everybody has been in Milan, but who knows Milan? The traveller in search of the picturesque and mediæval sees nothing to arrest him—except comfortable hotels—in a city which seems to tell only of yesterday. A glance at the Cathedral, at St. Ambrogio, at the most famous of the pictures, and he hurries on. Yet a little longer stay reveals a wealth of artistic interest in the many fine churches, in the rich galleries and museums, and much also that is worth learning even in the outward aspect of the city in the present day. The historic buildings have mostly fallen, the old crooked ways have given place to broad thoroughfares, the picturesque life of the past has been smothered by the sombre bustle of modern commercialism. But her heritage of beauty is to some extent inalienable. She remains always Italian. Colour and atmosphere lend an indestructible charm even to her modernity. The warm brick of the buildings against the limpid blue sky, the gold and grey of sunshine and shadow, the shining canals that border some of the further streets with a still and pensive melancholy, make a lovely and characteristic harmony still, as in the days of the Quattrocentist artists who painted them in the backgrounds of their Madonnas and San Roccos. And there are some old

streets left, mostly in the heart of the city, such as the Via del Pesce and the Via Tre Alberghi, long cobbled alleys ribboned with triple lines of pavement, where the tall houses and bowed-out balconies of curious ironwork, rusted by age and weather, if they cannot remember the days of Milan's earlier glory, must have known at least something of the sad centuries of bondage which followed, before they shook to the roar of the Cinque Giornate sixty years ago.

The compass of this small volume has made it impossible to tell otherwise than summarily of the great past of this city and of her artistic riches to-day. I have had to pass over, or barely mention, many noteworthy things. I am especially sorry that I could not include the places of interest in the immediate neighbourhood. A visit to the Certosa of Pavia, which sums up all the aims and achievements of Lombard Renaissance art, is necessary for an appreciation of the Milanese sculptors and painters, while the associations of the famous building with Gian Galeazzo Visconte and with the Sforza princes, make it a part of Milanese story. The old Church of Chiaravalle, with its incomparable Lombard-Gothic tower and its trecento frescoes, and picturesque Monza, where that historic emblem and wonder of twelfth century goldsmiths' art, the Iron Crown of Lombardy, is preserved with other priceless treasures, ought not to be missed by the traveller.

The main facts of Milanese story are well known, and may be found, not only in the native chroniclers and historians, but also in many modern books dealing with Milan and with Italian history generally. Mongeri's *L'Arte in Milano*, and the writings of Count Malaguzzi Valeri, especially his *Milano* in the series

"Italia Illustrata", have been my chief help in the topographical and artistic part of this book, and I have also made use of the works of Signor Luca Beltrami, Mrs. Ady and others. For the painters and pictures I have depended on Morelli, the acknowledged authority on Lombard art, and have consulted besides the writings of Dr. Gustavo Frizzoni, of Mr. Herbert Cook, and other modern critics.

E. N.

SUTTON VENY, WILTS,
November 1907

The Story of Milan

CHAPTER I
The Ambrosian City

"Verenanda est Roma in Apostolo. Sed nec spernendum Mediolanum in Ambrosio."—ARNULPHUS.

Milan is to-day the most modern of Italian cities. Her Risorgimento in the last century, accomplished with the pouring out of blood and the efforts of a strenuous virtue, makes for her a mighty and sufficing past in the near background, and she seems to stand wholly on this side of it, triumphant and new-create. Neither Nature nor the further centuries have, you feel, any longer part in her. Who of the numberless travellers from the North, as they lose the vision of mountain, lake and green champaign, just traversed, in the bustle and confinement of the crowded streets, realises that this solid mass of brick and stone, this vast hive of human beings, is the slow product of that enchanting country, of its rivers and fertile soil, built up and moulded by human passion and labour during thousands of years amid the changes and chances of extraordinarily varied fortunes. Only when his eyes, lifted above the regular roof-lines of the modern streets, light upon the Gothic pinnacles of the Duomo, and a further acquaintance with the city discovers, wedged among

the growths of yesterday, the many relics of her older past—the Castle of the fifteenth century Sforza, Renaissance palaces and churches, St. Ambrogio and its compeers of the era of liberty, a rare fragment of the older imperial civilisation—does he become conscious of the long and painful course of the centuries, and remember that he stands in the secular capital of Lombardy, on ground as storied almost as the sacred dust of Rome.

The name alone of Lombardy calls up visions of continuous strife. There the nations who have made their grave in Italy lie most thickly. The sunny fruitful plains at the foot of the barren mountains have been fattened from the beginning by human blood. The *love of figs*—a phrase which has passed into the language of the Icelanders as an expression for all passionate appetite—has again and again impelled the peoples of the grudging North to storm the barrier of snows and seek the delusive land of promise beyond. Principalities and kingdoms have been founded there one after another, only to perish in turn, as if the soft land of morass and meadow were some unstable quicksand created for the engulfing of men. Etruscans, Insubri, Latins, Visigoths, Lombards, French and Spaniards, have come and gone, in the midst of an almost incessant warfare.

Yet through all the changes, a quiet, continuous labour was going on, restraining and directing the courses of the rivers, draining the marshes, taming the wild luxuriance of the land to fertile use and order, and slowly building up out of the confusion of conflicting elements the solid foundations of the present.



THE DUOMO FROM
HOTEL EUROPE

Seated in the centre of the plain which spreads out at the foot of the Alps, and commanding the natural gateways between Italy and the countries to north and west, Milan seems to have held from the first the chief position among the cities of Lombardy. In the early centuries of our era it was hardly less important in the North of Italy than Rome was in the South. The line of the Po, cutting across the peninsula, or perhaps more correctly, the Apennine chain, originally divided Italy ethnologically and politically, a division which still endures to some degree in the character and sentiments of the respective inhabitants on either side. The Insubri, who drove out the Etruscans and settled in Lombardy about the sixth century (B.C.), were a race of Gallic origin. They had no ties of blood with the Romans, who subjugated them later, and their country—called by the conquerors, Cisalpine Gaul—was as

much a foreign province of the Latin dominion as the Gaul beyond the Alps. On the other hand their relationship and familiarity with that Gaul was so close that it has influenced the sympathies of the Milanese people throughout history, and has left a strong impress on their dialect. When some centuries later the capital of the Empire was losing its controlling power, and the bond uniting the members of that immense artificial system was beginning to relax, Milan assumed an almost independent position. As the seat of Diocletian and his colleague Maximian, she could scorn abandoned Rome, looking with compassion from her magnificent palaces and baths, her populous streets and mighty walls, to the silent courts and colonnades of the Palatine Hill. Constantine completed her severance from Rome by dividing Italy into two separate portions of the Empire, and making Milan the capital of the northern half, with a government distinct from Rome. The old racial boundaries were thus restored, and on these lines were built up the many later schemes for the foundation of a Kingdom of Italy. And on these lines there rose within the new ecclesiastical empire which was shaping itself out of the ruins of the old Roman system, an episcopal dominion extending over all Lombardy, and virtually independent of the Church of Rome. Many centuries were to pass, and fierce struggles to take place, before the Church of Milan was brought into subjection to the Papal See. This work of unification, accomplished chiefly by the potent mind of Gregory VII. in the eleventh century, in association with a growing instinct of nationality in the Milanese people themselves, was one of the most important steps in the process by which the various and alien elements of the great Lombard city were converted

into a component part of the Italian nation.

We cannot pause to search into the origins of the city in that obscure antiquity which Italian legend fills with the figures of diluvian and Trojan heroes, on an equal plane of remoteness, or to inquire closely into the mystery of her name, *Mediolanum*, as it is in the Latin tongue, whence by derivation—influenced, doubtless, by the sweet appellation *Mailand*, Land of May, which her green refreshing aspect suggested to her Teutonic invaders—it has become Milano. The simplest and most generally accepted explanation of the name is that it is a bastard word, between Latin and Teutonic, signifying the Middle Land, and suggested by the city's central position in the Plain.

We must take up our story at the beginning of that barbarian inrush through the yielding barriers of the Empire, which by mingling the vigour of new blood with the effete products of Roman civilisation, generated the travail of mediæval Italy, and out of that travail a nation. Milan had already a great past, closely bound up with the vicissitudes of the later Empire. From Diocletian and Constantine downwards she was honoured almost constantly by the presence of emperors. Julian was proclaimed Cæsar within her walls. Many edicts of Constantius were published there, Valentinian made his residence in the city, and there Theodosius spent long periods, and there died and was buried. The Empress Justina and her young son, Valentinian II., had their seat in Milan, and the slothful and degenerate Honorius ruled from its palace the Empire of the West, till frightened out by the Goths. The wealth and luxury of the city in the fourth century, her culture, her innumerable fine houses, her magnificent walls, built by Maximian, her circus, temples, theatres, baths, are celebrated in

a famous epigram by the Latin poet Ausonius, who proclaims her the paragon of Rome.

But at the end of this century the imperial era was rapidly declining and giving way to a new order of things. A fresh period of irruptions from the North was at hand, and within the ancient polity itself a new organisation, the Christian Church, had arisen and was usurping spiritual authority. Milan had been early conspicuous in the history of Christianity. Legend names S. Barnabas himself as the founder and first occupant of her See, and she had testified to the new faith in the days of persecution by the blood of many martyrs. SS. Gervasio and Protasio, the youthful warrior pair, SS. Nazaro and Celso, master and faithful disciple, SS. Felix and Nabor, S. Valeria, San Vittore, and many others, are recorded with picturesque and touching details in Milanese legends and art. And in Milan the triumph of Christianity was first proclaimed, since here Constantine subscribed his edict of toleration in 313. But Christianity, established soon after as the State religion, had yet to struggle with the difficulty of conflicting counsels and doctrines within its own body. The tenets promulgated by the Council of Nicœa in 532 were by no means universally accepted by Christians in the fourth century, and in North Italy the teachings of Arius were widely followed, especially by the Gothic subjects of the Empire. Under the Empress Regent Justina they were the religion of the imperial Court in Milan, and the whole population was divided into fiercely hostile parties by the doctrinal question.

It was at this critical point of her political and ecclesiastical destinies that there appeared in Milan one of those epoch-making characters who from time to time arise at moments of hesitation in the history

of human communities, and apparently initiate and determine their subsequent course. The great figure of her Bishop Ambrose, Saint and Doctor of the Church, scourge of the Arians, subduer of emperors, stands for Milan at the opening of a new era, to which his dominant mind gives impress, direction and inspiration. From this time forward, Milan is no more the imperial, but the Ambrosian city. Throughout her mediæval existence the consecrating memory of St. Ambrogio, her patron and protector, set like a spiritual jewel in a hundred exquisite and devoutly fantastic legends, is present in her government, her struggles for liberty, her art and peaceful industry, her daily life and the peculiar ritual of her religious worship.

In 374 Auxentius, Bishop of Milan, died. He had been an Arian. A great contention arose between the two doctrinal parties over the choice of his successor. The city was in a state of uproar, and it became necessary to summon the Prefect of the province to restore peace. A brilliant young advocate named Ambrosius, of a Roman family of high standing in the official world, had been lately appointed Prefect. He came to the capital and convoked a public assembly in the chief church, to assist at the election of a bishop. It was impossible, however, for the two parties to agree in a selection; the powerful Court influence of the Arians being balanced by a preponderance of orthodox Catholics among the people. Suddenly, above the angry noise of dispute which filled the church, a clear voice, as of a child, was heard to pronounce distinctly three times over the words, *Ambrose is Bishop*. The *nolo episcopari* of the young governor, vigorously expressed, and emphasised, according to legend, by his flight from the city, nothing availed to save him from the dignity

which the unanimous will of the people now forced upon him, and Ambrose, as yet unbaptized, was made Bishop of Milan. Whether the apparent finger of Providence had been directed by some hidden terrestrial agency, it is ungrateful to inquire. Ambrose, in deserting the service of the decaying Empire for the government of the metropolitan See of Lombardy, had undoubtedly found the right field for his mighty energies. He was a great Christian, a man of profound doctrine, of pure life and loftiest spiritual qualities. He was also the most able of statesmen. None knew so well the power of this new polity of the Christian Church amid the struggling confusion of forces in the moribund Empire. He became paramount with his pupil, the young Emperor Gratian, and used his influence to stamp mercilessly upon the last embers of Paganism, overthrowing with unsparing arguments all the pleas of the patrician Symmachus and the Conservative party in the Roman Senate in favour of the preservation of the stately faith and customs of their forefathers. The doctrinal unity of the Church itself was his next great task. The Arian heresy was, as we have seen, strongly entrenched in the palace of the Empress and her son, Valentinian II. Nevertheless, Ambrose decreed a uniform orthodox worship in all the numerous churches in the city. Justina protested, and demanded the use of the New Basilica within the walls—the principal church in fact—for the Arians. This being refused, she ordered the bishop to give up the Basilica Porciana, outside the city. Ambrose meekly offered her his life and all his possessions, everything except what she wanted, the church. “A temple of God could not be given up by a priest.” Temporal arms were then moved against him. But all the forces of the Empire together would have been

helpless against the martyr spirit of the Bishop. The Cathedral was his fortress, and there he entrenched himself in the strength of his holiness, surrounded by excited multitudes, whose ardour he inflamed by fiery discourses, in which he likened the Empress to Eve bringing ruin upon Adam, to Jezebel fighting Elijah, Salome destroying John Baptist, till they vowed to die with him rather than suffer the temporal authority to prevail over the spiritual. The very soldiers investing the church, terrified by the dreadful anathemas pronounced upon them, rushed in, not to do battle against the faithful, but to pray with them. For days the people continued in the church with the Bishop, and on this occasion, St. Augustine says, 'It was first instituted that after the manner of the Eastern Churches, hymns and psalms should be sung, lest the people should faint through the weariness of sorrow'—a famous evidence of the fact that St. Ambrose was the first to introduce the use of music into the services of the Western Church.

It is interesting to note in the midst of that vast crowd of now nameless and forgotten individuals a figure well known to all times since, the small quiet African mother, Monica, who had followed her son across the terrible winter seas, resolved in her invincible spirit to guide his seeking soul into the haven of the true faith. And Augustine himself, the young professor just appointed to the chair of rhetoric in Milan, must have been present too, gazing upon the surprising scene of this persecuted but dauntless pastor and his devoted flock. Every vestige of the *basilica nova intramurana*, where the great struggle took place, is now long gone. But its place is still the place of Milan's Cathedral, the great Gothic Duomo of later times. And the episcopal palace of to-day occupies the same site—or near it—of the

dwelling of Ambrose, where Augustine, his heart swelling with eager questions, would often enter uninvited, as all might freely do, and watch the holy man in silence, restrained from speaking by the fear of disturbing him as he sat reading in his moments of leisure and preparing himself to expound to the people.

But it would be vain to seek to-day even for the place of that fourth-century house upon the walls—Maximian's walls—where Augustine lodged with his mother and the marvellous boy Adeodatus, his son, fated so early to die. Or for the little garden where he hid himself one day, even from his faithful follower Alypius, and amid the throes of a terrible spiritual anguish heard the unseen child's voice chanting in pure, untroubled tones, '*Take up and read, take up and read*,' and opening the volume of the Apostle saw the words which lifted his soul out of the torture of conflicting desire into the serenity of faith at last. Nor is any trace left of the original baptistery for males, on the south side of the Cathedral, where the subsequent baptism of Augustine, Adeodatus and Alypius, at the hands of Ambrose, was in all probability performed. The place is occupied now by the Church of San Gottardo.

The conflict between Empress and Bishop was won by Ambrose. Justina's efforts to depose him and set up a new bishop were completely frustrated by his timely discovery of the bodies of the Milanese martyrs, SS. Gervasio and Protasio, a miraculous event which raised him to an invincible position in the opinion of all Christendom. The triumph of the great bishop, though it savours now of bigotry, was of deep and far-reaching significance. It was the revolt of the new and as yet hardly tried Church

against the ancient imperial authority. It pointed to the future. It initiated that obstinate and long-continued struggle between the temporal and spiritual powers which makes the history of the Middle Ages in Italy. For Milan and for Lombardy it meant more; it was a protest against the influence of the foreigner, against a strange domination in thought. The Arian heresy was alien and unnatural to Italian sentiment; its followers were chiefly among the large population of Goths settled by this time in Italy. Ambrose, in rallying round him the masses of the people and conquering the established powers, was in fact appealing to the elements out of which the Commune of later days was to develop—to those instincts of liberty and nationality of which the Mediæval Church was to be the glorious guide and champion.

The later and more famous triumph of Ambrose—when, before the doors of the same Basilica Nova, he stood, armed only with the insignia of his sacerdotal office, and barred the entrance of the sanctuary to the blood-stained Emperor Theodosius, till, awed by his spiritual dignity, the wearer of the purple sank before the white-robed priest and did public penance for the massacre of Thessalonica—was another and greater proof of the ascendency of the ecclesiastical over the imperial power. But the significance of the scene reaches further, and embraces the whole sphere of humanity. In standing bishop and kneeling king we see, not the individuals and their immediate motives, ambitious, despotic, superstitious, as they may partly have been, not even the struggle of great transitory interests, but a wider, deeper, more enduring principle—the recognition of the supremacy of spirit over brute force, the victory of the Christian ideal of love and pity over the earthly

lusts of blood and revenge, of the religion which adores the helpless Mother and Child over the deified Force of the ancient creeds.

Ambrose was now the most powerful man in the Empire, ruling the minds of men by the sheer strength of character and lofty virtue. The Barbarians in their distant lands testified to the might of his saintliness—this man who, as a Frankish king asserted with awe, *says to the sun, 'Stand still,' and it stands*. The two young Emperors, Gratian and Valentinian, were tools in his hands, and Theodosius himself had to acknowledge the Church in the person of Ambrose as a twin power in the realm. When the Bishop died in 397, he bequeathed to his successors an episcopal dominion so strengthened by his powerful personality, and glorified by the sanctity of his life and doctrine, that it was ever after associated with his name, and known as the Ambrosian Church. With its numerous and wealthy dependent bishoprics, its Arch-Pontiff or Pope, its cardinals, as the chief clergy were called later, and immense hierarchy, its peculiar liturgy and ritual, this Church was accorded the title of Holy—*Santa Chiesa*—and acknowledged as self-governing by Gregory the Great himself.

The Milan of Ambrose and Augustine still belonged in outward aspect to the imperial past. But a general decay, hastened by exorbitant taxation and bad administration, was visible at this time throughout North Italy, where many of the chief towns were, in Ambrose's own words, *Corpses of half-ruined cities*. At the opening of the fifth century the simulacrum of Empire was attacked by the Goths under Alaric (402), and half a century later (450) Attila, *Flagellum Dei*, passed with his Huns over the face of Italy,

uprooting the useless remains of the ancient world, as a plough furrows a field for the new sowing. Milan came within his course, but how deep and extensive was the ruin wrought by him there we do not know. His was but the first operation in God's tilling of that rank soil for the new life it was to bear. In 538 the city suffered a second and apparently more complete destruction, during the war of Narses and Belisarius for the recovery of Italy from the Ostrogothic dynasty established by Theodoric. Milan revolted from the Gothic King Vitige and allied herself with the Eastern generals. Vitige despatched a portion of his army, swelled by a host of Burgundians from the mountains, ancestors, probably, of those Swiss who were to plague the Milanese in later history. The city was closely invested, and after some months, deceived in the expectation of succour from Belisarius, she fell a victim to the revenge of the Goths. The historian Procopius describes the three hundred thousand slain, the women sold as slaves, the habitations razed to the ground, and his statement, in spite of obvious exaggeration, is an indication of the awful havoc and desolation inflicted upon the still soft, corrupt and luxurious city.

This blow seems to have crushed the vitality of Milan. For centuries she remained in a weak and depressed condition. During the Lombard domination, which swept away the brief authority of the Eastern Empire established by the arms of Narses, her pre-eminence in North Italy was usurped by Pavia, which Alboin and his successors chose as the capital of their new realm, now first called *Lombardy*. The broken palaces of the once imperial metropolis no longer sheltered sovereigns. The Lombard kings delegated their authority in the city to a governor, whom they called *Duke*—whence the

name *Cordusio*, still used in the centre of the city, a corruption of Corte Ducis, the palace or judgment-hall of the Duke—and only approached from time to time to hold a Diet within the vast melancholy area of her deserted circus. Even the successors of St. Barnabas and St. Ambrose abandoned her, and transferred the See to Genoa, where it remained till the next century, diminished in power and prestige by its exile from the city of the Ambrosian tradition, while the Roman Pontiffs, throughout the two centuries of Lombard supremacy, were quietly increasing their influence and making good that claim to supreme spiritual authority before which the Ambrosian Church was in the end to succumb.

The return of the episcopal See to Milan indicates some degree of revival in the city. But two hundred years more were to pass before her Church resumed its old importance, and Milan her rightful rank in North Italy. Under Charlemagne, who conquered Desiderio in 774, and created a so-called Kingdom of Italy, Milan held only the third place among the metropolitan Sees, yielding precedence after Rome to Ravenna. The Frankish king, whose great scheme of a restored Roman Empire included a united Latin Church under the Pope as supreme head, not only exalted the spiritual authority of Rome over the other Sees, but even endeavoured to suppress the peculiarities of the Ambrosian liturgy and force Milan into uniformity with the rest of the Latin Church. He is said to have descended upon the city and seized all the liturgical books, burning some and carrying others away into Germany. But even his will was helpless against the cherished custom of centuries. Some religious men, so the chronicler declares, succeeded in hiding copies of the books, and as soon as the Emperor had disappeared, they

were unearthed and the old rites resumed as before.

The political changes of the ninth and tenth centuries favoured the revival of the Lombard See. With the disruption of Charlemagne's swollen empire, and the removal of the temporal support, the spiritual sovereignty of Rome and the unity of the Church broke down, at least in practice, and the grand and comprehensive idea of a single rule of Christendom under the twin sceptres of Emperor and Pope—that inspiration of great minds in the Middle Ages—failed now, as later, of realisation. Amid the ungoverned turbulence of the Roman nobles and citizens the Papacy gradually sank to the lowest depths of corruption and impotence, and any deference to its authority once paid by the Milanese primates was soon forgotten.

For a while the Carlovingian kingdom of Italy held together in spite of constant wars, and under Louis II. Lombardy enjoyed a period of peace and great prosperity. But after his death in 875, the country, rent by the struggles of various claimants to the throne, and overrun by Huns and Saracens, was gradually reduced to a state of chaos, out of which the power of the feudal barons emerged as the only effective authority. The Counts and Viscounts, as the imperial ministers were properly called, lost their authority, or else preserved it as an hereditary and almost independent right from father to son, fitting themselves as time went on into the graduated order of the feudal system, which was extending itself into the whole organisation of society. The one stable power, that of the Church, based on an inextinguishable tradition, became paramount in the city, and in virtue of its vast possessions assumed the temporal as well as the spiritual dominion. By the

tenth century the Archbishops of Milan appear as great feudal princes, the most powerful in North Italy, and practically independent of the Emperor. This position was largely due to the spirit and ability of the two great prelates of the previous century, Angilberto (824-59), and Ansperto (868-81). Ansperto openly refused the obedience claimed from him by John VIII. By assembling and presiding over the Diet of the princes of North Italy at Pavia, which elected Charles the Bald as successor to Louis II., and afterwards crowning the new monarch, he arrogated the right of conferring the Crown of Italy independently of the Papal approval. He appears in this election as a great temporal prince, leading the North Italian States, and expressing the revolt of Lombardy against the pretensions of the Pope in the Lateran to the heritage of the power which once dominated the world from the Capitol. Throughout the struggles of the next twenty years for the possession of the throne, Ansperto's support was always given in opposition to the Pope. When summoned by John VIII. to a Council at Rome in 879, to answer for his offences against the Holy See, he shut the door against the papal legates, so that they were compelled to the undignified proceeding of shouting the pontiff's complaint through the keyhole; and he and all his vast flock, which included, with the suffragan Sees, the whole of Lombardy, were totally indifferent to the excommunication stammered against them by the enraged and helpless Pope.

Archbishop Ansperto was the chief restorer of the city as well as of the Church of Milan. He rebuilt and repaired the broken walls, the buildings ruined by the barbarians, and by his wise and resolute government gave a much-needed security to the life

and property of the citizens. It was a greatly increased power which he transmitted to his successors, who wielded it with the same autocratic spirit. In the confusion of the Carlovingian break-up, when no one knew who was the rightful sovereign of the old Lombard kingdom, or who held the prerogative of electing him, the Archbishops of Milan assumed the part of king-makers, and laid the Crown, now on the head of an Italian prince, now on that of some heir of the Carlovingian tradition. The constant aim of the archbishops was to increase and consolidate their power, and the weakness of the royal authority gave them their chance. The story of the city in these two centuries is chiefly composed of the contests of the Primates with the successive wearers of the Lombard crown, who in their turn endeavoured to tyrannise over the See by seizing the right to elect its occupant, and filling it with their own rapacious and arrogant favourites. These royal appointments were violently opposed by the people, so that the city was distracted by constant schisms and civil warfare. From 948 to 953 the strife between Adelmano, the choice of the citizens, and Manasses, an ambitious and intriguing foreign priest, whom Berengarius had appointed to the See, filled Milan with tumult and bloodshed, during which the Ambrosian Church was despoiled of much of its treasure. The election in 953 of a third aspirant, Walperto, to whom the others gave way, closed at last the miserable war. With the coronation of Otho the Great (964) in St. Ambrogio, by this archbishop, who had crossed the Alps in person to summon the German prince to the deliverance of Italy from the cruel tyranny of Berengarius, a blessed period of peace and consequent prosperity began for Milan, favourable to the development of those popular

forces in the city—hitherto depressed by constant terror and insecurity—which were to make her history in the coming centuries.

The peace, however, soon bred in the city a restless vigour which could find no other vent than war. Under Ariberto d'Intimiano, who was elected archbishop in 1018, Milan, now restored to undisputed pre-eminence over her rival Pavia and the rest of the Lombard cities, started upon a career of conquest. In Ariberto the archiepiscopal pallium cloaked a potent statesman and warrior, who well knew how to defend that temporal power which the ecclesiastics of the Middle Ages looked upon as the best guarantee of their spiritual authority. When the Emperor Henry II., who followed the Othos, died in 1024, and the uncertainty as to his successor on the Lombard throne threatened new trouble to Italy, Ariberto hastened to Germany, and on his sole authority, according to one chronicler, though others say that he was supported by a party of Italian magnates, offered the kingdom to Conrad the Salic. Two years later (1026) he reasserted the right of the Primate of Milan to crown the King of Italy, by laying the circlet on the new monarch's brow within the city itself. At Conrad's subsequent coronation in Rome as Emperor, the Archbishop of Milan was the most important of the imposing company of ecclesiastical princes who attended on the occasion. His dignified withdrawal from a contest with the Archbishop of Ravenna for the place of highest honour was followed by a formal recognition of his primacy in a Papal Bull, while with less self-restraint his vast train of followers reduced the company of the Ravennese prelate to proper submission by apostolic blows and knocks in the streets of Rome, amid a tremendous uproar. Milan's ecclesiastical

superiority to Ravenna and all other Italian Sees was thus triumphantly settled.

Ariberto's ambition for the glory and predominance of Milan was well supported by the people. They followed the militant prelate with enthusiasm to the subjugation of Pavia, which had refused to acknowledge Conrad as king (1027), and a little later they made a furious assault under his command upon the little neighbouring city of Lodi, and forced its freedom-loving inhabitants to submit to Ariberto's yoke and accept a bishop of his choosing. Thus Milan, impelled by the pride and ambition and necessity of expansion bred of strength and riches, was the first to provoke that spirit of hatred and revenge among the sister cities of Lombardy, which could only be expiated by centuries of bloodshed and sorrow.

But neither leader nor people had any doubt of the righteousness of their military enterprises, which were indeed invested with a sort of religious consecration. Ariberto instituted the use of a sacred Car in times of war, which bore aloft in the midst of the host the tokens of the Christian Covenant, the Cross and the Altar of Sacrifice, in sanctifying association with the Vexillum of the city. Round these emblems of their faith and of their existence as a community the citizen soldiers would rally, bearing the Car forward to victory with irresistible enthusiasm in moments of advantage, or defending it with despairing resolve when defeat threatened. Thus was originated the *Caroccio*, adopted afterwards by all the Communes of Italy—an exalted and beautiful idea, which, though often debased by association with enterprises of greed or revenge, became also the guide and inspiration of the

Lombard peoples in their noble struggle for liberty in the succeeding centuries.

That struggle was already foreshadowed in Ariberto's time. The pride of the Archbishop and the city which he governed soon came into violent contact with the will of the Emperor. Conrad resented the prelate's increasing encroachment upon the royal prerogatives. Besides the sovereign right of making war, the Archbishop claimed the privilege of investing the bishops of his jurisdiction and the secular nobles also with their fiefs. His assumption of autocratic authority provoked a large party of the lesser nobles, who made an insurrection against him in 1036, and being defeated and driven out of the city, united with the aggrieved citizens of Lodi and broke into open warfare. A fierce battle was fought at Campo Malo, in which Ariberto appears to have been worsted. The Emperor, regarding the moment as favourable for asserting his authority, crossed the Alps (1037) to restore peace. But on arriving in Milan he did not find the humility and submission which he expected, and offended, or perhaps alarmed, by the haughtiness of the Prince Prelate and the excited temper of the populace, he retired to Pavia, and there summoned Ariberto to appear before a Diet, to answer the accusations of his enemies. The Archbishop obeyed, and without allowing him time for defence, Conrad commanded his arrest. He was carried to Piacenza and there kept in captivity. But Conrad had hardly reckoned with the power which lay behind his great vassal. Instead of accepting this chastisement with resignation, Milan broke into an uproar of lamentation at the news of her pastor's imprisonment. With fastings, processions and litanies, with oblations, and benefactions to the poor, the pious citizens hoped to

propitiate Heaven on his behalf, while the more worldly-minded sought to procure his rescue. At last, after two months, Ariberto himself found a means of escape with the aid of the Abbess of the great convent of San Sisto in Piacenza. This lady, at the request of a trusty servant whom the prelate managed to send to her, despatched to him twenty mules laden with divers kinds of delicate meats, and ten waggon loads of wine, out of the goodly stores of the convent. With these provisions Ariberto made a great feast for his Teuton guards, who soon stupefied themselves with the good wine. The Milanese chronicler Landolfo describes the scene—‘ ... They became beyond measure intoxicated—persisting in their potations until the middle of the night, and each one provoking his neighbour to drink more and more.... They began to quarrel and threaten one another with rolling eyes and terrible voices, and then to weep with thick tears pouring down their faces, and so drunk were they with the wine that they did not know what they were doing, and their limbs would not serve their office so that they fell down prostrate. The servants of Ariberto, seeing them in this plight, were immensely rejoiced, and carrying them away one by one, laid them out on well prepared couches as if they had been dead men....’ While the Teutons lay thus and ‘snored terribly,’ the prisoner slipped quietly off to the river Po hard by, where he found a ship, sent by the Abbess, in readiness for him. Into this he entered, and soon reached Milan in safety, while his guards, awaking, half stupid from their drunken slumbers, went seeking for him everywhere with hideous clamour.

The fugitive was soon followed by the irate Emperor, with a great army, and Milan was closely besieged.

Mighty deeds of valour were performed on either side, according to the Milanese chroniclers. But all the efforts of the great Emperor and his hosts were unavailing against the city, defended by its ancient Roman walls and by an enormous population. After a few months he raised the siege, and endeavoured with equal futility to overthrow Ariberto by deposing him and setting up another archbishop. His persecution of Milan provoked, the chroniclers tell us, a signal manifestation of the Divine wrath, in the person of St. Ambrose himself, who appeared one day in the midst of terrible thunder and lightning as the Emperor was listening to the Mass, and caused such consternation among those present that many fell down dead. Thus, worsted by supernatural as well as earthly means, Conrad retired to Suabia in 1038, leaving the Archbishop master of the situation, and to all intents and purposes potentate of Lombardy.

But this crowning height to which Ariberto had brought the See of Milan was the brink of a signal downfall. The greatest, he was also the last of the strong ecclesiastical princes of Milan. Silently, steadily during these last centuries of revived vigour and prosperity a new force had been developing in the city, and acquiring conscious existence—the People. The wars of Ariberto's reign had endowed this force with the knowledge of arms and a sense of its own power. It was the nameless, irresistible will of the masses of the citizens which had carried Ariberto to victory over the Emperor, and this very victory tended to the undoing of the Archbishop and his order, by weakening the feudal system with which the episcopal and aristocratic power of Milan was now inextricably bound up. It had been the part of the Church of St. Ambrose to give the consecrating

impulse and inspiration to the revolt of the new world against the decaying order of the Roman Empire, and under its latest representative to lead the city, as we have just seen, to victory over the Head of feudalism. But now in its turn this great force for civilisation and humanity was to be corrupted by temporal power and possession—to renounce its mission as guide and sanctifier, and assume instead the part of opposition to the vital and progressive elements of the community. Ariberto and his clergy were, in fact, the representatives in Milan of feudalism and aristocracy. The hierarchy of St. Ambrose was composed of the great nobles of the city, in whose families the high ecclesiastical offices and benefices had became hereditary possessions. These arch-Priests, arch-Deacons, Cimiliarchs, Decumani—the Cardinals or Ordinaries, as the highest orders of the clergy were called—were great feudal magnates, forming the strongest class of the Milanese nobility. Ranged beneath them in ecclesiastic and feudal rank were the lesser clergy, just as the secular aristocracy was divided into the two degrees of Captains—*Capitani*—and their vassals, called Vavasours—*Valvassori*. Below these came the undistinguished masses of the people, merchants, artisans, and peasants, mostly serfs, and all absolutely subjected to the arbitrary government of the nobles.

The first revolt against this system was that already mentioned, which resulted in the battle of Campo Malo, and arose within the privileged class itself, being an attempt of the Valvassori and minor clergy to shake off the heavy yoke of their feudal superiors. But a much more fatal discord in the community began in 1042, when the whole populace joined with the discontented Valvassori, and broke out into fierce

rebellion against the nobles. One Lanzone, a noble who had deserted his own order, was their leader. A civil war raged for many months, filling the streets with daily tumult and bloodshed, and at last the Archbishop and the magnates were forced to abandon the city. Invoking the aid of the nobles in the neighbouring communities, they returned with a strong army and invested the city. The struggle was waged with hideous ferocity on both sides, neither giving mercy to prisoners or wounded. The besiegers built six great strongholds round the walls, commanding the principal gates, and effectually shutting out all succour of food or arms. Two long and terrible years went by, till the plight of the citizens grew desperate. Pallid and lean from famine and sickness, still they fought on with invincible souls, in the midst of the deserted palaces and falling towers of this city which, the chronicler tells us, no longer seemed, as of yore, the seat of noble kings, but rather a desolate Babylon. At last Lanzone resolved to go to Germany and seek the help of Conrad's successor, Henry III. But the Emperor, mindful of his father's experience of Milan, would only grant it on condition that his army should occupy the city, and that the people should swear fealty to himself. But the new-born democracy, groping its way to liberty through a thousand obstacles, instinctively rejected these conditions, preferring its native tyrants to a foreign yoke. Lanzone skilfully used the fear of imperial interference to persuade the besiegers to agree to a reconciliation. Peace was concluded, all mutual wrongs being forgiven, the nobles restored to their homes and possessions, and a share in the government secured to the people.

The one sacrifice offered upon the altar of this new

covenant between the classes was the leader Lanzone himself, who, at the first opportunity, was arrested and put to death by the aristocratic party. But his work was done, and the foundation of the future Republic had been laid. Archbishop Ariberto, now ill and aged, had taken refuge during the troubles at Monza, and returned to his own city, only to die (1045). His career fitly closes with the first signs of the collapse of the social order which he embodied.

CHAPTER II
The Patarini

"Dicetur in posterum subjectum Romæ Mediolanum."—
ARNULPHUS.

The revolt of the Milanese people against the nobles was associated with the great agitation for the reform of the Catholic Church, initiated and carried on in the eleventh century by S. Giovanni Gualberto, San Romualdo and his disciple, Peter Damiano, and by the Cluniac monk, Hildebrand, afterwards Gregory VII. This movement had its political aspect. The spiritual supremacy to which these men aimed to restore the dishonoured and discredited Papacy included domination over the temporal powers. The first step to be accomplished was unity of government within the Church's own body, and the suppression of the virtual independence, based on feudal dominion, of the great metropolitan Sees, Milan, Ravenna and others outside Italy. Divining with sure instinct where the power of the future lay, they allied themselves with those democratic forces to which the Ambrosian Church was now fatally opposed, in a fierce attack upon the great Lombard See.

Much laxity of discipline prevailed among the higher

clergy of Milan, whose pride and splendour was famous throughout Europe. They lived like great feudal barons; armed *cap à pie*, they led their vassals forth to battle, nor in their domestic manners were they more rigid. They were, moreover, obstinately attached by long custom to the two practices which the severer spirits in the Church had condemned and fought against for centuries, simony and marriage, both closely bound up with their feudal constitution and polity. They stoutly maintained that the ordination of married men as priests was sanctioned by St. Ambrose himself in his writings, nor did they demur to the marriage of those already in Orders, though the sentence of the great Doctor on this point was more doubtful. In fact, they married with the same unconsciousness of sin as their untonsured brethren did. The natural consequence was that the offices and benefices of the Church were bequeathed from father to son, and tended to become hereditary in certain favoured families. It followed as inevitably that bishoprics, abbacies and all offices carrying with them worldly possessions, came to be trafficked in like any other sort of estates. The investitures of them were granted by the feudal superior for fixed and regular fees, graduated according to the value of the office, a practice resulting from the introduction by Charlemagne of the system of feudal tenure into the ecclesiastical body politic. Thus there were few among the dignitaries of St. Ambrose who had not paid, according to the current price, for their spiritual rank and its accompanying temporalities, and the possession of ecclesiastical benefices, either to be held or disposed of at will, had become a form of wealth which, vitiated though its origin might be, was wound in inextricably with the complicated existence of Milanese society.

It was natural that the successive decrees of the Popes from Clement II. (1046-1047) onwards against simony and marriage should have been disregarded in Milan. The renunciation of the benefices which provided them with a livelihood, and the putting away of the wives and children to whom they were bound by the ties of innocent and natural affection, were sacrifices too hard for men whose vocation was rather worldly than spiritual. Nothing less than a social revolution could overthrow the rooted customs of the Ambrosian Church.

Such a revolution, in the heaving and unstable eleventh century, was, however, easily excited. The discontent of the lower orders with the aristocracy increased as their lately-won privileges generated the desire for a further share of power, and their particular animus against the ecclesiastical nobles was strengthened by a deep and widespread aspiration for religious purity and truth among many of the humblest people. The agitation against the real and supposed scandals in the lives of the clergy was taken up with fury in the poorest parts of the city.

A revolutionary party grew up, which became known among its opponents by the opprobrious name of *Patarini*, a term used in Milan to denote heretics, and derived perhaps from *Patari*, rag-sellers, who with their customers represented the lowest class of the people. And though the aim of the revolutionists was a social and moral, not a doctrinal, reform, there probably prevailed much freedom of thought and religious opinion among them. The heresy of the Catharists—better known under the name of Albigenses, by which they were called later in the south of France—was taking wide hold in North Italy at this time. The strange Manichean ideas of these

sectaries, who believed in a dual principle of good and evil governing the world, must have found ready acceptance in pessimistic souls who saw the pride and luxury of the great on one side, and the misery of the oppressed and enslaved masses on the other. Their ideal of extreme bodily purity, rising to an asceticism which, by denying the flesh even the mere satisfaction of its needs aimed at the liberation of the spirit from its thraldom to the Devil by the self-extinction of the human race, contrasted their lives sharply with the luxurious habits of the majority of the orthodox clergy, and by sanctifying hunger and privation, gave a new dignity and self-respect to the down-trodden poor. Moreover, their stern rejection of all pleasure and selfish ambition gave them leisure and courage to devote themselves to the sick and suffering, so that many joined themselves to their company from the impulse of gratitude. They led in fact the evangelic life, though their dark and despairing tenets were utterly alien to the spirit of Christianity. They clung to their peculiar faith with a lofty enthusiasm which persecution could not subdue.

The confusion of the Catharists, or Catari, with the Patarini probably arose from the similarity of the names, and the natural tendency of the orthodox to confuse the different forms of thought outside their own dogmatic boundaries. The Patarini sympathised with the Catharists only in their practice of purity and evangelic simplicity of life. There is little doubt, however, that the Catharists mingled with the poorer classes of the city whence the Patarini were recruited, and must have taken advantage of the confusion of ideas resulting from the revolt against the old customs and authority to spread their doctrines.

Among the Milanese clergy themselves there was a small party zealous for reform. The first to raise open protest against simony and 'concubinage' was one of these, a noble ecclesiastic called Anselmo da Baggio. Ariberto's vacant throne had been filled by the appointment of one Guido, a creature of the Emperor Henry III., who in securing his election, had partly recovered that sway over Milan which Ariberto had wrested from Conrad. Guido was a weak man, with an uneasy conscience himself about simony, since he had paid the usual fee to the emperor as his feudal superior for the confirmation of his election. Thinking to rid himself of the troublesome zeal of Anselmo, he procured his election to the bishopric of Lucca, and thus endowed him with new power. Anselmo was one of the principal allies and agents of Hildebrand, by whose influence he was raised later to the papal throne, where, as Alexander II., he was able to wield all the arms of Rome against his native Church. Another leader of a more popular class soon rose up to take his place in Milan, a certain deacon and student of letters named Arialdo. This man became the soul of the movement. He was joined by Landolfo da Cotta, one of the highest order of clergy, like Anselmo da Baggio. Landolfo was a fiery and eloquent speaker, a zealot whose body was consumed by disease and his soul by enthusiasm. The two went about preaching in public places and stirring up the poorer classes, and soon gathered together a formidable following. Invading the churches, they drove the clergy from the altars, and pursuing them with contumely and violence, sacked their houses and forced them to sign an engagement to consort no more with women. The whole city was in an uproar; all the sons of disorder rushed to join the rioters. Archbishop Guido summoned a synod of

his clergy at a safe distance from the city, and thence fulminated an anathema against the ringleaders. Arialdo and Landolfo immediately hastened to Rome to make their complaint before the throne of Peter (1057). They returned accompanied by the Bishop of Lucca and Cardinal Hildebrand himself, sent by Pope Stephen X. to examine into the accusations laid against the Archbishop and his clergy. Their arrival raised a new and tremendous uproar. The Milanese, deeply jealous of the ancient episcopal glory and prerogatives of their city, rallied to the side of their own clergy at this attempt of the Pope to interfere, and the legates, having hastily and in secret condemned the Archbishop as simoniacal, and all his practices as abominable, departed, leaving matters worse than before.

As soon as the Roman attack had been driven off, and the issue appeared to be confined within the city, the masses again joined Arialdo. The clamour of bells and trumpets filled the streets and called the people to assemble in the great Roman theatre, where Arialdo and Landolfo inflamed their minds to fury by discourses against the clergy. There were daily riots in the streets. The clergy were supported by the nobles and by all the peaceable spirits, who, however, had none of the energy and zeal of their opponents, and soon wearied of the continual disorders and tumults. The struggle continued with intermittent uproar, and two years after the mission of Hildebrand, the Pope made a new attempt at intervention (1059). This time with the Bishop of Lucca there came instead of Hildebrand, whose soul contained no balm to pour upon angry passions, the famous Peter Damian. The contemplative of Fonte Avellana, fierce ascetic as he was, and inflamed with impatience and contempt for luxurious priests,

nevertheless possessed the gift of persuading and winning men. The difficulties which had defeated the earlier legation met him also. The Ambrosian clergy stood out for the ancient freedom of their Church and Diocese and the independence of its jurisdiction. Enormous crowds gathered round the episcopal palace, thirsting for the blood of the new representatives of the papal pretensions, and the popular fury rose to a height when at a great assembly which Peter convoked to hear his message he placed the Archbishop of Milan on his left hand, giving the place of pre-eminence on his right to the Bishop of Lucca, as delegate of the Pope. But the sound of his voice calmed the tumult as he rose and eloquently proclaimed the glory of the Ambrosian Church and of the many martyrs who had sanctified it with their blood, and so skilfully and with such moving words did he reprove its abuses, that before long Archbishop, dignitaries and the whole immense throng of clerics, trembling with emotion and penitence, were prostrate before the altar, acknowledging their sinful practices and vowing to renounce them for the future. The success of the preacher was confirmed by the subsequent visit of Archbishop Guido to Rome, in answer to a summons from Nicholas II. There for the first time in history the Primate of Milan was constrained to promise obedience to the Pope of Rome, and to receive from him the symbolic ring of investiture.

This humiliation of their episcopal prince was a bitter grief to the noble party in Milan. *Veneranda est Roma in Apostolo.* But Milan is not to be despised in Ambrose, cries Arnolfo the chronicler. ‘It will be said in future that Milan is subject to Rome.’ And though Rome had won a lasting advantage, the moral effect of Peter Damian’s mission soon died out. The old

ecclesiastical system and usage was not so easily overthrown. Two years later (1061) the conflict was resumed with new fervour by the Patarini, encouraged by the accession of their ally, Anselmo of Lucca, to the Papal throne. Moreover, a new champion of reform had arisen in Erlembaldo, a warrior lately returned from a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and brother of the now dying Landolfo. Bold as a lion, breathing out fire and slaughter against the Ambrosians, Erlembaldo was a formidable foe for the timid Archbishop and his party, who were inspired by no confidence in the virtue of their cause. He appeared in the arena of conflict bearing the standard of the Church, with which he had been solemnly trusted by Pope Alexander, who did not hesitate to rekindle the flames of civil war in his native city.

The cruel scenes witnessed before were now renewed in Milan. Blood was spilt in the streets, churches were invaded and sacked, priests dragged bodily from the altars, their houses burnt, their wives misused. But when Arialdo and his lieutenant began to condemn the ceremonial usages peculiar to the Ambrosian Church, the citizens turned against them, and finding the opposition too strong, the two missionaries appealed to Rome and procured the excommunication of the Archbishop. This only aggravated the wrath of the Milanese. The Patarine leaders were abandoned by all but a few of their most devoted followers, and when Archbishop Guido appeared before the altar of the Cathedral Church with the Bull of excommunication in his hands, the fury of the immense assembly knew no bounds. The reformers were set upon in the sanctuary itself, and Arialdo was so badly beaten that he was left for dead. Guido, taking advantage of the momentary

turn of the tide in his favour, laid an interdict upon the city until it should rid itself of Arialdo. The zealot was forced to fly, and a little later he fell into a snare which had been laid for him, and was betrayed into the hands of the Archbishop's niece, lady of a castle on Lake Maggiore, by whose command he was carried in a boat to a lonely island and there cruelly done to death.

The cause of reform was thenceforth glorified by the memory and example of a martyr. Arialdo was shortly afterwards canonised by Pope Alexander. His loss inflamed his party to new zeal and drew to it a great access of adherents. Erlembaldo and a priest called Liprando di San Paolo now led the crusade, carrying it on with such fury of sword and fire that they became virtual masters of the city. The Archbishop, wearied out by the endless strife and the insidious attempts of Rome to depose him, renounced his See, and the nobles, outnumbered by the rioters, abandoned the disorderly city and sought peace and safety in their castles and country palaces.

The contest now centred on the election of a new Archbishop. Neither of the rival claimants put forward by the two parties succeeded in establishing himself on the episcopal throne. Chaos prevailed in the Ambrosian Church. Erlembaldo, strengthened by the accession of Hildebrand as Pope Gregory VII., usurped the whole authority in the city and throughout the archdiocese. He swept far and wide like an avenging sword, driving priests from their benefices, and tearing them from the altars. Half Lombardy cowered under his rude and noisy tyranny, and his name became a by-word of terror throughout Italy.

But two appalling conflagrations, which followed one

another in 1071 and 1073, and laid waste the city, deprived the people of all heart for the contest with the aristocrats. Moreover, Erlembaldo's tyranny was beginning to produce a reaction. The nobles, regaining courage, leagued together for a great effort to liberate the city from his authority. By means of promises and gold, they won a large number of the humble citizens to their side, and at last they appeared one day in force in the city, seeking their enemy. The populace, awed by their numbers and magnificent martial array, were little disposed to face them. Followed by a few only of the most faithful and zealous of the Patarini, Erlembaldo, mounted upon his war-horse, and in full armour, upholding the banner of the Roman Church, flung himself into the midst of his foes, and fell, pierced by a hundred swords.

With his death the war ended. There was none to take his place. The city, exhausted by the long strife, was glad to rest. The nobles returned to their homes and their old place in the city, and in spite of the persecution which they had suffered for twenty years, the Ambrosian clergy resumed their old practices to a large extent.

Nevertheless, the design of the great Hildebrand was achieved. The supremacy of Rome had been proclaimed, and acknowledged in the hearing of the whole world. The prestige of the greatest of the provincial Sees had suffered a blow from which it never recovered. So much was the episcopal power of Milan weakened that Gregory VII. was able to subtract many of its suffragan Sees and join them instead to other archdioceses; and before the century was over, the victory of the Pope over the Emperor Henry IV., in the famous quarrel of investitures,

obliged the Ambrosian See to yield temporal as well as spiritual allegiance to the successors of St. Peter.

And though the Milanese clergy still clung for a while to their wives, and benefices continued to be bought and sold, these doubtful practices fell more and more into disrepute. Simoniac ecclesiastics gradually disappeared. The accusation of this sin was, however, long used by Rome as a means of gaining further advantages over the See of Milan, or driving out a prelate approved perhaps by the Emperor and obnoxious to the papal interests. It was equally useful to the people in making new encroachments on the privileges of the aristocratic clergy.

The gradual concentration of authority in Rome was greatly assisted by the influence of the monastic orders, who belonged as bodies to no particular diocese, but looked to the Pope as their supreme head, and were little disposed to be submissive to the prelates in whose jurisdiction a monastery might chance to be. In 1130, Bernard of Clairvaux and his white-robed monks—who seemed to the people, we are told, wonderful as angels from heaven—appeared in Milan, and gave an immense impulse to the monastic movement there. The rise of the mendicant orders of St. Francis and St. Dominic a century later brought a vast increase of strength to the Papacy. In Milan, as everywhere, the friars gained immense influence among the masses of the people. The See of Milan was by this time completely subjugated. It was greatly diminished in wealth and importance. The Pope exercised supreme jurisdiction in the archdiocese, and his legates constantly interfered in the government, assuming the highest place and authority with the acquiescence of the Archbishop.

Deeply indeed had the See of St. Ambrose sunk since the days of the great Ariberto!

But the same movement which had defined the position of Rome, had by the process of strengthening and raising the walls of the fold, thrust an enormous number of Christians into the doctrinal wilderness outside, and the Church was now menaced by the great spread and increase of heresy. Heresy was, in fact, the fatal legacy of Hildebrand's policy. While the Papacy, absorbed in its struggles with the Empire, could spare no energy to check them, the great sect of the Catharists, unhindered by worldly ambitions, had been quietly growing in numbers and strength, till in the twelfth century it was become a fully organised Church, divided into dioceses and governed by its own bishops. These sectarians were now generally called Patarini; the name of Hildebrand's old allies had become synonymous with the enemies of the Church. The deep gulf between the Catharists and the orthodox Church was crossed by a chain of religious associations which had sprung up all over Lombardy, in protest against the luxury and scandalous manners of both clergy and laity, and were founded, like the original Patarini, upon moral rather than doctrinal principles. Many of them hovered indeed in thought upon the vague borderland between orthodoxy and heresy, and were touched by that Northern difference of religious sentiment which, after many temporary ebullitions, produced at last the Protestant revolution. In the thirteenth century fifteen different sects are enumerated in the city—the Catharists, the Believers of Milan, the Arnaldists, followers of Arnald of Brescia, the Poor Men of Lombardy, and others that were mostly local varieties of the same sects. Poverty and humility were, as their name

denotes, the distinctive attributes of the *Poor Men*, while their doctrine was suspect enough to forbid their adoption into the Church. The large embrace of Rome succeeded, however, in enfolding another association of kindred type, the Umiliati, or Humble Ones, which was destined to become enormously powerful in Milan.

This order is said to have been founded early in the eleventh century by some Milanese nobles who had been captives in Germany, and who, converted to serious thoughts by the weariness of confinement, vowed that on their return they would live a holy and Christian life. It was a society of men and women, living in their own homes with their families, but distinguished from their neighbours by humility, industry and devoutness. A century later, under the influence of St. Bernard, they formed themselves into a regular order, with a rule obliging them to strict moral virtue and to the observance of all religious duties. They devoted themselves especially to the manufacture of woollen stuffs, one of Milan's chief industries. Very soon out of the first order a second was formed, which adopted a monastic life of greater austerity, the men and women, including many married couples, living side by side in separate cloisters, and in course of time a third order arose, composed of men only, who took sacerdotal orders, and were called Canons. Thus the association, from a kind of religious guild, tended to develop into a regular order. But its rule had never been fixed or confirmed by any papal sanction, and it remained for two hundred years practically independent of Rome. Nor were its doctrines during this time free from unorthodox thought; we find the Umiliati included in the condemnation of heretical sects uttered by successive Popes from time to time

in the intervals of their political cares. They shared the virtue of simplicity, at least, with the various bodies of Poveri who hovered half in and half out of the pale of Holy Church.

In the latter part of the twelfth century the order—in obedience perhaps to that widely diffused evangelical spirit which generated the great Franciscan movement a little later—had been developing and spreading very extensively. Its votaries went about preaching repentance in the squares and open places of the different cities, and persuaded numbers of noble persons, as well as plebeians, to abandon the sins of the world and the flesh, and to live according to the pious and simple vows of the order, either in monasteries or in their own homes. Their efforts were opposed by the bishops and regular clergy, who were disposed to look upon all zeal as heretical. But Pope Innocent III., recognising their virtue and their influence on the people, resolved to secure the somewhat loose orthodoxy of the brethren, and to direct their fervour and piety to the service of the Church. He extended his favour to them, and bestowed upon them the doubtful blessing of a formal rule, which, with the privileges, included the restrictions and severe discipline of a regular monastic order. This little pleased the Umiliati, and they made a touching appeal to Innocent's successor, Honorius III., to relieve them from their new obligations, bringing forward an ancient formula, given them, they declared, by St. Bernard, to the observance of which they had already bound themselves. But the Pope absolved them against their will from their old vows of obedience and insisted on the observance of Innocent's rule.

Thus the death-blow was dealt to the original spirit of the institution. After a short period of increased fervour and activity, in which they became the terror of their old spiritual kinsfolk, the heretics, the order followed the course of most other monastic bodies. Humility and poverty were exchanged for papal favours and honours, and for rich possessions, and before long corruption and laxity crept in among the brethren. The sacerdotal order became the first and most important, while those who followed the original rule of simplicity, humility and purity, living in their own homes, were called the Third Order. The brethren acquired in time great wealth from the woollen industry, which they continued to pursue, and later on they were largely employed in the public offices of the city, and especially in its financial concerns. Thus they gradually became very powerful, and under the tyrannies of the Visconti and Sforza, provided Milan with many great statesmen. In the sixteenth century the vast possessions of the order, in the form of commendas and prebends, etc., were practically owned by a few great families, and the actual number of the brethren had fallen to less than a hundred. Cardinal Carlo Borromeo procured the suppression of the ancient brotherhood in 1570, on the ground of the vices and luxury of its members. He risked his life by this step, since the degenerate brethren were not ashamed to employ assassins to attempt the murder of their spoliator. The possessions of the order were distributed among other convents, and their principal House, the Brera, which had belonged to them since the twelfth century, was handed over to the Jesuits.

The desire to define and purify doctrine, and to strengthen the Church, produced under a series of determined Popes a fierce outburst of persecution in

the thirteenth century. In Milan, where heterodox opinions were held by many of the most powerful as well as the lesser citizens, it was the signal for repeated bouts of civil war and constant struggles between the Pope and the rulers of the city. The introduction of the Dominicans into Milan in 1220 gave an enormous advantage to the cause of orthodoxy. As soon as the people saw the Christ-like virtues of poverty and humility and evangelising ardour, hitherto associated in their minds only with the condemned Patarini, displayed by these approved Catholic orders, they followed the Friars with enthusiasm, careless indeed of doctrine, but believing and trusting those who lived as they did themselves and mingled with them freely, understanding their sorrows and needs. It is doubtful whether St. Dominic himself was ever in Milan, but his famous disciple, Peter of Verona, was sent there in 1232 by the Pope, with full authority to search out and punish heretics. Peter carried out his mission with merciless zeal. His name, made terrible by its unsparing use as authority for the infliction of torments and fiery death, came to be feared throughout Lombardy. So bitter a hatred did he rouse by his stern interpretation of the awful word, *not peace but a sword*, that he himself fell a victim to the weapon of his predilection. On a morning in 1252, as he was returning on foot with a single companion from Como to Milan, two assassins sprang out upon him from an ambush and smote him to death with a sword. The sword, transfixing his skull, is familiar to us all in mediæval and Renaissance art as the ornament and emblem of the Saintly Inquisitor.

The murder of Peter Martyr was not inspired by heretical revenge alone. Motives of worldly policy

had a share in the deed. The division of orthodoxy and heresy virtually followed that between the two great parties in the State, the aristocracy and the people, and the conflict between them repeated to some extent the great Patarine struggle two centuries earlier, though now, in the reversal of issues the Patarini were associated with the aristocrats against Rome. The murder of Peter was committed at the instigation of some of the nobles. The Archbishop himself, Fra Leone da Perego, a Franciscan, a man of notable character and ambition, who hated Peter, both as the agent of papal arrogance and usurpation in Milan, and as the exalter of the rival order of the Dominicans, was possibly not unaware of the plot. But the political aspect of the doctrinal warfare belongs to an epoch which we have not yet reached in our story of the city. It is enough to say here that the murder of Peter of Verona was of the greatest service to the cause of orthodoxy and the Church. It excited universal execration of the heretics, and the Dominican, elevated to the ranks of the Martyrs, was far more powerful with his cloven brow than even when alive. From this time forward heresy rapidly lost ground, and with the gradual quieting of party passion, under the domination of a single family in the city, it lost all political force, and died away in insignificance and oblivion, till the great reawakening of religious controversy in the sixteenth century.

CHAPTER III
The Free City

"... Venne il dì nostro
O milanesi, e vincere bisogna."—CARDUCCI.

After the blows and humiliation which the Milanese Church suffered in the eleventh century from the united attack of Rome and the people, it was no longer able to stem the popular movement towards freedom. Throughout the long civil war the incipient Republic had been developing and gradually limiting, more and more, the domination of the archbishop and the nobles. This process, which was being repeated everywhere in Lombardy, was greatly favoured by the weakness of the Empire during the long minority of Henry IV. The cities, freed from the intervention of a foreign suzerain, were able to shake off to some extent the rule of feudalism. The great war waged later by Gregory VII. and his kindred spirit, the Gran Contessa Matilda, against Henry IV. and the claims of imperialism, promoted, with the power of the Papacy, the freedom of the Communes, and showed in these two great elements of the national life unity of aim, Italy's best defence against the stranger.

By the end of the eleventh century Milan was, in all

its external relations, practically a free city, owning little more than nominal allegiance and a ceremonious reverence to the Emperor, and allying herself now with him, now with his resolute foe Matilda, or defying the one and the other, as it pleased her best. Within the community itself the principle of popular freedom and representation was recognised in the government, and by means of constant insurrections the lower orders had forced the nobles to recognise their rights. The Commune, whose birth historians have dated from the great revolution of 1066 when Lanzone kept Archbishop Ariberto and the nobles in exile for three years, was now in full being. The institution about this time of elective magistrates, whose title of *Consuls* revived the old Latin tradition of the city, marks the emancipation of the young Republic from the archiepiscopal despotism. But the share of the ordinary citizens in the privileges of this Constitution was still much restricted. The Consuls appear to have been chosen exclusively at first from the higher class, whose hereditary habit of authority fitted them to govern, and under a constitutional form these officials tended to repeat the old aristocratic oligarchy. But the nobles had no longer any legal support in their attempts to tyrannise, and the whole system of government was in a state of flux, and subjected to ceaseless modifications and change by the continual revolts of the people, who, by the simple force of numbers, made their strength felt, and vindicated their growing pretensions to a larger part in the affairs of their city.

The same vitality which had won Milan her own freedom impelled her to the oppression of the weaker communities around her. Her first fulfilment of this tragic law of progress was the destruction of

her neighbour, Lodi, a strong and flourishing community, whose rivalry was a constant menace to her own trade and prosperity. There was a long-standing hatred between the two cities. The times lent abundant pretext to the Communes to make war upon one another. The quarrel between Empire and Church entangled them all in its immense web. Each, in embracing the one or the other cause, was guided by its local sympathies and antipathies, and reflected the general strife on a smaller scale in its relations with its neighbours.

In 1111, Milan, ally of the Church, scarcely waiting till Lodi's protector, the Emperor Henry V., had turned his back for the time on Lombardy, attacked the smaller city in full force, and ruined it to the foundations. The miserable inhabitants, sternly forbidden to rebuild their old homes, made poor little hamlets in which to shelter themselves in the vicinity, and there dragged on a poverty-stricken existence under the oppressive yoke of their conquerors, who jealously deprived them of every means of recovery. Yet the wonderful vitality which animated these young Italian communities preserved Lodi from utter despair, and smouldered in her, ready to burst out in revolt on the first opportunity.

Milan's next enterprise was the subjugation of Como, which was fast developing into a rich and powerful community, strong in the possession of a lake navy. That city, however, resisted with great vigour, retaliating with frequent success upon her aggressors, and before she was finally subdued the war dragged on for ten years. Nearly all the North Italian cities united with Milan against her, and she was finally captured and burnt down in 1127, and her inhabitants compelled to swear fealty to Milan.

During the quarrel for the Empire between Lothair and Conrad, after the death of Henry V., and the preoccupation of each of those monarchs in turn with the affairs of Germany, the great Lombard city pursued her sovereign way unchecked. Pavia, the old royal city, and her chief rival, whose subjugation was to cost Milan yet three centuries of almost ceaseless warfare, now felt, as often before, the strength of her arm, and was compelled to bow to her will in the general councils of Lombardy, and, with powerful Cremona and the rest of North Italy, to follow her lead.

But the aggressive and tyrannic conduct of the great city was preparing for her an awful day of retribution. In 1152, the death of the Emperor Conrad and the election of his nephew, Frederick Barbarossa, opened a new era for Italy. The young monarch, half barbarian, half Paladin, was resolved to restore the power of the Empire in Italy. The first step towards this end was the reduction of the chief vassal, Milan, to the obedience which she had so long forgotten. Her sins against her neighbours gave him a pretext. One day, at a Diet at Constance (1153), two citizens of Lodi, bearing heavy crosses upon their shoulders, to signify the grievous afflictions which Milan had put upon their community, entered the hall, and kneeling before the Emperor, besought his protection and help. Frederick, having listened to their tale, swore to punish their arrogant and usurping foe. He straightway despatched an envoy, named Sicherius, to the Milanese, commanding them to cease from oppressing Lodi. But so little was the distant power of the Empire feared, in comparison with that of the great Lombard city near at hand, that when the two Lodigiani, who had undertaken their mission without

the knowledge of their fellow-citizens, returned home, and proclaimed the benevolent intentions of the new monarch, the people were inexpressibly dismayed. With woeful countenances they execrated the ‘most stupid men’ who had brought them into this plight, and when Sicherius appeared shortly after, they entreated him to abandon his journey, lest he should bring the vengeance of Milan upon them. The envoy, however, not daring to disobey the imperial mandate, proceeded on his way, and presented his letters in Milan. The Consuls read them, flung them on the ground, and stamped them under foot, imperial seal and all, with fury and contempt. Sicherius himself escaped with difficulty from their hands. Returning to Lodi, he told his tale, and the unhappy citizens prepared themselves for immediate ruin.

But Milan, having recovered calmness and begun to contemplate her rash act with some trepidation, spared them for the time, and awaited the development of events. This was not slow. Frederick, deeply offended, descended upon Lombardy in the following year, with an enormous host, fully resolved to humble the arrogant Milanese. He held a great Diet at Roncaglia. Hither with the rest of the princes and magnates of Italy came the Consuls of Milan, and offered all the ceremonial tokens of submission and reverence. But the impossibility of reconciling the differences between the monarch and the Republic quickly became evident. Milan utterly refused to release Lodi and Como from her rule. The Emperor soon proceeded to open hostility against the city. But he found his task no light one. Milan’s sister communities were still withheld by fear from lending aid to her foe, whose glittering show of authority they held for transitory and insubstantial. Even Lodi

was only persuaded with difficulty to forswear her forced oath of fealty to her oppressor and give credence to Frederick's promises of protection. Her diffidence was well justified. Frederick contented himself with besieging and destroying Milan's faithful ally, Tortona, capturing a few outlying castles and laying waste her territory, and then, intent on compelling Pope Hadrian to confirm his election by crowning him in Rome, he passed on southwards (1155). The defiant Milanese immediately proceeded to rebuild Tortona and to wage fierce war with the Pavesi, who, true to their traditions, had given enthusiastic obedience to the new representative of the Empire. Meanwhile Frederick, having received the imperial diadem, made his way back through the eastern parts of Italy, translating his heroic aspirations into a reality of fire and blood and spoliation, and finally, having exhausted his treasury, returned into Germany. His unlucky protégés of Lodi were abandoned to the mercy of their enemies. Their villages were surprised and captured by the Milanese, and the people compelled to flee in the darkness of night. 'Who, seeing the women stumbling along the way, with their little ones, some in their arms, some clinging to their garments, some falling behind wailing—who seeing them fall into the ditches in the darkness and the rain, would not have been sad and moved to compassion? Who would not have been melted into tears?' cries the chronicler Morena. Many died from the hardships which they suffered, and the rest took refuge in hamlets and in friendly Cremona. For the second time the Milanese destroyed their homes and razed their city to the ground.

The other allies of the Emperor also suffered the vengeance of the arrogant city. Novara and Pavia

and other communes had to lament defeat and devastation. Thus Milan prepared for the new coming of the Emperor, who, all well knew, was but biding his time and gathering strength for the work of punishment. In 1158 he crossed the Alps again, followed by a mighty host of vassals. He proceeded directly against Milan. The citizens, who had fortified themselves during his absence with an immense fosse and huge earthworks which enclosed a much wider circuit than the old walls, calmly awaited his attack. With his company of tributary kings and princes and archbishops, the Emperor sat down with all solemn preparation round the city. To each gate was allotted a prince in command of an army. Seeing the magnificent array and the determined purpose of the invader, Milan's fickle allies, one and all, sent their forces to join him, anxious to propitiate the stronger party, and not unwilling to strike a blow at their domineering leader. No less than a hundred thousand fighting-men surrounded the city. Milan was confronted with the fate which she had pitilessly inflicted on others. Struck by sudden dismay, or persuaded by treacherous counsels, she had hardly endured the siege for a month before she surrendered and humbled herself to acknowledge the supremacy of the Emperor. Satisfied with her prompt submission, Frederick confined his revenge to the exaction of his full imperial rights, a penalty grievous enough to a community so long accustomed to complete freedom. She was compelled to take the oath of fealty to the Emperor, to restore to him the *regalia*—which consisted chiefly of the produce of certain taxes—to renounce all pretensions of sovereignty over Lodi and Como, and to accept an imperial legate as her supreme magistrate.

Frederick's victory was, however, little more than a mockery. Milan's vitality and spirit of independence were too strong to be so easily subdued. As soon as the Emperor had passed on to another part of Italy, she boldly broke the newly-established peace and assaulted the German garrisons left behind in Lombardy. Her example fired many of the other cities to violate the obedience which they had sworn to the Emperor, and the whole of North Italy was soon in arms again. Too rashly, however, had the Milanese disregarded the nature of him whom they were defying. Vowing to accomplish his purpose without mercy this time, Frederick hastened back. Before attacking Milan again, he encamped before her devoted ally, the small city of Crema, which, after a siege conducted with barbarous ferocity, he captured and burnt. Still delaying his vengeance on the chief offender, he spent two years in laying waste the Milanese territory and capturing her castles, and having effectually destroyed her sources of supply, he sat down once more (1161) before the city marked by his implacable will for destruction.

The siege lasted for seven months. No noble deeds of valour and chivalry distinguished the German Paladin's emprise; he accomplished his work by the slow and cruel hand of famine. Every gate was closely blockaded, and all compassionate bearers of food from outside to the starving people were almost without exception captured, and either ruthlessly scourged or maimed of the right hand. Frederick showed the besieged none of the respect due to gallant foes. He strung up his prisoners on gallows, nobles and plebeians alike, in the view of their kinsfolk and friends within, or sent them back sightless into the city. Within the walls, hunger reached such a pitch that in their madness husbands

and wives, fathers and sons, turned upon one another. The hideous selfishness of bodily need disfigured the gaunt faces in the streets, while the spectacle of the mutilated wretches who had passed through the Emperor's hands, breathed into all hearts dreadful apprehensions of their future fate. In their despair the people cried out for surrender, and at last the Consuls, aware of the inflexibility of the foe, and fearing that to resist longer was to sacrifice the entire people to the extremity of his vengeance, threw themselves upon the mercy of the Emperor, and surrendered the city at discretion (1162).

The scenes which follow paint vividly for us the tragedy of the great city's downfall. The magnitude of the punishment which Frederick meted out to Milan invests him with a kind of sublimity. This was his opportunity to deliver a blow which should resound to the four corners of the earth, and accomplish, once for all, by the horror of its mere narration, the subjugation of the rest of rebellious Lombardy. None knew better than this mediæval monarch how to surround his revenge with all those awful aspects and illusions of terror that impress the minds of men. Day after day, processions of citizens, with bowed heads, and ropes round their necks, presented themselves before him at his command, as he sat enthroned in state in rebuilt Lodi, the Empress Beatrice at his side, his vassal kings and princes on either hand, and still the doom of the city remained unspoken. The eight Consuls—some of the noblest patricians of Milan—came, holding their naked swords in their right hands, and swore to do the will of the Conqueror. Next appeared three hundred cavaliers, and kissing the Emperor's foot, delivered up to him the Milanese standards; while to Mastro Guitelmo, a man much revered by his fellow-citizens,

was committed the bitter charge of laying the keys at his feet. Still another mark of humiliation was demanded of them, and a day or two later came the Sacred Car itself, with the banner of the Cross, and all the most venerable insignia of the Republic, to be surrendered for the completion of Milan's shame.

Then at last the voice from the throne spoke, commanding that beside every gate of the city the fosse should be filled up and the walls destroyed, so that he might march in in triumph. Milan—who for centuries had proudly claimed the right of keeping all sovereigns excluded from the enclosure of her walls—was now herself to lay low her defences to admit a victorious monarch. A few days later Frederick made his entrance with his army over the ruined walls, and the dreadful fiat went forth, dooming the great city to complete destruction. The inhabitants were ordered to quit their homes, taking with them what they could carry. No entreaty, no tears, even of his own followers, could move Frederick's resolve. The piteous spectacle of the outcast people, huddled in masses outside the walls in the bitter cold of March, homeless, not knowing where to go, and uttering loud lamentations, could not change his inexorable purpose. With an extremity of cruelty he committed the work of ruin to Milan's neighbours and bitterest foes—the men of Lodi, Pavia, Novara, Como, Cremona—all burning to retaliate a thousand wrongs. They threw themselves with fury upon the doomed buildings, each community satiating its vengeance on the quarter facing towards its own city. In a very few days an incredible amount of destruction was wrought. But it was the work of months to raze to the ground the towers, the fine palaces and public buildings, many of them surviving from the days of the Roman

Empire, and the crowded habitations of a vast population. The churches and religious houses alone were spared, and for a while the campanile of the Cathedral, a tower of admirable beauty and height, which had not its like, they say, in all Italy, still rose untouched above the ruins, a beacon of consolation to the despairing people. But at last, the implacable decree of the conqueror pronounced its sentence, and that, too, fell. Finally not more than a fifth part of the fair city, which men called the flower of Italy—the May City—was left standing.

From the spectacle of burning Milan, which he watched with his own eyes, the magnanimous Avenger passed on with his Empress to celebrate the Feast of Olives at Pavia! Frederick was now the dread of all Italy. The trembling cities of Lombardy crept to his feet and kissed them. The crown of Italy, hitherto withheld from him and now conceded by fear, was set upon his head. As for the Milanese, crowded in the poor villages and suburbs around their ruined city, and barely able to exist, they were fain to accept any conditions which he imposed.

But the great Emperor's fortunes had reached the flood, and the turn was at hand. To have made his triumph enduring he must have exterminated all Lombardy. While the Milanese people breathed, the Republic lived in spirit, only awaiting the least relief from the pressure of the conqueror to take substance once again. And now that its sins and arrogance had been wiped out by such an awful expiation, the hatred and jealousy of the sister Communes changed to compassion. The deep roots of a common nationality began to stir. Moreover, all were enslaved alike, all groaned together under the intolerable oppression of the imperial officers who had been

substituted for their old system of self-government. ‘They who had been used to live without restraint at ease and in liberty, and to dispose of their own affairs according to their will, held this bondage as the deepest shame, saying among themselves that it was better to die than to suffer such shame, such dishonour,’ writes Morena. Ground down with grievous and irregular taxation, their noblest citizens flung as hostages into the governors’ dungeons, their industry and commerce strangled, they began to regard war even with the terrible Barbarossa as preferable to this degradation and slow ruin. Their spirit of revolt was encouraged by that great counterbalancing power to the Empire, the Papacy, which after a period of schism and depression was lifting its head once more. In Alexander III., now completely victorious over the rival Pope Victor, nominated by Barbarossa, the Communes found that inspiration and direction which it was Rome’s traditional part to give to the cause of freedom and nationality. The papal excommunication laid upon their oppressor gave the consecration of a religious cause to rebellion. Fomented by secret emissaries from Rome, the movement grew and gathered head. Disturbances broke out everywhere in North Italy, and culminated in a meeting of envoys from five Communes—Brescia, Bergamo, Cremona, Mantua, Ferrara—with the delegates of Milan at a convent near Bergamo (1167), and the formation of a defensive alliance, which was to become the famous Lombard League. The first thing resolved on by the allies was the rebuilding of Milan and the protection of the city from every foe until she should grow strong enough to defend herself. A week or two later the unhappy Milanese, huddling together in their wretched hovels, and momentarily expecting a

second destruction from their old enemies of Pavia, were rejoiced at the sight of the horsemen of Bergamo, with their banner displayed, riding swiftly to their succour. Troops from the other friendly cities followed. The Milanese were solemnly conducted into their ruined city on the 27th April 1167, and the work of restoration began. With marvellous rapidity new walls and dwellings grew up. Gathering confidence and strength every day, the League soon broke into active hostility against those communities which remained faithful to the Emperor, and the castles occupied by his garrisons. Lodi was compelled by force to join the new fellowship. Fresh accessions came continually, and by the end of the following year the League numbered twenty-three cities, all sworn to resist the usurpations of the emperor with the sword. Pavia, almost alone, remained aloof, faithful to her hate of Milan.

Frederick, returning hastily from a campaign against the Pope, found his castles captured, Milan re-risen defiant from her ashes, and all North Italy armed against him. The Emperor was not equal to this new situation. His former triumph had, in fact, only been achieved by the aid of a part of the cities themselves, and his German levies, diminished by fighting and pestilence, were powerless to contend with a vast hostile combination of all together. His army and his very person were in utmost peril. There was one way only of salvation for him—retreat. In a manner very different to the majesty of his coming, with furtive haste, unknown even to his allies, he stole back to Germany early in 1168.

Six years passed before the Emperor felt himself strong enough to confront his rebellious vassals again. In his prolonged absence the Lombard League

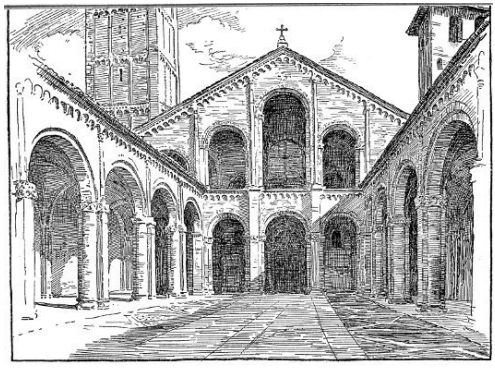
had acquired mighty strength. Milan had arisen from her chastening of shame and sorrow stronger and more honourable than before. Renouncing her old vexatious claims upon her smaller neighbours, she now contented herself with the dignity of leadership among the Communes. The League gathered itself together to meet the new onslaught of Barbarossa, and though he spread terror and desolation throughout the land, his effort to subdue the steady resistance of the cities was fruitless. His purpose was contrary to the laws of nature, and the stars in their courses fought against him. Pavia, Como and the Marquis of Montferrat supported him alone of all North Italy. In May 1176, impatient to strike a crushing blow against the rebels, Frederick was marching with new reinforcements from Germany to join his Lombard allies when, a few miles from Milan, between Busto Arsizio and Legnano, he encountered the Milanese army, which had come forth with the Sacred Car in its midst to stay his progress. A great battle took place. Driven back at first by the Teuton cavalry, the Republican soldiers, who had taken a desperate vow to conquer or to die, rallied around the Caroccio, and fought with such obstinate courage that they beat back every assault of the foe, and at last, with a sudden rush, utterly routed them and drove them into flight. The slain, the captives, and the fugitives drowned in the Ticino could not be numbered. The monarch's treasure-chest fell into the hands of the victors, and a more precious booty still, his shield, his banner and his lance. His very person was missing after the battle, and the Empress, waiting in the Castle of Baradello, clothed herself in black and mourned him for dead. He had, however, escaped in safety, and a few days later made his way to Pavia.

The splendid victory of Legnano decided once and for all the fate of Lombardy. Frederick realised at last the strength of the despised citizen forces, and condescended to seek for peace. In the following year (1177) at Venice was held that famous meeting of Pope, Emperor and the Consuls of the Lombard Communes, at which legend and art express the humiliation of the invader and the triumph of Italy, by picturing the monarch prostrate beneath the foot of the Pope. A truce of six years was agreed upon at this Congress, and at the end of that period the famous Peace of Constance (1183) finally confirmed to the cities all the privileges for which they had so nobly fought. The right of self-government, of war and peace, the possession of the regalia, with other minor prerogatives, were secured to them in perpetuity, and the only dues to be paid by them to the Emperor were a ceremonial fealty, an annual tribute, certain supplies when he visited the country in person, and the acceptance of his legate as the ultimate judge in the courts of judicature.

Thus did Lombardy win freedom. For reborn Milan, her new position and dignity was signalised in 1186 by the appearance of her late foe and oppressor in the character of a gracious guest, and the celebration of the marriage of his son, Henry, King of the Romans, with Constance of Sicily, in the basilica of St. Ambrogio. But the narrow crooked streets that had grown hastily up around the churches, and the few surviving fragments from the destruction of 1162, were no image of the imperial Milan of the past, nor did the fair words and mutual promises of friendship which passed between Frederick and the citizens express the real feelings of either party. When, sick at the failure of his worldly projects, the yet vigorous warrior turned his ambition to that

holier enterprise, the conquest of the Sepulchre of Christ, and leaping one hot day into an insignificant stream in Syria, was drowned in its shallow flow, all Milan broke into rejoicing. Nor was there ever kindness between the Republic and his descendants. The Milanese consistently opposed and thwarted the policy of Henry VI., and after his early death did their utmost to depress the House of Suabia by warmly supporting Otho IV. against the interests of Henry's infant son Frederick.

During the reign of Otho, while the political field was divided between him and the young Suabian prince, the disputed imperial authority had no power to harm, and Milan was free to resume the interrupted process of development and expansion. As before, this process was not a peaceful one. The subsidence of the Teutonic flood had left behind bitter dregs in Lombardy in the shape of new causes of feud and animosity between individual Communes. Relieved from the pressure of Frederick's tyranny, the cities readjusted themselves on the lines of their former divisions. The Lombard League broke up into warring elements, and the restless land fermented with a cruel internecine strife.



ATRIUM OF ST. AMBROGIO

But when, some years later, Frederick II., grown to manhood, had cast off the bondage in which the Pope had fettered his youth, and seated on the imperial throne proved himself indeed *the third blast of Suabia*, heir in spirit as in blood of his mighty grandsire, the Communes proved true to one another, and to the newly threatened cause of freedom, and the great Lombard League, with Milan at its head, sprang to life again to face the tyrant. During the long and desolating wars which Frederick's ambition inflicted upon North Italy, Milan steadfastly fought against him, even when most of her fellows had been induced by fear or self-interest to desert the good cause. Late in 1237 her army, which had marched to the aid of the Brescians, was surprised by the imperial host at Cortenuova and suffered a crushing defeat. Multitudes of her soldiers perished, and the Sacred Car itself, stuck fast in morasses, had to be abandoned in the retreat. Its defenders were able, however, to save the Cross and Banner, and break the car to pieces. Frederick's exultation over these fragments, upon which he bound the captive Podestà of Milan, Pietro Tiepolo, son of the Doge of Venice, and dragged him, in imitation of a Roman triumph, through the streets of Cremona, is a measure of the importance which he attached to his victory over the Lombard city.

With the defeat of Cortenuova the cause of the Communes seemed lost. All trembled beneath the heel of the conqueror, save Milan and the 'lioness' Brescia, and one or two others. To the Emperor's summons to surrender at discretion the Milanese returned messages of defiance. They had the support

of the Pope, whose emissaries, the mendicant friars, mingled everywhere with the masses of the people, exhorting them to resistance. In 1239, Gregory proclaimed a crusade against the oppressor, whose destruction thus became a sacred obligation upon the faithful. The Cross and the Sceptre, irreconcilable emblems, now confronted each other with a clear and definite issue.

A year and a half passed after Cortenuova before Frederick actually invaded the Milanese territory. The Republic, heartened by the magnificent example of Brescia, whose successful resistance to a nine months' siege had delayed the Emperor's designs against the chief city and greatly dimmed his military glory, went boldly forth to meet him. A noble of gigantic stature, named Ottobello da Mandello, towering in his mail of proof over friends and foes alike, led the citizen knights undauntedly against Frederick's Saracen troops from Sicily, whose dark faces and infidel garb, joined to ferocious courage, made them a name of terror throughout Italy. With the Milanese fought Gregorio da Montelungo, papal legate, and the Franciscan Fra Leone da Perego, afterwards Archbishop of Milan, besides a great number of friars, Minor, Preaching and Umiliati, *who not only, girding themselves with swords and putting on helmets, displayed the false image of soldiers*, but also excited the citizens to the conflict by promising absolution to all who offended the person of the Emperor or of any of his followers, as Frederick himself complained in a letter to the King of England. No regular pitched battle, however, took place. The Republicans fought with the stratagem of those attacked in their own country, and by cunningly entangling the enemy amid their streams and canals, opening dams and loosing the waters

upon him, plunging him into hidden pitfalls, and surprising him with sudden attacks in his most embarrassed moments, drove him by the aid of sword and flood out of their territory.

Six years later (1245) the Emperor again invaded the Milanese country, which in the meanwhile had been laid bare by a desolating war of several years with his ally, Pavia. But fortune was still against him. His son Enzo, newly created King of Sardinia, encountering a citizen force one day, ventured himself too boldly in single combat with a Republican knight, and was overthrown and made prisoner. Frederick, having obtained his release, withdrew his army, and made no further attempt to subdue the great Lombard city.

Thus was Milan's account with the House of Suabia closed for ever. With the failure of Frederick's fortunes and his death in 1250 was extinguished the last appearance of that great mediæval idea—the Holy Roman Empire—as a dangerous element in Italian politics. The imperial tradition might linger on and cause a temporary disturbance from time to time in the peninsula, influencing the vicissitudes of its internal quarrels, but it had no longer power to revolutionise or molest the settled constitution of the free Lombard Communes. The mediæval triumph of Italy over the foreigner was accomplished. In the course of the last two centuries, Milan, in whose development is mirrored that of all Lombardy, had completely asserted and defined her nationality. In her Church, in her constitution, law and sentiment, she was now one at last with the rest of Italy. It remained for her, leader in the long struggle now happily determined, to produce in the epoch of Strong Men which was about to succeed the epoch of

the People, the man strong enough to overthrow all rivals and to weld the many independent cities and States of the peninsula into a united Italy under an Italian king. How she tried to do this and failed will be seen later.

CHAPTER IV
The Reign of Faction

"Factions alone are the cause of our great ills."—PRATO.

So wrote a Milanese chronicler in the sixteenth century. Had the people but one mind, he adds, assuredly no city would be more pleasant and fortunate than theirs. His complaint holds equally good for the thirteenth century. The presence of a foreign invader did indeed produce a temporary union of heart and hand, and so far the earlier generations show a noble contrast to their descendants of three hundred years later. But even while Frederick II. was still in the land, and in response to opportunities of selfish advantage offered by alliance with him, there were constant defections from the League, and we find the whole of North Italy seething with the warfare of city against city. After his death, when the mutual rage and hate was no longer checked by any fear of a general oppressor, the strife was continued with worse fury under *the diabolical names of Guelf and Ghibelline*, to use the expression of a contemporary writer, the divisions between city and city being repeated within each community itself. The Lombard scene dissolves into a whirling confusion of fratricidal war, in which

beneath the cross-currents and blind purposes of individual passion and greed, we may distinguish the two steady principles of the Church and democracy on the one side, and the aristocratic and feudal element, deriving its right from the Empire, on the other. In Milan the issue, which had long before defined itself as a struggle between nobles and people, remains fairly clear. The plebeians had forced their way more and more into the government. Their right to share in the election of the Consuls had been long conceded, and some among them had even taken a place in that august body. In 1198 they had acquired the strength of union and organisation by forming themselves into an association calling itself the *Credenza di Saint Ambrogio*, with elective magistrates and officers of its own, and a certain share in the government and the revenues of the community. This body consisted of the lesser trades and guilds, but excluded the mass of poorer artisans and labourers. The merchants, bankers, traders in wool, etc., had their corporation also; the lesser nobles were banded in a society called the *Motta*, and the great nobles formed the *Società dei Gagliardi*, so that no less than four *factions* existed in Milan at the opening of the thirteenth century, besides the populace, which threw its weight on one side or another, with the quick inconsistency of irresponsibility and impulse. Each faction had its separate claims and ambitions, but the tendency of the three lower ones was to unite against the great nobles, who, amid continual uproar and conflict, were gradually stripped of their exclusive power and privileges. And in 1258 the last and most sacred enclosure of their caste was stormed and carried by the Vulgar: a decree of the Republic threw open the highest offices of the Ambrosian Church to

plebeians. The twelfth and thirteenth centuries were, in fact, the Epoch of the People, and though all classes, high and low, fought loyally together against Barbarossa and Frederick II., it was the democratic preponderance in the city which determined its steady opposition to the imperial pretensions. The same principle threw Milan on the Guelf side, which she upheld with ardour in the general Lombard warfare, manifesting her party zeal especially in a fierce intermittent war with Pavia. That city was as necessarily Ghibelline, though the party cry on either side was but the excuse for the efforts of the one to hasten and the other to delay the inevitable absorption of the lesser by the greater.

With the power of the people was associated as of old the predominance of papal influence in the city and the depression of the archiepiscopal See. St. Peter had now completely subjected St. Ambrose. The assumption of supremacy in temporal as well as spiritual matters on the part of the Popes, their constant interference by means of legates, the activity of their innumerable and ubiquitous agents, the friars, had indeed reduced the seat of Ariberto to comparative insignificance, while the decay of feudal power and the depression of the aristocracy had robbed it of its wealth. But even assisted by the Pope, and at the height of their strength and triumph, the popular forces were impotent to establish any enduring order in the city. The nobles were still too powerful to submit peaceably to political inferiority. Moreover, as the offices and honours once confined to them became open to all, the successful and wealthy plebeians tended to join the upper class, which began to lose distinction of race in that of wealth and ability. The aristocracy, thus continually replenished with new blood,

received fresh vigour and life, and the old divisions gradually merged into two classes, the *milites*, who fought on horseback and in armour, and the *plebs*, or general mass of citizens, who, little trained and lightly armed, accompanied the horsemen into battle on foot. The struggle between these two radical orders transformed Milan's short period of republican liberty into a scene of anarchy and civil warfare, leading to the inevitable end of faction and strife, the tyranny of an individual.

Already by the end of the twelfth century the struggle of the factions over the annual election of the Consuls occasioned so much tumult and bloodshed, that the citizens in despair agreed with one accord to submit themselves to the government of a Podestà chosen from outside. But this device for peace ended by aggravating the strife. The faction uppermost for the time appointed a fierce partisan from another city, perhaps the leader of an exiled faction, who embroiled Milan with his own Commune, and exalted his sympathisers within her walls at the expense of the other party. The general discontent and disorder was reflected in constant changes in the Constitution. In the absence of any stable principle of government the power tended to fall into the hands of individuals. This was the opportunity of the nobles, from whose order the leaders of men naturally sprang. Taking advantage of the forces ready to their hands, these put themselves at the head of aristocrats or plebs, without much regard for principle, and in so doing resumed their ancient pre-eminence in the community, and initiated the new Epoch of Great Men, which was to succeed the failing Epoch of the People.

This process, at work throughout Lombardy, is

shown in the second half of the thirteenth century in Milan by the gradual narrowing of the general party issue into a struggle for predominance between two great Houses, who represent and sum up in their mutual quarrel the diverse aims of the factions, and divide the community into two sharply defined and bitterly hostile bands, which fall inevitably, though by no means very precisely, into the wide general division of Guelf and Ghibelline. These were the Houses of the Della Torre, or Torriani, and of the Visconti.

In the race for supremacy the first far outstripped the second. The Della Torre were country nobles, who had, however, long been subjects and citizens of Milan, and though living usually on their estates in the Valsassina, they often appeared in the city and took part in its government and politics. They are named among the Capitani—the great secular nobles of Milan—from early in the twelfth century. They had from the first aided and protected the cause of the people against their own order, and it was this sympathy which lifted them to greatness on the democratic wave of the thirteenth century.

The power of this House in Milan arose first out of the gratitude of the city for the compassionate succour which Pagano della Torre, head of the House in 1237, gave to the wounded and starving fugitives from the disastrous battle of Cortenuova, whom he sheltered and tended in the Valsassina, and afterwards helped to get back safely to Milan. The Commune rewarded him with offices and with gifts of houses, and from that time the Torriani became regular inhabitants of the city and the principal leaders of the people's faction.

Pagano *the Good* himself died in 1241, but left a

numerous kindred to inherit his popularity. In this year Frate Leone da Perego was elected Archbishop of Milan. The new Primate secretly aspired to raise his See to its old power and importance, and to shake off the tutelage of the Pope, and though but a year or two before he had fought loyally, as we have seen, beside the papal legate in the ranks marshalled against Frederick II., he now put himself at the head of the aristocratic party, and even invoked, it may be suspected, the aid of the powerful forces of heresy. But against the nobles was ranged Martino della Torre, nephew of Pagano, as leader of the people, who, in 1249, elected him their head with the title of *Anziano*,—Ancient—of the Credenza, and the Franciscan Leone was more than matched by the Dominican Pietro da Verona, whose zeal, sanctity, and awful inquisitorial powers were the strongest support of the Papacy in Milan. The murder of the Inquisitor in 1252 was almost certainly prompted by partisan motives. But it failed signally in its political as in its sectarian purpose, and for Papacy, people, and the Dominican Order alike, the bloody crown of the Martyr became an emblem of united strength and triumph. His death was followed by insurrections of the people. After a few years of comparative peace under the strong Podestà Manfredo Lancia, the feud between the two parties broke out afresh, and the Archbishop and nobles were driven out of the city. The following year a reconciliation took place (1257), and was solemnly confirmed in a treaty called the 'Peace of St. Ambrose.' In this the privileges already won by the popular party were formally conceded to them. All dignities and offices in the Commune, from the highest minister down to the town-trumpeter, were to be equally divided between the nobles and the Plebeians. Both sides

swore to observe the peace in perpetuity. Yet two months later it was broken, and the nobles once more banished by the all-powerful Della Torre. They united with the Ghibellines of the other cities, and even treated with the terrible Ezzelino da Romano, whom the trembling populations of North Italy believed to be the son of the Devil. They promised him the Lordship of Milan if he would aid them, and in 1259, the last desperate year of his evil course, the Trevisan chief, issuing forth from Brescia, made a sudden stealthy dash with his famous horsemen upon the city. Martino della Torre, deceived as to the invader's movements, had led the Milanese to meet him in another direction, and the city was undefended for the moment, and must have fallen into Ezzelino's hands had not warning reached Martino just in time for him to hasten home and man the walls, thus defeating Ezzelino's purpose.

The growing power of the Della Torre began before long to rouse suspicion and distrust in Rome, in spite of their steady championship of the popular cause. The hold of the Papacy upon Milan was in fact somewhat uncertain. The people still remembered with pride the ancient tradition of their Church, and were inclined at times to resent the constant interference of the Pope and his inquisitorial friars. In this feeling lay the possibility of a union between the Archbishop and the democratic party, which it was the policy of Rome to avert, even at the cost of prolonging and aggravating the miserable state of civil war in Milan. On the death of Frate Leone in 1257, the Della Torre sought to raise Raimondo, a son of Pagano the Good, to the archiepiscopal throne. Their intention was defeated by the opposition of the nobles, secretly instigated by Urban IV., and after some years of controversy over the

vacant seat, Urban, thinking to hold the balance of parties in his own hands, appointed to it Otto Visconte (1263). The paradoxical spectacle of the Pope raising a Ghibelline noble to power, and the noble accepting it from the Pope—one of those strange eddies constantly occurring in the political current of the day—was completed by the alliance of the Della Torre with the celebrated Captain, Oberto da Pellavicino, protector of heretics, close comrade once of Ezzelino and the Ghibellines, and mortal foe of the Church. Into the hands of this typical figure of the North Italian drama, Martino, pressed by the hostility of the nobles and the secret machinations of the Pope, had in 1259 surrendered the Lordship of Milan for five years. Under his leadership the Torriani oppressed the friars, drove out the papal legate, Cardinal Ottaviano da Ubaldino, and on the elevation of Otto Visconte to the See, seized upon all the episcopal territories and revenues, and kept the new prelate for years out of his ecclesiastical capital. Pope Urban retaliated with spiritual thunders, and Milan lay long under the heavy spell of the papal interdict.

The Visconti and the Torriani were already deadly foes. The House of the Snake, which in Archbishop Otto, was now about to begin its great ascent, to the overthrow and destruction of the Tower of its rivals, probably derived its origin and name from one of the Viscounts of the Carlovingian rule, who had succeeded in converting the territory entrusted to his administration into an hereditary appanage. It was, in any case, of great antiquity in the city. The famous cognizance which its later career invested with a peculiar terror, is said to have been won by a noble crusader of the House, also an Otto, in single combat with a Saracen, who carried a shield emblazoned

with the device of a seven-coiled serpent devouring a child. Otto slew the Saracen and adopted the device, which he transmitted to his descendants, and with it who knows what mysterious and persistent curse of guile and cruelty?

It is with Archbishop Otto, however, that the real fortunes of the House begin. Strong, crafty and determined, with a power of biding his time observable in a singular degree in all the notable members of his race, Otto was the right man to foster and direct the gradually reviving power of the nobles in Milan and lead them to victory over the Della Torre and the people. But for fifteen years he fought and intrigued in vain, leading his fellow-exiles and the forlorn hope of the Ghibelline party in Lombardy against the swelling tide of Guelf success, which the death of Ezzelino da Romano, the overthrow of the House of Suabia in Manfred and Corradino, and the ascendency of Anjou in the South, had brought to the full. The domination of the Torriani seemed to become every day more assured. Heads of the Lombard League, Martino and his family were all-powerful in North Italy. They drove the Ghibellines out of the surrounding cities, and established their own sympathisers in power everywhere. Many of the Communes accepted the actual sway of the great House. Martino died in 1263, and was buried in the Monastery of Chiaravalle. He was succeeded by his brother Filippo, on whose death, two years later, Napo, a son of the good Pagano, assumed the chieftainship.



CHIARAVALLE

Meanwhile the capital itself, spared, under the protection of these great lords, the bloody succession of sieges and captures which laid waste its neighbours, where the more evenly balanced parties caused revolutions with bewildering frequency, increased rapidly in wealth and luxury. The narrow, tortuous streets overflowed with the full, rich-coloured, sharply chequered life of the thirteenth century. Some terrible scene of Ghibelline prisoners slaughtered in the market-place, and dragged, mangled and bleeding, at the tails of horses through the streets, with yelling crowds of children after them, is succeeded by a May-Day holiday, when the most illustrious youths and maidens of the city, splendidly adorned, ‘weave joyful dances’ beneath pavilions spread in all the open spaces. And the blue sky roofing the sunny squares is suddenly darkened by the smoke ascending from the death-pyre of a heretic, while lean mendicant Brothers look on with

triumph, certain that the cry which comes from that breaking chrysalis is the voice of the Devil discomfited. Now troops, knights and men-at-arms in clanking armour, with tattered banners held high, trample in over the drawbridge, returning from some exploit against the Ghibellines. Or it is a multitude of moaning Flagellants, in white shrouds stained with blood, whose self-inflicted lashes can scarcely fall fast enough to keep time with the pangs of their guilty consciences, as they hurl themselves against the gates, which the stout captains of the city keep shut, judging that fifteen different sects within their walls are enough, without admitting these crazy penitents to upset the unsteady minds of the people.

The narrow streets were filled with the hum of busy industries. Fine palaces and comfortable dwellings abounded, with wells and mills and all the necessaries of a prosperous existence. But wealth and its pleasant habits were causing the Milanese to forget the liberty for which they had once made all sacrifice. That word of sinister omen—*Signore*—was heard without protest among them. They had granted the title voluntarily to Martino della Torre, and both he and Filippo called themselves Perpetual Lords of Milan. The people preferred a domination which at least secured them peace, to the loss and suffering caused by continual civil struggles. Moreover, absorbed in trade and in peaceful industry, they had no time or inclination for the rapidly developing art of war, and a class of highly trained professional soldiers, fully equipped with weapons and armour, who engaged themselves for hire to any Commune, were superseding more and more the old city militia, composed of all the able-bodied men. These mercenaries, who owned no allegiance except to the master who paid them, lent

enormous power to the ruler of a city, who, by means of them, was able to overawe discontent in the people. Thus, aided by the conditions of the times, the Torriani gradually established a virtual despotism over Milan, though careful not to alarm the popular mind by any grander sounding titles. It was not long, however, before they abandoned even this degree of caution, and in 1273 Napo persuaded the Emperor Rudolph to grant him the title of Imperial Vicar of Milan, thus obtaining a legal sanction for his usurpation.



VIA DEL PESCE

Napo was a wise and prudent man, but in this step he went too far. The Della Torre fortune was even then on the wane. The Milanese might rejoice in the peace which despotism bestowed, but they loudly resented being called upon to pay for it by new and heavy taxation, and all the lovers of liberty feared

the novel and arrogant title of Imperial Vicar. Among the supporters of the ruling House themselves, the long course of power enjoyed by the Torriani had bred envy and enmity. Dissensions arose, and the discontented were punished by spoliation and banishment. Numbers abandoned the party and joined Otto Visconte. Tumults shook the city once more, and sedition secretly gathered head. Napo, feeling his power slipping from him, used the cruel and tyrannous measures of despair to save himself and his House. Otto and the exiles, on the other hand, braced by adversity and clinging together in a determined band, were daily gaining strength. They were aided by the other Ghibellines of Lombardy, especially by the Pavesi, and with continual attacks and raids upon the Milanese territory they strove to vex and weaken the party in power. Nevertheless, for some years still their cause seemed hopeless. The Della Torre, who had cast off Oberto da Pellavicino when they were strong enough to do without him, had reconciled themselves with the Papacy in 1274, and their great prestige was apparently strong enough to defy defections and subdue discontent.

But time and circumstance were steadily undermining the great House, and with a sudden crash it fell. On a certain January night in 1277, the wife of Matteo Visconte was delivered, we are told, of her first son, who, because he was born *ad cantu galli*, as the cocks were crowing—heralding a false dawn, as their habit is in winter midnights—was named *Galeazzo*, first of the many of that name who were to crow over Milan. It was at this very moment that Otto Visconte—who, with his great-nephew, father of the new-born babe, and the rest of his kinsmen, had been making desperate attacks upon various points in the Milanese country, with little

success so far—was creeping stealthily in the darkness, at the head of a strong body of fighting men, towards Desio, a village ten miles from Milan, where the Della Torre, disdainful of their oft-beaten foe, were sleeping encamped, with but a small force and under a careless watch. Awakened by the noise of attack, these latter rushed to arms; but too late. The enemy was in their midst. Francesco della Torre, son of Napo, fell pierced with wounds. The chief himself, overthrown in his weighty armour, lay grieving helplessly upon the ground, and with a crowd of sons and kinsmen was made captive. All was over. Otto Visconte rode victorious at last into Milan, where the citizens, who had heard of the discomfiture of their lords as they were starting with the Caroccio to the rescue, suited their faith to the occasion, and with immense applause and jubilee proclaimed the prelate Lord of Milan.

Thus, by the hazard of a moment's battle, the long supremacy of the Torriani was overthrown. Napo was imprisoned in the terrible Tower of Baradello, whose ruins still crest a hill a mile or two on the Milanese side of Como. Here, within the bars of a cage, the once mighty chief languished for a year and a half till he died.

Meanwhile, the change of ruler had brought the city none of the relief from war and its burdensome cost, which the people had fondly expected. The kinsmen and adherents of the exiled family in the city were very numerous and strong, and the whole Guelf party in Lombardy was anxious to bring about the restoration of the Torriani. The new Lord of Milan was attacked with fury, and could only maintain himself by the energetic use of the sword, and by those same methods of proscription and banishment

with which his predecessors had made themselves odious.

Otto was now, however, an old man, and worn out by the ceaseless struggles of his life. His mind was beset with the fears and suspicions of one who, under the stress of ambition, had himself practised overmuch deceit and treachery, and some years before his death, in 1295, he had surrendered the chieftainship to the young and ambitious Matteo. With extraordinary prudence and sagacity, Matteo steered his way amid the rocks and stormy waves of his course, beating back the open attacks of his enemies, matching their plots and snares with an invincible subtlety, and so ingratiating himself with the citizens by a show of moderation, piety and benevolence, that in a few years his somewhat unstable authority had transmuted itself, in accordance with the apparent will of the people, into virtual sovereignty. By force of craft rather than arms he had made himself master in Como, Alexandria, Novara and the Montferrat territory, and his conciliatory policy towards the opposite party won for him enormous influence as arbitrator in the disputes which ever racked Lombardy. He even propitiated Pope Boniface VIII. by politic concessions, which in no way lessened his own power. In 1294 his gifts and flattery prevailed upon the Emperor Adolfo to grant him the potent title of Imperial Vicar of Lombardy.

But the stealthy march of the Visconte's ambition did not go unchecked. His pretensions roused the Guelf party to new efforts against him, and the impetuosity and recklessness of his sons as they grew up wrecked his careful plans, and excited once more to fiery heat those party passions which it was his aim to smooth

and allay. His love for the splendid Galeazzo, born at the cock-crow of the Viscontean day, was the father's undoing. In pursuance of his policy of tranquillising the party strife which forbade all stable and settled government in North Italy, Matteo made a marriage for this son with Beatrice d'Este, widow of Nino Visconte, Judge of Gallura, and sister of the Marquis of Ferrara, recognised chief of the Guelf party in Lombardy. The marriage was of evil omen for the Visconti. We all know those sad words on the little durability of woman's love which fall from the ghost of the forgotten husband in the *Purgatorio*.[1]

1. Canto viii., vv. 73-81.

The foreboding of disaster which they contain was justified; for though in the end the Viper was able to give Beatrice as fine a sepulture as the Cock of Gallura could have done, yet the events which soon fell out might well have made her regret the *bende bianche* which she had exchanged for the bridal garland. The marriage, far from reconciling the two political parties, had only thrown together a pair of extremely hot and indiscreet heads in Galeazzo and Azzo VIII. of Ferrara. The vast ambitions which both were suspected of nourishing roused the fear of Guelfs and Ghibellines alike. Appointed Captain of the Milanese people, Galeazzo only succeeded in alienating the citizens and strengthening his enemies by his injudicious and unfortunate military enterprises. The Torriani and their partisans, who had long suffered eclipse, had begun to regain influence and allies, and a formidable league was formed in Lombardy to overthrow the Visconti. A long struggle followed, and day by day Matteo's power waned in the city. The people, whose

inveterate distrust of the nobles his sagacity and conciliatory measures had been unable to overcome, grew more and more discontented. Jealousy of the Visconte's power, and resentment at his policy towards the Guelfs, had alienated many of the nobles themselves. The day came when Matteo perceived that his position was no longer tenable. Without waiting for a catastrophe which might have ruined his House for ever, he quietly abandoned the city to his foes and took his departure (1302).

The Guelf supporters of the Della Torre now entered Milan, and were received with a great outburst of popular joy. A short period of anarchy followed, caused by the nobles, who had helped to drive out the Visconti, but had no desire to see the Della Torre in their place. After a few months, however, the sons of Napo succeeded by the favour of the lower classes, to whom their name was still dear, in restoring themselves to power, while in all the surrounding cities, whose fortunes were always bound up with Milan's, their partisans drove out the Ghibellines and reinstated the Guelfs.

Mosca, Guido, and Enrico della Torre now ruled the city, at first with a show of deference to the will of the Republic, but after a few years with a sovereignty fuller than that which the Visconti had enjoyed. The people were, in fact, accustoming themselves to a single rule. In 1307 Mosca died, and Guido assumed sole authority. Meanwhile the Visconti were dispersed in various directions. Galeazzo and his wife Beatrice had taken refuge with her kindred at Ferrara, and the other sons of Matteo had found places of safety where the powerful alliances of the family secured them from pursuit by the Della Torre. The shrewd chief himself, after vainly attempting to

reverse the fortune of war, had withdrawn to a remote country villa on the Lake of Garda, and having apparently renounced all public activity, was passing his time in the innocent pastimes of fishing and thinking. But his keen eye watched every movement on the field of politics. He had spies and agents everywhere, and was but waiting the moment for a spring upon his foes. With cynical satisfaction he noted the inevitable course of the new tyranny in Milan; the jealousy and suspicion awaking within the city itself, and in the subjects and allied communities around at the growth of Guido's despotism, the disloyalty of his near kindred and dependants, greedy for a share of power, and all the embarrassments of a chief in whom a noble and generous temper was not seconded by the sagacity and self-control which distinguished the observer himself. An oft-told story relates that Guido, at the height of his prosperity, sent a messenger to his fallen rival to ask him derisively how he fared, and when he hoped to see Milan again. Matteo was wandering beside the lake, discoursing with a companion. 'You see how I live,' he said to the envoy, 'suiting myself to my fortunes. Tell your Lord that I am waiting till the sins of the Torriani have reached the measure of mine to return to my country.' The expectation of the philosopher was justified as time went on, and Guido began to resort to cruel and oppressive means of preserving his power. In 1309 he imprisoned his cousin Cassone, Archbishop of Milan, and his nephews, the sons of Mosca, on suspicion of plotting against him, and was only withheld from further revenge by the protests of his own friends. The subsequent banishment of these kinsmen, who thenceforth sought his ruin, helped to prepare the disasters which were soon to fall upon

his House.

The Guelf party was indeed fast losing its hold once more on Lombardy, owing to the hostile feeling in the cities towards King Robert of Naples, who, as champion of the Church and head of the Guelfs, was seeking to establish his sovereignty over North Italy. At the same time a new turn of the wheel was preparing in Germany, where, in 1310, Henry of Luxemburg was elected Emperor, and immediately manifested his intention of descending into Italy to exercise the imperial authority for the purpose of restoring order and peace in the factious Communes.

Matteo Visconte in his hut of exile saw that his moment was come. With characteristic insight he gauged the noble soul of the new Emperor, with its lofty ideals and conviction of a divine mission as peacemaker. His agent, Francesco Garbagnate, made his way to the imperial Court, where he insinuated himself into Henry's favour, and ever at his ear whispered of the woes of Lombardy, and of Milan, the splendid city, groaning under a despotic oppressor; of thousands of exiles languishing in poverty; of their chief, patiently enduring his evil fortunes without attempting retaliation or revenge.

The anticipation of the Emperor's coming was by no means so pleasing to Guido della Torre and his friends. The mere thought of this spectre of imperialism, which, when men believed it was well laid at last, ever rose to disturb the settlement of the turbid elements of Italian life, seems to have stirred the Republican chief to uncontrollable indignation. 'What have I to do with Henry of Luxemburg?' he cried, stamping furiously, in a great assembly of his party convoked to deal with the situation. To his experienced and unillusioned mind the Emperor's

purpose was simply the exaltation of the Ghibellines and the destruction of the Guelfs. With passionate entreaties and prophecies of impending peril, he sought to raise a league against Henry, but nearly all his former supporters and allies, tired of his ascendency and afraid of the King of Naples, had pledged themselves to welcome the new-comer.

In November 1310 the Emperor arrived at Asti, whither almost all the magnates of North Italy, both Guelf and Ghibelline, hastened to do him homage. One day there entered the Court a man who, by the simplicity of his attire and following, appeared a person of little consequence. Throwing off his hood and cloak, he ran and knelt before the Emperor, and kissing his feet, saluted him as the longed-for peacemaker and consolation of the exiles, and implored his compassion. The suppliant was Matteo Visconte, who, for fear of his enemies, had come thus disguised and secretly. Henry welcomed him with the greatest kindness, and having listened earnestly to his recital of the wrongs which he and his had suffered, promised to give them speedy relief. Matteo then turned to some of the Guelf nobles present, his fiercest enemies, and with the most admirable display of a meek and forgiving spirit, offered to embrace them. But they, knowing well the perfidy of his fair seeming, repulsed him with scorn and heaped revilements upon him. To all of which the Visconte replied with perfect mildness and goodwill, pointing to the Emperor—'Here is our king, who is come to give us peace; the end of all our woes is at hand.' His foes, perceiving how completely he had put them in the wrong and won the Emperor's confidence by his show of magnanimity, began to misdoubt them of the future and wish that they had heeded Guido della Torre's warnings. The game was now, in fact, despite

Henry's good intentions, in the hands of the wily Ghibelline chief. Besides all the barons and magnates of his own faction, the exiled Archbishop Cassone della Torre and a number of other Milanese Guelfs, whom Guido had offended by his tyranny, ranged themselves under Matteo's leadership, and by the advice of this greatly preponderating section of his Italian vassals, Henry was persuaded to turn his steps early towards Milan.

He sent officers before him to prepare for his reception in the ruler's palace, which as sovereign he expected to occupy. But he had forgotten Milan's traditional privilege of keeping the Emperor outside her gates. Relying upon this, Guido della Torre refused to give up the palace. Nevertheless Henry proceeded on his way, and as he neared the city, the Milanese, who had heard the rumour of his great goodness, came forth in multitudes to meet him. At his right hand rode Matteo Visconte. The obsequious bearing of the Ghibelline chief contrasted strangely with the grudging welcome offered by the Lord of the city, who appeared last of all to greet the monarch, and forgot to lower his standard before the Imperial Eagles. This omission was roughly remedied by some of the German soldiers, who seized the defiant banner and flung it in the mud. His pride met only a mild rebuke from the Emperor, who, having entered in state with his queen, took up his abode in the archiepiscopal palace. At first all went well. The Archbishop and all the other exiles were restored to their homes and possessions, and Henry made the Visconti and Torriani swear perpetual peace. The reconciliation was celebrated in the eyes of all the people by a ceremony in the Piazza of St. Ambrogio, where the Emperor appeared seated on a great throne, with the members of the two rival Houses

placed side by side at his feet. An Imperial Vicar was appointed to keep peace in the city, and the factions in the neighbouring Communes having been pacified in like manner, Henry was crowned in Milan by Archbishop Cassone, amid extraordinary joy and festivity.

Not for long, however, did the lion and the lamb thus couch together. Even while the Emperor still lingered in Milan, suspicion and discontent began to seethe among the citizens. The old fear and hatred of the Empire, which still lived in the descendants of Barbarossa's victims, was fanned by the heavy exactions of the imperial officers, who demanded an enormous sum as a coronation gift from the already exhausted citizens. The German troops were also a continual vexation to the people. The Torriani did all they could to foster the growing spirit of revolt. Guido and his cousin the Archbishop forgot their feud in their common desire to get rid of the Emperor, and the Visconti themselves were found ready to sympathise with the general discontent. It was rumoured in the imperial palace that Galeazzo Visconte and Francesco della Torre had been seen joining hands in sign of amity at a meeting outside the gates. But whatever the other members of his House might be doing, the Head of the Visconti sat aloof, peacefully unconscious, apparently, of what was going forward.

Henry and his ministers grew uneasy, as the hostility of the city became ever more visible and menacing. At last, on a day in February, the storm burst. The whole of Milan rose suddenly in wild tumult, crowding and clamouring round their old leaders, the Torriani, who appeared with all their followers in full armour in the market-place. Before long

Galeazzo Visconte also arrived upon the scene, mounted on his war-horse and arrayed for battle. But to the surprise and dismay of the conspirators he ranged himself with the imperial troops, who came charging down upon the Torriani and their disorderly host. Meanwhile, at the first sound of tumult, the Emperor, suspecting treachery, had despatched officers to arrest Matteo Visconte. They found that veteran sitting in the quiet loggia of his palace, most innocently occupied in reading a book. Hastening with them to the Court, he cast himself down before the Emperor, protesting his perfect loyalty and innocence of all offence, and offered his best services to aid in subduing the rebellion. The adherence of the Visconti was the Emperor's salvation. By the powerful assistance of Galeazzo and his followers, the Germans, after a brief, fierce battle, completely overcame the rebels. The Torriani perceived too late that they had been outwitted and ruined by the cunning of the rival House, on whose help they had been led to depend. Simone and Francesco, Guido's sons, fled at a gallop out of the city, while the old chief himself rose with difficulty from a bed of sickness and crept over a garden wall into the precincts of a nunnery, whence he was able after a while to escape into safety. Their adherents were put to the sword, and their houses were sacked and utterly destroyed by the Germans, who with vindictive fury, swept through the streets, slaying and spoiling without mercy.

Thus was the power of the Della Torre in Milan for ever overthrown. The Visconti, having cleverly disposed of their rivals, had now to rid themselves of the Emperor, in order to regain their old sovereignty. Henry, vexed at the bloodshed which had already stained his fair white banner of peace, and beginning

to realise the secret strength of the spirit of faction, sent Matteo and Galeazzo into exile, lest he should appear to have favoured the Ghibellines in the late affair. But the fall of the Torriani had filled the Guelfs with distrust and fear of him. He passed on his way, to find the cities of Lombardy arming against him and his task of peace-making growing more and more difficult of accomplishment. Hardly was he gone from Milan before the Visconti returned, and in a very short time Matteo succeeded in making himself once more all-powerful. A year later the wisdom of the Milanese Serpent appeared to have completely charmed the Imperial Eagle, when in return for a timely supply of gold to support the Emperor's enterprise, Matteo won the legal confirmation of his authority over the city, with the title of Imperial Vicar of Milan.

CHAPTER V
The Visconti

"Maudire la puissance, c'est blasphémer l'humanité."

The Visconti had now firmly established their dominion in Milan, a dominion destined, in the story of the unstable mediæval governments of Italy, to be equalled by few in duration, and by none in extent. For good or for evil the great city, with her command of the chief passes of the Alps for war and commerce, her wealth as the capital of the vast alluvial plain of Lombardy, was delivered into the hands of a race singularly fitted to use these natural advantages for the creation of a mighty State. The Visconti, as a family, were characterised by exceptional ability and tenacity, and above all, by a subtlety of brain and suppleness of conscience which, under the stress of ambition or necessity, induced a perfidy so quiet and so effectual that the Snake upon their shields became for all Italy a symbol of their political methods, and an object of horror and fear. The vices and weaknesses which ruined other Italian dynasties seemed to have little power over these Milanese princes. Hot and rash of blood in the earlier generations, they rarely allowed passion to override prudence; those of them who did were quickly

rooted out. Even that most fruitful disorder in a reigning House, the jealous rivalry of its own members, could not avail to overcome their political coolness or sagacity, or sunder their union against a common enemy. With time this self-control became a habit of cold and passionless judgment, all-powerful in the management of men and States. Even the fatal weakness of remorse and superstitious fear, to which they were all prone, could not undermine them; they were able to parry their consciences, and delay repentance until their successors were old enough to carry on their unscrupulous policy. Nor did the arrogance and cruelty which tyranny bred in this sovereign race prove their overthrow. In spite of its record of crime, no retributive catastrophe ended the dynasty. It died out of itself, and we shall see the last of the Visconti sink into the grave under the burden of an empire greater almost than any other in Italy.

Il Gran Matteo, as posterity named the founder of the dynasty, was the prototype in character of all the great sovereigns who were to follow him. He ruled from the cabinet rather than from the saddle. Statecraft was his victorious weapon, and his calculating and passionless nature had its complement in a humanity remarkable for his time. But it needed not only his incomparable prudence and foresight, but also the strong arms of his three elder sons, Galeazzo, Marco, and Luchino, to assure his dominion and restore it to its old extent. The remaining years of the chief, as head of the Ghibelline party in North Italy, were spent in a constant warfare with the Guelfs and their allies, King Robert of Naples, and the Church. The awful papal ban fell again and again upon the Visconte and his subjects. Nevertheless Piacenza, Bergamo, Lodi, Como, Cremona, Alexandria, Tortona, Pavia,

Vercelli, and Novara were brought one by one beneath his sway by the victory of diplomacy or arms. His success was embittered, however, by estrangement from his beloved first-born, Galeazzo, who coveted his father's supremacy, and jealously resented the rivalry of his brother Marco. But Galeazzo's hot temper had been chastened by exile and time, and in spite of their mutual anger, he supported his father's policy with a wise loyalty.

The fortunes of the Guelf party sank low before the rapid growth of the Viscontean power. Its hereditary leaders in North Italy, the Marquises of Este, were entangled in an unnatural struggle with the Papacy, which was itself enfeebled by the exile of Avignon, and by the operations of its own selfish greed. But in 1319 the party gathered itself together once more for a mighty effort to overthrow the Ghibelline domination in Milan. The Cardinal Legate, Beltrando del Poggetto, in the name of Pope John XXII., formed a great league of the Guelfs against the Visconti, and hurled at them afresh the spiritual weapons of the Church. Matteo was summoned repeatedly to answer for his sins at the feet of the Pope. In 1322 he was cited finally before a tribunal of the Inquisition at Alexandria. Instead of him, his son Marco appeared there at the head of an army with banners spread. The Inquisitors hastily retreated to Valenza, where in security they solemnly cursed Matteo for twenty and five different crimes and heresies, and invoked every conceivable penalty upon him and his House, even to the fourth generation. Full remission of sins was offered to all who took arms against them.

The old Ghibelline chief, weakened by age and bodily infirmity, quailed before this onslaught. Many of his own adherents and kinsmen were deserting

him. Milan, trembling under the ban of the Church and excited by the papal agents, was verging on revolt. Matteo summoned the offending Galeazzo, forgave him, and resigned to him the chieftainship. Retiring to a village at a little distance from the city, he died shortly after, full of years and sorrow.

Galeazzo and his brother Marco, bitter rivals, forgot for the time their mutual wrongs, and with the other sons of Matteo stood up in manful union against their foes. For fourteen days they concealed their father's death from the Milanese, while Galeazzo calmed the city by conciliatory measures, and assumed the supreme power. The storm broke heavily upon them now. Immense numbers from all North Italy joined the standard of the Legate, which, impiously displaying the Cross in a worldly quarrel was carried towards Milan, with the avowed purpose of overthrowing the Visconti and restoring the Torriani. Monza and Piacenza fell (1323), and the capital itself was attacked, the suburbs sacked, and the walls closely blockaded. The straits of the Visconti appeared desperate. But the brothers fought with invincible spirit, and they were supported by the Emperor, Louis of Bavaria, who sent succour from Germany. The papal army itself began to dissolve through rivalries and dissensions, and sickness. The siege was soon raised, and early in the following year (1324) the Visconti took the offensive and inflicted a signal defeat upon the allies at Vaprio. Their fortunes now revived. Within the next few years they recovered many of the lost cities of their father's State, and the Pope, realising the impossibility of overthrowing them, began to listen to emissaries from Galeazzo with suggestions for peace and reconciliation.

But the desire of the Visconte for a settlement of the long and exhausting strife was baffled by his own party and his own household. The other Ghibelline chiefs, especially the great Can Grande della Scala, viewed unwillingly the increase of the Milanese power. Marco Visconte, a splendid warrior, more skilled and daring in arms than any other Lombard of his day, but unlike the rest of his House none too wise—*savio non fu troppo*, says Villani—could not brook his elder brother's supremacy. Their kinsman Lodrisio fiercely resented his own subordinate position. The citizens groaned under the heavy taxes exacted to pay Galeazzo's great army of German mercenaries. Complaints of the Visconte's arrogance, and information of his negotiations with the Pope, were carried by intriguers to the Emperor.

Louis descended into Italy early in 1327, at the general call of the Ghibellines. Galeazzo Visconte alone was silent, foreseeing that the Emperor's appearance would inflame anew the partisan strife. Louis appeared shortly in Milan, followed by the Ghibelline lords of North Italy, chief among them Can Grande. He was received with great homage and ceremony and crowned in St. Ambrogio by two schismatic bishops, who alone dared to anoint his excommunicated head. The Visconti appeared to enjoy his full favour, and as vassals of the Empire were confirmed by him in various honours and privileges. But intrigue was busy at work, and the fair seeming was suddenly broken by a tragic event, if the chroniclers tell us true. Stefano, the youngest of Galeazzo's brothers, as he was offering the cup to the Emperor at the banquet one night, was called upon by the suspicious monarch to taste the wine. Having put his lips tremblingly to it, he was struck with mortal sickness, and died shortly after. This

evidence of intended treachery naturally inflamed Louis' resentment against his hosts. The next day he summoned Galeazzo to a council, and seizing as a pretext the refusal of the prince to demand an enormous coronation gift from the almost revolting citizens, he arrested him, with his son Azzo and his brothers, all except Marco. The Visconti, surprised, could make no defence, and were carried off to Monza and thrown into the dungeons of the Castle there which Galeazzo himself had lately built.

Thus did the Visconti once more lose Milan. A governor, appointed by Louis, reigned in their stead. Marco, if he owed his escape to disloyalty, soon rued his mistake. The ruin of his house involved him too, and he wandered in poverty and exile. Louis' high-handed act was, however, displeasing to many of his Ghibelline supporters, and he found it prudent to release Galeazzo at the end of a year, at the request of Castruccio, Lord of Lucca, the most powerful member of the Ghibelline party at that time. The Visconte, broken by his sufferings in prison, and unable to recover his State, joined his friend Castruccio, and died a few months later. His son and brothers succeeded soon after, through the intervention of Castruccio, in making their peace with the Emperor. For the promise of sixty thousand golden florins, Louis granted to Azzo, the dead prince's heir, the title of Imperial Vicar of Milan, and the Visconti once more took possession of the city with the full approval of the people (1329).

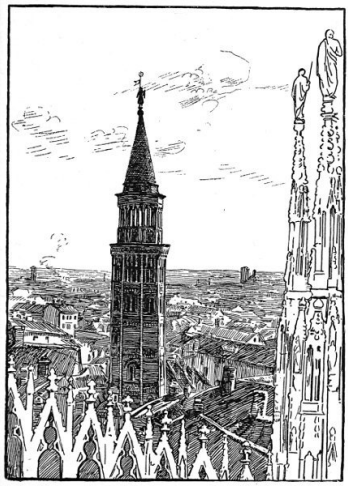
Once restored to power, they were at little pains to pay the stipulated sum to the Emperor, who by this time was fast losing prestige in Italy. They reconciled themselves with the Church instead, and when the enraged Louis presented himself with an army

beneath the walls of Milan, he was received with derision and jeers. The Emperor, enfeebled by the contempt and desertion of nearly all his partisans, was helpless against the renewed strength of the great Milanese House. He was glad to compound with Azzo and to reconfirm him in the position of Imperial Vicar.

From this moment began the unbroken prosperity of Matteo Visconte's sons and of the great city which they ruled. Secure in the weakness of both Empire and Church from further interference, Azzo was able to devote himself to the expansion and development of his State. The short reign of this prince, who had won great fame for his prowess in the Tuscan wars with Castruccio, was wholly fortunate. The menace offered to its prosperity by the rebellious attempts of his uncle Marco was overcome by the death of that turbulent warrior, who was killed in 1329 apparently by a fall from a window in his nephew's palace, though it was generally believed that he had been first strangled and then flung out by order of his kinsmen. The other enemy within the House, Lodrisio Visconte, was not so easily disposed of. Abandoning Milan, he allied himself with the Scaligeri of Verona, with whom the Visconti had come into inevitable collision, now that the weakness of their common Guelf foe had left the field of North Italy open to the rival ambition of these two great Ghibelline powers. In 1339 Lodrisio, with forces supplied by Martino della Scala, invaded the Milanese territory, and approaching the capital, spread terror and desolation everywhere. At Parabiago they encountered the Milanese, under Luchino Visconte, who, after a tremendous struggle, won a complete victory. Lodrisio was captured with his two sons, and imprisoned in a strong castle. A

few months later Azzo died of gout, at the age of thirty-seven. In the brief years of his reign he had completely restored the power and prestige of his House. He left Milan fortified by new walls, beautified by new palaces, churches and towers, a city fairer and greater than that ruined by Barbarossa, and full of a rich, industrious and joyous life.

Azzo had no heir. He was succeeded by his uncles, Luchino, and the ecclesiastic Giovanni, who was now Archbishop of Milan. The two brothers thus held the whole dominion, spiritual as well as temporal. They worked together with rare unanimity for the aggrandisement of their House and State. Luchino pressed with his arms energetically against the Scaligeri, whose empire was fast receding before the attacks of the rest of the Ghibelline powers of North Italy, who in uniting with the Visconti to crush this predominant member of the party, were but smoothing the way for the rise of a State destined to be far greater than Verona ever was. The Milanese prince added many cities to the dominion of his House, and was the first to carry the fear of the Visconti across the Apennines into Tuscany, where he had almost acquired Pisa when recalled to Lombardy by the outbreak of war there.



TOWER OF S. GOTTARDO
FROM THE CATHEDRAL

Luchino was a careful ruler, thoughtful for the welfare and progress of his subjects, and just towards the lower classes. He promulgated new laws for the protection of the poor and weak, and for the encouragement of industry, and refrained from excessive taxation. Nevertheless, he had the same violent temper as his elder brothers, Galeazzo and Marco, and soon developed the characteristic vices of tyranny—lust, cruelty and suspicion. In Giovanni, on the contrary, all the rarer qualities of the Visconti appeared, the subtle brain, the self-control and power of biding their time, combined with a benignity which was never disturbed except to good purpose, so that while steadily pursuing ends as vast and ambitious as his brothers', he still kept the respect and love of the people. He well knew how to influence the course of events without falling foul of his suspicious brother.

The younger princes of the House, however, the three sons of the dead Stefano, were less cautious, and soon incurred the wrath of their despotic uncle. He discovered, or perhaps invented, a conspiracy on their part to oust him from power, and drove them mercilessly into exile and poverty. The eldest, Matteo, took refuge with his wife's family, the powerful Gonzaga of Mantua, but Bernabò and Galeazzo had to fly to France to escape from the tyrant's snares. A confederate in their plot, Francesco della Pusterla, head of one of the great Milanese Houses, whose wealth and influence were necessarily a menace to the power of the Visconti, was betrayed into Luchino's hands and beheaded, with his sons and his beautiful wife Margherita, who, according to the chroniclers, had rejected the unlawful love of the tyrant.

Luchino is said to have come himself to an unnatural death in his old age, through poison administered to him by his third wife, the young and lively Elisabetta della Fiesca, in whose hearing the suspicious husband, enraged by a report of light conduct on her part, had declared that he would light a fine fire and do the greatest act of justice which he had ever done in Milan. The accusations against this lady may, however, have been trumped up to justify the persecution which she and her son, Luchino Novello, and all the dead tyrant's children, who had grown too arrogant for the peace of the State, had to suffer from the Archbishop after their father's death. Giovanni imprisoned or banished them all. Towards his other nephews, the banished sons of Stefano, whom misfortune had chastened, Giovanni used a different policy. He won their loyalty and obedience by recalling them from exile, granting them lands and honours and making them his heirs, and about

this time he obtained a solemn act from the General Council of the people, still nominally the ultimate authority in the community, recognising him and his nephews after him as the true, legitimate and natural Lords of the city, district, diocese and jurisdiction of Milan. Thus was the hereditary dominion of the Visconti—already an established fact—formally legalised by the will of the Commune.

Under the able rule of the Archbishop the power of the Visconti advanced steadily, but more by the gentle pressure of a scheming and cunning statesmanship than by the brute force of arms. His apparently peaceful temper had lulled the jealousy and fear of the other powers, when in 1350 they were thunderstruck by his secret acquisition of Bologna—the great object of contention between the two parties in North Italy—which Giovanni de' Pepoli sold to him for a large sum. Corio, the fifteenth century historian, relates that Clement VI. sent a legate to the Visconte to demand its restoration to the Holy See, and to bid him renounce either the spiritual or temporal jurisdiction of Milan, since his exercise of both together was a scandal to Christians. The high-hearted Archbishop for answer unsheathed his sword in the midst of the Cathedral, and raising the Cross in his other hand, cried—*This is my spiritual weapon, and with this sword will I defend my temporal empire undiminished*. Summoned to defend his contumacy before the Pope, he sent his people to Avignon to provide lodgings and victuals for twelve thousand horsemen and six thousand foot soldiers. But when Clement heard of these preparations he called the envoys, and hastily reimbursing them with their charges, sent them back with a message to Giovanni excusing him from coming. Later historians throw doubt upon this

circumstantial tale. And certainly it seems strange that the Pope should condemn the union of spiritual and temporal dominion. There is no doubt, however, that the Papacy was powerless to check Giovanni's ambition, and was glad to confirm him in possession of Bologna for a price.

Giovanni's method was to inflame by unseen agencies the party spirit in the cities which he coveted, and when both factions were exhausted, to step in with his money-bags and quietly establish his own dominion. Thus by a skilful manipulation of the vast wealth with which Milan supplied him he succeeded with little expenditure of blood in embracing more and more territory within his coil. In 1353 Genoa was yielded to him, and Milan for a short time became a naval power, defying the fleets of Venice. The importance of securing maritime outlets for a commercial community turned the Archbishop's attention on the seaport of Pisa also. But here Florence interposed a barrier against both fraud and force, and though he plagued the Tuscan Republic grievously by invading her territories, raising the Barons of the Apennines against her and intriguing with her foes in Pisa and Lucca, she successfully prevented him from gaining a footing in Tuscany.

While the Visconti were thus extending their dominion far and wide and creating a sovereignty more powerful than any in Italy, the capital itself was making corresponding strides in wealth and civilisation. The strong and single government, though involving so much cruel sacrifice of rival interests and pride, and carried on by crafty and often iniquitous means, was for the general advantage of the people. The citizens lacked only

freedom, and this very lack saved them from the awful faction struggles which hindered the progress of the neighbouring Communes. Under Azzo, Luchino and Giovanni Visconte, the city enjoyed an unexampled length of peace. No hostile banner was seen from the walls, no blood was spilt in fratricidal strife within. The Visconti employed foreign and professional troops in their wars, thus weaning their subjects from the habit of arms, dangerous to a tyrannic supremacy, and sparing them for more profitable work. All classes, noble and plebeian, engaged in commerce and industrial arts, and produced an ever increasing flow of wealth, wherewith these princes were able to pay handsomely for the hired support of their tyranny. Finding no opportunities of sedition or turbulence, the more restless spirits abandoned the city, and, joining the bands of military adventurers which roamed the country, they fought for any prince or community that chose to hire them. The general security of life and property in the Milanese State was assured by the severe and, on the whole, impartial justice of Luchino and his brother, and the wise statutes which they formed aided the development of trade and industry. Safe from depredating troops and robber bands, the fertile territory was brought to high cultivation, and wildernesses, untilled before, now submitted to the husbandman. The engineering art was actively practised in draining and irrigating the country and connecting the city by canals with the great river waterways.

One of the chief sources of Milanese wealth was the breeding of war-horses in the rich and well-watered pastures round the city. At the same time the Milanese merchants were travelling all over England,

France and Flanders, buying fine wool, 'with which in this city,' says the fourteenth century chronicler Fiamma, 'very fine and beautiful clothes are woven in great quantities and dyed with every different colour and sent to all parts of Italy.' Silk was also manufactured here after 1314, when the silk-weavers of Lucca, disturbed by the invasions of Uguccione da Faggiuola and of Castruccio, abandoned their city for Milan. The constant wars abroad encouraged the armourer's craft, of which Milan became one of the greatest centres in Europe. With wealth, a love of luxury and the soft pleasures of life grew in the people. Fiamma notes with disapproval the changes in the antique costume, the superfluous embroideries, the gold and silver and pearls, and the broad fringes used in dress, the richness of the meats, and the esteem in which masters of the culinary art were held, things conducive, according to him, of the soul's damnation.

Both Luchino and Giovanni lived much in the sight of their subjects, keeping open Court and sharing in the public feasts and pleasures. The benevolent Archbishop was much beloved. One of his first acts of undivided sovereignty had been to release Lodrisio Visconte from the dungeon in which he had dwelt ever since Parabiago, a resounding generosity which covered many quiet deeds of harshness and oppression. He died in 1354, leaving his dominions to Matteo, Bernabò and Galeazzo II., to the entire exclusion of Luchino's sons.

The new sovereigns had much ado at first to preserve their great heritage. Many cities, patient under the Archbishop's yoke, rebelled against his successors, including Bologna. The Guelf enemies of Milan tried to enlist the new Emperor Charles of Bohemia

against the Visconti; but that monarch preferred the large sum which they offered him for his sanction of their rule as Imperial Vicars, rather than the hostility of princes who could assemble six thousand men-at-arms and numberless foot soldiers beneath his window as a spectacle for his entertainment when he visited them in Milan. The Gonzaga of Mantua, once their allies and now their bitterest foes, leagued, however, with the Church and the hereditary foes of the Visconti and dealt them some heavy blows. The German company which the Mantuan princes employed invaded the Milanese territories under the formidable Count Lando, and penetrated nearly to the capital. But the citizens, in spite of their softness and lack of military practice, went forth with the courage of despair and defeated and drove away the Count, who was greatly surprised, since he *nothing esteemed the Milanese*. In other directions the Visconti suffered great losses. Genoa revolted in 1356, and to secure peace they were compelled to surrender Parma and Asti two years later.

The eldest brother, Matteo, had died in 1355. Weak, injudicious and a glutton, he was only a hindrance to the progress of his House. General report laid his death to his brothers' charge. Bernabò and Galeazzo made a fresh division of the State, and Milan itself was split up between them. They worked together, however, with a single aim, in spite of mutual hatred and jealousy, to repair the losses of their State. Pavia had set up a free government, headed by the friar, Giacomo de' Bussolari, who, an earlier Savonarola, sought to purge his city from tyranny and sin at once. Steadfastly beset by Galeazzo's army, it had to yield at last to famine and sickness. Further afield Bernabò spent years in a desperate struggle to recover Bologna, under a tempest of papal

anathemas, and though baffled himself, he prepared the way for his successor. He was constantly in fierce conflict with the Marquises of Este, whose rebel kinsmen he sheltered while they employed Luchino's disinherited sons against him. Galeazzo on his side had to sustain the assaults of Savoy and Montferrat, which came near to ruining him.

But multitudinous and determined as their enemies were, the inimitable statecraft which was the Viscontean heritage, backed by their vast resources, enabled them to restore their power and to make Milan feared and respected everywhere abroad. These princes rarely took the field themselves, but entrusted their enterprises to the foreign companies by whom the Italian wars were now chiefly waged. These bands of hardy and unscrupulous adventurers, who were proof against the enervation which wealth and civilisation had induced in the Italians, were become powerful factors in the politics of the country. Most formidable of all was the company of Sir John Hawkwood. These English mercenaries, says Azario, were more excellent robbers than any of the other plunderers of the Lombards. By day they mostly slept and waked by night. And so diligent and skilful were they in capturing towns that their like had never been seen. After suffering much from Hawkwood's zeal against him in the service of the Pope, Bernabò bribed him to his own side; but after a few years the great captain, faithful only to caprice, suddenly deserted the Visconte, with disastrous results to the latter. Later on, Bernabò tempted him again by the gift of one of his own daughters in marriage, with a large dowry. Nevertheless, the later part of Hawkwood's career was spent in the pay of Milan's inveterate foe, Florence.

Milan, unaffected by the quarrels of her sovereigns, was now the richest, most populous and luxurious city of Italy. The capitals of the great European kingdoms had no such splendid palaces, such comely-paved streets, such fair-fountained gardens and pleasaunces trodden by beautiful exotic beasts and birds, as this seat of citizen princes. The Visconti assumed the dignity and state of royalty. Galeazzo was himself married to a princess of the ancient House of Savoy, and both brothers pursued the sagacious policy of making alliances for their children with the sovereign Houses of Europe. Bernabò made statesmanlike use of his ten daughters and five sons by his wife Regina della Scala, and his score or so of illegitimate children, wedding them, according to the conditions of their birth, to royal princes and great Italian potentates, or to lesser nobles and successful soldiers, such as Hawkwood and Count Lando. Galeazzo married his one son and daughter with even greater splendour, and endowed them so lavishly that it was almost the ruin of his State. For his heir, Gian Galeazzo, he obtained the hand of Isabella de Valois, for a sum of five hundred thousand florins. The maiden Violante he gave to Lionel, Duke of Clarence, son of Edward III., with two hundred thousand florins and many fair lands and castles in Piedmont.

This last marriage was celebrated in 1368, with unexampled magnificence. The bridegroom arrived in Milan accompanied by the Sire le Despencer and a train of two thousand Englishmen. A splendid cavalcade went forth to meet him. First came Galeazzo himself, who was said to be more beautiful in person than any other man in Italy, wearing, as his custom was, a wreath of roses on his flowing golden hair, and attended by his greatest vassals.

With him was his wife, Bianca of Savoy, and his daughter-in-law, the young French Isabella, and other noble ladies, followed by eighty damsels apparelled in scarlet, with sleeves of white cloth embroidered with trefoils, and girdles so richly worked that their worth was eighty florins each. Gian Galeazzo, a boy of fifteen, came next, leading a company of knights on steeds caparisoned as if for a joust, and after these followed the officers of State and of the household with their pages, all gorgeously arrayed. At the marriage feast the very meats were gilded, and with each of the sixteen courses splendid gifts were offered to the guests—highly-bred hounds with velvet and silken collars and leashes of silk; falcons with chains of gold and hoods of velvet, and silver buttons enamelled with the Snake; richly ornamented saddles and other horse furniture; suits of armour fashioned by the famous Milanese smiths; brocades of gold and richest silk, silver flagons worked with enamel, silver-gilt basins, mantles and doublets thickly sewn with pearls for the prince, and seventy-six splendid coursers and war-horses, each more generous, beautiful, and gorgeously caparisoned than the one before; and last of all twelve fat oxen. Galeazzo and the bridegroom sat at one table with the noblest of the guests, among whom was Messer Francesco Petrarca the poet, in the most honourable place. At another were placed Regina della Scala and a number of ladies. Such scenes as these are dimly pictured for us in primitive frescoes here and there, in which we see assemblages of ladies in jewelled robes and lofty peaked head-dresses, and gentlemen correspondingly fine stiffly seated at narrow boards, or pacing with slow and stately step through the dance within some spacious pillared hall.

Though extravagantly lavish for State purposes, the Visconti did not keep open Court like their predecessors. No tables were set out in the streets for the common people on holidays, no oxen roasted whole or wine-vats broached for all who liked to drink. The chroniclers complain of the avarice of their Lords. The taxes were continually increased. Pressed by the huge cost of their wars and their alliances, the Visconti were in fact always in need of money, and so assured was their supremacy in Milan, that they no longer feared the discontent of the citizens. With the development of their despotism the social gulf between the Visconti and the rest of the community had grown wide. Both brothers were proud, suspicious and cruel. But the severity of the silent Bernabò, and his terrible fits of rage and strange capricious temper, made him the most feared. He was laudably resolved to maintain justice and order, so that a man might go unarmed through any part of his dominions, and to suppress the old faction hatreds, but his methods were intolerably harsh. No one was allowed to call himself Guelf or Ghibelline on pain of having his tongue cut out. To be found abroad in the city at night, for any reason whatever, was to lose a foot, and so forth. Moreover, on mere suspicion people were put to cruel death or torment. This arbitrary severity was, however, of little avail, and crime was far more rife in the city than before Bernabò's time. The tyrant's passion for dogs was as extravagant as his disregard for human suffering. He had five thousand hounds, which his subjects were compelled to keep and tend for him, and if one were found to be either too fat or too lean for the chase, or to have come to any harm, woe to its guardian. Every sort of game was sacred to the prince's sport, and the peasants who slew wild boars

or other forest creatures for food during a severe famine, were hanged or blinded. Two Franciscan brothers, who dared to expostulate with the prince for his harshness, were burnt as heretics, an act something ironical on the part of one who himself spent nearly all his life under the ban of the Church. There was a certain grim humour in some of Bernabò's fierce deeds, as in his treatment of two dignified Benedictine abbots, who were sent to treat with him by the Pope. The prince met them on a bridge over the Lambro, where, with due reverence, they presented to him the pontifical Bulls. Bernabò read them, and looking up, eyed the legates grimly, and asked them whether they would prefer food or drink. Perceiving a sinister meaning in the question, the trembling clerics glanced at the deep river flowing beneath, and said that they would rather eat. Whereupon the papal missives, parchment, seals, silk cord and all, were crammed down their throats.

Galeazzo was not so capriciously cruel as his brother, but his rule was equally oppressive. To add to the afflictions of the people, the country was devastated by the foreign Companies, who robbed friends and foes alike; and years of famine and pestilence came, which their Lords took no more thoughtful measure to relieve than hanging some of the chief ministers. To both brothers clings the horrible reproach of a decree, condemning prisoners of State to the so-called Quaresima, a series of tortures lasting forty days. Yet Galeazzo was conspicuous for domestic virtues, and both princes were very devout, and founded many churches and convents, and gave largely in alms. One has to remember in judging these sovereigns that the Florentine chroniclers, who have always held the ear of the world, hated them as the enemies of their city. They depict them as

barbarous and ignorant tyrants, sunk in gross vice. Yet Petrarca, the recognised sovereign of thought and letters in fourteenth century Italy, spent several years at Milan, in the service first of Archbishop Giovanni, and afterwards of Galeazzo, and speaks of the city and its Lords with great affection and respect. The high honour which the Visconti paid to the poet shows their regard for the things of the spirit. Their capture of Petrarca was felt to be as great a triumph as the conquest of a province. Boccaccio and other Tuscan writers inveigh fiercely against their countryman for his adherence to the Visconti, pretending that he who loved freedom had been deluded by the vulgar worship of riches and luxury, and had become a slave. But Petrarca, whose close acquaintance could judge better of his hosts, probably appreciated the large and far-reaching political ideas which were the heritage of the Visconti, and perhaps saw in Milan a hope for Italy, outside the conception of the Florentines, the possibility of a larger freedom in national union, which should restore the successors of the Romans to their lost glory.

The Visconti, moreover, took great pains to advance learning and culture in their dominions. They founded the University of Pavia, the once celebrated school of jurisprudence there having long decayed, and richly endowed its chairs, and it was Galeazzo who started the famous library at Pavia, to which all students were allowed access. Bernabò was something of a scholar himself, and had studied the Decretals in his youth; but the anxiety of constant wars and the cares of State hindered him from doing all that he would willingly have done for the intellectual welfare of the capital.

The bitter jealousy which prevailed between the two brothers divided them much in later years, though it could not disunite them in the face of their foes, and Galeazzo had left Milan and removed his Court to Pavia, though still keeping his share of the government of the capital. He died in 1378. His son, Gian Galeazzo, was delicate of constitution, of retiring habits, and much given to study. The gentleness with which he began to rule, remitting taxes and seeking to propitiate his subjects, excited the scorn of the grim Bernabò, who readily accepted the proposal of the young widower—Isabella de Valois having died—for the hand of his daughter Caterina, thinking thus to get an extra hold upon him. Little did the veteran prince suspect that this mild recluse, who was hardly ever seen out of his palace at Pavia, was the very quintessence of that subtlety, tenacity and ambition which had made the House of the Visconti the most dreaded in Italy. Gian Galeazzo's genius for statecraft had been carefully trained by his father. While Bernabò regarded him as of little account, he was strengthening his position both at home and abroad by quiet diplomacy, and evolving mighty schemes in his mind, while he patiently waited the ripe moment for their accomplishment.

There is nothing more dramatic in all the sensational story of mediæval Italy than Gian Galeazzo Visconte's sudden spring to power. Seven years had passed since his father's death, and Bernabò's tyranny had grown ever more oppressive, in sharp contrast to his fellow-ruler's. One day in 1385 Gian Galeazzo set forth from Pavia for Milan, escorted by four hundred men-at-arms, having announced his intention of visiting a holy shrine near Varese and his desire of embracing his honoured uncle on his

way. He had arranged not to enter the capital, but to skirt the walls till he reached the castle beside Porta Giovia, recently built by his father. Laughing at the young man's caution and his pusillanimity in bringing so large an escort, the elder Visconte sent two of his sons on ahead, and swinging himself into the saddle, galloped off, with two or three servants only, to meet his nephew. The two Sovereigns had but exchanged greetings when, Gian Galeazzo signed to the captain of his escort, Jacopo dal Verme, who laid his hand upon Bernabò's shoulder, and in a moment the tyrant found himself a prisoner. With his sons he was hurried into the Castle of Porta Giovia. Gian Galeazzo entered the city and was received with immense joy. Not vainly had he counted upon the terror and hatred which his uncle had excited. The people, rushing to the houses of the fallen tyrant and his sons, sacked them from end to end, fired and tore them down, and razed them to the ground. In a General Council of the citizens the sole and absolute dominion of Milan was unanimously conferred upon Gian Galeazzo and upon his male heirs.

Bernabò was removed soon after to the Castle of Trezzo, and died seven months later, of poison, it was said. His sons, except the two captured, had fled in all directions, and were doing their utmost to raise help against the usurper. But so perfectly had Gian Galeazzo conceived and accomplished his great stroke, and with the exercise of such consummate diplomacy and such victorious arms did he secure himself afterwards, that not one of Bernabò's children, in spite of their princely alliances, were able, with all their constant efforts, to overthrow him or recover any part of their heritage.

The usurper's one excuse for his treachery was that

his uncle and cousins had been openly intriguing against him. Immediately after the capture of Bernabò he drew up a solemn indictment against him, charging him with a catalogue of appalling crimes, and with insidious designs against his, Gian Galeazzo's, life, and sent it to all the Courts of Europe. This characteristic attempt to give legal justification to his action deceived nobody. Italy at large regarded the young ruler with an admiration and dread which events soon proved well-founded. The brain which had shown such sovereign dissimulation cherished ambitions before which whole cities and states were to fall. It was not long before his schemes began to be fulfilled. The story of Gian Galeazzo's military enterprises is one of almost unbroken conquest. He was no soldier himself, but he knew how to choose his generals, and he got the best out of them by interfering with them little and rewarding them very generously. The chaotic state of Italy at the time gave him his chance. So extraordinary was his success, that he was regarded as something almost diabolical. It seemed to his terrified enemies that he fascinated those whom he marked for destruction, so that they fell with eyes open into his snares. Francesco da Carrara, Lord of Padua, was persuaded to aid him to overthrow the Scaligeri of Verona. That city having been conquered in 1387, Gian Galeazzo picked a quarrel with his ally, besieged and captured Padua (1389), and sent Francesco to die in the dungeons of Monza. Master now of Verona and Padua, the Visconte had touched the Adriatic shore. Meanwhile Mantua and Venice looked on stupidly and awaited their own destruction as if paralysed. General fear possessed Italy at the rapid progress of the conqueror, who, unseen himself, directed his instruments with such

unfailing insight to his desired ends. The Visconte's policy was to strike at the weak first and gradually prepare the way for greater enterprises. The Church was at this time in the throes of the Great Schism, and Gian Galeazzo, protesting conscientious difficulties in deciding to which Pope he owed spiritual obedience, played them against one another, while he seized the papal fiefs in the Romagna. His armies climbed the mountains and poured into Umbria and Tuscany. Aroused at last by the example and exhortations of Florence, Italy shook off her stupor, and a general effort was made to stem the advance of the Visconte. Yet still he crept on, remedying the checks to his arms by his stealthy diplomacy. The King of France, in answer to the appeal of Florence, sent an army to invade his States, but it was routed by Jacopo dal Verme, and Charles VI. was himself converted into an ally by the Visconte's flatteries and promises. In 1399 he triumphed over Florence again by acquiring Pisa, without a blow, from Gerardo d'Appiano, while Perugia, Siena and Assisi submitted to his generals.

Already in 1395 Gian Galeazzo's great increase of power and prestige had been marked by his elevation to a new dignity. His untiring negotiations, backed by the offer of an enormous sum, persuaded the Emperor Wenceslaus to constitute the Milanese State, including a number of conquered cities, into a Duchy, and to invest the Visconte and his male heirs with it in perpetuity. The ceremony of investiture took place in the Piazza of St. Ambrogio, where upon a great throne the imperial legate robed and crowned the new duke in the sight of all the people, in the midst of every pompous circumstance, while in the basilica afterwards the Bishop of Novara, destined to become Pope Alexander V., preached the sermon and

lauded the subject of his oration for his illustrious blood, his conspicuous beauty of person and the virtuous tranquillity of his mind.

Gian Galeazzo was as great an administrator as statesman and conqueror. By wisdom, economy, careful distribution of taxation and supervision of finances, he relieved the people from the cruel and ill-considered burdens imposed by the bad management of his predecessors, while increasing his own resources enormously. He was the very genius of order. He saw that the law was properly and effectively carried out, justice done to all, and perfect rule maintained throughout the State. It was by his generous, just, and wise government of the cities which he conquered that he consolidated his vast dominions.

In these favourable conditions Milan flourished exceedingly, and could contribute without overwhelming distress her share of the duke's annual revenue of twelve hundred thousand florins, and of the extra levies for special purposes, amounting sometimes to eight hundred thousand florins in one year—sums far exceeding those commanded by any other Italian prince.

Gian Galeazzo's rule, though sometimes oppressive, was not carried on by the harsh methods of his predecessors. Violence and wanton cruelty were probably repugnant to his sensitive physical temperament and despicable to his unimpassioned mind. He was never bloody, except for a purpose, as in the awful sack of Verona after her revolt and recapture in 1390. But for a refined and ingenious cruelty which exercised itself in long worming plots ending far off in some unexpected catastrophe, Gian Galeazzo seems to have had an artistic predilection.

It was he, men said, who by Iago-like suggestions drove Francesco Gonzaga of Mantua to slay his wife Agnese, one of Bernabò Visconte's daughters, in a frenzy of jealousy, that he himself might be first and loudest afterwards in proclaiming the innocence of the lady and exciting general execration of the murderer. The beheading of young Obizzo d'Este at Ferrara has been also attributed to evil suspicions which the Milanese prince instilled into the Marquis Alberto for political ends. The Visconte's influence is plainer still in the hideous treachery and ingratitude of Jacopo d'Appiano, who, with a kiss of peace, slew his protector and friend, the noble Pietro Gambacorti, and made himself Lord of Pisa for Gian Galeazzo's benefit, as very shortly appeared.

The Duke's piety was as marked as his less estimable characteristics. He did not doubt his own righteousness or hesitate to invoke the aid of Heaven for all his enterprises. He was assiduous in his devotion to the Saints and observance of the Church's rites and ceremonies. The Cathedral of Milan, the vast Certosa of Pavia, and many other great buildings, were planned and founded by this prince. These works were not done solely for a spiritual reward, but also to proclaim his own glory to the world and to encourage art and industry. All Gian Galeazzo's greatness of spirit showed in his buildings. His engineering schemes were as mighty and daring in conception as undaunted and patient in accomplishment. To subdue Padua and Mantua he undertook the gigantic task of diverting the Brenta and Mincio. But here he measured himself too audaciously against natural forces. One night the Mincio, 'in piena,' hurled its waters at the huge dam and swept away the work which had cost untold labour and gold.

With all his occupations of war and statesmanship, Gian Galeazzo found time to continue his father's patronage of Letters. He had as a youth studied deeply himself in the University of Pavia. An early fresco at Pavia, now long lost, represented him as a child standing in a crowd of nobles and distinguished men in his father's palace, and in answer to the question, who was the greatest man present, pointing to the poet Petrarca. This allegory recorded the honour which he paid all his life to intellect and learning. He called the greatest scholars to the Chairs of the University, including Emanuel Chrysoloras, who thus brought to Milan the newly reviving knowledge of Greek. He made these men his councillors and familiar associates. They read poetry to him and discussed the new discoveries of antiquity, so that his castle has been called a temple of wisdom. Architecture, sculpture, painting were equally fostered by him. There was no sort of human activity which he did not seek to stimulate for the advantage and glory of his State.

Though its operations meant destruction to lesser powers, Gian Galeazzo's brain was essentially kingly and creative. This was the moment in Italy of the formation of great States. The old faction struggles of the era of freedom had come to an end with the establishment of tyrannies, and of these the lesser were now being swallowed up by the greater. In this process Milan under the Visconti was the leader. Its natural outcome seemed to be the foundation of a great settled kingdom in the peninsula, like France and England in the North. The patriotic spirits of the time dreamed of such a kingdom as the redemption of Italy from her woes of constant dissension and warfare. The idea took practical shape in the mind of the great Matteo's descendant and heir, in whom

character and circumstance united to carry the large political thought and ambition of the Visconti nearest to its supreme fulfilment. And it was to Gian Galeazzo that the dreamers looked for the realisation of their desire, as perhaps Petrarca had looked to the earlier generation. Fazio degli Uberti, the fourteenth century Florentine poet and exile, who lived long at the Viscontean Court, in one of his canzoni makes Rome cry—

'O figliuol mio, da quanta crudel guerra
Tutti insieme verremo a dolcie pace
Se Italia soggiace
A un solo re....'[2]

2.

'Oh my son, from what cruel warfare
Should we come all together to sweet peace
Could Italy be subject
To one sole king....'

To such a single crown Gian Galeazzo undoubtedly aspired. And though he was defeated in the end, it was by no mortal means. All the efforts of the hostile league of Florence, Venice, the Pope, and the lesser Italian Princes, could not hinder his advance. His dominions at the beginning of the fifteenth century embraced nearly the whole of Lombardy and the Romagna. The Umbrian cities Perugia and Assisi were his. Lucca, Pisa and Siena obeyed him. The tide of his success crept on. He foresaw and discomfited every move of his opponents. In 1401 Bologna, long an obstacle in his path, was surrendered to him by the Bentivogli. His bravest and most obstinate foe, Florence, lay virtually at his mercy. On every side of her he was supreme. Cut off from all help she waited his deadly attack. The moment of his triumph was at

hand.

In July 1402 the Duke instructed his armies to close round the city of the Arno. Retiring from Milan, where the plague had appeared, to his villa at Melegnano, he had the mantle, sceptre and diadem prepared for his coronation as King of Italy. He had nothing to fear now from mortal enemies. There was one power only which his arms and calculations could not defy. On the 10th of August he was seized with the deadly contagion, and a few days later he died, at the age of 49.

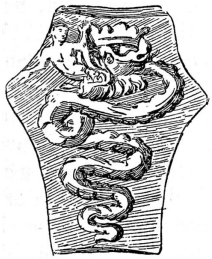
Who can tell the thoughts of the man as he lay on his death-bed, in his hands at last all that he had laboured for day and night without ceasing, and they powerless to close upon it. Who can measure the passion of that defeated brain? His death caused infinite joy in Florence, and in Italy generally. Yet there were many who, with an anonymous poet of the time, wept for the loss which had deprived

> 'questo emisfero
> de quel che col pensiero
> Sanar volia l'italico payese.'

Their lament was justified. The direct result of the tyrant's death was the release of all the elements of disorder and reaction in Italy, the revival of angry faction, the break-up of a great organised State among a host of greedy and warring pretenders, and the terrorism of military adventurers over the whole country, ending in the establishment of a dynasty in Milan destined to sell Italy to her final shame and ruin. What if Gian Galeazzo had lived a few years longer? Florence would probably have fallen before him, Florence whose incurable spirit of individualism had been the one barrier between him and his

ambition. But was that single little torch of liberty, which itself was soon to waver and be spent, worth the sacrifice of a united and peaceful Italy, strong enough to resist all outside foes, forward enough to lead all Europe in the path of progress?

Yet if that noble fruition of art and civilisation which glorifies the fifteenth century in Florence was conditional on her independence, then Italy through all the tears of her after centuries of sorrow and humiliation might well answer Yes.



THE SNAKE OF
THE VISCONTI

CHAPTER VI
From Visconti to Sforza

"Una città corrotta che vive sotto un principe ... mai non si può ridurre libera."—MACCHIAVELLI.

Gian Galeazzo's three sons by Isabella of Valois had died in infancy, leaving him with one daughter only, Valentina, whom in 1387 he had married to the Duke of Orleans, brother of Charles VI. of France, an alliance of immense immediate advantage to the Visconti, but of fatal issue for Milan and Italy generally, in days beyond even his far vision. After some years of marriage, his second wife, Caterina Visconte, had borne him a son, whom he had named Giovanni Maria, decreeing that every one of his descendants should thenceforth bear the name of Maria, as a token of his gratitude to the Virgin, to whose intercession he attributed the birth of his heir. A second son, Filippo Maria, was born later. At the time of the Duke's death the elder was only fourteen, and the younger ten. In addition to their youth, they had the enduring disadvantage of issuing from parents both of the same stock, which already, in the ferocity and capriciousness of Bernabò and the physical timidity and weakness of Gian Galeazzo himself, had shown signs of vitiation. This taint in

the blood became in Giovanni Maria a moral disease, amounting to mania, and in his brother an exaggerated misanthropy and timidity.

Giovanni Maria succeeded to the dukedom, and Filippo became by his father's will Count of Pavia, which had been erected into an appanage of the sovereign House. The charge of the young Duke's person and state immediately became the object of a wild scramble among the different parties in the city. The dead man's will, appointing his widow regent, was utterly disregarded, and she and her adviser, Francesco Barbavara, were driven out by Estorre and Carlo Visconte, two of Bernabò's sons, who now reappeared after long exile, hoping to recover their heritage. The Duchess died in 1404, poisoned, it was believed, by her son. But this unhappy lady, who had seen her father entrapped and murdered and her whole family ruined by her husband, and whose sons were now helpless in the hands of robbers and foes—who had been driven hither and thither in the whirl of faction and was already paralytic—might well sink beneath her sorrows, without the help of this unnatural crime, which there seems to have been no better reason than his general wickedness for laying to the young Duke's charge.

Meanwhile Bernabò's sons were swept away by other faction leaders, to return and be again overthrown, as the fortunes of the struggle surged backwards and forwards. One after another of Gian Galeazzo's great captains snatched and held the city for a time. Now Ottobuono Terzo—now Carlo Malatesta—now Facino Cane, the most famous of them all, ruled in the name of the utterly incapable Prince, while out of the ruins of Gian Galeazzo's vast State, which Venice, Florence and the Church had hastened to dismember, each

faithless governor seized some remaining fragment wherewith to create a small independent dominion for himself. Thus while the great Duke's conquests, further off, were quickly lost, cities close to the capital and long subject to the Visconti fell to these lesser depredators. Pavia and other towns were captured by Facino Cane, who kept the young Filippo a virtual prisoner, and Monza became the stronghold of Estorre Visconte and his spirited sister Valentina.

The confusion and struggle in Milan continued throughout the ten years of Giovanmaria's reign. The condition of the city was lamentable. Peace and order were destroyed, and the names of Guelf and Ghibelline were heard again in the streets, inflaming household against household and awakening the horrors of civil war. The Duke made no attempt to rule for himself. His only share in the government was the execution of State prisoners, whom he caused to be torn to pieces, under his own eyes, by dogs trained for the purpose. The extraordinary passion for dogs, together with the hatred of humankind, visible in Bernabò and others of the Visconti, had become an extravagant ferocity in this degenerate member of the race. The story of Milan during his reign is like some dreadful dream, in which, when sleep has fallen on the incessant riots and fighting, through the darkness of the night stalk the awful figures of the maniac Prince, gloating in his sport, and his huntsman, Squarcia Giramo, beside him, with their terrible hounds in leash, on the scent of human blood.

The Duke's appetite for blood was rewarded with Dantesque fitness. He died in 1412, suffocated in his own blood in the precincts of the palace, under the

daggers of three Milanese nobles, who had sworn to rid the world of a monster, and his body, lying in its blood in the Cathedral, whither it had been carried and left alone by the general horror, had for its only pall blood-red roses strewn upon it by a harlot.

At the moment of Giovanmaria's murder, Facino Cane, who for some years had dominated Milan, lay on his death-bed. Filippo Maria Visconte, whose youth had passed in confinement at Pavia, now found himself at one stroke free, and in nominal possession at least of the Dukedom. He was twenty years old. The astute young man's first step was to marry Beatrice Tenda, Facino's widow, through whom he became at once master of Pavia and the State which the Condottiere had conquered for himself, and of Facino's fine army and immense treasure. He then led his troops to Milan, where his entry was opposed by Estorre Visconte and a strong faction. The great stronghold of Porta Giovia was, however, held for the legitimate prince by the Castellan, Vincenzo Marliano, who roused the citizens against Estorre. That brave soldier, the Hector of his race, was overthrown, and he and his nephew Giovanni Carlo, with all their supporters, were compelled to fly after a few days. The young Duke marched in without opposition and was received with enthusiasm by the people.

The city felt at once the presence of a master. Order was restored, factions calmed, peaceful industry protected, and punishment inflicted on Giovanmaria's murderers. Filippo proceeded to engage the most successful Condottieri of the day to defend and restore his State, seconding their valour and generalship in the field by the most careful and industrious diplomacy in every Court of Italy and the

principal European kingdoms. The rebel Visconti were subdued by the death of Estorre and the surrender of Monza (1412), which the brave Valentina relinquished, making honourable terms for herself and the remaining descendants of Bernabò. Lodi, Como, Piacenza and Brescia were recovered in the course of a few years, and in 1422 Genoa was won. Filippo's rapid progress awakened the old terror of the Snake once again in Italy. The third Duke of Milan had indeed many of the successful qualities of his race, the craft, the patience, the untiring industry. But they were vitiated by his timidity of mind and body, which made him both suspicious and superstitious. Supremely perfidious himself, he dared trust no man, and constantly laid snares for his own agents, and ended by falling into them himself. Thus in 1424, fearful of the glory of his great general, Carmagnola, who had been the chief means of restoring his fortunes, he offended and alienated the Condottiere, with disastrous consequences. In his fear and dislike of all men he shut himself up in the innermost recesses of the Castle of Porta Giovia, and maintained as many precautions as if he dwelt in a city of traitors. He tolerated few persons around him, except his astrologers, who ruled him through his fears. He dared take no step without consulting them. He was never seen by his subjects except upon some rare State occasion, surrounded by guards, or when some peasant, working in the solitary fields, spied him slipping hastily in his barge along the canals between Milan and his favourite country palace of Abbiategrasso.

This dark habit of life made him odious to the sunny-tempered Milanese. They shuddered at this pale fat man, who increased their horror by condemning his

own wife to death in 1418. To Beatrice Tenda and her vast dowry Filippo owed almost entirely his possession of the Dukedom. Her years much exceeded her second husband's, though the Duke, like his father, had never been young. Because he was tired of her, or because she was cross and avaricious, as the chroniclers variously aver, or more probably because she had served her purpose and was no longer of any use to him, Filippo accused her of infidelity. She was arrested and carried to the Castle of Binasco, together with her supposed lover, a handsome young knight, Michele Orombello, who had solaced her dreary existence with his skill upon the lute, and after having resisted torture inflicted to make her confess herself guilty, she was beheaded. Orombello and two of her ladies shared her fate. Ten years later the Duke married, for political reasons, the Princess Maria of Savoy. This poor lady was hardly less to be pitied than Beatrice. The Duke neglected her himself, yet jealously kept her secluded from all but her own women, allowing no man to appear in her presence. Meanwhile Agnese del Maino, the lady who had secured the tyrant's affections, reigned in the Castle as his wife in all but name. Filippo's love for Agnese, a woman of spirit and culture, and his devotion to the daughter she bore him, his only child, Bianca Maria, were human traits in his otherwise unamiable character. Though no lover of learning, Filippo continued, as much as circumstances allowed, the Viscontean patronage of culture and letters, the tradition that had descended from his ancestors, the hosts of Petrarca. He kept up the University of Pavia and called great scholars to its chairs. The celebrated humanist, Pier Candido Decembrio, was for many years his secretary. He employed artists of renown, including Brunelleschi

and Pisanello, in various works. To his daughter the Duke was careful to give the scholarly training which with the revival of learning had become a necessary ornament for the women as well as the men of the great Italian Houses, and Bianca Maria added the accomplishments of Latin and Greek to the beauty and spirit with which nature had endowed her.

But the Duke had neither means nor leisure amid the struggles of his ambition and the pressure of his fears for much attention to the peaceful arts. He was entirely occupied in redeeming his heritage and preserving it from the greed of Venice, the inveterate hate of Florence, the envy of the smaller States, and, from what he feared most of all, the ambition and intrigues of the Condottieri in his own employ. The fortunes of Italy were now, in fact, in the hands of the great military adventurers. After a century and a half of physical lassitude, during which her wars had been carried on by foreign mercenaries, she had bred a race of warriors who had learnt their craft so well in the camps of the German and English Condottieri that they had now superseded the foreigners. With hosts of trained and disciplined soldiers at their command, who knew no faith except to their leader, they took service now with one sovereign, now with another, and with their fickle arms and policy made and unmade States at their will. Facino Cane and Jacopo dal Verme had already played their parts, to the disruption of the Milanese State. Carmagnolo, after serving Duke Filippo for many years, went over to Venice, and for long balanced the two States one against the other, by his crafty conduct of the war, till he fell a victim to the superior cunning of the Doge and his councillors in 1432. And now, in the midst of the noise of battle and the ferment of intrigue, in which all the years of Duke Filippo were

wrapped, the great name of Sforza is first heard in Milanese story.

With the first Sforza and his son Francesco on the one side, and Braccio Montone and Niccolò Piccinino on the other, the age of the Condottieri culminated. The whole of Italy was plunged into strife by these great leaders, in whom the old faction divisions of the country were revived, and cities and States split up once again into hostile parties, Guelfs and Ghibellines reappearing under the new names of Sforzeschi and Bracceschi. These rival forces were at once the salvation and the torment of Duke Filippo. The hope of succeeding to the heirless man's dominions—an elevation not beyond the attainment of an obscurely born individual, in an age and country in which men made themselves, and everything was possible to strength and ability—was a bait which drew them to his service; and with all his cunning and perfidious diplomacy he manipulated them for his own advantage, pitting them against each other, now encouraging one, now compassing his downfall by means of another. But they, too, were cunning. It was a game of wits, and Filippo often found himself outdone. Yet to the very end, though plagued, cajoled and defeated on all sides, he succeeded in circumventing all the efforts of either party to seat itself securely in Milan, preferring, with his strange spite towards mankind, to leave his kingdom to anarchy rather than adopt an heir.

In spite of him, however, destiny had raised up in a rustic race hailing from Cotignola, in the Romagna, a regenerator for the worn-out tyranny of the Visconti. Muzio Attendolo, the founder of the Sforza family, is pictured by legend as a peasant boy, who, when

twelve years old, flung his woodman's axe into a tree, and ran away to the wars. He appears to have been really the son of a small landowner, rich only in the possession of a progeny mighty in number and in strength. The name of Sforza is said to have attached itself to him, in consequence of some signal effort of his extraordinary strength and will. These qualities, joined to his great energy, raised him to the highest military fame. His life was chiefly spent in the wars of Naples and the Church, but he had just accepted service with the Duke of Milan, when one day he plunged into a swollen river, under the arrows of the enemy, to save a drowning boy, and sank beneath the weight of his armour (1424).

His son, Francesco, though only twenty-two, took command of his army, and soon showed equal valour and much greater ability. Engaged, in 1425, by Duke Filippo, he rapidly became a power in Milan, where he struggled with the rival Condottiere, Niccolò Piccinino, for supremacy in the councils of the Prince, and in the favour of the people. In 1432, Filippo gave him the highest mark of favour by promising him the hand of Bianca Maria, and with all solemnity the little girl of eight years old was betrothed to the great general. But no sooner had the Duke thus exalted Sforza, than he hastened to depress and humiliate him in every way. Niccolò Piccinino was given the chief command of the Visconte's forces, and Francesco was fain at the time to abandon Milan, and his hopes of eventually possessing the Dukedom in his promised wife's right, and to accept the standard of Pope Eugenius IV., Filippo's bitter enemy. For many years the brilliant genius of Piccinino and the subtlety of the Duke were victorious over all enemies, and baffled every effort of Sforza to obtain his little princess and regain his

footing in Milan. The climax of Filippo's success came in 1435, when his Genoese fleet defeated the Neapolitans at Gaeta, and brought back captive the Kings of Naples and Navarre and a great company of lords and gentlemen. The Duke on this occasion completely belied his usual character and astonished the whole world by his kingly spirit. He received the two monarchs with the utmost honour, and immediately granted them their freedom. Moreover, he entertained them and their trains for a whole month, with great splendour and a joyous festivity, rare indeed in Milan during his reign. His generosity was doubtless calculated; in Alfonso of Naples he disarmed an enemy and made a lasting friend, and by cunningly rousing in that monarch a hope of succeeding to the Milanese state, he raised up an aspirant who might be useful as a weapon against the conflicting pretensions of Piccinino and Sforza.

Before long, however, fortune turned against the Duke. Sforza, at the head of the League of Venice, Florence and the Church, routed his generals and captured his provinces and cities. In this predicament, Filippo appealed to the great Condottiere's ambition, and allured him once more by offering him his bride at last with a rich dowry of territory and gold. Francesco thereupon ceased to press the attack upon him, and the war became little more than a languid pretence. Having thus nonplussed his foes, who were completely dependent on the caprice of their general, the Duke, with his interminable negotiations, continually delayed the accomplishment of his promise, and meanwhile secretly endeavoured in every way to entangle and overthrow Francesco. In this he was only baffled by the almost equal craft and caution of his would-be son-in-law.

But as time went on, the Duke began to grow old and to weary of the eternal struggle. He was oppressed with languor and excessive fat. The fear of total blindness came upon him. Nearly all Italy was armed against him. The parties in the State grew ever more clamorous, his captains more unmanageable. Each of the latter seized upon one of his cities and domineered over it as its Lord. Disasters accumulated upon him in the field. Piccinino's daring raid into Florentine territory, in 1439-40, ended in the great defeat of Anghiari, and Sforza, enraged by the Duke's duplicity, was capturing his cities for the League and devastating his territories far and wide. Meanwhile, the peace which all Italy sighed for was delayed by the great Condottiere, who, having triumphed over all his rivals, would not sheath his sword till he had secured Bianca Maria and the enormous dowry which he demanded with her. At last, yielding to the persuasion of his only friend, Niccolò III. of Ferrara, the general peacemaker, Filippo agreed to the marriage, and the maiden of seventeen was conducted to the city of Cremona, which was to be her rich portion, by the fatherly Marquis Niccolò, and there wedded to her mature bridegroom.

Sforza's purpose was, however, only half accomplished. Though the lady was won, the Dukedom remained to be secured. But he had to reckon with his father-in-law's antipathy, doubtless originating in a deep-seated pride of race, and also with the hostile party—led by Niccolò Piccinino and his sons—which was all-powerful in Milan and virtually ruled the now decrepit Filippo. The Milanese armies before long moved once more against Sforza, who retaliated by accepting the command of the Venetian forces and carrying fire and sword right up to the walls of Milan. The

terrified Filippo was compelled to seek reconciliation with his offended son-in-law, and to the chagrin of Venice, Sforza abandoned her side in the hour of success and rapidly won back for the Visconte the Milanese territories which he had just conquered for the Republic. At this juncture the Duke, plagued by the irreconcilable importunities of the two parties, used the only resource left to him wherewith to baffle them both. Without confirming his promises to Sforza he fell sick, and, obstinately refusing all remedies, let himself die (1447), reiterating with his last breath a wish that after his death everything might fall to ruin.

And so it did. The city was immediately plunged into confusion and uproar. Pretenders sprang up on every side, and the old faction trouble threatened to overwhelm all order. The cities subject to Milan rebelled, and once more the great State of the Visconti broke up into independent fragments. Meanwhile, in the midst of the tumult in the capital itself, the beautiful word Liberty, still remembered from the glorious days of Milan's Republican freedom, was breathed by a few noble and disinterested citizens. It was acclaimed by the people, who thought it meant relief from taxation, and was accepted by the various factions, each hoping to make profit out of it. Amid enormous enthusiasm the Golden Republic of St. Ambrogio was constituted, and the supreme authority delegated to a few leading men, who were called Captains and Defenders of the Liberty of Milan.

The first act of the Republic was to sweep away the Castle of Porta Giovia, stronghold and symbol of hated tyranny. The people exulted to see it fall, but many thoughtful men, remembering the predatories

who coveted the rich city, were dismayed. Nor did the new Constitution prosper. The Milanese had lost all capacity for self-government under the long-continued despotism of the Visconti. ‘Nothing could make Milan free,’ pronounced Macchiavelli later, ‘being altogether corrupt, as was seen after the death of Filippo Visconte, when desiring to establish liberty she neither was able, nor knew how, to maintain it.’ The tyranny of hostile factions triumphed over the best intentions of the Republicans, and the thoughtless people arrayed themselves one against another, behind leaders whose only aim was to subjugate them. Those who had really pure motives were drawn hopelessly into the whirlpool, and the Defenders of Liberty oppressed each other, and the citizens generally, with every cruelty and injustice.

Meanwhile the Duchy was claimed by the Guelf party for Alfonso of Aragon, on the strength of a will which his supporters had extracted from the dying Filippo. A pretension—first threat of the misfortune that was to fall later on Milan—was also advanced by the Duke of Orleans, son of Filippo’s sister, Valentina Visconte. The Emperor claimed the Duchy as a vacant fief. More dangerous than any of these pretenders was Venice, greedy to extend her empire. But strongest of all was the resolution of Francesco Sforza, who mended the flaw of illegitimacy in his wife’s claim by the strength of his good sword. General of the Milanese armies at Filippo’s death, he used his power to defend the State from the attacks of Venice, and to subdue it gradually to his own sway. But his enemies were strong. The Piccinini, Francesco and Jacopo, warred against him with arms and intrigue, in alliance with the old Guelf faction. They held Milan against him, but their councils were confused by passion and divisions, and the great

general drew steadily nearer to the city. He defeated the Piccinini in the field, and outwitted their perfidious diplomacy with an equal craft. He leagued with Venice and Florence against the new Republic, defeated the Duke of Savoy, whom Filippo's widow, Maria of Savoy, had enlisted against him, and cutting Milan off from all friends or help, laid siege to the capital itself.

Yet still the citizens clung to their illusion of liberty, and obstinately refused to submit to a new master. Amid fierce tumult they appointed fresh magistrates from the lowest ranks, persecuted and proscribed the nobles, and put an enormous price on the head of the 'perfidious' Francesco Sforza, decreeing death to any who breathed his name without a curse. But their resolution was useless. For some time they kept the invader at bay with great spirit, aided by his party foes; but the death of Francesco Piccinino at this juncture was a serious blow to the defence. All trade was stopped by the siege, and general ruin threatened this community, long used to wealth and ease. The city was now reduced to grievous straits by famine. The desperate struggles of the democratic leaders, Gio. Ossona and Gio. da Appiano, to maintain their rule by blood and torture in the face of the growing discontent and the ceaseless intrigues of Sforza's partisans, made them odious to all. Tumults broke out, and everywhere, says Corio, were heard lamentations, weeping and cries. The Captains of Liberty were no longer feared or obeyed. When in desperation they began to parley with Venice, the citizens unanimously agreed that submission to Sforza was a lesser evil than falling into the jaws of San Marco, and a rising of Ghibellines and friends of the Condottiere succeeded in sweeping away the Republic of St. Ambrogio, and opening the gates at

last to the victorious Francesco, and to a new era of peace, prosperity and servitude (1450).

Amid the wild applause of countless thousands, the great warrior rode in, followed by his soldiers, whose necks and shoulders were hung round with loaves of bread. *It was a fine thing to see*—in Corio's words—*with what eagerness the people snatched off the bread, and with what voracity they devoured it.* So enormous was the throng, all shouting Sforza and Duca, that the conqueror and his horse were literally lifted up and carried on men's shoulders. But even yet one or two, among them the high-hearted Ambrogio Trivulzio, opposed his entrance, demanding of him guarantees for the liberty of the city. They were overpowered, however, by the multitudes, and Francesco Sforza was proclaimed Duke by general consent of the citizens.

Milan had immediate consolation for her lost liberty. By the wise provision of the conqueror, such generous abundance flowed in after the herald loaves of the soldiers, that in three days it seemed as if there had been no siege at all. Order was restored with a firm and kindly hand, and the splendid feasts and tournaments, continuing for nine days, and drowning the memory of past afflictions, hid no cruel deeds of vengeance upon the Duke's political opponents.

Italian historians generally agree in a favourable estimate of Francesco Sforza. Corio, the historian, whose father was a gentleman in the service of the Sforza, and he himself from his youth up, attached to the ducal household, describes the first Duke as *liberalissimo*, full of kindness, a lover of justice and religion, and declares that none observed faith better than he. This last, in fifteenth century Italy, was not

saying much. More impartial writers, while praising his courage, ability and general humanity, recognise that his triumph was due as much to perfidy and political suppleness as to valour. He was a man of his time, and his moral standard was that expressed by Macchiavelli later, who, writing of the Sforza, excuses him on the ground that great men are ashamed to lose, not to gain, by deception.

As Duke of Milan, Francesco still resorted to the same practices. The long tyranny of the Visconti, the strange cruelties and mysterious misanthropic habits of the later princes, the intercourse of the last Duke with astrologers and necromancers, which had wrapped him in a sort of diabolical atmosphere, made the idea of a despot repulsive and awful to the people, apart from their fear of oppression. But the brave, robust presence, the frank and genial manner of this lord of the battlefield and camp, *who nothing esteemed astrologers*, did much to overcome their prejudices, and his rejection of the gorgeous symbols of sovereignty prepared for his entry as *superstitioni dei Re*, and unfit for a simple soldier, was carefully calculated to win their confidence. But he dared not trust them. No sooner was he seated on the throne than with false assurances that his only motive was the safety and embellishment of the city, he began to rebuild the castle of Porta Giovia, and to fortify it with enormous walls, and with two huge round towers commanding the habitations of his subjects themselves, an ever visible warning against rebellion. The Milanese, however, made no attempt to shake off the yoke. The bulk of the people resumed with joy their industrial occupations, too content with relief from immediate afflictions to question of the future. They might well, too, recognise that submission to the successful soldier was Milan's only

hope of salvation as an independent State.

In Italy, as a whole, the elevation of Francesco Sforza meant the boon of peace. It enrolled on the side of order and stability the chief element of disturbance in the country. For more than a century continual strife had been kept up by the Condottieri in their own interests. But now that the greatest of them all had attained a solid throne, the era of their irresponsible energies was over. The splendid title and wealth of the Visconti, and the immense resources of the Lombard capital, united with the military skill and renown of the Sforza, could consolidate and safeguard once again that great empire of the Snake, whose decrepitude had been the chief opportunity of the Condottieri, and the provocation of the late wars. On the part chosen by Milan depended largely the fate of the whole peninsula. The far-eyed ambition of the Visconti had chosen war. The new dynasty, on the contrary, preferred to develop the vast wealth of the State which it had won rather than increase its bounds, and was content to relinquish for the sake of peace all pretensions to the cities once belonging to the Visconti, and now usurped by Venice. Neither Francesco nor his successor sought the aggrandisement of their dominions. And where the Visconti, aggressive though they were, had studied the peace of Italy in the larger sense, they were nobly followed by the two first Sforza. Gian Galeazzo's national policy—Italy for the Italians—his care to keep those Alpine gates, whose keys had been committed to Milan's charge, locked against a possible invader, was adopted and carried on by the Sforza, through nearly half a century; and when it was reversed, and the flood of disaster and ruin let loose upon the country by Francesco's younger son,

the brilliant prince to whom Fate had denied no gift except just those two qualities which had made the Visconti great—judgment and knowledge of men—there is reason to believe that fear rather than ambition was the motive.

During the last century of the Viscontean domination, Milan, which had suffered little herself from the wars of Gian Galeazzo and Filippo Maria, and had never been taxed beyond her strength by those able tyrants, had grown into an enormous centre of trade. The rich produce of the East, transmitted from Venice and the other Italian ports, and the exports of the country itself, passed through the Milanese warehouses to the marts of the North. The Milanese woollen fabrics clothed all well-to-do Europe, and her smiths forged the panoply of the knights and men-at-arms on every battlefield and in every jousting-list of Christendom and of civilised Heathenesse as well. So great were the workshops of the master armourers that two of them alone are said to have armed on one occasion four thousand horsemen and two thousand foot soldiers for Duke Filippo in the space of a few days. The abundant products of the fertile plains around flowed into the capital, and with increasing population and wealth new industries arose, adding to the general prosperity, so that this city could with ease keep up an army which would have beggared Venice or Florence. In her almost inexhaustible resources lay the secret of her power in Italy, and of her great influence even in the Councils of Europe.

The new Duke laboured to breed, by all the arts of peace, yet greater wealth, and to secure its full advantage for the State. Especially he desired that Milan should have a due share in that splendid

patrimony of light and learning which Italy was now inheriting across the chasm of the Middle Ages from her rediscovered Past. This man of war, bred up from childhood in the camp, entertained all the liberal ideals of the day. He particularly honoured virtuous and learned men, Corio tells us, and to his encouragement of art the city owed many beautiful buildings. In his patronage of the humanities, as in all his affairs, the Duke was nobly supported by his wife, Bianca Maria Visconte. This lady—*donna d'animo virile*—had been from their marriage-day the prop of his ambition and resolve. Her invincible spirit had never allowed him to flinch a moment from his task of conquest, had restored his courage under misfortune, and had even inspired him by donning helmet and cuirass, and herself leading troops to his succour on the battlefield. Aided by her clever mother, Agnese del Maino, Bianca Maria had acted for him in critical moments in his absence, with invariable constancy and promptitude, so that he was wont to declare that he had more confidence in her than in his whole army. In the acquisition of Milan she was his chief councillor, and now that the throne of her ancestors was won, she claimed her full share of it. One may suspect that this conqueror of men—not alone in history—was somewhat mastered by the young woman at his side. Bianca Maria is celebrated by the chroniclers for her goodness. 'This lady,' says Cagnola, 'in piety, compassion, charity, and beauty of person, as well as every other virtue, surpassed all the women of our age, and was the splendour and mirror of all Italian women.'

Francesco left the government of his sons entirely to this notable lady. She herself superintended their Greek and Latin studies. But instruction in the art of ruling was the chief feature of her training, and that

famous pedant, Filelfo, the Florentine, who was one of their tutors, had to remember that his task was to form princes, not merely men of letters. She was careful to have them taught chivalrous exercises, habits of courtesy, and the good manners proper to princes; and so rigorous was her discipline that no boys were ever better behaved than the 'fantastick' of after days, Galeazzo Maria, and he who was to betray Italy, Lodovico il Moro.

With the change from the worn-out domination of the Visconti, rooted in the Middle Ages, to the rule of the soldier of fortune, who owed his success to personal genius and character, the Renaissance era, that opportunity of individual talent, may be said to have opened in Milan. The aspect of the city soon showed the operation of a new vitality and enthusiasm, in the splendid buildings which now arose, and in the activity of all artistic and industrial employments. But Duke Francesco's designs for the improvement of his State were hampered by the last convulsive struggles of the long-continued wars of North Italy. It was some years before Venice, Savoy, and the rest of Milan's enemies were quieted and propitiated by the arms and the prudent diplomacy of the new ruler, who with time found means of overcoming all the dangers which threatened him. An alliance with Louis XI. of France protected the Duke from the pretensions of Orleans. With Cosimo de' Medici he maintained a loyal friendship, and thus disarmed Florence, and with Naples he concluded a treaty of peace, which was sealed by the marriage of his daughter Ippolita to King Ferdinand's son, Alfonso of Calabria. Francesco was well aware, however, of the secret hostility harboured against him by a strong party in the city, and was ever on his guard. The death of Jacopo Piccinino, in 1465, rid

him of the last survivor of the great family of Condottieri, who had been his most formidable foes and rivals. Historians have charged Francesco with a share in the horrid deception by which this brilliant captain was decoyed to his destruction at the hands of Ferdinand of Naples.

A year later (1466), when the Duke himself died, his dynasty seemed to be securely founded in Milan. Yet, in the absence of the heir, the Duchess and her councillors hastened to put the Castle into a state of defence, and to take every precaution against rebellion. Galeazzo Maria, was hurriedly summoned from France, where he was fighting for Louis XI. in the Barons' War. His return was accomplished with the utmost speed and secrecy, and the story of his passage through the dominions of Savoy, disguised as the servant of a travelling merchant, the attempt to capture him as he passed by a certain castle in the mountains, his escape into sanctuary, and thence, after three days' concealment, into the fastnesses of the hills, where by difficult ways he was conducted into his own territory, strikes at once that note of romance and extravagance which accompanies the strange personality of Galeazzo Maria Sforza throughout his short course to the grave.

Once in his own dominions the new duke had nothing to fear. The habit of servitude had become only too confirmed in the Milanese, and they sealed their submission to the House of Sforza by accepting Francesco's son without protest as their Lord. Galeazzo, born too late to remember aught but the triumphant days of his House, or to have known any interruption in the flattery, servility and fear which waited on princes in the fifteenth century, found himself at twenty-two monarch of a great State and

vast riches, lord of the lives and destinies of large populations, and master, in all the vigour and freshness of his youth and of the unexhausted Sforza blood, of that incomparable treasure of delight and varied human experience which the Renaissance of learning, of knowledge, of beauty, had added to the heritage of power bequeathed to the Italian tyrants by their immediate ancestors. Is it a wonder that the princes of that bright new day, in all the pride of the restored faith in human greatness and possibility, should have believed themselves more than men, and like the old Roman emperors, whose histories they read and whose heirs they considered themselves, should have assumed the proud appellation of *Divi*—Gods? These favourites of Time and Fortune lacked, however, one thing: that discipline of the will—more rigorous than the self-mortification of the apostles of asceticism—which the religion of beauty and joy requires in its followers.

In Galeazzo Maria Sforza the characters of a Renaissance tyrant appear in an exaggerated light. A strain of the bizarre, inherited from his Visconte ancestors, working in the strong new blood of the Sforza, produced in him an extravagance of temperament which ruled all his thoughts and acts. He had been instructed in the new learning by Filelfo and other humanists of repute; but from the classic example and precept thus set before him by men who themselves often abused the ideals which they taught his unbalanced nature had learnt only licence. His hot passions, romantically shown in youth by his love for Lucrezia Landriani, and his adoration of the child she bore him, that famous Caterina, afterwards Lady of Forlì, developed rapidly into unbridled lust. His vanity was nothing less than preposterous, and his care for his tall and splendid person, and in

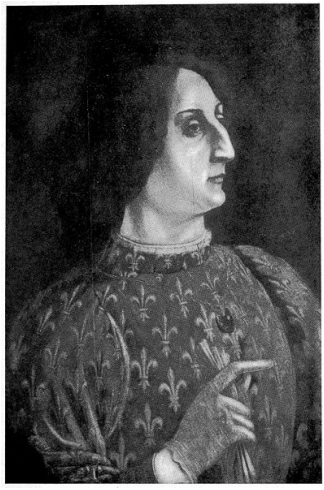
especial for his beautiful white hands, was a sort of idolatry. His insatiable appetite for gorgeous surroundings and rich display glutted itself with an orgy of colour and ornamentation, rioted in costly fabrics and priceless gems and gaudy equipages. Never before in Italy had such pomp been seen as accompanied his journey, in 1471, to visit Lorenzo de' Medici, who, as head of the Florentine Republic, had been entertained a short time before in Milan. With him went his consort, the beautiful Bona of Savoy, the princess who was to have married Edward IV. of England, had not her fickle suitor fallen in love with Elisabeth Woodville instead. Bona became Galeazzo's wife in 1467.

Besides his Duchess, all the great feudatories and ministers of State, arrayed in cloth of gold and silver, accompanied the Duke, himself a magnificent figure in royal crimson. The courtiers wore velvet and finest silk, the dresses of the chamberlains and pages were exquisite with needlework, the lackeys were in silk and cloth of silver, and the very cooks and scullions in velvet and satin. An immense train of horses, with trappings of silver and gold, carried grooms in silken liveries of the Sforza colours, purple and white. Mules, with housings of white and purple damask embroidered with the devices of the Sforza in silver, bore litters hung with gorgeous stuffs, and containing beds of cloth of gold. Huntsmen leading five hundred couple of dogs, falconers with highly trained hawks upon their wrists followed, and a host of trumpeters, pipers, musicians and jesters played their lively part in the procession. The description of this gallant train, winding out in all its fresh new bravery into the green Lombard plain from the serrated walls and gates of the mediæval city, in the radiance of a May morning, suggests something of

what Milan once was and of the lost beauty of Renaissance pageantry. The luxury and extravagance of the Milanese visitors greatly impressed the Florentines, and, according to Macchiavelli, helped to corrupt them and induce them to abandon their sober habits for pleasures and vanities.

Galeazzo's love of decoration vented itself in the adornment of his palaces with paintings and works of art. He employed a host of artists, and in his impatience and excitement demanded miracles of them. He would have marble palaces and painted chambers rise as at the stroke of a magician's wand; and an oft-told tale relates how he commanded a certain artist to decorate a whole wall with portraits of the ducal family in a single night. And woe to those who displeased him. The glittering, gaudy figure of this prince, with the great black eyes and hawk nose, and the white effeminate hands, dressed in the motley parti-coloured dress, red and white, used by the Dukes of Milan, moves through the pages of history in an alternation of black shadow and garish light. He was pointed out in whispers as the murderer of his own mother. It is true that his imperious temper had quickly resented Bianca Maria's attempt to share in the government and to retain the power which her influence on her husband had given her. A short struggle had ensued between the mother and son, and ended by the defeated Duchess resolving to withdraw to her dower city of Cremona and there exercise her lawful authority. But neither did this division of the State suit the new Duke, and he detained her in the Castle of Melegnano, where, devoured by anger and grief, she fell sick after a few months and died, poisoned, according to common belief. But the accusation appears to rest only on Galeazzo's general reputation

for wickedness, and the ingratitude and want of filial piety which he had already shown himself capable of towards his mother. He is not a singular instance, however, of a young sovereign disagreeing with a dominant queen-mother. With as scant evidence, the death of his first betrothed, Dorotea Gonzaga, which freed him to make the more advantageous alliance with Bona, is laid to Galeazzo's charge.



GALEAZZO MARIA SFORZA, BY PIERO POLLAIUOLO (UFFIZI, FLORENCE)

To face p. 138]
[*Alinari, Florence*

To such a personality as this prince's, so conspicuous and so frenzied, legend readily clings, even in his own lifetime, and the imaginations which peered into the secrets of his dungeons carried, perhaps,

some of their morbid visions with them. We must, however, believe the contemporary writers, who record hideous deeds committed by the Duke even in the light of day, grim pranks of punishment and devices of cruelty inflicted upon offenders, under his own eyes. There was a strange touch of imagination in his adjustment of torments to offences, and often a kind of wild justice and sympathy for the oppressed, horribly manifested, as when he punished a priest, who had refused the funeral rites to a poor man, by burying him alive in the same grave as the corpse. Galeazzo Sforza was in fact an embodied paradox—a monster of vices and virtues, as he has been called, or better still, in his daughter Caterina's word, a 'Fantastick.' This mad, bad prince had the theoretic admiration of his age for virtue, and was possessed with a very rage for cultivating it in his subjects. Abuses, such as bribery of magistrates, corruption in the public administration, oppressive restrictions on trade and commerce, were vigorously put down. He allowed none but himself to take money from petitioners, or to seize other people's property. His passion for justice and good government had planted so many gallows in his realm, that when his young bride came to Milan she trembled at the spectacle and fell on her knees, imploring pardon for prisoners and offenders, a boon immediately granted to her compassionate beauty. Though greedy of treasure and guilty of robbing his rich subjects, Galeazzo was punctual and exact in paying his servants—a rare virtue in an Italian prince. So trustworthy was his word as a sovereign that men regarded it as if it had been money. He had great personal attractions, was merry, affable and familiar with those around him, and willingly gave audience to his subjects. The courage which the populace expect of a prince was

conspicuous in him—*a man who never knew fear*, as his fearless daughter Caterina proudly describes him.

Better still, Galeazzo Sforza knew men. No one of proved worth and activity had to fear his caprices. Cecco Simonetta, his father's faithful minister, was retained in the highest offices throughout his reign; and his chief engineer and architect, Bartolommeo Gadio, kept undisturbed command of the great works of the Castello. Nor did the Duke's heated temper affect his political judgment. He reconciled himself with Savoy, and with Lorenzo de' Medici and Ferdinand of Naples formed that triple alliance which gave Italy her most splendid period of peace. In the cordial relations which he maintained with France he never forgot Milan's appointed task of guarding the gate of Italy. Within his own dominions he held party passions in check, and followed his father's prudent policy of employing in the important offices of State foreigners like the Sicilian Simonetta, and men who owed everything to the House of Sforza, and of diminishing the influence of the great nobles.



BRIDGE OVER NAVIGLIO
NEAR SAN MARCO

With peace without and order within, the tide of prosperity rose ever higher in the populous city. The vast lands of the Duchy were everywhere being brought to full fertility by irrigation works and the draining of wastes. Palaces surrounded by beautiful gardens and fruitful orchards and vineyards were springing up where before had been wilderness. Great schemes for new waterways between the different cities of the State were in hand, and all the immense increase of the country's resources, resulting from improved agriculture and greater facilities of traffic, flowed by a thousand streams into the coffers of the capital. An extraordinary vitality seemed to possess all classes in this morning of the Renaissance. The larger horizons revealed to the spirit by the revival of ancient literature and thought, the multiplicity of new interests created by increased knowledge, the joy of the release from the

mediæval sense of guilt and sorrow, gave to this age the vigour and enthusiasm of a regenerated world. Milan was one vast hive of vivacious energies, busy in commerce, in art and all kinds of handiwork, in learning, poetry, music. The Duke's excited spirit was eager for all intellectual and artistic novelties. His Court was thronged with scholars and philosophers. Not content with the magnificent library of Pavia, he formed a fine collection of books in Milan, and printing-presses were set up in the city at this time. But above all else Galeazzo loved music. Milan had been from early times the resort of troubadours, minstrels and those skilled in 'divers musicks,' but never before had such beautiful singers been heard there as the Duke summoned from Flanders and all parts of Europe to compose the choir of the ducal chapel in the Castello. Music and the chase were Galeazzo's favourite diversions; and the vast hunting-grounds and deep forests of the Duchy, full of wild boars and stags and all sorts of beasts and birds, the wide meres and watery channels crowded with waterfowl, were continually visited by gallant hunting and hawking trains. The picturesque interest of that far-off princely life, rich in all the adornments of rarest art, and fresh with the springing joy of that hopeful age, is enhanced for us by its dimness. It has all the poetic charm of a half-obliterated fresco. These historic figures appear to our vision in that stiffness and innocence and decorative grace, that mingling of mediæval romance and Renaissance beauty with which they were doubtless represented by the primitive painters who covered the walls of Galeazzo's palaces in Milan and Pavia with scenes of the ducal life—frescoes, alas! long perished.

The picture of the city at this time would be bright indeed but for the plague-spots of vice and cruelty in

the ruler, and of corruption in the people. Acquiescence in tyranny, and the new luxury of life, had bred effeminacy and servility in the citizens. But there were some among them who could not forget their shame. This motley prince, himself an early and crude product of the still undisciplined spirit of the Renaissance, was destined to perish by the operation of that same spirit. The very arrogance of blood and brain which drove him to excess swelled the indignation of the youths who assembled in the school of the humanist Cola Montana, and followed the finger of their preceptor as he pointed with scorn to the spectacle of the Duke passing with extravagant pomp across the Piazza dell' Arengo, and to the obsequious train of nobles and magistrates in gorgeous attire attending him, and contrasted the degradation and pusillanimity of these courtiers with the noble simplicity of the Carthaginian and Roman patriots who had won immortal fame by giving their lives for their country. Cola, who was himself secretly envenomed against the Duke on account of personal wrongs, never ceased to hold up before his pupils the example of Brutus and the lofty ideal of virtue and self-sacrifice which inspired their classic ancestors. Inflamed by his eloquence and by a mingling of pedantic pride and youthful enthusiasm, these sons of fathers who remembered the brief hope of the Ambrosian Republic formed a resolution to rid the State of the monstrous tyranny which oppressed it. Girolamo Olgiati, Gio. Ant. Lampugnano and Carlo Visconte were the chief conspirators. The lofty indignation of the two latter was aggravated by personal grievances, but the motives of Olgiati, whose sensitive mind had been moulded for years by Cola Montana, seems to have been pure of all egoism except a beautiful self-conceit. They communicated

their plot to a few trusty comrades, and went about the city secretly stirring up discontent. In spite of the general prosperity poverty existed, and it happened that the season had been bad and scarcity threatened. The populace could not see beyond this immediate evil, and all groaned together under the taxation which they supposed went only to provide for the limitless luxury of the Court. Many citizens were hereditary Guelfs and foes of the Sforza. The idea of rebellion was familiar enough in every North Italian city, and the conspirators received so much sympathy and so many promises of adherence that the excited vision of young Olgiati pictured the whole city awaiting the signal of the great deed to rise and set him and his fellows at the head of a Republic as noble as those of antiquity. Day and night Lampugnano's house was crowded with enthusiasts for liberty. All preparations were made for the rising, deputies were appointed to ensure the safety of the city in the confusion which was sure to follow the overthrow of the government, and the day and the particulars of the great act of judgment on the tyrant were carefully arranged.

On St. Thomas Day (1476), Duke Galeazzo entered early in the morning into his capital, after a short victorious campaign against the encroachments of Burgundy in the mountains of Savoy. Let it be remembered of him that his last deed was thus to beat back invaders of Italy. As he rode to Milan from his Castle of Abbiategrasso, in the bitter cold which had numbed the streams and fogged the air, three ravens slowly rose and flew across his path, one after the other, uttering hoarse croaks. The Duke seized a gun and fired at these evil augurs, and was half-minded to turn back. He went forward, however, but a heavy presentiment of ill had fallen on his soul. As

he rode in, welcomed by the nobles who had thronged the city to do him homage, the conspirators noted his heavy countenance, and knew that the hour was at hand. Instead of mirth he carried gloom into the Castle, all prepared for his coming, and though it was the season of joy, he ordered the ornaments of the chapel to be draped in black, and bade the Flemish priest, Cordiero and his thirty fellow-singers from beyond the mountains, chant every day in the Mass a verse from the Office of the Dead. Nevertheless the great Christmas festivities took place as usual, and the tall figure of the Prince, robed to the feet in crimson damask, and accompanied by the fair Duchess and a crowd of nobles, stalked gesticulating though the splendid chambers of the Castello, vaunting, in the midst of a strange and mournful oppression, his own magnificence, and the glory and enduring strength of his House.

The next day was the Feast of St. Stephen. Very early in the morning, Gio. Antonio Lampugnano and Girolamo Olgiati knelt and heard Mass together, like knights entering into battle. A great crowd gathered in S. Stefano, where the Duke was to attend Mass later. Some of the conspirators mingled with the people, while the three leaders waited in a house close by. The slow moments passed. At last the appointed hour arrived and the procession was at hand. Girolamo, in his confession, tells the rest in breathless words. *Soon a noise; it is the Prince. We hide our daggers, and in an instant stand in the church. The Duke passes, I transfix him, he falls and expires.*

Corio, who was one of the Duke's chamberlains and was present in the church, describes how Galeazzo entered between the Ferrarese and Pisan Envoys,

preceded by a pompous train of guards and servants. The writer saw the daggers flash from the little group of conspirators and bury themselves in the gaudy body of the Prince, and heard his one cry, *O Nostra Donna!* as he fell back in a pool of blood. In the uproar which immediately arose, Lampugnano was killed as he fled through the press of shrieking women; but Girolamo and Carlo Visconte, with their accomplices, succeeded in escaping from the church. The mangled body of the tyrant was carried into the adjoining Canonica, and its gory dress was exchanged for a robe of white cloth of gold, and all the ducal ornaments and insignia set upon it. Meanwhile Girolamo, hounded by the rage and terror of his father out of his home, whither he had fled, took refuge with a priest and waited in violent agitation, his exalted brain seething with hopes and fears. The people must be even now rushing to arms. His friends must be coming to find him and place themselves under his command. They would sack the palaces of Cecco Simonetta and the hated ministers, seize the gates, abolish the taxes, proclaim a glorious Republic. The hours went by and nothing happened. Hearing a great noise, he looked eagerly out and saw the lacerated remains of his comrade Lampugnano being dragged along by yelling children with every hideous insult.

Hope began to desert him. He was sought, not by friends and admirers, but by officers of justice, and fleeing miserably from one refuge to another, was soon captured. In his dungeon, the mind of the young man—he was twenty-three—maintained its exaltation, though it was a wonder, says Corio, that amid such torments as he underwent, the afflicted spirit did not abandon the agonised body. He managed to compose a long relation in Latin of all

the circumstances of the plot, a document of poignant human interest which shows the effect of the prevailing enthusiasm for antiquity upon a serious and lofty soul. Even at the last frightful moment, when the iron of the executioner was at his breast, the fainting youth had courage to animate himself in the tongue of Brutus and Cato with the words—*Collect thyself, Hieronimo. The memory of thy deed shall live long. Mors acerba, fama perpetua!*

CHAPTER VII
The Opening of the Gate

"Il Duca perse lo Stato e la roba e la libertà, e nessuna sua opera si finì per lui."—LEONARDO DA VINCI.

If the great movements of history could ever be said to turn on the existence of an individual, one might regard as the paradoxical result of Galeazzo Maria's death the loss of Italy's freedom. The young Milanese Brutus, in his noble rage against tyranny, little foresaw the three centuries of dark and hopeless servitude which by the unimpassioned workings of fate his blow would indirectly bring upon his country. The exclamation of the cynical Sixtus IV. at the news of the murder—*To-day is the peace of Italy dead*,—showed a clearer vision. The scheming Pope saw and gauged the unstable elements in the situation—the ambition of Naples and Venice, the helplessness of Duke Galeazzo's ten-year-old successor, the contagion of disorder throughout Italy; remembered the aggressive Turk in the east, the adventurous Frank in the north, and forthwith set to work to precipitate the inevitable upheaval in the interests of his own family.

The trouble ahead was, however, as yet hidden. Milan kept calm. The air-bubble expectations of the

conspirators had perished at the touch of reality. There was no attempt at a rising. The widowed Duchess assumed without opposition the supreme authority as regent for her son, the child Gian Galeazzo, with Cecco Simonetta as her chief minister. The dead Duke's brothers, Sforza, Duke of Bari, and Lodovico il Moro, were absent in France, Ascanio the priest in Rome. But the situation was pregnant with danger, as Simonetta well knew. He suspended all Galeazzo Maria's works of embellishment in the city, set the engineers and builders to construct new defences, threw a strong garrison into the Castle, and adopted every precaution against revolt. The chief menace came from the nobles of the old Ghibelline party. They hated Simonetta, who was a Sicilian and the creature of Francesco Sforza, with no interest apart from his master's House, which he strengthened by depressing the great feudatories. The veteran minister was unpopular with the people too, because he was a foreigner, and because of the heavy taxes. Sforza and Lodovico, hurrying back from France, and joined by Ascanio, found a powerful party, headed by the fiery and restless soldier, Roberto di San Severino, ready to support them in overthrowing the government. But Simonetta was on the watch. He seized one of the chiefs of the disaffected party, and filled the city with troops. San Severino promptly fled to Naples, and the three princes retreated to a little distance, ready to escape. Their youngest brother, Ottaviano, a youth of eighteen, who was involved in their plot, also rode hastily out of the city, and finding himself pursued, leapt into the swollen Adda, and was washed off his horse and drowned. A formal decree banishing the elder princes was issued, and for the moment the danger was over and Simonetta

triumphed.

Naples, however, ambitious for a foothold in Milan, embraced the cause of the exiles, and sent San Severino with an army to worry the ducal territories. The brothers themselves, from their different places of refuge, kept up communications with their partisans in the city, and intrigued against the government. Simonetta's power depended upon the will of the Duchess Bona, a lady 'of little good-sense,' according to Commines. Though she left the guidance of affairs entirely to the minister, his influence could not compete with the charms of her handsome Ferrarese secretary, Antonio Tassino, to whom she could deny nothing. The inordinate presumption of this favourite soon conflicted with Simonetta's authority. Lodovico Sforza, who far away had eyes and ears everywhere, was quick to profit by the dissension between these two powers at Court. The death, in 1479, of the elder brother Sforza—from excessive fat—helped to clear the path for the ambition of the Moro, who was now created Duke of Bari by the King of Naples, in succession to Sforza. To him the rebellious spirits in Milan looked henceforth as their leader. A number of the great nobles, the Borromei, the Da Pusterla—those old foes of the Dukes of Milan—the Marliani and others, aided the upstart Tassino to turn the Duchess against her husband's faithful old servant. Beatrice da Este, wife of Lodovico's half-brother Tristan, and other ladies in her intimacy, plied her with complaints of Simonetta, and entreated her to dismiss him and recall the banished Moro, who with the mercenaries of Naples was now preying on her territories. Tassino whispered the same persuasions between the endearments which she permitted from him. At last, one day Lodovico himself knelt before her, having at

great risk returned to the city and made his way secretly through the gardens into the Castello. Heedless of his disobedience to her decree of banishment, the thoughtless woman received him with the utmost joy, and the whole city burst into a frenzy of welcome. Simonetta's clear vision read the future. *Most illustrious Duchess*, said he, *I shall lose my head, you your State*. Deaf to his warning, Bona committed the government to her brother-in-law. Three days later Simonetta was arrested and carried to the Castle of Pavia, where, after he had lain a whole year in captivity, he was brought to trial, before one of the most vindictive of his personal enemies, on a charge of enormous crimes against the ducal House. He was tortured, and finally beheaded in the Castle yard. For putting him to so merciful an end, Bona took much credit to herself in an official notification of his trial and death sent to the various Courts of Italy.

The minister disposed of, the turn of the favourite came. From being Lodovico's ally and tool, Tassino was now become a serious hindrance to Lodovico. His arrogance was overweening. He had boundless power over Bona, and was rapidly making himself absolute master in the palace. The crisis arrived in a struggle over the Rocchetta, the inner Keep of the Castle of Milan, which, with its strong garrison and impregnable defences, gave its commander virtual dominion of the whole city. Tassino persuaded the Duchess to appoint his father as Castellan, in the place of Filippo Eustachio, who had been put in charge of it by Duke Galeazzo. But Filippo, a staunch adherent of Lodovico's, disobeyed her repeated commands to give up the keys, and sturdily resisted all her efforts to remove him, defying her threats and sentences, until the Moro had prepared a swift and

sudden stroke. One day, at Lodovico's bidding, Filippo and Gio. Francesco Pallavicino entered the apartments of the little Duke, at an hour when most of his attendants were out of the way, and snatching up the child, carried him across the narrow bridge which led from the Corte Ducale into the Rocchetta, and delivered him into the custody of his uncle. With the person of the sovereign in his possession, behind the defence of drawbridges, portcullises and artillery, and a strong body of soldiers faithful to himself, the Moro could dictate terms to the Duchess. She had no alternative but to surrender to him the regency and the guardianship of her son. As for Tassino, seeing himself overreached, he fled incontinently, to escape a worse fate, and stripped of everything but his perfumes and ivory combs, which were bundled after him, he disappears ignobly out of history. Bereft at once of lover, son and sovereignty, Bona was a piteous figure of helpless rage and grief. She declared she would abandon the Duchy, even if she had to climb out of the windows and cross the moat at the risk of her life. Lodovico, however, gently detained her in the Castle of Abbiategrasso, a virtual prisoner, until the subsidence of her shallow passion enabled her to submit to the new order of things and settle down, without power or authority, to a quiet life with her children, in the Castello of Milan again.

Thus, by a series of successful palace intrigues, Lodovico Sforza made himself supreme in Milan. He had still, however, to cope with the resentment of the nobles who had helped him to power, and now found themselves denied any share in it. Like all usurpers, Lodovico found ingratitude necessary to self-preservation, and from the first he studied to depress his more powerful subjects, choosing foreigners and men of modest degree as his ministers

and advisers. Roberto di San Severino with many other nobles now took up arms against him. But they were completely defeated by Constanzo Sforza, an able general and a kinsman of the reigning House, and the turbulent San Severino, transformed into the Moro's bitterest foe, quitted the Duchy, and went off to serve Venice in the war against Ferrara.

The masterly craft by which Lodovico Sforza had achieved his triumph, roused the admiration and fear of all Italy, which increased as, with the progress of time, he became the most conspicuous figure in Italian politics. About the enigmatic personality of this prince, history has confused our minds with contrary judgments, which romance has translated into a various caricature. His peculiar association with Italy's greatest glory and greatest shame has thrown an exaggerated light and shade upon his memory. The Italian historians of this period make him the scapegoat for that calamity of Italy, which no one man, but the ancient and inherent sin of the whole nation, brought about. Guicciardini, while recording his many virtues of mind and heart, is glad to believe him guilty of the worst crimes of ambition and perfidy, and to discover in him a fatal self-conceit. Paolo Giovio speaks of him as *born for the undoing of Italy*. Modern inquirers have modified the traditional view of the Moro, by showing the baselessness of some of the worse charges against him, and by a diligent prying into all the details of his domestic existence, they have at once humanised and belittled the old picture of the man. Yet still the real Lodovico seems dark to us. It is not for nothing that the name of *il Moro*—the Moor—given to the dark-skinned boy in his childhood, has clung to him through history; it shows the conviction of his contemporaries and of posterity that it fitted not only

his bodily appearance, but the complexion of his soul.

By his actions he must be judged. In the Italy of the Quattrocento, to do evil that good might come was excellent morality. The best men practised it, and differed only from the worst in the ends they pursued. Lodovico's usurpation of power had its immediate justification in the salvation of the State. The prestige of his name, and his fine statesmanship, could alone avert the civil war and anarchy which Bona's government was leading to, and oppose a barrier to the greed of Venice and Naples for Lombardy. The deposition of a weak woman by a strong and able man was an act unsingular in a country where beneath all law and convention reigned the tacit conviction that character was the true legitimacy. Once in power, he found that internal peace necessitated the sacrifice of the turbulent elements of which he had served himself to climb, and personal ingratitude became a public virtue. Freed from the prepotence of these restless spirits, the citizens could pursue their occupations undisturbed, and the prince could devote himself to his great schemes for the improvement of agriculture, the facilitation of commerce and the humanising of the people. It is these things—in which he carried on the noblest tradition of the Sforza domination—which are the Moro's apology for much wrong-doing; it is these and not his ceaseless political activity, and immense prestige as a statesman, which make the story of Milan great during his reign, a period brilliant, joyous and prosperous beyond compare.

Though in title only regent for the young Duke, Lodovico was absolute sovereign. His extraordinary

activity, resource and subtlety, backed by the boundless wealth of Milan, soon made his influence felt abroad. For the first year or two his cares at home kept him from interfering much in general affairs. The balance of power in Italy, deprived of the weight of Milan, wavered in consequence, and Sixtus IV., Naples and Venice did their utmost to swallow up Florence. The safety of the great Tuscan Republic, secured partly by the courage and address of Lorenzo de' Medici, but more by the timely knock of the Turk at the door of Italy, at Otranto, was further assured by the fast-rising power of the new ruler of Milan, who by uniting his State in 1484, in a fresh alliance with Florence and Naples, restored to Italy that equilibrium which had been first established by his great father, Francesco.

The eleven years that followed the Peace of Bagnolo (1484-95) were the most splendid in the history of mediæval Italy. They were the culmination of a great ascent, preceding as great a downfall. Pressing upwards through the continual struggles, amid the phantoms and shadows of the earlier centuries, the chosen spirits of humanity had at last emerged upon a height, where, as in the light of unclouded morning, the whole world seemed spread out before and behind them, heaven itself within their reach, the gods themselves their fellows. In the general material prosperity out of which the fine flower of Italian civilisation in the Quattrocento had sprung, as in the cultured and artistic joy of life which was its highest expression, Milan, led by Lodovico Sforza, held a foremost place. Whatever may have been his secret motives, this prince exerted himself ceaselessly to conceive and carry out projects of enduring benefit to the country. Summoning the greatest brains in Italy to his service, he set on foot immense

hydraulic works, by means of which wildernesses were converted into fruitful tracts, and new ways opened for the passage of merchandise and general traffic. He widened his father's famous canal, the Naviglio Martesana, and the Naviglio encircling the city, employing the inventive genius of Leonardo da Vinci, to overcome the difficulty of the different levels by a system of locks, still existing in Milan to this day. He joined these canals with the ancient channel between Milan and Pavia, thus forming a navigable waterway between the Adda and the Ticino. Large districts hitherto unfertile owed their after prosperity to this enlightened ruler. He fostered agriculture, founding model farms and introducing improved breeds of cattle and horses. His pleasaunces and orchards round the Castello at Milan, and his country palaces and villas were so beautiful and fruitful that they were called earthly paradises. After a brief half century of the Sforza rule, the Duchy of Milan was become a vast garden, supporting an enormous population of hardworking peasants. Commerce flourished more than ever, every way being opened to it by wise and considerate measures. In the higher branches of industry the Moro's vitalising interest and enthusiasm was as effective. His splendid patronage of art and letters made this city of prosperous traders the richest centre in Italy of the æsthetic culture of the Renaissance. Attracted by his liberality and large ideas, the rarest genius of the age was at his command. Bramante of Urbino spent many years at Milan, building cupolaed temples and colonnaded palaces, and transforming the old mediæval city of the Visconti into the fair Renaissance vision of the Moro's desire. For Lodovico and for Milan, Leonardo da Vinci did his greatest works. Perugino painted for

the Moro the splendid Madonna with the Archangels, now in the National Gallery, and in the stimulating atmosphere a number of native artists of considerable distinction sprang up. Lodovico equally favoured men of letters and scientific inquirers. He invited them to Milan, and gave them great rewards, and did his utmost by grants and personal care to raise the University of Pavia and the schools founded at Milan by Galeazzo to a flourishing condition.



CANAL, VIA SAN MARCO

But the merits of the Moro's government were obscured to the people by his tyrannic methods. The peasants, groaning under the oppression of forced labour and of heavy and unjustly distributed taxation, were too preoccupied by their immediate grievances to care for the rich harvest which would ensue some day from the sacrifice of their sweat and their scanty gains. In their belief the Prince sought only self-glorification and the increase of the already

fabulous ducal treasure. Their simple lamentations sound in the pages of the chroniclers like a dull threatening undertone in that wonderful symphony of rich and various instruments which the life of the Milanese Court was at this time.



CANONICA OF ST. AMBROGIO

One of the worst characteristics of a tyrant was, however, conspicuously absent in Lodovico Sforza. He was not cruel. Galeazzo's horrible ways of enforcing the law no longer prevailed. The gallows vanished; fragments of quartered traitors adorned the gates no more, and such pains as justice or policy necessitated were administered out of the sight and, if possible, knowledge of the Moro. Even Guicciardini describes the Moro as *mild and merciful.* The sight of bodily suffering hurt his fastidious delicacy, his love of fair and seemly appearance, his fine sensibilities. His shrinking from blood was perhaps a sign of what may explain much that seems dark in his history—fear; of the decadence which fatally awaits races risen too swiftly to greatness.

However that may be, his mildness did not win the hearts of the people for a sovereign who addressed them from behind the protection of iron bars and never admitted them to free and friendly audience. An ever-widening gulf divided their lives of elemental want and passion from the exquisite existence of subtle and various delight within the impassable walls of the Castello. It was for the Moro, we remember, that Leonardo sketched the plans of an ideal city, with an upper system of streets in which the sovereign and his chosen society of nobles and courtiers might pass, uncontaminated by the breath and odour of the multitudes below.

To the princes of the Quattrocento the people were but the necessary foundation of existence, 'the mud on which proud man is built.' And how incomparable was the fair fabric, so based, and composed of all the rarest elements of life. The story of the Moro's Court is well-known to English readers. The joyous figures that peopled it are familiar to us, and the gorgeous pageants, the processions of princes and potentates and fair ladies, the stupendous display of wealth and beauty, the tourneys, feasts and dances, are tales oft told in biography and romance. In 1489 the long arranged marriage of the young Duke with Isabella of Aragon, granddaughter of King Ferrante of Naples, was celebrated with extraordinary pomp, and two years later the festivities were renewed for the double nuptials of the Regent himself with Beatrice da Este, daughter of the Duke of Ferrara, and of her brother Alfonso, heir-apparent of Ferrara, with Anna Sforza, sister of Gian Galeazzo. All these splendours were far overpassed, however, in 1493, when the Moro's diplomacy was rewarded by an imperial alliance for the House of Sforza, and Bianca Maria, the Duke's remaining sister, rode forth from the

Castello in a chariot of gold to her marriage with the Emperor Maximilian. The imagination reels with the descriptions of the rich robes and jewels, the pavilions and triumphal arches, the garlands, the blazoned hangings, the allegorical masques, the noise of music and of applauding crowds on these occasions. One would feel that Milan must have suffered an intolerable surfeit of colour and delight, did we not know that the gorgeous riot was shaped into symmetry and order by the supreme decorative taste of the Italian Quattrocento. All the beautiful neo-pagan conceits, the new vision of the gods of Olympus granted to that age, inspired these brief spectacles. Leonardo—Bramante—fashioned those gorgeous edifices of an hour, built up that wonderful seeming, ephemeral as the glories which it celebrated, and stayed those passing moments for ever in the history of the world.

Though it was the desire to outdo every other princely Mæcenas which impelled Lodovico to bid highest for the services of great artists and scholars, it was not merely his liberality which held such a man as Leonardo at Milan, but rather his large appreciation, his sympathy with great and original ideas, his rare wisdom in leaving genius free to work in its own way. He had this, moreover, in common with that unique among the sons of the Italian Renaissance, that he, too, was a far seeker and the designer of things never to be finished. Leonardo came to Milan about 1483. There exists a copy, apparently in his own handwriting, of a letter recommending himself to the Moro, in which he enumerates all his qualifications for employment, beginning with his skill in the invention of military engines, and ending with his capacity to carry out any work in sculpture or painting *as well as any other*

man, be he who he may. Vasari tells us that on his arrival in Milan he offered Lodovico a silver lute which he had fashioned himself in the form of a horse's head, and in such a manner that in beauty and sonority of tone it surpassed every other instrument at the Court, and that the prince quickly became enamoured of his admirable gifts and conversation. The more intimate knowledge of the man revealed in his own notebooks has, however, changed the traditional picture of Leonardo as a fine courtier and brilliant wit and conversationalist, the centre of attraction at the Court, enjoying great revenues from the Moro and dissipating them in splendid living. We see him, instead, secluded with his pupils in the pleasant home which Lodovico gave him on the outskirts of the city, beside the Castello gardens, poring over some problem of construction or hydrostatics, striving to create a flying-machine or other novel engine. Or passing rapidly, according to his mood, from modelling the great horse to his painting in the refectory of Sta. Maria della Grazie, or tracing the exquisite contours of those beautiful favourites of the Moro, Cecilia Gallerani and her successor, Lucrezia Crivelli, mocked and allured in each shadowy face by that inscrutable smile of woman in which the secret of life seemed to hide itself. He evidently cared little to mingle with the social life of the Court, where perhaps he was neither able nor willing to express to a circle, alive to intellectual interests but enslaved by pedantry and charlatanism, those occult thoughts which even in his writings he hid in left-handed hieroglyphics. Yet he must have been a familiar presence in the palace, where he was constantly summoned for some work which to us seems strangely disproportioned to his genius—the arrangement of the water-supply for the

Duchess's bath, the designing of triumphal arches for a wedding pageant, or the costumes and accessories of some spectacular joust. Whatever it was, he did it with the interest of one for whom there is no great nor small, and for whom a moment as much as countless centuries holds eternity, and little things and big manifest alike the divine law of necessity.

Leonardo's figure overshadows for us all others of Lodovico il Moro's Milan. There were many others besides him, however, of highest reputation at the time in the chosen circle of the Court. The Moro, in his care for the intellectual improvement of his subjects, imported poets from Tuscany to teach them the art of composing sonnets. Ancient prejudice against all things Lombard withheld many of Leonardo's countrymen from accepting the Sforza's offers of honours and emoluments. But the sunshine of Court favour, come whence it might, was greedily accepted by the Florentine Bernardo Bellincione, whose gift for stringing together appropriate and flattering verses secured him the position of Court poet for many years at Milan. Nor could any small local passion restrain that bare-boned vagabond genius, Antonio Camelli—called il Pistoia after his native city—from quenching his perennial famine at the ducal table. But though he played the fool to amuse his patrons, il Pistoia was of much rarer stuff than Bellincione. Behind his cloak of buffoonery the tragedy of a serious and prophetic spirit hid itself, and a fine satire inspired the sallies of his fantastic muse. An irrepressible sonneteer, he poured forth streams of verse at Milan. A number of his sonnets allude to the politics of the day, and are of great interest.

These professors of poesy were very successful in

propagating their art in Milan. Francesco Tanzi, one of the many versifiers at Court, declared that after the example of Bellincione, Milan was full of sonnets, and all the rivers and canals ran with the water of Parnassus. The poetic frenzy had invaded the whole of society, so that every young knight who desired the favour of ladies and princes had needs be skilled in making rhymes and improvising to the music of his lute. A flourishing school of poetry rewarded the Moro's patronage and encouragement, and its most distinguished graduates were young nobles of the first rank—Gaspare Visconte, of the same stock as the old ducal House, and Antonio di Campo Fregoso, of a famous Genoese House. A singer of older and still higher repute in the ducal circle was that mirror of the graceful and cultured chivalry of the day, Niccolò da Correggio, who as the son of Beatrice da Este, wife of Tristan Sforza, was constantly at Milan, in devoted attendance upon his cousin, the younger Beatrice da Este. Marchesino Stanza, Girolamo Tuttavilla, Galeazzo di San Severino, Galeotto di Caretto, a lettered noble and chronicler of Montferrato, all swelled the tuneful choir. The Moro himself is said to have included sonnet-making among his myriad activities. Around these distinguished figures hovered a host of lyrists of various rank and accomplishment, both natives and pilgrims attracted from afar to this now famous shrine of the Muses. Men of other occupations added their voices in moments of leisure. Among these was Bramante, who, in the intervals of his labours as architect, engineer, painter and master of revels, competed eagerly for the laurel wreath.

The chief theme of their song, and the object of the gallant adoration and service of all, was the younger Beatrice da Este, who at fifteen came to Milan to be

the Moro's bride. To this child of tuneful Ferrara, trained from childhood upwards in all the æsthetic traditions of its famous Court, an atmosphere of poetry, music and art was as natural as the air she breathed. With that full and eager vitality which she shared with her father, Duke Ercole, and her sister, Isabella of Mantua, she sought all beautiful and joyous things. In the Court of her rich and indulgent lord she could satisfy every desire. For the rich equipment of her person and her surroundings she had the rarest talent at her command. Leonardo da Vinci devised curious girdles for her. That finest of goldsmiths, Caradosso, carved the beautiful gems which she wore, and spent his most delicate workmanship on pax or reliquary for her oratory. To create her presentment in marble she could choose a Gian Cristoforo Romano, most cultured and graceful of young sculptors. Her love of sweet melody was fed by the crowd of skilled musicians who frequented this Court, where their art was traditionally welcome. Besides the Flemish priest Cordier, and the other ultramontane singers of Duke Galeazzo's celebrated choir, there were here the viol player, Jacopo di San Secondo—the Apollo of Raphael's Parnassus—whose strains were able to soothe the Moro in moments of fever and pain, Atalante Migliorotti, the friend and companion of Leonardo, and others numberless, nameless to us now. An incomparable craftsman, Lorenzo di Pavia, made instruments for her of purest tone, in cases of ivory and ebony most exquisitely worked. She played herself upon these, and had a sweet voice. Many a time with her devoted knight, Galeazzo di San Severino, model of all fashionable graces, and himself an accomplished singer, and her favourite Daino, most musical and delightful of fools, she and

her ladies would make harmonious concert. As became a daughter of Este, Beatrice extended a princely patronage to scholarship and serious literature. Her secretary, the learned Vincenzo Calmeta, tells us that she engaged men suitably gifted to read aloud to her the *Divina Commedia* and the works of other Italian poets. She would give serious attention to literary debates, such as the lively poetic contention we read of between Bramante and Gaspare Visconte, on the respective merits of Dante and Petrarca.

Such encounters of sharp-sworded wit, so much in vogue at that time, were conducted at Milan with less pedantry and self-conceit than in Courts ruled by more strictly humanistic traditions. A freedom, gaiety and freshness animated the intellectual atmosphere here. The Moro's extraordinary activity of mind and wide interests, Beatrice's ardour, and capacity for enjoyment, fired all around them. The Duchess's eagerness for culture was tempered by her love of sport and outdoor life. Her hawks and her hounds were a primary passion in this Ferrarese princess, and many a fair morning was passed in adventurous chase of the wild creatures in her husband's vast hunting demesnes. She was a splendid horsewoman, and had unbounded courage. The lively sports in which she indulged with her ladies and cavaliers were not always of a refined order. The gaiety of the fifteenth century was ministered to by jests and practical jokes of incredible coarseness, and by all the obscenities of the allowed fools and monstrosities of nature who capered in grotesquely brilliant garb round every Renaissance princess. Yet into this full life the Duchess herself carried a redeeming innocence. In spite of her free intercourse with the young nobles, no lightest shadow ever

rested on her fair fame.

The society in which she passed her bright, pure existence had, however, but lately had Galeazzo Maria for leader and example, and had forgotten all moral restrictions. When Beatrice came first to Milan she found her husband's mistress, the beautiful poetess Cecilia Gallerani, installed in the palace itself. The whole of Milan was rotten beneath its fine vestures and its art and learning. Wealth and luxury had encouraged the love of pleasure natural in the people, and the ideal of freedom in thought and manners, the search for novel experience and sensation, the worship of the new old gods, born of the revived knowledge of antiquity, had induced immorality and corruption more than elsewhere in this city where voluptuous tastes were not restrained, as in the Florentines, by natural temperance. Everywhere in the midst of the joyous revels lust and evil passions were heaping up sins ready for the retribution to come. Corio, an eyewitness of these times, preludes his story of the great catastrophe by a vivid picture, adorned by the fashionable pagan conceits, of Milanese life during these years before the fatal 1495, when it seemed to the city and its Lord that everything was more firmly established in peace than ever before. No one thought of other than accumulating riches. Pomps and pleasures ruled the hours. *The Court of our princes was splendid exceedingly, full of new fashions, dresses and delights. Nevertheless, at this time virtue was so much lauded on every side that Minerva had set up great rivalry with Venus, and each sought to make her school the most brilliant. To that of Cupid came the most beautiful youths. Fathers yielded to it their daughters, husbands their wives, brothers their sisters, and so thoughtlessly did they thus flock to the amorous hall that it was*

reckoned a stupendous thing by those who had understanding. Minerva, she too, sought with all her might to adorn her gentle Academy. Wherefore that glorious and most illustrious Prince Lodovico Sforza had called into his pay—as far as from the uttermost parts of Europe—men most excellent in knowledge and art. Here was the learning of Greece, here Latin verse and prose flourished resplendently, here were the poetic Muses; hither the masters of the sculptor's art and those foremost in painting had gathered from distant countries, and here songs and sweet sounds of every kind and such dulcet harmonies were heard, that they seemed to have descended from Heaven itself upon this excelling Court.

We who know the after days of Milan watch the golden hours gliding by towards the darkness ahead, and the glory centring round the two doomed figures of Lodovico and Beatrice is pregnant for us with tragedy and grief. Corio continues with a description of these princes, *in this so vain felicity*, passing their time in divers pleasures, and speaks of the magnificent jousts and tournaments and military shows, and of the homage paid by the poets to the Moro as Lord both of war and peace. Yet, he adds, with all this glory, pomp and wealth, which seemed as though nothing could be added to it, Lodovico, not content, or unaware of his felicity, must needs reach higher still, that his fall might be the greater. And the chronicler, preparing himself to compose the cruel and unheard-of tale, fears that compassion will not suffer him to arrive at the piteous end without tears.

The Moro's power was in fact unstably based. His was the right of natural ability to rule. But beside him the lawful sovereign had grown to manhood during these years. Gian Galeazzo Sforza—the

engaging little boy reading Cicero in Bramantino's fresco, now in the Wallace Collection—showed with advancing years little desire or capacity to govern. Amiable, weakly, and self-indulgent, he was perfectly content to leave the power to his uncle, for whom he had a love and admiration which are a touching element in the relationship of the two men—usurper and legitimate prince. Had they only been concerned, the Moro's peculiar difficulties might never have arisen. He seems to have regarded himself sincerely at first as the vicegerent of his nephew. *Dum vivis tutus et laetus vivo. Gaude, fili, protector tuus ero semper.* These words, in the mouth of nephew and uncle, are the motto on a miniatured page in the *History of Francesco Sforza*, by Gio. Simonetta, printed in 1490. The picture shows Lodovico and Gian Galeazzo kneeling on the edge of a lake; in the midst of the water a ship with a youth in it and a Moor at the helm, and in the background a mulberry-tree (*moro*) spreading wide branches. This allegory—one of many such that we read of—may have expressed some real affection as well as self-exaltation in Lodovico, though after-events give it a strange irony.

But the respective marriages of the two princes introduced another element into the situation. Beatrice da Este was not only the joyous spirit of festival and sport and all artistic delight, but a woman of strong character and intelligence. She quickly gained influence over her husband, and asserted herself in State affairs. The very narrowness of her youth and sex gave her power over the complex and wide-minded Moro, who adored her spirit and courage, and yielded to her as his great sire Francesco had yielded to Bianca Maria. Beatrice wanted the semblance as well as the substance of

sovereignty, and the birth of her son, in 1492, added the new ambition of a mother to her desire. Isabella of Aragon, on her side, had a royal spirit; her soul swelled with rage and offended pride when the regent showed no intention of relinquishing the government to her husband. In vain she urged Gian Galeazzo to assume his rights; her exhortations only passed straight from the confiding boy into Lodovico's ears. Her sense of wrong was further exasperated by Beatrice, who usurped the homage and consequence which should have been Isabella's as consort of the sovereign. The rivalry between the princesses began very soon after Beatrice's appearance on the scene, and that playful boxing-match of which we read, in which the Duchess of Bari knocked down her of Milan, was the symbol of a contest which involved fatal issues reaching far beyond the two women themselves.

Influenced by his wife's ambition, and the birth of his son—also perhaps by the impossibility, when the hour came, of relinquishing the sweets of power and sacrificing his vast projects and the fruits of his past incessant labours to the claim of mere primogeniture represented by the feeble and already failing Gian Galeazzo—Lodovico was evidently scheming, after 1490, to make himself Duke of Milan. From the time of the Moro's marriage the ceremonial homage which had been paid till then to the young Duke was gradually lessened. The tutelage which had been proper in his boyhood was now used to emphasize his incapacity. No single office or dignity was at his disposal. Ministers of State, captains of fortresses, generals and magistrates, all were appointed by Lodovico. At no point did his subjects come into contact with their real sovereign. He was dependent for all supplies upon the Moro, who kept absolute

control of the immense Sforza treasure. The birth of his heir was but scantily celebrated, while that of Lodovico's a little later was made the occasion of the most pompous rejoicings. The halls of the sovereigns in the Corte Ducale were gradually deserted, while Lodovico and Beatrice's apartments in the Rocchetta were thronged. The self-seeking courtiers knew well where their devotion was most profitably placed. Besides, it was melancholy in the chambers of a sickly prince and a sad princess ever brooding over her wrongs. The two appeared less and less in public, and finally retired altogether to the Castle of Pavia, and their pathetic figures were almost forgotten on the joyous stage of Milanese life.

But they existed—a constant menace to the Moro, a weapon for his thousand enemies in the State, and for jealous Italy outside. Isabella's piteous complaints to her grandfather, whom she implored to right her husband, inflamed the long-standing Aragonese hatred of the Sforza. The other powers—Venice, baulked in her greed of conquest by the strong hand of the Moro, and ever nervous for the cities which she had wrested from Milan in Filippo Maria's time; Pope Alexander VI., who allowed no gratitude to the Sforza, although through Cardinal Ascanio they had been the means of his election, to interfere with his schemes for a new Borgian Italy; Florence, politically and commercially jealous of the Lombard State—all would have gladly seen the Moro overthrown and Milan depressed.

During these years of peace and of expansion for Milan, the suspicious fear with which the disproportionate prosperity of one power was always regarded by the rest of Italy had concentrated itself upon Lodovico Sforza. His extraordinary success and

untiring activity, his powers of intrigue, his ability and resource, were the theme of every tongue. The extravagant adulations of his Court poets were repeated and unwillingly credited throughout Italy. With the vast wealth of Milan at his command what might he not do? Fear of Milan was an old habit. Was it she that should give Italy a master after all? Was this dark prince, mysteriously potent, to be the destroyer of her liberty at last?

Had men looked more closely into the monster of their imagination, they might have perceived that it was not Lodovico's ambition that was most to be apprehended. The fatal situation which now developed seems to have been the product of two opposing fears. The Moro's faith in himself and in his good fortune was a superstition which supported itself upon the lying prophecies of the astrologer ever at his side, and was at the mercy of every ill omen. His intrigues were often the devices of a man on the defensive, rather than the confident moves of a conqueror. To give a colour of justification to his now almost complete usurpation, he set casuists to work and evolved a specious doctrine, pronouncing himself lawful successor of his father, as the first son born to Francesco after he became Duke of Milan. By means of this argument, and the better persuasion of an enormous gift of gold, he obtained from the Emperor Maximilian the promise of the investiture of the Duchy, an obsolete legality which neither Francesco or Galeazzo had troubled to obtain in confirmation of the right won by the sword. These devices, however, aroused only derision and scandal in his own country, nor could they quiet his own uneasy mind. He felt Italy against him and was afraid. His particular dread of the House of Aragon never slept. Though old King Ferrante urged with

pathetic sincerity the maintenance of the league which had preserved the peace of Italy for so many fortunate years, he might at any moment be succeeded by Alfonso of Calabria, who did not disguise his hatred of the Moro and his longing to right his daughter and son-in-law. Lorenzo de' Medici had died in 1491, and peace was already threatened by the injudicious policy of his son Piero. The covetousness of Venice, the faithless selfishness of the Pope, completed a situation of general peril, which might easily beget a great combination to crush Lodovico and reinstate Gian Galeazzo, to be followed by a scramble for the States which all knew the young Duke incapable of governing.

The Moro resolved to anticipate the blow. With fatal confidence in his power to control the force which he was evoking, he opened the gate which it was Milan's sacred duty to keep shut against the foreigner. He invited Charles VIII. of France to lead an army into Italy against the Princes of Aragon, and to recover the Kingdom of Naples for the House of Anjou.

Lodovico's act did not perhaps at the time wear the magnitude of guilt which subsequent events gave it. Italy was so disunited, so lacking in any general principle of patriotism that her various tyrants had not scrupled to appeal at times to France or the Empire in their needs. Men were used to sporadic attempts of the Princes of Anjou to overthrow the Aragonese dynasty in Naples. But now that the Angevin claims were vested in the King of France, such attempts must be more perilous for Italy. Naples was not the only State to which France had pretensions. Louis of Orleans—next in succession to the throne of France after the sickly Charles and his

infant son—claimed the Duchy of Milan itself through his ancestress Valentina Visconte. The success of the French enterprise in Naples could scarcely fail to be followed by a vindication of this other claim. Nothing but that strange and fatal belief in himself, which not only inspired Lodovico but had infected his contemporaries, could have blinded the Moro to the madness of his proceedings and induced Venice, Florence and the Pope to abet his projects at first by forming a new league with him and abandoning Naples to its fate. There was some strange glamour about this remarkable man which deluded his own generation. The Renaissance spirit felt itself represented and fulfilled in him. Its boundless confidence in human possibilities was exemplified by the reputation of almost superhuman powers with which it invested Lodovico Sforza. *God in Heaven and the Moro on earth*, so dared il Pistoia to sing, and the prince to hear. The tragic fall which awaited this exaltation is a part of the inward as well as outward history of an age when pride built so high, only to be smitten with incompleteness. Strangest of all, perhaps, was the self-deception of Lodovico himself, shown by the persistence in him, throughout his hopeless captivity, of this superstitious faith, after it had utterly failed him in the crisis of his life, so that in his last moments, in his prison at Loches, he could attribute his overthrow to nothing less than the direct intervention of God, to punish him for his sins, *since only the sudden might of destiny, he said, could have subverted the counsels of human wisdom*.

In inviting Charles, Lodovico doubtless thought to produce a temporary diversion, which should weaken Naples and produce a political upheaval, amid which he should be able to secure the ducal

throne, and once seated in it, readjust by adroit diplomacy, the balance of power in the peninsula after the retirement of the invader in due course. But he had left out of account the respective conditions of France and Italy—the pent-up military fury in the noble classes in the first country, which raged for an outlet, the fatal weakness of disunion in the second, and the enervation which peace and unparalleled prosperity had produced in its people. He may have hoped to achieve his ends by the mere threat of French invasion, and counted on the indecision of the young king and his own subtle craft to keep the matter from going any further. Charles, however, whose weak head swam with the flatteries of venal councillors, and with romantic ideas imbibed from the tales of the Paladins, was easily persuaded to undertake the conquest of Naples as a preliminary step to the redemption of Christendom from the Turk.

But the preparations for the expedition were very dilatory, and more than two years passed before they were completed. During this time of suspense Italy was full of doubts and fears. Lodovico's allies began to hesitate, and there were daily shiftings of policy in the various States, now in favour of Naples, now of France, all actuated by self-interest, which guided them finally in this crisis of their country's fate to a despicable neutrality, waiting upon events. The Moro's own policy was shifting and tortuous, even displaying at times an anxiety—little credited by his neighbours—to save Naples from the catastrophe which he himself was bringing upon her. Already he was working for a reaction against the French in the event of their success in Italy. But his advances to the opposite party won for him only the distrust of his friends, and in France many warned Charles of the

folly of relying upon this man, *homme sans foy, s'il voyoit son profit pour la rompre*, as Commines pronounces him.

Meanwhile, careless apparently of the future, Italy continued her wild dance of pleasure. In Milan, gaiety and licence reigned supreme. Yet there are many signs that a sense of sin and of a reckoning at hand had begun to awaken. The sonnets of il Pistoia grew grave with prophecies to laughing Italy of the much weeping which time would soon draw from her, and of the shortness of the hours between her and her immense, irreparable sorrow. The superstitious Moro himself must have been shaken by the blind friar who is said to have appeared in the Piazza of Milan at the time of his negotiations with the French King, crying—*Prince, show him not the way, else thou wilt repent it*. From Florence came the echo of Savonarola's annunciation, *Gladius Domini super terram cito et velociter*. More poignant still to ears that could hear was the tremulous voice of the octogenarian King of Naples, warning Pope and Moro, again and again, of the peril clear to the terrible prevision of the dying—*He who will may begin a war, but stop it, no!*

But the voices cried in the wilderness. King Ferrante's was spent by death early in 1494, and in the following autumn Charles appeared at last at the head of a splendid host, and was welcomed with immense pomp and revelry by Lodovico and Beatrice at Pavia. There in the Castle the young Duke lay dying. The King visited him, and the piteous spectacle roused the sympathy of the monarch and his followers, for whom the person of legitimate sovereignty had a sacredness unfelt by the Italians. Charles was, however, much embarrassed by the

Duchess Isabella, who besought him to have mercy on her father, the King of Naples. *She had better have prayed for herself, who was still a young and fair lady*, observes Commines.

The invaders passed on, finding their path cleared before them, and their progress already an assured triumph. Their cruelty when they had first entered the country had terrified all inclination to oppose them out of the Italians. Piero de' Medici's shameful surrender, Florence's welcome, the inactivity of the Pope, the speedy fall of Naples, all the details of the pitiful story are well-known. Charles had not gone far when Gian Galeazzo died. The cruel report at once arose, and was widely believed by both French and Italians, that Lodovico had had him poisoned, and the Moro's memory has come down to our day loaded with this detestable sin. Modern inquiry has, however, shown how little foundation there is for the charge, disproving the preliminary accusations against Lodovico of starving and ill-treating the ducal couple, and making it clear that Gian Galeazzo was surrounded by physicians and carefully tended. It is evident that Lodovico's temperament was incapable of such a crime—that he would have been repelled by the mere idea of murdering this nephew whom he had brought up, and who loved him with a pathetic fidelity to the last. Gian Galeazzo's longing on his death-bed for the uncle, who was far away, riding in splendour beside the French King, his touching questions to one of Lodovico's gentlemen whether he thought his Excellency the Moro *li volesse bene*—loved him, Gian Galeazzo—and whether he seemed sorry that he was ill, go far to dissipate the cruel suspicion. Nevertheless, the young Duke's death relieved Lodovico's conscience of its last scruple with regard to the Dukedom. He hastened

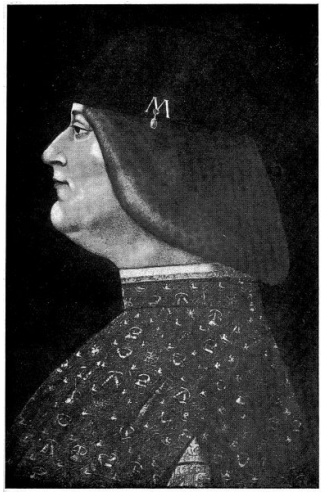
back to Milan and had himself invested with the ducal mantle, cap and sceptre, in the midst of a stupendous pomp.

Meanwhile, the success of the French was producing the result anticipated by the Moro. Venice, awaking to the danger which the terrible prestige of the conqueror's arms meant for all Italy, was ready to listen to Lodovico's proposals for a remedy. The invaders were now to add to their experience of Italian pusillanimity an acquaintance with the craft which had superseded brute courage in this advanced nation. Scarcely had the French King turned his back on Lombardy, when the Venetian ambassadors were treating with the new Duke of Milan for an alliance against him. A few months later, Charles and his knights, sick with the Southern delights of their newly-conquered realm, and longing like homesick children for France, found their return barred by a powerful coalition of their late ally with Venice, the Emperor, the King of Spain, and nearly all the minor States of Italy. The story of their homeward march, more like a flight, need not be repeated here. At the approach of the French to his dominions, the faithless Lodovico trembled in his palace, in spite of the mighty host of allies which was awaiting them, while his people, beside themselves with fear of the cruel Northerners, and exasperated by the grievous taxation imposed upon them to oppose this evil which the Moro had himself provoked, murmured against him as the murderer of Gian Galeazzo, and the oppressor of the widowed Duchess and her son. Lodovico well knew that he could not lean upon his subjects in adversity. But the battle of Fornuovo (1495) relieved Lombardy of all fear of the French for the time, though the Italians let slip their chance of annihilating the hungry and

enfeebled enemy, and crushing the Northern terror for ever. The irresistible conqueror of a year back, having with miraculous good fortune escaped with the best part of his troops to Asti, was compelled to negotiate for peace with Milan and Venice. At the meetings of the Duke and the Venetian Ambassadors with the representatives of Charles, Lodovico was accompanied by his young wife, who took part in all the discussions, and astonished everybody by her intelligence and wisdom. All through this critical period of the French invasion, Beatrice was the true helpmeet of her husband, sustaining by her courage and will his more sensitive temperament under the fears and doubts which assailed it.

Peace at last concluded, the French finally made their way home, leaving so weak a hold on Naples that the Aragonese quickly reinstated themselves. In the universal joy at the disappearance of the invaders it appeared to all that the Moro had saved Italy. His prestige, of late clouded, was now more brilliant than ever. Securely seated on the ducal throne, strong in the new alliance in which his initiative had bound Italy, he seemed indeed to have succeeded in all his calculations and schemes. Those seeds of future danger—the fatal knowledge of Italy's weakness, which the French had acquired, the declaration of the Duke of Orleans, that he should return to conquer his rightful heritage of Milan—were unheeded. In his new exaltation the Moro vaunted himself the child of fortune, and believed himself to be, as astrologers, poets, courtiers, ambassadors told him, arbiter of the destinies of Italy, and incarnation of almost divine wisdom and prudence. He put his trust more and more in destiny, and prompted by his venal astrologer, Ambrogio da Rosate, thought to read in the stars his triumph. As if

blinded by the gods in preparation for the sacrifice, he passed all bounds in his arrogance. The old jealousy and distrust of his fellow-sovereigns now revived with new force. His jester's vainglorious trumpeting—*the Pope is my chaplain, Venice my treasurer, the Emperor my chamberlain, and the King of France my courier*, was repeated in every city of Europe, as if Lodovico himself had seriously spoken it. The many guests at the Castello of Milan told everywhere of the painting on the walls there, depicting Italy as a queen, and the Moro, with a *scoppetta*—his personal emblem—brushing the dust from her robes, whereon were inscribed the different Italian cities. These boasts of exaggerated self-confidence rankled in his contemporaries. But while they hated him, they feared him too. More than ever now all Italy waited upon his motions.



LODOVICO IL MORO,
BY BOLTRAFFIO
(TRIVULZIO

COLLECTION)

To face p. 176.]
[*Anderson, Rome*

The months that followed the conclusion of peace with Charles were joyous beyond compare. In the summer of this year (1496) the Duke and Duchess had a meeting with the Emperor, and returned loaded with honours, which added a new lustre to Lodovico's fame.

Suddenly, at the height of his fortune, Fate struck her first blow at the Moro. Beatrice died (1497).

The golden days of Milan changed all at once to gloom. Silence shut down upon the dancing and sweet music. The Duke, to whom even his children and State seemed no longer worth living for, sat for nine days in a darkened chamber alone, refusing all comfort, while in Sta. Maria delle Grazie the monks chanted incessant masses for Beatrice's soul. The Moro was overwhelmed. *He who had ever lived happy, now began to feel great anguish*, says the Venetian Sanuti. The fabric of his dreams had crashed upon him. What were kingdoms to him without that clear-sighted and dauntless spirit at his side? Not only was his strong affection rent, but his profound faith in his good fortune was awfully shaken. As if the evil augury had to declare itself unmistakably, on the night of Beatrice's death a large part of the walls of the vast pleasaunce which he had created round the Castello fell with a great crash, ruined by no storm or wind, or agency perceptible to human sense. From this moment, so much is man's destiny affected by his own spirits, all Lodovico's misfortunes began. He entered on that downward course which was to drag

so much to ruin with it—and to the husband's loss of the blessing of this Beatrice, the poet of the Italian Renaissance ascribes not only the fall of Moro, Sforza, and Visconte Snake together, but the captivity of Italy.

'Beatrice bea, vivendo, il suo consorte,
E lo lascia infelice alla sua morte.
Anzi tutta Italia, che con lei
Fia trionfante e senza lei, captiva.'[3]

3. Ariosto, Orlando Furioso, canto xlii.

The gate which the Moro had thought to shut so easily upon the departed stranger was once more ajar. A second French expedition threatened Italy, and Milan in particular. Early in 1497, the great captain Gian Giacomo Trivulzio, head of the party in Milan hostile to the Sforza, and a bitter personal foe of the Moro, who had abandoned his country and was high in the French service, made a raid into the ducal dominions. At the same time his partisans stirred up the discontent of the people, and inspired their volatile minds with desire for a change of masters. And soon the League began to show its internal weakness. The interests of the two chief parties in it were fatally opposed. Venice found her designs on Pisa thwarted by Lodovico and in her rage began to ponder the advantages of making friends with the French. Out of the struggle for Naples now renewed between the French garrison and the Aragonese she might by a prudent policy, when both combatants were exhausted, secure the sea-kingdom of the South, and might not a second descent of the French King, lasting long enough to overthrow the Sforza and no more, put rich Lombardy at last within her reach? With such hopes the grave senators

flattered their ambition and forgot their faith to Italy. The Pope, for his own interests, had turned his back on the Sforza, and was parleying with the common foe, while in Florence the Frate and the people still looked to Charles for the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth and the restitution of Pisa.

The King, however, swayed by opposite counsels, let the months go by, and the Moro, with desperate trust in his own statesmanship, still hoped to save his Dukedom. In spite of his anxieties and embarrassments, his unconquerable instinct of order maintained the fair aspect of his dominions. But on the great artistic projects of his triumphant days an arresting spell was laid. The resources of the State were exhausted in war and defensive preparations. The people were already taxed to rebellion, and no supplies were forthcoming for his painters and sculptors. Leonardo asked in vain for the bronze for casting the statue of Francesco Sforza. The clay model, raised in front of the Castello in 1493, on the occasion of Bianca Maria's marriage with Maximilian, had remained there since, and it seemed more and more likely that this high thought of prince and artist combined would never take on any but an ephemeral form.

The brief, uneasy quiet was broken by a stroke of fate. Charles VIII. died suddenly (1498), and was succeeded by the Duke of Orleans. Louis XII. had no sooner ascended the throne than he announced his immediate intention of invading Milan.

Once more put to the trial, Italy proved again unfaithful to herself. And the pity of it was that the fault lay in her long-rooted political conditions, not in the will of the people. The sentiment of patriotism

was strong in the country, and *bon italiano* was the current expression for one who hated and opposed the French. Yet it could not avail to overcome the conflict of interests among the different States, which was, after all, the blind continuous struggle of the national instinct, whether represented for the moment by Republic, hereditary tyrant or military usurper, towards the creation of a single and united kingdom. This time Venice was the arbiter of the situation. Answering the Moro's piteous and self-humiliating appeals for help and protection only by cruel taunts of perfidy, the Republic concluded an alliance with the French (1498).

The Moro's old disloyalties were now repaid to him tenfold. He looked round him in vain for a friend. The reward of usurpers and short tyrannic dynasties based on force, not love, met him in an alienated people, who refused to endure hardship or make sacrifices to save him, but looked instead to any change of government as desirable. His armies, composed chiefly of foreigners, were undisciplined and rebellious, serving only for pay. They were badly generaled by the Duke's favourites. Lodovico, with all his ability, had little judgment in his choice of servants. He was led by his affections, which betrayed him. Chief among his trusted officers were the San Severini brothers—the Conte di Caiazzo, Galeazzo, famous champion of the tourney-lists, and the Moro's son-in-law, and the gruff Gaspare, better known as Fracasso. They were the sons of Roberto di San Severino, but Lodovico had kept them always beside him and heaped honours and places upon them. Galeazzo, the prime favourite, had the chief command of his army. Francesco Bernardino Visconte, Antonio Maria Pallavicino, Antonio Trivulzio and the rest, all were alike unprepared in

heart to sacrifice themselves for the sovereign in whose sunshine they had warmed themselves. The slight tie that bound together the various elements of the State could not endure against fear, ambition, greed and hereditary hate. The situation was further aggravated by the arrogance and exactions of the ducal favourites which excited the rage of the people and increased Lodovico's unpopularity.

Events moved rapidly. In March 1499 the treaty between France, Venice and the Pope was publicly proclaimed. Louis was to conquer Milan, and Venice, as the price of assistance, was to share the spoils. Florence was nominally the Moro's ally, but had neither means nor will to help him now. Naples was too weak to count, and Lodovico's one friend, the unstable and spendthrift Maximilian, gave only empty promises. The Duke was left to make his desperate defence alone. In spite of his energetic preparations the presage of doom lay heavy on his soul, and affected all around him. He believed that Fortune, once his friend, was now contrary, and that God was angry with him.

In June the French army arrived in Asti, and immediately invaded the ducal territories. Every obstacle fell before them. Treachery and fear delivered castles and cities one after another into their hands. The Conte di Caiazzo made secret terms with them, and withdrew his troops from action. The rapid progress of the invaders brought them soon to the strong city of Alessandria, in which Galeazzo di San Severino and the main Milanese army lay to check their advance upon the capital itself. Here they met a promise of resistance, but the place had not been besieged many days when for some extraordinary and unexplained reason it was

delivered to them. Some say that Galeazzo was seized with despair, others that he was deceived by a forged order to retire. Anyhow, one morning before daybreak he stole out with a few other nobles and galloped to Milan, and his army, when they found their general gone, incontinently fled in all directions.

No obstacle now remained between the enemy and Milan. With the same fatal spirit of despair which had undermined the whole defence, Lodovico gave himself up for lost. Though his great Castle at Milan was the strongest fortress in Europe, its garrison nearly three thousand, its artillery enormous in number and size, its munitions of war and all necessaries infinite, he could see no salvation except in abandoning the city and seeking aid in person from the Emperor. There may have been something of the instinct of bending before the storm in his decision. He knew that he could not hold the city, where the insurgent mob was already sacking the palaces of his favourites. If the citadel only stood firm, however, there was every chance of some revolution of the political wheel carrying him back before long. But blinded again by affection, he made a fatal mistake in his choice of a Castellan. In spite of many warnings he confided the entire command of the castle to one Bernardino da Corte, whom he had brought up from childhood and loaded with favours, charging him to guard it faithfully against the enemy, and promising to relieve him before three months were past.

Lodovico Sforza's departure from the city which his father had won and he himself had ruled gloriously for many years; the tears and kisses with which he parted from his little motherless sons, sending them

before him into Germany; his last visit, attended by weeping monks, to the tomb of his wife in Sta. Maria delle Grazie; his rapid ride out of the city next morning, after a night of fever and anguish, accompanied by a very few friends and followers, while the people's cry changed from 'Moro, Moro' to 'Franza, Franza,' even as he passed—these things are all recorded with deep compassion by Corio, whose chronicle sadly concludes with this downfall of the House which he had served from boyhood.

Behind Lodovico's back, amid the flames and smoke of the burning palaces, the streets and squares broke out into a garish splendour of decoration to welcome his conqueror. Four days later Gian Giacomo Trivulzio rode in at the head of the French, amid the wild enthusiasm of the mob. The General, elated at his triumphant return to his native city, promised them anything and everything in the name of their rich, powerful, and all benign new master, the King of France. They believed that the millennium was come.

They soon learnt their mistake. Meanwhile, Fate had dealt the decisive blow to the domination of the Sforza. The rock of their fortunes, the impregnable Castello, provided by the extreme care and thought of the Moro with every necessary for a lengthy siege, was after a few days basely sold to the enemy by the traitor Castellan. On reception of the news in his distant retreat Lodovico is said to have remained as if mute, and to have finally uttered these words only —*Since Judas was there never a greater traitor than Bernardino Curzio*.

This condemnation was echoed by the whole world, and with especial emphasis by the French themselves, who were amazed at such treachery and

cowardice. But the Castellan was not the only traitor. Bernardino Fr. Visconte and others of Lodovico's great ministers were his accomplices, and partakers of the spoil. Hardly was the old master gone, ere they bent before the new. Louis XII. followed his army in person to Milan, and entered in great state, wearing the ducal beretta, and greeted by the same artistic demonstrations of joy and loyalty as had so often celebrated the pompous occasions of the Moro's rule. After a short stay he departed to France, leaving Trivulzio as governor, an imprudent choice, which inflamed the old faction spirit. Most of the nobles were Trivulzio's hereditary enemies. They began at once to scheme his overthrow, aided by the French guards, who could not bear to see Gian Giacomo preferred before them to such high place. In the populace discontent soon reawakened. They found themselves in worse case than before. Their master was different, but the taxes remained the same, and in addition they had to endure the cruelties and excesses of the French troops. The partisans of the Sforza worked insidiously upon their minds and excited them to cries of 'Moro, Moro,' once again. The city seethed with intrigue and sedition. Every day tumults arose, and the brave Trivulzio, beset with snares and embarrassments, tried vainly with his frank methods and simple soldier's choler to rule this mass of conflicting passions, greeds, sufferings and cunning ambitions.

While the way was thus being prepared in Milan for his restoration, Lodovico, in his exile at Innsbrück, was using every means to accomplish it, even to the desperate expedient of inciting the Turk to attack the Venetian State. At the same time he gathered together a strong body of Swiss and German mercenaries, and prepared to start for Italy as soon

as he learnt from his friends in Milan that the moment was come. The French strength in the Duchy had been greatly diminished by the departure of large detachments for Naples and the Romagna, when the report ran through Milan that the Moro was come back and had retaken Como (1500). The whole city was immediately in an uproar, and the mob surged round the palace of the governor, who, after vainly endeavouring to quiet them, was forced to hide from their insults and threats. A few days later he left Milan. Immediately after, Lodovico's forerunners, Cardinal Ascanio and two of the San Severini, rode in at the head of four thousand Swiss. Messer Galeazzo, flowering once more in the sunshine of his Lord's success, had arrayed himself all in white, with a great feather on his head, and a pair of shoes on his feet much more fitted for the service of Venus than of Mars, as a sarcastic chronicler observes. The Duke himself followed a day later and re-entered his capital in state. But his triumph was only apparent. The Castello was now the bulwark of his enemy. It stood with its huge bastions and vast squares of parapets furnished with a thousand engines of war, frowning over the defenceless city. Even as the Moro paced in stately procession through the streets the bells rang out, and a terrified cry arose that the French had sallied from the fortress. The Duke was not strong enough to attempt its reduction, and unwilling to face the constant peril of its presence, he left the city, which he was never to see again, and removed to Pavia.

The same sickness of doubt, indecision and fear, the same presentiment of failure which had attended the Moro for so long, now seemed to attack this great adventure for the redemption of his fortunes. He neglected to strike a decisive blow at the French

before they could be reinforced, and contented himself with retaking a few cities with as little shedding of blood as possible. In vain Fracasso and his bolder captains exhorted him to more energetic steps. His fierce Swiss mercenaries, to whom he refused the satisfaction of sacking the conquered towns, grew violent and rebellious. His treasury was exhausted, nor could all the expedients of Cardinal Ascanio in Milan, even the appropriation of the treasure of the Duomo and the other great churches, raise enough money to content the voracious Swiss, of whom new hosts were continually swarming into the city on their way to the camp, clamouring for employment and pay. The citizens, terrified by these rude allies, squeezed of every penny to supply the Duke's necessities, found their plight worse than ever. Hearing of the great reinforcements even now pouring down from the mountains to swell the French army, they trembled with fear of the consequences of their rebellion against Louis XII. In Novara, where the Moro now lay, despair and confusion prevailed among the leaders, while the temper of the Swiss mercenaries grew daily more ominous.

The French army, gradually increasing in number and strength, was encamped at Mortara, a few miles away, and constantly made bold dashes up to the very walls of Novara. A battle could no longer be avoided. On the 4th of April the enemy advanced to within a mile of Novara and challenged the Italians to the combat. Lodovico's army issued forth in noble array, but it was nothing more than hollow show. The whole of the Swiss, who formed its greater part, refused to fight, on the pretext that they could not shed the blood of their fellow-countrymen engaged in the French ranks. Their leaders had in fact secretly

treated with the enemy. Returning into Novara, followed in wild confusion and panic by the rest of the army, they proceeded to arrange terms of capitulation with De Ligny, the French commander. The promises, entreaties, tears even of the unhappy Moro, could not move them from their purpose. All he could obtain was a promise that they would carry him into safety disguised in the midst of their ranks when they abandoned Novara. And even this small mercy was a sham and a treachery. Someone among them warned the French generals of the arrangement, and a careful scrutiny of the troops, as in accordance with the agreement with the French they marched out unmolested, soon detected the Duke by his well-known features and complexion and the undisguisable height and majesty of his person. With him were captured also Galeazzo di San Severino and one or two other nobles.

Thus unbloodily, as if by the decree of Fate, fell Lodovico Sforza. We watch his dark and mournful figure—more dignified in adversity than when tossed amid the rude and difficult circumstances of active war—as it passes slowly out of Italy in its vesture of tragedy, conducted with respectful compassion by the chivalrous French, taunted and reviled by his own countrymen. It bears a significance reaching far beyond the immediate event and the immediate victim. So much was passing away with it. Italy, that fair queen whose robes the too-aspiring Prince had desired to brush free from every stain, was a captive with him, befouled and bloodied by the ignorant barbarian, and all the joy and exaltation of her wonderful Quattrocento was to fail, and her new-found strength and hope, with its sky-aspiring projects but half realised, to be bound down in the sad fetters of disillusion, despair, and a new spiritual

tyranny, while the grand ideal of the Renaissance was to travel away with her freedom and find its perfect fulfilment elsewhere.

As Lodovico Sforza was the first to utter the fatal invitation to the French, he was fitly the first scapegoat. But, not alone in his sin, he was not alone in the punishment. If we condemn him for starting the ruin of his country by delivering Naples to Charles, what shall we say of Venice, Florence and the Pope, who each for their own selfish interests completed it by selling Milan to Louis? The inexorable retribution did not fail to fall upon them also. The first years of the sixteenth century are its history. Alexander, dying, dragged down that son and that earthly dominion for which he had given his soul. Venice, shaken nigh to destruction in her turn, by an iniquitous combination, had to forget her wide dreams of empire and be content with a narrow liberty, passing into stagnation and decay. Julius, continuer of Alexander's worldly policy, may well have seen with prophetic eye, when death called him too, his unaccomplished scheme of a renovated Church,—Papacy and Empire in one, head of a new heaven on earth, which should lay the sword of temporal and spiritual victory at the feet of the purified Venus, Madonna with her Son upon her knee, shrink to the monastic ideals and the rigid excluding tyranny of the Catholic reaction. Last of all, Florence, most constant of the lovers of liberty, with her most melancholy fall filled up the cup of expiation and sealed the final subjugation of the country.



SCOPETTA OF LODOVICO IL MORO

CHAPTER VIII
The Sorrow of Milan

"Il povero Milano cridava, pensando di poter cridare, ma fu
una mala cosa per Milano."—BURIGOZZO.

At Novara, Milan lost her independence for ever. The restoration of the Sforza, witnessed twice over in the first thirty years of the sixteenth century, was a mere puppet-show, barely concealing the hand of greater Powers behind. The Gascon archers, who from the Castello walls amused themselves by shooting to fragments the great clay model of 'the Horse,' had ruined as effectively the fair social fabric, as unique, as fragile, and as incomplete, which Leonardo's work symbolised in the person of its founder, Francesco Sforza.

With the captivity of Lodovico began in fact that long foreign subjugation of Milan which was to endure into modern times. Her vicissitudes during the short period that still comes within the scope of our mediæval story are too sad to linger over. Reoccupied by the French after Novara, the city was mulcted in an enormous sum as the penalty of rebellion, and instead of the comparatively mild régime under a native governor, first instituted by

Louis, she had to suffer the iron rule of a foreign viceroy, whose aim was to stamp out every spark of free and patriotic aspiration in the people.

But for several years Milan enjoyed at least outward peace, under the triumphant Lilies, governed in succession by the Cardinal de Rohan, the Sieur du Benin, and Charles d'Amboise, Sieur de Chaumont, the last of whom ruled from 1505 to his death in 1511. In 1509 domination of the French was shaken by a sudden reversal of policy on the part of Pope Julius, who, having used their aid to humble Venice, suddenly made friends with that Republic, and loudly roared to all Europe his intention of driving the French out of Italy. The immediate result for Milan was a great inroad of Swiss allies of the Pope, under that terrible peasant priest, the Cardinal de Sion, and the devastation of the fair Lombard provinces. The French, whose forces were weakened by dispersion in various directions and could ill resist this furious onslaught, endeavoured to dismay their adversary by raising a so-called General Council for the reform of the Church, in the shape of a few partisan cardinals, who sat solemnly in the Duomo at Milan and pronounced futile sentences of excommunication and deposition against the bellicose Pontiff.

But Julius, strong in alliance with the Emperor and the King of Spain, laughed at the feeble thunders of his rebellious sons. The French found better aid in the military genius of Gaston de Foix, the King's nephew, who succeeded Chaumont as Governor of Milan and commander of the army in 1511. With a stern and silent rapidity which amazed all Italy, the young general of twenty-two swept through Lombardy, retaking lost cities, relieving those

beleaguered, and carrying his arms against the Papalists and Imperialists right up to Ravenna, where he routed them utterly in the famous battle of Easter Day, 1512. The victory, however, issued fatally for the winners. The hero of it was borne dead from the field in slow and mournful procession back to Milan, followed soon after by his paralysed army in retreat before the renewed hosts which the inactivity of the new French commander, Palissy, had allowed the dauntless Pope to collect. Pressed on all sides in the Duchy by the Swiss, Palissy was unable to maintain his position there either, and continuing their retreat the French passed away over the Alps, abandoning all their conquests in Lombardy, except the fortresses of Milan and Cremona.

And now once more a Sforza was proclaimed Lord of Milan, amid the thunderous rejoicings of the people. But the son of Lodovico and Beatrice, Massimiliano, whom the Pope and the Cardinal de Sion, for their own political purposes, lifted to the throne of his ancestors at this juncture, was nothing but the feeble tool of those two potentates, a helpless and rotten bark tossed amid the storms of those contentious times. For the little authority which he wielded, he was utterly unfit. Bred up in exile at the Emperor's Court, he had no affection for his country, and regarded his new sovereignty merely as an opportunity for extravagant pleasure and dissipation. The maintenance of his luxurious Court, and of the huge army necessary to defend the State, demanded enormous sums, to raise which he recklessly alienated the ducal revenues, and continually imposed unexpected taxes on his subjects. To satisfy rapacious allies and favourites, he flung away his fiefs, seeming, as a chronicler says, to follow the proverb—*The fewer possessions, the fewer cares.* While

the light-minded youth forgot all duties and cares of State, in feasting, jousting and the dance, the resentment of the people was rising against him, his ministers and captains were intriguing with his foes, and the roar of the great guns at intervals from the Castello might have reminded him that the key of Milan was still held by the enemy, and that Louis in France was quickly preparing an expedition to reconquer Lombardy.

The first attempt of the French in 1513, under Louis de la Tremouille and Gian Giacomo Trivulzio, met, however, with an unexpected and signal defeat from the Swiss at Novara, which drove them back over the Alps. This was followed by the capitulation of the French garrison in the Castello of Milan, and Massimiliano seemed now firmly established in his seat. But Julius II. was dead, and the whole political scene had shifted once again. The Venetians were now ranged with France against the Papal League, and the accession of Francis I. to the French throne, early in 1515, raised up against the Sforza a young and enthusiastic foe, who was undaunted by the sad experiences of his two predecessors in their Italian ventures. The King hastened to raise an enormous army, with which he crossed the mountains in person, and, skilfully guided by Trivulzio, surprised and made captive Prospero Colonna, general of the ducal forces, who was awaiting him in a strong position. Advancing unopposed, almost up to Milan, Francis seemed about to complete a bloodless conquest, when a sudden rising of the Milanese themselves, and the arrival of a great force of Swiss to the aid of the Duke, checked his progress. And now at Marignano (Melegnano) outside Milan was fought that mighty battle (14th September 1515), not of men, but of giants—as the veteran Trivulzio

affirmed—in which the fierce and stubborn Swiss and the gallant French contended all one evening and again the next day, till seven thousand of the mountaineers lay dead upon the field, and their brave comrades, utterly exhausted, were forced to give way and fly into Milan.

At news of the defeat Massimiliano retired into the Castello, abandoning the city to the enemy. Here he might have held out awhile, but his spirit was too small, and by the advice of Girolamo Morone, one of the most astute statesmen of that day, and the chief stay of this generation of the House of Sforza—who counted on the existence of a more promising younger brother, Francesco—the incompetent prince renounced his Duchy to the French King for a large pension. Retiring to France, this elder son of the Moro disappears ingloriously out of the story of Milan.

The Duchy remained for the next six years in French possession, and was ruled with comparative justice and beneficence by the Constable de Bourbon, till the just, generous, and propitiatory impulses of the new sovereign yielded to indifference and forgetfulness, and it was abandoned to the cruel and arbitrary government of the Sieur de Lautrec, brother of the King's mistress, the Comtesse de Châteaubriant. His tyranny helped to provoke another revolution in 1521, when the young Emperor Charles V. united with Pope Leo X. in a new *Holy* League, and proclaiming his right to Milan as an imperial fief, sent an army to invade the Duchy. Lautrec, having executed some of the noblest citizens on suspicion of intriguing with the Imperialists, abandoned the city, leaving the Castello garrisoned, and took up his stand four miles from the city, at the Bicocca, where

he suffered a tremendous defeat, which lost Milan again to France. This turn of the tide carried Francesco, Lodovico's second son, to the ducal throne. The wild joy with which the oppressed and suffering Milanese greeted this new Sforza, in whose name they trusted with touching hopefulness for a return of the old glory of their city, was not wholly misplaced. Duke Francesco II. has left a memory of good repute. The misfortunes of his reign were not due to his faults or weaknesses, but to the political circumstances of the time, which deprived him of all real power, and made him a mere pawn in the great game played between Charles V. and Francis I. with Italy for stake. Milan was, in fact, dominated by the Spaniard, and the presence of a great army of these foreigners was a crushing burden upon prince and people. Though there to defend the city, they wrought little less destruction and cruelty than the French, when the latter returned as enemies in 1523, and advancing close to the capital, spread havoc and desolation all around. Though unable to take Milan, they established themselves in some of the neighbouring towns, and the approach of Francis himself with a large army in the following year (1524) drove the Duke into flight. The city, bereft of half its population and garrison by a terrible pestilence, was utterly unable to make any defence against the French monarch. Francis, having entered Milan in triumph, passed on to besiege Pavia, which kept him heroically at bay through many months.

Meanwhile the Emperor was rapidly gathering force for the relief of his vassal State. From Naples came Lanoy with the garrison of that province; from Germany the ferocious giant Fründsberg, leading twelve thousand lanzknechts; while mercenaries from every part swarmed to the camps of Charles'

other commanders, the Constable de Bourbon and the Marquis of Pescara. This horde of hungry and rapacious villains, whom the Emperor left to gather supplies and pay out of the unfortunate country which it passed through, swooped down upon the gallant army of the King, which, falsely secure in its vainglory and sense of personal valour, allowed itself to be entrapped in the Park of Pavia, and on 24th February 1525, that vast and exquisite pleasaunce, created for the summer dalliance and the gay winter sports of the Dukes of Milan, became an awful red-mown field of all the chivalry of France. Never, perhaps, was such an oblation of knightly grace and virtue poured out to Death as on that day. One after another the gentlemen of France fell around their King. The famous veterans of the Italian wars died together with the youngest scions of their Houses, new come to this fatal Italy. Among many Milanese nobles who also fought in the King's ranks and fell was Galeazzo di San Severino, who, after mourning for his friend and lord, the Moro, through several years of exile, had taken service with the conqueror and risen to the position of Grand Ecuyer of France.

Madame, tout est perdu sauf l'honneur, wrote Francis to his mother. Among other things the Duchy of Milan, but just retaken, was lost again, and this time for ever. Monseigneur le Roy being a prisoner at Pizzighettone, his army destroyed and the survivors of his gentlemen confined in different fortresses, Duke Francesco returned again under the imperial protection to his capital. But though he was beloved by his people, his restoration meant a renewal of the intolerable Spanish tyranny, and fresh exactions for the benefit of the Emperor's treasury, worse than any the city had ever suffered before. The Duke himself groaned under a slavery for which the empty title

and insignia of sovereignty little compensated him.

And now at the very height of Charles' success, there seemed to come a hope of freedom for his oppressed vassal. Italy and the whole European world had been startled by the overwhelming victory of Pavia, and began to fear the further advance of a conqueror whose triumph was a menace to all. Pope Clement VII., whose projects for the aggrandisement of the Medici were hampered by Charles' predominance in the peninsula, seized the opportunity to draw the Queen-Mother of France, Henry VIII. of England, Venice and the smaller Italian States into a vast alliance against the Emperor. This seemed the moment for Milan to throw off the yoke of Spain, and Francesco, or rather his chancellor, the able and faithful Morone, entered into secret relations with the League. He was, however, betrayed by the Marquis of Pescara, whom he had endeavoured to seduce from allegiance to Charles. Morone came near to losing his head, and the Duke himself was denounced for high treason to his feudal Lord, and was forced to take refuge in the Castello, where he was closely blockaded by Pescara and De Leyva; while the miserable citizens, who had found the Spanish troops intolerable enough as their allies and defenders, had now to suffer unspeakable things from them in the character of conquerors.

For many months the Duke held out in the hope of the relief promised by the League, till provisions grew short and famine appeared at hand. Meanwhile the city, driven to frenzy by its oppressors, rose again and again in desperate tumults, which were quelled each time by the Spanish generals with treacherous promises to relieve the general misery, and followed by severities and outrages more dreadful than ever,

till the fair city became a very hell of slaughter, lust and rapine. In vain the forces of the League, under the brilliant young Giovanni de' Medici, approached to the Duke's succour. They were driven back by the Imperialists, and Francesco was at last forced by extremity of want to surrender the castle and abandon the city altogether (1526).

But the League was daily growing in strength and soon returned to the attack. The Imperialists were closely besieged in their turn in Milan, till the descent of Fründsberg with fresh hordes of mercenaries compelled the assailants to retire and concentrate themselves on the defensive against the once again overwhelming Imperialists. Lombardy was now become the complete prey of the occupying armies. The ferocious and undisciplined hosts that nominally served the Emperor no longer heeded the commands of a master who gave them no pay, and was himself far away in Spain. They were practically an independent robber horde, following whom, and going where, they pleased, supporting and enriching themselves on plunder, torturing and murdering peasants and citizens without distinction, to squeeze from them their last possession. It meant nothing to the soldiers that Charles was entering into negotiations for peace with the League. Nor could their captains control them. The Constable de Bourbon, who became Governor of Milan for the Emperor in 1526, promised the afflicted people to move the army from their midst, but even if he had been sincere, he could not have kept his word. Yet the army loved him above all their other leaders, this rebel and exiled prince of France, who was an adventurer like themselves.

Before long Milan and the country round was

changed into a bare desert, out of which even Spanish cruelty could no longer extract a subsistence. The thought of the unvisited regions farther on began to spread and agitate among the famished hordes; the names of Florence and Rome, cities of untold riches, were breathed from one to another, and as one man they rose at the offer of the Constable de Bourbon to lead them southwards. As a swarm of locusts lifts from a devastated plain, they swept suddenly away on the awful, irresistible course which ended in that final catastrophe of the Middle Ages, the Sack of Rome.

This tragic event, though hardly a part of the pious Emperor's plans, made the last link in the chain which Spain was forging round Italy. Neither the Pope, nor Francis I., who had regained his liberty early in 1526, were able to offer any further serious resistance to the conqueror, though for some years yet the French continued to make desperate efforts to regain Milan, and the city had to endure both the tyranny of the Spanish governor, De Leyva, and the horrors of blockade. The Treaty of Barcelona between the Pope and the Emperor, and the peace signed by Charles and Francis at Cambrai—that *Paix des Dames*, arranged by the most famous ladies of France and Italy—followed by the Congress and Coronation of the Emperor at Bologna in 1530, secured peace at last for the tormented country by laying the destinies of Italy finally in the conqueror's hands. Francesco Sforza, who threw himself on the Emperor's mercy, was graciously pardoned and reinstated in his Dukedom. The return of this amiable prince inspired a faint joy in the exhausted people, and gradually, in spite of the enormous subsidies exacted by the Emperor, and the burdens imposed to drive off the attacks of the independent

condottieri and pirates who ranged the disordered country, a certain amount of life and activity crept back into the cruelly-wronged city.

Such consolation and remedy for her wounds as his fettered powers and grave embarrassments allowed, Francesco administered, introducing order into the wild confusion of the government, and reviving trade and industry by careful regulations. But what a changed Milan from that in which his father and mother had reigned gloriously, in beautiful stainless palaces, surrounded by the finest productions of art, was this wrecked, defiled and devastated city, in whose deserted streets and suburbs nettles grew rankly, and wolves, grown used to feed on human flesh, roamed at will, attacking armed men, and snatching children from their mothers' arms! 'What an incredible evidence of the change of fortune,' writes Guicciardini, 'to those who had seen her not long before overflowing with inhabitants, and not only full of all gaiety and delight from the natural inclination of her inhabitants to feasting and pleasure, but because of the wealth of her citizens, the infinite number of her shops and industries, the delicacy and abundance of all the things which form man's food, the superb apparel and equipages and sumptuous adornments of both her women and her men, more flourishing and happy than any other city of Italy.'

There is an interesting record of these years of tribulation in the chronicle of a Milanese mercer named Burigozzo, who, sitting in his dark-browed shop, set down from day to day, as they passed before his eyes, the vicissitudes of *el povero Milano*. His quaint simplicity and patriotic grief make his tale very moving. It is a picture of confusion, tumult and

misery, relieved at first by brilliant gleams, such as the hollow pomps and glories of the entries of kings and conquerors, but darkening ever to a more tragic gloom and terror and despair as it passes from the milder sufferings of the period of French occupation to the unspeakable horrors—*cose da non dire*—committed by the Spaniards and lanzknechts of Pescara and De Leyva. All the great events of the time are made vivid to us in his pages. We hear the ceaseless noise of battle outside, the guns of the Castello, often directed upon the terror-stricken city itself, roaring continually and answered by the great bell of the Duomo sounding *a martello*, to summon the citizens to arms. These, maddened by exactions and cruelty, or inspired by hope of driving out oppressors, or excluding assailants, gather in thousands at the call. Suffering has made them merciless, and they attack and butcher parties of mercenaries in the streets. Once they make a holocaust of the old wooden Campanile of the Duomo, with a whole company of Spaniards within it. And through the streets, crowded with blaspheming and bestial soldiery, we see endless processions pass, white-robed children, men and women with bare feet and clad in sackcloth, monks, friars, all the hierarchy of the Cathedral, filling the air with penitential wailings and cries of *misericordia*, as they wind from the Duomo to St. Ambrogio to implore the help of the great patron saint of the once fortunate Milan. Churches crowded with suppliants; the excited populace pressing round some upstart prophet—some fierce bearded monk who drives the timid priests from altar and pulpit, and calls upon the people in the name of Christ to slaughter the French. In street and temple alike confusion and foulness, where so shortly before the genius of order

had presided. Then upon the uproar falls the sick and heavy silence of the pestilence, and the mercer's tale moves as with a hushed step, while, imprisoned for a whole month within his house, he watches his children die, himself by the grace of God untouched and well—while no sound is heard but the carts going by laden with the sick, and the ceaseless *campana del corpo*—while the graveyards spread and double in extent round the numberless churches. A hundred thousand persons perished, he tells us, during the summer months of 1524.

As the picture unrolls itself before us we are fain to turn away from the spectacle of anguish and all abomination during the hideous years of the Spanish occupation after 1525. The city preyed upon by the fiendish mercenaries, the people outraged, pillaged, and tortured till they yielded up their last mite of buried treasure. Multitudes flying from their homes to avoid worse things and sheltering in the country round, though that was infested by human beasts and wild ones only less cruel, or worse, stopped and bound, little children and all, by their ruthless tormentors, to prevent their escape. And withal siege, starvation; *such a leanness of men from hunger as was an anguish to witness*, the little bread which they possessed seized by the governor, the dying poor driven into so-called refuges, whence every days scores were carried out dead.

But the story of these thirty years is not entirely of gloom. If we turn from the people to the great Milanese nobility, we see a different aspect of life, no less tragic in a sense, but brilliant enough and glorified by the fine culture and rare artistic taste of the age. Within their sumptuous palaces and wide secluded gardens, defended by great names and

powerful interests from the intrusions of marauding soldiery, or in pleasant country villas beside the lakes and placid rivers of Lombardy, whither they retired when pestilence or famine held sway in the city, they created for themselves that unreal world of ladies and cavaliers, arms and love, of which Ariosto sings. It was during these years that the courtly Dominican friar, Matteo Bandello, was Prior of the Convent of Sta. Maria delle Grazie, and was collecting in the most elect circles those gay and scandalous tales, which, retold by his witty pen with introductions describing the circumstances in which he heard them, give a vivid picture of the incomparable cinquecento society of Milan, with its fine literary accomplishment, vivacious wit and over liberal manners—a society presided over by such gracious figures as Ippolita Sforza, the lady of Bandello's own particular adoration, and Cecilia Gallerani, the Moro's old favourite. Ippolita, a granddaughter of Duke Galeazzo Maria, was married to Alessandro Bentivoglio, a son of the deposed Lord of Bologna. She and Cecilia, now the Contessa Bergamini, and Camilla Scarampi made up a trio of Milanese poetesses and literary connoisseurs of finest discrimination and judgment and of wide renown. Apparently careless of the woes of their country, these ladies and others of their rank, with the graceful cavaliers and dilettante ecclesiastics who made their court, occupied themselves in romantic vanities, in amorous intrigues, and in learned and philosophic dalliance. Close relations united them with the other courts and aristocracies of North Italy, and the famous Marchioness of Mantua, Isabella da Este, was often the centre and queen of those elegant gatherings of beauty and wit and gallantry described by Bandello. History shows us that most typical lady

of Italian society dancing with the King of France at the great ball which the usurping monarch gave in 1507, in the Castello of Milan, in the very halls where her sister and brother-in-law had once reigned —a spectacle significant of fallen Italy. Like the princes of the neighbouring States, the great nobles of Milan, once powerful in the story of their city, had lost all patriotic and independent spirit. The severe repression of party-passion, that unfailing symptom of vigorous life in an Italian community, by the French conquerors in 1500, reduced them to idleness and political nullity. They made friends with the new powers and entered their service, but they had no longer any real influence on affairs. The revolutions which placed the Sforza princes on the ducal throne in turn afforded the nobles opportunities of intrigue and brought home to them the terrible realities of foreign subjugation. In 1521, for example, those who had embraced the side of the old dynasty suffered the reprisals of the savage Lautrec, and on mere suspicion Milan was desolated of its noblest inhabitants by summary executions, banishment and forfeiture. These families were, however, restored to their old position by the elevation of Francesco Sforza to the Dukedom, and they made no attempt to rebel against the Imperial Eagle, which was their real master. When the intolerable persecution inflicted by the Spanish and German mercenaries from 1525 to 1529 maddened the people to repeated insurrection, not one of the nobles came forward to give them courage and to organise and direct their undisciplined efforts to effective action. A certain Pietro della Pusterla, of a House which through all the story of Milan had been distinguished as leaders of popular movements, seems to have assumed some authority over them, but even he abandoned them in

the hour of need and danger.

These futile attempts exhausted the last remains of aspiration for liberty and self-government in the broken-spirited Milanese. They made no attempt to rebel against the settlement of 1530, which resigned them finally into the Emperor's hands. Though utterly dismayed—*tutto smarrito*, says Burigozzo—by the heavy fine inflicted by Charles as a penalty for the rebellion of the Duchy, they resigned themselves to *patientia* and hope for better days to come.

Much *patientia* was necessary before those days came. The country round was depopulated, and it was long before the old abundance flowed again into the city. There were times when bread lacked and the people murmured against the helpless Duke. Prices remained very high and there was little trade. A visit, however, from Charles V. in 1533, expected with fear and dismay by the citizens, to whom his name was only associated with ravaging lanzknechts and Spaniards, brought them, to their joyful surprise, good luck—a great influx of custom and rich payment for their goods, instead of robbery.

In 1534 a brief reflection of its old glory brightened the city on the arrival of a bride for the Duke, the sixteen-year-old Cristina of Sweden, whose portrait by Holbein is in the National Gallery. The streets and squares were magnificently decked for her reception. The young princess, whose countenance, says the chronicler, was more divine than human, rode in under a golden baldaquin, surrounded by twelve of the noblest gentlemen of the city, so splendidly arrayed that each appeared an Emperor, and with such great white plumes in their caps that her Excellency seemed to move in the midst of a forest. The joy with which she was greeted was, however,

shallow enough, and changed quickly to groans when the money for the Duchess' maintenance had to be squeezed out of the people by a special tax.

The fine bridal feast was soon followed by a still more pompous, but lugubrious pageant, when eighteen months later (1535), the last Duke of Milan was carried to his tomb in the great temple founded by the first Duke, Gian Galeazzo Visconte. Always delicate of constitution, and worn out by the great anxieties of his life, Francesco fell a victim to a severe illness in 1535. He left no child to inherit the ducal throne.

There still survived, however, a Sforza, Gian Paolo, son of the Moro by Lucrezia Crivelli. This prince set off immediately for Rome, to press the Pope to support his claim to the Dukedom. But on his way he was seized with sickness and died. Men said that he was poisoned by those to whom his existence was an inconvenience.

Thus was spent the dynasty of the Sforza, and Milan devolved as a vacant fief to the Empire. This great city, once the seat of Roman Emperors, the crowning place of Carlovingian and German monarchs, the capital of North Italy, and for centuries the heart of the most powerful principality in the peninsula, was now to sink to a mere provincial position, to become an impotent fragment of dismembered and captive Italy.

We need not occupy ourselves with the further vicissitudes of the city under the now settled dominion of Spain, which all the chivalrous and repeated efforts of France in the sixteenth century was unable to overthrow. It is enough to note her transference from Spanish to Austrian rule after the War of Succession in the early years of the

seventeenth century, and her continued subjection to the House of Hapsburg—with the brief Napoleonic interruption of 1796 to 1815—till in 1848 she rid herself by insurrection of the Austrian garrison, and ten years later became free and national at last as a member of the new-born Kingdom of Italy.

Her mediæval life ended with her mediæval liberty. Its robust passions, its vigorous and restless activity of body and mind, the sense of human power, the wide-ranging speculation, the audacious flights of the spirit, which mark its florescence in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, turned to weariness, disillusion and despair. Individuality lost itself in the bonds of convention and submission. In art, in literature, everywhere—decay. On thought, on science, the blight fell. The same hand which had stilled the political aspirations of Milan was laid heavily upon her soul. The prepotence of Spain and the revival of dogmatic zeal in the Papacy meant the employment of every engine of oppression against that spiritual freedom which Italy had used both for good and for evil. The Holy Office was set up in the Convent of Sta. Maria delle Grazie, and our friend Burigozzo lived long enough to see the pitiful ceremonies of the public recantations and penances of heretics before the door of the Duomo. But the most powerful agent of the Catholic reform in Milan was the famous Cardinal Archbishop, Carlo Borromeo, known to religious history as San Carlo. As Ambrose stands at the entrance of Milan's mediæval era, with back turned upon the ruined Empire behind, and strong gaze broadening down the centuries of new faith, new hope, new ideals, so Carlo Borromeo stands at its close, as sternly facing towards the past, and closing the door upon the new world of thought and knowledge beyond. Her

independent story is consecrated at its beginning and at its end by the mighty personality of a saint, who, whatever his influence upon her actual progress, gives by his example of will, of courage, and of spiritual exaltation, an everlasting inspiration to mankind.

Carlo Borromeo was a scion of the great patrician family of that name in Milan, founded far back in the mists of mediæval antiquity by a certain pilgrim, the *buon romeo* from whom it took its name. The House was conspicuous in the story of the city, and was foremost in consequence and in wealth in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Carlo was born in the ecclesiastical purple. His uncle, Pius IV., of the Milanese House of Medici, created him a cardinal in 1559, at the age of nineteen, and heaped benefices upon him. In 1560 he became Archbishop of Milan on the retirement of Cardinal Ippolito II. d'Este, who had occupied the See for a great number of years in succession to his uncle Ippolito I. The young Cardinal was now wealthier than any other prince of the Church. A few years later, however, he renounced all his benefices, *which having he was great, and casting away, greater*, as his biographer observes. He retained the Archbishopric only, and taking up his abode in the city, he devoted himself to the government of his diocese, with an immense zeal and fervour of reform. The Jesuits, the Teatini, and other of the new and reformed orders which sprang up in obedience to the religious impulse of the time, were introduced by him into Milan, and he suppressed the immensely wealthy and influential order of the Umiliati, and alienated its revenues to the support of the new communities and to the furtherance of his great schemes. An ascetic of purest and most exemplary life, he indulged as representative of the Church in a

boundless pride and pomp. He was a despot, and his despotism opposed itself to all independence of thought. He extended his ecclesiastical jurisdiction to its utmost limits, and seizing delinquents almost under the nose of the civil authorities, filled the dungeons of the episcopal palace with them. His imperious will came into conflict with the governors, but his powerful influence in the bigoted Court of Spain gave him supremacy, and he was in fact the ruler of Milan. His splendid temper of Milanese patrician vented itself in grandiose schemes for the building, restoration and ornamentation of churches and religious institutions. But as his authority was exerted to suppress all individuality and spontaneity in literature and thought, so his rich patronage was lent only to the decadence in art. A nobler manifestation of the man was seen during the pestilence of 1576, when, with heroic self-forgetfulness, he fulfilled his duty as chief pastor of the afflicted people, succouring them by every means in his power. His exalted figure, with cross borne high, leading processions of penitent and supplicatory citizens through the streets, is one of the saintly pictures of history.

Carlo Borromeo died in 1584, having lived but just forty-six years. Beyond him is the long sleep of Milan. Under the pall of stillness her historic virtues lie dormant, her historic names inglorious. But not dead. When the long-deferred moment of the awakening comes, the old courage, the old faith, the old sense of fellowship arises stronger and more lively than before, and the names of old resound again among the champions of Lombard and Italian freedom, in the prisons of repressive tyranny, round the barricades of the Cinque Giornate, on the fields of Custozza, Novara, Solferino, side by side with the

patriots sprung of the nameless blood which long ago watered the rich tilth of Legnano.

CHAPTER IX
Art in Milan

"Cosa bella mortal passa e non d'arte."—LEONARDO DA VINCI.

The Milanese as a people do not take a great place in the story of Italian art. They show at no time the spontaneous artistic character which was the blessed birthright of the Florentines, Sienese, Umbrians, Venetians. They granted, however, splendid hospitality to the art of others. Talent of every kind was attracted to this wealthy and luxurious city, and the concourse of foreign artists roused and developed considerable industry in the natives from early times.

Lombardy, and in particular Milan, its principal city, were exposed to influences which did not reach further south. The strain of northern blood in the people, derived from their Gallic origin, readily received the impress of the ultramontanes who flowed down throughout the centuries into the fertile plains of Po and Ticino, and the thoughts and ideas which they brought, assimilating with the natural instincts of the soil, and with the ancient traditions of the Latins, resulted in an artistic character which is quite Italian, though very different from the more southern populations. It lacks their spontaneity and

daring, their lofty imagination and idealism, has little of their sense of beauty, falls short in sheer ability. But it is distinguished by sincerity, a love of realism, a humble and zealous industry, and also by certain marked and inveterate mannerisms. And though the Milanese, or rather the Lombards who peopled the wide Duchy of the Visconti and Sforza, remained always very receptive, looking for a lead, and owing their strongest artistic impulses to some genius from abroad, their work keeps always its strong native character.

Milan's greatest moment was one in her art, and in her public life. The same spirit of freedom which stood up to Barbarossa and Frederick II., raised her incomparable brick buildings of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. In this development of architecture on the large and reasonable lines of the old Roman building, modified by the mystic ideas and melancholy sentiment of the North, and by the capabilities of the rich and plastic material yielded by the alluvial soil, Lombardy shows the highest result of the mingled elements of her artistic life. When no longer inspired by freedom, architecture was still fostered in Milan by ostentatious tyranny, and continued to be the most genial art of the people. In the fourteenth century, the Visconti raised beautiful churches and palaces, but the builders inclined more and more to abandon the national traditions for Gothic lightness and grace. In the crowning work of the Cathedral, the false Gothic ideal finally triumphed. The classical revival, which followed under the Sforza and filled the city anew with churches and palaces, was communicated to Milan by Tuscan architects. It was cherished by the eclectic spirit of princes and nobles, and owed nothing to popular impulse. But in adapting her

peculiar material, brick, to the new style, Lombardy gave it a local and special character, and only when the vulgar exaggeration of the classic fashion overwhelmed Italy in a general flood of baroque extravagance, did Lombardy lose architectural individuality.

Sculpture, as the handmaid of architecture, was also actively practised in Milan from the twelfth century onwards. The same masters from the shores of Como, from the valley of Antelamo, close to Maggiore, from Campione near Lugano, who carried the Lombard or Romanesque style all over North Italy and into Tuscany in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, built her churches and carved upon the façades mystical figures and devices. The Romanesque sculpture remaining in Milan is very rude, and the names of its authors are in few cases remembered. In the fourteenth century the family or guild of masters from Campione is prominent in the records of Milanese architecture and sculpture, and individuals are distinguished by name. Under the guidance of the Pisan sculptor Giovanni di Balduccio, one of the ablest of Nicola Pisano's followers, who worked long in Milan, these Campionese produced numberless sepulchral monuments, a few of which survive still in the churches and museums. The Pisan traditions appear in them, modified by the native character. The classic nobility and severity, the ideal grace of Nicola and Giovanni Pisano degrade into heaviness and coarseness in these ruder and more realistic hands, and the forms learnt from them are remoulded according to certain inveterate predilections which persist always in Lombard sculpture.

At the end of this century, artistic industry received

an extraordinary impulse throughout the Visconte States from the splendid patronage of Gian Galeazzo. His vast new foundations, the Duomo of Milan, the Certosa of Pavia, his mighty engineering enterprises, gave endless employment to workers in stone. In this fervour of activity Lombard sculpture began to evolve clearly its special character, and agreeably to the gorgeous tastes of the Prince, which became a tradition for his successors, a love of excessive and exaggerated ornamentation appears, and marks it henceforth.

After Gian Galeazzo a lull came in art with the civic confusion of Gian Maria's few years, and the continuous wars of Filippo Maria's thirty-five. This period represents the pause between the mediæval era and the Renaissance in Milan. The building and decoration of the Cathedral was continued slowly by men whom the old principles no longer inspired, and the new had not yet reached. No great names occur in the host of craftsmen engaged in the work. The Campione fraternity was still represented, and continued to exist for a long time, though its traditions were dying out, and Jacopino da Tradate, who worked in the earlier half of the century, was a sculptor of some power.

The triumph of Francesco Sforza in 1450 began a new era of prosperity for Milanese art. A long peace, a succession of sovereigns in whom a policy of splendour was assisted by stupendous wealth and a genuine love of beauty and culture, the concourse of strangers of genius to their Court, bringing the inspiration of the great classic revival from Tuscany and Central Italy, roused the Lombards to an enthusiasm and activity which carried them to their highest pitch of achievement at the end of the

fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Brunelleschi, employed by Filippo Maria to build a fortress, Antonio Averulino, known as Filarete, whom Francesco Sforza summoned to design the Ospedale Maggiore and to assist on the Castle, Michelozzo, builder of the beautiful Portinari Chapel, and finally the great Bramante, twelve years resident in the city in the Moro's days, and Leonardo da Vinci himself, master of all the arts and sciences, were their guides in the new or rediscovered mysteries of architecture. Giuniforte Solari, and Pietro his son, architects of the Duomo, Certosa, and many of the churches and convents raised everywhere by Francesco and Bianca Maria in the ardour of their piety and the joy of their newly-won glory, show the transition from Gothic to the Renaissance style, slowly accomplished however, for the Lombards were tenacious of their local traditions and not ready to accept new ideas. Even in the next generation of builders, Amadeo, Dolcebuono, Cristoforo Solari, Briosco, and the rest, all nursed in the precepts imparted by the Tuscans, and fully inspired by the Renaissance spirit, there was still a lingering adhesion to certain Gothic predilections. The Lombard character, especially noticeable in a love of ornamentation, still expressed itself in the forms learnt from foreign example. In all that peculiarly graceful building in Milan of the later fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, which is called indiscriminately Bramantesque, and attributed to the influence of the Urbino master—cloisters and cortiles with elegant pillared porticos and sculptured capitals of rich and fanciful design, and archivolts and cornices decorated with terra-cotta mouldings, grand arched portals often decorated with classic heads—a Lombard character may almost always be detected.

In sculpture the Mantegazza are the first of the Milanese artists to show signs of the Renaissance. These two brothers, Cristoforo and Antonio, natives of Milan, were working from about 1443 until late in the century. They represent the old Campionese traditions revivified by contact with the new ideas, as expressed by the Paduans and Florentines. Their work is marked by that excessive zeal in the search for realism common to North Italian art at this time, leading to the representation of exaggerated action and emotion. With the Mantegazza violence is not always accompanied by strength, and their conception is not lofty enough to save their naturalistic tendency from vulgarising the sacred subjects which they set forth. The Northern element in them, encouraged by the German and Flemish artists at the liberal Sforza Court, appears in their extreme sincerity and pains, their lack of grace and idealism, their attention to minutiæ rather than to broad effect. Their figures are usually long and ill-proportioned, with small heads, the contours angular and sharp, the faces rude, with projecting cheek-bones and cavernous eyes; and the Lombard peculiarity of numberless arbitrary folds, flattened to the form beneath as if the draperies had been wetted, gives to the whole compositions of these sculptors the appearance of crumpled paper. The Mantegazza are closely followed by an artist of much more sweetness and geniality, Giovanni Antonio Amadeo (1447-1522), the most productive and typical of the new generation of sculptors. The joyous vitality of the Renaissance overflows in Amadeo and carries all his native characteristics to unrestrained excess. The Lombard love of pomp and gorgeous decoration runs to a riot of ornamentation in his reliefs, which are crowded and overloaded with rich and fertile fancies.

Builder as well as sculptor, he sacrifices architectural effect without scruple for the sake of decorative detail, as the extraordinarily ornate façade of the Colleoni Chapel at Bergamo, one of his most famous works, testifies. This is a fault common to the Lombard architects. The façade of the Certosa, that museum of Renaissance art in Lombardy, the characteristic production of the busy school of the Mantegazza, Amadeo, Benedetto Briosco, and their assistants and followers, is an enduring monument of architects spoiled by being decorative sculptors, the building being treated chiefly as a space to load with decoration. The production of Amadeo's prolific talent, during a long and prosperous career, was very large, and continued till shortly before his death. Amadeo shares the naturalistic tendency of the Mantegazza and their native mannerisms, especially that of the crumpled paper folds. A love of story-telling, amounting to loquacity, appears in his subject reliefs, with their multitudinous figures and redundant action. The florid, extravagant fancy of his decorative work is not restrained by his sense of proportion, and in his indiscriminating use of classical motives borrowed from other schools—heads of emperors, allegorical conceits, etc.—a want of culture and scholarship is evident. The vulgarity of Lombard art in comparison with the Tuscan is exemplified in Amadeo, but is redeemed by the sympathetic qualities of gaiety, spontaneity and artlessness, which give his work often much charm and sweetness.

Amadeo's activity was at its height at the time when Leonardo was working in Milan upon the equestrian statue of Francesco Sforza. Duke Galeazzo Maria's failure to find a native to do the work shows the limitations of the Lombard sculptors. All shunned the

problem of casting a bronze figure on so large a scale. But Lodovico il Moro, taking up the interrupted project after his brother's death, found in the Tuscan Leonardo one who feared no difficulties. The completion of the model of the horse, after years of preliminary study, was the greatest sculptural event that ever happened in Milan. But it remains outside the story of the Lombard sculptors. Unlike the painters, they seemed to have been little disturbed in their course by the tremendous personality of the Florentine. If traces of his influence appear in their work, it is in types borrowed from his paintings.

A host of well-known sculptors accompany and follow Amadeo. Gio. Dolcebuono, Cristoforo Solari, known as il Gobbo (the Hunchback), Benedetto Briosco, the Cazzaniga brothers, Agostino Busti, called il Bambaia—all show the local characteristics. But an inclination to softness and sensuousness and a lack of the old virile energy begins to vitiate their work as time goes on, and signals the coming of the decadence, though the technical skill of the school increases. Il Gobbo, scion of the old artistic stock of the Solari, was one of the most highly-reputed of the sculptors, though he has left little of high worth behind him. He was much favoured by the Moro, who chose him to execute the monument for Beatrice's tomb. The interesting sepulchral figures of this ill-fated pair, completed many years later, and now in the Certosa, are his work. In Agostino Busti the school reaches its highest technical proficiency. But the old freshness and inspiration is gone. Il Bambaia, who is at times great—as in the beautiful recumbent figure of Gaston de Foix—degenerates often into coldness and conventionality, and his decorative taste was as ill-regulated as that of his less

accomplished predecessors and contemporaries. A number of other artists—Gian Giacomo della Porta, Andrea Fusina, Cristoforo de' Lombardi, Angelo Siciliano, and, later on, Gabrio Busca, Vincenzo Seregni, etc.—were engaged on architectural and decorative work in Milan in the sixteenth century, chiefly on the never-ending subject of the Duomo, the exterior of which is a vast object-lesson in the artistic decadence of the Milanese. The pious zeal of S. Carlo and the cultured tastes of his nephew and successor in the Archbishopric, Cardinal Federigo Borromeo, gave a new impetus to art; but it was ill-directed by the false taste of the age, and Lombard sculpture, like the architecture, ends in the empty pomposity and extravagance of the baroque style.

The other branches of mediæval and Renaissance art found a busy centre also in Milan. The decorative crafts of the goldsmith, wood-carver, of the intarsia worker and embroiderer, flourished here early. In the fourteenth century the fame of the Milanese armourers was shared by the hands which engraved the swords and shields and cuirasses forged in the clanging quarter of the Spadari. The unparalleled wealth and luxury of the Visconti and of their nobles called for the finest skill of the embroiderer and goldsmith to adorn their apparel and harness, and lavished ornamentation on their palaces, their pageants, their feasts, which shone with gold and glowed with costly and beautiful colour. In the following century all these crafts were still more encouraged by the Sforza. Matteo da Civate was a goldsmith of repute, and the Mantegazza and others of the sculptors pursued this delicate craft also with great success. The fame of the Milanese goldsmiths was finally crowned by Ambrogio Foppa, known as Caradosso, whose figures chiselled in gold were of

such admirable workmanship that Cellini himself praised and envied him as one of the greatest masters in this art that he had ever known. The native workers were, however, but a few of those employed at the Sforza Court, which in the days of Lodovico and Beatrice was a very museum of artistic work of every kind, contributed by the finest talent of Italy, Germany, Flanders and Spain.

Nor was the art of painting less cherished in Milan. The Visconti, for the adornment of their great palace at Pavia, the Sforza for the splendid halls of the Castle of Milan, and of their hundred villas and palaces of pleasure, engaged an army of painters. But until the later half of the fifteenth century not one name occurs there of any significance in the history of painting. Giovanni da Milano, mentioned by Vasari as a pupil of Taddeo Gaddi, and an excellent painter, shows in his surviving works the conventional style of the later Giottesque school, varied by something of that heaviness and darkness of colour which we see afterwards in the Milanese Quattrocentists. From Giovanni onwards the few artists that we hear of, and the many that certainly worked in Milan, have left little trace behind them, and that little does not differ from the rude and homely style common in North Italy before the development of the Paduan school. Early in the fifteenth century the influence of Pisanello, who worked in the Visconti Court, and of the artistic ideals which he represents, made itself felt in Milan, and painters like Michelino da Besozzo and the Zavatarii peopled the walls of the ducal and aristocratic palaces of the Milanese state with such decorative, but strangely proportioned figures as are still to be seen in a chamber of the Palazzo Borromeo. Other and stronger influences, however,

must have been working in the Milanese at this time, and under the spur of Florentine and Paduan example, and that of the German artists who thronged the court of Filippo Maria and Francesco Sforza, they were doubtless evolving obscurely the more or less distinctive character which emerges first into notice with Vincenzo Foppa. Were the works of the earlier contemporaries of Foppa, Bonifacio Bembo, Pietro dei Marchesi, Stefano de' Fedeli, Constantino da Vaprio, Bernardino de' Rossi, etc., still existing, we should probably find that they were already moving in the direction which his greater talent was able to pursue definitely and to point out to his successors.

Foppa's is the first figure that stands out for real artistic excellence in the history of Milanese painting, and he is always called the founder of the school. Born at Brescia sometime in the first half of the fifteenth century, Foppa is generally supposed to have studied in the school of Squarcione. His earliest known work is the Crucifixion, at Bergamo, dated 1456. He worked chiefly in Milan and the neighbourhood, and died in 1492. He was a very serious painter, and though he had not the inspiration of genius, with sound artistic sense he grasped the material facts of nature and gave force and reality to his creations. His treatment of forms is simple and direct, and his sincerity and singleness of purpose redeem the homeliness of his types, and render his figures noble and impressive. The Squarcionesque tradition is to be seen in the classical backgrounds and inlaid marble thrones, etc., of his pictures, but the general character of his work shows a distinct departure from the Paduan style. The heavy forms and dark grey flesh tones are native qualities, and are very persistent throughout the

Milanese school of painting.

Zenale, born at Treviglio in 1436, died in 1526, is little more than a name to us, for in spite of his long life scarcely any of his work has survived. The altarpiece at Treviglio, in which Buttinone was associated with him, is the only work extant that can with certainty be called his. Buttinone was his contemporary and co-worker in the frescoes in S. Pietro Gessate in Milan, as well as in the Treviglio altarpiece. Zenale's share in these frescoes is quite unrecognisable, and there is nothing else in Milan that can be identified as his work.

Buttinone's paintings are rare, but some survive in Milan and the neighbourhood. He has a good deal in common with Foppa, and probably derived his training from the same source; but there is a decided individuality in his work, an almost painful struggle after realism which results in a strange ugliness. His faces have great protruding foreheads and enormous ears, the flesh tones are dark and grey with streaks of high light, the children have large heads and disproportionately small limbs. There is something pathetic in his painstaking efforts and their poor results.

Ambrogio da Fossano, called Borgognone, is a much better artist. His name first appears in 1481 as a painter of the University of Milan. His early work is characterised by a simplicity and refinement and a sense of beauty which is much developed later on. He has at first the same tendency to grey flesh tones as Foppa and Buttinone, only with him they are modified to pleasant cool colour harmonizing with the silvery hues of background and draperies. Later he develops a freer expression, which we see at its best in the beautiful frescoes of S. Satiro (now in the

Brera) and the Certosa. He may have felt the influence of Leonardo, but he never lost his individuality. All through his life he kept the religious feeling which is his marked characteristic, and which makes the deepest appeal of his work. His drawing, however, is often bad; his flying angels are wrongly foreshortened, and there is no movement in his figures. He did an immense amount of painting and there is a sameness in his pictures, graceful though they are.

About 1483 Leonardo da Vinci came from Florence and settled in Milan. His art must have been a revelation to the Lombard painters. Not only was his technique infinitely superior to theirs, but his scope was so great, his imagination so profound, he created new forms, new types, a new world of light and shadow and perspective. His enterprises were gigantic, not in painting only, but in sculpture, architecture and engineering. The Milanese, who had little originality of their own and were always susceptible to outside influence, gathered round him, and a school of painting was formed in which we see his types imitated to such a degree that much of his pupils' work has been attributed to the master himself, until modern criticism, headed by Morelli, has given it back to the true authors. The painters we shall now mention must all have felt more or less Leonardo's influence.

Ambrogio de Predis was Court painter to Lodovico il Moro in 1482, and therefore was a painter of repute when Leonardo arrived in Milan; but that he became a close follower of the master is shown by the fact of his being associated with him in the altarpiece of the Virgin of the Rocks, of which de Predis painted the two side panels, the angels in the National Gallery,

and many critics think he also executed the London version of the central part under the direction of Leonardo. Of the portraits attributed to him, some are very good, a profile of a girl in the Ambrosiana being the best. So much better is it than the coarsely-painted clumsy angels of the National Gallery, that it is difficult to recognise the connection between them; we can only suppose, however, that portrait painting was more congenial to him.

Bartolomeo Suardi, called Bramantino, painted at the end of the fifteenth and beginning of the sixteenth centuries. He is said to have been a pupil of Foppa and of Bramante, working architecturally with the latter. His work is free and broad in manner, though often empty and wanting in drawing; the forms are full and the faces wide, with very regular features, particularly noticeable in the profiles. The blonde colouring of his flesh tones is unlike the usual low tones of the Milanese. There is little evidence in his work of Leonardo's influence.

Andrea Solario, born about 1460, was an accomplished painter. Of his early training we know nothing; but his elder brother Cristoforo was a sculptor, and may have helped Andrea to arrive at the excellence of drawing which we see in his portraits. Some of his work shows the influence of Leonardo, but he was also affected by the Venetians, and especially by Antonello da Messina; his portraits also show affinity with the Flemish school, in their clear outlines and high finish. The landscape backgrounds to his subjects are fine in colour and effect. He was fond of painting half-length pictures of the Madonna and Child, and treated the subject with a tender realism that is very charming. Technically he reached a higher excellence than any of his

fellow-Milanese painters. With the exception of the large altarpiece at the Certosa, his pictures are mostly small and unambitious in subject. He was, however, employed by Charles d'Amboise, in 1507, to decorate with frescoes the chapel in his Castle of Gaillon in Normandy. These have perished.

Boltraffio, Cesare da Sesto, Gianpietrino, Bernardino dei Conti, Marco d'Oggionno, Melzi and Salai were all close followers of Leonardo. Their work is not strong or original, nor is the drawing very good, but it has a charm nevertheless, that of earnest and conscientious effort, striving after the ideal of beauty their great master set before them, which degenerates in their hands, however, into a fatal prettiness. Their fault was an almost morbid exaggeration of the gradation of tones in the modelling of contours, by which they lost all freshness and vigour. Boltraffio, born 1467, was of noble family, and was a favourite pupil of Leonardo's. His painting is highly finished and has distinction; his Madonnas, clad always in rich garments, are stately and beautiful, with oval faces and regular features. The painting is very smooth, which gives a cold and unnatural effect to the flesh. The fresco in St. Onofrio in Rome, formerly ascribed to Leonardo, is now given to him, and some critics consider him the author of the much-disputed Belle Ferronière of the Louvre.

Cesare da Sesto's work was very Leonardesque to begin with; later on he was influenced by Raphael. His manner is lighter and more graceful than most of the Lombards. In Gianpietrino's painting the Lombard greyness of flesh tones is carried to an almost gloomy extreme. His Madonnas and Magdalens often have charm, but in the former he

imitated Leonardo too closely, and the execution is timid.

Bernardino dei Conti painted Madonnas in the Leonardesque manner, but the colour is peculiarly hot and the contours lumpy. His drawings, which are better than his paintings, have a great resemblance to those of Ambrogio de Predis, by whom, Morelli says, he was much influenced. Marco d'Oggionno's pictures are lifeless imitations of the master, in which all the subtlety is lost, the chiaroscuro is too strong and the colours too intense. In his large canvases, such as the Archangels of the Brera, he fails signally. Of the work of Melzi and Salai we know little. Salai is mentioned by Vasari as a youth of singular grace and beauty with waving curly hair. He may have served as model for some of those Leonardesque drawings of youths with curling hair with which we are familiar.

Painters deriving still from Leonardo but who have achieved a great celebrity of their own are Bernardino Luini and Gaudenzio Ferrari. Luini is the most popular painter of the Lombard school, probably because his paintings are so numerous and therefore widely known. There is always a sweetness and charm in his work, though rather superficial and sentimental, and in the best examples he attains beauty and dignity; but his forms have the Lombard heaviness and his drawing is not good. There is want of imagination and a tameness in his pictures that make them very monotonous. The dates of his birth and death are unknown, nor is anything known of his early training. He certainly imitated Leonardo, but his best work has a character and individuality of its own. The frescoes of the Monastero Maggiore in Milan, of Saronno and Lugano are considered very

fine.

Gaudenzio Ferrari was born about 1481 at Valduggia. Little is known of his early life; he must have felt the influence of Bramantino and Luini; his work is sometimes confused with that of the latter painter. He had much more inventive and dramatic power than Luini, as his frescoes show. He was a most prolific painter, and had too much energy and too little self-restraint. His colour is fiery and his compositions overcrowded. In spite of his ability he fell into bad taste and careless workmanship, showing unmistakable signs of that decadence which gradually overtook Italian art.

The most talented of all the Lombard painters was Giovanni Antonio Bazzi, called il Sodoma, for though Tuscany and Rome were the scenes of his activity and possess his greatest works, yet he derives his artistic descent from Lombardy. He was born at Vercelli in Piedmont in 1477, and studied painting for two or three years at Milan before going to Siena, where we hear of him in 1501. His painting shows plainly his origin, and some of his works have great affinity to Leonardo, though he is not known to have been actually his pupil.

The Leonardesque tradition was carried on by the brothers Martino and Albertino Piazza of Lodi, whose work is suave and pleasing, but weak. The family of Campi, two generations, worked through three-quarters of the sixteenth century. Their work is able, but without distinction; they show a Venetian influence.

Bernardino Lanino was a pupil and imitator of Gaudenzio Ferrari; he was active through the middle of the sixteenth century. The school dies away with Lomazzo, more famous for his writings on Art than

for his paintings, and with Daniele Crespi, in whom we see all the exaggerated realism of the decadence of Art.

CHAPTER X
The Duomo

"The far-famed Cathedral of Milan, which men call the eighth wonder of the world."

In Milan, as we see the city to-day, modernised, commonplace, characterlessly handsome, there is one great redeeming thing—the Cathedral. Other churches there are, greater and more beautiful in every sense except size, but they are smothered in the dull drift of everyday buildings. The Duomo, as is befitting, has a supreme position. It is the heart of the city, the converging point of all the far-coming ways, the irresistible magnet for the eyes of the myriads thronging those ways. It rises up in its immense stature above the petty interests and activities of the crowds at its base, an embodied exhalation of the holy spirit of man, a witness to the irrepressible upward flight of his thoughts and to his eternal need of beauty and light.

The impression which a traveller coming from the station first receives of the Duomo is of a vast ethereal presence at the end of the long street, so light, so cloud-like, so delicate that it seems to be no temple piled up slowly by men's hands to the measure of their prayers, but a fabric of some upper

sphere, built of air and dreams. Broad set in its main proportions, it gives high and ample seat to the swelling contour of the cupola, which a hundred pinnacles guard like serried spears, pointing into the upper blue around the spring of the midmost spire. In the silvery light of afternoon it appears a shadowy forest of upward-springing shafts, with sharp gleams along edges and salient lines. The details are lost in a soft mass, and the atmosphere casts over all a veil of illusion. Through such a veil this famous Cathedral of Milan is best seen and best understood.

In the view of the whole building from the great Piazza on the west side, its faults are more apparent —the inadequacy and insignificance of the cupola, or central tower, the incongruity of the façade, the extravagance of the ornamentation. Nevertheless, the huge white marble pile has always majesty and splendour, if only from its size and material and the amazing number of its airy embroideries and fripperies of stone. It has a magic, unearthly beauty of colour, silver, dove-like, rosy against the blue, according to the changing light of the day—most wonderful in the strange, pale, clear moment when the sun has just set. An exotic in this flat country of the alluvial soil, where brick is the natural medium for the builder, it seems to bring into the hot and stifling city at midsummer a cooling breath from that marble cave close to Lago Maggiore whence its material was drawn. One could almost believe that it was the dripping of water through countless ages which had built up its clear substance into those strange fantastic shapes, those spires and fretted edges and fairy shafts.

Their Cathedral is the pride and joy of the Milanese. Yet not so much this billowy heap of stone, but the

spot upon which it stands should be consecrate to their hearts. None of the noblest memories of their past sanctify the church which Gian Galeazzo Visconte founded, which opened its doors with equal welcome to Francesco Sforza, the usurper, and to French and Spanish and Austrian conquerors by turn, and which was finished by Napoleon Buonaparte. But the ancient, half-ruined church, which Gian Galeazzo pulled down to make room for his new temple, enshrined the dearer history of Milan's liberty. Sta. Maria Maggiore, as it was then called, was the representative through many transformations of that *basilica nuova intramuros* in which Ambrose entrenched himself in his great struggle with the Empress Justina and achieved his victory for the new organisation of the Church, protector of the people, over the corrupt despotism of the Empire. And if what is one of the spiritual events of the world's history must be fixed in time and place, it was no doubt at the gates of this, the chief church, that Ambrose interposed his hand between the blood-stained Emperor and the altar of Christ. In later centuries, in the figures of the enthusiasts Arialdo and Erlembaldo, of the courageous Peter Damian, fronting the excited and hostile multitudes, the memories of the old Cathedral church were still of the victory of the spirit over the forces of the world, of liberty over oppression, of a new order of things over the corrupt system of the past. And in the early days of the Milanese Republic the church was closely associated with the life and struggles of the people. All business, public and private, was transacted in the piazza outside. The portico of the church was the house of parliament, and the politics of the city were sanctified by the benediction of religion. The chief priest was likewise

the head of the people, and the pastoral staff which topped the lofty Campanile stood for temporal as well as spiritual dominion. In times of peace the Sacred Car was housed within the church, and in the church those warlike decisions were taken which occasioned it to be drawn forth that it might go in the midst of the host against the enemy.

But the noblest moment in the story of the old Cathedral was its restoration after the ruin of the city by Barbarossa in 1166. The ruthless destruction of the Campanile, a tower *of such marvellous beauty, such great breadth and admirable altitude that there was said to be none other like it in Italy*, had wrecked it in great part. The labour of the men, the jewels of the women, went to the rebuilding, till the church stood up once more in the midst of the re-risen city, defying the destroyer.

With the building of the present Duomo all the vestiges of those ancient and good days were swept away. Milan's liberty was gone, and the church which symbolised it, both in association and in its Lombard style of architecture, had been allowed to become half-ruinous. The population had outgrown the capacity of the church, and in their rapidly growing wealth and importance it was natural that prince and people should desire a cathedral more suited to their condition. So the old building fell for ever.

The citizens acquiesced in the scheme for a new Cathedral, but the enormous temple which rose on the site of the old one, the Duomo of to-day, was the conception of Gian Galeazzo Visconte, and of him alone. It was the measure of his vast ambition and audacious will. He planned it great enough for the capital of a Kingdom of Italy. The citizens seconded

him with generous offerings, but whether their enthusiasm was genuine or merely flattery of the tyrant's wishes mattered nothing. Gian Galeazzo was doubtless moved to this work by a desire to expiate the crime by which he had acquired sole sovereignty, and to entomb it in the memories of his subjects beneath this proud ornament to the city. He is said to have had another motive, shared by the people. A strange evil, we are told, afflicted Milan at this time. Some say that the women were unable to bring their male children safely to the birth; others, that a mysterious malady prevailed among the boy babies, withering them within a few years. The citizens were filled with terror at the doom of extinction which seemed to impend over them. Gian Galeazzo's three sons by Isabella of France had all died in infancy, leaving him only the girl Valentina, and at this time his second wife, Caterina Visconte, was still childless.

The Duomo was then a votive offering from Gian Galeazzo Visconte to Heaven for a son to inherit the great destinies which he intended to conquer, and from the Milanese people for children to continue their race. It was dedicated, not to the Birth of the Son of God, but to hers who brought Him into the world—*Mariæ Nascenti*, as the inscription on the façade proclaims—to the Birth of Motherhood.

Thus the great church rises in worship of the mystery of Life. When one thinks of its origin, the wonderful ribbed and perforated and pinnacled building appears in a new light, rising as it were out of the still hovering darkness of the Middle Ages, the embodiment of a people's aspiration towards renewed life. The moment of its inception was that pregnant one for Italy when the mediæval pessimism was yielding to hope and joy in life, and when to the

worship of the Nascent Mary was to be joined the worship of that twin mystery, the Venus Reborn.

The building was begun in 1386. The story of its actual rise is extremely lengthy and tedious. The multitude of conflicting counsels, the number of architects concerned with it, make its very existence seem a miracle. It is not known who first designed it, or whether he was a native or foreigner. Milan's close relations with the countries beyond the Alps, and the alliances and constant intercourse of the Visconti with the Courts of France and Germany, naturally induced Gian Galeazzo to call Northern architects to his aid and to choose the Gothic style of the North. There is little doubt that the original plan proceeded from a Northern mind. The work of carrying it out, however, passed very soon into the hands of native builders, most of whom belonged to the celebrated guild of stoneworkers from Campione. Marco da Campione was chief architect—ingegnere—in 1386. Others of the company, Zeno, Bonino, Jacopo, and Maffiolo, appear in the records of the first years, with Simone Orsenigo, the dei Grassi and a host of other noted craftsmen of the day. Among the crowd there was evidently no conspicuous master spirit, and the post of chief was obtained, especially later on, as much by interest and intrigue as by merit. Many foreign artists were called from time to time by Gian Galeazzo to give help and advice. Their intervention always led to heated argument and loud contention in the Council of the Fabric, the foreigners criticising and condemning the work of the Lombard builders, and these defending it with jealous zeal, and invariably defeating and driving out the intruders. Johann von Fernach and Heinrich von Gmünd were employed for a short time in the latter part of the century. Their strenuous objections to

important points in the structure were overruled by the Italians. In 1400 the Frenchman, Jean Mignot, having been engaged to take a prominent part in the work, pronounced the building unsafe, and proposed radical alterations. The indignant Lombards, headed by the celebrated military architect, Bertolino da Novara, disputed his opinion and persuaded the Duke that all was well. Mignot was dismissed and condemned to replace what he had already pulled down in conformity with his own ideas.

So the battle raged for years. It had a negative rather than positive result on the building, which progressed on the lines already laid down, but without receiving any impress of individual thought or genius. In its complete state to-day it shows, with all its immensity, a poverty of ideas, both within and without, which no wealth of ornamentation can hide. It rose with great rapidity at first, in response to the energy and will of the prince. In 1392 the walls had reached the full height of the side aisles, and all the pillars of the interior were already standing. That forest of lofty shafts soaring to dim heights, in which we wander to-day, astonished and awed, must once have enclosed the puny mortal form and the immeasurable spirit of the first and greatest Duke of Milan. His death in 1402 robbed the great enterprise of vitality and inspiration. In the misfortunes of Giovanmaria's reign, both funds and encouragement lacked, and the general mediocrity of the builders was equally blighting to the progress of the work. The local architects had by this time obtained undisputed charge of it, and the clamour of controversy had died down. Sons had succeeded to their fathers' posts, and continued slowly in the old track. By the time Francesco Sforza attained the Dukedom, in 1450, general interest in the Cathedral

was much diminished. Architectural ideas were changing. The Renaissance was begun. The great Tuscan masters, summoned to Milan by this Duke and his predecessor, had recalled to the Lombard builders those classic principles native to Italy and long forgotten under the Gothic influences of the Middle Ages. The earlier Sforza sovereigns used their patronage to raise new churches, and it was not till the fervent artistic atmosphere of the end of the century had developed a certain eclecticism in cultured minds that the Duomo received a new impetus from Lodovico il Moro.

The main body of the church was already finished, but the façade, the cupola, and other details were still to do. A German master, Johann Nexempilger von Gratz, was first invited by the Moro to continue the work, but was quickly dismissed, the severity of his ideas being unacceptable to the Italians. A number of native artists were then set to work to design a cupola which should reconcile the curves and rectangles dear to the Renaissance with the acutely-pointed style of the rest of the Cathedral. Over this problem great minds pored. Leonardo da Vinci made several designs and models of a cupola, but they were not accepted. Bramante also made models for it. The assistance of the Tuscan Luca Fancelli, and the Sienese Francesco di Giorgio was also called upon. But the work remained finally to the local artists, men of industry and ingenuity, but of no great genius. Chief among them were Cristoforo Solari, Giovanni Antonio Amadeo, and Gian Giacomo Dolcebuono. To Amadeo was finally entrusted the building of the cupola, which he carried out and completed, with the exception of the crowning pinnacle. This artist held the post of chief architect from 1490 till his death in 1522, becoming

the repository of all the traditions and secrets of the long-continued work.

Though the great fabric was apparently carried on in the old style, it reveals a new spirit from this time. The true feeling for Gothic was dead, and the architects of the late Quattrocento could only reconcile it with their artistic conscience by flamboyant excesses. Moreover, Amadeo and his companions were sculptors first and architects second. The opportunities of Gothic were fatal in their hands. It was they who first started the building on that evil course of elaborate and excessive ornamentation which has made it what it is to-day—a building generally admired for its resemblance to a monstrous sugar-cake. Their lead was followed with an ever-diminishing sense of artistic propriety and an increasing love for florid effect by their successors in the middle and latter part of the sixteenth century. The impulse imparted to the work by the zeal of Carlo Borromeo and the great religious revival, expressed itself only in cold and uninspired artistic platitudes, the emptiness of which is ill concealed by superficial exaggerations. The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are represented by an increase of bad taste and meretricious effect, and the story of the long evolution of the temple ends in a climax of bombast in the Napoleonic era, to which is owed the present grandiose façade and the battalions of pinnacles which crown the whole edifice.



CUPOLA OF THE DUOMO,
FROM THE ROOF.

A building conceived in a spirit foreign to the place where it was to rise, and carried out by men to whom its design and idea was naturally unsympathetic and incomprehensible, through ages in which all the original inspiration was lost, could not well be a wholly satisfactory achievement. Milan Cathedral sins grievously against the principles of pure Gothic. The pointed style is carried in it to an acuteness in which all grace and flexibility of line is lost. In fretful moments one feels that these endless sharp angles scrape one's nerves. The effect of solidity and strength has been completely sacrificed for the sake of ornamentation, and dignity and repose lost in a restless reiteration of trivial details. The huge-ribbed flanks gape with enormous windows. Every nook and cranny, every jag and angle is crowded with statues. The outlines of the roof are frilled by an elaborately-pierced balustrade with crocketed pinnacles. From the central roof to the lower level of the side aisles spring a host of

flying buttresses, so perforated that they look like wisps of foam rather than solid props intended to support the fabric. A myriad spears quiver upwards from the roof far into the sky, and upon each dances a statue. No wonder that the guides call upon you to admire its likeness to lacework or confectionery, and that people compare it to a drift of snow, a billow dashing into spray, a white mountain bird alighted in the midst of the city—anything except a building of solid bones and substance.

Restorations and continual repairs have almost effaced the handiwork of the original builders. The north-east part of the exterior is the most ancient. The three magnificent windows of the apse, with their rich tracery, are one of the most beautiful features of the original design. And amid the swarms of baroque saints, in every contorted attitude of theatric sentiment, which have settled on this part, as everywhere over the building—four thousand four hundred and forty, outside and in, they say—a patient observer may pick out some which, by their dignified simplicity, refinement and repose, show the purer taste of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. The lowest figures on the northernmost window of the apse are an Adam and Eve, and have been attributed to Antonio Rizzo, a fifteenth century Venetian sculptor, known by his work in the cortile of the Doge's Palace. Cristoforo Solari, Andrea Fusina, Tomaso da Cazzaniga, il Bambaia, are all represented by sculptures on the apse. Higher up are works by earlier and less accomplished hands, huge gargoyles of fantastic form—dragons, a serpent coiled round the nude body of a woman, a child entwining itself with a bough, a female figure with great curling hair, a siren with bat's wings—monstrous creations of the Northern fancy, which

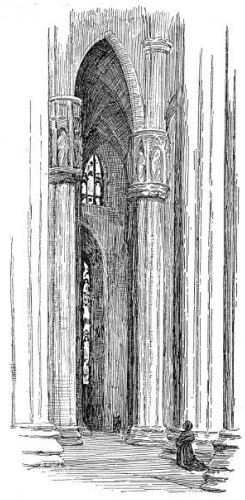
dominated in the first years of the Cathedral. Beneath these gargoyles are ranged the so-called Giganti, colossal statues of warriors, heralds, huntsmen, foresters, slaves—figures of romance and of the rude fields too. Some are by German sculptors, and by Lombards under their influence; others of rather later date show new and realistic tendencies.

There is little of interest on the south side and in the lower end of the exterior. The monotonous length of the vast flanks is unbroken by the rich interest of doorways, such as were originally projected. The classic façade is frankly discordant, though it is no less thickly littered with bad sculptures. The bronze doors of the middle entrance are a very recent work, showing the hark back of the modern sculptor to Quattrocento models. But if the exterior of the Duomo lacks in impressiveness, the interior makes amends. Wonder and awe overwhelm one on entering. In the dim religious light from the great stained windows, one is aware of vast echoing aisles, of mighty columns passing away, one behind the other, into depths and distances of rich gloom, where the pointed lines of arch behind arch become visible, broken by long slits of glowing glass. A quiet reigns as of places untrodden by earthly things. Pigmy human forms creep here and there over the immense expanses of the pavement, or kneel at the foot of a column, bowed in devotion.

In this solemn interior it seems as if the native and foreign ideals had united for once, with harmonious result. Here is the breadth and spaciousness of Latin thought—the loftiness of Gothic. With its five aisles, transepts and apsidal east end, the church is of striking simplicity. There are no chapels built out, few side altars, and few monuments. The High Altar,

with its canopy, and the florid pulpits and marble screen round the sanctuary, are the only conspicuous objects. There is little incident in the building itself. A feeling gains upon one, after a time, of a certain emptiness, monotony, even poverty, in all this grandeur of height and space. The inadequacy of the short light arches of the nave, in comparison with the colossal shafts supporting them becomes visible, and the eye is offended by the shameless deception of the roof, which is painted to simulate open tracery, and give a false effect of added height. The endless repetition of line and arch ends by being wearisome, and one longs for the rich symmetric light and shade of triforium and clerestory, for the beautiful mouldings, the star blackness of trefoil and quatrefoil piercings, and for all that deep and varied interest which grows upon the eye slowly, and in just relation to general effect, in the best Gothic architecture. The curious and elaborate capitals, like huge rings, are the most conspicuous details here. Each in itself is a wonderful piece of Gothic ornament, with arcades and crocketed pinnacles and niches filled with statues, but they are so high up that one can hardly appreciate them in detail. As capitals, one must quarrel with them. They do not seem natural members of the columns, but things put on merely for effect, and look as if they were meant to slip up and down, and might be at the bottom as well as at the top. That on the great pier to the left of the High Altar is said to be the handiwork of Heinrich von Gmünd, and to have been the model of the rest. The statues which decorate the lofty interior of the cupola, high up, are in the characteristic manner of the late fifteenth century Lombard sculptors, and the busts of the Fathers of the Church in the spandrils are by Cristoforo Solari. The rest of

the ornamentation in the church is mostly of the Borromean and later periods. It is the ascetic cardinal's fault that all the picturesque incrustations which had gathered upon the old building, with priceless historic associations, are missing. He ruthlessly swept away the shades of the rich and lively past, its profanities and sincerities together. The tombs of the old Lords of Milan, Visconti and Sforza, in the ambulatory, were cleared away, and other monuments were destroyed or displaced in too zealous obedience to the decree of the Council of Trent, forbidding the burial of bodies in monuments in churches. The doors in the transepts were walled up, and his favourite sculptor, Pellegrino Tebaldi, a belated follower of Michaelangelo, whose neo-classic predilections were in utter disaccord with the spirit of the building, was set to work to re-garnish its devastated spaces.



WITHIN THE DUOMO.

There are no paintings of account in the church. The few pictures belong to the same period as the altars, designed by il Pellegrini, over which they hang. The original Gothic design did not admit of frescoes on the walls. The necessary colour is given by the windows. In many of these the glass is modern, but some very fine fifteenth and sixteenth century glass still survives. It has not the supreme beauty of very early glass; the designs are pictorial, but the colour is gorgeously rich and deep, and in the earlier ones the subjects are treated with due regard for decorative effect.

A few things of interest may indeed be found in the vast spaces of the nave and ambulatory. Low down against the north wall is the rude granite tomb of Archbishop Ariberto, eleventh century, brought hither in 1783 from the suppressed Church of St. Dionysius. The ancient crucifix of Byzantine style above it, upon the foot of which is a relief of Ariberto holding a model of St. Calimero, a church restored by him, is said, but without foundation, to be the crucifix which used to be carried into battle on the Caroccio. Beneath a window further up stands a sarcophagus, raised upon columns of Verona marble; in it are the bones of the two Visconte Archbishops, Otto, Lord of Milan in the thirteenth century, and his great grand-nephew Giovanni, who ruled See and city in the first half of the fourteenth, and who elected to be laid with his great predecessor when he died. The recumbent statue of Giovanni on the top is probably by a Campionese master. This monument, which had once an honourable place in the apse, is the only memorial in the church of the great family which founded it. Higher up is the Gothic tomb of Marco Caselli, a merchant who died in 1394, and gave his large fortune to the building of

the Cathedral. The tomb was designed by Filippino da Modena, but the recumbent statue and the figures of Evangelists and Fathers on the front and sides are by another hand, a Venetian or a Lombard influenced by the Venetian school.[4] We come next to a refined little sixteenth century monument to Giovanni Antonio Vimercati, by Agostino Busti, il Bambaia. Three altars designed by il Pellegrini follow. Over the last there is a bas-relief of Madonna with SS. Catherine and Paul, a poor and primitive work by one Jacomolo di Antonio (1495), recently placed here.

4. Malaguzzi Valeri, *Milano*, vol. i. p. 73.

In the south transept the beautiful window over the door into the street is mainly the work, much mutilated and added to, of Michelino da Besozzo in 1438. Here on the west side is a great monument by Leone Leoni of Arezzo, a disciple of Michaelangelo, to Gian Giacomo de' Medici, brother of Pius IV., a princely pirate who terrorised Lake Como and led his undisciplined troops in the service now of one, now of the other of the combatants struggling for North Italy in the sixteenth century, till Charles V. compounded with him by creating him Marquis of Melegnano. On the east side is an altar with a relief of the Presentation of the Virgin, and statues by the school of il Bambaia. A statue close by representing St. Bartholomew flayed is admirable only for the impudence of the inscription on it—'*Non me Praxitiles, sed Marcus finxit Agrates.*' Marco Agrate was one of the crowd of early sixteenth century Lombard sculptors who helped to people the Duomo with statues. This one was originally on the exterior of the church.

The choir in its present form is due to Pellegrini, whose assistants executed the grandiose work after his designs. It is enclosed by a high marble screen, which is sculptured on the side towards the ambulatory with reliefs of the life of the Virgin and decorative figures of late Renaissance style. Two extremely ornate gilded pulpits stand in front of the choir, one on each side. The organs are embellished with heavy gilded decoration and paintings by Proccacini and the late Lombard school. The choir has very fine decorative panelling, and the triple row of stalls are of walnut wood very richly carved, those behind showing scenes from the story of St. Ambrose and effigies of the martyrs and saints and prelates of Milan. The bronze ciborium over the altar is a good work of its period; it is in the form of a round temple, and beneath is the richly-ornamented tabernacle given by the Milanese Pope, Pius IV. (1559-65), to the Cathedral.

Beneath the choir is the crypt, also built in classic style by il Pellegrini. The outer chamber was restored in 1817. In the inner sanctuary lies the body of San Carlo in a silver coffin given by Filippo IV. of Spain. Vault and coffin are remarkable only for gorgeousness. Pomp and magnificence outside, an emaciated ascetic within, contrast significant of the Church of the Catholic Revival. An aperture in front of the choir above allows a view of the saintly resting-place.

The door into the sacristy on the south side of the ambulatory is decorated with a rich and interesting Gothic canopy of the earliest period of the Cathedral. This sculpture was designed and partly executed by Hans von Fernach in 1393 and finished soon after by an Italian, Porrino de' Grassi, who doubtless did the

graceful subject reliefs, while the rude, vivacious little figures, from the Gospel story, in the decorative border round, are evidently by a hand of different nationality, that of the German Hans. Within the sacristy there is a richly-sculptured Gothic arch over the lavabo, enshrining a relief of Christ and the Samaritan Woman, signed by the sculptor, Giacomo da Campione.[5] Also a statue of Christ at the Column, by Cristoforo Solari, a heavy and flaccid work.

5. See Malaguzzi Valeri, op. cit. vol. i. p. 56.

The famous treasure of the Cathedral is kept in this sacristy. Here are great seicento figures of St. Ambrogio and S. Carlo in solid silver, and other silver objects of the same period, precious in material but artistically of little account. In a small case there are, however, some veritable treasures. The covers of a Book of the Gospels, presented to the Cathedral by Ariberto, beautiful examples of the goldsmith's art in the Romanesque period, adorned with chiselled reliefs, with enamel, gold filigree work and precious stones. On one is represented Christ between the Virgin and St. John, with Ariberto presenting the book to her, and below, St. Ambrogio between SS. Protasio and Gervasio. The work shows the Byzantine influence, which was still supreme in this branch of art in the eleventh century. A pastoral staff of silver gilt, ornamented with enamel, is of the same period. Two ivory diptychs, one of very early date, carved with the freedom and grace still surviving in Greek artists in the fourth and fifth centuries; the other of heavy and debased Lombard workmanship of the ninth century must be noticed, and also a little ivory vessel carved with figures of the Virgin and

Evangelists, tenth century Lombard work. Among many precious mediæval and Renaissance objects there is a golden pax, with a finely carved Deposition between columns of lapis-lazuli, and a group of angels above, with the arms of the donor, Pius IV. This is attributed, but erroneously, to Caradosso.

The magnificent tapestries in the possession of the Cathedral were shown at the Great Exhibition of 1906, and several of them perished in the fire which occurred on that occasion.

Beyond the sacristy, in the ambulatory, is a copy of the sacred painting of the Annunciation, in the SS. Annunziata in Florence. It is said to have been painted by Bronzino, and given by Francesco I. de' Medici to Cardinal Borromeo. The Madonna del Parto further on is apparently a restoration of an ancient painting, and the object of a very special devotion. A bare inscription beneath it records that Niccolò Piccinino is buried with his son Francesco in this spot. The great Condottiere had prepared a splendid tomb for himself, but the marble was seized at his death for other purposes, and when Francesco Sforza became Duke, he preferred that the memory of his rival should go uncelebrated. The statue of Martin V. close by, a colossal seated figure, was sculptured by Jacopino da Tradate in 1421. In the long inscription in verse, by a Milanese gentleman of humanistic tastes, the sculptor is likened to Praxiteles. Beyond we come to the monument of Cardinal Marino Caraccioli, Governor of Milan from 1536 to 1538—a late and very uninspired work by il Bambaia. Close to it is a little Pietà, by one of the early Cathedral sculptors. The three great windows of the apse were originally filled with stained glass, by Stefano da Pandino and Franceschino de'

Zavatarii, early in the fifteenth century, but only in the upper part of the middle window does any of it survive; the rest is modern. In the sculptured tracery of the middle window appear the favourite emblem of Gian Galeazzo Visconte, the Dove in the midst of rays, and figures, sculptured after the design of Isacco da Imbonate, of the Virgin and the Angel of the Annunciation, and of the two bishop saints, Ambrogio and Galdino. The latter was Archbishop of Milan from 1166 to 1176, and a notable foe of heretics and Ghibellines.

Under the window further on is an ancient Crucifix, with head restored, brought here from the chapel of Filippo Maria's castle when it was demolished by the Ambrosian Republic. Tablets under the great windows record members of the Sforza family buried here. It was in the apse that the biers of the Dukes of Milan used to be suspended, between the columns, till San Carlo reformed them away. The body of Gaston de Foix was given royal place among them, being hung between the two great pillars on the left hand of the altar. Cardinal Borromeo did not have the displacing of that, however. He was anticipated by the Swiss mercenaries under the brutal Cardinal de Sion, who, only a few years after the hero was buried, tore down the bier and scattered the remains, to the scandal of all Christendom. A fresco further on in the ambulatory, of the Crucified, with Saints, a poor work with a certain charm of simplicity and prettiness, by Isacco da Imbonate, in 1423, seems to show an intention, quickly abandoned, of clothing the walls with paintings. Beyond we come to a fifteenth century painting of Madonna, and St. John the Baptist, standing in a flowery landscape, showing little merit except decorative charm. High up against the wall is a statue of Pius IV., by the sixteenth

century sculptor, Angelo Siciliano.

The Gothic ornamentation over the door of the north sacristy takes us back to early days again. It is by Giacomo da Campione.[6] The canopy encloses a relief of Christ in Glory, surrounded by angels and saints, and in the tympanum below, Christ appears between the Virgin and St. John. These sculptures are more accomplished than those of the south sacristy, though they show the Lombard lack of idealism; the small profile busts of men in the costume of the period on the architrave—perhaps portraits of the artist's fellow-workmen on the Cathedral—are excellent, well-modelled, and full of vivacity.

6. See Malaguzzi Valeri, op. cit., vol. i. p. 56.

In the north transept stands the *Albero*, a colossal seven-branched candlestick of bronze, in the form of a tree. An inscription on the base records that it was presented to the Cathedral by one of the Trivulzio family in 1562, but it is usually described as thirteenth century work. The style, however, proclaims it not earlier than the late fifteenth, and it might well be later. The seven branches spring from a bossy stem supported on winged dragons; the interstices are filled up with a web of vine tendrils in which figures of delicate workmanship are wrought —sacred and symbolic characters, and biblical scenes; the story of Adam and Eve, Noah and the Dove, the Sacrifice of Isaac, David with the head of Goliath, etc. The Procession and Adoration of the Magi are cunningly arranged round the stem. Up the sides of the chapel of the Madonna dell' Albero there are some bas-reliefs representing the Life of the Virgin, by Cristoforo Solari, il Bambaia and others of

the early Cinquecentists; these were originally round the door in this transept which Cardinal Borromeo abolished. The stained glass window over the altar of St. Catherine in the corner of the transept to the left is by Stefano da Pandino (1432). The altar has statues of St. Jerome and St. Augustine, early works of Cristoforo Solari, and some little sculptures of earlier date, doubtless from some older shrine. The tabernacle on the right, with a figure of God the Father, is by one of the Campionesi.

On the third altar in the nave on this side is preserved the wooden crucifix carried by S. Carlo in procession round the city during the Great Plague of 1576.

A little altar further on, with modern sculptures, is decorated with beautiful Quattrocento arabesques, fragments of a monument sculptured by Amadeo in 1480 for Alessio Tarchetta, a general of the Sforza. Other parts of the monument are preserved in the Castello. Beyond is the tomb of Gio. Angelo Arcimboldi, Archbishop of Milan from 1550 to 1555. Lower down we see some twelfth and thirteenth century figures representing the writers of the New Testament, in Verona marble, probably parts of an ambone or pulpit, and perhaps some of the figures of saints with which Archbishop Uberto Crivelli, afterwards Urban III., is recorded to have decorated the old Sta. Maria Maggiore in 1185.

The Baptistery is on this side of the nave, between two of the pillars. The font is an ancient basin of red porphyry, said to have once been in the Baths of Maximian Hercules; it was found in S. Dionysius, with the remains of that saintly prelate of Milan inside. These were translated to a place in front of the High Altar. The canopy over the font is an ornate

late Renaissance work designed by il Pellegrini.

Down here in the nave, where the later ornamental details are lost in the great pillared spaces, it is possible to call back some of the shades frightened away by the purifying S. Carlo. Wicked they were indeed, but in a great way which it is not given to modern sinners to emulate. First of all we see Gian Galeazzo, the founder of the temple—he who all but mounted to a throne of Italy on the body of his murdered uncle—passing calm, cultured and impenetrable, between the columns. Then the bleeding body of his evil son Giovanmaria, carried from the steps of the palace where he had fallen and flung down here in haste by the terrified bearers. The cunning and suspicious Filippo next—who but a few weeks before had beheaded his wife—following Pope Martin in the great pageant of the consecration of the High Altar in 1418, uneasy at finding himself under the eyes of his subjects. Francesco Sforza, the splendid conqueror, pressing his way up the great nave on his war-horse, amid the thronging multitudes, to give thanks to God that Milan was delivered into his hands. His weak young grandson, Gian Galeazzo, hand in hand with his youthful bride, Isabella of Aragon, a white-robed pathetic pair, passing up to the celebration of their marriage, beneath a specially constructed portico, simulating a pergola and supported on fifty-two columns. The usurper Lodovico il Moro, with the ducal beretta newly set upon his head at the door of the Cathedral, moving with majestic step towards the High Altar, to seek the benediction of Heaven upon his unlawful dignities. We see the latter again a few years later, during that brief return in 1500, bowed with care and apprehension, giving hasty thanks to God for restoring the city to him, while the French guns,

thundering from the Castle, tell him what a mockery that restoration is. A moment later his tragic figure has vanished into the shades and the aisles echo to the triumphant tread of the French conqueror and his captains, Trivulzio and the rest, and the subservient Italian princes and ambassadors, coming to give thanks in their turn. And now the stately figures of foreign kings and emperors succeed one another in the many gorgeous processions which pass up between the columns. Thrust between them is the mournful Triumph of the young French hero, whose dead body, with the sword of Julius II., and the standards of the Spanish King and of all the great captains whom he had overthrown in his last victory displayed before it, is carried up in silence and tears. Anon the place fills with the pitiful multitudes during the dreadful days of French and Spanish occupation; now they gather round the frenzied *frate barbazza*, who shrieks to them to rise and slaughter their persecutors, now marshal themselves in penitential procession, beating their breasts and wailing *misericordia*. And as the figure of the reforming Cardinal Archbishop—the ascetic and despotic saint—rises before us, the great nave clears suddenly of all that clamorous life of the city which did not fear before to pass in and out on its daily affairs and to bring its worldly traffickings, its quarrels, troubles, excitements, sorrows, into the House of God,—and we lose sight for ever of the mediæval world.

The roof of the Duomo is ascended from the south transept. It is a long climb, but well worth the pains. You emerge at the top into sunshine and air, and find yourself on the terrace of a vast garden, all of sparkling candid stone, where you may wander, easily losing yourself, along paths and alleys, up and down flights of steps, always between marble groves

of flowers and foliage, with a forest of slender stems springing up around you, and flowering into human forms high up against the blue—all the petrified growth of that lake grotto of Gandoglia, or *Candoglia*, as the punning old writers call it. There is no open space in the heart of Milan where you can take the air so pleasantly on fine days in winter and spring as up here. But this garden is suspended in the air, and you look down upon the thick clustered roofs which cover all the ground below in an immense roundure, like the low ruddy vegetation of an island left bare at low tide in the middle of a purple sea. Immediately beneath, at dizzy depths, are the narrow intersecting lines of the streets, full of black, crawling humanity. From up here you see the city as a whole, and are able to realise something of its geographic place. If the day is clear there will appear, rising up on north and west beyond the sea of plain, the dim shores of what looks like another world—a vast half-moon of hovering forms, cloud-like, yet with the clear-cut contours of earthly substances, rising out of the shadow of earth to shining whiteness against the sky. The guidebooks give names to these fairy shapes—Mont Blanc to the west, Monta Rosa nearer and more conspicuous, the Matterhorn rising close behind this last, and other famous heights. Unless the weather is exceptionally favourable, however, one cannot discern with clearness more than the nearer spurs of the mighty Alpine barrier which defends the pleasant land of Italy from the cold and gloomy North. But it is enough to make one understand the significance of Milan in the historic past, as guardian of the chief gateways of Italy.



PUTTI, GUGLIA
DI AMADEO.

The Cathedral itself is a wonderful vision from the top, with its vistas of flying buttresses and crocketed pinnacles, and all its immensity of intricate stone-work. The colour of the marble, and the play of light and shade upon the fretted surfaces give it a peculiar enchantment. Looked at closely, however, it all becomes rather frivolous and wearisome. Nothing could be more monotonous than the uninventive likeness in difference of the endless ornamentation. No one detail is the same as another, yet the lines are all alike, for ever and ever repeated. The actual work is mostly modern. The most conspicuous and interesting feature is, of course, the great octagonal cupola, the main part of which was built in the early years of the sixteenth century by Amadeo. He was prevented, however, by the continual objections and disputes of the experts whose advice was called in about it, from finishing the work, and the ornate

construction of rampant arches and pinnacles and central spire which surmounts it belongs to the eighteenth century. Of the four spiral turrets at the corners, with staircases in them, three were not built till the last century, but the one on the north-east was designed by Amadeo himself, who perhaps set his own hand to some of the excessively flamboyant ornamentation. It is called the *Guglia di Amadeo*, but the upper part was rebuilt in 1799. The loggetta connecting it with the body of the structure is encrusted with charming reliefs, but though the delightful medley of putti, and angels dancing and playing instruments of music round the medallions of Madonna on one side, and the Pietà on the other, have much of the gaiety and abandon of Amadeo's work, their execution is too weak for him. The attractive infants, swinging and playing in the openings of the stone-work on either side of the passage lower down are more like his handiwork, and the New Testament scenes carved in low relief at the base are probably by a late follower of the master.[7] At the top of the staircase in this *Guglia*, now kept locked, in the little passage in the loggetta, there is a medallion portrait in bas-relief, by an unknown hand, of Amadeo himself, showing the deep-lined bony profile of an old man, with scanty locks flowing from under his beretta.

7. Malaguzzi Valeri, *G. A. Amadeo*, p. 232.



GIANT STATUES ON THE DUOMO.

Other details of interest are to be seen on and about the roof of the apse. When in ascending from below you emerge into the open air, take the passage straight before you, instead of mounting higher or turning on to the roof of the south aisle. Passing through a covered way you will soon come out upon a little projection of the roof, close to some of the monstrous gargoyles, and the *Giganti* beneath them. These last are robust and dignified survivals of the fourteenth century, and of the serious traditions of the Lake Masters, and are curiously at variance with the later style of ornamentation on the building. Further on, on the roof of the south sacristy, to which a stairway leads down, stands the Eve of Cristoforo Solari, a graceful and expressive figure, lumpy, however, in its contours. On the corresponding roof of the north sacristy, on the other side of the apse, is the companion statue of Adam,

leaning in melancholy pose upon his spade, a heavy and nerveless presentment of the father of mankind, yet most favourably distinguished in taste from the later statues on the Cathedral. The pinnacle at the north-east angle of this sacristy roof, surmounted by the figure of a Knight holding a banner, is one of the oldest pieces of work on the Cathedral. It is fourteenth century pure Gothic, and the careful and artistic workmanship of all the rich detail of ornament on it is very impressive in comparison with its surroundings.

From the roof of the Cathedral one has an unobstructed view of the tall octagonal Campanile of San Gottardo to the south. This beautiful and characteristic North Italian building of the fourteenth century combines the beauties of Lombard and Gothic with incomparably harmonious effect, achieving a wonderful charm of colour and grace by the delicate marble arcades and slender soaring shafts of marble with which the solidity of the ruddy brick is lightened. Unfortunately we see the brick now in the rawness of recent restoration. The tiled steeple is surmounted by a bronze angel in stiff pose with wings outspread. This Campanile was built about 1330 by Magister Franciscus di Pecoraris da Cremona for Azzo Visconte. The church beside it which that gouty prince raised in honour—among other saints—of S. Gottardo, the protector of sufferers from gout, and filled with precious ornaments and works of art, replaced the old Baptistery, San Giovanni alle Fonti. It was completely modernised in 1770, and the ancient apse —which is perhaps anterior to the fourteenth century —is the only survival of the old building. San Gottardo served as the chapel of the great Visconte palace, which stood on the south of the Cathedral

where now sprawl the melancholy courts and mean buildings of the Palazzo Reale. This palace had been originally the seat of the Milanese Consuls, and the space around it was the Broletto Vecchio, where the public buildings stood in the early days of the Republic. When Matteo Visconte made himself master of Milan, he and his family, as permanent heads of the Republic, occupied the palace, and transformed it into a fortress, with towers and moats, for the defence of their tyranny. His grandson Azzo beautified it with ornaments and paintings and fountains. These were all destroyed by Galeazzo II., who rebuilt the palace on a much larger and more magnificent scale, with two great courts surrounded by porticos, wherein took place the great marriage feasts, and other celebrations of the splendid Visconte Princes. There, doubtless, was set the banquet for the young Duke of Clarence and his bride Violante, when Petrarca sat beside the bridegroom, among the chief guests, and the boy Gian Galeazzo brought in the marriage gifts. It was in this palace that Giovanmaria Visconte, passing through the courts on his way to hear Mass in S. Gottardo, was stabbed to death by the waiting conspirators. Francesco Sforza and Lodovico il Moro repaired and embellished the palace, and it was inhabited by Isabella of Aragon after the death of her husband Gian Galeazzo Sforza. Restored by il Pellegrini, it was reduced to its present aspect in 1770.

The Archiepiscopal Palace, which faces the Duomo on the south-east, represents the dwelling-place of the ecclesiastical princes of Milan for at least a score of centuries, and probably many more. Standing close beside the Cathedral church, the Archbishop's residence was called, up to the twelfth century, the

Palazzo Milanese, being in fact during the earlier Middle Ages, when the archbishops ruled the city, the seat of government, until the Palace of the Commune, or of the elected Consuls, which rose in its precincts and under its protection, gradually usurped its place, as the voice of the public parliament, or Arengo, held in the Piazza, grew more and more powerful. Under the Visconte archbishops, who once again united the ecclesiastic and temporal sovereignty in a single hand, the palace was enlarged and partly incorporated with the palace of the Consuls, now become, as we have seen, the fortress of the Visconti. The Arcivescovato was rebuilt in the fifteenth century by Archbishop Arcimboldi, and remains of that date may be seen in the outer cortile. The great inner court is the work of il Pellegrini in S. Carlo Borromeo's time, and the existing building belongs partly to that period and partly to the end of the eighteenth century.

CHAPTER XI
The Basilica of St. Ambrogio

"Regina delle chiese lombarde."

In a quiet plebeian quarter, remote from the bustle of the city, surrounded by a wide piazza and a pleasant grove of lime-trees, stands the old basilica of St. Ambrogio. It is reached in a few minutes from the Duomo by the S. Vittore tram. This church, architecturally and historically, ranks first among all in Milan. The Duomo, foreign in material and bastard in style, cannot compare in interest with this grand product of the Lombard soil and the Lombard spirit. The story of St. Ambrogio reaches back through the long centuries of Milan's modern and mediæval life to the time of the saintly Doctor himself. It was in 386 that St. Ambrose founded it beside the already existing basilica Faustæ. Here he buried, in the place which he had prepared for himself, the bodies of the martyr saints Protasio and Gervasio, whose resting-place had been revealed to him just at the crisis of his struggle with the Empress. *Two men of marvellous stature such as the first age bore,* so he describes the bodies in a letter to his sister Marcellina. *We carried them, as the evening was falling, to the basilica Faustæ.... The following day*

we removed them to the church which they call Ambrosianam. They were laid beneath the altar, *where Christ is offered up*, and Ambrose commanded that when his own time came he should be buried in all humility beside them upon their left hand.

The church was dedicated to the martyrs. Nevertheless, it continued to be called the Basilica Ambrosiana according to the fashion of that day, when the churches were called after their founders, as for example the Basilica Faustæ, otherwise S. Vittore in Cielo d'Oro, the Basilica Porciana, also dedicated to S. Vittore, and the Basilica Paulina, or SS. Felix and Nabor. To later centuries it has become unalterably Sant Ambrogio.

Being in a peculiar sense the church of the patron saint and protector of the Milanese people, the basilica held from the first a very prominent place in the life of the Ambrosian city. Here the Primates gathered their suffragans to those synods and provincial councils, in which in the days of ecclesiastical rule the affairs of North Italy were decided. The foundation of a monastery of the powerful Benedictine Order in connection with the church, in 783, added to its importance. The archbishops of the reviving See of Milan, in the ninth century, restored it and bestowed upon it the utmost honour and reverence, endowing it with great riches. Here Otho the Great was crowned King of Italy by Archbishop Walperto in 961, and from that time, whenever a coronation took place in Milan, it was performed in St. Ambrogio. Perhaps the curious privilege which the city enjoyed, of keeping all sovereigns excluded from its precincts, was the reason why the Cathedral church was never chosen for the ceremony. In 1186, Frederick Barbarossa was

present here when with immense splendour Henry of Suabia wedded Constance of Sicily, the Constance who is moon-arrested in Dante's *Paradise*, because of her supposed inconstancy to monastic vows, though the old tale of her being dragged from a convent to marry the Emperor's son has been proved a fable.

During the factious age of liberty St. Ambrogio was the church in which the popular party gathered, to seek the sanction and protection of the patron saint and to discuss their affairs, being shut out from the Duomo by the Archbishop and the aristocratic party. Here the short-lived reconciliation of 1258, called the *Pace di St. Ambrogio*, was completed and sworn to before the Altar with great solemnity by the representatives of both factions.

In St. Ambrogio Henry of Luxemburg, the looked-for peacemaker, was crowned in 1311, with his consort, Margaret of Brabant, in the presence of all the great nobles of Italy and characters conspicuous in the history of the time. A strange and somewhat ominous circumstance of this occasion was that the crown always used for the coronation of the Kings of Italy—which had become, though only shortly before this time, known as the Iron Crown—was missing. With the rest of the treasure of the Cathedral of Monza—where it was kept then, as to-day—it had been pawned by the Torriani.[8] So a new iron crown, in the form of a laurel wreath, was forged to encircle the brow of Henry VII. The newly anointed monarch created two hundred knights in the church, the first upon whom he laid his sword being Matteo Visconte. From this time the ceremony of knighting was customarily performed in St. Ambrogio, and later on those who received the dignity there were called the Knights of St. Ambrogio.

8. The treasure was recovered later from Avignon by Matteo Visconte.

It was in St. Ambrogio that Gian Galeazzo Visconte, newly created Duke of Milan, knelt before the altar while the Archbishop of Milan and a splendid array of prelates chanted hymns and offices in celebration of his elevation to the ducal dignity, in the presence of princes and ambassadors from all the States of Italy and Europe. Here, in 1477, the young Republicans who had sworn to avenge the wrongs of their city upon the tyrant Galeazzo Maria Sforza, bowed themselves before the image of the Saint, patron of the Milanese liberties, and besought his blessing upon their enterprise. In the sixteenth century St. Ambrogio was the goal of the pathetic penitential processions which used to wind their way from the Duomo day after day during the visitations of the plague and the persecutions by the Spaniards.

The Basilica as we see it now shows no trace, it need hardly be said, of the church which Ambrose himself built. But it still contains his bones. An interesting proof of his actual burial there beside the two martyrs, according to his directions, was the discovery, in 1864, beneath the High Altar, of two cavities of unequal size, the larger in the middle, the smaller on its left hand, evidently burial-places. There were no bodies in them, but the remains of the three saints were found in a sepulchre of porphyry above the cavities. It was known that they had been removed and laid in one tomb together by Archbishop Angilberto in the ninth century, probably at the time when the floor of the sanctuary was raised and the golden altar set up. The church appears to have been completely rebuilt at this time

by Angilberto (824-859) and Ansperto (868-881), after the instalment of the Benedictines, in order to suit it to the requirements of monastic ritual. Angilberto had the main part built, it is supposed, and Ansperto added the atrium—*Atria vicinas struxit et ante fores*,—as is recorded in the lengthy epitaph of the said prelate inscribed above his tomb on the south side of the nave.

But the noble building of to-day, with its grand forecourt, or atrium, is almost certainly not the ninth century church of Angilberto and Ansperto, but a reconstruction on the same lines in the eleventh or early twelfth century. The date of St. Ambrogio has been a much-disputed point, and some authorities still cherish the theory that it is in the main the ninth century building, and as such, the prototype of all the many churches of the Romanesque style scattered throughout Europe. But the advanced system of vaulting, and the compound form of the pillars, as seen in St. Ambrogio, are said not to appear in other Italian churches until a good deal later than the ninth century—later, in fact, than in more northern countries. If the Basilica be of this early date, it must have remained for two hundred years a solitary example of a splendid style of architecture which had arrived at completeness without leaving any traces of preliminary stages. There are many tenth and eleventh century churches, however, which show what would naturally seem the early and undeveloped stages of the style, which is in favour of the belief held by most of the writers on the subject, that St. Ambrogio follows rather than precedes them in date, and stands at the zenith and not at the dawn of Romanesque architecture. The style of most of the decorative sculpture on the building also points to a later origin.[9]

9. The exponents of the ninth century theory are Dartein, Landriani, and Mongeri, among others, and more recently, Luca Beltrami; and of the theory of a later origin, Kügler, Viollet-le-Duc, Stielh, Cattaneo, Adolfo Venturi, etc.

There is no actual record, it is true, of a restoration in the eleventh or twelfth century, but the patriotism and fervour of vitality which animated the Milanese in that epoch, and brought them into conflict with Barbarossa, may well have induced them to rebuild and beautify this church, which, being the resting-place of their Patron, was to them as the sanctuary of their liberties. Italian enthusiasm has always memorialised itself in brick and stone, and, moreover, in the twelfth century architecture was the only art in which they could fully express themselves. Not only in Milan, but throughout Lombardy, the churches of this period are a grand and enduring testimony to the great era of the Italian Communes, and in St. Ambrogio, queen if not mother of them all,[10] surely we have before us the noblest artistic embodiment of the spirit which produced the Lombard League.

10. *Madre e regina delle chiese lombarde*—Dartein.

The outward form of the church—the large Romanesque style—is in keeping with that great patriotic thought and resolve. It is essentially of the soil. The grand curves of the arches, the massive pillars, the sense of space and freedom seem the proper expression of the mediæval Lombard character, in their union of Latin breadth and clearness with the picturesque ruggedness, and the rich effects of light and shade of Northern building.

Above all, the material—brick and stone, that fortunate combination which produces such glory and enchantment of colour—is peculiarly Lombard. The effect of it in St. Ambrogio is most beautiful and satisfying. Even the newness of much of the brick at the present time—crude evidence of restoration—cannot destroy the charm.



SIDE AISLE OF ATRIUM, ST. AMBROGIO.

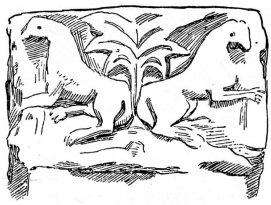


CAPITAL IN ATRIUM OF ST. AMBROGIO.

The atrium or forecourt is surrounded on three sides by arcades supported on massive pillars. It is rather later in date than the façade of the church, which rises up in a wide gable, pierced with lofty round-headed openings above the shadow of the narthex or portico, triple-arched, which forms the eastern side of the atrium. On either hand of the church rises a campanile of characteristic Lombard type. The lower one is the Monks' Tower, and dates from the eighth or ninth century. It is probably the first thing which the Benedictines built on entering into possession of the church in 783, bells being a necessity of the monastic ritual. The tall tower on the left, which, with its ornamental arcading and delicate ribs of brick and stone, shows an advance of some centuries on the simplicity of the older one, was built in 1128 by Archbishop Anselmo for the Canons, to vindicate the ancient rights of these, the original servants and custodians of the basilica, against the encroaching monks, who are said to have pulled down the pre-existing belfry of the secular priests. The struggles between these two bodies of secular and regular clergy, established side by side and sharing the privilege of serving the church, were very fierce and continuous through the Middle Ages. The monks are long gone now, and the Canons remain in peaceful possession of the altars and of the quiet courts and shrunken cloisters of the old place. Both towers have been restored in recent times. The atrium and façade have also been restored, but show more vestiges of the original work. In the fantastic sculptured imagery which ornaments the capitals of the great columns, in the curling foliage patterns of the friezes on archivolts and architraves, in the endless knots and intricate web of the ribbed stems upon the lintels and jambs and columns of the great middle doorway, in

the grotesque beasts and human creatures which course up pillars, or writhe round capitals, we see the hand of the twelfth century craftsman still shaping the stone into the forms of religious symbolism, but expressing also his own satiric and pessimistic views of life, of nature ever at war with itself, and at the same time beginning to subordinate spiritual ideas to a desire for decorative effect. The attempts seen here at representing human figures are still of the rudest and most primitive, as for example the figure—perhaps Salome—dancing, while another plays the lyre, on a capital to the left of the middle door, the Adam and Eve (?) on either side of the Tree on one of the middle capitals of the narthex, the huntsman standing triumphant above a crowd of horned beasts—symbolic of the victory of the human over the animal nature. But many of the capitals are purely fanciful and decorative; the grotesque creatures writhe into graceful and symmetric designs, and that sort of flat-ribbed cord that appears so constantly, and in its endless windings is emblematic of eternity, is led into graceful curves and develops into leaves and stems which, growing bolder and freer, become finally beautiful foliage designs with masks and grotesques that seem to herald the Renaissance. This more advanced decoration is probably thirteenth century. Some fragments of the more archaic ornament, especially round the middle doorway, which has the appearance of being pieced together in places, seem to be survivals of an earlier existence of the church, which were embodied in the twelfth century reconstruction—the symbolic Lion of St. Mark, for example, and the Abbot's Cross on a column on the right hand, which belongs perhaps to the period of the rebuilding for the monks. The name of *Adam*

Magister, inscribed round a slender column on the left of the door, upside down, is no doubt that of the architect or sculptor of the present or some former phase of the building.



CAPITAL IN ATRIUM OF ST. AMBROGIO.

The walls of the atrium and round the doorways of the church show everywhere traces of fresco paintings of various periods, from Byzantine to Giottesque and the fifteenth century Lombard school, carefully uncovered in recent times, but all hopelessly ruined. The two large half-obliterated scenes in chiaroscuro on either side, at right angles to the front wall of the church, have been attributed tentatively to the little-known painter, Zenale. They represent the story of St. Ambrose and St. Augustine. That on the right hand, which is the least spoilt, shows three devotees kneeling before St. Ambrose, who are supposed to be the three successive dukes, Francesco, Galeazzo Maria, and Gian Galeazzo Sforza. On the left of the principal door, supported on four columns, is the sarcophagus of the humanist, Pier Candido Decembrio (died 1477), secretary and biographer of Duke Filippo Maria, and of his successor, Francesco Sforza. It is a graceful Renaissance work, perhaps by the Lombard sculptor, Tommaso da Cazzaniga,[11] and has bas-reliefs on the front, showing the Virgin, with Decembrio kneeling

before her protected by St. Ambrose, and the journey of Tobias and the Angel, signifying the soul's journey into eternity. A very archaic bas-relief representing St. Ambrose, with the triple-thonged scourge in his hand, is on the wall beyond the left-hand door. The atrium is a museum of sculpture of many periods. Here are monuments and shields of mediæval and Renaissance days—tombstones cast out from this and neighbouring churches—the broken original of the carven beasts over the right-hand door, and various unburied fragments of that dead Roman world which underlies Milan.

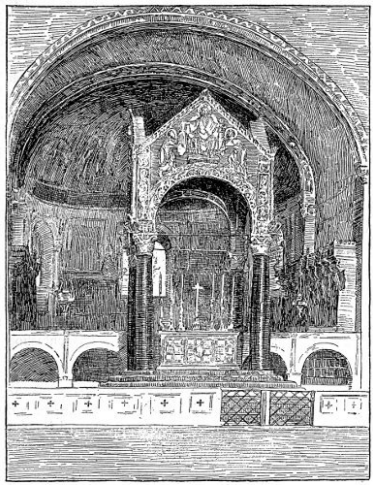
11.

See Malaguzzi Valeri, *G. A. Amadeo*, p. 295.

The great wooden door of the church, carved all over with small scenes, and of very ancient origin, has lost its interest by a too complete restoration. An unrestored fragment which is kept in the *Archivio Capitolare* has been pronounced to be of the time of Theodosius.

The interior of the basilica has the same noble effect of largeness, dignity, and repose as the atrium. In the solemn obscurity and devout silence one becomes aware of massive arches and deep vaulting, of great spaces and dim, far-off recesses, of rich colour and gilding, of grotesque forms and wreathing serpentine stems in the pallid stone of capitals and pulpit and screen. The careful restoration of half a century ago has repaired as much as possible the mishandlings which the church suffered from the zeal of Carlo Borromeo, and again two hundred years later, though the modern decoration of the cupola cannot be admired. We now see the Lombard basilica in its twelfth century form, with a great central nave of four bays, and side aisles with *matronei*—galleries for

the women—above them, an essential feature of a Romanesque church. The nave is roofed with cross vaults springing from enormous pilasters, except the last bay before the choir, which opens up into a lofty cupola, whence a circumscribed light pours down from a circle of windows high up, illuminating the beautiful canopy of the High Altar beneath. This cupola, carried up to a height not in accord with the rest of the church, is a thirteenth century restoration, following a disastrous fall of the roof of this part in 1196.



CIBORIUM, ST. AMBROGIO.

The eastern portion of the basilica, which has three apses, is a survival of the ninth century building. The apses do not exactly correspond in direction with the later built body of the church, as is easily seen in looking up from the nave to the central apse. That they belong to the church built for the monks, and not to an earlier basilica, as their obvious priority to

the rest of the building has led the supporters of the ninth century theory to suppose, is shown by there being three apses, and by the prolongation of the space in front of them for the choir, to accommodate the monks, who needed a place apart from the people for their special functions. In a very early basilica there would be but one apse, and it would start from the nave. The sanctuary is raised a few steps above the level of the nave, and in its midst, conspicuous and alone as it should be, beneath the noble curves of arch and cupola rises the four-sided canopy of the High Altar, upon four antique columns of red porphyry, glowing with deep colour and gilding against the rich darkness of the great mosaic in the tribune behind. The decoration of the canopy is of stucco. Moulded upon the flat pediments above the semicircular arches are gilded figures in relief against a background of deep blue; on the front, facing into the nave, Christ enthroned, giving the keys to Peter, and the law to Paul; on the back St. Ambrogio, protected by an angel behind him, stands between SS. Gervasio and Protasio, who present to him two kneeling Benedictine monks, one of whom holds in his hands a model of the canopy, and is thought to be Abbot Gaudenzio, appointed head of the monastery in 835; on the left side Madonna, with the Dove of the Holy Spirit on her head, is standing between two kneeling princesses, who lift their hands in supplication to her; on the right is St. Ambrogio and two princes, who also kneel and seem to beseech him. The friezes and bands of ornamentation are exceedingly rich, and very beautiful in design. At the corners are eagles, with their wings spread and fish between their claws. The canopy is an early thirteenth century restoration of a pre-existing one produced by Byzantine artists,

probably in the time of Archbishop Angilberto, and wrecked by the fall of the cupola in 1196, little but the columns and the capitals surviving. The new work kept the Byzantine character of the old—the rigidity of the figures, the conventionalised draperies, the sacred symbols, though the spirit of a later age is visible in a certain rude attempt to give life to the heads.

Beneath the canopy the treasure which it was built to shelter still stands, the famous golden altar of Archbishop Angilberto. This altar is the largest and perhaps the most beautiful example known of the goldsmith's art in the Carlovingian period. It is kept enclosed in a massive case, and a fee of five francs must be paid to the sacristan to see it. On St. Ambrose's Day only is it uncovered to public view. The front of the altar is entirely faced with plates of fine gold divided into panels by borders of exquisite mosaic of enamel, and gold filigree work of delicate and various design, enriched with thickly-set gems, rubies, opals, sapphires, topaz and turquoise, cats'-eyes and every sort of strange-hued stone, some of great size, and edged with pearls. The panels are filled with figures in relief. In the middle, in a panel of oval form is Christ, with a jewelled halo, enthroned amid stars formed of precious stones. Around Him are the four Evangelic Beasts and the Apostles, three and three together. On either side are scenes from the Gospel story. The Resurrection, Ascension and Pentecost are sixteenth century restorations, quite out of keeping with the archaic character of the rest. The back and sides of the altar are of silver and of silver-gilt. On each of the sides there is a Greek cross of gold filigree set with gems and bordered with exquisite enamel, and around are figures of saints and angels, SS. Ambrose,

Simpliciano, Gervasio and Protasio appearing on the right side, and on the left SS. Martin, Nabor, Nazario and Magno, the three latter being Milanese martyrs in the time of Diocletian and Decius. The back is divided into panels like the front, but in the middle there are four medallions. The two upper ones contain figures of the angels Michael and Gabriel. The two below are of great interest, as evidence of the origin and antiquity of the altar. In one is shown St. Ambrose crowning Angilberto, who has a halo of rectangular form, which signifies that he was living at the time of the representation; he offers a model of the altar to the Saint. The names Sanctus Ambrosius and Dominus Angilbertus are inscribed beside them. In the companion medallion we see Ambrose again, crowning *Volvinus magister phaber* (Master Volvinus the Smith), as the inscription describes him, the German artificer whom the Archbishop charged to make this altar, art at that time being far more advanced beyond the Alps than in Italy. The panels contain scenes from the legend of St. Ambrose; the Saint as a babe in the cradle attracting a swarm of bees by his honeyed mouth; journeying on horseback into Liguria, where he was prefect; flying at full gallop from Milan to avoid being Bishop, and admonished by a voice from on high to return; being baptized and ordained Bishop; celebrating Mass, while a cleric touches him on the back, showing how, as the legend relates, sleep has fallen on him and he is being transported in a vision to Tours, where in another panel he is represented laying the dead St. Martin in his tomb; again he appears preaching, inspired by an angel; treading beside the altar on the gouty foot of a bystander and healing it; seeing Christ in a dream, who announces to him his approaching death; offering his body to God as he

dies; lastly, his dead body is being carried to Heaven by angels. These reliefs are very reminiscent of classic forms and have a surprising grace and freedom for the period. The representations of St. Ambrose's story in particular are full of life and vigour, and show much beauty of composition and modelling, though they betray the era of their origin in certain awkwardnesses of proportion and grotesque attitudes. Here and there cameos of exquisite and evidently antique workmanship are let into the borders, and gems with Greek words cut in them; but perhaps the greatest beauty of all is the enamel—just beginning at that time to be used extensively in decorative art—and the delicate designs in which it is composed.

This gorgeous jewelled work, flashing out beneath the splendour of the canopy, seems to gather into a point all the glory of this rich interior. From the choir, which is raised several steps above the sanctuary, one can get a complete view of the mosaic decoration of the apse, a grand and imposing composition, with a colossal figure of Christ enthroned in the centre, lifting His hand in benediction, and on either side of Him SS. Gervasio and Protasio, and the Archangels Michael and Gabriel above. The names of the two martyrs are written beside them, letter beneath letter. Under the central figure there are three medallions; S. Satiro, brother of St. Ambrose, in the centre, and S. Marcellina, their sister, and S. Candida to right and left. The sides of the composition depict the story related by S. Gregory of Tours about St. Ambrose and represented on the altar; how he fell into a trance as he celebrated Mass and was rapt in spirit to Tours, where he performed the burial rite over the body of S. Martin. This mosaic is of the twelfth century, and

though it follows the Byzantine style in arrangement and general treatment, it shows a tendency to abandon the old rigid conventions for the sake of more life and expression in the attitudes and draperies of the figures, and so sacrifices something of the decorative effect. The colour is very sombre, lacking the richness and glow of the best mosaic.

There is a marble episcopal seat of the ninth century in the choir. The stalls are very beautiful. Some are of the fourteenth century, as is also the triple seat on the right hand of the altar; the other stalls date from 1507. The designs carved upon them—trees and foliage, with small figures of men and animals, a peasant gathering grapes, a neglectful swineherd munching acorns, while the pig climbs the tree to reach some for itself, a man and a bear facing each other with comical hesitation beneath a tree, and other rustic scenes—are very graceful and delicate, and show a Renaissance spirit of gaiety.

The richly sculptured pulpit carries us back again to the earlier ages of the church. It is a very late twelfth century restoration of the pre-existing pulpit, which was ruined by the fall of the roof in 1196. An inscription on the side facing down the nave records that Guglielmus de Pomo, Superstes—chief priest or superior of the church—caused this and many other works to be done. It rests partly upon a Christian sarcophagus of the fifth or sixth century, and partly upon columns. The cover of the sarcophagus is crowded with figures in bas-relief, among which appear the effigies of the unknown couple, apparently of high rank, buried in it. On the side facing into the middle of the church, Christ is represented, seated among the Prophets, and on the other side He appears with the Apostles. Abraham

sacrificing Isaac is the subject sculptured on one end, Elijah ascending in the chariot of fire on the other. These sculptures of the late Roman age, showing the decadence of a developed style, contrast strangely with the exuberant twelfth century decoration upon the other parts of the structure—ornamental borders and friezes with the characteristic curling stems that enmesh strange animals in endless pursuit of one another, innocent creatures, stags and hares chased by savage-fanged beasts, birds and grotesque humans forming caryatids, an ass playing the lyre, an eagle pecked by another bird, etc. Art has died and been born again in the interval between the old and the late work. In the twelfth century sculpture we see the wild rush of a new life, vigorous, cruel and merry, but at the same time penetrated by the pessimistic consciousness of youth. The difficulty of the sculptor in dealing with human figures is shown by the absurdly childish way in which the little scenes of Adam and Eve's history, in the spaces beneath the arches, are represented. On the parapet of the pulpit at the back a Christian feast is sculptured.

The crypt beneath the choir was originally built in the ninth century, but is now completely modern. Descending into it you may look into the hallowed recess, where in an ornate silver shrine of very recent date lie the bodies of St. Ambrose and of the twin martyrs, Gervasio and Protasio, still beneath the high altar, where long ago the great bishop willed to lie.



SCULPTURE ON PULPIT IN ST. AMBROGIO.

Beside the door leading into the crypt, on the north side, there is a fresco, by Borgognone, of the Child Jesus among the elders in the Temple, and being found by His Mother. The sweet seriousness and devoutness of the painter are charmingly shown in this painting; the colour, warmer and gayer than he often uses, seems a forecast of his famous pupil Luini. A painting on the wall opposite of Madonna with Saints, placed so much in the dark that little can be distinguished in it except its unmistakable Lombard character, has been attributed to Zenale, but without sufficient evidence.

A chapel on the south side of the church leads to the small sanctuary which is all that remains of the Basilica Faustæ, or San Vittore in Cielo d'Oro, afterwards dedicated to S. Satiro, who was buried there in 379 by his brother St. Ambrose. The present chapel, restored in 1859, is the easternmost bay of the original church, which was probably rebuilt in the eighth century. The deep cupola is covered with gold mosaic, with a figure of San Vittore in the centre, whence the name San Vittore in Cielo d'Oro. The Evangelic Beasts are represented round the cupola, and on the walls below are stiff figures of bishops and saints of the Milanese Church. These mosaics are fifth century, but have been restored.

A chapel lower down on this side of the church is frescoed with the legend of St. George, by Lanino, a follower of Gaudenzio Ferrari. Near a side door further down still is a painting, in very bad condition, attributed to Ferrari—Christ bearing the Cross, with the Three Maries—and some late and inferior frescoes of the same school. A coloured stucco image of St. Ambrose, of the eleventh century, done from a portrait of him taken from life, as the

inscription informs us, is to be seen on the wall nearer the west end. Beneath it is the stone sarcophagus of Archbishop Ansperto, and the famous epitaph referring to the building of the atrium. On the north wall, opposite, a relic of the pagan past is placed over the door leading into the belfry, a bas-relief of the Vintage, exquisitely decorative and gay. It is supposed to be a vestige of a Temple of Bacchus, which, according to tradition, stood upon the site of this church and was swept away by Ambrose. The last chapel on this side is the baptistery, and here is a fresco by Borgognone over the altar—the Risen Christ between two Angels. The long, slender figure of the Christ, graceful but nerveless, the general expression of pensiveness and sweetness, the colour no longer grey and pallid, as in his earlier pictures, but rich and harmonious, are very characteristic of this artist in his late period.

Two columns standing in the nave are surmounted, one by a serpent of bronze, the other by the cross. The serpent, if we may believe the eleventh century chronicler Landolfo, is that very one which Moses set up in the wilderness, and was brought in the writer's own day from Constantinople by Archbishop Arnolfo, who had gone thither to seek the hand of the Emperor's daughter for Otho III., and to whom the Greeks, who owned the sacred treasure, had presented it. Women used to bring their sick children to the column to be healed by the serpent.

In the Sacristy of the Canons may be seen some beautiful illuminated books, the most precious of which is the famous Missal of Gian Galeazzo Visconte, of the late fourteenth century, which commemorates the coronation of that prince as first Duke of Milan. It is exquisitely illuminated, in clear

brilliant colour, by a Lombard miniaturist, Annovello da Imbonate. The front page depicts the scene of the coronation; a beautiful composition in which the Duke appears kneeling in crimson robe and ermine at the feet of the imperial legate, with his subjects gathered below. In the ornamental border the emblems of the Visconti are introduced; the snake, the dog chained beneath a tree, the dove with the motto, *A bon droit*, etc. There are other pages fully miniatured with scenes of Gian Galeazzo's career. Among several Corali of the late fifteenth or early sixteenth century, there are two with very fine and delicate miniatures, attributed to Borgognone and suggestive of that painter in the sentiment and pose of the figures.

The *Teca degli Innocenti*, a silver casket of the late fifteenth century, containing relics of the Innocents, and very elaborately decorated with bas-reliefs of the Massacre, and other New Testament scenes, is kept in the sacristy, and also a silver pax, called Filippo Maria Visconte's, with a bas-relief of the Dead Christ, of Lombard workmanship; a fifteenth century ostensory, of beautiful Gothic form, and a processional cross, given by S. Carlo to the church, but of earlier date.

A door on the north side of the church leads into the canonica, and one steps out from the grand old Lombard basilica into a beautiful portico of the Renaissance period. Lodovico il Moro intended to raise here a stately residence for the Canons. He charged Bramante of Urbino with the work, but the much occupied architect had little time to devote to it, and it dragged on, so that only this one side of the cloister, and that unfinished, was built before the Moro's fall put an end to all his ambitious schemes.

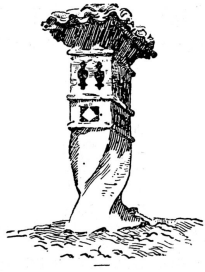
This fragment, at once so noble and so graceful in its proportions, and showing a fine and restrained taste in the capitals, is almost certainly of Bramante's design, which is more than can be said of most of the work attributed to him in this city. The delicious *putti*, in every charming pose, and plastic as life itself, which decorate the labels upon the arches, show the development of Italian art in the three centuries which divide them from the grotesque sculptures in the church. How interesting, too, the contrast between the treatment of arch and pillar, of brick and stone, by the learned and sophisticated Quattrocentist, and the same forms, the same materials in the hands of the rude, vigorous, and deeply religious generation which built the church. The cloister, in its incompleteness, leaning up against the old basilica, monument of democratic fervour and strength, is a poignant relic of the aristocratic and exclusive ideas of the Renaissance, and of the incomparable grace and joyousness of their brief reign in Milan. The profiles of the two presiding spirits of that moment, Lodovico and Beatrice, are moulded on either side of the doorway by a mediocre Lombard sculptor of the Renaissance period.

A quaint chimney, upon the house facing the cloister, is an interesting example of a type once common in Milan, and still often seen in the neighbouring towns.

Adjoining the basilica is the old convent, now a military hospital, with two fine cloisters, designed, it is thought, by Bramante.

Among the lime-trees on the piazza, near the church on the north side, stands an antique column, a relic of some pagan building, either the Roman temple, which is supposed to have preceded the basilica, or

of a summer palace of the emperors, which stood beside it. An ingenious thirteenth century chronicler, one Daniele, in an imaginary description of the coronation of the mediæval kings in St. Ambrogio, makes this column play an important part in the ceremony. *The King must swear the oath outside the church, where a marble column stands.... He must kiss the said column, because as the column is upright, so must the judgment of the sovereign be upright.* A more faithful account of the ritual at the coronations is given by the tenth century chronicler, Landolfo the Elder.



CHIMNEY, CANONICA OF ST. AMBROGIO.

CHAPTER XII
San Lorenzo. Romanesque Buildings

"Gloriose sacris micat ornata Ecclesiis
Ex quibus alma est Laurenti...."

In the Via Ticinese, just within the twelfth century boundary of the city, there stands a magnificent row of Corinthian columns, the only vestige above ground, in its original position, of the imperial Milan, whose splendours were sung by Ausonius. The Roman building of which they formed probably the peristyle, has long vanished, but the place where it must have stood is now occupied by San Lorenzo, the most ancient existing church in Milan, though much restored and altered, especially in the sixteenth century. The large impressive interior, octagonal in form, and surrounded by a wide ambulatory with a gallery above, which opens into the body of the church through four double storied arcades, recalls the style of San Vitale at Ravenna. Recent studies favour the theory that it was built in this form, as a church, in the sixth century, rather than the old idea that it was originally the great hall of Maximian's Baths, and was converted to a Christian temple by St.

Ambrose. However that may be, its form carries us back to a time which no other building in Milan commemorates, when the Roman Empire still lived, and the Church had but lately issued from its martyr struggles, and was still linked in its architecture with the old world.

San Lorenzo has unfortunately preserved none of those splendours celebrated by historian and poet in the eighth century. Arnolfo the chronicler weeps over the destruction of its roofs of mosaic and gold and starry gems, its paintings and sculptured marbles, in the calamitous fire of 1071. *Oh Temple, which had not your like in the world*, he cries. Restored after the fire, it was again grievously damaged by fire in 1124, and again restored. The fall of a great part of the roof in 1573 gave Cardinal Borromeo and his favourite Pellegrini an opportunity for interference. Pellegrini was succeeded in the work of restoration by his pupil, Martino Bassi. The result of their labours was the present lofty cupola, supported on great pilasters between the openings into the ambulatory, and the heavy architectural decoration of neo-classic style, which impose upon the old building, bare now of the rich and glowing colour of its original design, a cold, austere and melancholy character.

Fragments of antique capitals used upside down as bases of columns here and there, some columns of African marble in the chapel of St. Ippolito behind the High Altar, and a beautiful marble doorway with decoration of pagan character in low relief, at the entrance to the chapel of St. Aquilino, show that the church is partly composed out of the wreckage of the Roman city. The chapel last named, which opens off the ambulatory on the south, is of the sixth century,

and has kept its ancient form. It is octagonal like the church, and is roofed with a shallow cupola. The circle of deep apertures high up, by which it is lighted, form outside those round-headed niches so familiar in later Lombard buildings. The Empress Galla Placidia is supposed to have founded this chapel, and to have intended to be buried there. A Christian sarcophagus, of late Roman workmanship, stands in a niche on the right hand of the entrance. But Galla Placidia lies in her gorgeous mausoleum at Ravenna. This sepulchre is said, however, to enclose the remains of her first husband, Athanulph, King of the Goths. Some mosaics in lunettes on either side of the apse date from the early days of the chapel—Christ with the Apostles, and the Shepherds feeding their Flocks. The sixteenth century tomb of St. Aquilino occupies the apse, which is decorated with frescoes of the Luinesque school.

There is little else of interest in the church. In the ambulatory is a tomb of 1411, and above it a much restored painting of Madonna with SS. Stephen and Ambrose presenting to her members of the Robbiano family, and in the chapel of St. Ippolito, a tomb with the effigy of Antonio Conte, a priest of the church, who died in 1349, and the late fifteenth century monument of another of the same family, Giovanni Conte, who restored the chapel.

The façade is of ornate late classic style, and the unfinished building on either side of the court in front was designed by Ricchini, a seventeenth century architect. An interesting view of the exterior, from the Piazza Vetra, on the north-east side, shows the enormous dome rising with incongruous effect, above the brick mass of the building, between four low towers of Lombard style, which survive from the

eleventh or twelfth century reconstruction of the church after the great fires.

The archway and towers in the main street just beyond San Lorenzo represent the old Porta Ticinese, built by the Milanese consuls in 1171, and restored by Azzo Visconte in the fourteenth century. The structure was newly restored in 1858. Upon the outer side of the arch there is a sculpture of Madonna enthroned with the Child, and St. Ambrose presenting to her a model of the city, with SS. Lorenzo, Eustorgio and Peter Martyr, standing around. Similar groups, now in the Museo Archeologico, were placed upon Porta Romana and Porta Orientale by Azzo. They are the work apparently of the Campionese followers of Giovanni di Balduccio of Pisa.



THE OLD PORTA TICINESE.

The Porta Ticinese corresponds to the original gate of the same name in the old circuit of the Roman walls, which stood nearer into the centre of the city at a spot now called *Carobbio*, a corruption of Quadrivium, the Four Ways. The modern gate is some little distance further south. This is the way out of the city to Pavia, the ancient Ticinum, hence the name Via Ticinese. Throughout the Middle Ages, from the time when Pavia was a royal seat, this street was the scene of all the state entries of conquering kings, or princely visitors. Barbarossa came this way, passing in majesty over the flattened earthworks and prone gates of the humiliated city. Three centuries later, the victorious soldier of fortune, Francesco Sforza, made his state entry by Porta Ticinese, appearing with his wife, Bianca Maria, and his young son, Galeazzo, upon a triumphal car beneath a canopy of cloth of gold, followed by the captains and chosen men of his army. Less than fifty years after, the destroyer of the brief Sforza domination, Louis XII., passed up in unparalleled splendour, wearing the ducal cap of Milan, having been presented by the Constable of the Gate with the keys of Porta Ticinese on the bridge over the canal immediately outside. He was preceded by all the clergy in pontifical array, and by a gorgeous procession of pages, musicians, men-at-arms, and courtiers. Immediately before him rode Gian Giacomo Trivulzio, the golden staff of a Marshal of France in his hand, and in the throng of cardinals and ambassadors who followed, the most conspicuous was that warlike ecclesiastic, known then as S. Pietro in Vincula, who, as Julius II., a few years later became the scourge of the French intruders. So is the shame of Milan and of Italy written on the stones of that street.

Just beyond the gate the street crosses the canal—the *Naviglio* it is called—which follows the mediæval circumference of the city, on the line of the great fosse dug by the Milanese as a defence against Barbarossa. It is the central mesh as it were of the network of waterways connecting Milan with Pavia and the other cities of the Lombard Plain. The narrow streak of water, with picturesque backs of houses descending into it, and women in bright coloured skirts and gay kerchiefs on their heads, washing by the edge, is a pleasant interruption to the crowded, rather squalid street.



HOUSES ON THE NAVIGLIO.

Further on, beside the modern gate, is the old basilica of St. Eustorgio, once famous as the resting-place of the Three Kings, and later as the shrine of St. Peter Martyr. Tradition declares that the basilica

was built by the Milanese bishop, St. Eustorgio, in the fourth century, on the site of an ancient font used by St. Barnabas himself to baptise his converts. The primitive church, whatever its date, was replaced later by a Romanesque building, which exists in the main to this day, though with many alterations and modifications made by successive generations of devotees. Recent restorations have cleared away the disfigurements which it suffered in the baroque period.

The exterior gives a striking record of the phases through which the church has passed. The façade is in the characteristic style of the thirteenth century, but dates only from 1865. The south flank, which was restored at the same time, is of the fourteenth century, when the Visconti, Torriani and other great families, eager to show their devotion to the church where the recent martyr Peter of Verona was buried, built a series of sepulchral chapels on this side. With its slender pointed windows, and *oculi* deeply set within a rich framework of multiplied mouldings, its gables and characteristic ornamentation of interlaced *archetti* beneath the eaves, it is a very graceful example of the Gothic brick building of North Italy. A chapel projecting at the western end belongs to the fifteenth century, and was built by Pietro Solari. The apse of the church, with its deep-niched arcade, carries us back again to the Romanesque period. Beside it rises, in accordant style, the Campanile, which was begun in 1297, and beyond, at the east end of the church, is a beautiful chapel, built nearly two centuries later—in 1462—for Pigello Portinari by a Tuscan architect, probably Michele Michelozzo. The tall brick Campanile, soaring in its direct simplicity and strength, each storey marked by a line of graceful *archetti* and of bricks set pointwise above

them, making a sort of dogtooth ornamentation, and its angles faced with white stone, contrasts in an interesting manner with the proud little building below. The Portinari chapel shows the new development of brick architecture in obedience to the classic ideas of the Renaissance. The rotund cupola swelling upon the broad square base, the elaborate yet harmonious combination of curves and rectangles, the restrained decoration of moulded pilasters and flat-carved capitals, of rich terra-cotta cornices and deep-moulded *oculi*, the skilful arrangement of colour in the distribution of stucco and brick, all reveal new thoughts, new ideals, new knowledge, a sort of human pride undreamed of by the faithful souls of the earlier generation, who thought only of glorifying God and lifting their building as near to Heaven as they could.



EXTERIOR OF PORTINARI CHAPEL, ST. EUSTORGIO.

The interior of the basilica, though the tribune and part of the side aisles are said to be late ninth century, is in the main of the twelfth or early thirteenth century. It has lofty semicircular arches, showing here and there the slightest inclination to a point; cross-vaulting, compound pillars, and at the lower end women's galleries, or rather a restored semblance of them—all Romanesque features. The capitals are sculptured in the style of the same period, with strange animals and grotesques. The large and noble architectural form, combined with the harmonious colour of the faded red brick and pallid stone, makes a very beautiful and impressive effect, which is enhanced by the dim light crossed by misty shafts of sunlight, and lost in deep shadows beyond, and by the silence, the spaciousness, the sharp note of voiceless prayer that rises up from a little group of shawled figures bowed before some altar, or from a solitary figure suppliant at the foot of a pillar. The very incongruities in the building and in the ornamentation add to the interest. Here are fragments of old fresco peeling from pillar and vaulted roof; there newly restored gaudy figures; everywhere the past and the present joining in one living whole. You feel here the continuity of religious fervour, of Christian love and faith, through all the changes of thought and taste during eight centuries.



INTERIOR OF ST. EUSTORGIO.

The institution of a convent of Dominicans for the service of the church in 1227, and the burial here of their famous prior, Peter of Verona, murdered by heretics in 1252, drew the attention of the pious to St. Eustorgio just when art was showing a new vitality. The church still contains a number of sculptured monuments of Milanese nobles, who were buried here in the chapels which they built in the centuries immediately following. These are of great interest to the student of Lombard art. The first chapel on the right at the bottom of the church was not built till 1484, and the tomb within it is of the Renaissance period, and is the work of the Cazzaniga and of Benedetto Briosco. The tomb of a young fifteenth century knight, Pietro Torelli, who died in battle at the age of eighteen, is in the next chapel. His effigy lies on the top, and the Madonna and Child, with various saints, are sculptured on the front, perhaps by Jacopo da Tradate.[12] The canopy is later and inferior work. A chapel farther up has

12. Mongeri, *L'Arte in Milano*.

ruined fourteenth century frescoes in the vaulting, representing apparently the four Doctors of the Church in grand canopied seats. The next contains the rich Gothic tomb of Stefano Visconte, son of the great Matteo and father of Bernabò and Galeazzo. The monument dates from the middle of the fourteenth century. Upon the front is a bas-relief of Madonna and Child, with the kneeling figures of Stefano and his wife, Valentina Doria, the one being presented by his name-saint, St. Stephen, behind whom stand Peter Martyr and Peter the Apostle, the other by St. John Baptist, with St. John the Evangelist and St. Paul behind. Beneath the cusped arch of the canopy is Madonna again, a stately maternal type, smiling as she holds a fruit above the Child, as if playing with His eagerness to seize it—a motive more graceful and natural than is usual in the rather stiff and heavy compositions of the Lombard masters of that period. The dignity and naturalism of this sculpture altogether shows the hand of one of the most successful followers of the Pisan Giovanni di Balduccio.

The monument in the next chapel is to Gaspare Visconte, of a collateral branch of the reigning House, who had been sent on embassies to England and was a Knight of the Garter. It resembles Stefano's in design, but the bas-reliefs are later and inferior work. Opposite is the recumbent statue, torn from its right place and set up against the wall, of Gaspare's wife, Agnese Besozzi (died 1417), with her sons at her feet. Above this stone is a sarcophagus, with a bas-relief of the Coronation of the Virgin, with angels and saints and devotees, also by some scholar of

Giovanni di Balduccio. The Snake emblazoned on it shows that it commemorates some of the Visconte family, probably one Uberto and his son Giovanni, with their respective wives. The last chapel on this side is said to have been dedicated by Martino della Torre to his name-saint of Tours. No trace of the great Guelf House remains in it. It seems to have been usurped by their conquerors, the Visconti, whose Snake appears in the fifteenth century frescoes —much damaged by the whitewash which once covered them—upon the vaulted roof. In these, which represent the Evangelic Beasts and various saints, there appears on the left a woman's figure carrying a shield with the letters 'B. M.' and a crown upon it, in homage, it would seem, to the Duchess Bianca Maria Visconte Sforza.

The arch of the east wall in the arm of the church is covered with a large faded fresco of the Adoration of the Magi, attributed by some to Bramantino. In the Chapel of the Magi below a massive and quite unadorned sarcophagus purports to be the tomb where the bodies of the Three Kings reposed. They had been brought hither, according to tradition, by home-returning crusaders, and here they lay, worshipped and plied with rich offerings by faithful pilgrims from all parts of Christendom, until 1164, when they were carried off by Barbarossa's chancellor, the Archbishop of Cologne, as some of the most precious spoils of the conquered city. The old story of the Wise Men is sculptured over the altar by Gio. di Balduccio, or more probably by one of his scholars. It is a crowded composition, in which the vivacity and movement of the short thick figures show the growing tendency towards realism still restrained by classic traditions.

On the wall opposite this chapel is the fourteenth century tomb of Protaso Caimi, a noble Milanese knight; it is decorated with the familiar composition of the occupant kneeling before Madonna, with saints in attendance, among whom may be noticed Sta. Martina, holding her lion across her by its fore and hind legs. A coloured and gilded statue of St. Eugenius, of rigid archaic style, but probably not earlier than the end of the thirteenth century, stands also in this part of the church.

The richly sculptured altarpiece of the High Altar still shows the Pisan influence. But it belongs to the end of the fourteenth century, when it was presented to the church by Gian Galeazzo Visconte, and shows in the attitudes and draperies and long slender forms a new delicacy of workmanship and a new search for sentiment and grace, notably in the Madonna with head turned and throat stretched, standing beside the cross, and the grieving St. John on the other side. The upper part, with the stucco statues, is a seventeenth century restoration.

Passing behind the High Altar, through the crypt or under choir, which was built in 1537 and is supported on columns once forming part of the cloister of the adjoining convent, and through a vestibule with remains of old frescoes on the walls, we come to the Capella di S. Pietro Martire—the Portinari Chapel—the exterior of which has been already described. In this rich and complex structure, rectangular below and rising by the grand curves of wide-spanned arches to a lofty sixteen-sided cupola, in the delicate arcade and parapet running round it high up, in the beautiful terra-cotta decoration of frieze and cornices, the sculptured arabesques of the pilasters, the frescoes in spandril and arch, we

recognise the new spirit of the Renaissance. The architecture is of Tuscan inspiration, though certain details, such as the point still visible in the rather ornate windows, are indicative of Lombard taste. The chapel, which in form recalls the Pazzi Chapel in Florence—though it lacks the perfect purity and restraint of that wonderful building—is always supposed, though without any positive evidence, to be by Brunelleschi's pupil, Michelozzo. The general design may be regarded as certainly Michelozzo's, and much also of the ornamentation, especially the charming stucco frieze of dancing angels, light graceful forms instinct with winged motion and linked by a long chain from which depend great bells of fruit and foliage. The same great bells or tassels with fat *putti* swinging on them, compose the delightful arabesques on the pilasters. To Vincenzo Foppa, chief of the early Milanese school of painters, was entrusted the fresco decoration of the chapel. The four Fathers of the Church, in tondi in the spandrils, figures of a robust and quiet realism, full of a naturally-expressed dignity and fresh and decorative in colour, are some of his finest work. The other frescoes, four large scenes representing scenes from the life of Peter Martyr—the Saint preaching at Florence; confounding a false miracle-worker at the altar; tending a youth who has fallen from the top of a building and whom he has miraculously saved from death; and being stabbed to death by heretics—are Foppa's design and in part his work, but they have been much restored, and in their present state are hardly worthy of him.

The monument of Peter Martyr occupies the middle of the chapel, which was built to enshrine his head only, and not this huge Trecento tomb containing the rest of his body, which was moved here in the

seventeenth century from its place in the church and is a superfluous and cumbersome feature, quite out of keeping with the finished little Renaissance building. In itself the tomb is a very fine and important work, the masterpiece of Giovanni di Balduccio—though in parts the help of his scholars is visible—the model in thought and style for the monumental sculptors of the Trecento in Milan. The name of the sculptor and the date, 1239, are inscribed upon it. The sarcophagus is decorated with bas-reliefs narrative of the Saint's career, crowded and vivacious compositions, in all of which except that of the healing of the dumb boy an inferior hand has been traced.[13] Figures of the Virtues, stately and classic in type though characteristically thick and short, stand against the pilasters, each with feet planted on some symbolic creature. The different orders of angels are represented by figures on the top of the sarcophagus, and the pyramidal cover is decorated with more bas-reliefs—a king and queen kneeling, a bishop, friars and devotees, the Saint crowned by angels and blessing the people of Milan. The monument is completed by a beautiful Gothic canopy with Madonna enthroned between St. Dominic and St. Peter Martyr.

13. Ventura, *Storia dell' Arte*, vol. 4, p. 562.

S. Vincenzo in Prato, to the west of San Lorenzo, is a beautiful example of early Romanesque. Built by Abbot Gisilberto in 833, it was restored after 1000, and after undergoing the usual transformations of the baroque period it was reduced quite recently to its old Lombard form of three aisles ending in three apses, the principal apse containing the sanctuary

being raised above a deep crypt. The brick exterior, with the row of deep niches round the apse and the ornamental *archetti* beneath the roof, is very picturesque and characteristic.

Another interesting building of the end of the tenth century is the abandoned fragment of the old Church of S. Celso, which gives its name to the great adjacent temple of Sta. Maria di S. Celso. The principal part of the old basilica was pulled down in 1818 to give light and air to its overgrown neighbour, and there is little more than the apse now left, and some interesting capitals of Romanesque style inside and outside the building. The fine old doorway has fortunately escaped destruction, and has been embodied in a new façade, built in 1851. Upon the architrave is a rude bas-relief depicting the story of San Celso and his companion, San Nazaro, who were martyred in the Field of the Three Mulberry Trees, the very spot where the church stands. The decaying wooden doors and the Madonna and saints at the top are of the fifteenth century.

S. Calimero, to the north-east, is also Romanesque. S. Nazaro, close to the last, one of the oldest foundations, standing in the days of St. Ambrose, rebuilt in later centuries and again completely transformed by Cardinal Borromeo, has preserved some Romanesque features in its exterior. Within there are some old stained-glass windows of German workmanship. A very precious silver coffer, with beautiful reliefs of late Roman workmanship, is also kept here. Attached to the church is a sepulchral chapel, built for Gian Giacomo Trivulzio by Francesco da Briosco in 1518. The tombs of the great Marshal and of members of his family, with their

recumbent figures carved upon them by sixteenth century sculptors, may be seen in it.

S. Giovanni alla Conca, also a very ancient church and much favoured by Bernabò Visconti, has a fine thirteenth century façade, restored.

A very ancient church, said to have been the first built in Milan, on the site of a temple to the Sun, is the little S. Babila, just opposite the Column with the Lion, which marks the place of the old Porta Orientale at the beginning of Corso Venezia. As seen now S. Babila is a complete restoration, very scientifically accomplished in the last few years, and presents within and without a very perfect model of a Lombard church of the early centuries after the 1000.

Most of these early Milanese buildings have indeed to be accepted on the faith of the modern restorer, but for whom these interesting churches would still be vested in the hideous baroque disfigurements of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. S. Sepolcro, close to the Biblioteca Ambrosiana, is one of these. The towers, the crypt—studied with much interest by Leonardo da Vinci—and the exterior of the apse alone remained of the eleventh or twelfth century church, and these have been lately restored and a new façade built in appropriate style to replace the Borromean substitute for the original. The interior is quite spoilt. In the sacristy there is a Nativity by Gianpietrino, a characteristic work, with some infants of attractively soft contours, but curiously brown flesh colour in the foreground. Sta. Maria a Beltrade, off Via Torino on the west side, is of very ancient origin, but has nothing of interest left except a twelfth century bas-relief of rudest and most childish style upon the wall outside, representing the

old Candlemas procession in which an image of Madonna was carried from this church to the Cathedral, a Christian substitute for the Pagan ceremony in honour of Cybele.

Another ancient Milanese sanctuary, the Chapel of S. Satiro, built in 879, was restored in the Renaissance period, and incorporated with the Church of Sta. Maria presso S. Satiro.[14]

14. See Chapter XIII.

S. Simpliciano, in the north of the city, has preserved three beautiful doorways of the Romanesque period, enriched with sculptured marble columns and roll mouldings. The eleventh century interior was enlarged in the late fifteenth century, and transformed in later restorations. Its chief interest now is the great fresco in the apse—the Coronation of the Virgin—an imposing composition by Borgognone in his advanced years, rich and decorative in colour, and remarkable for Quattrocento simplicity of treatment and feeling at a time when the great Cinquecentists had already revolutionised artistic ideals.

To the east of S. Simpliciano, close to the Palazzo di Brera, stands S. Marco, which in the exterior of the transepts alone shows traces of its original thirteenth century form. The beautiful pointed door, with the statues in Gothic niches above, was built more than a century later. The rest of the façade is modern, and the whole exterior wears a vesture of new red brick. The campanile, with its pointed steeple and frieze of interlaced *archetti*, is early fourteenth century and very characteristic of the brick building of that period. The interior is baroque, but in the north

transept there are some fine sepulchral monuments of Milanese nobles. They are all of the school of Giovanni di Balduccio, and the bas-reliefs upon them resemble in arrangement and style the tombs already seen in St. Eustorgio. One is to Salvarino Aliprandi, of an ancient patrician family in the city, who died 1344. Another commemorates Lanfranco Settala, General of the Augustinian Order and founder of the church, who died in 1264. His genial effigy is carved on the tomb, seated in his preceptor's chair, with his devout and diminutive pupils around him. Here is also the tomb of Martino Aliprandi, a man distinguished for his learning and eloquence, sent as envoy from Azzo Visconte to Pope John XXII. in 1332, and yet another, that of Giacomo Bossi, a knight of the Empire, who died in 1355. The monument of the Birago family, which is placed above the last, though sculptured as late as 1455 by Cristoforo dei Luvoni, shows little artistic advance on the Trecento works.

Of secular buildings of the Romanesque and early Gothic period hardly anything is now left in Milan. The Palazzo della Ragione, however, still stands, though disfigured in later days, on the spot which was once the Broletto Nuovo, the centre and citadel of civic life in the Republican era, a space enclosed in defensive walls and pierced by six gates, corresponding in direction to the principal gates of the city. The walls were built and the seat of the Podestà was transferred thither early in the thirteenth century from the Broletto Vecchio beside the Cathedral, a move significant of the complete liberation of the Commune from the old domination of the Archbishop. The word Broletto appears to be derived from *brolo*, signifying in Milanese a garden, the old Broletto having been once the garden of the

Archbishop; but the name followed the civic offices with which it had become inseparably associated—hence Broletto Nuovo. The move was in fact a return of the chief authority in the city to its old abode, since the Broletto Nuovo was apparently the citadel in Roman times, and the seat later on of the military governors, called *Dukes*, under the Lombard rulers. The name of Curia Ducis, the Court of the Duke, still survives in the name Cordusio, by which the big modern piazza close by is called.

The Palazzo della Ragione was built in 1228, with a vast open portico below and a great hall above, which was reached, not by a staircase in the building, but over the archway still existing at the north end. It was altered in later times, and an incongruous upper storey was added in the eighteenth century. It is now being restored. The palace stood till 1866 in the centre of a piazza—the original Broletto in fact—which was enclosed on the north side by the great Palazzo dei Giurisconsulti. The modern Via Mercanti now runs between it and the last-named palace, but on the other side it faces into the little Piazza dei Mercanti, which represents all that remains of the Broletto, and is still surrounded by old palaces. It is the one bit of mediæval Milan left, apart from single buildings. On this side of the Palazzo della Ragione there is a little equestrian statue of the Podestà Oldrado da Tresseno, with his name and the date, 1233, beneath, and some Leonine verses in which he is lauded in an elegant rhyme for building the upper storey of the palace and for sedulously performing his duty of burning heretics.

Qui solum struxit Catharos ut debuit uxit.



STATUE OF
OLDRADO DA
TRESSENO

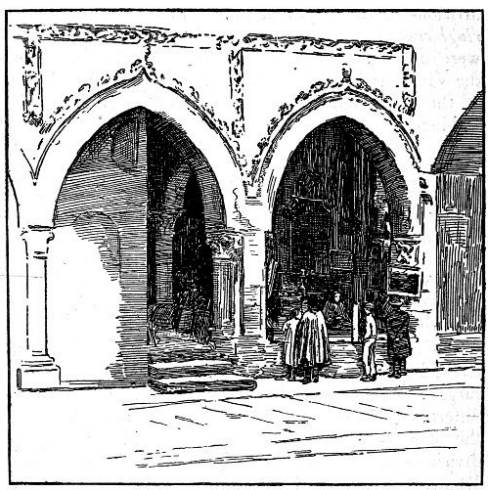
The statue is by Benedetto Antelami,[15] chief of the so-called Comacine masters—predecessors of the Campionesi—and best known by his sculptures on the Cathedral and Baptistery at Parma. It is the work of his old age. It shows a feeling for nature and a power of expression immensely in advance of the twelfth century sculptors, and marks the gradual emancipation of thought from the strange terror and the sense of human littleness in the midst of natural and supernatural forces, which oppressed the Middle Ages. Here is a work of art in honour of one who is neither God nor saint—a new conception of man's importance in the scheme of the Universe.

15.
Venturi, *Storia dell' Arte*, vol. 3, p. 340.

On the south side of the piazza is the Loggia degli Osii, built, as a scarcely legible inscription in the wall records, in 1316, by Matteo Visconte, who had acquired the houses of the Osii, a Milanese family, for the purpose. Built in and partly concealed in later

times, the old features of this palace have been quite recently disclosed by careful restoration. The beautiful pointed arcade of the loggia rests upon a parapet decorated with the shields of the Visconti and of the different divisions of the city, and in the middle projects the *ringhiera* or balcony, from which official harangues were made and decrees proclaimed. The statues of the Virgin and various saints in the deeply-sunk niches of the storey above are of the school of Giovanni di Balduccio.

The palace on the right hand of the loggia, of heavy ornate style, replaced in the seventeenth century a much earlier building. The west side of the piazza is filled by a little palace, originally built by Azzo Visconte early in the fourteenth century for the bankers and money-changers. It is decorated with charming terra-cotta ornamentation, and has been partly restored, but it is much spoilt by modern occupation and use for business purposes.



PALAZZO DEI BANCHIERI

On this spot of the Broletto Nuovo all the busy excited life of mediæval Milan once swayed and surged. This was the point upon which all the different parts of the city converged, and hither at the call of danger marched the militia of each division, called by the name of its gate, Porta Romana, Porta Ticinese, etc., to go forth again, each preceded by its gonfalon, to the defence of the respective gates and quarters. Or if the decree of the Republic were for an offensive expedition, the Caroccio would be drawn forth from its place in the Duomo and brought here, and the combined host, gathering round it, would pass out in order of battle. In the upper chamber of the Palazzo della Ragione public business was transacted, and the portico below was the assembly place for the citizens for the discussion of public affairs and for amusement and sport, all that common social life, shared together by noble and plebeian, of republican Italy in the Middle Ages. Here were brought the captured enemies of the Republic—that is, of the party in power. In some dark and secure corner of the palace there were cages inhabited by living prisoners. The chroniclers relate how Napo della Torre, to revenge his brother Paganino's death at the hands of Milanese exiles in Vercelli, had thirteen noble prisoners carried to the Broletto and their heads smitten off one by one, till his own young son fell at his feet and vowed that he himself would not live if the life of the thirteenth—a certain physician who had lately cured the boy of a mortal sickness—were not spared. But the statue of Oldrado, burner of heretics, has not looked down on grim scenes only. Here many great feasts took place, such as that one which Francesco della Torre made in 1268 to celebrate the passage through Milan of Margaret of Burgundy, the bride of Charles of Anjou,

when two oxen stuffed with pigs and sheep were roasted in the Broletto, and more than three thousand persons were fed; tournaments also were often held here in honour of victories and joyful events. We read of tumults too, and of the Milanese women on one occasion, when a rumour of new taxes had gone forth, besieging the palace with knives in their hands and seizing and selling all the salt, which was then as always a Government monopoly and was stored in an adjacent building.

Another monument of Milan's republican days, and of her noble struggles for liberty in the twelfth century, is the old Porta Nuova, often called the Portone,—the massive arches at the end of the Via Manzoni. This is one of the gates built in defiance of Barbarossa in 1171. It was originally decorated with rude sculptures representing the return of the Milanese, after the destruction of the city in 1162, and with a figure of Barbarossa seated cross-legged on a devil; these are now in the Castello. The bas-relief with two Roman heads, still to be seen on the gate, is said to be a relic of the older gate corresponding to this one in the Roman walls. The old towers have been pulled down.

CHAPTER XIII
Gothic and Renaissance Buildings

"O tempo consumatore delle cose e o invidiosa antichità."—LEONARDO DA VINCI.

A campanile here and there about the city, as for example those of S. Gottardo and S. Marco, already described, the richly decorated belfry of St. Antonio —near the Ospedale Maggiore—and but little else, remains in Milan of the graceful Gothic brick building of the period, early fourteenth century, when Azzo Visconte beautified the city with many new edifices. The Duomo stands as the great monument of Gian Galeazzo Visconte's time, half a century or so later.



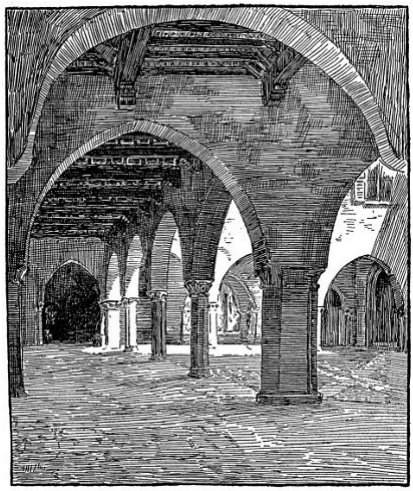
DOORWAY OF PALAZZO BORROMEO

From the beginning of the fifteenth century dates the Palazzo Borromeo, a rare example, still surviving, of the domestic building of the Gothic period. The fine pointed doorway is enriched with sculptured mouldings of beautiful design, into which at the top is introduced the heraldic device of the House, the Camel couched in a basket, emblematic of the patience and the far journeyings of the *Bonromei*, the Good Pilgrims. The cortile, which is exceedingly picturesque, has porticoes with pointed arches of wide span, resting on low octagonal pillars with simple capitals of stiff foliage. On one side, where there is no portico, the windows are richly ornamented with terra-cotta mouldings, and are of a somewhat later date. They have been recently restored, and the fresco decoration in the wall appears too freshly repainted. The Bit, also a device of the Borromei, is moulded beneath the windows, and the motto Humilitas, surmounted by a crown—a suggestive juxtaposition—is repeated everywhere in the painted pattern. Fragments of early fifteenth century frescoes have been uncovered on other parts of the walls in the cortile. In one corner we see a company of sweetfaced, pensive ladies, with the shaven foreheads and turban-like head-dresses and coiffures of the period, gathered on a ship, which a reverend Signor, in crimson cloak and cap, seems to await at a landing-place, a page without beginning or end of one of those entrancing stories of Ursula and her maidens, or some other saint, or of errant knights and beautiful princesses which, figured thus upon the walls, fed the romantic spirit of mediæval households. More complete and of great charm are some frescoes in a chamber on the ground floor of the palace, which visitors are allowed to see. They depict the pleasant country life of the Milanese

nobles in the fifteenth century—gaily attired ladies and gentlemen, with high head-dresses and broad hats, seated round a table under a tree in a wide landscape, playing the game of cards called *tarocco*, others dancing, a lady with an astonishingly tall form and tiny head performing a *pas seul*. These paintings suggest to some extent Pisanello's style, and are doubtless by one of the many painters—Michelino da Besozzo, the Zavatarii, and others, who were covering the walls of the Viscontean palaces in Milan and elsewhere with scenes of the same sort, all now long vanished.

The Borromeo Art Collection will be spoken of in a later chapter.

Buildings of the middle and second half of the fifteenth century, the period of the Sforza, those great patrons of architecture and all the arts, are much more numerous. Sta. Maria del Carmine, a little to the south-west of the Brera, was built under the direction of Guiniforte Solari about 1446, and is the first of the transitional period from Gothic to Renaissance. It has a modern façade, and the nave is the only original part, the choir having been rebuilt late in the sixteenth century. In a chapel on the north side there is a Madonna by Luini, much spoilt.



CORTILE OF PALAZZO BORROMEO

Sta. Maria Incoronata, further north, near Porta Garibaldi, consists of two churches in one, that on the right built by the Augustinian monks, with the help of Francesco Sforza, in 1451, the other by the Duchess Bianca Maria ten years later. The twin building is an interesting memorial of the closely united ducal pair. It has been much modernised. The exterior of the north side and of the apse, and the tower, with its rich terra-cotta decoration, make a very picturesque mass of brick building. Inside the church is the fifteenth century tomb of Gabriele da Cotignola, brother of Francesco Sforza and Archbishop of Milan, with his recumbent effigy set up against the wall. Also monuments to some of the Bossi family, with finely carved profile heads, perhaps by one of the Busti; a monument to Giovanni Tolentino, attributed to Fusina, and one or two other sculptured memorials, also of Renaissance style.

The interesting Church of S. Pietro in Gessate, in the east, has kept more of its original form. It was built about 1460, probably by Guiniforte Solari, and enlarged later. The nave, of a pure and simple Gothic, is flanked with chapels of the same style, built by noble Milanese families. Some of these have escaped seventeenth and eighteenth century disfigurement. The second chapel on the right has mediocre and much repainted frescoes of the Marriage and Death of the Virgin. The decoration of the roof with figures of saints in simulated niches, and angels in medallions resembling round windows, is a very favourite arrangement with the Milanese painters. The frescoes in the chapel of St. Anthony—the next going upwards—are attributed to Montorfano. In the large altarpiece Mariotto Obiano da Perugia, and Antonia de Michelotti, his wife, founders of the chapel, are portrayed kneeling to the enthroned Virgin, to whom they are being recommended by St. Benedict and St. Anthony respectively. Above is the Dead Christ with St. Sebastian and St. Roch. The architectural details of this picture are very rich, and the marvellously patterned dress of the lady is painted with the utmost minuteness and finish. The dark ashen hue of the Virgin's face, the high lights on the salient features, the ugly little angel playing on the lute, and the general impression of laborious care are all very characteristic of the uninspired but painstaking minor painters of the earlier Milanese school.

The great frescoes of the Capella Grifi in the south transept are more important, and are interesting as being in part by Bernardo Zenale, of whom there is only one other undisputed work known. As in the altarpiece at Treviglio, so here Zenale was associated with Buttinone. The frescoes are, however, so much

ruined that it is difficult to judge them or to distinguish the different hands. On the left wall are scenes from the life of St. Ambrose, with groups of fifteenth century courtiers in the foreground. The subjects on the right are almost obliterated, but we seem to distinguish St. Ambrose again, seated in judgment. The curious figure above, of a man hanging, is inexplicable, unless as a symbol of justice visited on malefactors. The general colour of the painting is warm and decorative, and more spontaneous than Buttinone's laboured easel pictures would make us expect. The types of some of the courtiers in the left-hand fresco, and the women with long plaited hair on the right are so much fairer and more refined than anything one knows of Buttinone's that one is led to attribute that part to Zenale; but the rather coarse angels of the vaulted roof, very recently uncovered, seem to be very Buttinone. The white-robed figure of St. Ambrose below them, on a white horse against a blue sky, prancing forth against the Arians, scourge in hand, is extremely decorative. On the floor of the chapel, bereft of the sarcophagus on which it once rested, lies the recumbent figure of Ambrogio Grifi, buried here in 1495.

In the Via Filodrammatici, close to La Scala, is the beautiful old doorway of the Palazzo Vimercati, which belongs to the early Sforzesque period. The portrait of Duke Francesco, sculptured in profile, decorates the front of the archivolt, with those of Julius Cæsar and Alexander in flattering conjunction on either side. The rich band of foliage round the arch culminates in the pine-cone, one of the emblems of the Sforza. There is much resemblance between this door and that of the Borromeo Palace.

One of the greatest achievements of Francesco Sforza

and Bianca Maria, and a proof of an advanced sentiment of humanity, was the erection of the vast Ospedale Maggiore for the reception and care of the sick, still to this day the chief hospital of Milan.[16] It was begun in 1456 by the Florentine architect, Antonio Averulino, or Filarete, who made the plans and carried on the work till 1465, when he was supplanted by his Lombard rival, Guiniforte Solari. The southern portion, distinguished by its elegance and comparative purity of style from the rest, is the only part of the immense façade which is the original fifteenth century work. The diversity of architects is plainly revealed in this portion. The lower part, with its stately round-headed arcade and restrained ornamentation, is by the pupil of Brunelleschi; while in the windows of the upper storey, not interspaced in correspondence with the arcade below, the Lombard affection for the pointed arch and for luxuriant decoration has prevailed over the original design of the Florentine. The building is one of the richest examples of the brick and terra-cotta architecture of North Italy, and this meeting of Gothic and Renaissance ideals in it adds to its interest. The rest of the façade was built in

16. The famous Lazaretto, outside the old Porta Orientale, a beautiful fifteenth century building, where the plague-stricken thousands were huddled in the awful visitations of 1576 and 1630, as described in the *Promessi Sposi*, has been pulled down.

the seventeenth century, in imitation of the earlier part, but the coarseness and crowded excess of the terra-cotta decoration betrays its period. In the great marble portal, the architect, Ricchini, has frankly

followed the style of his own times. Within there is a vast cortile of the same date. On the south side part of the fifteenth century building is incorporated in it. Two much spoilt paintings of 1472, by Francesco Vico, representing Francesco and Bianca Maria Sforza and their benefactions to the hospital, are in one of the wards. Passages on the right lead out of the principal cortile into smaller courts, fragmentary and encumbered with erections for hospital use, but evidently remains of the original building. The elegance and lightness of the porticoes here, the graceful terra-cotta ornamentation of the archivolts, the richness of the moulded brick cornices, the charming colour of the brick and stone used together, show how beautiful the hospital must once have been. These old cortiles have been attributed to Bramante, but apparently with no more justification than most of the other buildings of this style in Milan, labelled indiscriminately in uncritical times as Bramantesque.

The Via dell' Ospedale opens into the piazza beside S. Stefano, where Galeazzo Maria Sforza, was stabbed to death by Girolamo Olgiati and his companions on St. Stephen's Day, 1476. The church, of very ancient foundation, has been completely modernised, and the atrium where the deed was accomplished has disappeared altogether. A primitive Madonna and Saints is frescoed over an altar on the south side, and beside the west entrance is an archaic bas-relief representing Christ blessing two saints. Via Brolo leads hence into Piazza Verzieri, the fruit and vegetable market, where the rows of women hucksters, in their bright kerchiefs and coloured skirts, seated beneath vast white umbrellas, make a picturesque scene in spite of the modernised surroundings.

The traces of Bramante's handiwork in Milan, where he is known to have been employed for many years, have vanished more and more in the light of the careful studies of recent times. But in the Church of Sta. Maria delle Grazie we do at last come upon them, though his part in this building also seems to be much less than was generally supposed. The famous Dominican church, with its memories of Lodovico il Moro and Beatrice d'Este, of Leonardo and Bramante, of the novelist Prior, Matteo Bandello, brings us to the full Renaissance. It is in part, however, of the transition style, and links together the earlier and later Sforzesque periods. It was built for the Dominicans in 1465, by Count Gaspare Vimercati, one of Francesco Sforza's chief supporters, and became later a special object of interest to the Moro, who, not satisfied with its already antiquated style, began to rebuild it completely as soon as he attained the Dukedom. His project was, however, only carried out as far as the choir and cupola. This part used always to be, and is still by some, attributed to Bramante, but there is no evidence that he contributed except with his advice and influence to the work. The great clustered pile, as it appears outside, with its rectangular and circular projections, its panels and pilasters, parapets, arcades, columns and candelabra, its medallions and perforated wheels, seems typical of Renaissance ideas as interpreted by the Lombard architects, with their dislike for simplicity and broad effects, their fondness for broken surfaces and elaborate detail, their natural redundancy. It is grandiose, melancholy and cold. Round the base are shields bearing the various devices of the Sforza. The flank of the church, with its long windows and round *oculi*, and

rich terra-cotta mouldings, is of the earlier style used by the Solari, as is also the façade, but here in the beautiful marble portal, the only part accomplished of the new front projected by Lodovico, we come upon what is generally allowed to be actually Bramante's work. Its large and dignified character, and the pure design of the arabesques, show a great artist, and a character foreign to the Lombard. The *scoppetta*, il Moro's peculiar emblem, is introduced into the pattern on the pilaster on the right hand of the door.

On entering the church one cannot but feel grateful that the Moro's ambitious designs never arrived at the destruction of this beautiful Gothic nave, so simple and so graceful, so devout and suggestive, with its grey columns and hoary colour and touches of faded fresco everywhere. The story goes that Count Gaspare Vimercati, the founder, and Fra Jacopo Sestio, who was in charge of the work for the Dominicans, had much contention over it, the one desiring a fine handsome building, the other a sanctuary suited to the poverty and humility of the friars. They seem to have succeeded in embodying the ideals of both. From the dim Gothic aisles one emerges with a curious sense of contrast into the great space beyond, where immense arches, springing from heavy pilasters, support a lofty dome, whence abundant light pours down from a circle of windows. This is, of course, the later part of the building. The cupola, which is of nobler and severer aspect within than outside, is much disfigured by baroque decorations. The device of painting objects in perspective, to simulate relief, had already attracted the architects even of the great age, as is shown here, where it is used with ingenuity and restraint in the simulated parts of the gallery in the

lowest storey of the dome. The Evangelists in the spandrils are a glaring instance of its abuse in later times.

The choir has fine stalls of 1470, decorated with figures and elaborate designs in intarsia. High up on the right, near the organ, is a charming fresco by Luini, painted in 1517, of the Virgin and Saints and a devotee, one Laschenaer, an officer of Louis XII.'s. It was to this choir, still unfinished, that the dead body of the young Duchess Beatrice was carried in those mournful early days of 1497, and here that the friars chanted Masses round her bier for seven days and nights without ceasing, and that amid a countless host of mourners bearing torches she was committed to her tomb. Hither came her husband, to weep and pray over her grave, before he abandoned his and her Milan to the invader. Beneath the pavement behind the High Altar she lies now, her infant children beside her. Some say that the Moro's body, recovered from its far-off exile in France, rests here too beside it, but this is very uncertain. Anyhow a pitiful obscurity covers this grave in which those brief years of an incomparable pride and glory ended —not even a stone marks it now. The monument carved for it by Cristoforo Solari, with the effigies of the husband and wife upon it, has been removed to the Certosa of Pavia.

There are some ruined frescoes by Gaudenzio Ferrari in the fourth Chapel on the south side of the church. The old, low-vaulted ornate chapel of the Rosario, on the north side, has some fifteenth century frescoes, also ruined. Close to the altar is a large sepulchral monument to the Della Torre family, late fifteenth century, attributed to the Cazzaniga. The monument to Branda Castiglione, with the realistic profile and

delicate arabesques, is perhaps by Briosco,[17] and that to the Della Valle by Fusina.

17.
See Malaguzzi Valeri, *G. A. Amadeo*, p. 238.

The most interesting part of the building architecturally is the small cloister which leads to the old sacristy, both recently restored. Here the beautiful porticoes, in which the characteristic Lombard charm of colour due to the combination of brick and stone is joined to a singular purity and grace of form, justify the traditional belief that Bramante was the architect. The sacristy also, a lofty rectangular building, is probably his. The roof is decorated with a curious painted pattern of intertwisted cords, such as is seen in some of Leonardo's drawings. There are beautiful presses, some of which are inlaid, others painted in imitation of inlay; they are decorated with small painted scenes, biblical and legendary. They were begun in 1498 by the sacristan, Fra Vincenzo Spanzotto, and continued later under the care of Matteo Bandello. In the recess at the east end there is a very poor altarpiece, representing Gaspare Vimercati kneeling before St. John Baptist, attributed to Marco d'Oggiono; and on either side of the chapel a profile in bas-relief, one a portrait of the Moro, the other of his son Maximilian, a charming-looking youth with curling hair, at about the age when he returned to Milan as Duke—by some Milanese sculptor of the early sixteenth century. A fresco on the right-hand side, by Luini, shows Madonna, with Beatrice d'Este and one of her little sons kneeling as devotees. It is a charming presentment, joyous and young, of the princess as she may have remained in the memory of the artist from the days of his youth.

The convent, now long converted to secular purposes, was, like the church, the object of Lodovico Sforza's generosity. Leonardo da Vinci was commissioned by him to decorate the refectory with paintings, and there the Florentine artist, working slowly through many years, produced his Last Supper. The work was probably begun soon after 1483, and apparently not finished till 1498. The fate that befell it within a few years is one of the greatest tragedies in the history of art. Owing to his experimental use of oil, instead of the usual method of wall-painting, it was already quite ruined—*rovinata tutta*—when Lomazzo wrote his treatise on painting, sixty years later, and as early as 1536 it was, by Vasari's testimony, only a blur. The repeated restorations of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries have almost obliterated the faint remaining traces of the master's handiwork. The Dominicans wantonly contributed to the destruction of their priceless possession by cutting a door into their kitchen through the lower part of the central group, and Napoleon's troops, stabled in the hall in 1796, gave it a final battering.

The refectory stands beside the church. As one enters, the ghost of the great picture appears at the upper end of the long melancholy chamber. It seems at first sight as if nothing of the real work were left. *Cosa bella mortal passa*, Leonardo has said himself, and he, least of all, seems to have cared to give immortality to the beauty which he created. *E non d'arte*, he adds. And soon we perceive that this too is true here. For the deep and elemental significance of the painter's conception lives still in its largeness and entirety, expressed in the great lines of the composition, in the distribution of light and shade, in the disposition of the figures. Our eyes are carried up

by every line of the composition, every action of the subordinate figures, and left alone with the Christ. He sits upright, His hands spread out upon the table, His head against the space of light framed by the large middle window of the long chamber. On either side, but a little apart, so that no other head intrudes on this central space of light, are ranged the Twelve, in groups of three. The words have been uttered—*One of you shall betray me*—and a tempest of surprise and questioning agitates them. Peter, half rising, grasps the shoulder of John, who still sleeps on. Judas draws fiercely away, clutching the moneybag. Beyond this group, Andrew, James the Less, and Bartholomew, variously show distress and wonder. On the other side, James the Elder spreads his hands in horror; Thomas lifts his forefinger; Philip, risen, leans forward in earnest protest. Matthew, Thaddeus and Simon, beyond, comment eagerly on His words. But their agitation cannot touch that central stillness; it serves only to deepen the spiritual silence in which He sits solitary. He has eaten and drunk with them, but they have not understood. Love itself is asleep, leaning away to a sinner's breast. Only Hate understands and watches, proud and defiant, with tense grasp upon its desire. But even the splendid Judas, supremely evil, draws back afraid. The Passion has begun. Out there in the dawn lies Gethsemane. Calvary is beyond. *Could ye not watch with Me one hour?* will be but a question already answered; only the *Eli Eli lama Sabacthani* has yet to come.



To face p. 314]

LAST SUPPER, BY LEONARDO.
DETAIL, FIGURE OF CHRIST

[*A. Ferrario, Milan*

It is commonly said that Leonardo never quite finished the face of the Christ. In any case we do not see it now as he left it. The half-length pencil drawing in the Brera Gallery has been regarded as Leonardo's own study for this figure, but if it is genuine—which many authorities deny—it has been so much worked over by other hands that it has no value as an indication of the artist's conception, which remains for us unparticularised. Studies of the heads of Matthew, Simon and Judas fortunately exist in the Windsor Castle Collection and show the heroic lines on which they were designed by Leonardo. The drawings of the Apostles in the Weimar Collection, photographs of which are to be seen in the room, are judged to be copies of studies made by one of Leonardo's followers from the picture, and are valuable as giving a contemporary version of the originals. There are also a few genuine sketches at

Windsor and at Paris of some of the groups, and in Venice a drawing of the whole scene exists, probably a copy of one by the master. The subject had long occupied Leonardo's thoughts before he received the commission, and these sketches show the progress of his conception of it. Among his writings, too, there are ideas noted down of various attitudes and actions for the Apostles.

Some of the many copies made by Leonardo's pupils hang on the walls here; the most important is the one on the right hand nearest the original, by Marco d'Oggiono. Here the artist has followed his master's work as faithfully as he could, and it is extremely interesting to notice the differences into which his own temperament has insensibly led him. These are most apparent in the central figure, which he has inclined sideways and impressed with a sentimentality and effeminacy absolutely foreign to the attitude of the original. This shows the direction in which Leonardo's Lombard followers were disposed instinctively to carry his style, evolving a morbid type which has become too much associated with his name. The copyist appears to have altered the Apostles, also giving the weakness of exaggeration to their virile and spontaneous expression of emotion. It is from this copy, or rather from a copy of it and not from the ruined original, that the engraving was done by which the picture has become known all over the world, another instance of the strange fate of ruin or of travestied existence which has befallen so much of Leonardo's work. The other copies in the room lose value by their departure in part from the arrangement of the original.



LAST SUPPER, BY LEONARDO.
DETAIL, ST. JOHN, ST. PETER AND JUDAS

To face p. 316] [*A. Ferrario, Milan*

The great work in the Dominican convent attracted immense attention and interest even during its progress. It is often mentioned by writers of this time and a little later. Bandello, in one of his novels, gives an oft-quoted description of the painter at work. *He used often to go early in the morning and mount upon the platform and, from sunrise until the dusk of evening, never putting down his brush and forgetting to eat and drink, paint without ceasing. Then two, three or four days would pass when he would not touch it, but remained for one or two hours together contemplating, considering and examining within himself, judging his figures. I have seen him too, according as his caprice or humour moved him, go off at noon-day, when the sun was in Leo, from the Corte Vecchia, where he was composing his stupendous horse of clay, and come straight to the Grazie, and mounting the platform, take a brush and give one or two strokes to one of the figures, and straightway depart and go elsewhere.* Doubtless Bandello was often in that room, where the friars

watched the progress of the painting with great impatience, annoyed at the painter's unaccountable lengthiness. Duke Lodovico himself, finest and most appreciative of critics, would sometimes come, and many noble gentlemen were wont to visit the painter here and converse with him as they contemplated his work. The fame of the great picture spread quickly throughout Europe. When Louis XII. entered Milan in 1499, he came to see it, and expressed a desire, fortunately impracticable, to carry it away to his own country. With him were Duke Ercole of Ferrara, the Marquis Gian Francesco of Mantua, and many other brilliant and historic characters; among them was Cæsar Borgia, and possibly it was on this occasion, before his newly finished picture, that Leonardo first met this extraordinary man, into whose service he shortly after entered.

The other end of the refectory is filled with a vast fresco of the Crucifixion, by Montorfano, signed with his name and the date 1495. The perfect state of preservation of this poor, laboured and crowded composition, an inferior example even of the Milanese school, seems a bitter irony here. The Lombard painter, sticking to the old groove, has achieved the permanence which Leonardo recklessly risked for the sake of an experiment. At the lower corner of the painting, on either side, are portraits of the ducal family kneeling in devotion, Lodovico and the little Maximilian on the left, Beatrice and the younger child Francesco on the right, and these, unlike the rest of the picture, are in very bad condition—almost obliterated. Vasari affirms them to have been painted by Leonardo himself at the special command of the Duke, and in oil, like the Last Supper; but the portraits themselves, as far as can be judged from what remains of them, are quite

mediocre and do not bear out his statement.

In San Satiro, entered from Via Torino, we come at last to a building really by Bramante. The church is properly called Sta. Maria, the ancient S. Satiro being represented by a chapel incorporated with it. It was founded in 1476, on the site of a shrine containing a miraculous picture of the Virgin. It is a purely Renaissance building, but has certain peculiarities due to cramped conditions, the builder having been restricted in space and bound by the necessity of embodying the remains of the old Basilica of S. Satiro on one side and of an existing Chapel of S. Teodoro on the other. The difficulties have been ingeniously surmounted, and the effect is very fine, but it seems a pity that the genius of Bramante should not have had room for free play. The general impression on entering into the rich and gilded obscurity of the interior is of great breadth and spaciousness. The three aisles, in which the dividing pilasters and arches are unusually low in proportion to the height of the roof—a feature explained by the necessity of according them with the old S. Satiro, now the Chapel of the Pietà—open out into a great space roofed by a lofty cupola and with wide transepts. The church ends in a grandiose semicircular choir. Here the architect met with his chief difficulty, being prevented by the street outside from carrying the building as far eastward as was necessary for his design after allowing full scope for the rise of the cupola. He has overcome it by a deceptive use of perspective, the depth of the choir being simulated, not real. The device can only be admired for its ingenuity and the cleverness with which it is executed.

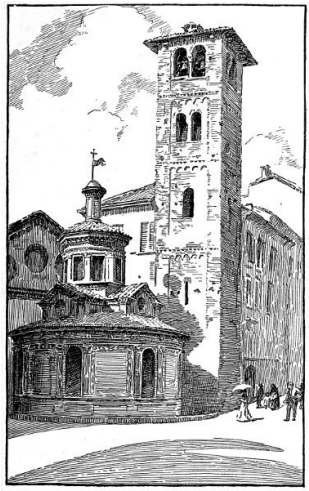
The gilded friezes and capitals of the nave are of the best Renaissance style, rich but of clear and not over-elaborate design. In the spandrils beneath the cupola are medallions circled with gilded ornamentation and containing paintings of the four Evangelists, by Bramantino, dignified forms, dim and rich in colour as seen from below. There is an old picture of the Virgin over the High Altar, with a portrait in it of the young Duke Gian Galeazzo Sforza, but it is held in such extreme veneration that the veil covering it may not be withdrawn except on one special day of the year.

The Chapel of the Pietà is at the end of the left transept. This ninth century structure, founded according to tradition by Archbishop Ansperto, was restored at the time when the large church was built beside it. The coloured terra-cotta group of the Deposition which gives its present name to the chapel, a crudely realistic work, ably modelled and utterly inartistic, has been ascribed, quite unjustifiably, to the famous Milanese goldsmith, Caradosso, a delicate worker in fine materials. It is probably by one of the many Lombard sculptors of the style of the Mantegazza.

Adjoining the church on the right is the Baptistery or sacristy, a beautiful little example of Bramante's work. It is a small octagonal building with a lofty dome and very richly decorated. The remarkable terra-cotta frieze, composed of heads projecting from wreaths, between groups of sportive *putti*, and painted to look like bronze, has been also always ascribed to Caradosso; but it is now pronounced to be certainly not his work, the style of the heads, vigorous, realistic, and somewhat coarse, showing all the characteristics of the late fifteenth century

Lombard school of sculpture, rather than the fine hand of the metal-worker, trained in Rome, whom documents, moreover, prove to have been absent from Milan when this work was executed.

The exterior of the church is much hidden by the houses around, but a bit of it can be seen closely in Via Falcone and shows Bramante's hand in the bold classic style, and the strong, simple, and graceful design of the terra-cotta ornamentation. From the Via Carlo Alberto one gets an impressive view of part of the low and elaborate Renaissance pile, proud and learned, and beautiful with brick and stucco decoration, swelling beside the simple old Campanile which belongs to the original ninth century church, and is the most ancient example of a Romanesque tower now existing in Milan.



SAN SATIRO

The Monastero Maggiore, also called S. Maurizio, in

the Corso Magenta, is an early sixteenth century building of typical Renaissance form, by Dolcebuono, and is extremely interesting on account of the complete and beautiful decoration of the interior by Luini and his school. It is one of the principal shrines for the worshippers of that master, who is seen at his best there. Luini was commissioned, about 1522, to paint this church by Alessandro Bentivoglio and his wife, Ippolita Sforza, their daughter Alessandra being a nun in the ancient and wealthy Benedictine convent to which it belonged. The interior, which is of great length, without aisles, has a very graceful gallery or loggia all round, and chapels in the corresponding space below. A partition wall in the middle, not reaching to the roof, divides it into halves, the lower half being the public church, with the High Altar at its upper end, and the part shut off behind the choir that reserved by the nuns for their private use. The whole interior has the effect of a splendid hall, rather than a church. The walls are entirely covered with paintings, of the strong gay colour characteristic of Luini's work, dimmed by time to a delightful harmony where the temptation to "freshen it up" has been resisted. Beautiful ladies, in richest robes, look out from beside the High Altar with that sweet familiar smile, of which the charm grows somewhat stale by too much repetition. The emblems they carry show them to be saints—Cecilia and Ursula holding a tabernacle between them, Apollonia and Lucia standing on either side of a small figure of the Redeemer. Above them appears a real lady of the time, Ippolita Sforza herself, a beautiful and stately creature, in a spreading white brocade dress, kneeling under the protecting presence of three saints, of whom Sta. Scholastica, who has her hand on Ippolita's shoulder, is said to be

a portrait of her daughter, the young Suora Alessandra. Alessandro Bentivoglio, a mild personage, who is lauded by his daughter in a memorial inscription for having done no one any harm—*nemini nocuit*—is depicted in a corresponding composition on the other side of the altar, with S. Benedict, St. John Baptist, and St. Lawrence. Above on the left is the Martyrdom of St. Maurice, and on the right St. Sigismund, the supposed original founder of the church, offering a model of the building to St. Maurice, who stands upon a pedestal, and in the background of the same composition is seen the Martyrdom of Sigismund. Between is represented the Assumption of the Virgin, in which the principal figure has been unfortunately much restored. The altarpiece is by Campi, 1578.

The frescoes of the chapel on the right of the sanctuary are also by Luini. In the midst is the Scourging of Christ; on the left the fine portrait of an old man, Francesco Besozzi, at whose charge the chapel was painted, and St. Catherine protecting him; on the right St. Lawrence. Above and at the sides are depicted scenes from the legend of St. Catherine. The figure of the saint being beheaded—on the right-hand side—is very beautiful. The meek bent head, with rich gold hair simply coiled, the adorable neck bared for the sword, the golden dress, composing an exquisite harmony of colour, make one forgive Luini for sometimes boring one a little. Bandello, in his story of the Contessa di Cellant, tells us that this is a portrait of that naughty and ill-fated lady, who was beheaded on the piazza of the Castello in 1524 for having induced one of her lovers to murder another. But there seems to be no real foundation for this identification, and it is difficult to associate this wholly lovely creature with the too

passionate Contessa.

The frescoes in the other chapels are by the school of Luini.

Passing into the choir, or Nuns' Church, we see on the other side of the dividing wall more frescoes by Luini himself, corresponding to the decoration on the public side. Here is another row of sister saints, whose beauty is the more enchanting for the veil spread over them by the centuries, and happily undisturbed. These gracious ladies stand for Apollonia, Lucia, Catherine, and Agatha. The story of the Passion is frescoed round the altar. Near by may be seen the arms of the Bentivogli and Sforza quartered together, and the initials of Alessandro and Hippolita, the benefactors of the church. The lower part of the wall is decorated in chiaroscuro, with angels and saints in simulated terra-cotta medallions. The ceiling painting over the altar—God the Father surrounded by saints—is by Borgognone, by whom are also the figures of bishops and saints between the arches on each side of the church. The rest of the frescoes with which the walls are everywhere covered are poor works, by the sons and followers of Luini. The carving of the double row of stalls, simple but of very good style, is of the same period as the church.

By a staircase, which emerges on a terrace, where you find yourself close to the ancient brick campanile of the convent—a relic, some say, of the Roman walls, or, according to other authorities, one of the towers built by Ansperto when he restored the walls in the ninth century—you are conducted into the upper gallery of the church. Over the doorways leading through this loggia there are half-length paintings of women saints by Boltraffio, exceedingly

charming where they have not been spoilt by repainting. They have the familiar contours of that artist's Madonnas, but the colour, unlike the hot and opaque tones of his oil-painting, is very fresh and delicate, and decorative. They are all there, the Martyrs, Catherine, Agnes, Agatha, and the rest, each sweet-visaged creature bearing a green branch flowering into red or some lovely blossom. Here is one of a type especially characteristic of Boltraffio, with long golden hair curling in rings over her shoulders; she is dressed in green and purple, and holds a lily. On the wall dividing the two parts of the church there are some very poor frescoes by the sons of Luini—the Supper in the House of the Pharisee, the Adoration of the Magi, and the Baptism of Christ.

The effect of the long gallery and of the richly-decorated church as seen through its graceful pillared openings is very charming. A fit temple for Suora Alessandra and her fellows, those vestal virgins of the Renaissance, cherishing the flame of its many-sided religion in their art-irradiated cloisters, innocent sacrifices for the sins of the too vigorous races, Bentivogli, Sforza, and many another almost as wicked, from which they sprang. Beneath the archways, where their beautiful martyr sisters of long before look sweetly down upon them, the meek veiled figures seem to flit silently before us. But they, too, are but beings of the imagination now. The little door in the wall between Luini's saints is never opened now for the passing of the Eucharist to the cloistered worshippers on the inner side. No sweet voices rise any more to the accompaniment of that ornate organ; the long row of stalls has been untenanted this hundred years and more. In this place, where those virgin princesses and ladies knelt and adored, surrounded by these exquisite creations

of the Renaissance spirit, and by its lovely order and refinement, the loathsome dust to-day lies thickly everywhere, and no foot falls but that of a chance visitor. And the vast gardens and vineyards of the convent, where behind high secluding walls Alessandra and her companions took the air and played and laughed, let us hope, and where, doubtless, the stately Ippolita came to visit her daughter, bringing a breath of the joyous world outside, have given place to modern streets and houses, and the great Monastero Maggiore has utterly disappeared, except for this one rich relic, the church.

Sta. Maria della Passione, with a great cupola built by Cristoforo Solari early in the sixteenth century, and an ornate late Renaissance façade, contains one of the most important works of Luini's earlier career, a large picture of the Deposition, in the choir. There are some fine Cinquecento choir stalls. In the right transept are Christ and the Apostles by Borgognone, and in the left a Last Supper by Gaudenzio Ferrari. The sacristy has frescoes by Borgognone.

Sta. Maria presso S. Celso adjoining the little Romanesque basilica of S. Celso, was built by Dolcebuono at the end of the fifteenth century, but altered and finished later. The ornate façade is of the later part of the sixteenth century. The cloister in front was probably designed by Cristoforo Solari. There are some pictures by important masters in the spacious and imposing interior. The lowest on the left-hand side is a characteristic work by Borgognone —Madonna, with St. Roch and St. John Baptist. Behind the choir there is a Madonna with St. Jerome, by Paris Bordone; the Baptism of Christ, by Gaudenzio Ferrari; and St. Paul, by Moretto. In the

sacristy is preserved a very precious example of ninth century goldsmith's work, a cross given by Louis the Pious to Milan, of exquisite workmanship and thickly set with gems. It has figures of the Emperor and Empress and the Carlovingian princes carved upon it. The treasure also includes a carved Cinquecento jug, once attributed to Cellini, and one or two other pieces of goldsmiths' work. There are, besides, some beautiful embroidered vestments.

S. Giorgio al Palazzo, in Via Torino, an old church completely transformed in recent centuries, contains in the third chapel on the right some fine frescoes by Luini, of the scenes of the Passion. The Crucifixion in the dome of the chapel is an impressive composition, quiet and harmonious in colour.

S. Fedele, designed by Pellegrini in the latter part of the sixteenth century, and containing fine Cinquecento choir stalls—once in the destroyed church of S. Maria della Scala—St. Alessandro, of the seventeenth century, S. Carlo, built about a hundred years ago, all sumptuously decorated in the taste of their times, and other less important churches of the same style, have little artistic interest, and are, in any case, far outside the scope of our mediæval story. We must turn back to the best period of the Renaissance, and look at some palaces which still remain from that time.

The Palazzo Carmagnola, also called the Palazzo di Broletto, at the corner of Via Rovello and Via Dante, is the oldest of these palaces, and is also of historic interest. Duke Filippo Maria gave a house here, in 1418, to his great general, Carmagnola, who rebuilt it a few years later. The house passed through one of his daughters to the Dal Verme family, and was confiscated in 1485 by Lodovico Sforza, who

installed his mistress, Cecilia Gallerani in it later. The historian Giorgio Merula, one of the ornaments of the Moro's court, also inhabited it for some years. When Louis XII. made himself master of Milan, he gave the palace to his general, Charles d'Amboise, and later on it came into the possession of the city, and was used for public offices, whence it acquired the name of Palazzo di Broletto. It is now the Intendenza di Finanza. The building has little of its old aspect left, but there is a picturesque cortile of the late fifteenth century, with graceful and characteristic sculptured capitals, part of a probable restoration of the palace by the Moro, to make it a habitation worthy of his beautiful favourite.

A beautiful late Quattrocento palace is the Casa Fontana, or Silvestri, in the Corso Venezia, which has a noble portal of classic form, supported on columns in the form of candelabra, and windows enframed in terra-cotta ornamentation. The façade is, moreover, painted in chiaroscuro, with designs of the typical style of Lombard Renaissance decoration—colossal heads and sporting *putti*, etc. It has been attributed to Bramante, but is more probably the work of local architects. The cortile is very picturesque.

Casa Ponti, in Via Bigli, has a Cinquecento cortile of very graceful proportions, and glowing with the deep rich colour of painted decoration. On the walls above the porticoes there are full-length figures, representing gods, muses, the arts, etc. They are of noble grace and stateliness, with the familiar contours and the everlasting smile of Luini and his school. The archivolts, spandrils, the little arcade beneath the rich projecting cornice, are all covered with arabesques and devices of graceful and playful fancy. We see here the very setting of that joyous

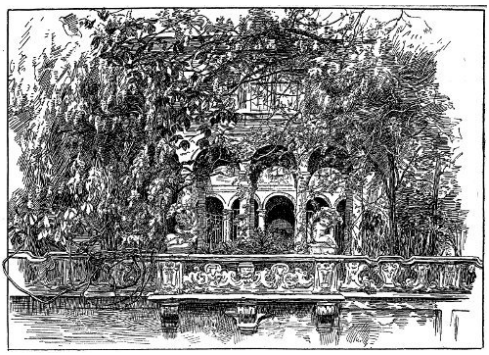
decorative Cinquecento life which has hardly its parallel for beauty in history. But the old glory of it is dimmed by the passing of centuries and the influences of a damp climate. Many of the figures are in very bad condition, and on one side of the court modern copies have been substituted and the originals removed and placed on the staircase of the palace, where, if one has the good fortune to be allowed to enter, one may study closely the gracious figures of Painting and Sculpture, and some delightful baby forms, riding on sea-horses, playing with grapes, etc., from the frieze upon the parapet in the cortile. The portal of the palace is a fine example of early sixteenth century building, and has two little statuettes of Madonna and the Angel of the Annunciation, in the spandrils.

Casa Castani—opposite S. Sepolcro—of the late fifteenth century, has also a fine doorway, of simple but noble form. It is decorated with classic heads in the spandrils, and has a Greek motto on the cornice, signifying Good Luck. A medallion of Francesco Sforza appears above, a sign of homage to the reigning house, often seen on palaces of this period in Milan. The cortile is built with double loggias.

Casa Dal Verme in Foro Bonaparte, opposite the theatre of that name, is another house of the same style, with an exceedingly picturesque cortile, to which the warm colour of the terra-cotta decoration gives a great charm. Between each arch there is the familiar decoration of medallions with shields or classic heads. These palaces have all much affinity, and they are generally attributed to the influence of Bramante. They have, indeed, been labelled sometimes as the work of the Master himself. The style is, however, common throughout North Italy at

this time, though probably derived in the first instance from Florentine sources. There are others of similar style in different parts of the city.

No. 10-12 Via Torino, entered through a squalid passage, has a very picturesque small court, with porticoes surmounted by two open storeys, and delightful terra-cotta ornamentation. This beautiful old fragment of the Milan of the Sforza period has fallen into plebeian use, and is, moreover, doomed to speedy destruction in the course of projected improvements to this crowded quarter.



PALAZZO VISCONTI DI MODRONE —GARDEN ON THE NAVIGLIO

There are many fine palaces of the late sixteenth and of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in Milan, of heavy and ornate Renaissance style, degenerating into florid excesses in the later period. These do not come within our subject, but one or two must be mentioned. The enormous Palazzo Marino, the seat of the Municipality, was built in the middle of the sixteenth century by Galeazzo Alessi for a Genoese named Tommaso Marino, who had made an immense

fortune as a merchant in Milan. Before the great edifice was finished however, the fortune had been swallowed up by various misfortunes, and the family discredited through one of Tommaso's sons, who murdered his wife. The palace was sequestered in 1577 by the city, to which it still belongs. It is of the grandiose style of the later Renaissance, and the cortile is extremely ornate, though the decoration is not allowed to conceal the stately architectural lines. The great hall is also very richly decorated in the same style with stucco reliefs and paintings. The façade into Piazza della Scala is modern.

The Palazzo de' Giurisconsulti, in Via Mercanti, opposite the Palazzo della Ragione, was built in its present handsome but heavy form by Vincenzo Seregni in the sixteenth century, at the charge of Pope Pius IV., of the Milanese house of Medici, whose arms appear on the edifice. Till recent times this palace formed part of the old enclosure of the Broletto Nuovo.

The Palazzo Arcivescovile, of which the large cortile was built by Pellegrini, has been already mentioned in Chapter X.

The house—in Via Omenoni—built by the sculptor Leone Leoni for himself in the second half of the sixteenth century, is remarkable for the colossal statues supporting the cornice, whence it has acquired the name of Palazzo *Omenoni*.

Palazzo Chierici—an eighteenth century building, now a law-court—close to Sta. Maria del Carmine, should be visited for the sake of a great ceiling painting by G. B. Tiepolo, the Venetian painter. The room is open to the public.

You may get a charming glimpse of old Milan—long

past the mediæval period indeed, which we set out to describe—but in a luxurious, leisured Settecento aspect almost as completely gone in these her industrial days, by walking down the Via Damiano—passing, by the way, as you turn out of Via Monforte, one of those locks in the canal which are attributed to the invention of Leonardo da Vinci—along the Naviglio, till you come to a beautiful pierced balustrade facing you across the narrow streak of water beneath a thicket of wistaria, chestnut and flowering trees. Behind appears the graceful arched portico of the palace to which the garden belongs—the Palazzo Visconti di Modrone. The wistaria has climbed all over the trees, and in spring it is a cloud of softest purple. You see the fine feathery twigs and sparse young leaves of the trees caught high up against the blue in delicate wreaths and garlands of the tender-coloured bloom, and hung with a film of its fine tendrils. A curtain of it drapes the lively green of the horse-chestnut and smothers the spikes of white blossom. The dry stem from which all this loveliness gushes forth, to fall in these cascades and streams of delicious colour, winds in great serpentine coils in the shadow over the parapet, and you may trace its stealthy and sinuous climb amid the branches of the trees—the strangling clasp of its huge vine. The central part of the parapet is guarded by two delightful stone *putti*, holding cornucopiæ—the genii of this joyous blossoming place. Mocked by the still flow and reflection of the water beneath, you might fancy yourself for a moment in Venice.

The flowering May-time of the year is a pleasant moment in which to see this Milan, when her squares and gardens break forth into the luxurious blossom of magnolia, chestnut and wistaria, which endear all her modern ways by their colour and sweetness, and

soothe with the sight of their ever recurring, imperishable beauty, our regret for all that has perished.

CHAPTER XIV
The Brera Picture Gallery

"Chi sprezza la Pittura non ama la Filosofia ne la Natura."—LEONARDO DA VINCI.

The Palazzo di Brera contains one of the finest collections of pictures in Italy. The palace itself, once the house of the great order of the Umiliati, and after them of the Jesuits, who in their turn were dispossessed by the State in 1772, is in its present form a grandiose seventeenth century building, with a double galleried cortile of fine proportions. In the midst of the cortile stands a statue of Napoleon Buonaparte, by Canova. The Biblioteca Nazionale occupies part of the building. There is a large fresco of the Marriage at Cana in Galilee on the staircase leading to the Library, by Callisto Piazza, one of the late Milanese school—a good example of the artist.

The Pinacoteca is entered from the upper loggia. The pictures have recently been admirably arranged. They are labelled with the names and dates of the artists, and the attributions are in accordance with the latest criticism. We shall only dwell on the most interesting of the numerous works, noticing particularly the local school.

We pass through Sala I. with cartoons by Andrea Appiani, a late eighteenth century Milanese artist.

Sala II. contains some of the best work of the early Lombard school, frescoes of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, which have been removed from churches and convents. We pass some unimportant primitive frescoes that would be beautiful in their original position, but lose artistic value in the narrow space where they are now seen, and come to three frescoes by Bramantino, which show him at his best. The Madonna and Child (15) is very characteristic of his manner, in the broad treatment of the flesh and drapery, in the blond types, and the way in which the figures are lighted from below. A *Putto* (16) has an irresistible charm. This child among the vine leaves is so true to nature, so full of joy and life. The St. Martin (17) is a noble conception of chivalrous youth. In beauty and refinement it excels any other work by Bramantino.

We now come to Vincenzo Foppa, who takes the most important place in the early Lombard school. Madonna and Child with SS. John Baptist and John Evangelist kneeling on each side (19). The composition is formal, but there is a strong feeling for nature in the figures. Martyrdom of St. Sebastian (20) is a composition full of vigour and life; the saint's figure is well drawn and modelled with a sculpturesque solidity. There is a naïve simplicity in the expression of the archers' faces and in their close vicinity to their mark, hardly in keeping with the academic feeling shown in the architectural surroundings. Foppa's colour in these two frescoes is much fresher and pleasanter than in his altarpieces.

Next we have Borgognone (Ambrogio da Fossano), whom Morelli calls the Perugino of the Lombard

school. These frescoes from the church of San Satiro belong to his best period. St. Martha, St. Catherine, St. Mary Magdalen (22); St. Barbara, St. Roch and St. Clara (23); St. Martina, St. Apollonia and St. Agnes (24). They are very beautiful figures, of most refined and delicate execution. St. Roch is especially fine, his poetic face shows a power of characterisation that is seldom seen in Borgognone's work, and the St. Barbara is exquisitely graceful. It is very unfortunate that these valuable frescoes have been so much damaged. The large Madonna with angels and God the Father (25) is a fine picture, but loses its due effect in the narrow gallery.



PUTTO, FRESCO BY BRAMANTINO (BRERA)
To face p. 336] [*Anderson, Rome*

We come next to a number of frescoes by Bernardino Luini, where his fundamental faults, viz., heavy forms and want of drawing, are glossed over by his gift of charm. Madonna and Child, with a lamb and little St. John, in a landscape (63), is one of the best. The Madonna is tender and dignified, and there is an

idyllic feeling about the whole that is very attractive. Madonna and Child with St. Anne (64) is also charming. St. Anne is a graceful figure in yellow and purple, a combination of colours which the peasant women of Lombardy wear to this day. There are some profane subjects, 70 to 76 inclusive, from the Villa Pelucca, near Monza. A young horseman in a decoratively-treated landscape (72); Sacrifice to Pan (73); Daphne (74); Birth of Adonis (76). A very charming bust of a young woman (75), whose golden hair and dress of palest puce and white against a background of pale green makes a pleasant colour harmony.

On the opposite wall are frescoes by Gaudenzio Ferrari, scenes from the life of the Virgin. There is life and movement in these paintings and a freshness both of treatment and feeling, but the execution is careless. The side panels of the Adoration of the Magi (33), with the servants and horses, are very spirited. The Meeting of the Virgin and Elizabeth (37) is rather theatrical, but the lines of the composition are good.

There are other frescoes by Marco d'Oggiono and Bernardino Lanino.

Sala III.—Here we have pictures of the Venetian schools of the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. There are examples by Moretto, and fine portraits by G. B. Moroni. By Paris Bordone there are three sacred subjects (106, 107, 108), and a picture called Gli Amanti Veneziani (105) which shows him in a more congenial mood. It has all the charm of rich colour and sensuous beauty, and one can admire the fine qualities of the technique here, whereas in the religious subjects it gives no pleasure. Near by hangs the masterpiece of the Brescian artist,

Girolamo Savoldo, Madonna and Child, with SS. Peter, Domenico, Paul and Jerome (114). The background is especially beautiful, with its water and hills and luminous sky paling to an exquisite light on the horizon. The Cenacolo (117), doubtfully ascribed to Titian, cannot be considered his work. The rather uninteresting Adoration of the Magi (119) was begun by Palma Vecchio and finished by Cariani. The large Marriage of Cana (120) is a work of the school of Paolo Veronese. There are also pictures by the sons of il Bassano.

Sala IV. contains Venetian works of the sixteenth century. The first thing one sees is Tintoretto's famous picture of St. Mark Appearing to the Venetians, who are searching for his body in the crypt of St. Eufemia of Alexandria (143). Mr. Berenson says of this picture—'... the figures, although colossal, are so energetic and easy in movement, and the effects of perspective and of light and atmosphere are so on a level with the gigantic figures, that the eye at once adapts itself to the scale, and you feel as if you too partook of the strength and health of heroes.'[18] In Tintoretto's Deposition of Christ (149), the grand lines of the shadowed figure fill us with a deep sense of tragedy. Of a very different character to these two pictures is

18. *The Venetian Painters of the Renaissance*, p. 56.

the festive scene, by Bonifazio Veronese (114), Moses Saved from the Water. The subject here is an excuse for one of those *fêtes champêtres* which the Venetian artists loved to paint. The picture shows us delightful groups of richly-dressed men and beautiful women in a romantic landscape, painted with all Bonifazio's characteristic glory of colour.

Baptism and Temptation of Jesus (151) cannot be regarded as a genuine work of Paolo Veronese.

Sala V.—Venetian pictures of the fourteenth-sixteenth centuries.—Gentile Bellini's great canvas of the Preaching of St. Mark in the Piazza of Alexandria (164) is a stately representation of a contemporary scene; some of the groups are very quaint. It was finished by Gian Bellini. Bartolommeo Montagna has a very fine altarpiece, Madonna and Child, with SS. Andrew, Monica, Ursula and Sigismondo (165), signed 1498. There are three charming little pictures by Carpaccio—Marriage of the Virgin (169), Dispute of St. Stephen (170), and Presentation of Mary in the Temple (171). Three works by Cima show us this gentle artist at his best. St. Peter enthroned between SS. John Baptist and Paul (174) is a restful picture with devout saints; the mild and youthful St. John is a notable contrast to the wild and ascetic figure of this saint as usually depicted by the Florentines. The other two pictures are Madonna and SS. John Baptist, Sebastian, Roch, Magdalen and donors (175), and St. Peter Martyr between SS. Nicolo of Bari and Augustine (176). St. Sebastian (177), by Liberale da Verona, is a most delightful and satisfying picture, suffused with a golden glow, and the idealised figure of the saint forms an exquisite harmony with the colour of the houses and blue sky and water of the background.

Sala VI. contains three fine works by Titian. Portrait of Count Antonio Porcia (180) is a magnificent painting; the pale face, black dress and background, and blue landscape, make a striking arrangement of colour. The St. Jerome (182) is a late work, the rugged figure in the savage landscape is tremendously vigorous. Ruskin writes of this picture

that it is ‘a superb example of the modes in which the objects of landscape may be either suggested or elaborated according to their place and claim. The larger features of the ground, foliage and drapery, as well as lion in the lower angle, are executed with a slightness that admits not of close examination.... But on the rock above ... there is a wreath of ivy, of which every leaf is drawn with the greatest accuracy and care, and beside it a lizard, studied with equal earnestness, yet always with that right grandeur of manner to which I have alluded....’[19] Beside the Titians, the picture by Palma Vecchio—S. Sebastian, Constantine, St. Helena, and St. Roch (179)—seems wanting in strength and distinction. St. Roch has a poetical head, and S. Sebastian is a well-painted nude, but the type is effeminate.

19. Ruskin, *Modern Painters*.

Sala VII.—Some of the finest portraits by the Venetian painter Lorenzo Lotto are here. Of the portrait of a Gentleman (183), Mr. Berenson says —‘This is the most subtle of all Lotto’s portraits in characterisation, and considered merely as technique, it is his most masterly achievement.’[20] Nos. 184 and 185 are almost certainly the portraits of Messer Febo da Brescia and Madonna Laura da Pola, his wife, which are known to have been painted in 1543-44. The woman, beautiful and distinguished, has an intent, sad gaze, with that reserve in her expression that one is familiar with in Lotto’s portraits. The man’s character is less complex than hers. Both portraits are of very

20. B. Berenson, *Lorenzo Lotto*.

fine execution, though hers is the more delicate. The little panel, Assumption of the Virgin (186), is an early work with a pleasant landscape. The Pietà (188) is an important but unattractive composition.

Sala VIII. contains unimportant works of various Venetian schools.

Sala IX. is one of the most interesting of all, for here are the works of Gian Bellini, Mantegna, and some of the best examples of that individual and fascinating painter, Carlo Crivelli. On entering, one is at once arrested by the noble Pietà of Gian Bellini (214). In this most touching picture the artist has expressed himself with a deep human feeling which he rarely shows afterwards. We feel almost awed in the presence of the Mother's infinite love and sorrow, and the perfect peace and calm of the dead Christ amid the agony of hopeless grief. St. John cries aloud in his despair, and a pitiless dawn is breaking behind them. It is an early work and the treatment of the flesh and heavy draperies is broad and severe. In the picture hanging next, Madonna and Child in a beautiful landscape (215), dated 1510, we see the change wrought by nearly fifty years. The intensity of feeling of the young Bellini has died away in technical perfection. The Madonna and Child (216) is an early work of the same period as the Pietà. In this beautiful sad Mother and Child is visible the earnest sentiment and the same broad manner of painting.

Mantegna's three pictures hang opposite, and it is interesting to compare them with Bellini's, as the two painters had much in common to start with, and departed widely each on his own lines afterwards. The Polyptych, St. Luke and other saints, with Pietà in upper part (200), is one of his earliest works, finished in 1454. The figures are very refined and

carefully drawn, but they are rather stiff, and the execution almost timid. Beside this picture hangs one of his latest works, the Dead Christ and the Maries (199), and we can note the difference between the early and late style of the master; the careful academic manner of the first has yielded to the broad freedom of the second. This uncompromisingly foreshortened figure must have been an experiment, and is chiefly interesting technically. The Madonna and Child surrounded with cherubim (198) is a beautiful picture, painted in the broad manner of Mantegna's maturity.

Carlo Crivelli fills the rest of the room with a wealth of colour and beauty. Madonna and Child with SS. Peter and Dominic (201) is so exquisite a picture, so lovely in colour and design, that one feels the last word has been said in an art that combines the highest decoration with a true and childlike religious feeling. Who has ever imagined a more pure and innocent creature than this lovely Madonna who sits with such unconscious grace in her rich garments on the stately throne? The Child, too, is so sweet as he earnestly squeezes a dove in both hands. The young S. Geminianus has the ardour of a martyr. The whole picture is a very exquisite harmony of colour and line. Coronation of Christ and the Virgin by the Eternal Father (202), signed and dated 1493, is a superbly decorative work glowing with rich colour. The flying angels seem really beings of the air, and the devout saints really dwellers in Paradise. S. Catherine and S. Sebastian are especially beautiful. The Pietà above (203) is very fine in composition, and the Christ is godlike with His long golden hair. The Crucifixion (206) is a restless composition. Crivelli has striven so hard to express his emotion, but the result is an exaggeration of forms and

movement. There is no repose anywhere, draperies flying, fingers contorted; even the sky is in troubled wavelets. Madonna of the Candle (207). In this beautiful panel the Madonna sits like a goddess on her high throne, yet has all the sweetness of humanity. The perfect oval of her face and symmetry of her form are drawn by a master's hand. The rich garland of fruits and the roses and lilies are painted with a loving care. There are also two panels of saints by Crivelli (204 and 205).

Sala X. contains Venetian pictures of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. There are four small pictures by Cima (217, 218, 219 and 220), charming little pictures in which there is more life and movement than in his larger works. Adoration of the Magi (223) by Stefano da Zevio, dated 1435, is a pleasing picture, showing the early Veronese character. The decorative Polyptych (228) is by Antonio Vivarini and Giovanni da Murano.

In Sala XI. we have Venetian schools of the sixteenth-eighteenth centuries. Two landscapes by Canaletto (235 and 236) are full of light and air. Guardi has two views of the Grand Canal at Venice (242 and 243).

Sala XII., Lombard School.—Here are portraits of the Visconti family, of little artistic value. A Madonna Adoring the Child, with SS. Catherine and Joseph (248) by Vincenzo Civerchio. The Milanese painter Bernardino Buttinone has two pictures, Madonna and Child between SS. Bernardino and Stephen (249), signed and dated 145-. This picture has all the decided characteristics of the artist—the laboured execution, low flesh tones, high and prominent foreheads, enormous ears, claw-like fingers and vividly-coloured draperies. The small Madonna (250)

is a highly-finished picture and equally lacking in beauty. The SS. Catherine and Sebastian by Defendente Ferrari are charming figures in gorgeous costumes.

Sala XIII. possesses four pictures by Borgognone. The most interesting is the small picture of the Madonna and Child with S. Clare and a Certosino (259). It is an early work, very devout and sweet in feeling, and shows the artist's connection with Foppa, particularly in the type of the Child and the grey flesh tones. The latter, however, are very much modified, and form a very harmonious scheme with the white draperies and silvery colour of sky and water behind. Madonna and Saints (257), by Bevilacqua, is a decorative altarpiece with colour brilliant almost to crudeness.

Sala XIV. contains works of the sixteenth century by Leonardo's followers. Two Magdalens, by Gianpietrino (262 and 263), are good examples of his work, and have some poetical charm. An unfinished Madonna (261) of Leonardesque composition shows a great similarity in the landscape background to that of the well-known Bacchus of the Louvre, a doubtful Leonardo. Madonna and Child with little S. John (271), by Bernardino dei Conti, is reminiscent of Leonardo's Virgin of the Rocks. The colour is hot and the modelling lumpy.

Sala XV., Lombard school of sixteenth century.—The first picture in this room is a lovely Madonna and Child (276) by Cesare da Sesto. It is sympathetic in feeling and refined in execution. The arrangement of dark foliage behind the Madonna, showing on one side the distant landscape and pale sky, is very happy. It is the best picture we know of this artist. Madonna and Child (277) by Gaudenzio Ferrari is

very typical of his style, rather affected in attitude and hot in colour. Close by hangs a Holy Family (279) by Bramantino. The drawing of the Saviour (280) is not admitted by the best authorities to be a genuine work of Leonardo's. Two kneeling figures (281) by Boltraffio are distinguished by dignity and feeling. They show how well Boltraffio could paint portraits. Andrea Solario has three paintings and a drawing. The best is a portrait of a young man (282), whose characteristic head, with clear, almost hard outline, is well-drawn and carefully finished. Madonna and Child (286) by Sodoma is one of his most Leonardesque works.

Sala XVI. is entirely devoted to works by Luini. A fresco of angels bearing the corpse of St. Catherine to deposit in the Sepulchre (288) is a graceful composition. The well-known Madonna del Roseto (289) with its charming background of a rose-trellis is one of the most popular of this artist's pictures. To us a more sympathetic work is the charcoal drawing (290) of the Madonna watching the Child, who sleeps on a cushion. Here is also a series of frescoes giving the story of S. Joseph, taken from the suppressed Church of Sta. Maria della Pace.

Sala XVII. contains works of the Lombard school of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. There is a large Polyptych (307) by Vincenzo Foppa. The central panel, Madonna and Child with Angels, is a very characteristic painting of the artist. The Madonna, stately and almost severely simple, is yet perfectly natural, and so is the Child as He touches the strings of the instrument held by an angel, leaning His head as if listening to the sound. The large heads and crumpled draperies of the angels are peculiarities which Foppa shares with the Lombard sculptors. St.

Francis Receiving the Stigmata, in the panel above, is rather a feeble figure. The bright red and lavish use of gold in the side panels of saints have a rich effect. The Assumption of the Virgin (308), by Borgognone, dated 1522, is a poor work; in it all his faults are exaggerated; there is no movement in the figures, the background does not recede: the whole thing is absolutely lifeless. Bramantino's large Crucifixion (309) is very inferior to his other works in the gallery.

The picture of the Madonna and Child, with the Doctors of the Church, and Lodovico il Moro, his wife Beatrice, and their children kneeling (310), has been variously attributed to Zenale, Bernardino dei Conti and Ambrogio de Predis. It has little artistic merit, much the best part being the portraits. The Virgin and Saints are heavy in type and coarse in execution, showing the Leonardesque influence imposed on the native school. Ambrogio de Predis seems to us the most probable author of this much disputed work. Marco d'Oggiono has three pictures—St. Paul (311), Assumption of the Virgin (312), the Archangels Michael, Raphael and Gabriel overcoming the Devil (313). There is no genuine inspiration in these works, nor any charm of colour or technique. We turn with relief to Boltraffio's interesting and well-painted portrait of the poet Girolamo Casio (319). Martyrdom of St. Catherine of Alexandria (321), by Gaudenzio Farrari, a crowded and confused composition, shows the decadence of this able and facile painter.

We come to several large canvases by the family of Campi of Cremona. The best of these is Madonna Adoring the Child (329), by Giulio Campi; the technique is able, in the later Venetian style. Two

pictures by Vincenzo Campi—a Fruitseller and Fishseller—are Flemish in manner. Next come the painters of Lodi, but we have not time to dwell on these productions of the later Milanese school. In the cases are drawings of various Italian schools.

Sala XVIII. contains productions of the late Lombard schools (sixteenth and seventeenth centuries) that repel by their brutal realism.

In Sala XIX. we have unimportant works of the schools of Parma, Reggio and Modena.

Sala XX. Ferrarese and Bolognese Schools.—The Ferrarese school is represented in this gallery by some splendid pictures of the best period. In his St. Sebastian (433) that richly imaginative artist Dosso Dossi, with his Cinquecento enjoyment of beauty and his mastery of dramatic effects of light and shade, has given us a picture of enthralling interest, painted with marvellous breadth and power. This strong young body, bound by uplifted arms to the tree, expresses the very passion of martyrdom. This is no mere physical agony; though the arrows visibly torture the flesh, they pierce the soul more sharply. The dark grove, where great fruits and leaves shine out, touched by a strange evil light, surrounds the figure with mystery and magic, which is heightened by the glimpse of a tranquil distant landscape. Not St. Sebastian, but a character from some Ariostean fable this seems—a young hero in search of truth ensnared by cruel necromancy, stripped and bound by the powers of evil. His knight's helmet lies at his feet. The sensuous beauty of the picture increases its dramatic interest; the curve of the nude body, the flesh colour, incomparable in its coolness and its pearly shadow, crossed by that swathe of green drapery—a green all Dosso—the rich glossy leaves,

the distant blue, all serve to deepen the tragedy.

Francesco d'Este, whose portrait (431), in the character of St. George, by Dosso, hangs beside St. Sebastian, was one of the sons of Duke Alfonso of Ferrara and Lucrezia Borgia. The St. John Baptist (432) is lighted as if by a fire from below, in a manner very characteristic of Dosso.

The Adoration of the Magi (429) by Lorenzo Costa, the predella of an altarpiece by Francia, is a good example of the master.

The great altarpiece (428) is a majestic composition, and especially interesting as the work of that rarest painter, the Ferrarese Ercole de' Roberti, who in the grand architectural and decorative environment of this Madonna Enthroned shows himself faithful to the precepts of Cosimo Tura. But the arrangement of the triple figures on the throne—St. Anne and St. Elizabeth seated on stools on either side of the Virgin, with a sort of pyramidal effect—and the types of the heads, especially of the fair and regal Virgin, are very individual. The figures of St. Augustine and of Peter the Sinner, below, complete the stately arrangement. The beautiful harmony of red and purple and puce and gorgeous reddish gold shows with rare splendour the Ferrarese feeling for colour.

The Correggio (427) is not one of the painter's best works, but the graceful Madonna has his peculiar charm; the baby is strangely small. Two figures of saints (449) are characteristic, but rather conventional productions by Cossa, noticeable for their decoration and the 'lacquer enamel' quality of the colour. They are parts of a triptych, of which the centre, S. Vincenzo, is in the National Gallery.

The great Annunciation (448), by Francia, is a

beautiful and spacious composition, with an exquisitely clear atmospheric effect and picturesque background; but in the over-elaborated Angel the painter comes perilously near the banal.

A little figure of the Crucified (447) by Cosimo Tura —a fragment probably of a picture of St. Francis Receiving the Stigmata, is instinct with the great Ferrarese master's intensity of feeling and devotion. Other and inferior painters of the school fill the rest of the room.

Sala XXI., Schools of the Romagna.—The three painters, Rondinelli, Marco Palmezzano—who was pupil of Melozzo da Forlì—and Cotignola, are well represented. Rondinelli has three pictures. One illustrates a legend in the life of Galla Placidia (452), in which St. John the Evangelist appears to her and leaves his shoe behind him as a relic. Cotignola's (Francesco Zaganelli) pictures are decorative and pleasant in colour, but weak in drawing. He was assisted in Nos. 457 and 458 by his brother Bernardino. Marco Palmezzano is the best painter of the three. The Nativity (469) is a pleasing picture, and in the Coronation (470) the music-making angels are charming. The Madonna and SS. John Baptist, Peter, Domenico and Mary Magdalen (471) is a good picture, but rather mannered in the treatment of draperies and clouds.

Sala XXII. possesses the most famous picture of the collection—the Marriage of the Virgin, by Raphael (472). It is signed and dated 1504. This was painted when the artist was only twenty-one. It is an extraordinarily complete work for so young a painter. He did not set himself new and difficult problems to solve; he was content to take the composition of his master Perugino (fresco in the

Sistine Chapel), and with perfect artistic instinct improve it into the exquisite picture we have before us. We cannot do better than quote Mr. Berenson. 'Subtler feeling for space, greater refinement, even a certain daintiness, give this "Sposalizio" a fragrance, a freshness that are not in Perugino's fresco. In presence of young Sanzio's picture you feel a poignant thrill of transfiguring sensation, as if, on a morning early, the air cool and dustless, you suddenly found yourself in presence of a fairer world, where lovely people were taking part in a gracious ceremony, while beyond them stretched harmonious distances, line on line to the horizon's edge.'[21] The picture is seen to full advantage, admirably placed as it is in a room by

21. B. Berenson, *The Central Italian Painters of the Renaissance*, p. 124.

itself, where it can be well seen and thoroughly studied and enjoyed.

Sala XXIII., Central Italian Painters.—Signorelli has two pictures here—Flagellation of Christ (476), and Madonna and Child between Cherubims (477). There is a predella picture (483) by Eusebio di San Giorgio, a Madonna (473) by Pacchiarotti, and other works of the Siennese school.

Sala XXIV. contains frescoes by Bramante of Urbino, representing Heraclites and Democritus, six men-at-arms and a singer, originally decorating the Baron's Hall in Casa Panigarola at Milan. These paintings show a distinct connection with the art of Melozzo da Forlì. They are grand monumental figures, that one feels belong to a great architectural scheme, and cannot be properly appreciated in this small room.

Sala XXV., Painters of Umbria and the Marches.—Here we have several interesting works, especially the very fine picture by Piero dei Franceschi, Madonna and Saints, with Federigo da Montefeltro, Duke of Urbino (510). This is a stately composition, where the saints are grouped round the Madonna, and the great Duke of Urbino kneels at her feet, while she sits with the Child sleeping easily on her knee, grand and aloof, a being far above the passions and weakness of humanity. She is quite unlike any other Madonna, and though not exactly beautiful, holds one's attention far more than many that are so. After Piero's work most pictures look trivial; but one can turn with pleasure to Gentile da Fabriano's exquisite Polyptych (497), whose flower-like beauty of colour and line transports us into another world. There is an Annunciation (503) by Giovanni Santi, the father of Raphael, which foreshadows the charm so highly developed later in his son. A Madonna and Angels, and various Saints (504) by Nicolò da Foligno. A Madonna with SS. Simon, Guida, Bonaventura and Francis (505), by Signorelli, signed and dated 1508. In one of Timoteo Viti's pictures, Madonna with SS. Crescenzio and Vitale (508), the saint holding the banner is of that distinct Umbrian type one sees in the work of the young Raphael, whose first master Timoteo probably was.

Salas XXVI. and XXVII. contain works of the Bolognese school of the Caracci; Sala XXVIII., works of the Roman school of the seventeenth century; Sala XXIX., works of the Genovese school, including pictures by Salvator Rosa. Sala XXX. and XXXI., foreign schools, mostly Flemish and Dutch, of the seventeenth century. The remaining rooms have modern Italian pictures.

CHAPTER XV
Other Galleries and Museums

(The Poldi-Pezzoli Museum—The Ambrosiana Library and Museums—The Borromeo and Trivulzio Collections, etc.)

The Poldi-Pezzoli Art Museum contains an admirable collection of pictures of the greatest period of Italian art, and artistic treasures of various kinds, and one has the added pleasure of seeing these things in the harmonious surroundings of a luxurious house. The very sound of the water pleasantly dripping from the fountain in the hall as we enter is a promise of refreshment and delight. The palace and the collections were the generous legacy of the Cavaliere Poldi-Pezzoli to the city, and it remains much the same as when it was a private dwelling. The somewhat florid decorations of the rooms are very obviously of recent date.

In the downstairs rooms there are some fine sixteenth century tapestries, antique Eastern carpets, and cases containing antique stuffs; a few pieces of antique sculpture, and pictures, chiefly portraits, of the late Renaissance and modern periods.

Sala Verde, at the top of the staircase, contains

pictures of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; two bas-reliefs (100-101) of the Adoration of the Magi, and St. Giuliano Killing his Parents, German work of the sixteenth century; landscapes by Guardi, Canaletto and Zucarelli; Joshua stopping the Sun in its Course (111), and other paintings by Tiepolo; and a beautiful Flemish tapestry (1201) of the early fifteenth century—the Queen of Sheba before Solomon. There are also some fine marriage chests; two exquisite chess-boards (122, 123) of the sixteenth century, one of them with the *stemma* of the Visconti, and other interesting objects.

Ante-sala.—Pictures of the late sixteenth century.

Sala Gialla.—A very ornate Seicento clock; some Oriental porcelain; two Sèvres vases (149), etc.

Salone Dorato contains many treasures. The Madonna and Child, by Botticelli (156), though much restored, is a lovely picture, with that incomparable distinction of line and colour that characterise his work. The Portrait of a Young Woman (157) is ascribed to Piero dei Franceschi, but Verrocchio and Antonio Pollajuolo have also been suggested as the author. The outline has the play and movement, and the character a vivacity that one associates with Florentine painting, and the peculiarly large and impersonal qualities that Piero gets even into his portraits are absent. But whoever the artist may be, it is a very attractive work. The Madonna and Child (158) is by Rafaello Caponi, a Florentine Cinquecento painter. The Madonna Enthroned with Angels (154) is of the fifteenth century school of Murano.

Apart from the pictures, the most precious object in the room is a marvellous Persian Carpet (159) of the fifteenth or sixteenth century, of large size and in

perfect preservation. The beauty of the design and the exquisite colour make this carpet a miracle of decorative art. It was made for the feet of princes, as the legend, worked in silver round the border, records:—*Blessed is the carpet which in a pleasant company has become shadowed beneath the footsteps of the Shah.*

It has sacrificed itself upon his path, as the sun does, and has offered itself beneath his feet like a white fleece.

This is not a carpet, it is a white rose; it is a fabric which resembles the eyes of the very Houris....[22] And so on.

22. An Italian translation of these verses is given in the *Rassegna d'Arte* (Anno iv., No. 10), and appears in the official catalogue of the Museum.

Another beautiful piece of work (155) is the middle portion of a vestment of the later fifteenth century, embroidered with the Coronation of the Virgin and two devotees kneeling at the sides.

The case in the middle of the room contains a collection of beautiful objects of the goldsmiths' and kindred arts, chiefly of the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries—tabernacles, paxes, reliquaries of precious materials chiselled and adorned with enamel; cups and vases and basins of crystal and agate; exquisitely worked spoons and forks, etc., etc. One very lovely pax (unnumbered) of silver, decorated with enamel, has a Resurrection on the front—the figures in grisaille upon a blue background—and heads of saints in medallions, and on the back the Pietà figured in mother-of-pearl. Another pax (161 *bis*), of characteristic Lombard workmanship, is in the form of a little tabernacle,

and has sacred subjects and figures of saints exquisitely worked in enamel. A fourteenth century crystal cup (163) is of most graceful form and beautiful workmanship; upon the foot episodes from the story of Tristan and Isolda are figured in enamel. It is suggested that this may have been a tourney prize. A cup with a cover of agate (169) and decorated with silver gilt, chiselled and enamelled and with precious stones, is specially noticeable for beauty of material and shape. The enamel (180) with a representation of the Resurrection, is a very precious fifteenth century work, probably Milanese. A tiny diptych (214) of gilded bronze is particularly interesting for the two little figures in *niello* on the outside, representing Lodovico il Moro and Beatrice d'Este. Within there are subjects depicted in enamel —St. George and the Dragon, and the Deposition—in the style of the painter Foppa.

In the large case nearer the window there is a wonderful display of jewellery, from the fifteenth to the eighteenth century. No. 286 is a miniature of the Duke of Monmouth. In the other large case, near the fireplace, there are numerous treasures of Roman, Etruscan, and Greek art. A smaller case holds gold ornaments, chiefly of the Roman epoch. There are also in this room suits of armour, some fine pieces of seventeenth century furniture, tapestries, bronzes, etc.

Gabinetto del Salone Dorato.—Here are pictures of the late Flemish and Italian schools, and an Annunciation (436) of Tuscan style, attributed to Pesellino.

Sala Nera.—Among the pictures in this room are St. Mary Magdalen (473), attributed to Luca Signorelli, but with doubtful justice, and a very charming little

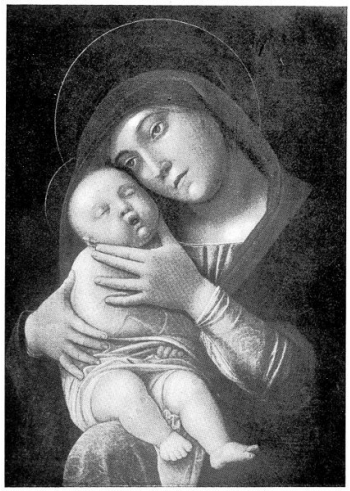
triptych (477) by Mariotto Albertinelli, Madonna and Child, with SS. Catherine and Barbara, which shows how good his work can be on a small scale, like that of his fellow-worker Fra Bartolommeo, whose style he much resembles. Here are also some fine pieces of furniture, notably a cabinet (481) of sixteenth century Italian workmanship, and another (482) of Florentine production in the seventeenth century.

Sala dei Vetri Antichi.—The chief interest of this room is the splendid collection of antique Muranese glass. Many of the pieces are of very beautiful form, some decorated with patterns in colour and gold, and some with handles and bases of bronze or silver.

Gabinetto Dante contains a numerous collection of small artistic objects.

Sala degli Specchi.—Here hang pictures of various Italian schools, among others a Deposition (552) of the school of Botticelli, and a Brescian fifteenth century work (555)—a large canvas of the Madonna Enthroned, to whom St. Benedict presents a devotee.

Sala del Perugino.—A pleasing little picture by Perugino (603), Madonna and Child with angels, gives its name to this room. Here are also pictures of the Florentine school and of the school of Murano. Of the latter the large Madonna Enthroned (589), by Antonio Vivarini, is a fine decorative altarpiece; by Nicolò da Foligno, there is a Crucifixion (582), with a realistic Umbrian landscape; by Stefano da Zevio, a Hermit in the Wilderness (591). A stout monk in a black habit (598), ascribed to Piero dei Franceschi, looks like a good portrait of a man of strong character. In the Annunciation (599), by Marco Palmezzano, the figures are stiff, but there is light and air in the landscape. A little picture of a bishop (600) has the peculiar manner of Cosimo Tura.



MADONNA, by MANTEGNA (POLDI-PEZZOLI)

To face p. 356]
[*Anderson, Rome*

Gabinetto dei Veneti.—The small picture by Mantegna is the greatest treasure of the collection. It is the most appealing of all his Madonna pictures. Never has the subject of mother and child been so sympathetically expressed, even among Italian masters, unless we except Luca della Robbia. The sleeping baby is touchingly true to nature, its round little form under the tightly wound drapery is perfectly given, and there is a depth of feeling in the mother's thoughtful, almost sad expression as she clasps Him to her, as if the very intensity of her love gave her a sense of foreboding. It is a late work of the master, painted with perfect mastery of form and a breadth of technique in which there is none of the

dryness of his early years. Christ with the Symbols of the Passion and St. Francis kneeling to receive the blood in a chalice, (620) by Carlo Crivelli, has a mystical feeling and the beauty of a miniature painting. St. Sebastian tied to a tree (621) is also a characteristic picture of Crivelli's. Pietà (623), a miniature in an ornamental Gothic frame is of the school of Murano, probably of the Vivarini. Pietà (624) is by an imitator of Giovanni Bellini. By Bonsignore is a good profile of an old man (627). Cariani has a small Holy Family (613), gracious in colour and composition. Lorenzo Lotto, a Madonna with St. John Baptist and a prophet (614). A rather stiff altarpiece, Madonna with angels making music (610), is by Marcello Fogolino, a painter of Vicenza.

Passage.—A portrait (634), of herself, by the Bolognese woman painter, Sofonisba Anguissola, of the later sixteenth century, hangs here.

Sala dei Lombardi.—This room contains a good collection of the Lombard painters, especially of the followers of Leonardo da Vinci. Madonna *alla cuscino verde* (602), by Andrea Solario, is a thoroughly representative picture, not only of Solario but of the Leonardesque school. The subject is one we see repeated continually, and the juxtaposition of vivid colours, the very soft flesh painting and rather grey tones melting into each other, are local characteristics. Solario, however, is a more accomplished painter and better draughtsman than most of the school. This picture shows a kindly feeling in the portrayal of the simple, happy-looking mother and child, but it lacks refinement and distinction. The bit of landscape seen through the window is lovely. The Ecce Homo (637) is an elaborately-finished work, but leaves the spectator

cold. Two panels of saints, S. Giovanni Battista (653), dated 1499, and St. Catherine of Alexandria (657), have the Lombard heaviness of form. The *Riposo*, dated 1515 (655), is a mature work of Solario's. The landscape is beautiful and the colour with the dark trees and rich purple and gold of St. Joseph's garments is admirable, but rather disturbed by the over bright blue and red of the Madonna's drapery. Madonna and Angels (640) by Borgognone is a very sweet and refined little picture, harmonious in colour, the child's gold-coloured tunic being the brightest note in the picture. Madonna (643) by Foppa has the charm of sincere and tender sentiment. Madonna and Child, picking a flower (642), is one of Boltraffio's most stately Madonnas, with perfect oval face and regular features, and dressed in richly patterned garments. The painting is highly finished and so smooth that the flesh looks rather like porcelain. The child is Leonardesque in type with that exaggeration of form and modelling that is common to the master's followers. Portrait of Francesco Brivio (641), by Ambrogio de Predis, is a fine portrait, one of those profiles in which he excelled. Gianpietrino has a charming little Madonna (648), with long hair falling each side of her face. Also by Gianpietrino, according to Morelli, is the delightful little picture of Madonna and Child with a lamb (667), of Leonardesque composition, attributed to Cesare da Sesto. The Marriage of St. Catherine (663) by Bernardino Luini is a much-admired picture. There is also a St. Jerome (652) by him. The picture of the Sorrowing Madonna and Christ carrying the Cross (659), attributed to Luini, is considered by Signor Venturi[23] to be the work of Solario. Besides other pictures we have not space to dwell on, there are some beautiful wedding chests in

this room.

23.
La Galleria Crespi.

Sala d'Armi contains a very fine collection of armour and weapons, chiefly of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries with a few older specimens.

Biblioteca Ambrosiana.—This famous library was founded by Cardinal Federigo Borromeo, a cousin of San Carlo, and Archbishop of Milan in his turn from 1594 to 1631. He is the Cardinal Borromeo of Manzoni's well-known romance, the *Promessi Sposi*. A man of great virtue, he was also a splendid patron of literature, science and art. The foundation of a library for the free use of his fellow-citizens and of all comers was a long-pondered scheme of the Cardinal, and for years he employed competent scholars to collect books and manuscripts in all countries, till he had amassed no less than fifteen thousand codices, many of exceeding rarity, and thirty thousand printed volumes. In 1603 the building was begun and in 1609 it was solemnly opened. Since then the treasures of the library have increased continually by gifts and legacies, and collections of pictures and prints, etc., have been added to it.

The entrance to the Ambrosiana is in the Piazza della Rosa. In the vestibule an inscription records the Founder, and another threatens with excommunication anyone who should carry away a book.

Biblioteca.—In the Sala Antica some of the chief treasures of the Library are exposed to view. Here is shown a page of the precious *Codex Atlanticus*, a

volume of miscellaneous writings and drawings, chiefly of engineering subjects, by Leonardo da Vinci, collected and bound together by Pompeo Leoni in the latter part of the sixteenth century. Here, too, are twelve letters written by Lucrezia Borgia to Pietro Bembo, and with them a lock of golden hair, her gift to him, according to a long established belief, which there is no ground for discrediting. The same case contains a MS. of the *Divina Commedia*—late fourteenth century—with damaged miniatures; a Cicero, with very lovely and delicate miniatures of the early Cinquecento; a MS. with a miniatured page—St. Barnabas baptizing the first Christians in Milan—in the realistic Lombard manner of the sixteenth century, several books of Hours, and some very beautiful fifteenth century bindings, Italian and French. The famous Borromeo Book of Hours, one of the gems of the Library, is not shown here now, and can only be seen by permission of the Librarian. It is a little fifteenth century volume, adorned with numerous miniatures of exquisite workmanship by Cristoforo de Predis, a native of Modena, and apparently by another hand, perhaps more than one. On one of the pages the Annunciation is depicted, and below are two kneeling figures, a knight and lady, conjectured to be portraits of Conte Giovanni and Contessa Cleofe Borromeo. Besides scenes from the New Testament there is a calendar in the book with miniatures descriptive of the occupations of each month. The work is very delicate and fine, distinctively North Italian, but not heavy like the Milanese. Another case contains ancient manuscripts—Hebrew, Greek, Arabic, Ethiopian; a page of a Gothic version of the Bible belonging to a very precious palimpsest; two Irish manuscripts from the monastery of Bobbio,

founded by St. Columban in the seventh century; a Syrian MS. of the eighth century in a later Greco-Egyptian binding, covered with stamped leather; some palimpsests and an Egyptian papyrus of B.C. 169. Deeply interesting is the copy of Virgil, which once belonged to Petrarca, and has minute marginal notes in his handwriting. It has a miniatured page attributed to Simone Martini, representing in allegorical form the different works of Virgil. On the back there is a note written by Petrarca concerning Laura. A French MS. of the fourteenth century has exquisitely fine miniatures representing the Vices and Virtues, and the Judgment. Among the remaining books in this case there is one, the treatise *Regimine Principum*, by Lucano da Parma, dedicated to Galeazzo Maria Sforza, with a miniature of that prince, a proud figure in black and gold, with St. Catherine.

In another case are a number of very interesting autographs, including a letter from Galileo to Cardinal Federigo Borromeo, lauding the Biblioteca Ambrosiana.

The Library also possesses some priceless fragments of the *Iliad*, with paintings of the third century, the most ancient illustrated text known, but these are not exhibited. There are reproductions of two of the illustrations in the Guide Book of the Ambrosiana.

A small case at the end of the room holds a unique printed copy of a letter written by Christopher Columbus on his return from the discovery of the New World. In another are some pages of Tasso, with his autograph corrections; an Ethiopian psaltery; an illustrated Persian MS., etc.

The Sala Incoronazione is part of an older building incorporated a century ago with the Library. At one

end the wall is covered with a great fresco by Luini, Christ being crowned with thorns; the kneeling figures on either side, portraits of the Brothers of the Congregation of Santa Corona, to which the hall belonged, are very finely depicted, those on the left hand especially. Luini painted this fresco in 1521, with the help of an assistant, and was paid 115 lire, 9 soldi.

The Museo Settala, also on the ground floor, is open on Wednesday, Friday, and Sunday. It contains Etruscan, Roman, and Egyptian antiquities, and objects of mediæval art; a mineralogical collection; medals, weapons, and curiosities of various kinds.

Pinacoteca.—The picture galleries are on the upper floor.

Sala A.—Cabinet of the gilded bronzes contains German and Dutch pictures. Sala B has little of importance, but one may notice two panels by Bernardino Buttinone, St. Bonaventura (1) and St. Louis (5). By Bartolommeo Veneto, a Madonna and Child with St. John Baptist (3), and a Madonna picture by Bernardino Luini. Sala D contains the gem of the collection, Botticelli's picture of the Madonna adoring the Child, and three angels (15). It is one of the most lovely of his Madonna pictures, luminous in colour, full of movement, and delicate in execution. Well placed on an easel in the middle of the room it can be seen by itself and thoroughly enjoyed. The small picture of the Eternal Father (6), now attributed to Timoteo Viti, is very refined; it was formerly given to Francesco Francia, and certainly reminds one of the Ferrarese-Bolognese school. Two pictures by Bramantino, the Virgin, with St. Ambrogio, angels and donors (18) is in his usual manner, but the Nativity (19) is a strange picture,

and somewhat suggestive of the Northern schools, especially the Madonna with her abnormal forehead and quaint head-dress. The group of musicians behind are graceful figures standing up against the light sky. The large altarpiece by Borgognone, Madonna and Saints (23), an early work, possesses the dignity, simplicity, and devotion which are his unfailing qualities. The characteristics of his early period are to be seen in the straight and rather rigid figures, the badly foreshortened angels with large heads, and in the elaborate architectural throne and lavish use of gold. There are also by him, two Saints (17), St. Francis, rather sentimental, and St. Elizabeth, an elderly woman with a sympathetic face; the colour of the picture is pleasant.



PORTRAIT OF AN UNKNOWN, BY AMBROGIO DE PREDIS(?)

To face p. 363]

(AMBROSIANA)
[*Anderson, Rome*

Sala E.—The most important work here is the cartoon by Raphael, for the School of Athens, his great fresco in the Vatican. This extremely interesting study was acquired for the Ambrosiana by Cardinal Federigo Borromeo. The figures are drawn with all the vigour and grace of the master, and are worth careful study. One noticeable difference between the finished fresco and the cartoon is the absence in the latter of the figure of Heraclites. The stooping figure on the right, Archimedes, is a portrait of Bramante, and there is a study from life of his head beside the cartoon.

Portrait of a young woman (8), formerly ascribed to Leonardo, but given by Morelli to Ambrogio de Predis, an attribution which is now generally accepted. It is a charming and vivacious portrait, and certainly superior to most of de Predis' work, but we must remember that he excelled in portraiture. By Leonardo it assuredly is not. The identity of the portrait has also been much discussed. It was at one time called Beatrice d'Este. The latest conjecture is that it is the portrait of Bianca, natural daughter of Lodovico Sforza and wife of Galeazzo di San Severino. The portrait of a man holding a scroll of music (19), is attributed in the catalogue to Leonardo; we think, however, it is more likely to be also by Ambrogio de Predis, whose work was much influenced by Leonardo, and it has all the characteristics of his painting, the heavy modelling, and hot dark colour. It is an interesting and thoughtful face, presumably a musician, and perhaps the portrait of the celebrated Franchino Gaffurio,

master of the choir of the Duomo of Milan. Holy Family and St. Elizabeth (3), from Leonardo's design (the cartoon in Burlington House), is a well-known picture by Luini, but like all imitations of the master, it is quite superficial, and loses entirely the deep and mysterious significance of the original, so that one can hardly help wishing his designs had not been so much copied. The youthful Saviour (9) has a certain beauty and refinement, but shows Luini's weakness in drawing, especially in the large and clumsy hand. St. John with a Lamb (10) is a very charming picture of a little boy hugging a lamb. The Way to Calvary (18), by Giovanni Cariani, is an interesting example of this Bergamesque artist. Other noticeable pictures in this room are, the Presentation in the Temple (33), by Tiepolo; Adoration of the Magi (42), ascribed to Titian; Holy Family (43), by Bonifazio Veronese, and a full-length portrait by Gio. Battista Moroni.

Sala F contains inferior pictures of the late Lombard school; there is, besides, a pleasing altarpiece, attributed to Pinturicchio (58), though surely by a North Italian hand.

Sala G.—This room is filled with drawings; there are various studies, doubtfully attributed to Leonardo and drawings by his followers; among the latter an excellent pencil-drawing of a child's profile by Ambrogio de Predis or Bernardino dei Conti; it is the portrait of Massimiliano Sforza, eldest son of Lodovico il Moro, and probably the study for his portrait in the large altarpiece in the Brera; some well-drawn heads by Boltraffio; a drawing by Luini of Tobias and the Angel, and the Marriage of the Virgin by Gaudenzio Ferrari. There are two small profiles of Prospero Colonna and the Marchese di Pescara, and some caricatures. In a case there is a

reproduction of the *Codex Atlanticus* of Leonardo.

Sala H.—Here are more drawings and a collection of prints. In the central case is a drawing by Raphael for the figure of the Virgin in the Dispute of the Sacrament; on the back of the sheet is a pen-sketch of a group. There are other drawings attributed to various North Italian artists, and to Albert Dürer. The prints include specimens of Italian, French, English, Flemish and German schools.

Milan is rich in private art collections, some the fruit of a liberal patronage of the fine arts by her wealthy and noble families in the past, others brought together by distinguished connoisseurs in the present day. The famous Borromeo Collection is housed in the old family palace, and is open to the public on Tuesday and Friday afternoons. Among a number of works of the best Lombard period there is the Abbondanza of Gian Pietrino, an allegorical figure much resembling his well-known Magdalenes, with beautiful hands displayed in somewhat affected pose. The flesh colour is luminous and golden, not heavy and dark as so often with this painter. A painting by Boltraffio, after Leonardo's Madonna of the Rocks, has been spoiled by cleaning. There is a very charming small picture by the same artist, of a woman's head, with golden hair and a crown of leaves. A little Madonna, attributed in the gallery to Leonardo, is by one of his followers, perhaps Ambrogio de Predis. A small picture by Borgognone, grey in hue, shows his early manner, derived from Foppa. There are several others by this artist. By Filippo Mazzola is the line realistic head of a Young Man in a dark crimson cap and black dress, seen against a green background. Another very interesting

portrait, of Camillo Trivulzio, is by the rare painter, Bernardino de' Conti. It shows a man in a red cap and red dress, with black curling hair—a very serious profile, full of character and thought, and finely realised by the artist. The Madonna and Child, with two Hermit Saints, by Gaudenzio Ferrari, is a large and simple composition, full of the painter's geniality, but without the exaggeration and vulgarity he often falls into. The Madonna is a beautiful image of maternity, stately and sweet, with golden hair simply arranged; such a face, typically North Italian, you may sometimes see to-day among the peasant women in and around Milan. By the same artist is St. Roch as a pilgrim in full travelling costume of the sixteenth century. Luini is represented by Susannah and an Elder, of soft morbid tones, and by Madonna and Child and little St. John, in a landscape of hills and trees and water—a thoroughly characteristic work.

Of other Schools there is Christ on the Cross, by Lorenzo Lotto; St. Catherine, by Bartolommeo Veneto; Christ bearing the Cross, by Pinturicchio; and a Madonna, by Piero di Cosimo. There are many interesting things in the Museum besides pictures, including relics of San Carlo.

The important Trivulzio Collection, in the family palace, opposite to St. Alessandro, can only be visited by permission of the owner, Prince Trivulzio. It contains a fine Mantegna—the Assumption of the Virgin—painted in 1497; Portrait of a Man, by Antonello da Messina; Birth of the Virgin, by the Siennese Sano di Pietro; Madonna and Angels, by Pier' di Cosimo, etc., and a very interesting portrait of Lodovico il Moro, by Boltraffio. Here is also preserved the Gothic tomb of Azzo Visconte,

originally in S. Gottardo, and some splendid tapestries—the Twelve Months of the Year—of the Renaissance period, and of Lombard production. The fine library is rich in the possession of a manuscript by Leonardo, known as the *Codex Trivulziana*, and of a fragment of the precious *Libro di Gesù*, in which are portraits of Lodovico il Moro and his son Massimiliano, aged five, miniatured by Ambrogio de Predis.

The other private collections not being open to the public hardly come within our province; we may perhaps be permitted to mention Signor Crespi's (Via Borgo Nuovo), a particularly fine collection, which has been fully illustrated in a monograph by Sig. Adolfo Venturi, with reproductions of the pictures.[24] It contains the very fine portrait of a woman, variously ascribed to Titian and Giorgione, but given by Venturi to Pordenone; a very interesting early Correggio—the Presepio—and a small Madonna, by the same master; a Madonna of Gio. Bellini, also an early work of great beauty; a Holy Family, by Lorenzo Lotto, in which the Virgin is one of his most subtle presentments of feminine character; the Flight into Egypt, also by Lotto; Victory of the Gonzaga over the Buonacorsi, with a very interesting view of Mantua, by Domenico Morone; a fine portrait of a man attributed to Andrea Solari, but, according to Venturi, by Bartolommeo Veneto. The Milanese school is also well represented, and there are many other works of value.

24. *La Galleria Crespi.*

The well-known connoisseur, Dr. Gustavo Frizzoni, also has a small, but very choice collection of pictures, chiefly of the North Italian and Venetian

schools.

CHAPTER XVI
The Castello

"La miglior fortezza che sia è non essere odiato dal popolo."—MACCHIAVELLI.

In the west of the city a vast red brick building, towering against the sky, closes the wide vista of the modern Via Dante. It stands for that storied stronghold and palace of the Visconti and Sforza, the Castello di Porta Giovia, whose rapidly vanishing remains, mutilated, ruined and buried beneath the additions and incrustations of five centuries of changing circumstance, have been very recently dug out and restored and rebuilt into the present interesting semblance of the fifteenth century original.

The Castello was first built by Galeazzo II. Visconte, in the latter half of the fourteenth century. Galeazzo's stronghold incorporated one of the thirteenth century gates, the Porta Giovia—or, in Milanese, *Zobia*—which had kept the name of the corresponding gate in the Roman walls, named Giovia in honour of the Emperor Diocletian Jovius. It served at first solely for defence, and as a prison. Only a few years after its erection Galeazzo's subtle son secured within its walls his first great prey—

Bernabò Visconte, his uncle and fellow-sovereign. The fortress did not then extend beyond the city walls; these with the moat formed its defence towards the country. But Gian Galeazzo constructed a second citadel beyond the walls and moat, enlarging the enclosure to the dimensions which they occupy to-day—and enclosing Porta Giovia and a portion of the city walls in the new precincts.

The Castello, so increased and strengthened, became the chief support of the tyrants of Milan. Its possession ensured dominion of the city. When Duke Giovanni Maria was murdered, the fortress was faithfully held against all attacks by Vincenzo Marliano for his lawful successor, Filippo Maria, who was able to enter through it into the seditious city at the head of an army and force the factions to accept his rule. This last of the Visconte sovereigns made his dwelling in the innermost keep of the Castle in gloomy seclusion, imprisoned by his own fears. His tyranny and dark habit of life invested the Castle with horror for his subjects, and immediately after his death they deliberately tore the great building down, stone by stone, at great cost. Only the foundations were left standing.

But for a very brief time did the Milanese see the free sky unobstructed by menacing towers. On the overthrow of the Ambrosian republic and the accession of Francesco Sforza, the Castle began to be rebuilt, and before long the great fortress, enclosed within much stronger defences than before, was again in existence. It is this Sforza building, with the additions made by Francesco's sons, which we see in the restored Castello of to-day, though the brave new battlements and towers give a poor idea of the substance of those walls which amazed King René of

Anjou when he visited the works with the Duchess Bianca Maria in 1453, and of a building celebrated by many writers as the strongest and proudest in the world.

The first architects—or *ingegneri*—were Filippo da Ancona and Giovanni da Milano. The latter was succeeded by Jacopo da Cortona in 1451. A year later the building was far enough advanced for the Castellan, Foschino degli Attendoli, to take possession. The day of his installation was of mystical import for the Duke, who chose a day approved by his astrologers, when the moon was waxing. Francesco, who desired to make his building beautiful as well as strong, engaged the Florentine architect Filarete to design and adorn a lofty entrance tower in the walls facing citywards. This tower, destroyed long ago by accident and time, is now represented by the modern Torre d'Umberto, in which it must be supposed that the architect has somewhat freely interpreted the scanty evidence in contemporary documents and drawings of the appearance of the original.[25]

25. A fifteenth century graphite drawing of Milan on a wall of the old monastery of Chiaravalle, a short distance from the city, shows the form of the castle at that time.

The usual quarrels arose between Filarete and his Lombard fellow-architects, whom the Tuscan scorned as mere masons. Their jealousy and impatience defeated his ideas, and he was finally compelled to abandon the work entirely to them. The Duke's decorative projects indeed came to little. His order to Jacopo da Cortona to make windows, *of such beauty of style and form as a work like this demands*, in the

outer façade was never fulfilled, perhaps because of the inconvenience of such openings in a defensive curtain, and it was left to the restorer in these peaceful days to insert the Gothic windows—elaborately ornamented in imitation of some of the old ones still remaining in other parts of the building—which now adorn the front.

After the first the work proceeded slowly, hindered by the quarrels of the architects, the irregularity of payments, and the dishonesty of those in charge. In 1454 the Duke's military engineer, Bartolommeo Gadio of Cremona, was appointed to the chief post, which he held to the satisfaction of three successive despots till his death in 1484. Duke Francesco was destined never to inhabit himself this building which he had watched with such ceaseless interest, but when he died in 1466 it was complete in all its main features. Within the great walls which flanked Filarete's tower and were guarded at the angles by two massive round towers lay the vast outer court, with fortified side gates, as well as the main entrance in the central tower. At the other end of this piazza rose a second mighty curtain of masonry, behind which lay the citadel, containing the Corte Ducale on the north side, and on the south a strongly defended inner enclosure, the Rochetta or innermost keep, the place of retreat in extremity. In this form we see the Castle to-day, though with all the defensive apparel which frowned from gates and tower and walls gone.

On the accession of Galeazzo to the dukedom, the Corte Ducale was completed with the utmost haste for his reception, and having settled himself there, the young tyrant gave rein to his extravagant passion for gorgeous decoration. While keeping architects and builders still continually at work on his new

palace, he called painters from all parts of his state to fresco its walls, himself supplying the subjects. There is little doubt that everything possible to mortals was done to please a prince whose imperious will was supported by the torture chamber and the executioner, and that the palace was soon gay with the colour which he loved. Within its sumptuous halls Galeazzo entertained his guests with lavish splendour. Here Cardinal Pietro Riario was accorded pontifical state on his visit in 1473, and lay in a chamber so superbly adorned that no one had ever seen another so magnificent and princely, and here he and his host built up fantastic political schemes, which were to make the one monarch of Peter's throne and the other king of all Italy—schemes drowned but a few days later in a poisoned cup offered to the mad young priest at a Venetian banquet.

The Duke continued the construction of the Rocchetta also, which his father had left unfinished, and gave orders for the decoration of the great Sala della Palla on its north-east side. But it is with the Corte Ducale that the fateful memories of this prince are especially associated. Thither he returned on the Feast of St. Thomas, 1476, with the glory of a victorious campaign freshly investing him, yet abstracted and pensive, possessed with a sense of the nearness of death, so that he bid the singers of his chapel to repeat every day in the midst of the joyful celebrations of the season, the mournful cry from the Office of the Dead, *Maria Mater Gratiæ, Mater Misericordiæ*.... In the painted halls behind the chapel the usual Christmas ceremonies were carried out, and in the Sala *dei Fazoli* the Yule log was solemnly lighted upon the hearth in the presence of the tyrant and his family, and of all the great feudatories of

state. In the Sala delle Columbine—painted with doves—the Duke, clad in a long crimson robe, entertained his courtiers on Christmas Day, and discoursed on the greatness of Casa Sforza, pointing out with unconscious irony how firmly its fortunes were assured in the many descendants of his father Francesco then existing in health and prosperity. We may picture his tall figure on the following day, clad in the doublet of crimson satin lined with sable, for which, with characteristic vanity, he had cast aside his cuirass, fearing to appear too stout if he wore the armour beneath; and in the long hose, one crimson, one white, worn by the princes of Milan, passing through the loggia, which still exists, though much restored, and down the great staircase into the courtyard, on his way to attend Mass in S. Stefano. He had kissed his little sons, and parted from them with a strange hesitation—this man who, as his daughter Caterina proudly declared, *never knew fear*. Mounting his horse in the outer court, he rode out beneath the Tower of Filarete, followed by a gorgeous throng of courtiers, and his brilliant figure disappears from the Castello for ever. Later on the same day a messenger passed out of the gate charged by Bona with three rings, a turquoise, a ruby, and a precious seal, and with a vest of white cloth of gold, for the adornment of his body, which lay laced with twenty-three dagger wounds, in the Canonica of S. Stefano.

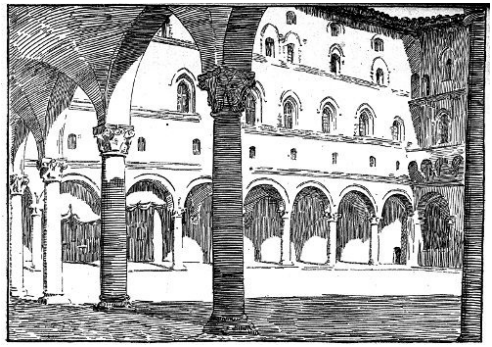
With the death of Galeazzo, the historic interest of the Castello shifts to the Rocchetta. This inner keep has remained more in its old state than the Corte Ducale, and is the most picturesque part of the castle to-day. The cortile is one of those characteristic colonnaded buildings which are generally described as Bramantesque in Milan. Two of the sides of the

quadrangle, however—to the left of and facing the entrance from the outer court—are of older date, having been built by Francesco and Galeazzo Maria respectively. The columns and capitals show the character of the early Renaissance in Milan; upon the capitals are carved the shields and various devices of the dukes. The other part was not finished till later. The lofty tower at the north-east angle, called the Torre di Bona, was built during the brief regency of Galeazzo's widow, when Cecco Simonetta hastened to complete the defences of the Rocchetta in order to ensure her authority. This measure, however, only served for her undoing at the hands of Lodovico il Moro, who, having taken advantage of her weakness and folly to possess himself of the Rocchetta, the person of the little Duke, and, in consequence, of the supreme government of the state, made his abode in this, the heart and key of the whole stronghold.

During the first years of his rule Lodovico did little to the Castle beyond completing its defences. But as time went on he allowed himself to assume the splendour of a reigning prince, and to satisfy an artistic appetite as eager as Galeazzo's and ordered by a finer discrimination. The great artists whom he called to his court were set to work to make the palace such a home of art and beauty as the world has rarely seen. Their services were required not only for lasting work, but to design the ephemeral decorations of the gorgeous state ceremonies in which the regent delighted to display the wealth at his command. The magnificent decorations for the coming of the young Duke's bride, Isabella of Aragon, in 1489, were designed, it is said, by Leonardo da Vinci. The regent's own approaching marriage with Beatrice d'Este caused a great ferment of artistic activity during the next year in the

Rocchetta in preparation for her habitation there. With despotic impatience Lodovico summoned all the best “painters of histories”—*depinctori de istoriade* —to come to Milan within two days of his order on pain of heavy fines, and show designs for the decoration of the Sala della Palla. He himself describes the room in a letter to his brother Cardinal Ascanio. The ceiling was blue, with golden stars, in similitude of the heavens, and the walls were covered with pictures on canvas representing the exploits of Francesco Sforza, whose image on horseback beneath a triumphal arch was depicted at the upper end.

With the advent of Beatrice d’Este the Rocchetta became the scene of an incomparable gaiety. The young princess filled it with new life. Her extraordinary capacity for enjoyment never knew satiety, not even in the lengthiest of state functions, which she enlivened by teasing the hoary ambassadors who occupied the place of honour beside her. In the beautiful rooms prepared for her in the south-west side of the court she lived her brief enchanted existence in the midst of the most exquisite environment which her husband’s wealth and devotion and the fine art of the Renaissance could create for her.



THE ROCCHETTA, CASTELLO

How difficult it is to-day, in this exhumed corpse of her old home, these dry bones of the past, denuded of all their old richness of detail and decoration, to realise that vivid young presence. Yet the sun shines gloriously in the wide cortile this afternoon, making a stately pattern of light and shade in the arcades, and we recognise at least in the fair and spacious proportions of the building and the grace of sculptured column and curving arch, that Renaissance beauty of architecture which made it once a worthy setting for such a prince and princess as Lodovico il Moro and Beatrice d'Este.

During his regency the Moro spent enormous sums on the various works which he undertook in the Castle. He formed a vast piazza around it, in the midst of which he apparently intended to place Leonardo's great equestrian statue of Duke Francesco. The clay model of this statue was in fact set up there on the occasion of Bianca Maria Sforza's marriage with the Emperor Maximilian, and remained there till, with the passing of the Moro's ephemeral glory, it too perished for the wanton amusement of a foreign invader. In 1494, when the

death of Gian Galeazzo removed the last shadowy limitation of Lodovico's sovereignty, the tyrant pressed on with new eagerness the incessant labours of his architects and engineers on the great building. The Rocchetta was finally completed by a portico on the north-east side; and among many other alterations and additions a set of exquisite camerini opening into a loggia were built across a bridge over the moat on the north-east side of the Corte Ducale. The picturesque exterior of this structure, which has been attributed to Bramante—groundlessly, it appears—may be seen in restored form to-day. The great gardens which extended on the north and west of the Castle were a special object of the Moro's care. He enlarged them continually, absorbing without mercy all the Naboths' vineyards adjacent. Both Leonardo and Bramante were employed by him at this time for various works in the Castello—chiefly of defence and utility—though Leonardo was also charged with the decoration of rooms in his character of painter. There are jottings in his notebooks referring to work of this sort, estimates in fact of the cost of the materials and labour required. Other existing documents show him frescoing the Sala delle Asse and a certain Saletta Negra in the Corte Ducale. But in spite of the most painstaking research and every effort of restoration, there is nothing now remaining in these rooms which can be considered Leonardo's handiwork. Neither of Bramante is there any undoubted trace left, except a precious fragment of a painting in one of the rooms of the Rocchetta.

The sudden death of Beatrice in the early days of 1497 extinguished all the sunshine in the Castello. The labours of builders and artists still continued upon it. But it was to works of defence that the

thoughts of the Duke were compelled now to turn almost exclusively. The peril of the French threatened the throne of the Sforza. Leonardo and the others were occupied in 1498 and 1499 in strengthening the fortifications and inventing new engines of defence, and the Rocchetta especially was rendered so strong that it was practically impregnable. Yet all this labour and care served only for the ruin of the Moro, and the advantage of his enemies. Afraid to trust himself within it, as we have seen, he abandoned it at the critical moment, leaving it in the hands of his faithless Castellan Bernardino da Corte, and deluding himself with the belief that he was turning his back upon it for an hour only, to return in triumph to its relief, he passed out of the gates for ever.

With the departure of Lodovico Sforza ended the good days of the Castello. Surrendered by Bernardino da Corte to the French, it was sacked of all its wonderful contents. Bernardino claimed as his share of the spoil all that Lodovico had not removed of the famous Sforza treasure, including priceless works of the goldsmiths' art. Gian Giacomo Trivulzio seized the splendid tapestries. All the exquisite accessories of Beatrice's short life, her costly robes, her instruments of music, her jewels, her beautiful books, were rudely shared between the various spoilers. What became of the pictures is unknown. The French captains occupied her private apartments, her delicate camerini, and the beautiful halls and courts where life had been practised as a fine art, were given up to coarse and drunken jollity, and defiled by the foul habits of the invaders. How deplorable the change in the eyes of the Italian princes and ambassadors who waited with servile deference upon Louis XII. during his stay in Milan is shown by many

records. *In the castello there is nothing but dirt and foulness*, says a Venetian who was present then, *such as Signor Lodovico would not have allowed for the whole world*.

The Castle had now to serve the grim purposes of war, not of art and pleasure. For these it was well fitted, in the hands of determined defenders. The French chronicler, Jean d'Auton, who was in the train of Louis XII., describes with admiration its immense strength, its broad moats, its towers, ramparts, walls and outworks, its fortified gates, its sally ports and posterns, with the impregnable Rocchetta in its midst. *If their effeminate stomachs had been swelled by manly hearts*, says he, speaking of Lodovico's garrison, *well might they have held it long against every human power, for they had in their hands one of the most advantageous places in the world.... In such keeping is it now*, he adds, *that, in spite of all the winds, in every corner of its garden, the noble fleur-de-lys shall flower for ever*. The fleur-de-lys was not, however, so fadeless as he boasted. But it bloomed undisturbed for twelve years, during which period the palace once or twice knew splendour and gaiety once more, as in 1507, when Louis XII. held his court there for a short time, and was waited on by cardinals, princes, and distinguished men from all parts of Italy. Then it was that Isabella d'Este danced with the king in the great ball-room in the Rocchetta, where her dead sister had presided. There, too, was Galeazzo di San Severino, once the most intimate friend of the now captive Moro and his wife, and now Grand Ecuyer to the usurper. The court poets, the musicians sang their venal praises as gaily for the new as for the old master, Leonardo, too, was there, in the service of the French king. For him one tyrant passed and another came; art alone endured.

The ravages in the palace were concealed by the gorgeous decorations. Two years later the king came again, and the company on this occasion was so superb that the meanest dresses were of brocade. These were but temporary liftings of the gloom. In 1512 the castle was besieged by the Holy League, and the French turned out. Again in 1515 it was retaken by the French, and the weak young Duke Massimiliano Sforza was replaced by the splendid Francis I., who rode in, fresh from his victory in the Battle of the Giants, beneath the usual arches of triumph. In 1521 a terrific explosion of gunpowder, lit it is said by a thunderbolt from a serene sky, destroyed the great Torre di Filarete, and killed the Castellan and a number of the garrison. A few months later the Castle was besieged by Charles V.'s army, and after fourteen months of heroic endurance, the French were again expelled. The reign of Francesco II. Sforza followed with all its terrible vicissitudes of war and siege and Spanish occupation. Bombardments, the necessity for new defences and alterations, the polluting presence of the Spaniards and lanzknechts wrecked ever more and more the proud habitation of the Sforza. A mocking reflection of its old glory brightened it for a few years after Duke Francesco's reconciliation with the Emperor in 1530, and one or two splendid pageants were added to the long succession of gorgeous spectacles of which it had been the scene under the Sforza. These ended in 1535 in the melancholy ceremony of the last Duke's funeral, when his dead body, or rather an image of it, arrayed in crimson velvet and scarlet hose, and a mantle of richest golden brocade, and crowned with the ducal beretta, was borne forth beneath a canopy of cloth of gold, by the doctors of the University, preceded by

an endless train of friars and monks and clergy and black-hooded mourners carrying torches, and followed by kinsmen, ambassadors and nobles in sable robes reaching to the ground. The real body was carried out quietly to the Duomo the same evening. Thus in symbolic show and unreal grandeur the short-lived dynasty of the Sforza vanished out of this great fabric of its creation.

From this time the Castello ceased to be the chief palace of a sovereign prince. Under the Spaniards its precincts were enlarged and strengthened in the second half of the sixteenth century by an immense outer quadrangle of fortifications which completely altered its aspect. The changing conditions of warfare, and the advance of the science of fortification, brought continual additions and changes, and many of the beautiful constructions of the Sforza period were ruthlessly sacrificed. Yet the Castello remained for long one of the famous sights of Europe, and is described with admiration by many travellers.

In 1800 the fortifications built by the Spaniards were destroyed, and only the old Sforza nucleus remained, abandoned to natural decay, and converted later into barracks. It is from this fate that its ruins have been rescued and built up into the imposing edifice of to-day.

The stately halls of the Corte Ducale are now the home of the archæological and artistic collections of the municipality. We have only space to mention shortly some of the most interesting objects as we pass through the rooms.

Sala I., once the office of the ducal chancellors, contains prehistoric, Etruscan, Greek and Roman antiquities, mostly dug up in Milan and its province.

The beautiful torso of a Venus, with fragments of a Cupid and marine accessories forming a group with her, is the most precious relic yet drawn from the grave of imperial Milan. Another treasure is the base decorated with graceful fresco paintings, in excellent preservation, of Ceres, Fortune, Hercules and Victory.

Sala II., containing Lombard sculptures from the sixth to the thirteenth centuries shows the complete decay of the old Roman tradition and the rude early stages of the new era of art. The most interesting objects historically, and also as evidence of the extraordinarily barbarous state of Lombard sculpture in the twelfth century, are the bas-reliefs from the old Porta Romana, one of the gates built by the Milanese in 1171. They represent the return of the citizens after their expulsion by Barbarossa, and in the rows of rudely carved figures on the first pilaster we see on one side the Milanese knights and men-at-arms entering a gate, with the name Mediolanum above, marshalled by a priest bearing a banner; on another side the soldiers of the allied cities, issuing from gates, with Brisia (Brescia) and Cremona marked above; on another, women and horsemen and priests carrying the cross. A boastful inscription records the authors of the sculptures, Anselmo and Gherardo, and proclaims one a new Dædalus, the other as being *pollice docto*, of cunning hand! On the other pilaster St. Ambrose is represented with scourge in hand driving out the Arians, and on another side are the citizens in procession, men with tools and chattels, women with babies.

A large figure astride a devil, supposed to be a satirical portrait of Barbarossa, was once on the same gate, together with an insulting figure of the Empress

which is also in this room. Here is, besides that precious memorial of Milan's freedom, the Stone of the Milanese Consuls, once fixed also on Porta Romana, a tablet recording the return of the people to their city in 1167, and the erection of the towers and gates, together with the names of the consuls.

The ceiling of this hall—one of the state rooms of the Sforza—shows traces of Renaissance painting—Cupids holding shields.

Sala III.—Fourteenth century sculpture by the Campionese masters. Here is the great sepulchral monument of Bernabò Visconte, with an equestrian statue of him on the top, executed in his lifetime, probably by Bonino da Campione, the sculptor of the tomb of Cansignorio at Verona, which it resembles in style. In the reliefs the Pisan traditions of Giovanni da Balduccio are followed, but with the inferior ability and the heaviness and rigidity of the local school, and modified also by a tendency towards realistic expression and elaboration of the draperies, which develops later into the mannerism of the fifteenth century Lombards. The smaller monument of Bernabò's wife, Regina della Scala, is by the same school. The Dead Christ upon the front is, however, a more artistic piece of work than the same subject on Bernabò's tomb. The droop of the head and fall of the arms is expressed with truth and feeling, and the figures of Luke and John are excellent in their dignity and simplicity. The vaulted roof of this room is decorated with a fifteenth century fresco of the Resurrection by an inferior Lombard painter, and with the arms and initials of Galeazzo Maria Sforza.

Sala IV.—Works of the Campionese masters, among them the groups of Madonna and Saints, once upon the old Porta Orientale and Porta Romana. In the

cortile is set up the magnificent marble portal of the palace built by Pigello Portinari in the reign of Francesco Sforza, to accommodate the Medicean Bank, and not long since pulled down. This beautifully proportioned doorway is attributed to Michelozzo. In the spandrils are profile busts of Duke Francesco and Bianca Maria. The heavy figures on the outer sides of the door are additions by some Lombard sculptor.

Sala V. consists of the upper half of the old ducal chapel. It still preserves, in much damaged condition, the ceiling fresco of God the Father in a blue sky with golden stars, which Galeazzo Maria commanded to be painted, and for which there was great competition between the court artists. It was finally done, in part at least, by Bonifazio Bembo, Stefano de' Fedeli and Gio. Montorfano. A Resurrection is also dimly visible, and beneath the vaulting the Virgin and Angel of the Annunciation, with Saints half obliterated on the walls below. The room contains sculpture of the early fifteenth century, and an exquisite Renaissance doorway at the head of the room, and another from the palace of Ippolita Sforza in Piazza S. Giovanni in Conca, at the entrance into Sala X.

Sala VI.—The old Sala delle Asse—at present empty —has a grand ceiling decoration, purporting to be a restoration of the decoration done by Leonardo in this room for Lodovico il Moro, of which some supposed traces were discovered here.

Sala VII.—This, called the Sala dei Ducali, from the ducal shields with which the ceiling is painted, contains sculpture of the late fifteenth century. Here are some of the characteristic productions of the Milanese Renaissance sculptors, among them a tondo

of the Nativity, an early and attractive work by Amadeo, in which the mannerisms, such as the paper-like folds of his draperies, are not yet unpleasantly evident; four pilasters, with reliefs attributed to Tommaso Cazzaniga; a little tabernacle in the window representing St. Sebastian, now attributed to Amadeo, to whom is also ascribed a little bas-relief of St. Cristopher, carrying a vivacious infant with a large head. There is also here a beautiful tabernacle, attributed to the Maestro di San Tommaso (so called from a work by him in S. Tommaso at Venice), and a bas-relief by the Florentine Agostino di Duccio.

Sala VIII.—The Sala delle Columbine of Galeazzo Maria's time is decorated with the favourite ducal device of the dove in the midst of rays, and the motto A Bon Droit. It is devoted to the works of Amadeo and the sculptors of his time. Here are some characteristic pieces by the Mantegazza brothers, two kneeling saints, angular and unbeautiful, and four bas-reliefs from the old façade of S. Satiro, representing Sibyls, and the creation of Adam and Eve. In these a predilection for long and angular contours and exaggeratedly complicated folds are united to an energetic, almost violent expression. Two kneeling angels, once attributed to the Mantegazza, are probably by Amadeo, by whom also are the tondi with the Virgin and the Angel of the Annunciation, and probably the head of a boy, placed in the middle of the room, broad and realistic in style, and of vivacious expression, but without beauty. Of rich and exuberant fancy are the exquisite arabesques on some marble fragments supposed to belong to the Targhetta monument in the Duomo, sculptured by Amadeo. A tondo of the Nativity shows the fully developed manner of this master. There is

also a bas-relief of Cain and Abel by Amadeo, as well as other things by him and his fellow sculptors.

Sala IX.—The Sala degli *Scarlioni*—of the Zigzags—painted with red and white stripes, contains sculpture of the rather later period of il Bambaia and Fusina. Here is Bambaia's famous work, the recumbent statue of Gaston de Foix, from the hero's monument in Sta. Marta, which was broken up and sold at the demolition of that church. The head is of classic beauty, and the whole figure shows a depth and sincerity of feeling to which we are hardly accustomed in this able but usually cold and uninspired artist. There are smaller fragments of the decoration of the same tomb on a stand close by. The casts in the cases are from reliefs also intended for this monument and now dispersed in various collections; they show in the detached style of the ornamentation and the confused design, a desire for novelty, unrestrained by artistic feeling. There are other works by this master, some of a classic grace, besides a number of other interesting things.

Sala X.—The lower half of the Capella Ducale exhibits a fine collection of the characteristic terra-cotta ornamentation of North Italy. In this delightfully plastic material, so rich and picturesque in colour, the Lombard decorative artists found a most happy medium for their art, which for the play of its exuberant gaiety and fancy needed a less severe material than marble. This wealth of exquisite fragments of decoration from old houses and convents gives some idea of the beauty which clothed the buildings of this city and its neighbours in the Gothic and Renaissance periods. Here are set up windows with rich mouldings such as may still be seen here and there about the city, but more and

more rarely as time goes on and the beautiful old buildings fall one by one in that dreadful sounding process, the *sventramento* of the old crowded quarters. Here are some remains of the lately destroyed house of the Missaglia, a famous family of armourers in the fifteenth century, whose monogram appears upon a capital, and fragments from the beautiful Banco de' Medici, of which some drawings are also shown. The charming fresco of little Gian Galeazzo Sforza, reading Cicero, by Bramantino, now in the Wallace Collection, came from this palace.

Mounting by the grand staircase and passing through the Loggia di Galeazzo Maria, we enter the great Sala Verde of the ducal days, which now contains a fine collection of majolica; ivories of the Roman and Mediæval eras; Limoges enamels; some beautiful sixteenth and seventeenth century glass, besides other things.

Sala II.—Here are some very beautiful crucifixes and sacred vessels, examples of goldsmiths' work of the Gothic and Renaissance periods; bronzes of later date; seventeenth century tapestries, etc.

Sala III. and Sala IV. contain carved and inlaid furniture—cornices, panels of altarpieces, etc. A carved altar frame of richest Renaissance style, with little paintings of saints at the corners, is a Lombard production of the fifteenth century.

Sala Milano.—This room is chiefly occupied with drawings and paintings of the buildings of old Milan, and mementoes of her history. Beneath the ceiling are ranged charming fresco portraits of the Sforza, by Luini, taken from a house in Corso Magenta. They are of course chiefly fancy presentments of those historic personages. The great silken standard of St. Ambrogio, partly needlework, partly painted in

tempera, of the sixteenth century, hangs on the wall. A very interesting little painting on wood, much damaged, depicts Galeazzo Maria Sforza, his son Gian Galeazzo, and lastly Lodovico il Moro, following one another in order of rank on horseback, fully armed and accompanied by their pages. Their arms and special devices are painted on the trappings of their horses. It is a work evidently of Galeazzo Maria's time.

Sala VII.—Here we enter the Pinacoteca, which contains a small but very valuable collection of the Lombard and other North Italian Schools.

Martyrdom of S. Sebastian by Vincenzo Foppa is an impressive work. The artist's tendency to dark and grey tones is carried to an extreme, and the effect is gloomy, almost tragic. St. Ursula and her Virgins by Moretto. The saint in her flowing draperies, holding the banners, is a noble figure, and the colour is good, with that opaque quality peculiar to this Brescian artist.

Sala II.—Large altarpiece by Borgognone, Madonna with SS. Sebastian and Jerome, is in his usual gentle and devout manner. Buttinone, a series of small scenes from the New Testament, showing all his peculiar mannerisms; the action of the rather grotesque figures is decidedly vigorous. Vincenzo Foppa, a small Madonna picture, has all the painter's strong characteristics. The string of corals reminds one of his Paduan training. Gianpietrino, a picture of the Magdalen, his favourite subject, is better drawn and modelled than his figures sometimes are, and less morbid in the flesh tones. Sodoma, a very theatrical S. Michael. Boltraffio, Madonna and Child of his usual type, and rather hot colour, and two panels of Saints, with well-painted profile portraits of

donors. Correggio, Madonna and Child, with little S. John is a particularly gracious composition. She looks down with a sad half smile at the children, who have the childish charm which Correggio depicts with such subtle mastery. It is a picture to sit down in front of and enjoy. By Carlo Crivelli there are two Saints, S. John with finger on lip, holding a book, and S. Bartholomew holding a knife and book. Antonello da Messina, a fine portrait of a dark man crowned with a green wreath. On the other side of the room there is a splendid portrait by Tintoretto of Doge Jacopo Soranzo, an old man in deep wine-coloured dress. Moroni, a portrait of a man in black with white ruff. Il Bassano, a man in elaborately ornamental armour. Antonio Pordenone, a fine portrait of a man with a small dog, a Titianesque landscape showing through the window. By Bernardino Licinio is a beautiful portrait of a fair, golden-haired woman, in rich black velvet dress embroidered in gold. She holds a picture of a man, and a lovely landscape of water and hills and sky shows through the window. This work has all the warmth and glow of the best period of Venetian painting. Cariani, a realistic portrait of a stout woman painted in a masterly manner. In interesting contrast to these splendid, generous, if decidedly sensuous paintings, is the small portrait by Lorenzo Lotto of a young man. It is not only the great subtlety and delicacy of treatment, the arrangement of cool flesh tones, grey dress and blue background, but the individuality of facial expression that most distinguishes it from contemporary painting. The artist has analysed the character of this youth and given us a psychological study. Mr. Berenson calls this picture ‘artistic’ in the French sense of the word and unexpected as a work of the Renaissance.[26]

26.

B. Berenson, *Lorenzo Lotto*.

On the walls are placed frescoes by Foppa and the early Milanese school, removed from demolished churches. Some beautiful miniatured books, Corali, Missals, Lives of the Saints, Bibles, etc., are ranged down the middle of the room on screens.

A small door at the end of this room opens into a way which leads by narrow staircases and passages and by a sort of drawbridge through the Torre di Bona into the Rocchetta. It was across here, by ways very strongly defended and almost impossible to force, that the little Duke Gian Galeazzo was hurried into the keep when he was stolen from his mother by the emissaries of Lodovico il Moro. The great rooms of the Rocchetta, once sacred to the fortunate existence of Lodovico and Beatrice, and now completely restored, contain the collections of Modern Art and the Museum of the Risorgimento, which is filled with deeply interesting memorials of that great recent moment of Milan's history, when she showed herself splendidly true to her grand traditions as the leader of the Lombard League seven hundred years earlier. There is something curiously suggestive in the presence of these memorials here in the old home of Lodovico il Moro, who represents the height of the tyranny to which the city succumbed in the intervening centuries. As we glance round these renovated rooms we realise how victoriously she has at last swept that tyranny and all its sins and evil memories away, sacrificing with it inevitably the artistic and decorative beauty which partly redeemed it.



MILAN

In the Sala del Tesoro, on the ground floor, where modern sculpture is now exhibited, will be found the remains of a fresco by Bramante, representing Argus, a magnificent warrior figure, fit guardian of this chamber, which once held the famous treasure of the Sforza.

TABLE OF THE VISCONTI

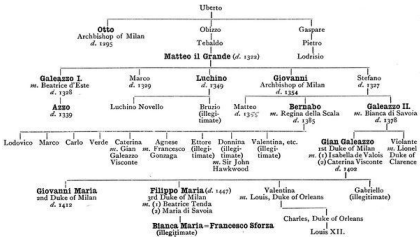
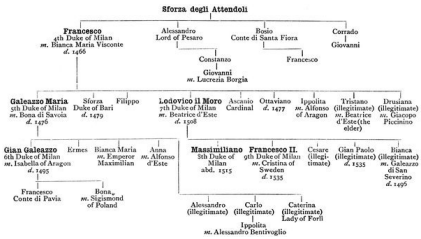


TABLE OF THE SFORZA



APPENDIX

TRAM ROUTES, ETC.

The following is a list of the trams and ways to the various places of interest. The trams start from the Duomo.

St. Ambrogio (p. 256), *San Vittore* tram.

Palazzo di Brera (p. 335) and S. Marco (p. 296) (street on right), *Porta Volta* tram.

S. Lorenzo (p. 278), Colonne di S. Lorenzo (p. 278) and St. Eustorgio (p. 284), *Porta Ticinese* tram.

Monastero Maggiore (p. 320) and S. Maria delle Grazie (p. 310), *Porta Magenta* (*Maddalena*) tram.

S. Simpliciano (p. 295) and S. Maria Incoronata (p. 305), *Corso Garibaldi* tram.

S. Pietro in Gessate (p. 306), *Porta Vittoria* tram.

S. Maria della Passione (p. 326). *Piazza Monforte* tram is the nearest. Alighting at *Via S. Damiano*, you pass by the garden of Pal. Visconti di Modrone (p. 334) on the way to the church.

Ospedale Maggiore (p. 308), *Porta Romana* tram. Alight at *S. Nazaro*.

S. Celso (p. 293) and S. Maria presso S. Celso (p. 327), *Porta Lodovica* tram.

S. Babila (p. 294) and Pal. Silvestri (p. 328), *Porta Venezia* tram.

Museo Poldi-Pezzoli in Via Morone (p. 352) is quickly reached on foot from the Duomo by *Corso Vittoria Emanuele* and *Via S. Paolo*.

S. Satiro (p. 318), in *Via Torino*, is two or three minutes on foot from the Duomo.

Biblioteca Ambrosiana (p. 359) and S. Sepolcro (p. 295) are also quickly reached by *Via Torino* and *Via Spadari* (on right).

Pal. Borromeo (pp. 302 and 365) is reached from *Piazza Cordusio* by *Via del Bocchetto*.

The Castello (p. 368) is a few minutes' walk by Via Mercanti (Pal. della Ragione (p. 296) and Piazza dei Mercanti on the left) and Via Dante. Many trams go in that direction from the Duomo or Piazza Cordusio.

There are frequent trains from the Stazione Centrale for the Certosa of Pavia (30 to 40 min.), Chiaravalle (11 min.) and Monza (15 min.). Monza may also be tediously reached by steam-tram from the Duomo.

INDEX

A

Adelmano, 18

Adeodatus, 11

Agostino di Duccio, 385

Albero, the, 244

Albertinelli, Mariotto, 355

Alessi, Gal., 330

Alexander II., Pope, 30, 32, 33

—— VI., Pope, 168, 179, 187

Alypius, 11

Amadeo, Gio. Ant., 213, 214, 231, 245, 250, 385, 386

——, *Guglia di*, 250

Ambrogio da Fossano (*see* Borgognone)

Ambrose, St., 8;

elected Bishop of Milan, 9;
contention with Empress, 9-12;
triumph over Theodosius, 12;
power in the Empire, 13;

death, 13, 256, 259, 273

Angilberto, Archbishop, 16, 259

Anguissola, Sophonisba, 357

Annovello da Imbonate, 275

Anselmo da Baggio, 29-32 (*see* also Alexander II.)

Ansperto, Archbishop, 16, 17, 259, 274

Antelami, Benedetto, 298

Antonello da Messina, 366, 389

Appiani, Andrea, 335

Aragon, Alfonso of, King of Naples, 124, 127;

Alfonso of, Duke of Calabria, 134, 170;
Ferdinand, or Ferrante, King of Naples, 140, 170, 173;
Isabella of, 158, 167, 168, 173

Arialdo, 30, 31, 33

Ariberto, Archbishop, 18-25

Averulino, Ant. (*see* Filarete)

Augustine, St., 10, 11

Ausonius, 7

Auxentius, 8

B

Bambaia, il, 214, 215, 234, 240, 243, 245, 386

Bandello, Fra Matteo, 201, 317, 324

Barbavara, Francesco, 117

Barnabas, St., 7

Bartolommeo Veneto, 336
Bassano, il, 389
Bassi, Martino, 279
Beatrice, Empress, 50, 51, 55
Bellincione, Bernardo, 161
Bellini, Gentile, 339
——, Gian, 341, 367
Bembo, Bonifazio, 215, 384
——, Pietro, 359
Bentivoglio, Alessandra, 323, 326
——, Alessandro, 320
Bernard, St., 35
Bernardino da Corte, 182, 183, 379
Bertolino da Novara, 229
Biblioteca Ambrosiana, 359-65
—— Pinacoteca, 361-365
Museo Settala, 361
Bicocca, La, battle of, 193
Boltraffio, 221, 325, 345, 346, 358, 365, 366, 389
Bonaparte, Napoleon, 225;
statue of, 335
Bonifazio Veronese, 339
Bonsignore, 357
Bordone, Paris, 327, 338
Borgia, Lucrezia, 359

Borgognone, 218, 219, 273, 274, 275, 295, 325, 327, 336, 344, 345, 388

Borromeo, Carlo, Cardinal and Saint, 39, 205-207, 215, 231, 247;

tomb of, 241

——, Federigo, Cardinal, 215, 359

Botticelli, 353, 362

Bourbon, Constable de, 193, 194, 196

Bramante, 156, 162, 211, 231, 276, 277, 313, 318-320, 350, 378, 391

Bramantino, 220, 290, 336, 344, 346, 358, 365, 387

Brera, Biblioteca, di, 335

——, *Pinacoteca, di*, 335-51

Briosco, Benedetto, 212, 213, 214, 288

——, Francesco, 294

Brunelleschi, 121, 211

Burigozzo, 199, 200, 203, 205

Busca, Gabrio, 215

Bussolari, Fra Giacomo de, 101

Busti, Agostino (*see* Bambaia, il)

Buttinone, Bernardo, 218, 307, 343, 388

C

Caiazzo, Conte di, 181

Cambrai, Peace of, 197

Camelli, Ant. (il Pistoia), 161, 171, 173

Campi, the, 223;

Giulio, 346;
Vincenzo, 346

Campione, Masters of, 210, 245, 383, 384

——, Bonino da, 229, 383, 384

——, Giacomo da, 241, 244

——, Maffiolo da, 229

——, Marco da, 229

——, Zeno da, 229

Campo Fregoso, Ant. di, 161

Canaletto, 343

Cane, Facino, 117, 118

Canova, 335

Caponi, Rafaello, 353

Caradosso, 162, 216, 319, 320

Cariani, 338, 357, 389

Carmagnola, 120, 122, 328

Carpaccio, 339

Castle of Milan, 119, 127, 130, 145, 150, 182, 183, 185, 191, 192, 196, 368-382;

Art Collections in, 382-391

Castruccio, 91

Catharists, the, 28, 29

Cazzaniga, the, 214, 288, 312

Cazzaniga, Tommaso da, 234, 385

Cellant, Contessa di, 324
Cesare da Sesto, 221, 344
Charlemagne, 15
Charles the Bald, 17
—— of Bohemia, 100
—— VIII. of France, 170, 172, 173, 175, 179
—— V., Emperor, 193, 195, 196, 197, 198, 203
Chrysoloras, Emanuel, 112
Cima, 339, 343
Civerchio, 343
Clement VI., Pope, 97
—— VII., Pope, 195, 197
Conrad the Salic, Emperor, 19, 20, 21, 22
Constance, Peace of, 55
Constance of Sicily, 55, 257
Constantine, Emperor, 5, 7
Conti, Bernardino dei, 221, 222, 365
Correggio (Antonio Allegri), 348, 367, 389
Cortenuova, Battle of, 59
Cossa, Francesco, 348
Costa, Lorenzo, 348
Crespi, Daniele, 223
Cristina of Sweden, 203
Crivelli, Carlo, 341, 342, 343, 357, 389
——, Lucrezia, 160

D

Dal Verme, Jacopo, 110, 122

D'Amboise, Charles, 190

Decembrio, Pier Candido, 121, 265

De Foix, Gaston, 190, 244;

statue of, 386

De Lautrec, Sieur, 193

De Leyva, 196, 197

De Predis, Ambrogio, 219, 220, 346, 358

Desio, battle of, 75

Diocletian, Emperor, 5, 6

Dolcebuono, Gio., 212, 214, 231, 320, 327

Dosso Dossi, 347

Duomo, the, 11, 199, 112, 324-253

E

Enzo, King of Sardinia, 60

Erlembaldo da Cotta, 32, 33, 34

Este, da, Beatrice (Visconte), 77, 78

——, Beatrice (wife of Tristan Sforza), 149

——, Beatrice (wife of Lodovico il Moro), 158, 162, 163, 164, 165, 167, 173, 176, 177, 178, 374, 377, 378;

Niccolò III., 125

Eugenius IV., Pope, 124

Eusebio di San Giorgio, 350

Eustachio, Filippo, 150

Eustorgio, St., 284

Ezzelino da Romano, 67, 69

F

Fancelli, Luca, 231

Fernach, Hans von, 241

Ferrari, Gaudenzio, 222, 274, 312, 327, 337, 344, 346, 365

——, Defendente, 343

Fiesca, Elisabetta della, 96

Filarete, 211, 308, 370

Filelfo, 133, 136

Fogolino Marco, 357

Foppa, Ambrogio (*see* Caradosso)

——, Vincenzo, 217, 218, 292, 336, 345, 358, 388, 390

Francesco di Giorgio, 231

Francia, 348

Francis I. of France, 192, 194, 195, 197, 380

Frederick I., Barbarossa, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49;

orders destruction of Milan, 50, 51, 52, 53; defeated at Legnano, 54, 55, 56

Frederick II., Emperor, 56, 59, 60

Fusina, Andrea, 215, 234, 306, 386

G

Gadio, Bart., 140, 370

Gallerani, Cecilia, 160, 164, 201, 328

Gentile da Fabriano, 351

Gervasio, S., 7, 11, 256, 259, 273

Gianpietrino, 221, 295, 344, 358, 365, 388

Giovanni di Balduccio, 210, 290, 292, 293

—— da Milano, 216

—— da Murano, 343

Gmünd, Heinrich von, 236

Grassi, dei, the, 229; Porrino, 241

Gregorio da Montelungo, 60

Gregory VII., Pope, 26, 34, 35, 42

Guardi, 343

Guido, Archbishop, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34

Guitelmo, Mastro, 50

H

Hawkwood, Sir John, 101, 102

Henry III., Emperor, 24, 29

—— VI., King of the Romans, 55, 257

—— VII., Emperor, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 258

Hildebrand, 26, 30, 31, 32 (*see* also Gregory VII.)

I

Isacco da Imbonate, 243, 244

J

Jacopino da Tradate, 211, 243

Julius, II., Pope, 187, 190, 191, 283

Justina, Empress, 8, 9, 11

L

Lampugnano, Gio. Ant., 143, 145, 146

Lando, Count, 100

Landolfo da Cotta, 30

Lanino, Bernardino, 223, 274, 337

Lanzone, 24, 25

Legnano, Battle of, 54, 55

Leo X. Pope, 193

Leonardo da Vinci, 154, 156, 158, 159, 160, 162, 179, 211, 214, 219, 231, 313, 315, 316, 317, 318, 374, 378, 380

Leone da Perego, Fra, 41, 60, 66, 67, 68

Leoni, Leone, 240, 333

Liberale da Verona, 339

Licinio, Bernardino, 389

Liprando di San Paolo, 33

Loggia degli Osii, 298, 299

Lombard League, the, 53, 54, 56

Lotto, Lorenzo, 340, 357, 366, 367, 389, 390

Louis of Bavaria, Emperor, 89, 90, 91

—— XII. of France, claim on Milan, 171, 179;

invades the Duchy, 181;
enters Milan, 183, 191, 283, 328, 380

Luini, Bernardino, 222, 304, 312, 313, 320, 323, 324, 327, 337, 345, 358, 361, 366, 388

M

Maestro di San Tommaso, 385

Maino, Agnese del, 121, 133

Mantegazza, Cristoforo and Antonio, 212, 213, 385

Mantegna, Andrea, 341, 342, 356, 366

Marco d' Oggiono, 221, 222, 337, 346

Margaret of Brabant, Empress, 258

Marliano, Vincenzo, 119, 369

Matteo da Civate, 216

Maximian, Emperor, 5, 7

Maximilian, Emperor, 158, 169, 181

Mazzola, Filippo, 365

Medici, Cosimo dei, 134;

Lorenzo dei, 140, 153, 170;
Piero dei, 170, 174

Melegnano (Marignano), Battle of, 192

Melzi, Francesco, 221, 222

Merula, Giorgio, 328

Michelino da Besozzo, 217, 240, 304

Michelozzo, Michele, 211, 285, 291, 292

Mignot, Jean, 229

Monica, St., 10
Montagna, Bart., 338
Montana, Cola, 143
Montorfano, Gio., 306, 317, 318, 384
Moretto, 327, 338, 388
Morone, Domenico, 367
——, Girolamo, 192, 195
Moroni, G. B., 338, 389

N

Naples, King of (*see* Aragon)
Naviglio, the, 154, 284
Niccolò da Correggio, 162
—— Foligno, 351, 356
Novara, Battle of, 186;
defeat of the French at, 192

O

Oberto da Pellavicino, 68, 75
Oldrado da Tresseno, 298
Olgiati, Girolamo, 143, 144, 145, 146
Orleans, Duke of, 116
Orombello, Michele, 120
Orsenigo, Simone, 229
Ospedale Maggiore, 308, 309
Ossona, Gio., 128

Otho the Great, 18, 257
Ottobello da Mandello, 60

P

Pacchiarotti, 350
Pallavicino, Gio. Francesco, 150
——, Antonio Maria, 180
Palazzo Arcivescovile, 255, 333
—— *Borromeo*, 302, 303, 304
—— *Carmagnola*, 328
—— *Castani*, 329
—— *Chierici*, 333
—— *Dal Verme*, 330
—— *dei Giurisconsulti*, 333
—— *della Ragione*, 296, 297, 298, 300, 301
—— *Fontana, or Silvestri*, 328
—— *Marino*, 330
—— *Omenoni*, 333
—— *Ponti*, 329
—— *Vimercati, doorway of*, 307
—— *Visconti di Modrone*, 33
Palissy, Sieur de, 190, 191
Palma Vecchio, 338
Palmezzano, Marco 349, 356
Patarini, the, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34.
Pellegrini, Pellegrino, 236, 240, 241, 255, 327

Perugino, Pietro, 156, 356
Pescara, Marquis of, 194, 195, 196
Pesellino, Francesco, 355
Peter Damian, 31, 32
Peter of Verona (Peter Martyr), 40, 41, 66, 67, 287;
monument of, 292, 293
Petrarca, Francesco, 103, 105, 106
Piazza of Lodi, the, 223;
Callisto, 335
—— *dei Mercanti*, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301
—— *Cordusio*, 297
—— *Verzieri*, 309
Piccinino, Niccolò, 123, 124, 125, 126, 243
——, Francesco, 126, 128, 243
——, Jacopo, 126, 128, 134
Piero di Cosimo, 366
—— dei Franceschi, 350, 356
Pinturicchio, 366
Pius IV., Pope, 206
Poldi-Pezzoli, Museo, 352-359
Pordenone, Ant., 367, 389
Porta, della, Gian Giacomo, 215
Porta Nuova, 301
—— *Ticinese*, 280, 283
Proccacini, 241

Protasio, St., 7, 11, 256, 259, 273

Pusterla, della, Francesco, 95;

Margherita, 96;
Pietro, 202

R

Raphael, 349, 362, 363

Ravenna, Battle of, 190

Riario, Card. Pietro, 371

Ricchini, 280

Rizzo, Antonio, 234

Roberti, Ercole dei, 348

Romano, Gian Cristoforo, 163

Rondinelli, 349

Rosa, Salvator, 351

S

Salai, 221, 222

San Secondo, Jacopo di, 163

San Severino, Roberto di, 148, 151

——, Galeazzo di, 162, 163, 180, 181, 184, 186, 195, 380

——, Gaspare di (Fracasso), 180

Sano di Pietro, 366

St. Alessandro, 328

St. Ambrogio, Basilica of, 55, 110, 199, 256-277

——, *Golden Altar in*, 268-271
——, *Canonica of*, 276, 277
St. Antonio, Campanile of, 302
S. Babila, 294
S. Calimero, 294
S. Carlo, 328
S. Celso, 293;
Sta. Maria di S. Celso, 293, 327
St. Eustorgio, 284-293;
Capella Portinari, 285, 286, 291-293
S. Fedele, 327
S. Giovanni alla Conca, 294
S. Gottardo, 11, 253, 254
S. Lorenzo, 278-280;
Columns of, 278
S. Marco, 296
Sta. Maria a Beltrade, 295
Sta. Maria del Carmine, 304
Sta. Maria delle Grazie, 310-313
——, *Refectory of*, 313-318
——, *Last Supper, by Leonardo*, 313-317
Sta. Maria della Passione, 326, 327
Sta. Maria Incoronata, 305
S. Maurizio, or Monastero Maggiore, 320, 323-326

S. Nazaro, 294

S. Pietro in Gessate, 306, 307

S. Satiro, 295, 318-320

S. Sepolcro, 295

S. Simpliciano, 295

S. Stefano, 309

S. Vincenzo in Prato, 293

Santi, Gio., 351, 358

Savoldo Girolamo, 338

Savoy, Bianca of, 103

——, Bona of, 137, 139, 148, 149, 150, 151;

Maria of, 121, 128

Scala, della, Can Grande, 89, 90

Regina, 102, 103

Scarampi, Camilla, 201

Seregni, Vincenzo, 215, 333

Sforza, Anna, 158

——, Ascanio, Cardinal, 148, 168, 184, 185

——, Bianca, 363

——, Bianca Maria, 158

——, Caterina, 136

——, Constanzo, 151

——, Francesco I., 122;

is engaged as Condottiere by Duke Filippo, 123;
betrothed to Bianca Maria 124;

abandons Milan for Venice, 124, 125;
wins Bianca Maria, 125;
is again fighting against Milan, 126, 127;
defeats Piccinini and besieges Milan, 128;
is received into city and proclaimed Duke, 129;
his character, 130, 131;
his encouragement of learning and art, 132, 133;
wars and foreign policy, 134;
dies, 135, 288;
his building of the Castle, 369, 370, 371

——, Francesco II., 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 198, 203, 204

——, Galeazzo Maria, 134;

character, 135, 136, 137, 138;
vices and virtues, 139;
ability, policy, 140, 142, 143, 144;
assassination, 145, 146, 147, 258, 371, 372, 373

——, Gian Galeazzo, 147, 150, 158, 166, 167, 168, 170, 173, 174

——, Gian Paolo, 204

——, Ippolita (Bentivoglio), 201, 323, 326

——, Lodovico il Moro, 134;

banished, 148;
his intrigues and return, 149;
overthrows Simonetta, 150;
makes himself regent, 151;
his personality, 152;
foreign policy, 153;
improvement of the State, 154, 155;
patronage of art and letters, 156;
mildness, 157;

his brilliant Court, 158, 159;
relations with Leonardo, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 165;
instability of his position, 166;
schemes to become Duke, 167, 168, 169;
invites Charles VIII., 170, 171, 172, 173;
is suspected of poisoning his nephew, 174;
leagues against France, 175;
his triumph and arrogance, 176;
is crushed by death of his wife, 177, 178;
his anxieties and difficulties, 179, 180;
is invaded by French, 181;
abandons Milan, 182, 183;
returns, 184;
his indecision and difficulties, 185;
is captured by the French at Novara, 186, 187, 276, 373, 374, 377, 378, 379

——, Massimiliano, is made Duke, 191;

renounces Duchy to Francis I., 193, 380

——, Ottaviano, 148

——, Duke of Bari, 148, 149

Sicherius, 45, 46

Siciliano, Angelo, 215, 244

Signorelli, Luca, 350, 351

Simonetta, Cecco, 140, 147, 148, 149, 150

Sion, Cardinal de, 190, 191

Sixtus IV., Pope, 147, 153

Sodoma, Gio. Ant. Bazzi, il, 223, 345, 389

Solari, or Solario, Andrea, 220, 221, 345, 357, 358;

Cristoforo (il Gobbo), 212, 214, 215, 231, 234, 236, 241, 245, 253, 326, 327;
Guiniforte, 211, 306, 308;
Pietro, 211, 285

Spanzotto, Fra Vincenzo, 313

Stefano dei Fedeli, 217, 384

—— da Pandino, 243, 245

—— da Zevio, 356

T

Tanzi, Francesco, 161

Tassino, Antonio, 149, 150, 151

Tenda, Beatrice, 118, 120

Theodosius, Emperor, 12, 13

Tiepolo, Pietro, 59

——, G. B., 333, 353

Tintoretto, 338, 389

Titian, 339

Torre, della, or Torriani, the, 65

——, Cassone, Archbishop of Milan, 80, 82, 83

——, Enrico, 79

——, Filippo, 70, 72

——, Francesco, son of Guido, 84

——, Francesco, son of Napo, 76

——, Guido, 79, 82, 83, 84

——, Martino, 66, 67, 68, 70, 72

——, Mosca, 79

——, Napo, 70;

made Imperial Vicar of Milan, 72, 75;
defeated and captured by Visconti at Desio, 76

——, Pagano, *the Good*, leader of the people's faction, 66

——, Raimondo, 68

——, Simone, 84

Trivulzio, Ambrogio, 129

——, Gian Giacomo, 178;

Governor of Milan, 183, 184;
driven out, 184, 191, 192, 283, 379

——, Art Collection and Library, 366

Tura, Cosimo, 348, 356

U

Uberti, Fazio degli, 113

Umiliati, Order of the, 37, 38, 39, 206

Urban IV., Pope, 68, 69

V

Valentinian II., Emperor, 7, 9, 13

Valois, Isabella de, 102, 106

Vaprio, Battle of, 89

Via Ticinese, 283

Via Torino, No. 10-12, 330

Vimercati, Gaspare, 311

Visconti, the, 65, 69;

cognisance of, 69;
character of, 86, 87, 88, 130

——, Azzo, 90;

created Imperial Vicar, 91, 92;
tomb of, 366

——, Bernabò, 95, 96;

succeeds to Lordship of Milan, 100, 101, 102, 104, 105, 106;
his capture and death, 108,
tomb of, 383

——, Bianca Maria (Sforza), 121, 124, 125, 133, 134, 135, 138

——, Carlo, 143, 145

——, Caterina, 107, 116, 117

——, Estorre, 117, 119

——, Filippo Maria, 116, 117;

succeeds to dukedom, 118;
enters Milan, 119;
diplomacy and conquests, 119;
character and habits, 119-121;
patronage of learning, 121;
wars and intrigues, 121, 122, 123, 124;
embarrassments, 125;
death, 126

——, Francesco Bernardino, 180, 183

——, Galeazzo I., 75, 77, 78, 79, 83, 85, 87, 88;

succeeds his father as chief, 88;
rules Milan, 89;
is arrested and imprisoned by Emperor Louis, 90;
his release and death, 91

——, Galeazzo II., 95, 96;

shares Lordship of Milan with Bernabò, 100, 101, 102, 104, 105, 106, 107

——, Gaspare (poet), 161, 163

——, Gian Galeazzo, 102, 103, 107;

overthrows Bernabò and makes himself sole Lord, 108;
his military enterprises, 109, 110;
is created Duke of Milan, 110;
his government, 110, 111;
character, 111;
patronage of letters, 112, 113;
conquests, death, 114, 115;
his building of the Duomo, 227, 228, 229, 230, 258, 368

——, Giovanni, Archbishop, 92, 95, 96;

conquests, 97;
Government, 98, 99;
death, 100

——, Giovanni Maria, succeeds to Dukedom 116, 117, 118

——, Lodrisio, 89, 92

——, Luchino, 87, 89, 91, 92, 95, 96, 98, 99

——, Luchino, Novello, 96

——, Marco, 87, 91, 92

——, Matteo, *il Grande*, 75;

assumes leadership of Ghibelline party, 76, 77;
abandons Milan, 78, 79, 80, 81;
returns, 82, 83;
outwits Torriani, 84;
is created Imperial Vicar, 85, 87;
death, 88

——, Matteo (son of Stefano), 95, 96, 100

——, Otto, Archbishop, 68;

leader of Ghibelline party, 69, 75;
defeats Torriani and rules Milan, 76

——, Stefano, 90;

tomb of, 289

——, Valentina, 116

——, Violante, 102, 103

Viti, Timoteo, 351

Vivarini, Ant., 343, 356

Z

Zaganelli (Cotignola), 349

Zavatarii, the, 217

——, Franceschino, dei, 243

Zenale, Bernardino, 218, 265, 273, 307

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