

ing pope, was a debauched old man. In Naples Joanna held her voluptuous court. Central Italy, extending from the northern frontiers of Naples to the southern limits of Lombardy, was divided by the Apennines into Tuscany on the west, and Romagna on the east. The papal states, with Rome for their metropolitan city, intervened between these provinces and the Neapolitan kingdom. North of Tuscany and Romagna came the great province of Lombardy, extending to the Alps, composed of five ducal potentates, virtually independent of each other established with much princely splendor and power in the great cities. Genoa and Venice were popular cities, of but small territorial extent, but majestic in maritime power. Such is a general, not a minute and accurate view of Italy at this time.

Milan was the most powerful of the Lombard principalities. But Verona, Mantua, Padua, and the duchies of Ferrara and Modena were by no means insignificant. Gunpowder began now to be used upon the field of battle; but in that early day the new weapons, clumsily constructed, had comparatively but little efficiency in the field. Genoa and Venice had established immense factories along the whole circuit of the Black sea, where they gathered the spices and merchandise of India, and the furs and other commodities of Russia. Here again, on these distant waters the squadrons of the two rival cities met in hostile array.

In January, 1352, the Venetian squadron, numbering seventy-five galleys, and the Genoese with but sixty-four, though of larger size, encountered each other in the Bosphorus, near Constantinople. As they rushed together in the shock of war, a terrific storm blackened over their heads, with vivid flashes of lightning and peals of thunder, while a tornado swept the waves with resistless fury. Regardless of thunder, and lightning, and wind, and rain, through the long, dark, stormy night the furious combatants struggled until the lurid morning dawned. It revealed an awful sight.

The sea was covered with wrecks and with the gory dead. The Venetian fleet was almost destroyed. Two thousand of their men were slain, and fifteen hundred taken captive. The Genoese bought their victory dearly, having suffered nearly as much. The following year another terrific battle was fought, in which the Genoese, in their turn, were severely whipped. The calamity was overwhelming, and Genoa was reduced to despair. In their consternation they threw themselves upon the protection of Milan, and a Milanese governor and garrison were sent to take charge of the humiliated city. Thus strengthened, the conflict was renewed. The two fleets met, near the port of Sapienza, in the Morea, and the Venetian squadron was utterly destroyed. Four thousand men were slain, and six thousand captured. Venice, in the extreme of exhaustion, sued for peace.

The duke of Milan acquired great renown by this success; and flushed with pride and power he began to trample upon the rights of the other dukes of Lombardy. They all combined with Venice to humble their common enemy. Both parties sought the aid of the emperor Charles IV. He coquetted with both parties and received the iron crown of Lombardy. He then proceeded to Rome, escorted by a brilliant army, where he was invested with the imperial diadem. For three years a miserable war infested Lombardy. At length all parties were wearied, and equally wounded and bleeding assented to peace.

The Catholic historians designate the papal residence in Avignon as the Babylonian captivity of the popes. From the year 1305 to 1375, seven popes in succession resided in this city. It possessed many attractions for the papal court. Imperial wealth had lined the streets with palaces, and the holy fathers, under the strong arm of France, and the mere tools of her ambitious monarchs, had found here safety, opulence, and voluptuous indulgence. But at length the north of France was devastated by British soldiers, and plundering

bands began to crowd down upon the rich plains of Vacluse. The luxurious prelates were alarmed, and Urban V., though a Frenchman, decided to reestablish the holy see at Rome.

With great pomp, accompanied by his cardinals, and escorted by the galleys of Venice, Genoa, Pisa, and Naples, he passed from the Rhone to the Tiber. Rome received him with great exultation. Under the efficient sway of Urban the papal states enjoyed repose, and the pontifical power attained renewed splendor. The eastern empire was now crumbling before the might of Sultan Amurath, and the emperor, John Palæologus, left Constantinople to throw himself at the feet of the Pontiff, to implore his aid in rousing Europe against the infidels.

But Italy was in such a distracted state, the emperor Charles IV. of Germany sweeping over it with his armies, and all the petty governments engaged in interminable wars, that Urban sighed for the repose of Avignon, and after a residence of three years in Rome, returned to his French palaces, where he almost immediately died. Gregory XI. at Avignon, was chosen his successor. Civil war was now desolating the states of the church. To quell it, Gregory XI. sent twelve thousand ferocious Britons, armed to the teeth, into the tumultuous region. They smote indiscriminately upon the right hand and upon the left. Even children at the breast were not spared. Five thousand perished in this stern chastisement by the holy father, in which infants were seized by the feet and their brains dashed out against the stones.

The duties of the sacred office rendered the pope's residence at Rome necessary. In the midst of scenes of tumult blood and woe, Gregory XI. was summoned to judgment. The cardinals met to choose his successor. Eleven were French, four were Italians, and one a Spaniard. The election was bitterly contested, for the people of Rome clamored against another foreign pontiff. The municipal government of Rome had assumed the form of a republic, being adminis-

tered by thirteen elected magistrates. These magistrates sent a deputation to demand an audience with the cardinals, that they might represent the wishes of the people. The sacred college rebuked them vehemently for their presumption in attempting to influence an election which was under the especial and exclusive guidance of the Holy Spirit.

This roused the mob. The Vatican, where the cardinals were in conclave, was surrounded, and the Roman populace insisted, with clamor and menace, that the Holy Spirit should give them a Roman, or at least an Italian pope. The choice fell upon a Neapolitan, who assumed the tiara and the keys, under the title of Urban VI. The people were appeased and the tumult ceased.

The choice proved unhappy. The possession of power developed in Urban a character of caprice and tyranny. He threatened to excommunicate the cardinals. With singular forgetfulness of ecclesiastical courtesy, he called one of the cardinals a thief and another a fool. He threatened to create a large number of Italian cardinals, so that the government of the church should no longer be in the hands of foreigners.

The cardinals, with very commendable spirit, met together and declared that the Holy Spirit had made a mistake in the election of Urban VI., and that they declared the election null and void. They then chose the cardinal of Geneva, pope, with the title of Clement VII. The question is not yet settled in the papal church which of these two men was the true pope. As they were bitterly hostile to each other; and as the decisions of the true pope was invested with almost the authority of divine decrees, the question must be admitted to be one of very serious moment.

For forty years this untoward event produced a schism in the Catholic church. France and Spain, with Joanna of Naples, espoused the cause of Clement VII. Italy, England, Germany, Hungary, and Portugal, arrayed themselves beneath the banners of Urban VI. Each of the antagonistic popes

was, in ability and character, quite contemptible. Urban VI. with a new created college of nineteen Italian cardinals established himself at Rome. Clement VII. with a majority of the old cardinals retired to the luxurious palaces of Avignon.

Urban VI. attempted to punish Joanna of Naples for her support of Clement VII. by an act of excommunication and deposition; at the same time he offered the investiture of her kingdom to one of his friends, Charles of Durazza. Joanna appealed to the antagonistic pope and his advocates for help. She being now the widow of four husbands, and childless, she declared, as her heir, Louis, duke of Anjou, uncle of Charles VI. king of France. Swords were immediately drawn, and armies were on the march. Charles Durazzo was hastily crowned king of Naples by Urban VI., and hurrying his march into Naples, he seized the kingdom and the queen. With his sword at the throat of Joanna he commanded her to abdicate the crown in his favor. Heroically she refused. Charles sent assassins into her prison who smothered her with pillows.

With a fine army Louis, duke of Anjou, entered the Neapolitan territory, to avenge the death of the queen, and to claim the crown. Two years of devastation and blood passed, when Louis died. Urban VI., not feeling safe at Rome, transferred his pontifical court to Naples, where he soon found himself involved in a quarrel with the king his own hand had created, over whom he had been very naturally disposed to exercise quite dictatorial power. The conflict waxed warm, and the king chased the pope into the castle of Nocera, where he vigorously besieged him. In this extremity Urban VI., as a desperate resort, appealed to the party of the duke of Anjou for relief. Some bold barons of that party rescued him, and carried him in triumph to Genoa. Soon after this Charles III. was assassinated by his own relatives, and the kingdom of Naples was left in a state of ruinous anarchy.

For years the kingdom presented the most deplorable aspect of tumult and wretchedness. Charles III. left a son, Ladislaus, ten years old, and a daughter, Joanna. His widow, Margaret, acted as regent for her son. The opposite party proclaimed the young son of the duke of Anjou king, by the title of Louis II., under the regency of his mother, Maria. Thus Europe rallied for war around the banners of these two boys. The popes, in the meantime, had each excommunicated the other. All Italy was in such a state of anarchy, that robber barons, emerging from their castles with well armed retainers, prowled about, robbing, murdering, and committing crimes of indescribable brutality.

The mother of Louis took good care of him, while the nobles led his armies. At length, after many bloody campaigns, the French party were so far triumphant, that Maria took her son and, with a powerful fleet and a numerous train of French nobles, conveyed him to Naples. He was, of course, received with the acclamations of the populace. But he developed a character so utterly effeminate, indolent, and dissolute, as soon to excite general contempt.

Ladislaus, on the contrary, cradled amidst the storms of battle, at the age of sixteen joined his barons in the field. Marrying the heiress of the most opulent noble in Sicily, he vastly increased his resources. Gradually he swept the kingdom of his foes, and entered Naples in triumph. Louis and his followers, abandoning the kingdom in despair, retired by sea to France.

It would be refreshing could we find one good man as a prominent actor in these tumultuous scenes. There doubtless were thousands of humble Christians, cherishing the spirit of their Saviour, and in retirement and prayer struggling along the path to heaven. But in the camp and the court we encounter little save vice and crime. Ladislaus proved a stern sovereign, ruling with a rod of iron. He was a stranger to gratitude, good faith, or mercy.

The beautiful Constance whom he had wedded, and through whose rich dowry he had gained his kingdom, he neglected, abandoned, divorced, imprisoned, without accusing or even suspecting her of any faults. His vagrant desires were weary of her, and he sought other charms. He afterward compelled the unhappy Constance to marry count Andrea, one of his favorites. As she was dragged to the altar, she said indignantly and aloud, in the presence of the assembled court and people:

“Count Andrea, you are to esteem yourself the most fortunate cavalier of this kingdom, for you are about to receive for your mistress the lawful wife of your liege.”

CHAPTER XXVI.

FRAGMENTARY ITALY.

FROM A. D. 1400 TO A. D. 1600.

DAWN OF THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY.—SCHISM IN THE CHURCH.—THE THREE POPES.—THE GREAT COUNCIL OF CONSTANCE.—“GOOD OLD TIMES.”—BEATRICE TENDA.—THE DUKES OF SAVOY.—THE HOUSE OF MEDIOL.—EUROPE MENACED BY THE TURKS.—THE GREAT EUROPEAN MONARCHIES.—FRAGMENTARY ITALY.—LEO X.—FRENCH CONQUESTS.—SPANISH CONQUESTS.—THE EMPEROR CHARLES V. MASTER OF ITALY.—PAPAL STRUGGLES.—FATE OF FLORENCE.—THE DUCHY OF PARMA—OF TUSCANY.

THE morning of the fifteenth century dawned upon Italy in clouds and gloom. The duke of Milan was master of nearly all of Lombardy, and was menacing Florence with apparently resistless power. Naples was utterly exhausted with her terrific civil wars. Venice, secure within her lagoons, was overawed by the most merciless oligarchy. The papal power had fallen into utter contempt. The annals of those days are filled mainly with the record of wars, treachery, murders, rapine, and crimes of every hue. Venice, by the foulest aggression, had extended her domain to the Adige, and the Lion of St. Mark, her symbolic banner, floated from the towers of Treviso, Feltro, Belluno, Verona, Vicenza, and Padua.

Urban VI., who had caused the schism in the church, died in the year 1389, and Boniface IX. was chosen as his successor. He died in 1404, and the cardinals, surrounded by a mob, in the wildest scene of tumult and uproar, raised Innocent VII. to the papal throne. Ladislaus, the stern king of Naples, drove the pope from the city, in an attempt to compel the states of the church to acknowledge him as their liege lord. He failed, and in his rage plundered and fired the city. Innocent soon died, and Gregory XII. was conducted to the