UAB
Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

U B
Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

UAB
Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

1500089996

UAB Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

A

DEFENCE

OF THE

CONSTITUTIONS OF GOVERNMENT

OF THE

UNITED STATES

OF

AMERICA,

AGAINST THE ATTACK OF M. TURGOT

IN HIS

LETTER TO DR. PRICE,

DATED THE TWENTY-SECOND DAY OF MARCH, 1778.

BY JOHN ADAMS, LL. D.

AND A MEMBER OF THE ACADEMY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES AT BOSTON.

As for us Engliſhmen, thank Heaven, we have a better ſenſe of government, delivered to us from our anceſtors. We have the notion of a public, and a conſtitution; how a legiſlative, and how an executive is moulded. We underſtand weight and meaſure in this kind, and can reaſon juſtly on the balance of power and property. The maxims we draw from hence are as evident as thoſe of mathematics. Our increaſing knowledge ſhews us every day more and more what common ſenſe is in politics.

SHAFTESBURY's Charact. vol. i. p. 108.

'Tis ſcarce a quarter of an age ſince ſuch a happy balance of power was ſettled between our prince and people, as has firmly ſecured our hitherto precarious liberties, and removed from us the fear of civil commotions, wars, and violence, either on account of the property of the ſubject, or the contending titles of the crown.

VOL. II.

A NEW EDITION.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR JOHN STOCKDALE, PICCADILLY.

1794.

UAB Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

R. 93919

UAB
Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

UAB Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

A

DEFENCE

OF THE

CONSTITUTIONS OF GOVERNMENT

OF THE UNITED STATES OF

AMERICA.

Italian Republics of the Middle Age.

Groſvenor-ſquare, April 19, 1787.

MY DEAR SIR,

THERE is no example of a government ſimply democratical; yet there are many of forms nearly or remotely reſembling what are underſtood by All Authority in one Center. There once exiſted a cluſter of governments, now generally known by the name of the Italian Republics of the Middle Age, which deſerve the attention of Americans, and will farther illuſtrate and confirm the principles we have endeavoured to maintain. If it appears, from the hiſtory of all the ancient republics of Greece, Italy, and Aſia Minor, as well as from thoſe that ſtill remain in Switzerland, Italy, and elſewhere, that caprice, inſtability, turbulence, revolutions, and the alternate prevalence of thoſe two plagues and ſcourges of mankind, tyranny and anarchy, were the effects of governments without three orders and a balance, the ſame important truth will appear, in a ſtill clearer light, in the republics of Italy. The ſketches to be given of theſe cannot be introduced with more

propriety, than by the ſentiments of a late writer,* becauſe they coincide with every thing that has been before obſerved. Limited monarchies were the ancient governments: the jealouſies and errors of the nobles, or the oppreſſions they ſuffered, ſtimulated them to render monarchy unpopular, and erect ariſtocracies. Ancient nations were, in one point, very generally defective in their conſtitutions, and that was the incertitude of the ſovereignty, and, by conſequence, the inſtability of government, which was, in all the republics of Italy, a perpetual occaſion of infinite confuſions. In no part of Italy, however united together, was found eſtabliſhed an abſolute hereditary monarch. By many examples, it is manifeſt, that kings either were created by the favour of the multitude, or ſought at leaſt their conſent, and conſulted the people in affairs of moſt importance and greateſt danger. The government of the grandees, which ſucceeded, was rather a fraudulent or violent uſurpation, than a true and proper ariſtocracy eſtabliſhed by law, or confirmed by long and unconteſted poſſeſſion; and a popular government was never ſo free, or ſo durable, as when it was mixed with the authority of one ſupreme head, or of a ſenate; ſo that mixed governments were almoſt always preferred. One of the three kinds of governments nevertheleſs fell, when another aroſe; and all the Italian republics, nearly at one time, by the ſame gradations, paſſed from one form of adminiſtration to another. In this particular agree all the memorials of ancient Italy. They were, from the beginning, governed by kings: the Tuſcans had kings; the Sabines had kings; and ſo had the people of Latium; and as every city formed an independent government, theſe

* Danina, Rivoluzioni d'Italia, v. i. p. 41.

kings

kings could not have much magnificence. Many ſtates often obeyed the ſame king; for he who had the lordſhip of one city, procured himſelf to be elected the head of another. Porſenna, whom Dionyſius calls king of Tuſcany, becauſe he was followed by many Tuſcan nations, was from the beginning only king of Chiuſi. The kings of Rome, by various means, gained the command of the Latin cities, which nevertheleſs, two centuries afterwards, reputed themſelves ſtill independent of the ſtate of Rome. The king of the Veientes had the lordſhip of Fidena, a free city, and independent of the Veientes, in the ſame manner as the Viconti lords of Milan, Caſtruccio lord of Lucca, and the Scala lords of Verona, and ſo many other princes and tyrants of the later ages, before the exaltation of Charles the Fifth made ſuch progreſs in obtaining the ſovereignty of many cities. Theſe kingdoms were either ſimply elective, or at leaſt required the expreſs conſent of the people, how often ſoever one relation ſucceeded to another. Royal governments nevertheleſs were generally diſpleaſing to the people; and the grandees and nobles, who were the moſt expoſed to the caprice of the prince, both in their perſons and property, ſtudied to generate in the minds of the common people an hatred to the name of king, and to excite the deſire of liberty. They flattered themſelves, that if the principality, which often fell into the hands of new men and adventurers, ſuch as Tarquin in Rome, and Ariſtodemus in Cuma, were aboliſhed, they ſhould be able to live, not only with more ſecurity and greater licence, but with more authority, command, and power. In what nation, and in which city, the revolution firſt began, is not eaſy to determine; but in the courſe of the third century of the Roman æra, one people following the example of another, this

UAB
Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

by means of one opportunity, and that by another, either expelled by violence their preſent kings, or deſiſted from electing new ones; and all Italy, hoiſting as it were a common ſignal, changed at once its whole form of government. The odium of the royal name, and an enthuſiaſm for liberty, ſeized ſo univerſally, and with ſuch energy, the whole Italian nation, that if any city wiſhed either to continue or recover the uſe of kings, this inclination was ſcarcely manifeſted before they were pointed out and reviled by the other cities, and upon all great occaſions abandoned. The Veientes,* either from a diſguſt at the cabals and ambition which aroſe from the annual creation of new magiſtrates, or the better to provide for war, created afreſh a king; by which reſolution they incurred to ſuch a degree the hatred and contempt of the other people of Tuſcany, that, contrary to every rule of policy, duty, and cuſtom, they were left alone to ſuſtain that obſtinate war with the Romans, which ended in their ruin. In the beginning of the fourth century of the Roman ſtory, there is ſeldom or ever any mention made of kings in any of the ſtates of Italy. The whole authority and adminiſtration of public affairs paſſed into the hands of the nobility, ſenate, or that body which conſtituted at firſt the middle order between the king and the people, which became the ſupreme head of the government; and although the greater magiſtracies were elected by the voices or ſuffrages of the people, nevertheleſs all the honours and all the power of the government were collected in the grandees, who eaſily commanded the votes of the electors, and who alone were the elected; for none of the plebeians dared to pretend to offices, civil or military: and it is too

* Liv. lib. v. c. 1.

evi-

UAB Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

evident, that in every kind of community, the rich and the noble endeavour, as it were, by their very nature, to exclude the common people and the plebeians. Moſt of the public affairs relative to peace or war were treated in a ſenate compoſed eſſentially of patricians and nobles, who, in every thing that regarded the conſtitution, inclined more to ariſtocracy than to popular government. No city was ſo mean or ſo ill ordered, as not to have a public council, or a ſenate. Livy ſpeaks of the ſenate, not only of Naples, Capua, and Cuma, but of Nola, Pipernum, Tuſculum, Tivoli, the Veientes, and of others, ſo frequently, that it is clear, that in all the republics there was an order diſtinct from the plebeians, who retained in their hands the eſſence of the government. But the plebeians, once become obſtinate, at the ſolicitation of the nobility, in a hatred of tyranny, had not far to go before they opened their eyes upon their own condition, and learned that they had done nothing more than exchange one maſter for many; and began to make every exertion to obtain, in part, the poſſeſſion of that liberty, of which they had obtained a taſte in words from the order of patricians and the ſenate: and as the multitude began to make trial of their ſtrength, the ſovereign authority was ceded to them by little and little, and the nobility, in their turn, were tormented and tyranniſed by the plebeians. Livy obſerves, that about the time of the Carthaginian war, by a kind of epidemical malady ſpread through the Italian republics, the plebeians applied themſelves to perſecute the nobility. Nevertheleſs, the order of the grandees always preſerved a great part of the power; for the nature of popular government being variable, inconſtant, and incapable of conducting itſelf, the ſenate and the nobility, who act with more maturity of deliberation, and with

UAB Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

intereſts more united, can generally counterpoiſe the party of the plebeians, and from time to time overcome it. From whence it happened, that all the cities were expoſed to continual revolutions of government, and very rarely enjoyed that perfect equality, which is the end of a free ſtate; but either the favour of the people, or the neceſſity of the ſenate, devolved the principal authority on ſome individual, who, with or without the title of ſupreme magiſtrate, was always regarded as the head of the government. Thus we find a Manilius, head of the Latins; an Accius Tullius, principal of the Volſci; an Herennius, of the Samnites; a Calavius, of the Campanians; a Valerius, a Camillus, and a Fabius, chief of the Romans; and, to ſpeak the truth, there was never any great and important ſucceſs in any free ſtate, neither at home nor abroad, except in thoſe times when ſome one citizen held the wills of the public in his own power. But waving the reſt of theſe general obſervations for the preſent, let us deſcend to particulars; and quitting the ancient republics of Italy, deſcend to thoſe of the middle age, among which Florence is the moſt illuſtrious. As the hiſtory of that noble city and magnanimous people has been written by two authors, among a multitude of others, who may be compared to any of the hiſtorians of Greece or Rome, we have here an example more fully delineated; an experiment more perfectly made and more accurately deſcribed than any we have examined before. You will not, therefore, find it tedious to conſider minutely the affairs of a brave and enlightened people, to whom the world is indebted for a Machiavel, a Guichiardin, and an Americus Veſpucius; in a great degree for the reſurrection of letters, and a ſecond civilization of mankind. Next to Athens and Rome, there has

not

not existed a more interesting city. Their history is full of lessons of wisdom, extremely to our purpose. We have all along contended, that the predominant passions of all men in power, whether kings, nobles, or plebeians, is the same; that tyranny will be the effect, whoever are the governors, whether the one, the few, or the many, if uncontrouled by equal laws made by common consent, and supported, protected, and enforced by three different orders of men in equilibrio. In Florence, where the administration was by turns in the nobles, the grandees, the commons, the plebeians, the mob, the ruling passions of each was the same; and the government of each immediately degenerated into a tyranny so insupportable, as to produce a fresh revolution. We have all along contended, that a simple government, in a single assembly, whether aristocratical or democratical, must of necessity divide into two parties, each of which will be headed by some one illustrious family; and will proceed from debate and controversy to sedition and war.—In Florence, the first dissension was among the nobility; the second between the nobles and commons; and the third between the commons and plebeians: in each of which contests, as soon as one party got uppermost, it split into two; and executions, confiscations, banishments, assassinations, and dispersions of families, were the fruit of every division, even with more atrocious aggravations than in those of Greece. Having no third order to appeal to for decision, no contest could be decided but by the sword. It will enable us the better to understand Machiavel, whose history will be abridged and commented on, if we premise from * Nardi, that the city of

* Le Storie della Citta de Firenze, p. 1.

Florence

UAB Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

Florence had, like all other cities, its people conſiſting of three generations of inhabitants, that is to ſay, the nobility, the people of property,* and the common people. Although ſome too diligently divided the nobility into three ſorts, calling the firſt nobles, the ſecond grandees, and the third families, meaning to ſignify, that ſome of the inhabitants had come into the city and become citizens, having been deprived of their own proper country by conqueſt, while they were attempting to enlarge and extend their territories; others, originally of this country, had become abundant in riches, and powerful in dependents, either by their own induſtry or the favour of fortune; and others, having been foreigners, had come in like manner to inhabit the city: but from their primitive condition, they ſtill retained the diſtinctions of lord and vaſſal, by habit and by fraud, both in the city and the country. And all this mixture were indifferently called nobles, grandees, and families; and they were equally hated, contradicted, and oppoſed, in the government of the republic, and in all their other actions, by that party which was called the ſubſtantial people, il popolo graſſo. The lower claſs of people, the plebeians, il popolo minuto, never intervened in government at all, excepting on one ſingle occaſion, when, with violence, they uſurped it, as in its proper place will be related. Some perſons made another diviſion ſtill of the plebeians, and not without reaſon; for thoſe who poſſeſſed real eſtate in the city or country, and were recorded in the public books of taxes and tributes of the city, and were called the † Enregiſtered, eſteemed themſelves, and were conſidered by their fellow-

* Il popolo graſſo, e il popolo minuto.
† Deſcritti.

citizens,

UAB
Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

citizens, as holding a middle ſtation. The remainder of the lower claſs, who poſſeſſed no kind of property, were held of no account. Nevertheleſs, all this undiſtinguiſhed aggregate were called the people of Florence, and the expreſſion is ſtill in uſe, as the people of Athens, or the people of Rome, anciently comprehended the whole body of the inhabitants of thoſe cities; to which confuſed, and in its nature pernicious aggregate, as that of the head and tail always is, the body of middling citizens will always remain extremely uſeful, and proportioned to the conſtitution of a perfect republic.—As Machiavel is the moſt favourable to a popular government, and is even ſuſpected of ſometimes diſguiſing the truth to conceal or mollify its defects, the ſubſtance of this ſketch will be taken from him, referring at the ſame time to other authors; ſo that thoſe young Americans, who wiſh to be maſters of the ſubject, may be at no loſs for information. The moſt uſeful erudition for republicans is that * which expoſes the cauſes of diſcord; by which they may learn wiſdom and unanimity from the examples of others. The factions in Florence are the moſt remarkable of any. Moſt other commonwealths have been divided into two: that city was diſtracted into many. In Rome, the conteſt between patricians and plebeians, which aroſe after the expulſion of kings, continued to the diſſolution of the republic; the ſame happened at Athens, and all the other commonwealths of Greece, Italy, and Aſia Minor.—Such was the patriotiſm or good fortune of Florence, that ſhe ſeems to have gathered freſh vigour, and riſen ſtronger for her factions. Some, who eſcaped in

* Machiavel's Introduction.

the

UAB Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

the ſtruggles, contributed more by their courage and conſtancy to the exaltation of themſelves and their country, than the malignity of faction had done to diſtreſs them: and if ſuch orders and balances had been eſtabliſhed in their form of government as would have kept the citizens united after they had ſhaken off the yoke of the empire, it might have equalled any republic, ancient or modern, in military power and the arts of peace.

The city of Florence was begun by the inhabitants of Fieſole, who, ſituated on the top of a hill, marked out a plot of ground upon the plain between the hill and the river Arno, for the conveniency of merchants, who firſt built ſtores there for their goods. When the Romans had ſecured Italy, by the deſtruction of Carthage, this place multiplied exceedingly, and became a city, by the name of Villa Arnina. Sylla was the firſt, and, after him, the three Roman citizens who revenged the death of Cæſar and divided the empire, who ſent colonies to Fieſole, who ſettled in the plain, not far from the town already begun: and the place became ſo full of buildings and inhabitants, and ſuch proviſions were made for a civil government, that it might well be reckoned among the cities of Italy. Whence it took the name of Florence is not ſo well known. Tacitus calls the town Florentia, and the people Florentines. It was founded under the Roman empire; but when that was over-run by barbarians, Totilla, king of the Oſtrogoths, took and demoliſhed it. Two hundred years afterwards it was rebuilt by Charlemain, from whoſe
1215. time, till 1215, it followed the fortune of thoſe who ſucceſſively ruled in Italy; for, during that period, it was governed firſt by the poſterity of Charlemain, then by the Berengarii, and laſt of

all

all by the German emperors. In 1010 the Florentines took and deſtroyed Fieſole. When the popes aſſumed greater authority in Italy, and the power of the German emperors was upon the wane, all the towns of that province began to govern themſelves. In 1080 Italy was divided between Henry the Third and the church. The Florentines always ſubmitted to the conqueror, until 1215. The longer it was before Florence was ſeized by the paroxyſms of factions, the more fatal they proved. The cauſe of its firſt diviſion is well known. The moſt powerful families in Florence, in 1215, were the Buondelmonti and the Uberti; and next to them the Amadei and Donati: a quarrel happened about a lady, and Meſſer Buondelmonti was killed. This murder divided the whole city, one part of it ſiding with the Buondelmonti, and the other with the Uberti; and as both the families were powerful in alliances, caſtles, and adherents, the quarrel continued many years, till the reign of the emperor Frederick the Second, who being likewiſe king of Naples, and deſirous to ſtrengthen himſelf againſt the church, and eſtabliſh his intereſt more ſecurely in Tuſcany, joined the Uberti, who by his aſſiſtance drove the Buondelmonti out of Florence; and thus that city became divided, as all the reſt of Italy was before, into the two factions, of Guelphs and Ghibellines; the former of which denominated the adherents of the pope,* and the latter

1010.

1080.

1215.

* Dánina, Rivoluzioni d'Italia.—There flouriſhed in Germany two principal families, the one called the Henries of Ghibilinga, and the other the Guelphs of Altdorp, which by the marriage of Azzo d'Eſte with Cunegund, daughter of Guelph the Third, ingrafted itſelf into the houſe of Eſte, called afterwards for that reaſon Guelfa Eſtenſe, from which are deſcended the dukes of Modena, and thoſe of Brunſwick and Hanover. From the firſt of which families, viz. the Ghibellines,

latter thoſe of the emperor; Guelph being the name of the general of the firſt army for the church in this controverſy, and Ghibelline that of the place of the birth of the general who commanded for the emperor, about 1139.—The Guelphs thus driven out of the city, retired into the valley, which lies higher up the Arno, where their ſtrong places and dependencies lay, and defended themſelves as well as they could; but when Frederick died, the neutral people in the city endeavoured to re-unite it, and prevailed upon the Guelphs to forget the diſgrace they had ſuffered, and return; and the Ghibellines to diſmiſs their animoſities and receive them. After they were re-united, they divided the city into ſix parts, and choſe twelve citizens, two to govern each ward, with the title of Aanziani, but to be changed every year. To prevent any feuds or diſcontents that might ariſe from the determination of judiciary matters, they conſtituted two judges that were not Florentines, one of whom was ſtyled the captain

Anziani.

Ghibellines, have ariſen many kings and emperors, as the third, fourth, and fifth Henry. Of the other, viz. the Guelphs, there had been for many years famous dukes, who contending for power and for credit with the emperors, had very often diſturbed the tranquillity of the ſtate. Under the reign of Henry the Fifth theſe two families happily united in alliance, becauſe Frederick duke of Suavia, married Judith, daughter of Henry duke of Bavaria, and ſiſter of Guelph the Sixth, who was at that time the head of the houſe of Altdorp.

Commentari de fatto civili occorſi dentro Firenze. Scritto dal Senatore Filippo de Nerli, p. 2.

Hiſtoria Fiorentina di M. Piero Buoninſegui, Gentilhuomo Fiorentino, p. 35.

Annali d'Italia, da Muratori, tom. vii. p. 150, 151. anno 1215.

Iſtoria civile del Regno di Napoli di Pietro Giannone, tom. iii. p. 83.

Muratori, Diſſertations, tom. iii. p. 130.

Muratori, Antichita eſtenſi, parte prima, c. xxxi. p. 305.

of the people, and the other the podeſta, to adminiſter juſtice to the people, in all cauſes civil and criminal: and ſince laws are but of little authority and ſhort duration, where there is not ſufficient power to ſupport and enforce them, they raiſed twenty bands or companies in the city, and ſeventy-ſix more in the reſt of their territories, in which all the youth were inliſted, and obliged to be ready armed under their reſpective colours, whenever they were required ſo to be by the captain of the anziani. Their ſtandard-bearers were changed every year with great formality.

This is the very ſhort deſcription of their conſtitution. The twelve anziani appear to have had the legiſlative and executive authority, and to have been annually eligible—a form of government as near that of M. Turgot, and Marchamont Nedham, as any to be found;—yet the judicial power is here ſeparated, and the people could ſo little truſt themſelves or the anziani with this power, that it was given to foreigners.—By ſuch diſcipline in their civil and military affairs, ſays Machiavel, the Florentines laid the foundation of their liberty; and it is hardly to be conceived, how much ſtrength and authority they acquired in a very ſhort time: for their city not only became the capital of Tuſcany, but was reckoned among the principal in Italy; and indeed there is no degree of grandeur to which it might not have attained, *if it had not been obſtructed by frequent and almoſt continual diſcords and diviſions.*—After this pompous preamble, one can ſcarce read without ſmiling at the words that follow, "For the ſpace "of ten years they lived under this form of go-"vernment;" eſpecially when it appears that during all theſe ten years, they were conſtantly employed in wars abroad, as appears by the following

lowing words: "During which time they forced the ſtates of Piſtoia, Arezzo, and Siena, to enter into a confederacy with them; and in their return with their army from the laſt city, they took Volterra, demoliſhed ſeveral caſtles, and brought the inhabitants to Florence."—The United States of America calculated their governments for a duration of more than ten years. There is little doubt to be made, that they might have exiſted under the government of ſtate congreſſes for ten years, while they were conſtantly at war, and all the active and idle were in council or in arms: but we have ſeen, that a ſtate which could be governed by a provincial congreſs, and indeed that could carry on a war without any government at all, while danger preſſed, has lately, in time of profound peace, and under a good government, broke out in ſeditions. This democratical government in Florence could laſt no longer; for in all theſe expeditions, ſays Machiavel, the Guelphs had the chief direction and command, as they were much more popular and powerful than the Ghibellines, who had behaved themſelves ſo imperiouſly in the reign of Frederick, when they had the upper hand, that they were become very odious to the people; and becauſe the party of the church was generally thought to favour their attempts to preſerve their liberty, whilſt that of the emperor endeavoured to deprive them of it. The Ghibellines, in the mean time, finding their authority ſo dwindled, were not a little diſcontented, and only waited for a proper opportunity to ſeize upon the government again. They entered into a correſpondence with Manfred, the ſon of Frederick king of Naples, in hopes of his aſſiſtance: but for want of due ſecrecy in theſe practices, they were diſcovered by

by the anziani, who thereupon ſummoned the family of the Uberti to appear before them: but inſtead of obeying, they took up arms, and fortified themſelves in their houſes; at which the people were ſo incenſed, that they likewiſe ran to arms, and, by the help of the Guelphs, obliged the whole party of the Ghibellines to quit Florence, and tranſport themſelves to Siena. There they ſued to Manfred for aid, who granted it, and the Guelphs were defeated upon the banks of the river Arbia, with ſuch ſlaughter, by the king's forces under the conduct of Farinata degli Uberti, that thoſe who eſcaped from it, giving up their city for loſt, fled directly to Lucca, and left Florence to provide for itſelf. Manfred had given the command of the auxiliaries, which he ſent to the Ghibellines, to count Giordino, a ſoldier of no ſmall reputation in thoſe times. This Giordino, after his victory, immediately advanced with the Ghibellines to Florence, and not only forced the city to acknowledge Manfred for its ſovereign, but depoſed the magiſtrates, and either entirely abrogated or altered all laws and cuſtoms that might look like remains of their former liberty; which being executed with great rigour and inſolence, inflamed the people to ſuch a degree, that if they did not love the Ghibellines before, they now became their inveterate and implacable enemies; which averſion continually increaſing, at laſt proved their utter deſtruction.—There is an admirable example of patriotiſm at this period of the Florentine hiſtory, in Farinata Uberti, who ſucceſsfully and decidedly oppoſed a plan of his own party of Ghibellines, and their allies, for the demolition of the city. He preſerved it however only for his enemies the Guelphs, who, driven out of Lucca, went to Parma, and joined their friends the Guelphs in

UAB Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

that city, drove out the Ghibellines, and had their confiſcated eſtates for their reward: they then joined the pope againſt Manfred, who was defeated and ſlain. In conſequence of this victory, the Guelphs of Florence grew daily bolder and more vigorous, and the party of the Ghibellines weaker and weaker; upon which count Guido Novello, and thoſe that were left in commiſſion with him to govern Florence, reſolved to try, by lenity and gentler treatment, to recover the affections of the people, whom they found they had exaſperated to the laſt degree by their oppreſſive and violent manner of proceeding. To cajole and ingratiate themſelves with the people, they choſe ſix and thirty citizens out of the people of Florence, and two gentlemen of higher rank from among their friends at Bologna, to whom they gave a commiſſion to reform the ſtate as they pleaſed. Theſe delegates divided the city into diſtinct arts or trades, over which they conſtituted a magiſtrate, who was to adminiſter juſtice to all who were in his department; and to every art a ſeparate banner was aſſigned, under which they might aſſemble in arms, whenever the ſafety of the public required it. But count Guido muſt have a tax to maintain his ſoldiers: the citizens would not pay it. He attempted to take back the new privilege of magiſtrates to each trade: the people roſe in arms, choſe Giovanni Soldanieri for their leader, fought the count and his Ghibellines, and drove them out of the city. The people, having thus got the upper hand, reſolved to unite the city if poſſible, and recal all ſuch citizens as had been forced to leave their homes, whether Guelphs or Ghibellines. The Guelphs returned, after ſix years baniſhment; the late attempt of the Ghibellines was pardoned, and they were ſuffered to come back again;

again; but they ſtill continued very odious both to the Guelphs and the people, the former not being able to forgive the diſgrace and hardſhips of their long exile, nor the latter to forget their inſolence and tyranny when they had the government in their hands: ſo that their ancient animoſities were not yet entirely extinguiſhed, either on one ſide or the other. The wrangle ſoon came to a criſis, and the Ghibellines fled out of the city, upon the interpoſition of a foreign force from Charles, king of Naples, in favour of the Guelphs. After the departure of the Ghibellines, the Florentines new-modelled their government, and choſe twelve principal magiſtrates, who were to continue in authority no longer than two months, under the title of buonhomini. Next in power under them they appointed a council of eighty citizens, which they called the credenza. After this, an hundred and eighty more were elected out of the people, thirty to ſerve every two months; who, together with the credenza, and the twelve buonhomini, were called the general council. Beſides which, they inſtituted another council, conſiſting of an hundred and twenty members, equally choſen out of the nobility, citizens, and commonalty, which was to confirm whatſoever had been reſolved upon by the others, and to act jointly with them in diſpoſing of the public honours and offices of the commonwealth. The firſt government of the anziani was as near a ſimple democracy as there is any example of: we found it, accordingly, ineffectual. The next, of buonhomini, was no better; and that could not ſupport itſelf. Now we come to a new plan, which diſcovers, in the authors of it, a ſenſe of the imperfection of the former two, and an attempt to obviate its inconveniencies and dangers: but inſtead

Buonhomini.

UAB Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

of a judicious plan, founded in the natural diviſions of the people, it is a jumble which common ſenſe would ſee, at this day, muſt fall to pieces. The buonhomini, the credenza, and the thirty of the hundred and eighty, wore an appearance of three orders; but inſtead of being kept ſeparate, they are all huddled together in the general council. Another council ſtill, of an hundred and twenty, equally choſen out of the nobility, citizens, and commonalty, was to confirm whatever was reſolved on by the others. Here are two branches, with each a negative. But the miſtake was, that the ariſtocratical and democratical parts of the community were mixed in each of them; which ſhows, at firſt bluſh, that there never could be harmony in either, both being naturally and neceſſarily ſplit into two factions. But a greater defect, if poſſible, than even this, was giving the executive power, the power of diſpoſing public honours and offices, to a joint aſſemblage of buonhomini, credenza, and the two other aſſemblies, all in one: the conſequence muſt be, that although every one of theſe four orders muſt be divided at once into factions for the loaves and fiſhes, yet the nobility, by their ſuperior influence in elections, would have the whole power. Unhappy Florence! thou art deſtined from this moment to never-ending factions, ſeditions, and civil wars!—Accordingly, we read in the next page, what any one might have foreſeen from this ſketch of their conſtitution, "that the government of "Florence was fallen into great diſorder and miſ-"rule; for the Guelph nobility being the majo-"rity, were grown ſo inſolent, and ſtood in ſo "little awe of the magiſtracy" (and how could they ſtand in awe of magiſtrates whom they had created, and who were even at their devotion?) "that

"though

" though many murders, and other violences, were " daily committed, yet the criminals generally " escaped with impunity, through favour of one " or other of the nobles. To restrain these enormities, instead of twelve governors, they resolved to have fourteen, seven of each party, who should be nominated by the pope, and remain in office one year. Under this form of government, in which they had been obliged in reality to submit to a foreign master, they continued for two years, when the rage of faction again blazed out. They rose in arms, and put the city under a new regulation. In 1282 the companies of arts and trades ordained, that instead of fourteen citizens, three only should govern, and that for two months, who were to be chosen indifferently out of the nobility or commons, provided they were merchants, or professed any art or occupation; and these were called priori. Afterwards, the chief magistracy was vested in six persons, one for each ward, under which regulation the city continued till the year 1342; but the course of events for these sixty years should be carefully traced, in order to see the operation of such a form of government, even in a single city. This institution, as might be expected, occasioned the ruin of the nobility, who, upon divers provocations, were excluded, and entirely suppressed by the people. The nobility, indeed, were divided among themselves; and by endeavouring to supplant each other, and aspiring to the sole government of the commonwealth, they quite lost all share in it. The priori were afterwards distinguished by the name of signori. There remained some sparks of animosity betwixt the nobility and commonalty, which are incident to all republics; for one side being naturally jealous of any encroachment upon their liberty and

1282.

Priori.

1342.

Signori.

UAB
Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

legal rights, and the other ambitious to rule and controul the laws, it is not poſſible they ſhould ever long agree together. This humour, however, did not ſhew itſelf in the nobility while they were overawed by the Ghibellines; but when the latter were depreſſed, it began to appear, and the people were daily injured and abuſed in ſuch a manner, that neither the laws nor the magiſtracy had authority enough to relieve them; as every nobleman ſupported himſelf in his inſolence by the number of his friends and relations, both againſt the power of the ſignori and the captain of the people. The heads of the arts to remedy ſo great an evil, provided, that every ſignori ſhould appoint a ſtandard-bearer of juſtice out of the people, with a thouſand men, divided into twenty companies, under him, who ſhould be always ready with their ſtandard and arms whenever ordered by the magiſtracy. This eſtabliſhment met little oppoſition, on account of the jealouſy and emulation that reigned among the nobility, who were not in the leaſt aware that it was levelled at them, till they felt the ſmart of it. Then, indeed, they were not a little awed by it for ſome time; but in a while they returned to the commiſſion of their former outrages; for as ſome of them always found means to inſinuate themſelves into the ſignori, they had it in their power to prevent the ſtandard-bearer from executing his office. Beſides, as witneſſes were always required upon any accuſation, the plaintiff could hardly ever find any one that durſt give evidence againſt the nobility: ſo that in a ſhort time Florence was involved in its former diſtractions, and the people expoſed to violence and oppreſſion; as juſtice was grown dilatory, and ſentence, though paſſed, ſeldom or never executed. The people not knowing what

courſe

courſe to take, Giano della Bella, a ſtrenuous patriot, though of a very noble family, encouraged the heads of the arts once more to reform the city. It was enacted, that the gonfalonier ſhould always reſide with the ſignori, and have four thouſand armed men under his command. They alſo entirely excluded the nobility out of that council of the ſignori, and made a law that all acceſſaries or abettors ſhould be liable to the ſame puniſhment with thoſe that were principals in any crime, and that common fame ſhould be ſufficient evidence to convict them. By theſe laws, which were called Li Ordinamenti della Giuſtizia (but which were in reality as tyrannical as the edicts of any deſpot could be) the people gained great weight and authority; but Giano being looked upon by the nobility as the author of theſe laws to bridle their power, became very odious not only to them, but to the richeſt of the commonalty: as well he might, for laws more oppreſſive and deſtructive of liberty could not have been made. Tyrannical as they were, however, they were not enough ſo for the people; for upon the trial of Corſo Donati, a nobleman, for a murder, although he was acquitted even under theſe new laws, the people were enraged and ran to arms, and demoliſhed the magiſtrate's houſe, inſtead of applying to the ſignori. The whole city exceedingly reſented this outrage upon all law and government; the blame of it was laid upon Giano, and he was accuſed before the magiſtrate as an encourager of inſurrection. While his cauſe was depending, the people took arms to defend him againſt the ſignori. Giano went voluntarily into baniſhment, to appeaſe this tumult. The nobility then petitioned the ſignori, that the ſeverity of the laws againſt them might be mitigated.

Corſo.

Giano.

gated. As ſoon as this petition was publicly known, the commons, apprehending the ſignori would comply with it, immediately roſe in a tumultuous manner: ſo that ambition on one ſide, and jealouſy on the other, at laſt occaſioned an open rupture between them, and both ſides were prepared for battle; but by the interpoſition and mediation of ſome prudent men, whoſe arguments with both parties are very judicious, the people at laſt conſented that no accuſation ſhould be admitted againſt a nobleman, without ſufficient evidence to ſupport it. Both parties laid down their arms, but retained their jealouſies, and began ſoon to raiſe forces, and fortify themſelves as faſt as they could. The people thought fit to new-model the government, and reduce the number of the ſignori, as they ſuſpected ſome of that body to be too favourably inclined to the nobility. A momentary tranquillity ſucceeded: but the ſparks of jealouſy and envy ſtill remained betwixt the nobility and people; which ſoon broke out, on occaſion of a quarrel between two families, the Cherchi and Donati, both conſiderable for their riches, nobility, and dependents. The ſignori were under no ſmall apprehenſions that the whole city would become engaged in the diſpute, and hourly expected the two parties would openly attack each other, as it ſoon afterwards happened, and a ſkirmiſh enſued, in which many were wounded on both ſides. The whole city, commons as well as nobility, divided upon it; nor did the contagion confine itſelf to the city alone, but infected all the country. So ineffectual was this contemptible government of the ſignori to the ſuppreſſion of this animoſity, that the pope was applied to: he ſent his nuncio to no purpoſe, and then put the city under an interdict; but this anſwered no end but to increaſe the confuſion,

Cherchi. Donati.

ſion, and frequent battles took place, till the whole city took arms, neither the power of the magiſtracy, nor the authority of the laws, being able to reſtrain the fury of the multitude. The wiſeſt and beſt of the citizens were in great terror; and the Donati, being the weaker party, not a little doubtful of their ſafety. Such is the effect of a government of all authority in one center. Here all was concentrated in the ſignori, choſen by the people frequently enough; yet although the nobility were arbitrarily excluded from that council, thoſe who were choſen were indebted for their elections probably to thoſe very nobles, and chiefly to the Donati and Cherchi. The Donati here were the minority, upon the whole, and therefore had great reaſon to be doubtful of their ſafety. It was agreed, at a meeting betwixt Corſo Donati, the heads of the Neri family, and the captains of the arts, to ſolicit the pope to ſend ſome perſon of royal extraction to reform the city. Here nature breaks out, in ſpite of all attempts to ſtifle it. A royal dignity is the moſt obvious thought to extinguiſh animoſities between nobles and commons. In this caſe the captains of the arts, that is, the people, perceived it, as well as Corſo and the Neri, the contending nobles. This meeting, and the reſult of it, was notified to the ſignori by the other party, who repreſented it as a conſpiracy againſt their liberty. Both ſides, however, were in arms again, and Dante, who was one of the ſignori, had the courage to adviſe that ſovereign aſſembly to draw out their companies, and being joined by great numbers out of the country, they found themſelves able to force the chiefs of each party to lay down their arms. They aſſumed an appearance of dignity, baniſhed Corſo and the Neri, and, to ſhew their impartiality, ſeveral of the Bianchi. But this government had no permanent ſtrength:

Neri. Bianchi.

UAB
Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

ſtrength: the Bianchi, upon plauſible pretences, were ſoon permitted to return. Corſo, and his aſſociates, obtained the ſame indulgence; but, inſtead of being quiet, they went to Rome, to perſuade the pope to appoint a perſon of royal extraction, as they had before petitioned his holineſs in their letters. Charles of Valois, brother of the king of France, was ſent accordingly by the pope. Though the Bianchi family, who then had the upper hand in Florence, looked upon him with an evil eye, yet as he was patron of the Guelphs, and ſent by the pope, they durſt not oppoſe his coming: on the contrary, to make him their friend, they gave him full power to regulate the city as he thought beſt. He cauſed his friends to arm themſelves: this made the people ſo jealous that he intended to deprive them of what they called their liberties, that they took arms. The Cherchi, and the heads of the Bianchi, having had the chief government of the city ſome time in their hands, and behaved with great arrogance, were become generally odious; which encouraged Corſo, and others of the Neri who had fled, to return, upon an aſſurance that Charles and the captains of the arts were their friends, and would ſupport them. Accordingly, whilſt the city was thus alarmed with the apprehenſions of Charles's deſigns, Corſo, with all his aſſociates, and many other of their followers, made their entry into it, without reſiſtance; and though Veri de Cherchi was called upon to oppoſe them, he declined it, and ſaid, "The people "might chaſtiſe them themſelves, if they pleaſed, "as they were likely to be the greateſt ſufferers "by them." But that inſinuation had no effect; for inſtead of chaſtiſing them, they received them with open arms, whilſt Veri was forced to fly for his ſafety. Corſo having forced his entrance at the

the Porta Pinte, drew up and made a ſtand near his own houſe; and being joined by a great number of his friends and others, aſſembled in hopes of a change of government, he releaſed all priſoners, civil and criminal; diveſted the ſignori of their authority; choſe new magiſtrates, all of the party of the Neri, out of the people, to ſupply their places; and plundered the houſes of the Bianchi. The Cherchi, and the heads of their faction, ſeeing the people for the moſt part their enemies, and Charles not their friend, fled out of the city, and in their turn implored the interpoſition of the pope, though they would not liſten to his exhortations before. Such is the ſeries of alternate tragedy, comedy, and farce, which was called the liberty of Florence, during this collection of all authority into one center, the ſignori; in which no man of any party could be one moment ſecure of his life, property, or liberty, amidſt continual exaltations and depreſſions of parties, in favour of different noble families, although thoſe nobles were all excluded from the government. The excluſion was but a form: nearly all the power was in their hands, and the ſignori in office were only alternate tools of one noble family or another. And thus it muſt ever be: exclude the ariſtocratical part of the community by laws as tyrannical as you will, they will ſtill govern the ſtate underhand; the perſons elected into office will be their tools, and, in conſtant fear of them, behave like mere puppets, danced upon their wires. But our humorous entertainment is not yet ended. The pope now, at the interceſſion of the Cherchi, ſent a legate, Acqua Sparta, to Florence, who made an accommodation betwixt the Cherchi and Donati, and fortified it

by

UAB Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

by ſeveral intermarriages between them. But this ſpiritual policy, though deep and ſound, did not anſwer his end: for when he inſiſted that the Bianchi ſhould ſhare in the chief offices of the commonwealth, that was refuſed by the Neri, who were in full poſſeſſion of them. Upon this the legate left the city as diſſatisfied as ever, and excommunicated it a ſecond time for its contumacy. The Neri, however, ſeeing their old enemies in their boſom again, were not a little afraid they would uſe all means to ruin them, in order to recover their former authority; and both parties were ſtill diſcontented, and freſh occaſions of diſcord ſoon occurred. Niccolo de Cherchi, and Simone, a ſon of Corſo Donati, met and fought. The battle was ſo ſharp and bloody, that Niccolo was killed upon the ſpot, and Simone ſo deſperately wounded, that he died the ſame night. This accident, as it is called, though an event ſpringing neceſſarily from the form of government and ſtate of parties, threw the whole city into an uproar again; and although it was altogether owing to the Neri, as Simone aſſaulted Niccolo, yet they were ſcreened by the magiſtracy, and, before judgement could be obtained, a conſpiracy was ſaid to be diſcovered betwixt the Bianchi and Pietro Ferrante, a nobleman who attended Charles of Valois, with whom they had been tampering, to perſuade his maſter to re-inſtate them in the government. The plot was detected by ſome letters from the Cherchi to Pietro: though it was the common opinion they were forged by the Donati, to wipe off the odium they had incurred by the murder of Niccolo de Cherchi. All the family of the Cherchi, with many of their followers of the Bianchi party,

and among the reſt Dante the poet * were immediately ſent into baniſhment; their eſtates confiſcated, and their houſes demoliſhed, by the ſtrength of thoſe forged letters. After which their party, with many of the Ghibellines who had joined them, were diſperſed in different places.—The quiet that enſued was very ſhort, for Corſo Donati was diſſatisfied that he did not enjoy ſuch a degree of authority in Florence as he thought due to his merit, as the government was in the hands of the people, and conducted by thoſe who were much inferior to him in all reſpects. To varniſh over his deſigns and revenge with a fair pretext, he accuſed ſeveral citizens, who had been entruſted with public money, with embezzling it, and many were ignorant and credulous enough to believe that Corſo did this out of pure concern and affection for his country. The perſons thus calumniated were in favour with the people, and ſtood upon their juſtification, and, after many law-ſuits and long litigations, theſe diſputes grew to ſuch a height, that it became abſolutely neceſſary to take up arms. On one ſide were Corſo, and Lotteri, biſhop of Florence, with many of the nobility, and ſome of the commons; on the other were the ſignori, and the greater part of the people: nothing was to be ſeen but affrays and ſkirmiſhes, in every part of the city.—In ſuch a "right conſtitution" as this, ſuch a government of "the people's ſucceſſive ſovereign aſſemblies" as the ſignori were, the body of the nation never can be unanimous: all the moſt wealthy, beſt born, beſt educated, and ableſt men, will unanimouſly deſpiſe and deteſt the government; except a few artful hypocrites among them, who

* 1298. Nerli, p. 9.

will

will belye their judgements and feelings, for the ſake of a preſent popularity for ſome private ends. Thoſe who thus hate the form of government, will have numerous connections, relations, and dependents among the people, who will follow them; ſo that there never can be more than a ſmall majority of the people on the ſide of government. Hence its conſtant weakneſs: hence it is a mere foot-ball, continually kicked from one ſide to another by three or four principal families. Thus it appeared in this caſe: the ſignori, feeling their weakneſs, and perceiving themſelves in great danger, utterly unable to puniſh crimes, ſupport their friends, or curb their enemies, were obliged to ſend to Lucca, a foreign ſtate, for aid, and were fortunate enough to find all the people of that city willing to come to their aſſiſtance. The tumults were compoſed for a time, but the ſignori and people were too feeble to puniſh the author of the diſturbance.—This interval of tranquillity was no more durable than former ones. The pope ſent his legate, Niccolo da Prato,* again, who ingratiated himſelf with the people, ſo that they gave him a commiſſion to new-model the city. In order to obtain the recal of the Ghibelline faction from baniſhment, he flattered the people, by reſtoring their ancient companies, which added much to their ſtrength, and diminiſhed that of the nobility. But the project of reſtoring the exiles was obnoxious to the ſignori, who forced the legate out of the city, which he put under an interdict at his departure, and left in the utmoſt confuſion. Two factions not being ſufficient, the city was now divided and ſubdivided into ſeveral; as thoſe of the people and

* 1303. Nerli, p. 9.

nobility,

nobility, the Guelphs and Ghibellines, the Bianchi and the Neri; and ſome who wiſhed for the return of the exiles, being diſappointed in their hopes, now the legate was gone, grew clamorous and outrageous; ſo that the whole city was in an uproar, and many ſkirmiſhes enſued. Thoſe that were moſt active in raiſing this clamour, were the Medici and Giugni, who had openly ſided with the legate in favour of the exiles. This is the firſt mention made of that family of Medici, who acted ſo diſtinguiſhed a part afterwards, finally ſubverted the commonwealth, and changed it into an abſolute ſovereignty, under the title of a grand dukedom, a form it ſtill wears.—A great fire broke out at this time, in 1304, and was aſcribed, as uſual in ſuch times, by ſome to accident, and by ſome to party deſign.—Let us look back to 1282, when this government of priori or ſignori, choſen every two months by the people, was eſtabliſhed: from thence to 1304 is only twenty-two years, in which we ſee a conſtant quarrel between the nobility and people, and between one party of nobles and another, and the neighbouring ſtates of Naples, Rome, and Lucca, in turn, called in to aid the different factions; alternate murders, baniſhments, confiſcations, and civil wars, as one party and the other prevailed; and, inſtead of a government, and a ſyſtem of juſtice and liberty, conſtant anarchy, and the perpetual rolling of a mob. In this year, 1304, Florence was viſited, in this lamentable manner, with fire and ſword. Corſo Donati was the only perſon of any diſtinction who did not take up arms: he thought, that when all parties grew tired of fighting, he was the more likely to be called in, arbitrator to decide their differences. They ſoon after laid down their arms, more out

Medici.

1304.

of

UAB Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

of wearineſs of their miſeries, and that they might have time to take breath, than from any real deſire of being re-united, and living in peace. It was only ſtipulated, that the exiles ſhould not be ſuffered to return; which was agreed to by thoſe that favoured them, merely becauſe they proved to be the weaker ſide.

New diſturbances ariſing, the pope was adviſed by his legate to ſummon to Rome twelve of the principle malecontents of Florence, among whom was Corſo Donati. They readily obeyed the ſummons.—As ſoon as they were ſet out upon their journey, the legate acquainted the exiles, that now was their time to return to Florence, as the city was then clear of the only men that had authority enough to oppoſe their entrance. Drawing together what forces they could, they immediately marched, and entered the city: but thoſe very citizens, who, but a little before, had exerted themſelves in the moſt ſtrenuous manner for their return, when they petitioned in the moſt humble and ſubmiſſive manner to be admitted, were the firſt that took up arms againſt them, now they ſaw them approach in a hoſtile manner, and joined with the people to drive them back. One is, however, aſtoniſhed at the reflection of Machiavel, "Such was the ſpirit of patriotiſm amongſt "them in thoſe days, that they cheerfully gave "up their private intereſts for the public good," when every page of his hiſtory ſhews, that the public good was ſacrificed every day, by all parties, to their private intereſts, friendſhips, and enmities.—After the exiles were repulſed, the citizens relapſed into their former diſtractions; and, after much violence, the governors of the commonwealth re-eſtabliſhed the companies of the people, and reſtored the colours under which the arts had

UAB Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

had formerly been uſed to aſſemble. The captains, ſtandard-bearers of the companies, and the officers of juſtice, were called together, and ordered not only to aſſiſt the ſignori in times of peace with their counſel, but to ſupport and defend them, by dint of arms, in all exigencies and commotions. To aſſiſt the two judges, who had been conſtituted in the beginning of their ſtate, they appointed an officer, called il eſzecutore, or ſheriff, who was to act in conjunction with the ſtandard-bearers, and ſee their orders carried into execution, whenever the nobility ſhould be guilty of any enormity or act of oppreſſion. The pope died, and Corſo and the other eleven citizens returned, whoſe reſtleſs ambition occaſioned ſuch troubles. Corſo, in order to make himſelf popular, conſtantly oppoſed the nobility in all their ſchemes, and, which way ſoever he obſerved the people to incline, he turned all his authority to ſupport them in it, and gain their affection: ſo that in all conteſts and diviſions, or when they had any extraordinary point to carry, they always reſorted to him, and put themſelves under his directions. Machiavel indeed obſerves, "that "all might now have lived in peace, if the reſtleſs "ambition of Corſo had not occaſioned freſh "troubles." But in this Machiavel is miſtaken: if Corſo had not exiſted, the people would have found ſome other leader and confident. When the people feel that the government is unable or unwilling to protect them againſt the oppreſſions of the nobles, they always ſeek out a Caſſius, Mælius, Manlius, or Corſo, to aſſiſt the government to protect them, or to erect a new government that will be able and willing. It is the defect in the government, and the wants of the people, that excite and inſpirit the ambition of

UAB Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

private men. To be ſure, the man of any diſtinction, who liſtens to the complaints of the people in ſuch caſes, whether from ambition or humanity, always creates himſelf much hatred and envy among the moſt conſiderable citizens. In this caſe theſe paſſions increaſed to ſuch a degree, that the faction of the Neri divided and quarrelled among themſelves. To alienate the affections of the people from him, they gave out, as the ariſtocracy always does in ſuch caſes, that he ſecretly deſigned to ſeize upon the government, and make himſelf king; and his magnificent manner of living, and marriage into the family of Faggiuola, head of the Bianchi and Ghibellines, made it eaſily believed. His enemies took up arms againſt him, and the greater part of the people, inſtead of appearing in his defence, forſook him, and joined his adverſaries. He was impeached, but refuſing to obey the ſummons, was declared a contumacious rebel. A civil war enſued; many were killed on both ſides. After a furious defence, Corſo threw himſelf from his horſe, and was killed. Such was the unfortunate end of * Corſo Donati, to whom his country and the Neri owed much, both of their good and bad fortune; one of the moſt eminent men that Florence ever produced. But Machiavel ſhould have laid the blame upon the conſtitution, not upon the reſtleſs diſpoſition or turbulent ſpirit of Corſo; becauſe it is impoſſible for a man of Corſo's genius, valour, and activity, in ſuch a government, not to be reſtleſs and turbulent; he is never ſafe himſelf, and large bodies of people are continually flattering and ſoliciting him, while others are threatening and perecuting him. No nation has a right to blame

* Nerli, p. 9.

ſuch

UAB Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

ſuch a citizen, until they have eſtabliſhed a form of government that is capable of protecting him on one ſide, and the people againſt him on the other. This flimſy ſovereignty of the ſignori was inadequate to either purpoſe.

After the death of Corſo, in 1308, the exiles from Florence excited Henry,* the emperor, to a war againſt that city, for their reſtoration: the magiſtrates applied to Robert, king of Naples, and gave him the government of the city for five years, to defend it, and protect them. This ſtorm, after raging ſome time, blew over, by the death of the emperor.† The Ghibellines then, under the command of Faggiuola, renewed the war, by making themſelves maſters of Piſa, and committing depredations on the Florentine territories. The Florentines fought him, and were totally defeated. They then applied to king Robert ‡ for another general: he ſent them the count di Andria, whoſe bad conduct, "added," ſays Machiavel, "to the impatient temper of the Flo-"rentines, which is ſoon tired with any form of "government, and ready to fall into factions "upon every accident," occaſioned the city to divide again. Machiavel's ſeverity ought, however, to have been applied to the form of government, not to the temper of the people, the latter being but the natural and neceſſary effect of the former. In ſuch a government the people have no protection or ſecurity; they are continually oppreſſed, vexed, and irritated, by one faction or another, one ally or enemy or another, one aſpiring citizen or family or another, againſt whoſe uſurpations, as the conſtitution affords no redreſs, they are obliged to recur to arms and a

1308.

1313.

* Nerli, p. 10. † Ibid.
‡ Nerli, p. 10. Muratori, Annal. tom. viii. p. 40.

change of government. The Florentines, in this caſe, ſought aſſiſtance from France and Germany, but could obtain none: they were determined, however, to carry their point, took arms, drove the count out of the city, and ſent for one Lando, of Agobbio, and made him their eſſecutore, or rather dictator or executioner,* with full power over all the citizens. Lando, being naturally rapacious and cruel, went about the city with a gang of armed men at his heels, hanging up one man and then another, as thoſe who had ſent for him gave him directions; and at laſt grew ſo inſolent, that he coined bad money with the Florentine ſtamp, which nobody had courage enough to oppoſe, to ſuch a height of power had he arrived by the diſſenſions of the citizens! Miſerable indeed was the condition of the city atthat time, which neither the bitter remembrance of the evils produced by their former diſſenſions, nor the dread of a foreign enemy at their gates, nor the authority of a king, was ſufficient to keep united; though their poſſeſſions were daily ravaged and plundered abroad by Faggiuola, and at home by Lando. The nobility, moſt of the conſiderable commons, and all the Guelphs, took the king's ſide, and hated Lando and thoſe who ſupported him; and, to free themſelves from ſo ignominious a yoke, they wrote to king Robert privately, and intreated him to appoint count Guido his lieutenant at Florence, which he readily complied with; and the other party, though they had the ſignori on their ſide, durſt not venture to oppoſe a man of ſo eſtabliſhed a reputation. But the count ſoon found he had very little authority in the city, as the magiſtracy, and the ſtandard-bearers of the ſeveral

* Nerli, p. 10.

companies,

companies, openly favoured Lando and his friends. Soon afterwards the citizens were reconciled and united under the king, by the friendly counsel of his daughter-in-law, and Lando, deprived of his authority, was sent back to Agobbio satiated with blood and rapine.* The government of the king of Naples was continued three years longer; and as the seven who were then in the signori were all of Lando's party, six others were added to them of the king's, and they continued thirteen for some time, but were afterwards reduced to seven again. 1316.

About this time Castruccio Castracani † drove out Faggiuola, and succeeded him in the government of Lucca and Pisa. The Florentines had enough to do to obstruct the growth of the power of this spirited and fortunate youth at the head of the Ghibelline interest, and to defend themselves against him. That the signori in this war might proceed with maturer deliberation, and execute with greater authority, they chose twelve citizens, whom they called buonhomini, without whose advice and consent the signori were not to pass any act of importance. But this effort of nature to form a balance to this simple government was of short duration: the dominion of king Robert expired, and the government once more reverted to the citizens, who set up the same form of magistracy that had been formerly instituted. The whole city was soon obliged to march against Castruccio, to the relief of Prato, and a proclamation was issued by the signori, that every exile of the Guelph party, who came in to the relief of Prato, should afterwards have liberty to return home. This policy added four thousand men to 1323.

* Nerli, p. 11. † Ibid.

their army, which before consisted of twenty thousand foot and fifteen hundred horse. Castruccio, afraid of so formidable a force, retreated to Lucca. Upon this retreat, great disputes arose in the Florentine camp, between the nobility and people, about pursuing Castruccio: these debates were referred to the signori, which, consisting at this time of commoners as well as of nobility, was as much divided in opinion. Upon this the people rose in a tumult, and forced the signori to give way to them; but it was now too late to follow Castruccio, and the people were so exasperated, that they would not suffer the public faith to be kept with the exiles. The nobility had some regard to their honour, though the people had not, and took the part of the exiles, which produced another civil war. As it generally happens in all commonwealths, that after any revolution or remarkable crisis some or other of the old laws are abrogated, and new ones made in their room, so though the signori at first was changed every two months, yet the magistrates who were now in office, having great power, took upon themselves to constitute a signori out of all the most considerable citizens, to continue forty months, whose names were to be put into a bag or purse, which was called imborsation, and a certain number of them drawn out by lot at the end of every second month; whereas before, when the old magistrates went out of office, new ones were always chosen by the council. As the council consisted only of the most considerable citizens, the government was before but a self-created, or at least self-continued aristocracy: now it was equally so, with this difference only, that lot was substituted in the room of choice. As the lot was not to be now renewed till after a term of above three years, it was thought they

they had extinguiſhed the cauſes of all ſuch diſguſts and tumults as uſed to happen from the frequent return of elections, and the number of competitors for the magiſtracy; not being aware how little advantage and how many miſchiefs were likely to flow from them.

In 1325, in a war with Caſtruccio, the Florentines were betrayed by their general Raymondo. This man ſaw that the Florentines had been ſo liberal in diſpoſing of themſelves, that they had ſometimes conferred their government upon kings, ſometimes upon legates, and ſometimes upon perſons of much inferior quality; he thought, if he could reduce them to any extremity, they, perhaps, would make him their prince: he was very importunate with them to give him the ſame command in the city that he had over their army, as he pretended he could not otherwiſe either require or expect that neceſſary obedience which was due to a general. Not being gratified, he trifled and delayed, till he was attacked, and defeated with great ſlaughter, and the loſs of his own life; receiving that puniſhment from the hands of fortune, that his ambition and perfidy had merited from the Florentines. The havoc, the depredations, impriſonments, burnings, and every other kind of devaſtation made by Caſtruccio upon the Florentines after this victory, forced them to offer their government to Charles, duke of Calabria,* ſon of king Robert, upon condition that he would defend them; for as that family had been uſed to rule over them, they choſe rather to ſhelter themſelves under him as their prince, than to truſt him as an ally. But Charles being engaged in the wars of Sicily, ſent Gualtier, a Frenchman, and duke of

1325.

1326.

* Nerli, p. 12.

Athens, as his lieutenant, who new-modelled the magiſtracy as he thought fit. His behaviour was, in appearance, at firſt ſo modeſt and temperate, that he gained the affections of every one.

1326. In 1326 Charles came in perſon with a thouſand horſe, and his preſence gave ſome check to Caſtruccio, and prevented him from roving and plundering the country as he had done: but if the citizens ſaved any thing abroad, it was loſt again at home; and when their enemies were curbed, they became a prey to the inſolence and oppreſſion of their friends. As the ſignori were entirely under the influence of the duke of Athens, he exacted four hundred thouſand florins from the city, in one year, though it was expreſsly ſtipulated in the agreement made with him, that he ſhould not raiſe above two hundred thouſand in the whole; beſides which, either Charles or his father were continually laying ſome heavy tax or other upon the citizens. Theſe miſeries were ſtill increaſed by new jealouſies, freſh enemies, and more extenſive wars, in which all the neighbouring powers were involved, till ſuddenly Caſtruccio, and Charles, duke of Calabria and lord of

1328. Florence, both died. The Florentines, unexpectedly delivered from the oppreſſion of one, and dread of the other, and having once more recovered their liberty, began to reform the commonwealth. They abrogated the ordinances of all former councils, and created two new ones, one of which conſiſted of three hundred of the commons, and the other of two hundred and fifty of both commoners and nobility: the former was called the council of the people, and the latter the common council.

After the death of Caſtruccio, in 1328, till the year

year 1340, the Florentines continued wholly intent upon their affairs and wars abroad. In 1340 new disturbances arose at home. The governors of the city had two ways of maintaining and increasing their authority: one was, by managing the imborsations in such a manner as always to secure the signori either to themselves or their creatures; the other, by getting judges chosen who they knew would be favourable to them in their sentences. And how is it possible, in any simple government, to prevent such management, to draw all the legislative, executive, and judicial power into one center, and that center a junto of aristocratics? But in this case, not content with two judges, the governors sometimes constituted a third, whom they called captain of the guards; with which office they now vested Jacomo d'Agobbio, and gave him an absolute power over the citizens. This Jacomo, under the direction of the governors, behaved with the most shameless insolence and partiality, daily injuring or affronting somebody or other. Some who were nobly born, and men of high spirit, were provoked to such a degree, that a stranger should be introduced into the city by a few of their fellow-citizens who had the power in their hands, on purpose to insult and abuse all the rest, that they entered into a conspiracy, with many other noble families, and some of the commoners, that were disgusted at so tyrannical a government, to revenge themselves: hence a conspiracy, that again involved the city in blood, in 1340. By artifice and force together the signori prevailed, and suppressed the conspiracy, beheading some, and proclaiming several other families rebels.* How- 1340.

* Nerli, p. 14.

ever,

ever, it did not ſatiate the revenge of thoſe in adminiſtration, to have conquered and ſuppreſſed thoſe families: but, like almoſt all other men, whoſe inſolence commonly increaſes with their power, they grew more imperious and arbitrary as they grew ſtronger; for though they had only one captain of the guards to tyranniſe over the city before, they now appointed another to reſide in the country, and veſted him with very great authority; ſo that any one who was in the leaſt obnoxious to government could not live quietly, either within the city or without it. The nobility, in particular, were daily abuſed and inſulted by them in ſuch a manner, that they only waited for an opportunity to revenge themſelves at any rate; and as one ſoon happened, they did not fail to take advantage of it. The Florentines had purchaſed Lucca, and carried on a war to recover it; but, after a long ſtruggle, were driven out of it, with much diſhonour, and the loſs of all their purchaſe-money. This diſaſter, as it uſually happens in like caſes, threw the people of Florence into ſuch a rage againſt their governors, that they publicly inſulted and upbraided them with their ill conduct and adminiſtration, in all places, and upon every opportunity.

In the beginning of the war, the management of it had been committed to twenty citizens, who appointed Malateſta de Rimini commander in chief of their forces in that expedition: but as he executed that charge with little courage, had leſs diſcretion, they ſolicited Robert, king of Naples, for ſupplies; which he accordingly ſent them, under the command of Gualtier, duke of Athens, who, as the evil deſtiny of the city would have it, arrived there juſt at the time when the enterpriſe againſt Lucca had miſcarried.

The

UAB
Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

The duke of Athens arrived at this time,* and 1342.
the governors being in great fear of the multitude, made him conſervator of the peace and commander in chief, that he might have both authority and power enough to defend them. The nobility now reſolved to take their revenge, even though it ſhould occaſion the deſtruction of the city; imagining there was no other way left to get the better of the people, who had ſo long domineered over them, but to reduce them into ſubjection to a prince, who, being well acquainted with the worth and generoſity of the nobility, and the inſolence of the commons, might treat both parties according to their deſerts. They had many private meetings to perſuade the duke to take the government wholly into his hands, and promiſed to ſupport him with all their intereſt and power. Several of the moſt conſiderable commoners joined them, particularly the families of the Peruzzi, Acciaivoli, Antelleſi, and Buonaccorſi. Such encouragement, and ſo fair an opportunity, inflamed the duke, who was naturally ambitious, with a ſtill greater thirſt of power: and to ingratiate himſelf with the lower ſort of the people, by acting like a juſt and upright magiſtrate, he ordered a proceſs to be commenced againſt thoſe that had been entruſted with the management of the late war againſt the Lucchese: in conſequence of which Giovanni de Medici and two others were put to death, ſeveral others baniſhed, and many obliged to pay large ſums of money for their pardon. This ſevere manner of proceeding alarmed the middle ſort of citizens, though it was very grateful to the nobility and common people, as the latter generally take pleaſure in executions, and

* Nerli, p. 15.

the

the former were not a little rejoiced at the fall of thoſe by whom they had been ſo grievouſly oppreſſed: ſo that, whenever the duke paſſed through the ſtreets, they reſounded with acclamations and praiſes of his juſtice and reſolution, while every one exhorted him to perſevere in his endeavours to detect the guilty, and bring them to condign puniſhment. Notwithſtanding all the expoſtula-
1342. tions of the ſignori, in 1342, in an aſſembly of all the people, the government was given to the duke for life, and he was carried about in a chair, amidſt the acclamations of the multitude; the ſtandard of the city was torn to pieces, and the duke's planted in its ſtead, at which all the good citizens were infinitely grieved and mortified, whilſt thoſe, either out of malice or ſtupidity, had conſented to this election, did not a little rejoice.

Machiavel's next taſk is to give us a detail of the duke's tyrannical behaviour, which was as wild, cruel, and mad, as all other tyrannies have been which were created on the ruins of a republic. The duke perceived the general odium he had incurred; but affected to think himſelf extremely beloved. He was informed of a plot againſt him, in which the family of the Medici, and others, were concerned; but he ordered the informer to be put to death. He cut out the tongue of Bettoni for complaining of heavy taxes, &c. His outrages were ſufficient to rouſe the Florentines, who neither knew how to value their liberty, nor endure ſlavery, ſays Machiavel. But the truth is, they had no liberty to value, and nothing but ſlavery to endure; their conſtitution was no protection of right; their laws never governed. They were ſlaves to every freak and paſſion, every party and faction, every aſpiring or diſappointed noble: ſome-

ſometimes to the pope, ſometimes to the king of Naples, ſometimes to Lando; ſometimes to one nobleman, ſometimes to another; ſometimes to their own ſignori, and ſometimes to their captains of arts. If the word republic muſt be uſed to ſignify every government in which more than one man has a ſhare, this muſt be called by that name it is true; but a republic and a free government may be different things.

There were now three conſpiracies on foot againſt the duke at once; but each conſpiracy was a new ſyſtem of tyranny, and aimed only at introducing one ſyſtem inſtead of another, inſtead of any concert, or reaſonable combination, to take down a bad government and ſet up a good one. The three natural diviſions of ſociety formed three different plots to ſet up a new tyranny, each in its own way: the nobility had one plot, the commons another, and the artificers a third. What ideas of the rights of mankind muſt theſe people have entertained! The commons had been deprived of the government, and they had no idea that the nobility or artiſans had any rights; the nobility were not reſtored to the government, which was all they wanted; and the artiſans had loſt their buſineſs: but none of theſe orders could communicate with the others. Aſſaſſination of the duke ſeems to have been all the object in view, as if that would remedy all the evils: the plots, however, were too freely communicated, and at laſt were told to the duke.

In 1343 the city was all in a tumult, and 1343.
"Liberty, liberty!" was the cry. A war was carried on in the city, and each party changed ſides ſeveral times; but, after long diſtractions, and much bloodſhed and devaſtation, the duke was blocked up in the palace, and the citizens

UAB Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

assembled to reform the government. Fourteen persons, one half of them of the nobility, and the other commoners, with the archbishop, had full power given them to new-model the state. The judicial department was committed to six magistrates, who were to administer justice till the arrival of the person who should be chosen to fill that office. "Greater, certainly," says Machiavel, "and more cruel, is the resentment of the people when they have recovered their liberty, than when they are acting in defence of it; and an instance of brutal ferocity happened here that is a disgrace to human nature. The people insisted upon some persons being delivered up to them, and among them a father and son; who were brought out and delivered up to thousands of their enemies: and though the son was not eighteen, yet neither his youth nor innocence, nor the gracefulness of his person, were sufficient to protect him from the rage of the multitude. Many who could not get near enough to reach them whilst they were alive, thrust their swords into them after they were dead; and not content with this, they tore their carcasses to pieces with their nails and teeth, that so all their senses might be glutted with revenge; and after they had feasted their ears with their groans, their eyes with their wounds, and their touch with tearing the flesh off their bones, as if all this was not enough, the taste likewise must have its share and be gratified." This is Machiavel's description of this savage barbarity; and his words are here preserved, that it may be seen and considered, that human nature is the same in a mob as upon a throne, and that unbridled passions are at least as brutal and diabolical, and unlimited power as tyrannical, in a mob as in a monarch or senate;

ſenate: they are worſe, for there is always a number among them who are under leſs reſtraints of ſhame and decency. After the people were thus ſatiated with blood, the duke and his friends were ſuffered to withdraw, with their effects, un moleſted out of Florence. After ſome diſputes between the nobility and people, it was agreed that one third of the ſignori, and one half of the other magiſtrates and other offices of ſtate, ſhould conſiſt of the nobility. The city was divided into ſix parts, each of which choſe one of the ſignori; and though it ſometimes happened that their number was increaſed to twelve or thirteen, yet they were afterwards again reduced to ſix. But as theſe ſix parts were not duly proportioned, and they deſigned to give more power and authority to the nobility, it was neceſſary to make a new regulation in this point, and to increaſe the number of ſignori. They divided the city therefore into quarters, and choſe three of the ſignori out of each. The ſtandard-bearer of juſtice, and thoſe of the ſeveral companies, were laid aſide; and inſtead of the twelve buonhomini, they created eight counſellors, four of each quality.

"The commonwealth," ſays Machiavel, "being "ſettled upon this bottom, might have continued "quiet and happy, if the nobility could have "been content to confine themſelves within the "bounds of that moderation which is requiſite "in all republican governments." It is impoſſible to read theſe grave reflections of Machiavel and Nedham, ſo often repeated, with patience. It would be as wiſe to ſay, that the nation might be quiet and happy under a deſpot or monarch, if the deſpot or monarch, and his miniſters and minions, could be content and moderate; or that the commonwealth might be happy under an oligarchy or ſimple ariſtocracy, if

all

UAB
Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

all concerned in government could be content and moderate. When we know human nature to be utterly incapable of this content, why ſhould we ſuppoſe it? Human nature is querulous and diſcontented wherever it appears, and almoſt all the happineſs it is capable of ariſes from this diſcontented humour. It is action, not reſt, that conſtitutes our pleaſure. All we have to do is to guard and provide againſt this quality; we cannot eradicate it. "But the behaviour of the no-"bility was quite the contrary," ſays Machiavel; "for as they always diſdained the thoughts of "equality, even when they lived a private life, ſo "now they were in the magiſtracy they thought to "domineer over the whole city, and every day "produced freſh inſtances of their pride and arro-"gance; which exceedingly galled the people, "when they ſaw they had depoſed one tyrant, "only to make room for a thouſand." All this one may ſafely believe to be exactly true; but what then? Why, they ought to have ſeparated the nobles from the commons, and made each independent on the other. Mixed together, in equal halves, the nobles will for ever tyranniſe. The inſolence of one ſide, and the indignation and impatience of the other, at laſt increaſed to ſuch a height, that both ſides flew to arms, and the people, being moſt numerous, carried their point, and deprived the nobles in the ſignori of their authority: the four counſellors of their order were alſo turned out of their offices, and the remaining number increaſed to twelve, which conſiſted of commoners only. Beſides which, the eight which remained in the ſignori not only made a new ſtandard-bearer of juſtice, and ſixteen other ſtandard-bearers over the companies of the people, but modelled all the councils in ſuch a manner, that the

the government was now entirely in the hands of the people: and we ſhall ſoon ſee how well it operated.—There happened a great dearth in Florence, ſo that there were grievous diſcontents both among the nobility and common people: the former repining at the loſs of their authority, and the latter murmuring for want of bread. Andrea Strozzi ſold corn as cheap as Mælius did in Rome. This drew ſuch numbers to his houſe, that he boldly mounted his horſe one morning, and putting himſelf at the head of them, called upon all the reſt of the people to take up arms: by which means he got together above four thouſand men in leſs than an hour, and conducting them to the palace of the ſignori, demanded the doors of it to be thrown open to him. This attempt was too bold and raſh to ſucceed: yet it gave the nobility freſh hopes of recovering their power, now they ſaw *the inferior ſort of people* ſo incenſed *againſt the commons.* They reſolved to take arms, and make uſe of all manner of allies to regain that by force which they conceived had been taken from them with ſo much injuſtice; and to inſure ſucceſs, they provided themſelves with arms, fortified their houſes, and ſent to their friends in Lombardy for ſupplies. The commons and the ſignori, on the other hand, were no leſs buſy in arming themſelves, and ſent to the Sianeſe and Perugians to deſire their aſſiſtance; ſo that when the auxiliaries on each ſide arrived, the whole city was ſoon in arms.—We ought to pauſe here, and remark a combination of parties that is perfectly natural, though it has ſeldom occurred in the hiſtory of any nation ſo diſtinctly as to be deſcanted on by hiſtorians or politicians. Here is as diſtinct a diviſion between the commons and the lower claſs, as there ever was between nobles and

commons. By the commons in this place are meant, thoſe citizens who in every nation of the world are commonly denominated *the middling people*, who, it muſt be confeſſed, have been, in all ages and countries, the moſt induſtrious and frugal, and every way the moſt virtuous part of the community. In all countries they have ſome influence; in many they have had ſome ſhare in the government: but no inſtance but this is at preſent recollected where they have ever had a ſovereignty in their hands, excluſive both of the higheſt and loweſt claſſes of citizens. As if it had been the intention of Providence to exhibit to mankind a demonſtration, that power has the ſame effects upon all minds, we find in this inſtance the Florentine commons diſcovering the ſame diſpoſition to tyranniſe over all above and all below them, as clearly as ever kings, nobles, or mobs, diſcovered it when they had the power. The nobility drew up in three diviſions. The commons, aſſembled under the ſtandard of juſtice, and the colours of their reſpective companies, and under the command of the Medici, immediately attacked one of the diviſions of the nobility. At this time the Medici were only commoners; we ſhall hereafter ſee that they became nobles and ſovereigns, and have placed ſons and daughters on ſome of the thrones of Europe. The action was hot and bloody for three hours, during which they had great ſtones tumbled down on their heads from the tops of the houſes, and were terribly galled with croſs-bows below. All parties behaved with an obſtinate bravery, that would have done honour to any good cauſe; but it is unneceſſary to relate all the attacks and defences, and all the viciſſitudes of fortune, in the courſe of the civil war: the numbers of the commoners finally prevailed, "upon

"which,"

" which," ſays Machiavel, " the people, eſpe-
" cially the inferior ſort of them, naturally rapa-
" cious and greedy of ſpoil, began to plunder
" the houſes of the nobility, which they afterwards
" burnt down to the ground; and committed
" ſuch other outrages, as the bittereſt enemy to
" the city of Florence would have been aſhamed
" of." The nobility being in this manner entirely ſubdued, the people took upon them to reform the ſtate; and as there were three degrees of them, it was ordained, that the higheſt rank ſhould have the nomination of two of the ſignori, the middle ſort of three, and the loweſt of three more, and that the ſtandard-bearer of juſtice ſhould be choſen by turns out of all three. The old laws were revived and put in execution againſt the nobility; and, to reduce them ſtill more effectually, many of them were incorporated with the other claſſes.* By theſe means they were brought ſo low, that they became abject and puſillanimous, and never durſt riſe any more againſt the people; ſo that being deprived of their arms and honours, their ſpirit and generoſity likewiſe ſeemed to be extinguiſhed. After this depreſſion of the nobles, the plague, of which above ninety-ſix thouſand people died in Florence, and a war with the Vicenti, kept the city in tranquillity till 1353. The war being ended, new factions ſprung up in the city; for though the nobility were ruined, fortune found other means to raiſe freſh troubles and diſſenſions. 1353.

The bitter animoſities which generally happen between the people and nobility, from an ambition in the one to command, and a reluctance in the other to obey, are the natural ſources of thoſe

* Nerli, p. 18. Molti avveliti ſi fanno popolani.

calamities that are incident to commonwealths; for all other evils that uſually diſturb their peace are both occaſioned and fomented by this contrariety of diſpoſitions. It was this that kept Rome ſo long divided. This alſo gave birth to the factions that ſprung up in Florence; though indeed it produced very different effects at laſt in the two cities; for the diſputes that firſt aroſe between the nobility and people of Rome were determined by reaſon and expoſtulation; but thoſe of Florence by the ſword. In Rome, that was effected by the laws, which in Florence could hardly be done by the baniſhment and death of numbers of their citizens. The quarrels of the Romans ſtill added to their ſpirit and military virtue; while thoſe of the Florentines utterly extinguiſhed them. The former deſtroyed that equality which was at firſt eſtabliſhed, and introduced a prodigious diſparity among the citizens: the latter, on the contrary, aboliſhed all ſuperiority or difference of rank, and put every man upon the ſame level. This diverſity of effects muſt certainly have proceeded from a difference of views. The people of Rome deſired no more than to ſhare with the nobility in the adminiſtration of the commonwealth; but the people of Florence were not only deſirous to have the government of the ſtate to themſelves, but uſed violent meaſures, and took up arms to exclude their nobles from any part in it: and as the terms of the Roman people were more moderate, their demands ſeemed not unreaſonable to the nobility, who therefore complied with them; ſo that, after ſome little bickerings, and without coming to an open rupture, a law was made, by which the people were ſatisfied, at leaſt for a time, and the nobles continued in their honours and offices. On

the other hand, the demands of the Florentine people were ſo extravagant and injurious, that the nobility took up arms to ſupport their privileges, and their quarrels grew to ſuch a height, that numbers were either baniſhed or ſlain before they could be ended; and the laws afterwards made, were calculated rather for the private advantage of the victors, than the good of the public. The ſucceſs of the people of Rome made that ſtate more powerful; for as they were equally admitted to govern the commonwealth, and to command their armies and provinces, with the nobility, they became inſpired with the ſame virtue and magnanimity; and as they grew more public ſpirited, their power alſo increaſed. But in Florence, when the people had ſubdued the nobility, they diveſted them of all manner of authority, and left them no poſſibility of recovering any part of it, except they would entirely conform to their cuſtoms and way of living, and not only ſubmit to appear, but to be commoners like themſelves. And this was the reaſon that induced them to change their arms and vary their titles, and the names of their families, which was ſo frequent in thoſe times among the nobility, in order to inſinuate themſelves into the affections of the people: ſo that the military ſpirit, and greatneſs of ſoul, for which the nobility had been held in ſuch veneration, was utterly extinguiſhed, and not by any means to be raiſed in the people, where there were no ſeeds of it: by which means Florence became every day more abject and puſillanimous. And whereas Rome at laſt grew ſo powerful and wanton by the effect of its virtue, that it could not be governed otherwiſe than by one prince; Florence was reduced ſo low, that a wiſe legiſlator might eaſily have modelled it, and given it what form he pleaſed.

The factions between the nobility and the commons, which ended in the utter ruin of the former, have been already related; but peace was not obtained. All authority was in one center, the commons; and there were other orders of citizens who were not satisfied; the same contest therefore continued, under a new form and new names. They now happened between the commons and plebeians, which were only new names, in reality, for a new nobility and commons: the commons now took the place of the nobility, and the plebeians that of the commons. Machiavel is as clear and full for a mixed government as any writer; but the noble invention of the negative of an executive, upon a legislature in two branches, which is the only remedy in contests between nobles and commons, seems never to have entered his thoughts; and nothing is more entertaining than that mist which is perpetually before eyes so piercing, so capable of looking so far through the hearts and deeds of men as his, for want of that thought. "There seemed to be no seeds of fu-
"ture dissensions left in Florence." No seeds! Not one seed had been eradicated: all the seeds that ever existed remained in full vigour. The seeds were in the human heart; and were as ready to shoot in commons and plebeians, as they had been in nobles. "But the evil destiny of our
"city, and want of good conduct, occasioned a
"new emulation between the families of the Al-
"bizi and the Ricci,* which produced as fatal
"divisions

* Erano in que' tempi cosi fatti gli Albizi, e' Ricci due famiglie popolane intra l'altre di gran reputazione, e di molto seguito, per esser di parentado grandissimo, ed erano in ciascheduna di esse, uomini grandi, e reputati, e che aspiravano molto alli primi gradi del governo, e alla grandezza dello stato

" diviſions as thoſe between the Buondelmonti and " Uberti, and the other between the Cherchi and " Donati, had done before." It was no evil deſtiny peculiar to Florence; it is common to every city, nation, village, and club. The evil deſtiny is in human nature. And if the plebeians had prevailed over the commons, as theſe had done over the nobility, ſome two plebeian families would have appeared upon the ſtage, with all the emulation of the Albizi and Ricci, to occaſion diviſions and diſſenſions, ſeditions and rebellions, confiſcations and baniſhments, aſſaſſinations, conflagrations, and maſſacres, and all other ſuch good things as appear for ever to recommend a ſimple government in every form. When it is found in experience, and appears probable in theory, that ſo ſimple an invention as a ſeparate executive, with power to defend itſelf, is a full remedy againſt the fatal effects of diſſenſions between nobles and commons, why ſhould we ſtill finally hope that ſimple governments or mixtures of two ingredients only, will produce effects which they never did, and we know never can? Why ſhould the people be ſtill deceived with inſinuations, that thoſe evils aroſe from the deſtiny of a particular city, when we know that deſtiny is common to all mankind? " Betwixt the two families of Albizi and Ricci " there was a mortal hatred, each conſpiring the " deſtruction of the other, in order to engroſs the " ſole management of the commonwealth with " leſs difficulty.* However, they had not as yet " taken

ſtato loro, e però traendo ad un medeſimo ſegno, era tra loro l'odio, e l'emulazione, ma non già erano venuti a manifeſta diviſione, nè all' armi, per inſino all' anno 1353. Nerli, p. 21.

* E pero Uguccione de Ricci reſtringendoſi, come capo di quella

" taken up arms, or proceeded to open violence " on either-ſide, but only thwarted each other in " council, and the execution of their offices."—A private quarrel happened in the market, and a rumour was inſtantly ſpread, nobody knew by whom, that the Ricci were going to attack the Albizi; and by others it was ſaid, that the Albizi were preparing to fall upon the Ricci. Theſe ſtories were carried to both parties, and occaſioned ſuch an uproar throughout the whole city, that the magiſtrates found it very difficult to keep the two families and their friends, from coming to a battle in earneſt; though neither ſide had intended any ſuch thing, as was maliciouſly reported. This diſturbance, though accidental, inflamed their former animoſities, and determined both ſides to ſtrengthen their parties, and be upon their guard; and ſince the citizens were reduced to ſuch a degree of equality by the ſuppreſſion of the nobility, that the magiſtrates were held in greater reverence than ever they had been before, each family reſolved to avail themſelves rather of public and ordinary means, than of private violence.

The intrigues of theſe two families to ſupplant each other are very curious; but as the detail of them is long, we ſhall leave the reader to amuſe himſelf with them at his leiſure, and come to a ſpeech made to the ſignori, by an eminent citizen, when affairs were become ſo critical and dangerous as to alarm all impartial men. " The com-

quella famiglia, con gli ſuoi conſorti, e con i primi capi della loro ſetta, penſarono di poter privar del governo gli Albizi, come diſceſi anticamente d'Arezzo, e però tegnenti del Ghibellino ogni volta, che ſi ritrovaſſe una legge, per la quale era prohibito a qualunque diſceſo di Ghibellino di poter eſercitare officio, o magiſtrato alcuno, la quel legge era diſuſata, nè piu s'adoperava, nè ſi mettava in atto o s'oſſervava in modo alcuno. Nerli, p. 21.

" mon

" mon diſeaſe," ſays he, " magnificent ſigniors,
" of the other cities in Italy has invaded ours,
" and is continually eating deeper and deeper into
" its vitals. All our towns, for want of due re-
" ſtraint, have ran into extremes, and from liberty
" degenerated into downright licentiouſneſs, mak-
" ing ſuch laws and inſtituting ſuch governments,
" as were rather calculated to foment and ſupport
" factions, than maintain freedom. From this
" ſource are derived all the defects and diſorders
" we labour under: no friendſhip or union is to
" be found among the citizens, except betwixt
" ſuch as are accomplices in ſome wicked deſign,
" either againſt their neighbours or their country;
" all religion and fear of God are utterly ex-
" tinguiſhed; promiſes and oaths are no further
" binding than they ſerve to promote ſome pri-
" vate advantage, and taken, not with any deſign
" to obſerve them, but as neceſſary means to fa-
" cilitate the perpetration of villanies, which are
" even honoured and applauded as good conduct,
" if they meet with ſucceſs. From hence it
" comes to paſs, that the moſt wicked and aban-
" doned wretches are admired as able, enterpriſing
" men; while the innocent and conſcientious
" are laughed at, and deſpiſed as fools. The
" young men are indolent and effeminate; the
" old, laſcivious and contemptible: without re-
" gard to age or ſex, every place is full of the
" moſt licentious brutality, for which the laws
" themſelves, though good and wholeſome, are
" yet ſo partially executed, that they do not afford
" any remedy. This is the real cauſe of that
" ſelfiſh ſpirit which now ſo generally prevails,
" and of that ambition, not for true glory, but
" for places which diſhonour the poſſeſſors:
" hence proceed thoſe fatal animoſities, thoſe ſeeds

" of

" of envy, revenge, and faction, with their uſual
" attendants, executions, baniſhments, depreſſion
" of good men, and exaltation of the wicked.—
" The ringleaders of parties varniſhed over their
" pernicious deſigns with ſome ſacred title: for
" being, in reality, enemies to all liberty, they
" more effectually deſtroy it, by pretending to
" defend the rights ſometimes of the nobility,
" ſometimes of the commons; ſince the fruit
" which they expect from a victory is not the
" glory of having delivered their country, but the
" ſatisfaction of having conquered the oppoſite
" party and ſecured the government of the ſtate
" to themſelves; and when once they have ob-
" tained that, there is no ſort of cruelty, injuſtice,
" or rapine, that they are not guilty of. From
" thenceforward laws are enacted, not for the com-
" mon good, but for private ends; war and peace
" are made, and alliances concluded, not for the
" honour of the public, but to gratify the hu-
" mours of particular men: our laws, our ſtatutes,
" and civil ordinances, are made to indulge the
" caprice, or ſerve the ambition of the conqueror,
" not to promote the true intereſt of a free peo-
" ple; ſo that one faction is no ſooner extin-
" guiſhed, but another is lighted up. A city that
" endeavours to ſupport itſelf by parties inſtead
" of laws, can never be at peace; for when one
" prevails, and is left without oppoſition, it neceſ-
" ſarily divides again. When the Ghibellines were
" depreſſed, every one thought the Guelphs would
" then have lived in peace and ſecurity; and yet
" it was not long before they divided into the fac-
" tion of the Neri and Bianchi. When the Bianchi
" were reduced, new commotions aroſe, ſometimes
" in favour of the exiles, ſometimes betwixt the
" nobility and people: and to give that away to
" others,

" others, which we could not or would not poſſeſs
" quietly ourſelves, we firſt committed our liber-
" ties into the hands of king Robert, then of his
" brother, next of his ſon, and laſt of all to the
" mercy of the duke of Athens, never ſettling or
" repoſing under any government; as people that
" could neither be ſatisfied with being free, nor
" ſubmit to live in ſlavery. Nay, ſo much was
" our ſtate inclined to diviſion, that rather than
" acquieſce under the government of a king, it
" meanly proſtituted itſelf to the tyranny of a
" vile and pitiful Agobbian. The duke of Athens
" was no ſooner expelled, but we took up arms
" again, and fought againſt each other with more
" rancour and inveteracy than ever, till the an-
" cient nobility were entirely ſubdued, and lay at
" the mercy of the people. It was then the general
" opinion there would be no more factions or
" troubles in Florence, ſince thoſe were humbled
" whoſe inſupportable pride and ambition had
" been the chief occaſion of them: but we now
" ſee that pride and ambition, which was thought
" to be utterly extinguiſhed by the fall of the no-
" bility, now ſprings up again among *the people*,
" who begin to be equally impatient for autho-
" rity, and aſpire with the ſame vehemence to the
" firſt offices in the commonwealth. It ſeems the
" will of Heaven that certain families ſhould
" ſpring up in all commonwealths to be the peſt
" and ruin of them: our city owes its miſeries
" and diſtractions not merely to one or two, but
" to ſeveral of thoſe families; firſt to the Buon-
" delmonti and Uberti, next to the Donati and
" Cherchi, and now, to our ſhame be it ſpoken,
" to the Ricci and Albizi. Why may not this
" commonwealth, in ſpite of former examples to
" the contrary, not only be united, but reformed

" and

UAB Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

" and improved by new laws and conſtitutions?
" *You muſt not impute the factions of our anceſtors*
" *to the nature of men, but to the iniquity of the*
" *times*, which being now altered, afford this city
" fair hopes of better fortune; and our diſorders
" may be corrected by the inſtitution of whole-
" ſome laws, by a prudent reſtraint of ambition,
" and by prohibiting ſuch cuſtoms as tend to
" nouriſh and propagate factions, and by ſubſti-
" tuting others that may conduce to maintain
" liberty and good civil government."

This ſpeech, although upon the whole it is excellent, has ſeveral eſſential miſtakes. That certain families will ſpring up in every ſimple government, and in every injudicious mixture of ariſtocracy and democracy, to be the peſt and ruin of them, is moſt certain. It is the will of Heaven that the happineſs of nations ſhould depend upon the uſe of their reaſon, as well as that of individuals; they muſt therefore provide for themſelves conſtitutions, which will reſtrain the ambition of families: without the reſtraint, the ambition cannot be prevented; nature has planted it in every human heart. The factions of their anceſtors ought not to have been imputed to the iniquity of the times; for all times and places are ſo iniquitous. Thoſe factions grew out of the nature of men under ſuch forms of government; and the new form ought to have been ſo contrived, as to produce a remedy for the evil. This might have been done; for there is a way of making the laws more powerful than any particular perſons or families.—As this advice was conformable to the ſentiments of the ſignori, they appointed fifty-ſix citizens * to provide for the ſafety of the commonwealth: but

* Nerli, p. 22. Fece creare una balia de 56 cittadini.

as

as moſt people are fitter to preſerve good order, than to reſtore it when loſt, theſe citizens took more pains to extinguiſh the preſent factions, than to provide againſt new ones, which was the reaſon that they ſucceeded in neither; for they not only did not take away the occaſion of freſh ones, but made one of thoſe that were then ſubſiſting ſo much more powerful than the other, that the commonwealth was in great danger. They deprived three of the family of Albizi, and as many of the Ricci, of all ſhare in the magiſtracy for three years, except in ſuch branches of it as were particularly appropriated to the Guelph party; of which number Pietro degli Albizi and Uguccione de Ricci were two. Theſe proviſions bore much harder upon the Ricci than the Albizi; for though they were equally ſtigmatized, yet the Ricci were the greater ſufferers. Pietro, indeed, was excluded from the palace of the ſignori, but he had free admittance into that of the Guelphs, where his authority was very great; and though he and his aſſociates were forward enough in their admonitions before, they became much forwarder after this mark of diſgrace, and new accidents occurred, which ſtill more inflamed their reſentment. Gregory the Eleventh was pope at that time, and reſiding at Avignon, as his late predeceſſors had done, he governed Italy by legates, who being haughty and rapacious, had grievouſly oppreſſed ſeveral of the cities. One of theſe legates being then at Bologna, took advantage of a ſcarcity, and reſolved to make himſelf maſter of Tuſcany. This occaſioned the war with the pope.* The Florentines entered into a confederacy with Galeazzo, and all the other ſtates that were at va-

* Nerli, p. 23.

riance

UAB Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

riance with the church; after which they appointed eight citizens for the management of it, whom they invested with an absolute power of proceeding, and disbursing money without controul or account. This war gave fresh courage to the Ricci, who, in opposition to the Albizi, had upon all occasions favoured Galeazzo, and appeared against the church; and especially because all the eight were enemies to the Guelphs: but though they made a vigorous war against the pope, they could not defend themselves against the captains and their adherents. The envy and indignation with which the Guelphs looked upon the eight, made them grow so bold and insolent, that they often affronted and abused them, as well as the rest of the principal citizens. The captains were no less arrogant; they were even more dreaded than the signori, and men went with greater awe and reverence to their houses than to the palace; so that all the ambassadors who came to Florence were instructed to address themselves to the captains.

After the death of the pope, the city had no war abroad, but was in great confusion at home; for, on one hand, the Guelphs were become so audacious, that they were no longer supportable; and on the other, there was no visible way to suppress them: it was necessary, therefore, to take up arms, and leave the event to fortune. On the side of the Guelphs were all the ancient nobility, and the greater part of the more powerful citizens: on the other were all the inferior sort of people, headed by the eight, and joined by George Scali, Strozzi, the Ricci, the Alberti, and the Medici. The rest of the multitude, as it almost always happened, joined with the discontented party. The power of their adversaries seemed to be very great

great to the heads of the Guelphs, and their danger great, if at any time a signori that was not on their side should attempt to depress them. They found the number of persons who had been admonished was so great, that they had disobliged most of the citizens, and made them their enemies. They thought there was no other remedy, now they had deprived them of their honours, but to banish them out of the city, seize upon the palace of the signori, and put the government of the state wholly into the hands of their own creatures, according to the example of the Guelphs, their predecessors, whose quiet and security was entirely owing to the total expulsion of their enemies; but as they differed in opinion about the time of putting their project in execution, the eight, aware of the trick intended, deferred the imborsation, and Sylvestro, the son of Almanno de Medici, was appointed gonfalonier.* As he was born of one of the most considerable families of the commoners, he could not bear to see the people oppressed by a few grandees. With Alberti, Strozzi, and Scali, he secretly prepared a decree, by which the laws against the nobility were to be revived, the authority of the captains retrenched, and those who had been admonished admitted into the magistracy. Sylvestro being president, and consequently prince of the city for a time, caused both a college and council to be called the same morning; but this decree was thrown out as an innovation. He went away to the council, and pretended to resign his office, and leave the people to choose another person, who might either have more virtue or better fortune than himself: upon this, such of the council as were in the secret, and others who wished for a

* Nerli, p. 23.

change,

1378. change, raiſed a tumult in 1378,* to which the ſignori and the colleges immediately repaired; and ſeeing their gonfalonier retiring, they obliged him, partly by their authority, and partly by their entreaties, to return to the council, which was in great confuſion. Many of the principal citizens were threatened, and treated with the utmoſt inſolence; among the reſt, Carlo Strozzi was collared by an artificer, and would have been knocked on the head, if ſome of the by-ſtanders had not reſcued him. But the perſon who made the greateſt diſturbance was Benedetto degli Alberti, who got into one of the windows of the palace, and called out to the people to arm; upon which the piazza was inſtantly full of armed men, and the colleges were obliged to do that by fear, which they would not come into when they were petitioned. But whoever intends to make any alteration in a commonwealth, and to effect it by raiſing the multitude, will find himſelf deceived, if he thinks he can ſtop where he will, and conduct it as he pleaſes. The deſign of Sylveſtro was to quiet and ſecure the city, but the thing took a very different turn; for the people were in ſuch a ferment, that the ſhops were ſhut up, the houſes barricadoed, and many removed their goods for ſecurity into churches and convents. All the companies of the arts aſſembled, and each of them appointed a ſyndic. The ſignori called the colleges together, and were a whole day in conſultation with the ſyndics, how to compoſe the diſorder to the ſatisfaction of all parties; but they could not agree. The council, then, to hold out ſome hopes of ſatisfaction to the arts and the reſt of the people, gave a *full power*, which the Florentines call a balia, to the ſignori, the colleges, the eight, the

* Muratori, Annal. tom. viii. p. 375. Gino Camponi del tumulto de' Ciompi, tom. xviii. Rer. Italic.

captains

captains of the parties, and the syndics of the arts, to reform the state. But while they were employed in this, some of the inferior companies of the arts, at the instigation of certain persons, who wanted to revenge the late injuries they had received from the Guelphs, detached themselves from the rest, and went to plundering and burning houses: they broke open the jails, set the prisoners at liberty, and plundered the monasteries and convents. The next morning the balia proceeded to re-qualify the ammoniti, *the admonished*, though with an injunction not to exercise any function in the magistracy for three years: they repealed such laws as had been made by the Guelphs to the prejudice of the other citizens, and proclaimed rebels many who had incurred the hatred of the public; after which the names of the new signori were published, and Louigi Guicciardini declared their gonfalonier.* If those who were admonished, the *ammoniti*, could have been content, the city was in a fair way of being quieted; but they thought it hard to wait three years longer, before they could enjoy any share in the magistracy. The arts assembled again to obtain satisfaction for them, and demanded of the signori, that for the good and quiet of the city it should be decreed, that no citizen for the future should be admonished as a Ghibelline, who had ever been one of the signori or the college, or the captains of the companies, or the consuls or syndics of any of the arts; and farther, that a new imborsation should be made of the Guelph party, and the old one burnt. It seldom happens, that men who covet the property of others, and long for revenge, are satisfied with a bare restitution of their own. Accordingly some,

* Nerli, p. 24.

who expected to advance their fortunes by exciting commotions,* endeavoured to perſuade the artificers, that they could never be ſafe, except many of their enemies were either baniſhed or cut off.

The city continued in the utmoſt confuſion between the two new parties of commons and plebeians. But waving a particular detail, the eſſence of ſeveral years miſeries may be collected from two ſpeeches. One is of Louigi Guicciardini, a ſtandard-bearer to the plebeians:—"The more we "grant," ſays he, "the more ſhameleſs and arrogant "are your demands. Others may flatter you, but "we ſhall always think it our duty to tell you "plainly, and without diſguiſe, what we think is for "your good. What is there, in the name of God, "that you can reaſonably aſk more of us? You "deſired to have the captains of the parties de-"prived of their authority; they have been de-"prived. You inſiſted that the old imborſation "ſhould be burnt, and a new one made; we con-"ſented. You wanted to have thoſe re-inſtated "in the magiſtracy that had been admoniſhed; "it has been granted. At your interceſſion we "pardoned ſuch as had been guilty of burning "houſes, and robbing churches, and baniſhed "many of our principal citizens at your inſtiga-"tion. To gratify you, the grandees are bridled "with new laws, and every thing done that might "give you content: where then can we expect "your demands will ſtop; or how long will you

* Fu facile a Salveſtro de Medici, e a gli altri, levato che fu tumulto, vincer la legge; ma non fu già loro coſi facile, nè poterano a poſta loro fermare il tumulto moſſo nel popolo, e nella plebe, che s'era anco Sollevata in modo, che da queſto rumore ne ſegui l'arſione, e il ſacco di molte caſi. Atteſe la sfrenata moltitudine due, o tre giornia a ſaccheggiare, e, arere quello potette. Nerli, p. 24.

thus

"thus abuſe your liberty? Why will ye ſuffer "your own diſcords to bring the city into ſla- "very? What elſe can ye expect from your "diviſions? what, from the goods ye have already "taken, or may hereafter take from your fellow- "citizens, but ſervitude and poverty? The per- "ſons you plunder are thoſe whoſe fortunes and "abilities are the defence of the ſtate, and if "they fail, how muſt it be ſupported? Whatever "is got that way cannot laſt long; and then ye "have nothing to look for but remedileſs famine "and diſtreſs." Theſe expoſtulations made ſome impreſſion, and they promiſed to be good citizens and obedient; but a freſh tumult ſoon aroſe, more dangerous than the former. The greater part of the late robberies, and other miſchiefs, had been committed by the rabble and dregs of the people; and thoſe of them who had been the moſt audacious apprehended, that when the moſt material differences were compoſed they ſhould be called to an account for their crmes, and deſerted, as it always happens, by thoſe very perſons at whoſe inſtigation they had committed them. Beſides which, the inferior ſort of people had conceived an hatred againſt the richer citizens and principals of the arts, upon a pretence that they had not been rewarded for their paſt ſervices in proportion to what they deſerved.

To ſhow how diviſions grow, wherever human nature is without a check, it is worth while to be particular here. When the city was firſt divided into arts, in the time of Charles the Firſt, there was a proper head or governor appointed over each of them, to whoſe juriſdiction, in civil caſes, every perſon in the ſeveral arts was to be ſubject. Theſe arts or companies, as we have ſaid, were at firſt but twelve, but afterwards they were increaſed

UAB Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

to twenty-one, and arrived at ſuch power and authority, that in a few years they wholly engroſſed the government of the city: and becauſe ſome were more and others leſs honourable among them, they came by degrees to be diſtinguiſhed, and ſeven of them were called the greater arts, and fourteen the leſs. From this diviſion proceeded the arrogance of the captains of the parties; for the citizens who had formerly been Guelphs, to which party thoſe offices were always appropriated, had made it a conſtant rule to favour the greater arts, and to diſcountenance the leſs, and all thoſe who ſided with them; which chiefly gave occaſion to all the tumults we have hitherto made mention of: and, as in the diviſion of the people into arts and corporations, there were many trades in which the meaner ſort are uſually occupied, that were not incorporated into any diſtinct or particular company of their own, but admitted into any of the others, according as the nature of their craft made them fit, it happened, that when they were not duly ſatisfied for their labour, or any otherwiſe oppreſſed by their maſters, they had no other head to apply to for redreſs but the magiſtrate of that company, to which the perſon belonged that employed them, who, they commonly thought, did not do them juſtice. Now, of all the companies in the city, that of the clothiers had the moſt of this ſort of people depending upon it; and being more opulent and powerful than any of the reſt, it maintained by far the greater part of the multitude. The meaner ſort of the people, therefore, both of this company and the others, were highly enraged at ſuch treatment; and being alſo terrified at the apprehenſion of being puniſhed for their late outrages, they had frequent meetings in the night; where, conſider-

ing

ing what had happened, they repreſented to each other the danger they were in; and to animate and unite them all, one of the boldeſt and moſt experienced of them harangued his companions in this manner: "If it was now to be debated, "whether we ſhould take arms, to plunder and "burn the houſes of our fellow-citizens, and rob "the churches, I ſhould be one of thoſe who "would think it worthy of great conſideration, and "perhaps be induced to prefer ſecure poverty to "hazardous gain. But ſince arms have been al-"ready taken up, and much miſchief done, the "firſt points to be conſidered are, in what manner "we muſt ſecure ourſelves, and ward off the pe-"nalties we have incurred. The whole city is "full of rage and complaints againſt us, the "citizens are daily in council, and the magiſtrates "frequently aſſembled. Aſſure yourſelves, they "are either preparing chains for us, or contriving "how to raiſe forces to deſtroy us. It behoves "us, therefore, to have two objects chiefly in "view at theſe conſultations: firſt, how to avoid "the puniſhment due to our late miſdeeds; and, "in the next place, what means are to be uſed "that we may enjoy a greater degree of liberty "and ſatisfaction for the future than we have "done hitherto. To come off with impunity for "our paſt offences, it is neceſſary to add ſtill more "to them, to redouble our outrages, to rifle and "burn a great number of houſes, and artfully "depend upon our numbers for protection; for "where many are guilty none are chaſtiſed. Small "crimes are puniſhed, and great ones uſually "rewarded; and where many ſuffer, few ſeek "revenge; a general calamity being always borne "with more patience than a particular one. To "redouble our crimes is the ſureſt way to procure

UAB Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

" a pardon for what has been already done, and " to obtain the liberty we desire; nor is there any " difficulty to discourage us. The enterprise is " easy, and the success not to be doubted of. Our " enemies are opulent indeed, but divided; their " disunion will give us the victory, and their " riches, when we have got them, will maintain " it. Let not the antiquity of their blood, nor " the meanness of our own, with which they so " insolently upbraid us, either dazzle or overawe " you. All families having the same original, " are of equal antiquity; nor has Nature shewn " any partiality in the formation of mankind. " Let both sides be stripped naked, and both will " be found alike. Cloath yourselves in their robes, " and them in your rags, and then you will appear " the nobles, and they the plebeians; for it is po- " verty alone that makes the real difference betwixt " us. It fills me with just concern, indeed, to " hear that some of you repent, forsooth, of what " you have done, and, out of a qualm of consci- " ence, resolve to proceed no farther. Neither " conscience nor the fear of infamy ought to ter- " rify you; for those who succeed in their attempts, " let them have used what means soever, are never " upbraided with them, or called by ignominious " names; and as for conscience, you have no rea- " son to give yourselves any trouble about it. " When famine, and racks, and dungeons, are " sure to be our portion, what greater terrors can " there be in hell?" The speech is long, and all in the same strain. It so inflamed his audience, that they determined to rise, and took an oath to stand by each other. The signori had secret information of the plot, but although they took the best measures in their power, the government had not sufficient energy to prevent or suppress the

tumult:

UAB Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

tumult: they burnt many houſes, and committed all ſorts of outrages. If any one of the plebeians had been injured or affronted by a particular citizen, he led the mob directly to his enemy's houſe; nay it was ſufficiently barely to mention the perſon's name, or to call out "*to ſuch a man's houſe*," or "*to "ſuch a man's ſhop.*" They glutted themſelves with miſchief, and then, to crown all, they knighted ſixty-four citizens, among whom was their favourite Sylveſtro de Medici. Their levity was very curious, for they conferred the honour of knighthood upon ſome of thoſe very perſons whoſe houſes they had burnt down but a few hours before. Such is the caprice of the multitude, and ſo ſoon are their diſguſts changed into favour and affection! The behaviour of the ſignori and the council of the people was ſuch as might be expected from men conſcious of having neither dignity nor authority derived from the laws. Before a law could be paſſed, it was neceſſary it ſhould have the aſſent of the common-council, as well as of the ſignori. It was contrary to eſtabliſhed cuſtom for two councils to be held on the ſame day; ſo that when the ſignori had agreed, it was neceſſary to wait till next day for the common-council to deliberate upon the demands of the mob. Theſe demands were extremely grievous and diſhonourable to the government: one of them in particular, that no perſon that was incorporated into the arts ſhould be compelled to pay any debt, under the ſum of fifty ducats, in two years, at which time the principal only ſhall be paid to the creditor, and the intereſt into the bank. Yet the ſignori had agreed to them, and the common-council were the next morning deliberating: the multitude, naturally voluble and impatient, got together again under the palace. The law paſſed;

but the deſtruction of the city was not the leſs expected. The ſignori and counſellors left the palace one by one, and the people entered it. Hæc natura multitudinis eſt; aut ſervit humiliter, aut ſuperbe dominatur. When the people entered the palace, Michael di Lando, a wool-comber, a bare-footed ragged fellow, carried the ſtandard of juſtice before them. "You ſee, my "friends," ſaid Michael, "the palace and city "are in your hands; how would you have them "diſpoſed of?" They unanimouſly cried out, that he ſhould be their chief magiſtrate, and govern the city as he pleaſed. Michael, a ſhrewd fellow, more obliged to nature than fortune, accepted the government, with a deſign however to compoſe the city. To amuſe the people, he ſent them to ſearch for Ser Nuto, the hangman, and immediately iſſued a proclamation, that nobody ſhould dare to burn or plunder any man's houſe for the future; and, to enforce the obſervance of it, he ordered a gibbet to be erected in the great piazza. The mob ſoon brought Ser Nuto into the piazza, and hung him up by one leg upon the gibbet; and, as every one tore away a joint, or a piece of his fleſh, in two or three minutes there was nothing left of him but one of his feet.

Michael di Lando.

Michael gallantly new-modelled the ſtate, appointed a new ſignori, and gave the rents of all the ſhops upon the Old Bridge to Sylveſtro de Medici; took a good ſhare to himſelf, and was very liberal to many other citizens, who had befriended the plebeians, not only out of gratitude for paſt favours, but to engage them to ſupport him in future againſt envy. But the plebeians thought Michael had been too partial to ſome of the principal commoners, flew to arms again, appointed eight heads over them, with other ſubordinate officers

ficers and magiſtrates; ſo that the city had now two tribunals, and was governed by two diſtinct adminiſtrations. They took away all honours and emoluments that had been granted to Sylveſtro de Medici, and to Michael di Lando. But Michael ſhewed himſelf in valour, generoſity, and prudence, far ſuperior to any other citizen, and well deſerves to be reckoned among thoſe few that have been real benefactors to their country. If he had been of an ambitious or ſelf-intereſted diſpoſition, the republic muſt have relapſed into a more intolerable degree of ſervitude than it was under the tyranny of the Duke of Athens: but his integrity would not ſuffer him to cheriſh any deſign that might be prejudicial to the good of the public, and his prudence taught him to conduct himſelf in ſuch a manner, as not only gained him the firſt place and confidence of his own party, but enabled him to triumph over that of his enemies. He ſuppreſſed this new rebellion againſt his authority with great addreſs and ſpirit, and thoſe proceedings ſtruck a terror into the plebeians, and opened the eyes of the better ſort of people, who could not help wondering at their own ſtupidity, that after they had ſuppreſſed the pride of the nobility, they could ſo patiently ſubmit to be inſulted by the very dregs and refuſe of the city. When Michael obtained this complete victory over the plebeians, the new ſignori was already appointed, two of whom were of ſo baſe and abject condition, that every one ſeemed deſirous to rid themſelves of ſuch infamous magiſtrates. When the new ſignori entered on the magiſtracy, there was an uproar in the piazza, which was full of armed men, who ſhouted with one voice, "No plebeians in the "ſignori!" The reſt of the ſignori, in order to appeaſe the tumult, degraded their two aſſociates,

and

and chose two others in their room: they likewise dissolved the plebeian companies, and deprived all those of their offices who had any connection with them, except Michael, and a few of the best of them. They also divided the subordinate magistracy into two separate jurisdictions, one of which was to preside over the greater arts, and the other over the less. For the signori, it was only provided in general, that five of that body should be drawn out of the less companies, and four out of the greater, and the standard-bearer alternately out of each. Sylvestro de Medici, and a few others, who had promoted this new regulation, became in a manner the chief governors of the city. These proceedings, and this new model of government, revived the old divisions betwixt the more considerable commoners, and the lower sort of mechanics, which had first been occasioned by the ambition of the Ricci and Albizi: and because they afterwards produced terrible consequences, Machiavel henceforward distinguishes these two factions by the names of the *Popular* and the *Plebeian*.

Popular and plebeian factions.

Though this constitution of government lasted but three years, it abounded with executions and banishments; for as those who were chiefly concerned in the administration well knew there were great numbers of malecontents, both within the city and without it, they lived in perpetual fear and alarm. The disaffected within the walls, either actually did, or were supposed to cabal daily against the state; and those without were continually raising disturbances abroad by the assistance of foreign princes or republics, sometimes in one part, sometimes in another. In such a government, the laws are insulted by every party in turn. Accusations were laid before the magistrates against

UAB Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

againſt a number of citizens, for correſponding with the exiles at Bologna, concerning a plot againſt the city; the priſoners were examined, and nothing criminal could be proved againſt them. The magiſtrates were going to acquit and diſcharge them; the people roſe in ſuch a ferment of clamour and calumnies, that the magiſtrate was forced to paſs ſentence of death upon them. Their executions occaſioned freſh murmurs and diſcontents in the city; ſo that both thoſe who had got the upper hand, and thoſe who were depreſſed, lived in continual fear and ſuſpicion of each other. Dreadful indeed were the conſequences which flowed from the apprehenſions of the former, as every little accident furniſhed them with a handle to trample on their fellow citizens, ſome of whom they daily put to death, or ſent into exile. They likewiſe made ſeveral new laws to ſtrengthen their hands, and keep thoſe down of whom they entertained the leaſt ſuſpicion. Theſe ſuſpicions growing ſtronger and ſtronger every day, made them behave with more rigour to the other party; a manner of proceeding that only ſerved to multiply their diſcontents, and to increaſe inſtead of allaying their own fears, which were not a little heightened by the inſolence of Georgio Scali and Tomaſo Strozzi, whoſe authority was much ſuperior to that of the magiſtrates; and therefore they all ſtood in awe of thoſe two citizens, as they knew it was in their power, if they ſhould join the plebeians, to turn them entirely out of the adminiſtration.

This intemperate and tyrannical manner of governing began to grow intolerable, not only to all good citizens, but even to the ſeditious themſelves; and it was not poſſible that the arrogance of Scali in particular could be long ſupported. By delivering

a friend and tool of his out of the hands of juſtice, by a mob, he ſoon furniſhed his enemies with a fair opportunity not only of wreaking their own private revenge upon him, but of delivering the commonwealth out of his hands, and the hands of the plebeians, who had ſo unmercifully tyranniſed over it for three years. They engaged in this deſign Benedetto, a man of immenſe fortune, very humane, ſtrict in his morals and principles, a ſteady friend to the liberties of his country, and ſufficiently diſguſted at the tyrannical proceedings of the government; ſo that it was no difficult matter to engage him in any meaſures that might contribute to the downfall of Scali. As the inſolence and oppreſſion of the principal commoners had made him their enemy, and a friend to the plebeians, ſo when he ſaw the latter purſuing the very ſame meaſures, he quickly detached himſelf from them. Having brought Benedetto and the heads of the arts into their deſign, they ſeized upon Scali, and the next day he was beheaded;* which ſtruck ſuch a terror into his party, that not one of them offered to ſtir in his favour, though they crowded in great numbers to ſee his execution. When he came to ſuffer death, in the face of that very people who had ſo lately worſhipped him with a degree of idolatry, he could not help complaining of the hardneſs of his deſtiny, and of the wickedneſs of thoſe citizens who, by their oppreſſions, had forced him to careſs a rabble, in which he found there was neither honour nor gratitude. He bewailed his folly in having truſted to the fidelity of plebeians, which he might well have known is ever liable to be ſhaken and ſeduced by any little ſuſpicion, miſrepreſentation, or blaſt

* Nerli, p. 28.

of

of envy. He told Benedetto, "This is the laſt day "of my misfortunes, and the firſt of your's." After him, ſome of his chief confidents were put to death, and their bodies dragged through the ſtreets by the people.

His death threw the whole city into a ferment. As the city was full of different humours, every one had a ſeparate view, and was eager to accompliſh it before he laid down his arms. The ancient nobility, now called grandees, could not bear to live any longer without ſome ſhare in the public honours, and exerted their utmoſt efforts to recover them; for which purpoſe they endeavoured to have the captains of the arts reſtored to their former authority. The heads of the popular faction, and the greater arts, were diſguſted that the government of the ſtate was ſhared in common with them by the inferior arts or plebeians; the inferior arts, inſtead of giving up any part of their authority, were very deſirous to increaſe it; and the plebeians were afraid of having their new companies diſſolved. From theſe different views and apprehenſions there was nothing to be ſeen in Florence but tumults for a whole year. Sometimes the grandees, ſometimes the greater, ſometimes the leſſer arts, and ſometimes the plebeians, were in an uproar; and it often happened that they all took arms at the ſame time in different parts of the city.

After many miſchiefs, dangers, and troubles, and many conſultations and conferences, a new form of government was eſtabliſhed.* All were recalled who had been baniſhed ſince Sylveſtro de Medici was ſtandard-bearer; all offices and appointments conferred in 1378 were aboliſhed; the 1381.

* Nørli, p. 28.

new

new companies diſſolved, and re-incorporated in their reſpective arts; the inferior arts ſhould not chooſe any ſtandard-bearer of juſtice; that inſtead of enjoying one half of the public honours, they were now limited to one third, and thoſe too of the lower rank: ſo that the popular nobility and the Guelphs re-aſſumed their ſuperiority; and the plebeians were utterly diſpoſſeſſed of it, after they had held it from 1378 to 1381. The new adminiſtration was no leſs grievous and oppreſſive, however, than that of the plebeians had been; ſeveral of the popular nobility, and many of the heads of the plebeians, were baniſhed, and among the reſt Michael,* whom the remembrance of his former great merit, in reſtraining the fury of the populace when ſo licentiouſly plundering the city, was not ſufficient to protect from the reſentment of the governing party. From ſuch impolitic proceedings in princes and governors of commonwealths it happens that men, naturally growing diſguſted with their ill-timed ſeverity and ingratitude, often incur their diſpleaſure before they are aware of it. As ſuch executions and baniſhments had ever been diſapproved of by Benedetto, he could not help blaming the authors of theſe; upon which the government began to grow jealous of him, as a favourer of the plebeian party, and one that had conſented to the death of Scali, not out of any real diſapprobation of his conduct, but that he might the more eaſily get the reins of government into his own hands. They kept a ſtrict watch over him, and reſolved to ruin him. Intrigues were ſoon laid, by which Benedetto was ſent into baniſhment.†

"You

* Nerli, p. 29.

† Pervenne in que tempe al ſupremo magiſtrato Bardo. Mancini, uomo molto contrario alla ſetta plebea, e molto nemico

"You ſee, my dear friends," ſays he, when he took leave of them, "in what manner Fortune "has contrived my ruin, and how ſhe ſtill threat-"ens you: it is the lot of thoſe who endeavour "to maintain their integrity in wicked and cor-"rupt times. From the ſame principle of love "to my country which once induced me to join "Sylveſtro de Medici, and afterwards to ſeparate "myſelf from Scali, I could not forbear cenſuring "the proceedings of thoſe who are now at the "helm, who, *having nobody to chaſtiſe them*, are "likewiſe deſirous to get rid of every one who "dares to reprehend them." He preſerved his character for piety and humanity abroad, and there died. His bones were brought back to Florence, and interred there with the higheſt honours by thoſe very people who had perſecuted him while alive with ſo much rancour and injuſtice.

The family of the Alberti were not the only ſufferers in theſe diſtractions, for many other citizens were either admoniſhed or ſent into exile. The members of this balia having done what they were deputed for, were going to break up, as they thought it would have an appearance of modeſty; but the people hearing of their reſolution, ran to arms in the palace, and inſiſted that they ſhould baniſh and admoniſh ſeveral others before they reſigned their authority.

mico per queſte, e per altre cagioni di Meſſer Benedetto Alberti, e conoſciuto Bardo la geloſia, che cittadini del governo avevano di quella caſa degli Alberti, con participazione de' principali della ſetta de nobili, fece creare una balia per ſicurtà dello ſtato, nella quale intra le prime coſe ſi delibero, che Meſſer Benedetto fuſſe confinato, e il reſto degli Alberti tutti ammuniti; e furono coſtretti i ſignori per geloſia de capi della ſetta, che molti altri cittadini tanto populani, che plebei, fuſſe confinato, o ammuniti, e per ridurre piu il governo a parte nobile, e per piu avvilire gli avverſari artifici e popolo minuto, &c. Nerli, p. 29, 30.

The

The ſignori, to diminiſh the authority of the plebeians ſtill more, made a decree, that the third part of the honours which they before enjoyed, ſhould be reduced to a fourth; and that there might be two at leaſt in the ſignori, always of approved fidelity to the government, they gave the gonfalonier, and four other citizens, authority to make a freſh imborſation, and to put the names of a ſelect number of citizens into a particular purſe, out of which two of every new ſignori ſhould always be drawn.

1387. Tranquillity now continued till 1387, when Giovanni Galeazzo Viconti, commonly called the Conte di Virtu, thought to make himſelf king of Italy by arms, as he had made himſelf duke of Milan by treachery: but after making himſelf maſter of Bologna, Piſa, Perugia, and Siena, and preparing to be crowned king of Italy at Florence, he died.* During the war with the duke, Maſo degli Albizi was gonfalonier, a bitter enemy to the Alberti. He reſolved, though Benedetto was now dead, to be revenged on the reſt of that family, for Pietro's unfortunate end, before he went out of office. He accuſed the two heads of the family of correſponding with the exiles, and took them into cuſtody: upon this the whole city was in an uproar. The ſignori called the people together, and appointed a new balia, by which many citizens, beſides almoſt all the Alberti, were baniſhed, and many artificers admoniſhed, or put to death, and a freſh imborſation of magiſtrates was made. This tyrannical manner of proceeding ſo enraged the arts and lower ſort of people, who now ſaw their lives and honours ſo wantonly taken away, that they roſe in arms, ſome of them running to the

Maſo Albizi.

Alberti.

* Nerli, p. 80.

piazza,

UAB Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

piazza, and others to the houſe of *Veri de Medici*, who, after the death of Sylveſter, was become the head of that family, and earneſtly intreated him to take the government into his hands, and deliver them from the oppreſſion of thoſe citizens, who were daily endeavouring to deſtroy the commonwealth, and every good man in it. Antonio de Medici was moſt importunate with him, though they had been long at open enmity. All writers agree, that if Veri had been as ambitious as he was virtuous, he might have made himſelf lord of the city: but he put himſelf at the head of the people, marched to the piazza, and there publicly refuſed to do any thing unconſtitutional, but prayed the ſignori to redreſs the grievances of the people. They highly commended him, and promiſed to give all ſatisfaction. Upon theſe aſſurances, and a reliance on Veri's word, the people returned to their houſes. As ſoon as the tumult was compoſed, the ſignori, inſtead of fulfilling their promiſes, fortified the piazza, enrolled two thouſand citizens to defend them, forbid all others to bear arms, put many citizens to death, and baniſhed others, who had been moſt active in the late inſurrection. The few Alberti who were left, and the Medici, thought themſelves and the people deceived, and were extremely diſguſted by theſe proceedings; but the firſt who had courage to oppoſe them was Donato Acciaivola, one of the grandees, rather ſuperior to Maſo Albizi, who, by the ſteps he had taken while he was gonfalonier, was become in a manner the head of the commonwealth. Donato endeavoured that thoſe who had been ſent into exile might be recalled, and thoſe who had been admoniſhed ſhould be re-qualified to hold their former honours and employments. He firſt attempted it by perſuaſion, but not ſucceeding,

Acciaivola.

UAB Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

ing, he threatened to do it by force. For this he was cited, convicted, and baniſhed to Barletta. Alamanno, and Antonio de Medici, and all thoſe who were of Alamanno's family, with many of the inferior arts, who had any intereſt among the plebeians, were likewiſe baniſhed. All theſe things happened within two years after Maſo degli Albizi had aſſumed the government.

1397. In 1397 the exiles at Bologna, ſpirited young men, among whom was Antonio de Medici, determined at all events to return to their country, and aſſaſſinate Maſo, depending upon the people's riſing in their favour; but either from a terror of the government, or prejudice againſt the exiles, the people would not move; and the conſpirators fled to the church, where they were put to death.* This conſpiracy was ſcarcely quaſhed, when another more dangerous was diſcovered, of other exiles ſcattered over Lombardy, in concert with the duke of Milan; but this was diſcovered, defeated, and the authors puniſhed. Then a new balia was inſtituted, with authority to provide for the ſafety of the commonwealth. By this council, ſix of the Ricci, ſix of the Alberti, two of the Medici, three of the Scali, two of the Strozzi, and many others of lower condition, were proclaimed rebels; all the reſt of the Alberti, Ricci, and Medici, except ſome very few, were rendered incapable of holding any office for ten years. One of the Alberti only was ſpared on account of his quiet character, Antonio: but the government was jealous of him, and ſoon found a pretence for baniſhing him to a diſtance of three hundred miles from the city: and to free the government from the continual apprehenſions they lived under

* Nerli, p. 32.

of

of the Alberti, they baniſhed all of that family that were above fifteen years of age. Theſe things happened in 1400.* 1400.

In 1412 ſome of the Alberti returned from baniſhment, and another balia was appointed, which made new laws for the ſecurity of the ſtate, and inflicted other penalties on that family. 1412.

In 1414 ended the war with Ladiſlaus, king of Naples, whoſe death delivered Florence from as much danger as that of the Conte di Virtu had done. 1414.

The period from 1371 to 1434, is that which is boaſted by Machiavel as the proſperous one, but whoſe proſperity he attributes to the virtues and abilities of Naſo. Piſa, Arezzo, Leghorn, and Montepulchiano, were added to the dominion.

" All republics, eſpecially ſuch as are not well " conſtituted, undergo frequent changes in their " laws and manner of government; and this is " not owing to the nature either of liberty or " ſubjection in general, as many think, but to " downright oppreſſion on one hand, or unbridled " licentiouſneſs on the other." It is very true, that moſt republics have undergone frequent changes in their laws; but this has been merely becauſe that very few republics have been well conſtituted. It is very true alſo, that there is nothing in the nature of liberty, or of obedience, which tends to produce ſuch changes; on the contrary, real liberty and true obedience rather tend to preſerve conſtancy in government. It is, indeed, oppreſſion and licence that occaſion changes; but where the conſtitution is good, the laws govern and prevent oppreſſion as well as licence.

* Nerli, p. 33.

UAB
Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

" This name of liberty is often nothing more than " a ſpecious pretence, made uſe of both by the " inſtruments of licentiouſneſs, who for the moſt " part are commoners, and by the promoters of " ſlavery, who generally are the nobles, each ſide " being equally impatient of reſtraint and con- " troul." This is a truth, which is proved, as well as illuſtrated, by every page of the foregoing hiſtory, as well as by the hiſtory of almoſt all other republics, ancient and modern: and the next paragraph ſhews that Machiavel had an accurate idea of the evil, though a confuſed one of the remedy. " When it fortunately happens, which " indeed is very ſeldom, that ſome wiſe, good, " and powerful citizen has ſufficient authority in " the commonwealth to make ſuch laws as may " extinguiſh all jealouſies betwixt the nobility " and the people, or at leaſt ſo to moderate and " reſtrain them, that they ſhall not be able to pro- " duce any bad effect, in ſuch caſe that ſtate may " properly be called free, and its conſtitution look- " ed upon as firm and permanent: for being once " eſtabliſhed upon good laws and inſtitutions, it " has no further occaſion, like other ſtates, for the " virtue of any particular man to ſupport it." One would be apt to conjecture from this, that Machiavel was about to propoſe a firſt magiſtrate, armed by the conſtitution with ſufficient authority to mediate, at all times, between the nobles and commons. Such a magiſtrate, poſſeſſed of the whole executive power, with a negative to defend it, has always authority to intervene between the nobles and commons, and to preſerve the energy of the laws to reſtrain both; and whether this executive magiſtrate is wiſe and good or not, if the commons have the negative upon the purſe and the laws, and the inqueſt of grievances, abuſes, and

ſtate crimes, that executive power can hardly be ill uſed. " On ſuch laws and principles many " of thoſe ancient commonwealths, which ſo long " ſubſiſted, were formerly conſtituted." Rome and Sparta were, in ſome degree, conſtituted upon theſe principles, and in proportion as they conformed to them, they were free and happy; but neither was perfectly conformed to them. " For want " of them, others have often varied their form of " government from tyranny to licence, and from " licence to tyranny:" and for want of them ſuch will ever be the vibration. " For as each of thoſe " ſtates always has powerful enemies to contend " with, it neither is nor can be poſſible they ſhould " be of any long duration:" and while they laſt, the liberty and happineſs of the citizens are conſtantly ſacrificed. " All good and wiſe men muſt of ne- " ceſſity be diſguſted at them." So much ſo, that if it were not for the chance and hope of obtaining a better conſtitution, after all the changes, any man of that character would prefer a ſimple monarchy at once. " Since much evil may very eaſily " be done in the former, and hardly any good in " the latter; the inſolent having too much au- " thority in one, and the ignorant and unexpe- " rienced in the other." Theſe characters of ſimple ariſtocracies and ſimple democracies, which ſucceed each other ſo rapidly, where the third power is not introduced to controul and moderate both the nobles and people, are very juſt; and Machiavel ſays, what is near the truth, " both " muſt be upheld by the ſpirit and fortune of one " man alone, who yet may either be ſuddenly taken " off by death, or overpowered by adverſity." It is a pity he had not ſaid, parties muſt be upheld together by the conſtitutional, legal authority of one man alone, poſſeſſed of the whole exe-

cutive power of the ſtate, and then, if he is taken off by death, another will ſucceed; if he be overpowered by adverſity the whole ſtate muſt be overpowered with him, and no form of government can be deviſed to warrant ſtates againſt peſtilence, earthquake, and famine, the inevitable and irreſiſtible judgements of heaven. "I ſay, "therefore, that the model of government, which "took place in Florence after the death of Scali "in 1381, was at firſt ſolely maintained by the "conduct of Maſo degli Albizi, and afterwards "by that of Niccolo Uzzano." This is a ſtrong inſtance of the efficiency of one man, ſo ſituated as to be able to mediate between the ariſtocratical and democratical ingredients in ſociety, and for providing ſuch an officer by the conſtitution, whoſe duty and buſineſs it ſhall always be to act the ſame part; nay, who ſhall be neceſſitated, from the principle of ſelf-preſervation and ſelf-defence, to preſerve the balance between them.

1414. The city continued in tranquillity from 1414
1422. to 1422; eight years: Uzzano and ſix others had the chief authority. Thoſe animoſities, however, which were at firſt kindled in the city by the quarrel betwixt the Albizi and the Ricci, and afterwards blown up to ſuch height by Sylveſtro de Medici, were not yet extinguiſhed; and although that party which had the largeſt ſhare in the affections of the people continued only three years in the adminiſtration, and was turned out of it in 1381, yet as they were favoured and ſupported by the greater part of the citizens, they could not be totally ſuppreſſed. The frequent *admonitions* and continual perſecutions that were carried on againſt the heads of it, from 1381 to 1400, had indeed brought them very low. The Alberti and the *Medici* ſuffered moſt by theſe proceedings. Several

of them had their eſtates confiſcated; others were baniſhed or put to death; and thoſe who were ſuffered to continue in the city were deprived of all their honours and employments; by which their party was much depreſſed, and almoſt reduced to nothing. They retained, however, ſharp reſentments, and determined to take revenge, though under the preſent circumſtances they thought proper to diſſemble.

This adminiſtration, compoſed of the moſt conſiderable commoners or popular nobility, which had kept the city ſo long in peace, at laſt were guilty of two errors in point of conduct, which proved their ruin. As ſoon as they thought themſelves ſafe from the attempts of the Alberti, they grew inſolent, and they quarrelled among themſelves: two faults, that have ever been committed by every ſingle aſſembly, whether of nobles or commons; and which ever muſt be committed by all that are to come. Amidſt their ſupineneſs, oppreſſions, and diviſions, the *Medici* recovered their former authority and power. The firſt of this family that began to lift up his head again was *Giovanni*,* the ſon of *Bicci de Medici*, who being a man of great humanity, and grown very rich, was admitted to a ſhare in the government of the ſtate; at which there was ſuch extraordinary rejoicings among the people, that many of the graver ſort of the citizens were not a little alarmed when they ſaw the old humours began to ſhow themſelves again. Uzzano repreſented to his colleagues,† that he knew Giovanni was a perſon of much greater influence and abilities than ever Sylveſtro had been, and that it was dangerous to promote a man of ſo general a reputation to ſuch

* Nerli, p. 34. † Nerli, p. 34, 35.

UAB Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

a degree of power: but the reſt of the governors envied Uzzano's reputation, and were glad to avail themſelves of any aſſiſtance to ruin him; ſo that Giovanni was ſet up, as it often happens, to pull down Uzzano.—When a popular aſſembly or a ſenate have the management of the executive power, diſputes for ever ariſe concerning every ſtep in foreign affairs, and diſcords and factions have full play. Thus it happened in Florence upon occaſion of a negociation with Philip Viconti, lord of Lombardy; every faction had a different opinion: that, however, in favour of a war prevailed; ten ſuperintendants of the war were appointed, ſoldiers were raiſed, and taxes impoſed; theſe occaſioned great murmurs in the city. The taxes were ſaid to be heavier on the poor than the rich; every one exclaimed againſt the oppreſſion of their governors, who had wantonly embroiled them in an expenſive and unneceſſary war, only to gratify their own private intereſts and ambition, and to eſtabliſh themſelves in their tyranny. The majority of the governors at laſt judged it neceſſary to declare war, notwithſtanding that reſolution ſtill met with great oppoſition, eſpecially from Giovanni de Medici, who publicly proteſted againſt it, which occaſioned a multitude of arguments pro and con. The war was unfortunate, and a battle loſt by the badneſs of the weather; this misfortune occaſioned great conſternation in Florence, eſpecially among the governing party, who had been the chief promoters of the war: they ſaw the enemy powerful and elated, themſelves diſarmed and without allies, and, what was worſe, hated to the laſt degree by the people, who inſulted them whenever they appeared in the ſtreets, complaining of inſupportable taxes, and upbraiding

ing them with the heavy expences of an unneceſſary war.

Machiavel, p. 238, enumerates the taunts which fury ſuggeſted upon this occaſion to an enraged and unbridled multitude. The ſignori called a meeting of the principal citizens, and earneſtly exhorted them to uſe their good offices to ſoothe the people, and appeaſe the general indignation which their clamours had excited. Rinaldo, the eldeſt ſon of the late Maſo degli Albici, having ſecretly entertained ſome hopes of becoming ſole governor of the republic, by the merit of his own ſervices and the reputation of his father, made a long ſpeech in juſtification of the war. A commiſſion was given to twenty citizens to raiſe farther ſupplies for the maintenance of the war, who ſeeing the governing party now humbled, took courage, and laid the chief burden of the taxes upon their ſhoulders; at which they were not a little mortified in their turn. They complained of it as too heavy; but when this came to the ears of the council, they took effectual care to have it collected; and, in order to make all impoſitions appear the more grievous and hateful to the people for the future, they gave a ſtrict charge to their officers to collect this with the utmoſt rigour, and to kill any one that ſhould dare to oppoſe them, or refuſe to pay it: and ſo many were murdered or wounded, that it was apprehended the two parties would come to blows; for thoſe who had been ſo long in power, and uſed to be treated with ſuch reverence and diſtinction, could not bear the thoughts of being inſulted in this manner; and the other ſide were reſolved, that every man, in his turn, ſhould equally feel the ſting of theſe oppreſſions. The principal citizens had now many private conferences, but Giovanni was not there; either becauſe

UAB
Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

cauſe he was not invited, as a perſon in whom they could not thoroughly confide, or refuſed to come becauſe he did not approve of ſuch cabals. Rinaldo degli Albici made an harangue.—He repreſented how the government had again fallen into the hands of the people, from whom their fathers had recovered it in 1381. He reminded them of the tyranny of thoſe who were in the adminiſtration from 1377 till that time; in which interval either the father or grandfather, or ſome near relation of almoſt every one who was then preſent, had been unjuſtly put to death. That the city was now going to relapſe into the ſame ſtate of confuſion and oppreſſion, as the multitude had already taken upon them to impoſe taxes; and if they were not either curbed by force, or reſtrained by ſome other expedient, would certainly, in the next place, proceed to appoint ſuch officers as they thought fit; after which they would turn the preſent magiſtrates out of their ſeats, to the utter deſtruction of an adminiſtration, which had governed the city, with ſo much glory and reputation, for forty-two years: the conſequence of which would be, that Florence muſt either be blindly governed by the caprice of the multitude, and then one party would live in continual danger and apprehenſion, while the other rioted in all manner of licentiouſneſs, or it muſt fall under the ſubjection of ſome one perſon, who would make himſelf abſolute lord, and perhaps tyrant, over it. As the audaciouſneſs of the multitude was in a great meaſure owing to the largeneſs of the imborſations, and the little care that was taken in them, which had filled the palace with new and mean men, he thought the only remedy for ſuch diſorders would be to reſtore the authority of the nobility, and diminiſh that of the minor arts, by reducing

reducing them from fourteen to ſeven, which would leſſen the power of the plebeians in the councils, both by retrenching their number, and by throwing more weight into the ſcale of the grandees, who would be ſure to uſe all poſſible endeavours to depreſs them, out of revenge for old injuries. The wiſe men always availed themſelves of different ſorts of people at different ſeaſons; and if their fathers had made uſe of the aſſiſtance of the plebeians to humble the inſolence of the grandees, now the latter were brought ſo low, and the former become ſo audacious, it would be no bad expedient to join with one to lower the other.—Uzzano made anſwer, that it might be done, if they could draw Giovanni de Medici into their deſigns; for if he concurred with them, the multitude being deprived of their head, would not be able to make any oppoſition.—Rinaldo was deputed to wait upon Giovanni, and perſuade him to join them. Giovanni replied to him, that he had always thought it the duty of a good citizen to endeavour to prevent any change in the eſtabliſhed laws. By ſuch changes ſome were turned out and others brought in, and the firſt generally thought themſelves more aggrieved than the others benefited; by which few friends and many enemies were made, mankind being naturally more prone to revenge than gratitude. That the citizens of Florence generally dealt baſely and perfidiouſly with each other: that as ſoon as the promoters and adviſers of this plan had ſufficiently depreſſed the people by the help of his authority, they would certainly fall upon him next with the whole force and aſſiſtance of the plebeians, whoſe affections he muſt have loſt by ſuch a conduct, and then he would be utterly deſerted and ruined. He could not help remembering the fate of Benedetto, who, at the inſtigation

inſtigation of ſuch as conſpired his deſtruction, conſented to the ſevere proceedings againſt Scali, and ſoon after was ſent into exile himſelf by the very perſons who had inveigled him into thoſe meaſures. That for his part he ſhould never agree to have any alterations made in the laws or conſtitution of his country.—Theſe deliberations, when known, ſtill added to the reputation of Giovanni, and increaſed the hatred of the people againſt the other citizens. On the contrary, Alamanno de Medici, his relation, and Coſimo, his ſon, urged Giovanni to take this opportunity of humbling his enemies and exalting his friends, reproaching him with his coldneſs, which they ſaid emboldened thoſe who wiſhed him ill to form daily conſpiracies againſt him, and would, one time or other, prove the ruin of all his family and dependents: but he was deaf to all their remonſtrances and prognoſtications, and determined to purſue his own meaſures. The deſigns of the faction were, however, now plainly diſcovered, and the city began once more to divide itſelf into factions. Under ſuch forms of government there can never be an independent judicial power: all parties are either courting, or threatening, or perſecuting the judges. There were at this time two preſiding under the ſignori, in the ſupreme court of juſtice: Martino, who was one of them, was of Uzzano's party, and Paolo, the other, followed that of the Medici. Rinaldo finding Giovanni inflexible, reſolved to turn Paolo out of his office, as he thought that the court would then be wholly at his devotion; but the other ſide being aware of this, were beforehand with him, and contrived matters ſo well, that they got Paolo continued and Martino diſcharged, to the great mortification and prejudice of his party.

The

The war laſted five years, i. e. from 1422 to 1427, and the citizens were impoveriſhed by taxes; and perſonal eſtate was now to be taxed as well as real. This was likely to fall heavy upon the rich, upon which account it was oppoſed vehemently by them all, before it paſſed into a law, except Giovanni, who publicly expreſſed his approbation of it; ſo that it was carried againſt them. This tax was regulated by a law made on purpoſe, and not left to the arbitrament of partial or intereſted perſons; ſo that the more powerful citizens were in ſome meaſure reſtrained from oppreſſing the inferior ſort, and influencing their votes in the councils, as they had been uſed to do, by the threats of taxing them according as they gave their ſuffrages. This tax, therefore, was very cheerfully ſubmitted to by the generality, though highly diſguſtful to the government. But as it is the nature of mankind to be ever reſtleſs and diſcontented, and when they have gained one advantage, to be ſtill graſping at a higher, the people, not ſatisfied with this equality of taxation eſtabliſhed by the law, demanded a retroſpect, by which it might appear how much leſs the rich citizens had paid before, than they ought to have done by this regulation, and every one be made to account for deficiencies. This queſtion occaſioned very long and ingenious arguments on both ſides; the Giovanni repreſented to the people the bad conſequences of retroſpects, and with many arguments ſoothed the people, till they dropped this demand.

In 1428 peace was concluded, and freſh com- 1428.
motions began in the city, on the ſubject of the new plan of taxation. In this juncture Giovanni fell ſick; and calling his two ſons, Coſimo and Lorenzo, to his bed-ſide, he adviſed them, "If "you would live with ſafety and comfort, be

"content

UAB Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

" content with ſuch a ſhare in the government as " your fellow-citizens confer upon you, by which " you will avoid envy and danger; for it is that " which a man arrogates to himſelf that makes " him odious, and not what is voluntarily given " him." He died lamented by the whole city, for he was very charitable and compaſſionate. His univerſal benevolence taught him to love good men, and pity the evil. He never ſolicited honours, though he obtained the higheſt. He died poſſeſſed of immenſe riches,* and full of glory and reputation, leaving his ſon Coſimo heir to his fortune and fame; both which he not only maintained, but augmented.

Ambition ſoon kindled new wars. The whole city was divided into little meetings and cabals of all ranks of people, the generality of whom were for commencing hoſtilities againſt the Luccheſe. Among the more conſiderable citizens who favoured this enterpriſe, were all the followers of the Medici family: thoſe who oppoſed it were Uzzano and his party. It ſeems almoſt incredible that there ſhould be ſuch a change of opinions in the ſame citizens, on this occaſion, concerning the expedience of a war; and yet thoſe very perſons who, after a peace that had laſted ten years, oppoſed a war againſt duke Philip, which was undertaken in defence of their own liberties, now ſtrenuouſly inſiſted upon one againſt Lucca, to invade the rights of others, and at a time too when the city was exhauſted and impoveriſhed to the laſt degree by the heavy expences of the laſt. From hence we may obſerve, how much more ready mankind are to uſurp the property of others, than to defend their own; and how much ſtronger the hope

* Nerli, p. 38.

of

UAB
Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

of gain is, than the fear of loſing. The ſignori aſſembled the common-council, where the matter was debated by ſome of the leading men of the republic, in the preſence of four hundred and ninety-eight citizens. The debate was conducted by Rinaldo on one ſide, and Uzzano on the other; and, upon a ballot, only ninety-eight were againſt the war.—The war was commenced, and carried on with all that rapacious avarice and ambition which had begun it, and grievous complaints and accuſations were brought againſt Aſtorre and Rinaldo for their behaviour in it.

In 1428* Niccolo de Uzzano died, and Rinaldo ſucceeded as head of his family and party. Rinaldo returned in a rage againſt the magiſtrates, and preſenting himſelf before the council of war, he told them, "he well knew how difficult and dangerous a thing it was to ſerve an unbridled people, and a divided ſtate; ſince the one was carried away with every rumour, the other put a malicious interpretation upon actions that were doubtful, and always puniſhed the evil, but never rewarded the good: ſo that if a commander ſucceeded in an expedition, he had no praiſe at all; if he was guilty of an error, his conduct was cenſured by the generality; but if he miſcarried, he was ſure to be condemned by every one; for in one caſe his own party would envy his ſucceſs, and his adverſaries not fail to inſult him in the other." The council endeavoured to appeaſe his reſentment, but gave the command abroad to others. The war was conducted afterwards rather unſucceſsfully, until they came to abattle before the town of Lucca, and were totally defeated. As the expedition had been undertaken almoſt by general conſent, the people, in the utmoſt conſternation, and not knowing

* Nerli, p. 39.

where

where to turn their rage, began to abuſe thoſe who had conducted the war, ſince they could not blame thoſe who, by their own inſtigation, had firſt adviſed it, and revived their old calumnies againſt Rinaldo: but the perſon whom they fell upon with the greateſt violence was Guicchiardini, who, they ſaid, might eaſily have put an end to the war, if he had not been bribed; nay, they went ſo far as to charge him with ſending an horſe-load of money to his own houſe, and particularly mentioned the names both of thoſe that carried and thoſe that received it. Theſe clamours and accuſations made ſuch a noiſe, that the captain of the people could not help taking cognizance of ſo public a charge; eſpecially as he was importunately called upon ſo to do by Giovanni's enemies. Having cited him therefore to clear himſelf of this imputation, he made his appearance, but with much ſeeming indignation and contempt of their malice; and his relations exerted themſelves ſo ſtrenuouſly for the honour of their family, that the captain was obliged to ſtop all further proceedings againſt him. The inſinuation here is very obvious, that the judge was bribed.

1433. In 1433 a general peace was concluded, and all towns that had been taken by the Florentines, Luccheſe, and Sieneſe, ſhould be mutually reſtored to their former poſſeſſors; ſo that the expence of this war was all loſt.

During the courſe of this war abroad, the factious humours began to ferment again at home; and Coſimo began to act with greater ſpirit in public affairs, and with more openneſs and zeal for the good of his friends, than ever his father had done: ſo that thoſe who rejoiced at the death of Giovanni, were not a little damped at the proceedings of his ſon. Coſimo was a man of very great prudence, of a ſedate and agreeable counte-

nance,

nance, exceedingly liberal and humane; never entering into any meaſures that would be pernicious to the ſtate, or even the party that he oppoſed, but taking all opportunities of doing good to every one, and of conciliating to himſelf the affections of his fellow-citizens by his goodneſs and generoſity. So noble an example of benevolence greatly increaſed the hatred which the public had already conceived againſt the governing party, and at the ſame time was the beſt method he thought he could take to enable himſelf either to live with reputation and ſecurity in Florence, or to get the better of any perſecution that the malice of his enemies might raiſe againſt him, by the intereſt he had with the people, and even, if neceſſary, by force of arms. There were two citizens who contributed to promote this intereſt, Averardo de Medici, and Puccio de Pucci; the one by his boldneſs and activity, the other by his great wiſdom and experience, which added much reputation to his party: indeed, the judgement and authority of the latter were ſo generally revered, that he gave name to the party, which was not called Coſimo's, but Puccio's party. In this divided ſtate of the city, the expedition againſt Lucca was undertaken, which, inſtead of extinguiſhing the rage of faction, ſtill added fuel to it; for though Puccio's party had promoted and adviſed a war, yet thoſe of the other ſide were chiefly employed in conducting it, as they had greater power in the government: and ſince Averardo and his friends could not by any means prevent this, they took every opportunity of defaming them, and calumniating their actions; ſo that when they met with any misfortune, it was not imputed to the ſuperior ſtrength or better management of the enemy, but to the miſconduct and imprudence of the

commiſſary. This was the occaſion that the enormities committed by Aſtorſa Gianni, though very great indeed of themſelves, were ſtill exaggerated. It was this ſort of treatment that provoked Rinaldo to ſuch a degree, that he left his command without permiſſion. This was the true cauſe of Giovanni Guicchicardini being cited to appear before the captain of the people. From hence proceeded all the charges and complaints that were exhibited againſt other magiſtrates and commiſſaries; and whilſt thoſe that had any foundation were always aggravated, and ſometimes ſupported by downright falſehood, the people greedily ſwallowed all, whether true or falſe, out of the hatred they bore to them: and though Uzzano, and the other heads of that party, were ſufficiently aware of theſe baſe artifices, and had ſeveral private meetings to conſider of proper means to prevent the effect of them, yet they could not fix upon any expedient. It was very dangerous, they knew, to connive at them, and not leſs to proceed to open violence: Uzzano himſelf was averſe to any remedies of that kind. Barbadori, ſeeing they were haraſſed in this manner, with war abroad and faction at home, made a viſit to Uzzano, whom he found alone, and very thoughtful in his ſtudy; and as he himſelf wiſhed to ſee the ruin of Coſimo, he left no method untried to prevail upon Uzzano to join with Rinaldo to drive him out of the city. Uzzano replied, "Common "prudence would be ſufficient to induce thoſe "who adviſe the expulſion of Coſimo to compare "their own ſtrength with his. Our party, it "ſeems, is now diſtinguiſhed by the name of the "Nobility, and the other by that of the Ple-"beians. Remember the fate of the ancient no-"bility of this city, who at laſt were utterly ſup-

" preſſed in their conteſts with the plebeians. " Our party is divided, while that of our adver- " ſaries is compact and entire. *Neri and Neroni,* " *two of the chief men in the city, have not yet de-* " *clared themſelves*; and it is uncertain what ſide " they will take. Several families are divided " among themſelves; and many there are that " hate us, and favour our adverſaries, merely out " of envy or malice to their own brothers, or " ſome other near relations. Among the ſons of " Maſo, Luca, out of hatred to Rinaldo, is gone " over to the other ſide; in the family of the " Guicciardini, Pietro, the ſon of Luigi, is a " mortal enemy to his brother Giovanni, and " joins our adverſaries; Tomaſo and Niccolo " Soderini openly oppoſe us out of pique to their " uncle Franciſco: ſo that if we conſider the quality " of thoſe who conſtitute their party, and of whom " our own conſiſts, I ſee no reaſon why one ſhould " be called the nobility in preference to the other. " If it is becauſe they are followed by the whole " body of the plebeians, that very circumſtance " makes them ſo much ſuperior to us, that if ever " we come to an open trial of our ſtrength, we " ſhall not be able to ſtand before them; and if " we ſtill continue in poſſeſſion of the firſt places " in the commonwealth, it is entirely owing to " the eſtabliſhed credit of an adminiſtration which " has now ſupported itſelf for the ſpace of fifty " years. But if things ſhould come to extremi- " ties, and our preſent weakneſs be diſcovered, " you may depend upon it, we ſhould be forced " out of the magiſtracy, perhaps to our utter de- " ſtruction. Coſimo, it is true, freely lends mo- " ney to every one that wants it; not only to " private people, but to the public, upon any " emergency, and to foreigners as well as Flo-

" rentines: he is a friend to ſuch as ſtand in need
" of protection, and ſometimes helps to advance
" an acquaintance to a reputable employment in
" the commonwealth, by the intereſt which his
" univerſal benevolence has gained him among
" the people. What ſhall we be able to plead in
" excuſe for endeavouring to expel him the city?
" Shall we accuſe him of being charitable, friend-
" ly, liberal, and beloved by every one? What
" law condemns charity, liberality, and benefi-
" cence? Indeed, theſe virtues are ſometimes
" counterfeited, to cajole the vulgar, by ſuch as
" aſpire to dominion; but they do not appear in
" that light at preſent, nor is it in our power to
" make them. We have loſt our reputation by
" our late miſconduct; and a people naturally
" prone to faction, and corrupted by continual
" diviſions, will no longer put any confidence in
" us, or give credit to ſuch accuſations. If he is
" baniſhed, he will return with more friends, and
" we ſhall have more enemies: if it is intended to
" put him to death in a *judicial manner*, that can
" never be effected; for, as he is rich, and the
" magiſtracy corrupt, he will be ſure to eſcape
" all puniſhment. But if he is baniſhed, or
" condemned, what will the commonwealth
" gain by that? No ſooner will it be free from
" the apprehenſions it was under from Coſimo,
" but it will be liable to the ſame from Rinaldo.
" For my own part, I am one of thoſe who never
" deſire to ſee one citizen exceed another in au-
" thority; and if one of theſe two muſt ſeize the
" reins, I know not any reaſon that ſhould induce
" me to prefer Rinaldo to Coſimo. I pray God
" to preſerve this city from ever falling under the
" dominion of any one man: but if a time ſhould
" ever come, when our ſins ſhall bring that judge-

" ment

" ment upon us, I pray ſtill more earneſtly, that we " may not become ſubject to Rinaldo. *The far greater* " *part of the citizens, ſome out of ſtupidity, and* " *others out of malice, are thoroughly diſpoſed to* " *ſell their country; and fortune has been ſo favour-* " *able to them as to provide a purchaſer.* Live " quietly, then; and as to any invaſion of our " liberties, be aſſured, you have as much to ap- " prehend from our own party as the other."— This ſpeech contains a volume of inſtructions: the ſituation of ſuch a government, where there are two parties, and no third power to balance them, is admirably deſcribed. Neri, or Neroni, who were yet neuters, are looked up to as capable, when they pleaſe, of overturning the balance, and effecting a revloution. Family quarrels are reſorted to and inflamed, in order to make different branches take different ſides. Though one party is called patrician and the other plebeian, ſo many individuals of each deſert their colours, and go over to the enemy, that it is impoſſible to ſay which party is really the patrician and which plebeian. Timid and irreſolute to the laſt degree, the government dares not diſoblige an individual, even by puniſhing a crime. The government really eſteeming its enemies more than its own members; and oppoſition approving members of government more than their own aſſociates. All parties endeavouring to get an influence over the judges, as eſſential to their exiſtence. The judicial power unavoidably corrupted. It was eaſy for Uzzano to ſay, and perhaps ſincerely, that he never deſired to ſee one citizen exceed another in influence. But, according to Machiavel, the exiſtence of the government had long depended upon the ſuperior authority of Uzzano himſelf. And no better plan of liberty than this deplorable

one of Florence can ever be preſerved, without ſome one citizen legally veſted with authority to controul each in his turn of the contending par-
1428. ties. Uzzano died in 1428,* and all reſtraint was at an end. Rinaldo now was head of the party, and was continually teaſing and importuning ſuch citizens as he thought likely to be judges, that is, ſtandard-bearers of juſtice, to take arms, and deliver their country out of the hands of Coſimo; who, taking advantage of the ſtupidity of ſome, and the malice of others, would certainly enſlave it. Thus Rinaldo, by endeavouring to ſupplant his adverſaries, and they to ſupport themſelves, kept the whole city in continual alarm and ſuſpicion; ſo that when new magiſtrates were appointed, it was preſently known how many there were on one ſide, and how many on the other: and at the imborſations for the ſignori, there was nothing to be ſeen but tumult and uproar. Every trifling affair that was brought before the magiſtracy created a diviſion among them; all ſecrets were divulged; they had no regard to juſtice; the good and the evil were treated alike; and there was not ſo much as one magiſtrate that did his duty. Rinaldo, impatient to lower the authority of Coſimo, intrigued to get Bernardo drawn for ſtandard-bearer,* and ſucceeded; went to congratulate him, and told him how much the nobility were rejoiced to ſee him in poſſeſſion of that dignity; repreſented to him the danger they were in from their diviſions; and that the ſureſt way to reſtore union among them was to rid themſelves of Coſimo. Bernardo anſwered, he was fully convinced of the expediency and neceſſity of what he had urged, and deſired him to prepare their

* Nerli, p. 39.

friends

UAB Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

friends to take arms. Bernardo then ſummoned Coſimo to appear before the ſignori. The ſignori aſſembled the people, and appointed a balia, conſiſting of two hundred citizens, to reform the ſtate; and the firſt thing debated was, whether Coſimo ſhould be put to death or not? Some argued for it, others thought baniſhment ſufficient, and many ſat ſilent. Coſimo was committed priſoner to Frederigo, in the turret of the palace. From this place he could hear the clamours of the armed men, who were below in the piazza, and frequent outcries for a balia; which made him apprehend that his life was in danger, but much more, that his particular enemies would take ſome extravagant method to diſpatch him: for that reaſon he would eat no meat for the ſpace of four days, except a mouthful or two of bread. Frederigo obſerving this, bid him take courage, and eat his meat, and keep himſelf alive for the good of his friends and his country; and that you may have no more ſuſpicion, ſays he, I will eat with you. Coſimo embraced him with tears in his eyes, acknowledging his generoſity, and aſſuring him he would amply recompenſe his kindneſs, if ever fortune ſhould put it in his power to ſhew his gratitude. Frederigo invited Farganaccio, a friend of the ſtandard-bearer, to ſup with them. Coſimo, after many fair words and promiſes, gave his gueſt a draught upon his banker for eleven hundred ducats, deſiring him to keep one hundred himſelf, and preſent the other thouſand to the ſtandard-bearer. This he willingly undertook to perform, and gave the money to Bernardo, who then began to grow cooler and more moderate in the proſecution; ſo that, after all, Coſimo was only baniſhed to Padua, though Rinaldo uſed his utmoſt endeavours to have him

put to death. Averardo de Medici, and many others of that family, were likewiſe baniſhed at the ſame time, and with them Puccio and Giovanni de Puci. Coſimo was brought before the
1433. ſignori, 3d of October, 1433, who pronounced the ſentence of baniſhment upon him. He received the ſentence with a cheerful countenance, ſaying, "that in what part of the world ſoever he ſhould ſojourn, his perſon and fortune ſhould ever be at the ſervice of the republic, the people, and the ſignori." The ſtandard-bearer told him, he would take care that his life ſhould be in no danger; and, having conducted him to his own houſe, to ſup with him, ordered a party of the guards to eſcort him to the confines of the Florentine dominions. Wherever he came, he was received with great honour, and publicly viſited by the Venetians, who treated him not as an exile, but as a perſon of the firſt rank and conſequence in the ſtate. Florence being thus deprived of ſo great a man, and ſo univerſally beloved,* Rinaldo ſaw a ſtorm ariſing, and adviſed his friends to collect their ſtrength, and fortify themſelves; that ſo, when their enemies ſhould riſe upon them, which was daily to be expected, they might be able to clear the city of them by dint of force, ſince, it ſeemed, they could not do it in a judiciary manner: that they muſt regain the affections of the grandees, by reſtoring them to their honours and authority. He was anſwered, that the inſolence and tyranny of the grandees always had been, and always would be inſupportable; and that it would be madneſs

* Partiſſi Coſſimo di Firenze l'Ottobre 1433, avendo laſciato di ſe nell' univerſale de' men potenti cittadini grandiſſimo deſiderio, parendo loro eſſer rimeſi in preda di pochi potenti, ſenza ſperanza di capo alcuno al quale ſi poteſſero appoggiare. Nerli, p. 40.

to

to run headlong into a certain and ſlaviſh ſubjection to them, when the danger that was apprehended from the plebeians might only be imaginary. Rinaldo, ſeeing his advice rejected, could not help lamenting the misfortunes that he foreſaw were going to fall upon himſelf and his party; but modeſty imputed them rather to the malevolence of their deſtiny, than to the blindneſs and perverſeneſs of men. But both Rinaldo and Machiavel would have been much better adviſed, if they had imputed all theſe evils to their true cauſe, an imperfect and unbalanced conſtitution of government, rather than to deſtiny or the perverſeneſs of men. In ſuch a form of government, deſtiny itſelf, without a miracle, cannot prevent the blindneſs and perverſeneſs of men. Thoſe who ſee the cleareſt are forced to ſhut their eyes, and thoſe who are moſt upright are compelled to be perverſe. Letters were ſoon intercepted from Agnolo to Coſimo, adviſing him to ſtir up a war from ſome quarter or another, and to make Neri his friend; as he thought then the people would be in want of money to carry it on. Agnolo was baniſhed, which in ſome meaſure reſtrained the ardour of thoſe who favoured Coſimo. It was now almoſt a year ſince Coſimo was baniſhed.

At the end of Auguſt, 1434, Niccoli di Cocco was drawn ſtandard-bearer for the two next months, and with him eight new ſignors, all friends to Coſimo; at which Rinaldo and his party were alarmed. Rinaldo was for taking arms, and obliging the ſtandard bearer to aſſemble the people in the piazza to appoint another balia, and depoſe the new ſignori; get others drawn more fit for their purpoſe, by burning the old imborſation, and making a freſh one, in which the purſes might be filled only with the names of their friends. Strozzi, 1434.

a man

UAB Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

a man of a peaceable and humane diſpoſition, and rather given to ſtudy than faction, oppoſed it; and it was reſolved to let the new ſignori enter peaceably upon the magiſtracy. The new ſignori having been created by Coſimo's party, no ſooner took poſſeſſion of the palace, than the ſtandard-bearer began his office by an action which ſhould give him reputation, and ſtrike a damp into ſuch as might think of oppoſing him. He immediately committed his predeceſſor to priſon, upon pretence that he had embezzled the public money; after which he began to ſound his aſſociates about Coſimo's return, and, finding them well diſpoſed to it, he communicated their deſign to thoſe who were reputed heads of the Medici party, who all encouraged him to attempt it. He then cited Rinaldo, and others the principals of the other party, to appear before him: but they, inſtead of obeying him, flew to arms. But their party was irreſolute, loſt their opportunity, and gave time to the ſignori to provide for their defence. They ſent to acquaint Rinaldo, and thoſe who were with him, "that they could not conceive what was the cauſe of ſuch a commotion; that if it was upon Coſimo's account, they could aſſure them they had no thought of recalling him." Theſe promiſes, however, made but little impreſſion on Rinaldo, who ſaid he would take care of himſelf, by turning them all out of their offices. *But it ſeldom happens that any deſign ſucceeds, where the authority of the conductors is equal, and their opinions different.* Rodolpho replied, "that for his part, he deſired nothing more than that Coſimo might not be ſuffered to return: ſo that all hope of ſucceſs being defeated by the delay of Rinaldo, the puſillanimity of Strozzi, and the deſertion of Peruzzi,

Peruzzi, the reſt of the party began to loſe their ſpirits and grow cool. Pope Eugenius IV. was then at Florence, driven out of Rome by the people, and interpoſed his mediation till he perſuaded the party to lay down their arms. As ſoon as the ſignori ſaw their adverſaries diſarmed, they began to treat with them, through the mediation of the pope; and, at the ſame time, ſent privately into the mountains of Piſtoia for a body of foot-ſoldiers, which, being joined by all the horſe they had in the adjacent territories, were brought into Florence by night; and having taken poſſeſſion of all the paſſes and ſtrong places in the city, they called the people together in the piazza before the palace, and appointed a new balia; which, at their firſt meeting, recalled Coſimo, and all the other citizens who had been baniſhed with him. On the other hand, they not only ſent Rinaldo, Peruzzi, Barbadori, and Strozzi, into baniſhment, but ſuch numbers of others, that moſt parts of Italy, and ſome other countries, were crowded with them, to the great impoveriſhment of Florence, both in regard to its wealth, its inhabitants, its trade, and manufactures. But the pope, ſeeing that party entirely ruined and diſſipated, which had conſented to lay down their arms upon his aſſurances and interceſſion, was exceedingly enraged, as well as Rinaldo. The latter, however, affected to ſay, it would give him no great regret to be baniſhed a city where private men had more authority than the laws. Coſimo having notice, immediately repaired to Florence; it has ſeldom happened that any commander, though returning in triumph from victory, was received with ſuch acclamations and univerſal joy as Coſimo was by his fellow-citizens, who ran in multitudes to meet him,

and ſaluted him with one voice, the benefactor of the people, and the father of his country!*

Machiavel begins his fifth book, as if he ſuppoſed his reader convinced that the commonwealth of Florence had expired, and an abſolute ſovereignty in Coſimo had commenced, by grave reflections upon the changes that are incident to all governments:—"They often degenerate into anarchy "and confuſion, and from thence emerge again "to good order and regularity. For, ſince it is "ordained by Providence, that there ſhould be "a continual ebb and flow in the things of this "world, as ſoon as they arrive at their utmoſt "perfection, and can aſcend no higher, they muſt "of neceſſity decline: and, on the other hand, "when they have fallen, through any diſorder, "to the loweſt degree that is poſſible, and can "ſink no lower, they begin to riſe again. And "thus there is a conſtant ſucceſſion of proſperity "and adverſity in all human affairs. Virtue is "the mother of peace; peace produces idleneſs; "idleneſs, contention and miſrule; and from "thence proceed ruin and confuſion. This oc-"caſions reformation and better laws; good laws "make men virtuous; and public virtue is always "attended with glory and ſucceſs."

* Ritorno adunque Coſimo in Firenze, con tanta reputazione e con ſi granda allegrezza dall' eſilio, con quanta, mai ritornaſſe alla patria ſua alcun altro cittadino trionfante, da qual ſi voglia o poſſa immaginare feliciſſiman impreſa vittorioſo; e benchè egli ſi sforzaſſe in tanta ſua felicità, e grandezza di mantenere ſempre quella civile modeſtea, la quale oſſervò in ogni ſua azione mentrechè viſſe, ad ogni modo appariva in lui una tal maeſtà di principe, che merito per pubblico decreto d'eſſer chiamato padre della patria, la quale da eſſo fu per trenta anni, pacificamente governata. Nerli, p. 43.

At the return of Coſimo, thoſe citizens who had been his chief friends, and ſome others who had been injured and oppreſſed by the late adminiſtration, were determined at all events to take the government of the ſtate into their own hands. The ſignori therefore, that was drawn for the two enſuing months of November and December, not content with what their predeceſſors had already done in favour of their party, prolonged the term, and changed the reſidence of ſeveral who had been baniſhed, and ſent numbers of others into exile. And this was done not only out of party rage, but likewiſe on account of their riches, alliances, and private connections: ſo that this proſcription, except in the article of bloodſhed, might in ſome meaſure be compared to that under Sylla and Octavius. There were, however, ſome executions; for Antonio, the ſon of Bernardo, was beheaded; and four other citizens, having left the place to which they had been baniſhed, and gone to reſide at Venice, were ſecured by the Venetians as ſetting a greater value upon Coſimo's friendſhip than their own reputation, and ſent priſoners to Florence, where they were put to death in an ignominious manner. Theſe examples greatly increaſed the ſtrength of Coſimo's party, and ſtruck a terror into that of his enemies. When they had thus cleared the city of their enemies, and ſuch as they thought diſaffected to their government, they began to ſtrengthen their hands by careſſing and heaping favours upon others. For this purpoſe they recalled the family of the Alberti, and all the reſt of the exiles that had been formerly baniſhed: they reduced the grandees, except ſome very few, to the rank of commoners, and divided the poſſeſſions of thoſe whom they had baniſhed among themſelves. After this they fortified themſelves with

UAB Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

with new laws and ordinances, and made a freſh imborſation, taking the names of all ſuſpected perſons out of the purſes, and filling them up again with thoſe of their own friends. They likewiſe took care that ſuch magiſtrates as had the power of life and death entruſted to them ſhould always be choſen out of the moſt eminent of their party; for which purpoſe they ordained, that the ſyndics, who inſpected the imborſations in conjunction with the old ſignori, ſhould have the power of appointing a new one. The left the cognizance of capital offences to the eight wardens, and enacted, that no exile ſhould return, even after the term of his baniſhment was expired, till he had obtained the conſent of the ſignori and thirty-four of the colleges, though the whole number of them amounted to no more than thirty-ſeven. All perſons were prohibited to write or receive any letters from them; every word, or ſign, or geſture, that diſpleaſed the governors, was puniſhed with the utmoſt ſeverity. And if there was any ſuſpected perſons left in Florence, who had not fallen under their laſh for ſuch offences, they took care to load them ſeverely with new taxes and impoſitions; ſo that, one part of their adverſaries being driven out of the city, and the other depreſſed and overawed by theſe means, they in a ſhort time ſecured the government to themſelves; and to ſupport their power with foreign aid, and deprive their enemies of all aſſiſtance if they ſhould offer to diſturb them, they entered into a defenſive league with the pope, the Venetians, and the duke of Milan.

Coſimo is very tenderly treated by Machiavel; yet he has impartiality enough to record the tragical ſtory of Neri and Baldaccio. Among thoſe who had the chief authority in the government, Neri

UAB
Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

Neri was one, of whoſe reputation Coſimo was more jealous than of that of any other perſon; as he had not only very great credit in the city, but was exceedingly beloved by the ſoldiery, whoſe affections he had gained by his bravery, humanity, and good conduct, when he commanded the troops of the republic, as he had done upon ſeveral occaſions; beſides which, the remembrance of the victories that had been gained by him and his father; one of whom had taken Piſa, and the other defeated Piccinino at the battle of Anghiari, made him reſpected by many and feared by others, who did not deſire any more aſſociates in the government. But of all their generals, Baldaccio was certainly the moſt eminent; nor was there any man in Italy, at that time, who ſurpaſſed him either in courage, or military ſkill, or bodily accompliſhments: and, having always commanded the infantry, they had ſuch an opinion of him, that it was generally believed he could influence them to execute any purpoſe, and that they would follow him in any undertaking whatſoever.

This Baldaccio was very intimate with Neri, for whom he had the higheſt eſteem, on account of his valour and other good qualities, of which he had long been a witneſs; but it was a connection that excited infinite jealouſy among the reſt of the principal citizens; who, thinking it dangerous to let him enjoy his liberty, and ſtill more ſo to impriſon him, reſolved to have him diſpatched; in which fortune ſeemed to ſecond their deſign.

It is very provoking to read theſe continual imputations to fortune, made by Machiavel, of events which he knew very well were the effects of ſecret intrigue; for there is no doubt it had been previouſly concerted to get Bartolomeo or Candini

Candini appointed ſtandard-bearer of juſtice; who having been ſent to defend the paſs of Marradi, when Picconino invaded Tuſcany, had ſhamefully deſerted it, and abandoned all that country to the fury of the enemy, which from the nature of its ſituation was of itſelf almoſt inacceſſible. So flagrant a piece of cowardice provoked Baldaccio to ſuch a degree, that he could not help expreſſing his contempt of him, both in public converſation and in letters which he wrote to his friends, in terms that not only excited Orlandini's reſentment, but made him thirſt for revenge, and flatter himſelf that he ſhould extinguiſh the infamy of the fact by the death of his accuſer. To this reſolution ſome other citizens (the Medici) were privy; who encouraged him in it, and ſaid, that by ſo doing he would ſufficiently revenge the injuries which he had ſuffered himſelf, and at the ſame time deliver the government from the fear of a man whom it was dangerous to employ, and might be their ruin to diſmiſs. Orlandini therefore, being confirmed in his purpoſe to aſſaſſinate him, ſhut up ſeveral armed men in his apartment; and the next day, when Baldaccio came to attend at the palace, as he did moſt days, to confer with the magiſtracy concerning the pay of his ſoldiers, he was ordered to wait on the ſtandard-bearer immediately, which he did, without ſuſpecting any danger. As ſoon as they met, and had taken a turn or two in the gallery, which is before the chambers of the ſignori, they began to talk about their affairs, and at laſt coming near the door of the apartment where the armed men were concealed, the ſtandard-bearer gave them a ſignal, upon which they inſtantly ruſhed out, and, as Baldaccio had neither arms nor attendants, they ſoon diſpatched him, and threw him out of the palace window,

window, from whence he was carried into the piazza; and after they had cut off his head, his body was expoſed all day as a ſpectacle to the people. This tragical event gave a conſiderable check to Neri's intereſt, and diminiſhed the number of his partiſans. The governors, however, did not ſtop here; for, as they had been now ten years in the adminiſtration, and the authority of the balia was expired, many began both to talk and act with much greater freedom than they thought was conſiſtent with the ſecurity of the ſtate. In order therefore to eſtabliſh themſelves in their power, they judged it neceſſary to revive that court; by which they would have an opportunity of ſtrengthening the hands of their friends, and more effectually depreſſing their enemies. With this view, the councils inſtituted a new balia in the year 1444, which confirmed the preſent magiſtrates in their reſpective departments, veſted the privilege of chooſing the ſignori in a few hands, and new-modelled the chancery of reformation, depoſing the preſident, Philip Peruzzi, and ſetting another perſon at the head of it, who, they were well aſſured, would conform himſelf to their inſtructions. They likewiſe prolonged the baniſhment of ſuch as they had before ſent into exile, impriſoned Giovanni, the ſon of Simone Veſpucci, and deprived all thoſe of their honours and employments that adhered to their enemies; amongſt whom were the ſons of Pietro Baronulli, the whole family of the Seragli, Bartolomeo Fortini, Franciſco Caſtellani, and many others. By ſuch means they at the ſame time regained their former authority and reputation, quaſhed all oppoſition, and got entire poſſeſſion of the government. But Givolamo, not obſerving the bounds that were preſcribed to him in his baniſhment, was 1444.

afterwards declared a rebel; and travelling about Italy to excite other ſtates to make war upon his own country, he was betrayed and apprehended at Lunigiana by one of the governors of that place, who ſent him to Florence, where he was put to death in priſon.

This adminiſtration laſted about eight years, and was indeed a very tyrannical and inſupportable one; for, Coſimo being now grown ſo old and infirm that he could not attend to public affairs with his uſual aſſiduity, the government fell into the hands of a few inſolent and rapacious men, who *knighted Luca Pitti*, for the good ſervices he had done the ſtate; he had alſo rich preſents made him, not only from Coſimo and the ſignori, but from all the principal citizens, ſo that he became very rich, and built him ſeveral magnificent palaces, and finiſhed them by very arbitrary means, extorting more and greater preſents from the chief citizens, whom he obliged to furniſh him with all neceſſary materials, and making the commonalty ſupply him with workmen and artificers. The diviſions which aroſe in Coſimo's party in 1455, were happily compoſed for ſome time, by his moderation and prudence; but in the beginning of
1464. the year 1464 he fell ſick, and ſoon after died;* an event much lamented both by his friends and enemies: for thoſe who did not love him for reaſons of ſtate, ſeeing their governors ſo greedy and ravenous while he was alive, and that they were only reſtrained by the reverence they bore to his perſon, from proceeding to open violence, began to fear, now he was dead, that they ſhould be utterly ruined and devoured. They had but little hopes in his ſon Pietro, who, though a very worthy

* In 1464, in the 75th year of his age. Nerli, p. 49.

UAB Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

man, had ſo weakly a conſtitution, and was yet ſo raw and unexperienced in matters of government, that they thought he would be obliged to comply with the meaſures of the others; and there being no longer any perſon of ſufficient authority left to check their career, they would become every day more and more oppreſſive. The loſs of Coſimo was therefore univerſally regretted, and with great reaſon; for conſidering he was no ſoldier, he was the moſt renowned and illuſtrious citizen that Florence or any other republic had produced in the memory of man. As he ſurpaſſed all others of his time in riches and authority, ſo he far exceeded every one in prudence, liberality, and magnificence; which great and amiable qualities made him the head of his country. Though he ſhewed a truly royal ſpirit in his great works and actions, and was in fact the ſovereign of Florence, yet ſo remarkable were his prudence and moderation, that he never tranſgreſſed thoſe bounds of decency which ought to be obſerved by a modeſt republican. In his little parties of pleaſure, in his converſation, in his alliances, and in every reſpect, he both acted and ſpoke like any other citizen; well knowing that pomp and pageantry, and oſtentatious parade, are not only of little real ſervice, but excite that envy among men which is not incident to ſuch actions as are done with an appearance of modeſty and humility. No man of this time had a more perfect knowledge of mankind in general: in all the various revolutions of ſo fickle and fluctuating a commonwealth, he maintained his authority for the ſpace of thirty-one years; for as he was naturally ſagacious, he foreſaw dangers afar off, and therefore took timely care to prevent them. This great man was born in 1389: the former part of his life was full of troubles and

diſaſters; but afterwards fortune was ſo propitious to him, that not only all thoſe who adhered to him in the public adminiſtration of the commonwealth were aggrandized and enriched by it, but ſuch as negociated his private affairs abroad (as he had factors in almoſt every part of Europe) acquired great wealth; ſo that many families in Florence raiſed immenſe fortunes under his influence, and ſeveral others owed every thing they had entirely to his advice and aſſiſtance. He was continually laying out vaſt ſums in churches, public buildings, and charities of different kinds. He was likewiſe a great patron and benefactor to learned men, and firſt brought Argirophilus to Florence, a Grecian by birth, and the greateſt ſcholar of his age, to inſtruct the youth of Florence in the Greek tongue, and made him preceptor to his ſon and nephew. This writer dedicated his works to the family of Medici, viz. his Tranſlation of Ariſtotle's Ethics and Phyſics, his own book De Regno, &c. Coſimo was at the expence of maintaining Marcilio Ficino, the reſtorer of the Platonic philoſophy, who tranſlated the works of Plato, Plotinus, Jamblicus, Proclus, &c. and had ſo great an eſteem for him, that he gave him a houſe and eſtate near his own ſeat at Careggio, that he might purſue his ſtudies there with more convenience, and entertain him with his converſation at leiſure hours; ſo that he had great merit in the reſurrection of letters, and perhaps in the formation of Machiavel himſelf, to whom the world is ſo much indebted for the revival of reaſon in matters of government, and who appears to have been himſelf ſo much indebted to the writings of Plato and Ariſtotle. Indeed, if ever the riſe of any family to abſolute ſovereignty upon the ruins of a republic could be pardonable,

this

UAB Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

this of the Medici, which was by real virtues, abilities, and beneficence, muſt be acknowledged to be an inſtance of it: but it never can be juſtified, nor ought ever to be excuſed, where there is a poſſibility of eſtabliſhing a conſtitution well-balanced and really free; and it may well be doubted, whether any nation that has once been free can ever become ſo univerſally or even generally corrupted, as not to be able to conduct a government of three well-balanced branches. He died full of glory, and with the higheſt reputation. After his death all the ſtates and princes of Chriſtendom ſent compliments of condolence to his ſon Pietro; and he has this inſcription engraved on his tomb by a public decree, "The Father of his Country." Machiavel is conſcious that he ſhall be ſuſpected of writing a panegyric upon Coſimo, rather than an hiſtorical portrait; and not without reaſon, for he was a dependant on the Medici family; and he has evidently hurried over ſome, and gloſſed over others of Coſimo's arts. He appears to have had more merit, as well as more art, than Auguſtus.—It is ſcarcely worth while to purſue this hiſtory, and relate the conſpiracies which were formed againſt Pietro and the Medici, or the oppreſſion of them. The name of Medici had become a charm in the ears of the Florentines, like that of Hercules among the Greeks, Cæſar among the Romans, Orange among the Dutch, and others without end: and if abſolute power muſt be eſtabliſhed, it was as well in the Medici as the Pazzi. But Leo the Tenth is not ſo excuſeable for not adopting a wiſer plan.

About the time of the death of Coſimo, Lewis the Eleventh of France was embroiled in a troubleſome war, which his barons had raiſed againſt him, at the inſtigation of Francis, duke of Bre-

tagne, and Charles, duke of Burgundy, which they called the war for the public good; * which lay so heavy upon him, that he could give no further assistance to John, duke of Anjou, in his designs upon Genoa and Naples. By these means Ferdinand of Arragon became king of Naples, and count Sforza, duke of Milan and lord of Genoa; and having contracted family alliances together, they began to take all proper measures to establish themselves and their posterity in their governments. For this purpose it was judged necessary that the king should, in the first place, make sure of such of the nobility as had taken part with John of Anjou against him in the late wars. The king made use of every artifice to reconcile his nobility to him, in which he at last succeeded; for they saw that if they continued in arms against their sovereign, they must inevitably be ruined; but if they came to an accommodation with him, or submitted to his mercy, they might obtain a pardon. These noblemen accordingly made their submission to him, but were afterwards all put to death at different times, upon one pretence or other.

1465. In 1465 Paul, the second Venetian, was elected pope; and the next year Sforza, duke of Milan, died, and was succeeded by his son Galeazzo, an event that not only added fuel to the animosities that were rekindling in Florence, but occasioned them to burst out into a flame; for after the death of Cosimo, his son Peter, being left heir to his riches and authority, thought proper to attach himself to Neroni, a man of very great power and reputation in the city, and of whom Cosimo had so great an opinion, that upon his death-bed he

* Philip de Comines.

gave

UAB Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

gave Peter a ſtrict charge to conſult him, and to be guided entirely by his advice in every thing that related either to the management of his own eſtate, or the adminiſtration of the public. In conſequence of this command, Peter ſent for him, and having told him how great a confidence his father had repoſed in him, he hoped he would aſſiſt him both in conducting his private concerns, and in the government of the city. Neroni promiſed to ſerve him faithfully; but when they came to examine Coſimo's books, they found his affairs in very great confuſion: Neroni, therefore, who was more influenced by motives of ſelf-intereſt and ambition than either by the friendſhip he had profeſſed for Peter, or the remembrance of the obligations he lay under to his father, thinking he had now a fair opportunity of ruining that reputation and authority which Coſimo left him heir to, gave him a piece of advice, which, to all appearance indeed, ſeemed both equitable and neceſſary, but ultimately tended to his deſtruction. He repreſented to him in how great diſorder his affairs were, and what large ſums of money he would have immediate occaſion for, if he intended to ſupport his family intereſt, and the reputation they had acquired of opulence and power in the commonwealth; and that there could be no relief or expedient ſo proper as to call in the debts that were owing to him, both from foreigners and his fellow-citizens: for Coſimo, out of his natural generoſity, and in order to eſtabliſh an influence at home, and gain friends abroad, had always been ſo ready to open his purſe to every one who ſtood in need of his aſſiſtance, that thoſe debts aroſe to a prodigious amount. To this propoſal, which ſeemed but juſt and reaſonable, Peter conſented, and, like an honeſt man, reſolved to make uſe of his own ſubſtance only in that emergency:

but he had hardly called upon two or three of his debtors, before the whole city was in an uproar, every one upbraiding him with avarice and ingratitude, and loading him with all manner of reproaches and ignominious names, as if he had come to plunder them of their own property, inſtead of demanding payment of a lawful debt. Neroni, ſeeing the general reſentment which his own council had excited againſt Peter, turned his back upon him, and entered into a combination with Lucca Pitti, Sodorini, and Acciaivoli, to deprive him of all power and authority in the ſtate. The end they all had in view was the ſame; but their motives to purſue it very different. Pitti was ambitious to ſucceed Coſimo in the government of the republic; and became ſo great after his death, that he diſdained the thoughts of ſtooping to Peter: Neroni, who knew that Pitti was not equal to ſo great a charge, thought, that if they could by any means get rid of Peter, the chief power muſt of neceſſity in a ſhort time devolve upon him: Sodorini was deſirous that the city ſhould enjoy more liberty, and be governed by the proper magiſtrates, as it uſed to be in former times: Acciaivoli had a particular quarrel with the Medici; thinking Coſimo had not uſed him well in an award between his ſon and his wife, and not being able to revenge himſelf upon Coſimo, was now determined to do it upon Peter. However, they all availed themſelves of the ſame pretext, and ſaid, that they neither deſired nor aimed at any thing further, than that the republic might be governed by lawful magiſtrates, and not by a little junto of particular perſons. The failure of ſeveral merchants about that time ſtill increaſed the clamour that was raiſed againſt Peter, and gave the people freſh occaſion to revile him; for they

they made no ſcruple of imputing the blame to him, and ſaid, that the ſudden and unexpected calling in of his money had been the occaſion of thoſe bankruptcies, to the great loſs and diſcredit of the merchants in particular, and the prejudice of the whole city. Beſides all which, as he was going to marry Lorenzo, his eldeſt ſon, to Clariſſa degli Urſini, every body took occaſion from thence to calumniate him; publicly declaring, that ſince he could not think any match in Florence good enough for his ſon, it was plain he did not regard them any longer in the light of fellow-citizens, but was taking his meaſures to make himſelf their ſovereign. From ſuch a temper in the people, theſe ringleaders of ſedition promiſed themſelves certain ſucceſs, eſpecially as the greater part of the citizens were ſo bewitched with the name of liberty, which they had made uſe of to varniſh over their private deſigns, that they cheerfully liſted under their banners. But while theſe ill humours were fermenting, there were ſome who, out of a real love for their country, and abhorrence of civil diſcords, reſolved to try if they could not palliate them, for a while at leaſt, by turning the attention of the people upon ſome more entertaining object; conſidering, that an idle populace is generally made uſe of as a tool to ſerve the purpoſes of ſuch as attempt any innovation or change of government. To employ them, therefore, in ſuch a manner as might beſt divert their thoughts, and prevent them from entering into cabals and conſpiracies againſt the government, and at the ſame time to conſole them in ſome meaſure, after their mourning for the loſs of Coſimo, who had now been dead a year, theſe citizens thought it would be no bad expedient to revive the public ſpectacles with which the people

uſed

uſed to be entertained. Tournaments alſo were inſtituted, in which Lorenzo carried away the prize from all others. But as ſoon as theſe entertainments were over, the citizens returned to their former machinations with more ardour than ever: from whence aroſe great troubles and diviſions, which were much inflamed by the expiration of the balia, and the death of Francis Sforza, duke of Milan. Galeazzo, the new duke, ſent ambaſſadors to Florence, to confirm the treaty of alliance that had been concluded between his father and the republic; one article of which was, that the Florentines ſhould pay that prince a certain yearly ſubſidy. The principal of Peter's enemies took the opportunity which this demand furniſhed, of publicly oppoſing him in council, and refuſed to comply with it. We may paſs over the long, though entertaining account, of the commotions, intrigues, and civil war between one party, whoſe object was the ruin of Peter and the Medici family, both in their private affairs and in their public influence; and the other, who exerted themſelves for their preſervation. The laſt prevailed, and the other was baniſhed and confiſcated. Some of theſe fled to Venice, and harangued the ſenate of that republic into a war againſt Florence and the Medici; but this war was unſucceſsful, peace was ſoon made, and the Florentine exiles, deprived of all hopes of ever returning to their country, diſperſed into different places. Tranquillity abroad ſucceeded; but now the Florentines were grievouſly haraſſed and oppreſſed at home by the tyranny and ambition of their fellow-citizens; for Peter was ſo diſabled by his infirmities, that he had it not in his power to curb the inſolence of his own partiſans, or provide any remedy: he ſent, however, for the principal of them, and

ſharply

UAB Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

ſharply reprimanded them. It is generally believed that, if he had lived, he would have recalled the exiles, to bridle the tyranny and rapacity of his own friends: but death, in the fifty-third year of his age, put an end to theſe good deſigns. He left two ſons, Lorenzo and Giuliano, both very promiſing.

Sodorini was at this time the moſt conſiderable among the leading men of the ſtate; and for his prudence and authority, in great reputation, not only in Florence, but with all the princes of Italy: ſo that after the death of Peter he had the higheſt reverence and reſpect ſhewn him by all the citizens, who daily reſorted in great numbers to his houſe; and ſeveral ſtates and princes addreſſed their letters to him, as head of the commonwealth. But as he was a wiſe man, and had thoroughly balanced his own fortune, and the circumſtances of his family, with thoſe of the Medici, he modeſtly declined returning any anſwer to thoſe letters; and gave his fellow-citizens to underſtand, that it was not to him, but the Medici, that they ought to pay their court. He aſſembled the heads of all the chief families in the city, and preſented to them Lorenzo and Giuliano, and ſaid, that if they were deſirous to live in peace and union at home, and ſecure from foreign invaſions, it was neceſſary to continue their obſervance to the houſe of Medici, and ſupport thoſe young gentlemen in the authority which their anceſtors had enjoyed: that it was but natural to ſhew the ſame regard to the family which they had ſo long been uſed to do, and therefore it muſt rather be a pleaſure than a grievance to them; for if mankind were apt to be fond of novelties, they were, for the moſt part, as ſoon diſguſted with them; that it had been found much more eaſy to maintain one in power, whoſe

UAB Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

whoſe enemies were in a manner extinguiſhed by time, than to raiſe another which muſt unavoidably be ſubject to new emulations, and ſpeedy ruin, from many cauſes and unforeſeen accidents. Lorenzo too, though very young, made a ſpeech with much gravity and modeſty; the citizens, before the aſſembly broke up, ſolemnly engaged to be guardians of their youth, and they, on the other hand, as ſolemnly promiſed to reverence them at all times as their protectors and parents. After which, Lorenzo and Giuliano were looked upon as the heads of the republic, and putting themſelves under the guidance and direction of Sodorini, the ſtate ſeemed to be perfectly compoſed, neither diſtracted by inteſtine diſcords, nor embroiled in foreign wars. But Bernardo degli Nardi ſoon found means to excite the ruined families, who had been exiled at the fall of Lucca Pitti, to kindle another war, which was extinguiſhed only by the deſtruction of the town of Prato. After this inſurrection, which was ſuddenly raiſed, and ſoon ſuppreſſed, the citizens of Florence began to ſink into luxury and effeminacy. The youth growing more diſſolute than ever they had been before, and having nothing elſe to do, threw away their time and eſtates in dreſs, in feaſting, in gaming, in women, and other ſuch diſſipations. Their whole ſtudy and emulation was to ſurpaſs each other in fine cloaths.

A new war broke out on occaſion of a mine of alum diſcovered at Volterra. Sodorini thought a "lean peace better than a fat war;" but Lorenzo, thinking this a favourable opportunity of diſtinguiſhing himſelf, and being ſupported in his opinion by thoſe who envied the authority of Sodorini, his opinion prevailed, and Volterra was reduced.

In

In 1476 happened the aſſaſſination of Galeazzo, duke of Milan, and the deſtruction of the aſſaſſins, who, as uſual in ſuch caſes, were left unſupported, both by the nobility and the multitude who had at firſt encouraged them. Such examples ought to be warnings to princes, to reign in ſuch a manner as to make themſelves honoured and beloved by their ſubjects: and to others, againſt truſting to nobles or the multitude, except in a very good cauſe; for though theſe may be diſcontented to the laſt degree, they will ſeldom ſtir a foot to their aſſiſtance in diſtreſs or danger. 1476.

After the Medici had gained ſuch an aſcendant, by the defeat of their enemies, in 1466, they grew ſo powerful, that they in a manner engroſſed the government of the republic wholly to themſelves; and their power was ſo great, that ſuch as were diſaffected to their adminiſtration were either obliged to ſubmit to it with patience, or endeavour to ſhake off the yoke, by clandeſtine machinations and conſpiracies; which being attended with great difficulties and dangers, for the moſt part end in the ruin of the conſpirators, and only ſerve to aggrandize and ſtrengthen thoſe ſtill more againſt whom they are formed. Italy was divided into two confederacies; the pope and the king of Naples were on one ſide; the Venetians, the duke of Milan, and the Florentines, on the other. When Philip de Medici, archbiſhop of Piſa, died, the pope appointed an enemy of the family of Medici (Salviati) to ſucceed him. The ſignori refuſed to give him poſſeſſion of the ſee. The Medici were diſcountenanced upon all occaſions at the court of Rome, while the greateſt reſpect and partiality were ſhewn there to the Pazzi, a family indeed which at that time was one

one of the richeſt and moſt powerful in Florence: Coſimo, conſidering their opulence and quality, had married his grand-daughter Bianca to Guglielmo de Pazzi, in hopes of uniting the two families more ſtrictly, and preventing all jealouſies and emulation betwixt them by ſuch an alliance. But ſo vain and fallacious are all human deſigns, the event proved quite contrary, for ſome of Lorenzo's friends having inſinuated to him that it would be dangerous to him, and a diminution of his own authority, to throw any more power into the hands of that family, he would not ſuffer Giacopo, nor any of his brothers or nephews, to enjoy ſuch honours and offices as they ſeemed to deſerve in common with their fellow citizens. The Pazzi, therefore, were ſo exaſperated at this uſage, that the Medici began to be afraid of them, and the apprehenſions of the one ſeemed to increaſe in proportion to the reſentment of the other; for in all competitions for places of honour and profit, the Pazzi, how much ſoever they might be favoured by the ſuffrages of the people, were always ſure to be ſet aſide and rejected by the magiſtracy. The Pazzi, therefore, thinking it intolerable that people of their rank and fortune ſhould be treated in that injurious manner, began to meditate revenge. He accordingly concerted a conſpiracy with many other perſons, and attempted to aſſaſſinate both the Medici at church. Giuliano was murdered with ſuch circumſtances of perfidy as would diſgrace the moſt infamous cauſe, much more a cauſe dignified with the name of liberty. Lorenzo defended himſelf with great bravery, and eſcaped with a ſlight wound. The inſurgents rode about the town, and cried, Liberty! Liberty! and called upon the

the people to join them. But ſuch was the influence of the Medici, and ſo much were they beloved, on account of their liberality and other princely qualities, that the reſt of their fellow-citizens did not deſire to ſee any change of government. The whole city was raiſed, and Lorenzo ſafely conducted by a great number of armed men to his own houſe: the palace was recovered by the people, and all thoſe who had ſeized upon it either taken or killed; the ſtreets reſounded with ſhouts of Long live the Medici! while the limbs of the conſpirators who had been killed, were either carried upon halberts, or dragged round the city; every one endeavouring to ſhew his reſentment, both in words and actions, againſt the Pazzi: for they not only plundered their houſes, but hurried Franciſco out of his bed to the palace, and there hung him up, cloſe by the archbiſhop and his aſſociates. So great was the favour and intereſt which the family of the Medici had gained among the people, by their prudence and liberality, that there was not a citizen of any degree whatſoever who did not go to Lorenzo, and make him an offer both of his perſon and fortune. Rinato, and Giacono de Pazzi, were both apprehended, condemned, and executed, with ſo many others, that the ſtreets and highways were full of their limbs. None of them were much lamented, except Rinato, who had always been eſteemed a prudent man, and void of that family pride which was laid to the charge of all the reſt. After the conſpiracy was ſuppreſſed, and the authors of it puniſhed, the funeral of Giuliano was ſolemnized with great pomp, and attended by all the citizens. He left one ſon, born ſome months after his death, and named Giulio, who was afterwards pope Clement

ment the Seventh. The pope and the king of Naples, when they were diſappointed of bringing about a change of government in Florence, by under-hand machinations, now reſolved to attempt it by open war: but the good fortune of the family, Lorenzo's addreſs, and the ſteady attachment of the Florentines to him, carried them ſafely through this danger too. After the quarrels among the more conſiderable ſtates were compoſed, there happened many other diſturbances for the courſe of ſeveral years, in Romagna, La Marca d'Ancona, and Siena; they were more frequent in Siena than any where elſe, after the departure of the duke of Calabria, in 1488; but after many changes and revolutions there, in which ſometimes the commonalty and ſometimes the nobility prevailed, the nobility at laſt effectually ſuppreſſing the other party, Pandolpho and Giacopo Petruccio, one of whom was in the higheſt repute for his wiſdom, and the other for his valour, became in a manner princes of that city. As for the Florentines, they lived very happily, and in perfect tranquillity, from the end of the war till the death of Lorenzo, in 1492. For Lorenzo, having eſtabliſhed a general peace throughout Italy by his great wiſdom and prudence, had began to turn his thoughts entirely to the aggrandizement of the republic, and the care of his own family. In the firſt place he married his eldeſt ſon Peter to Alphonſina, daughter to Cavaliere Urſini, and procured a cardinal's hat for Giovanni his ſecond ſon, who was not quite thirteen years of age when he was promoted to that dignity, of which there had been no example before; but he aſcended by degrees through all the preferments of the church, till he was exalted to the pontificate, under the name of Leo the Tenth. His third

UAB Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

third ſon Giulano was but an infant. He alſo diſpoſed of his daughters very much to their advantage. In his mercantile affairs he was rather unfortunate; for ſuch was the extravagance of his factors, who lived more like princes than private men, that they had diſſipated the greater part of his merchandize; ſo that he was often obliged to borrow large ſums of the public. His chief deſire was to promote union among the people, and ſupport the nobility in that degree of honour and reſpect that was due to them. He ſhewed great favour to thoſe who excelled in any art, and was a very liberal patron to learned men. He was paſſionately fond of poetry, muſic, and architecture. He founded the univerſity of Piſa. Immediately after his death ſuch ſparks of diſcord began to re-kindle, as ſhortly broke out into a flame, and preyed upon the vitals of Italy.

Peter, the great-grandſon of the firſt Coſimo, having entered into a league with France, Louis XII. without the conſent of the ſignori, was ejected by the Florentines, and retired to Venice; ſo that the Florentines recovered and enjoyed their ancient liberties till 1512, when Ferdinand, king of Spain, reſtored the family of Medici, which was expelled again in 1529. In 1530 Charles V. ſeized upon Florence, and made Alexander de Medici, great-grandſon of Lorenzo, and who married his natural daughter Margaret, ſovereign and duke of Florence. Alexander was murdered about ſeven years after, and having left no children was ſucceeded by his brother John, whoſe ſon Coſmo, was created grand-duke of Tuſcany, by pope Pius V. in 1569. Voltaire ſays, that the period while Florence was under the government of the Medici ought to be called the Medicean age, as the polite arts and ſciences were then

UAB Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

carried to the higheſt degree of perfection: then it was that thoſe great geniuſes, Arioſto, Machiavel, Guicchiardini, Cardinal Bembo, Triſſiano, Caſa, Bernini, Raphael, Michael Angelo, Titian, Paul Veroneſe, and ſo many others, adorned the age, and rendered their names immortal.

Machiavel's introduction to his ſeventh book, according to his cuſtom, is full of grave reflections. "Thoſe are much miſtaken, who think "any republican government can continue long "united."—So are they who think that any deſpotical or monarchical government can continue long united; and it is as eaſy, and more ſo, to form and preſerve the union of a republican as of a monarchical government. A conſtitution formed upon the nature of man, and providing againſt his diſcontented temper, inſtead of truſting to what is not in him (his moderation and contentment in power) may preſerve union, harmony, and tranquillity, better than any deſpotiſm. Republics that truſt the content of one aſſembly or two aſſemblies are as credulous, ignorant, and ſervile, as nations that truſt the moderation of a ſingle man. And it is as true of one as the other, ubi ſolitudinem faciunt pacem appellant. "Diſ-"ferences and diviſions for the moſt part are "prejudicial to republics; and yet it is cer-"tain there are ſome that are of ſervice to "them." The ſame is true of deſpotiſms and monarchies. Diviſions are hurtful for the moſt part, yet ſome are beneficial. "Thoſe indeed "are hurtful that are attended with parties and "factions; but when that is not the caſe, they "tend to the benefit of the commonwealth. As "it is impoſſible, therefore, for any legiſlator or "founder of a republic entirely to prevent feuds

"and

UAB Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

" and animoſities in it, it ought to be his chief " care to provide againſt their growing up into " factions." This is eaſily done by diſtinct and independent legiſlative, executive, and judicial powers, and by two councils in the legiſlature. Factions may be infinitely better managed in ſuch a republic, than in a deſpotiſm or monarchy.—" It " muſt be conſidered then, that there are two " roads to popularity in ſuch ſtates, the one " through public ſtations, the other through pri- " vate life. In the former it is acquired by gain- " ing ſome ſignal victory, by the prudent and " careful diſcharge of an embaſſy, or by giving " wiſe and ſucceſsful advice in council: in the " latter, by beneficence to one's fellow citizens, " by ſcreening them from the magiſtrates, by " ſupplying them with money, by promoting " them to honours and employments even when " they do not deſerve them, by entertaining the " people with plays and ſpectacles, and diſtri- " buting largeſſes among them. This manner of " proceeding procures followers and partiſans: " and as popularity thus obtained is dangerous " to the ſtate, becauſe it is commonly applied to " ſerve private and ſelf-intereſted views; ſo the " reputation that is acquired the other way is of " credit and advantage to it, when not made a " tool to party and faction, becauſe it conduces " to the good of the whole. And though emu- " lation and envy will always ſpring up even " among citizens of the latter ſort, yet, as they " have no partiſans that follow them for their " own private ends, they cannot hurt the com- " monwealth; on the contrary, they muſt of ne- " ceſſity be of ſervice to it, for this very emula- " tion will naturally excite their utmoſt endeavours " to excel each other in their merits towards their

" country, and make them *keep ſo ſtrict a watch* " *over one another's actions, that none of them will* " *have it in their power to tranſgreſs the bounds* " *of good citizens.* But the diviſions in Florence " conſtantly ended in factions, and therefore were " always pernicious to the republic; nor did any " one of thoſe factions continue united any longer " than it had ſubdued the adverſe party; for " when once that was done, and conſequently all " fear and reſtraint were at an end, it immediately " ſubdivided, and ſplit itſelf into others."—In truth, it is impoſſible that diviſions, in any form of ſimple government, ſhould ever end in the public good, or in any thing but faction. The government itſelf is a faction and an abſolute power in a party, which being without fear and reſtraint, is as giddy in one of theſe forms as in any other. " De l'abſolu pouvoir, vous ignorez l'yvreſs." It muſt therefore divide, if it is not reſtrained by another faction; when that is the caſe, as ſoon as the other faction prevails they divide, and ſo on: but when the three natural orders in ſociety, the high, the middle, and the low, are all repreſented in the government, and conſtitutionally placed to watch each other, and reſtrain each other mutually by the laws, it is then only that an emulation takes place for the public good, and diviſions turn to the advantage of the nation.

Coſimo's party got the upper hand in Florence
1434. in the year 1434; but as there were ſtill many very powerful men left on the ſide that was depreſſed, they yet ſtood in ſome awe of them, and therefore thought proper, not only to continue united, but to behave themſelves with moderation; nor were they guilty of any miſconduct or oppreſſive act of conſequence enough to draw upon

UAB Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

upon them the hatred of the people; ſo that whenever they had occaſion for the ſuffrages of their fellow-citizens to renew their authority, they always found them ready to re-eſtabliſh the chiefs of their party in any office they deſired: accordingly, from 1434 to 1455, a period of twenty-one years, they were ſix times appointed by the general council to fill the balia. There were in theſe times two very powerful citizens in Florence, Coſimo and Neri; the latter of whom had acquired his reputation in the public way, ſo that he had many friends, but few followers and partiſans. Coſimo, on the other hand, having gained his authority both by his public and private behaviour, had not only many friends, but partiſans and dependents alſo; and theſe two continuing ſtrictly united, never found any difficulty in obtaining whatſoever they aſked from the people, as their power was founded upon the favour of the public. But Neri dying in the year 1455, and the adverſe faction being utterly ſuppreſſed, this adminiſtration met with much oppoſition before they recovered their former authority; and chiefly from Coſimo's friends, who being now grown very powerful in the ſtate themſelves, and freed from all further apprehenſions of their enemies, were likewiſe deſirous to lower his popularity. This jealouſy gave beginning to the troubles that broke out in the year 1446; for thoſe who were then the leading men adviſed their fellow-citizens, when they were aſſembled in the general council, to take the ſtate of the commonwealth into conſideration, not to create any more balias, but to reſume the imborſations, and to chooſe their magiſtrates by lot out of the purſes that had been formerly filled. To cure them of this phrenzy, Coſimo had no other remedy, but either to

Coſimo. Neri. 1446.

UAB Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

ſeize forcibly upon the government, by the aſſiſtance of ſuch partiſans as ſtill adhered to him, and to cruſh all oppoſition at once; or to let things take their courſe, and wait till time ſhould convince his friends that they were labouring only to deſtroy their own power and reputation, and not his. He choſe the latter expedient; for he knew he ſhould run no riſque in that, as the purſes were filled with the names of ſuch as were well affected to him, and that he might conſequently take the adminiſtration into his hands again whenever he pleaſed. He ſuffered them therefore to proceed to an imborſation; but when the new magiſtracy was drawn, and every one thought they had now fully recovered their former liberties, the magiſtrates began to act in their reſpective departments, not according to the dictates and directions of thoſe leaders, but as they thought fit themſelves; ſo that ſometimes the friend of one great man, ſometimes the creature of another, met with an unexpected rebuff; and thoſe who before uſed to ſee their houſes filled with preſents and ſolicitors, now had neither ſubſtance ſufficient to live upon, nor even common ſervants to attend them. They likewiſe had the mortification to ſee themſelves reduced to a level with ſuch as they had uſed to look down upon with the higheſt contempt and diſdain; and thoſe who before were their equals, now ſuddenly advanced far above them. They had neither honour nor reſpect ſhewn them by any one; on the contrary, they were inſulted and abuſed wherever they went; and every body made ſo free with their private characters, and public conduct, that they ſoon began to be aware that it was not Coſimo, but themſelves that had loſt their authority. Coſimo, in the mean time, took little or no notice of theſe things;

things; but when any thing was deliberated upon that he thought would be agreeable to the people, he was the firſt that promoted the execution of it. But what ſtruck the greateſt terror into theſe grandees, and gave Coſimo a fair opportunity of making them repent of their paſt behaviour, was the renewal of the cataſto, that took place in 1427, by which the taxes were regulated and proportioned by law, and not levied according to the caprice or pleaſure of particular men. This law therefore being revived, and officers appointed to ſee it executed, the grandees having had a conſultation together, went to wait upon Coſimo, and intreated him to uſe his endeavours to deliver both them and himſelf out of the hands of the plebeians, and to new-model the government in ſuch a manner, that they might retrieve the reputation which formerly had made him ſo powerful, and them ſo much reſpected; to which Coſimo made anſwer, "that he would do what lay in his power for that purpoſe with all his heart, provided it could be brought about legally and quietly, and with the good-will and approbation of the people; but that he never would conſent to violent meaſures, or uſing force of any kind." They then endeavoured to get a law paſſed in the councils for a new balia; but finding it would not go down, they returned to Coſimo, and beſought him in the humbleſt manner, that he would make uſe of his intereſt to get it paſſed: but with this Coſimo peremptorily refuſed to comply, being determined to make them fully ſenſible of their error. Upon which Donato Cocchi, who was the gonfalonier of juſtice, reſolved to ſet up a balia without his concurrence: but Coſimo raiſed ſuch a ſpirit among the reſt of the magiſtrates, that

UAB Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

they not only oppoſed him with the utmoſt vehemence, but laughed at him, and treated him with ſo much ſcorn and deriſion, that it drove him ſtark mad, and he was carried back to his own houſe raging and frantic. Luca Pitti,* a bold and reſolute man, being now made gonfalonier of juſtice, Coſimo reſolved to leave the management to him; ſo that if any miſcarriage ſhould happen, or any odium be incurred, it might be thrown upon the gonfalonier, and not upon him. Luca was very importunate with the people to appoint a balia; but perceiving it was to no purpoſe, he not only treated thoſe who were members of the councils with great inſolence, but threatened them, and ſoon after put his threats in execution: for having filled the palace with armed men, in 1453 he called the people together in the piazza, and there compelled them, by force of arms,‡ to do that which they would not ſo much as hear of before. After they had thus reſumed the government, they created a balia; and the new magiſtrates, at the inſtigation of a few particular perſons, who adviſed them to ſupport an authority with terror which they had uſurped by force, began their adminiſtration with ſending Givolamo Machiavelli and ſome others into exile, and depriving many more of their honours and employments.

* Luca Pitti, tenuto uomo animoſo, et molto più audace, che ſavio, o prudente. Nerli, p. 48.

‡ Pero avendo Luca Pitti già conſumato il primo meſe dei ſuo magiſtrato, non laſcio paſſare, molti giorni del ſecondo che avendo diſpoſto i ſignori ſuoi compagni, et provviſto il palazzo d'arme, e di forze, e Coſimo, e gli altri della parte eſſendoſi provveduti, e armati in favore de' ſignori, fecero chiamare il popolo in piazza e ſi venne al parlamento ſecondo il coſtume ſolito mediante il quale ſi creò una nuova balià, e ſi riſtrinſe in quello lo ſtato, ordinandoſi nuove imborſazioni, &c. Nerli, p. 49.

Guic-

UAB
Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

Guicchiardin begins his hiſtory of the wars in Italy, where Machiavel concludes that of Florence, viz. with the death of Lorenzo de Medici in April 1492, the ſame year that the ſagacity, 1492. fortitude, and good fortune, of that ever memorable native of Coguretto, a village near Genoa, Chriſtopher Columbus, of plebeian birth, but of noble genius, in the ſervice of Ferdinand and Iſabella of Spain,* laid the firſt foundation of the conſtitutions of the United States of America. The death of Lorenzo was a ſevere misfortune to his country, which had flouriſhed, under the influence of his prudence, reputation, and genius, in all the bleſſings and embelliſhments of a long and ſecure peace; and very inconvenient to all Italy, who regarded him as a principal counterbalance to Ferdinand of Naples, and Sforza of Milan, princes as ambitious as they were powerful. Peter the Second, the eldeſt of his three ſons, who ſucceeded him without contradiction, was not qualified by experience or abilities for ſo important a ſtation. Deviating early from the councils of his father, and without conſulting the principal citizens, he was wholly directed by Orſini, a relation both by his mother and his wife, but a dependent of Ferdinand. This new connection, ſo prudently avoided by his father, excited the jealouſy of Sforza, and was the ſource of all the enſuing evils. Without reciting the particulars of his vanity, raſhneſs, and imprudence, eſpecially a fooliſh treaty with France, which he made, without conſulting the magiſtrates,

* Muratori, Annals. tom. ix. p. 367, anno 1492. Guicchiardin, lib. 6. Americus Veſpucius, who began his voyages in 1497, the two firſt of which he made by order of Ferdinand of Caſtile, and the two laſt by order of Emanuel of Portugal, was a native of Florence.

on

UAB Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

1494. on the ninth of November 1494, as he was going into the palace, Nerli, a youth of noble birth and great wealth, at the head of ſome others of the magiſtracy, ſtood armed at the gates,* and forbid him to enter. The populace, as ſoon as the report of this inſurrection ſpread in the town, inſtantly took arms. Peter, deſtitute of courage as well as advice, returned to his own houſe, where he was informed that the magiſtrates had declared him a rebel; upon which he fled with precipitation to Bologna, and was followed by his two brothers, Giovanni the cardinal, and Giuliano, who were likewiſe attainted. Thus, through the raſhneſs and levity of a thoughtleſs youth, the family of the Medici fell, for the preſent, from a ſovereign power which they had exerciſed for ſixty years. From Bologna they went to Venice. After ſome time the king, their ally, obtained a reverſal of Peter's attainder, and that of his two brothers, and a reſtitution of their effects, on condition that Peter ſhould not approach within an hundred miles of the borders of the republic, which was deſigned to prevent him from ſettling in Rome; nor his brothers within an hundred of the city. After the exile of Peter and his brothers, the city of Florence attempted once more to reform its government;† but, ſays Nerli, the citizens who ought to have reformed the ſtate, fell into the ſame error with all who had preceded them in ſimilar enterprizes, and founded the new government, as others had done whoſe ſteps they followed, upon parties and civil factions, as may be ſeen in the whole hiſtory of Florence, and for the benefit and

* Nerli, p. 62. Muratori, Annal. tom. ix. p. 374, anno 1494. Fu egli dichiarato co'fratelli ribello, poſta taglia contro le loro perſone, e poſcia meſſo a ſacco il ricchiſſimo loro palagio.

† Nerli, p. 63.

convenience

convenience of the ſuperior party and more powerful factions, and not at all for the benefit of the generality, or the univerſal good; and therefore it was impoſſible that a pacific and quiet republic ſhould ſucceed, or a durable government be eſtabliſhed. They created, however, according to the ancient cuſtom of the city, and by way of a parliament, always a ſcene of violence, and inconſiſtent with all civil modeſty, twenty Accoppiatori, or aſſociates, with authority to imborſe the ſignori from time to time, and to create, with other reſtleſs diſturbers of the public peace, the principal magiſtrates; and they reſolved, that Lorenzo di Pierfranceſco di Medici, who then declared himſelf one of the inhabitants, de popolani, though under age, ſhould be one of the twenty; and this was accompliſhed by their extraordinary reputation and influence, and thus he was made the head of the new government; and this whole revolution changed nothing but the head, and not at all the nature of the government. It was in this convention, which Neri calls a parliament, that thoſe elegant ſpeeches, which Guicchiardin* has preſerved or compoſed, one for Soderini, and the other for Veſpucci, are ſuppoſed to have been made: but it is ſurpriſing to ſee, that neither orators ſo eloquent and able, nor an hiſtorian who ſo elegantly reports the debate, appear to have once thought of the natural and neceſſary remedy. One is for a government ſimply popular, and the other for a form ſimply ariſtocratical; but neither thinks of an equal mixture of the three forms, nor even of the two, nor does an idea occur of ſeparating the legiſlative from the executive power. Soderini admits that, among all

Accoppiatori.

* Guicchiardin, lib. ii. p. 41, Ven. 1574.

writers

writers upon government, praiſes have been more liberally beſtowed upon the adminiſtration of a ſingle prince, and upon that of a few of the beſt citizens, than upon any popular government; but he thinks that the deſire of liberty is ſo natural or habitual in that city, and the condition of the citizens ſo proportioned to that equality which is the neceſſary foundation of a popular government, that this ought, without all doubt, to be preferred to all others: he even thinks a queſtion could not be made of this, as in all their conſultations it had ever been determined with univerſal conſent, that the city ſhould be governed in the name and by the authority of the people. But the diverſity of opinions aroſe from this, that ſome would cheerfully conſent in the regulation of the convention to that form of a republic with which the city governed itſelf before her liberty was oppreſſed by the family of the Medici; others, among whom he reckons himſelf, judging a government ſo ordered to have, in many things, rather the name than the effects of a popular government, and terrified with the accidents which frequently reſult from ſuch governments, deſire a more perfect form, which may preſerve concord and ſecurity to the citizens, bleſſings which, neither from reaſon nor experience, can be expected in this city, if it is not under a government dependent entirely on the power of the people, which muſt however be well ordered by two fundamental regulations: the firſt of which is, that all the magiſtrates and officers, both in the city and all its dominions, ſhall be diſtributed, from time to time, by an *univerſal council* of all thoſe who, according to our laws, are qualified for a participation in government; without the approbation of which council new laws cannot be deliberated;

thus,

UAB
Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

thus, it not being in the power of private citizens, nor of any particular conſpiracy or intrigue, to diſtribute dignities or authority, none will be excluded from them by the paſſions or caprice of others, but they ſhall be beſtowed according to the virtues and merits of men: by conſequence, every one muſt endeavour by his virtues, good manners, and by rendering himſelf agreeable both in public and private life, to open his way to honours; every one muſt abſtain from vices and injuries to others, and, in one word, from all thoſe things which are odious in a well-conſtituted city. It will not be in the power of any one, nor of a few, by new laws, or by the authority of a magiſtrate, to introduce another government, or to pretend to alter this, but by the reſolution of the univerſal council.—The ſecond fundamental regulation is this, that all the moſt important deliberations, as thoſe of peace and war, the examination of new laws, and generally all thoſe things which are neceſſary to the adminiſtration of ſuch a city and dominion, ſhall be treated by magiſtrates, particularly deſtined to this ſervice, in a ſelect council of the moſt experienced and prudent citizens, who ſhall be deputed by the popular council; for as the knowledge of theſe affairs of ſtate is not found in every underſtanding, precautions ſhould be taken that the government may not fall into hands incapable of conducting it; and celerity and ſecrecy, which are often indiſpenſable, cannot be conſulted or preſerved in the deliberations of a multitude: nor is it neceſſary for the maintenance of liberty, that ſuch things ſhould be treated by large numbers; for liberty remains ſecure at all times when the diſtribution of magiſtracies, and the deliberations on new laws, depend on univerſal conſent.—Theſe two points

being ſecured, the government will be truly popular, the liberty of the city well founded, and a laudable and durable form of a republic eſtabliſhed. He then compares his project with the plan of Venice, to which it has not however the ſmalleſt reſemblance; and proceeds: "This city of ours has never enjoyed a government like this, and therefore our public affairs have been conſtantly expoſed to frequent mutations; at one time trampled down by the violence of tyranny; at another, torn by the ambitious and avaricious diſſenſions of the few; now ſhaken by the licentious fury of the multitude: and although cities are built for no end but the tranquillity, ſecurity, and happy life of the inhabitants, the fruits of our government, our felicity, our repoſe, have been the continual confiſcations of our eſtates, the baniſhments and the executions on the ſcaffold of our miſerable citizens."

This is the ſubſtance of Soderini's oration, in which he is fully ſenſible of the tyranny and ſlavery of alternate factions, and the conſequent miſeries with which the hiſtory of Florence was filled: but inſtead of propoſing a rational remedy, he is for aggravating the evil. The executive power, the appointment of officers, had been the cauſe of diſcord; he now only propoſes to give thoſe appointments to the multitude, inſtead of a ſenate; to the univerſal, inſtead of the particular council: the only effect of which would be, that more heads would be turned, and more paſſions inflamed.

Veſpuci. The oration of Soderini was anſwered by Veſpuci, a famous lawyer, and a man of ſingular genius and addreſs. "If," ſays he, "a government, inſtituted in the manner propoſed by Soderini, moſt excellent citizens, would as eaſily produce ſuch

ſuch deſirable fruits, he would certainly diſcover a moſt corrupted character who ſhould wiſh for any other for a regulation of our country. He would be a moſt pernicious citizen, who ſhould not love, without reſerve, a form of a republic, in which virtue, merit, and the real value of men, ſhould be above all things acknowledged and honoured. But I confeſs myſelf ignorant, how it is poſſible to hope that a regiment, placed abſolutely in the power of the people, can be productive of ſuch mighty bleſſings. I am, on the contrary, moſt aſſuredly confident, that reaſon teaches us, that experience demonſtrates, and that the authority of the greateſt lawgivers confirms, that in ſo great a multitude there can never be found ſuch prudence, ſuch experience, and ſuch order, that we may have room to promiſe ourſelves that the wiſe will be preferred to the ignorant, the good to the evil, or men of experience to thoſe who have never ſeen a public tranſaction. As from an incapable and unſkilful judge it is not poſſible to hope for a ſagacious ſentence; ſo from a people, immerſed in ignorance and involved in confuſion, we cannot expect, without a miracle, prudent deliberations or rational elections. Can we believe that a multitude, inexpert, unſkilful, compounded of ſo great a variety of geniuſes, conditions, and cuſtoms, and wholly devoted to their private affairs, can poſſibly diſtinguiſh and know thoſe intricate intereſts and duties of the public, which men of the moſt conſummate wiſdom, who are wholly inattentive to any other buſineſs, are often with great difficulty able to diſcern? Not to mention, that the unbounded eſteem which every one entertains of himſelf, will ſtimulate them all to become ambitious of honours: nor will it ever be ſatisfactory to men in a popular govern-

ment

UAB
Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

ment to enjoy the honeſt fruits of liberty, but all will aſpire to the higheſt rank, and be impatient to intermeddle in all deliberations upon affairs of the moſt importance and greateſt difficulty; for among us there is leſs than in any other city in the world of that modeſty, which yields the precedence to him who has more knowledge or more merit. Perſuading ourſelves as we do, that, in reaſon and by right, we ought all of us to be equal in all things, the applauſe of virtue and merit, if left in the diſpoſition of the multitude, will be confounded, and this ambition being diffuſed through the majority, will deſignedly beſtow the moſt power on the moſt ignorant and the leaſt meritorious, becauſe, being by much the moſt numerous, they will have the moſt influence in a ſtate ſo conſtituted, that opinions muſt be numbered and not weighed. What certainty therefore can you have, that although they may be ſatisfied with the form that you introduce at preſent, they will not preſently diſarrange the inſtitutions the moſt wiſely concerted, by their novel inventions and imprudent laws, to which the wiſeſt citizens will not be able to reſiſt? Theſe things, at all times dangerous in ſuch a government, will be much more ſo at preſent, becauſe it is the nature of mankind, when they fly from one extreme, in which they have been held by violence, to ruſh with greater violence, without ſtopping at the mean, to the other extremity. Thus he who eſcapes from a tyranny, if unreſtrained, precipitates himſelf into an unbridled licentiouſneſs, which alſo may moſt juſtly be called a tyranny; for a people is exactly like a tyrant, when they give to him who has no merit, when they take away from him who has much, when they confound all gradations and diſtinctions

tions of perſons, and their tyranny is perhaps ſo much the more peſtiferous, as ignorance, which has no weights, nor meaſures, nor laws, is more dangerous even than malignity, which may govern itſelf by ſome rule, reſtrain itſelf by ſome bridle, and ſatisfy itſelf with ſome end. Has this city ever been under the abſolute government of the people, without becoming an inſtant prey to diſcord, without being ſhaken to its foundation, and without ſuffering an immediate revolution in the ſtate? Why are not our liberties ſecure under the government propoſed in this parliament? All things are referred to the diſpoſition of magiſtrates, who are not perpetual, but are frequently changed; who are not elected by a few, but, having been approved by many, are appointed, according to the ancient uſage of the city, by lot. How then can they be appointed by factions, or by the will of particular citizens? We ſhall have a much greater certainty, that affairs of the moſt importance will be examined and directed by men of the moſt wiſdom, experience, and gravity, who will govern with more order, ſecrecy, and maturity of judgment, than it is poſſible for a people, who are incapable of ſuch things, to poſſeſs: a people, who are often, when there is little occaſion for it, moſt extravagantly ſplendid and expenſive, and oftener ſtill, when there is the moſt urgent neceſſity, are ſo penurious and niggardly, as to ruſh upon the greateſt dangers and expences, for the ſake of ſaving the moſt trifling ſums."

In truth, both theſe ſpeeches, with all their eloquence, were thrown away. Soderini was for collecting all authority into one center, the people; and Veſpuci into another, the ſenate: neither dared propoſe a ſeparation of the executive from both in a firſt magiſtrate: and without that, and admit-

ting both the ſenate and people to a ſhare, there could be no peace nor harmony in Florence. The queſtion, however, was not decided by the logic or rhetoric of either: few of the citizens attended the convention, and the vote would have been for the ariſtocracy of Veſpuci, if another orator had not intervened. This was Savanarola the prophet, who declared, that he had a divine revelation from heaven in favour of a popular government, and that Jeſus Chriſt ſhould be choſen king of Florence,* againſt his own expreſs declaration, that his kingdom was not of this world.—The twenty accoppiatori, who had no head to keep them united, and neceſſarily fell into a variety of factions and diviſions among themſelves, perceiving their diſſenſions, the other citizens in general, and eſpecially all thoſe of the greateſt reputation, who at the election of the twenty had not been choſen of the number, began to take courage, and raiſe a cry againſt them for their diviſions, and the † weakneſs of their government: and Savanarola declared, that God had conſtituted him his ambaſſador in Florence, with full power and expreſs orders to declare his will, that Chriſt ſhould be king, and that under him the city ſhould be governed only by a ſingle aſſembly or popular council. The multitude believed him, and in 1495 the twenty were all obliged to reſign, and give place to the greater council and popular government,‡ and a new palace was built for them, with ſuch ardent enthuſiaſm, that it ſeemed to be true, as Savanarola declared, that the angels had acted as maſons and architects, that

* Nerli, p. 65. † Nerli, p. 64.

‡ Il conſiglio maggiore, e il governo popolare. Nerli, p. 66. Che gli angioli in quell' opera s'eſeritaſſero inluogo de Muratori, et operai, perchè piu preſto fuſſe finita.

the

the work might be the ſooner finiſhed. But this new government could no better agree than the accoppiatori, and for the ſame reaſon. The new great council, as well as the whole city, ſoon divided into three parties. The greateſt and moſt powerful was that which depended upon Fra. Giralamo, and was called the party of the Frateſchi, and conſiſted of thoſe who moſt deſired to live freely, and nearly of all thoſe who were gratified with the latitude of the popular government. The ſecond party were deſirous of having the government more reſtrained, and in the hands of a ſmaller number of the principal citizens; but were ſtill deſirous of liberty, and, as well as the Frateſchi, were in oppoſition to the party of the Medici. The third party conſiſted of thoſe who wiſhed for the return of the Medici, and the reſtoration of the old government. The views, motives, and manœuvres of theſe three factions are particularly deſcribed by Nerli, and their jealouſies, envies, ambition, and various ſchemes to ſupplant each other, in ſo natural a manner, that one would think his hiſtory written expreſsly to expoſe the folly of a government in one center.

In 1495 the Florentines met with freſh and dangerous troubles from other quarters, excited by the potentates of the league, who encouraged Peter to attempt his reſtoration to Florence. Peter, like all other exiles, ready to embrace every offer, imagined his own party powerful, and the new government odious, eſpecially to the nobility; ſo that he could not fail of ſucceſs: he made ſeveral advances, and excited ſome exertions among his friends, but was diſappointed of any effectual aſſiſtance, and at length gives up the enterpriſe. 1495.

UAB Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

1497. In 1497, the pope and Venetians conceived a new project for ſeparating the Florentines from the French, the unhappy ſtate of their city, in which there were ſuch great diviſions among the citizens, owing to the form of their government, giving encouragement to any power that wiſhed to moleſt them: for, ſays Guicchiardin, in the firſt inſtitution of the popular authority in Florence, there had not been introduced a mixture of thoſe temperaments, which, together with ſecuring, by ſuitable methods, the common liberty, might prevent the republic from being thrown into confuſion by the ignorance and licentiouſneſs of the multitude. For this reaſon, the citizens of better rank, meeting with leſs reſpect than their condition ſeemed to require, and the people on the other hand jealous of their ambition, multitudes of mean capacities frequently aſſiſting at important debates, and the ſupreme magiſtracy, to whom was referred the deciſion of the moſt difficult affairs, being changed every two months, much confuſion was occaſioned in the government of the republic. To this muſt be added, the great authority of Savanarola, whoſe followers were more numerous than thoſe of the contrary opinion, and appeared to have much the greater ſhare in the diſtribution of places in the magiſtracy, and of public honours; by which means the city becoming manifeſtly divided, one party ſtill claſhed with the other in all the public deliberations, as it always happens in divided cities, when *men care not how much they obſtruct the common good, for the ſake of lowering the reputation of the adverſe party.* Theſe diſorders were the more dangerous, becauſe, beſides the long vexations and great burthens borne by that city, there was that year a very

UAB Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

a very great ſcarcity: whence it might be preſumed, that the half-ſtarved populace were deſirous of a change. This unhappy diſpoſition gave hopes to Peter, who was beſides incited by ſome of the citizens. By ſecret aſſiſtance from the Venetians, and various other ways, he collected together a military force, and made an attempt, in 1497, upon Florence; but having neither genius nor reſources, he failed. His partiſans committed a number of maſſacres in ſome of the neighbouring towns: but his plot was diſcovered, and his principal friends in Florence, after full proof of the order and management of the conſpiracy, were convicted and ſentenced to death. The relations of the perſons condemned appealed to the grand council of the people, by virtue of a law that was made when the popular government was eſtabliſhed. The other party, apprehending that compaſſion on the age and nobility, and number of the relations of the criminals, might prevail on the affections of the people, ſeveral members of the ſupreme magiſtracy were, by preſſing importunities, and almoſt by force and menaces, conſtrained to conſent, that, notwithſtanding the interpoſition of the appeal, execution ſhould be done the ſame night. Of what avail is law in ſuch a government, for the protection of life, or ſecurity of liberty! The moſt zealous ſticklers for this were the favourers of Savanarola, who was reproached for not diſſuading his followers from the violation of a law, which but a few years before had been propoſed by himſelf, as neceſſary for the preſervation of liberty. But a dominant party, when there are but two, and no third power to balance them, is never long bound by any law, morals, or decency.

1498. The next year, 1498, Savanarola himſelf was burnt, not for his enthuſiaſtic impoſtures, but for preaching againſt the corruptions of the court of Rome, under that helliſh monſter of vice and cruelty, Alexander the Sixth, which would not have been remembered here, if politics and party, rather than piety, had not produced this event, as well as the aſſaſſination of Franceſco Valori, a nobleman of great influence, for being the chief patron of Savanarola, and the cauſe that the appeal to the popular council had not been admitted. The paſſions of party, their hatred and revenge, as well as their ambition, under ſuch unbalanced governments, lay hold of any popular prejudice, and moſt frequently of religious zeal, and the aſſiſtance of any means, even the friendſhip of an Alexander and a Borgia, to aid their gratification. But ſcattering the aſhes of this martyr in the Arno did not, ſays Nerli, quench the flames of diſcord, nor heal the diviſions of the city. The people remained in the ſame diſſenſions, every one quarrelling for his faction as uſual;* and freſh diſputes and diſſenſions aroſe; firſt, between Vitelli and the count Di Marciano; ſecond, by reaſon of the difference between the king of France and the duke of Milan; and third, on account of elections and the magiſtracies.

1500. In 1500 Cæſar Borgia,† having already ſubjected a great part of Romagna, deſirous of extending his dominions in Tuſcany, and having good intelligence of the diſpoſition and diviſions

* Nerli, p. 81. Reſto il popolo noſtro nelle medeſime diſſenſioni, e travagliato dalle ſue ſolite ſette, come ſi fuſſe prima.

† Nerli, p. 88. Muratori, Annals, tom. x. p. 1.

in

in the city of Florence, attempted to reſtore the Medici, and was diverted from the enterpriſe by an embaſſy and a round ſum of money. In 1502 a rebellion was excited in the city of Arezzo, which excited freſh diviſions in Florence, and produced new attempts to reform the government; firſt, by giving a head to the greater council; and ſecond, to conſtitute a gonfalonier for life: and Sodorini, who had no children, had great qualities, was moderately rich, of a family of great reputation, &c. and had rendered important ſervices to the ſtate upon many occaſions, was accordingly elected. But he had no thoughts of changing the popular government any further, and was ſoon found to have too much moderation for ſome of his friends. Rucellai, and Lorenzo di Pierfranceſco de Medici, and ſome other citizens, broke off from him, would not attend his feaſts, and grew diſcontented.

1502. This year died the pope Alexander the Sixth, and Peter de Medici, who, with ſome other noblemen, following the French camp after their defeat by the Spaniards at Gaeta, entered on board a bark which was laden with artillery, and was drowned at the mouth of the river, by the bark's ſinking under her burthen in a contrary wind. But theſe events, ſo fortunate in appearance for Florence, could not ſecure her tranquillity. The new gonfalonier for life had many parties in fermentation againſt him: thoſe who deſired a more popular government, and that his office ſhould only be annual, or for three months; thoſe of his own party, who thought him not zealous enough to make the government more ariſtocratical; and thoſe who wiſhed the reſtoration of the Medici, and a government completely monarchical. All theſe various kinds of citizens were daily ob- 1502.

ſerving his conduct, criticiſing his adminiſtration, exaggerating his errors, and deſtroying his reputation and popularity.

1505. In 1505, Bartolomeo d'Alviano invaded their country,* with a view to aſſiſt the Medici, but he was routed and put to flight. From ſo great a victory the citizens hoped for happineſs, quiet, and repoſe; but the effects of it were quite the contrary, and increaſed the ſecret oppoſition and cabals of the diſcontented citizens againſt the gonfalonier. Bentivoglio, ambitious to be made captain-general, and Giacomini, to increaſe his popularity, united in the deſire of adding to the glory they had acquired in the late victory the conqueſt of Piſa. The project of this enterpriſe occaſioned great confuſions in the city. The wiſeſt and beſt men declared themſelves againſt it, but ſuch numbers were bent upon it, that the gonfalonier, either blinded by the ſame paſſions ariſing from ſucceſs, or to counteract his adverſaries, or confiding too much in Bentivoglio, fell in with it. After tedious diſputes, angry accuſations, and mutual reproaches in the city, the enterpriſe was reſolved in the great council, with loud huzzas of the common people. A great expence was incurred in ample preparations, but the end was as unfortunate as the wiſer citizens had predicted;

* Nerli, p. 95. Muratori, Annals, tom. x. p. 25, 26.---Erano i cittadini quaſi tutti dichiarati a quale delle due parte piu aderiſſero, o a quella del gonfaloniere, o a quella de' Salviati, di manierachè nel fare de parentadi, o nel concedere per mezzo de' magiſtrati grazie, o benefizi, o nel favorir queſto, o quell' altro cittadino, che de' magiſtrati aveſſe biſogno, ſi ſcoprivano le paſſioni, e gl' intereſſi del gonfaloniere, o de' Salviati, ed in ſomma veniva in gara, ſe ſi dovevano pure rimutare, o di nuovo eleggere per infino a' tavolaccini del palazzo, e in ogni minima coſa ſi ſcoprivano gl' intereſſi delle ſetti. Nerli, lib. v. p. 99.

the

the two principal officers loſt all the credit of their former ſervices, and Sodorini, the gonfalonier, loſt much of his reputation, more of the popular confidence and affection; and in proportion as theſe fell, thoſe who had oppoſed the war roſe in the public eſteem. The enemies of the gonfalonier increaſed, and their oppoſition, headed by the Salviati, grew more active and determined, and weakened the government to ſuch a degree, that it was unable to execute the reſolutions, when taken by ſo ſmall majorities, or to command the ſoldiers; or to elect the council, the eight commiſſaries of war, or ambaſſadors; or indeed reſolve upon any thing. The two parties could agree upon nothing, and all the citizens were ſo decidedly declared partiſans, either of the gonfalonier, or of the Salviati, that they would not intermarry, or ever give a vote for any man to any office or public favour, who was not of their ſide.

Cauſes enough of debate in the grand council, and in the city, aroſe from day to day. In 1056, an ordinance for regulating the militia in the country, and enrolling every man from fifteen to fifty years of age under captains and colours, for frequent exerciſe in the military art; the demand of Alfonſina Orſini, the widow of Peter de Medici, of the reſtitution of her dower, confiſcated with the eſtate of her huſband; the marriage of her daughter Clariſſa to Philip Strozzi; the reſignation of the archbiſhop of Florence; the appointment of a ſucceſſor; the war of Piſa: in 1508, the creation of commiſſaries; the conceſſion of Piſa to the king of France;—all occaſioned ſuch ſtruggles, as excited at laſt a conſpiracy againſt the gonfalonier, in order to aſſaſſinate him, for the purpoſe of introducing the reſtoration of the Medici. This plot was diſcovered, but

1056.

1508.

but the guilty perſons had ſuch parties in the city, and the gonfalonier was become ſo unpopular, that the ſlighteſt puniſhment only could be inflicted. As in ſuch a ſtate of parties every meaſure of government is oppoſed, another controverſy aroſe about the continuance of the truce with Siena, which was at laſt agreed to upon the conceſſion of Montepulciano. Various new diſputes were now occaſioned by the new council in Piſa. Finally, the city found that, amidſt all the great tranſactions in Italy, by the diviſions among the citizens, and their continual oppoſitions to each other in every reaſonable meaſure, they had not only very ill ſerved their ally the king, but given great offence to the pope.

1512. In 1512 was the battle of Ravenna; and after a long ſeries of wars, in which the emperor, the king of France, the king of Spain, the Swiſs, the pope, the Venetians, and all other ſtates in Italy had been concerned, a congreſs was held at Mantoua in 1512. Giuliano de Medici, in his own name, and that of the cardinal, here ſolicited an enterpriſe againſt the Florentines. A revolution he pretended might be eaſily effected in that ſtate, through the diviſions of the citizens, many of whom wiſhed for the return of his family. By private intelligence, which he ſaid he maintained with ſeveral noble and powerful perſonages in the city, he thought a ſudden attack might eaſily ſucceed, and the conſequence would be, the taking the power of Florence out of the hands of one who depended on the king of France, and committing it to perſons who, injured and abuſed by him, would acknowledge no alliance but that of the confederates. He was ſeconded, in the name of the pope, by Barnardo de Bibiena, afterwards cardinal, who had been educated in the family of

UAB
Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

Medici. An offer was ſecretly made to Sodorini, a lawyer, and brother of the gonfalonier, who was then ambaſſador from Florence, that if the Florentines would comply with the demand of a ſum of money, the emperor and king of Arragon ſhould take them under their protection. The ambaſſador had no authority to conclude any agreement, and could only make his report to the republic. It was believed, that if the Florentines had laid aſide their niggardly chaffering about the price, they might have diverted the ſtorm; but either through the careleſſneſs or the malignity of men, the cauſe of that city was abandoned, and it was reſolved that the Spaniſh army, attended by the cardinal and Giuliano de Medici, ſhould march towards Florence, and that the cardinal, whom the pope in this expedition had declared legate of Tuſcany, ſhould call to his aſſiſtance the ſoldiers of the church, and thoſe of the neighbouring towns, whom he thought fit for his purpoſe. The viceroy, at the head of the Spaniſh army, was no ſooner entered the Florentine dominions, than he was met by an ambaſſador of the republic, to know what he required of them. The viceroy demanded, in the name of all the confederates, that the gonfalonier ſhould be deprived of his office, and that ſuch a form of government ſhould be eſtabliſhed, as would not give occaſion of umbrage to the allied powers, which could not be effected without reſtoring the cardinal and Giuliano de Medici to their country. —The government of Florence was in the greateſt conſternation, from the diviſions among the citizens, and the inclinations of multitudes to a change. A meſſage arrived from the viceroy, that it was not the intention of the league to make any alteration in the government or liberty of the city,

but

but only to remove the gonfalonier from the magiſtracy, for the ſecurity of Italy, and to reſtore the Medici, not as heads of the government, but as private perſons, to live under ſubjection to the laws and to the magiſtracy in all things. Various were the opinions in the city, according to the difference of men's judgements, paſſions, and fears. The gonfalonier, in a long harangue to the great council,* offered either to reſign his envied office, or defend it at the hazard of his life, as they ſhould determine. If the Medici, ſays he, have an inclination to live as private citizens, in due ſubjection to the ordinances of the magiſtrates and of your laws, their reſtoration would be laudable; but let not any one imagine, that the government of the Medici will be exerciſed in the ſame manner as before their expulſion. The form and foundation of things are changed: educated among us, they were familiar as other citizens, and, poſſeſſed of vaſt eſtates in proportion to their high dignity, they laid the foundation of their greatneſs in the affections of the citizens; but now, bred up in ſtrange cuſtoms, and having little inſight into our civil affairs, reſenting their exile, very indigent, affronted by ſo many families, conſcious that the greater part of the people abhor tyranny, conſtrained by poverty and ſuſpicion, they will have no conſideration for any citizen, but will engroſs the direction of all affairs to themſelves, and

* Face al popolo una orazione belliſſima, che aque' tempi, e in quel caſo era molto a propoſito, la quale, eſſendo io allora in quel conſiglio, udil quando la fece, ed è anco molto elegantemente ſcritta da Meſſer Franceſco Guicciardini nella ſua ſtoria. Narrò in qualla il gonfaloniere tutte le ſua azioni di dieci anni; dipoi offerſe sè, le facultà, e la propria vita per beneficio della città, e per mantenere quel liberto governo, ed alla fine ſi rimeſſe tutto in quel popolo, che l'aveva poſto in quel grado.

eſtabliſh

eſtabliſh their adminiſtration on fear and force, not love and benevolence. The city will become like Bologna under the Bentivogli, or like Siena and Perugia.—It was with wonderful unanimity reſolved to conſent to the return of the Medici as private citizens, but to refuſe the removal of the gonfalonier at the hazard of their lives and fortunes; and all hands were ſet to work to prepare for war, and the defence of Prato. The viceroy laid ſiege to Prato, took it by aſſault, which was followed by flight, ſhrieks, violence, rapine, blood, and ſlaughter. This ſad diſaſter produced a vaſt change in the minds of the people at Florence; the gonfalonier repenting of his counſel, terrified, and deprived at once of all eſteem and authority; others grew audacious: ſeveral young noblemen, with one of the family of Albizzi at their head, who had been in ſecret correſpondence with the Medici, forced the gonfalonier out of the public palace, and the magiſtrates were compelled to depoſe him.* He fled to Raguſa. Ambaſſadors

* Tal fine ebbe il ſupremo magiſtrato di Piero Soderini eſercitato da eſſo nove anni, e dieci meſi, e ſe in tale amministrazione, oltre a molte ſue buone opere, aveſſe aggiunto quel che anche molto più importava alla città, e a lui, l'aver tenutto più conto, che non fece, di chi veramente l'aveva condotto in quel grado, giovava forſe più aſſai, che non fece, alla città, a ſuoi cittadini, a ſe medeſimo, ed alla ſua caſa, e ſarebbeſi quel governo popolare forſe anche meglio mantenuto, come ſi mantenne, ne primi otto anni, che ſi reſſe ſenza capo alcuno dopo il 1494, che non fece poi in quei dieci, che lo reſſe Piero Sodorini. E ſe quel ſuo governo di nove anni e dieci meſi fu, ed è ancora tanto lodato, necque da quel buono ordine, che ſi tenne più nello ſplendere, e nello ſtare meglio ordinata la citta, che in quelli primi otto anni non ſi fece, e dal conſiderarlo diù da quello, che pareva in apparenza, che da quello, che era in fatti, ed in ſomma il gonfaloniere non ſeppe mai eſſer principe nè cattivo, nè buono, e credette troppo colla pazienza, godendo, come ſi dice, il benefizio del tempo,

Ambaſſadors were ſent to the viceroy, with whom, by means of the cardinal de Medici, they eaſily made an accommodation. He inſiſted only on the reſtoration of his family and their adherents, as private citizens, with power to redeem, within a certain time, the confiſcated eſtates, indemnifying thoſe to whom they had been transferred for the purchaſe and improvements. The Florentines were obliged to enter into the league, pay the emperor forty thouſand ducats, the viceroy eighty thouſand for his army, and twenty thouſand for himſelf. They made a league beſides with the king of Arragon, under reciprocal obligations of aſſiſting each other. It is aſtoniſhing that the Florentines ſhould not yet be able to ſee the cauſes of their continual misfortunes, and the neceſſity of different orders, and a balance in their conſtitution. The citizens now applied themſelves to reform their government, to preſerve their liberty, and the popular council, their all authority in one center, their right conſtitution of a commonwealth. To this end they enacted, that the gonfalonier ſhould no longer be elected for life, but only for a year; that to the council of eighteen, which was changed every ſix months, and by whoſe authority the moſt weighty affairs were determined, ſhould be added, for life, all thoſe who had diſcharged the great offices of ſtate at home or abroad, that the citizens of greateſt quality might always aſſiſt at their debates: at home, ſuch as had been gonfaloniers of juſtice, or of the number of the ten of the balia, a magiſtracy of great au-

tempo, ſuperare tutte le difficulta che ſegli opponevano, e non bene avverti, come debbono fare i principi ſavi, e i buoni capi, e governatori di republica, che ſempre, e ad ogni coſa la pazienza non giova, e che il tempo a lungo andare può arrecare coſi male, come bene. Nerli, p. 109, 110.

thority

thority in that republic; of ſuch as had ſerved abroad, all who by election of the council of eighty had been ſent ambaſſadors to princes, or had been commiſſaries-general in war: in all other points the laws remained without alteration. Ridolfi, a noble citizen, was elected gonfalonier for the firſt year; the people, as uſual in troubleſome times, not paying ſo much regard to thoſe who were moſt acceptable to them for popular arts, as to a perſon who by his great authority in the city, eſpecially with the nobility, and by his own extraordinary talents, was beſt capable of eſtabliſhing the tottering commonwealth. But things were now gone too far, and the enemies of public liberty were become too powerful: a ſuſpected army was in the country, and the moſt audacious youth in the city were deſirous of oppreſſing liberty. With them concurred in thoughts and deeds, though in words he pretended the contrary, the cardinal de Medici; for the reſtoration of his family as private citizens could not have been thought from the beginning a reward worthy of ſo great fatigues and dangers. But now he conſidered, that they muſt be univerſally deteſted by the people, from a ſuſpicion that they would be continually exciting conſpiracies againſt their liberty, and from the indignation conceived againſt the family for conducting the Spaniſh army againſt their country, and being the cauſe of the barbarous ſackage of Prato. The cardinal was ſtimulated too by thoſe who had before conſpired with him, and had no honourable ſtation in the new commonwealth. He therefore obtained the conſent of the viceroy, unexpectedly entered Florence, and repaired to the houſes of the Medici with a number of Italian officers and ſoldiers, the magiſtrates not daring to forbid their entrance, on account

count of the neighbourhood of the Spaniſh army. The next day a great number of citizens being aſſembled in council in the palace, and Giuliano de Medici among the reſt, the ſoldiers ſuddenly forced the gate and ruſhing up ſtairs, took poſſeſſion of the palace. The gonfalonier and the magiſtrates were forced to ſubmit to the will of a man, whoſe arms were more powerful than their unarmed reverence, and at the motion of Giuliano, called, by ſound of the bell, an aſſembly of the people in the ſquare of the palace. Here thoſe who met, finding themſelves ſurrounded by armed ſoldiers, and the youth of the city in arms for the Medici, conſented that fifty citizens, nominated with the approbation of the cardinal de Medici, ſhould be inveſted with the whole ſovereign power of the people, which the Florentines call a balia. The government was reduced to that form which ſubſiſted before 1494, a guard was ſtationed at the palace, and the Medici reſumed their former grandeur, but governed more imperiouſly, and with more abſolute authority than their father Peter had done. After this manner was the liberty of the Florentines oppreſſed by arms, being reduced to this condition by the diviſions among the citizens. This was in 1512.—In 1513, the pope Julius the Second died, and the cardinals in conclave unanimouſly elected Giovanni cardinal.

1512. On the firſt of September 1512, the new ſignori, without any gonfalonier or ſupreme magiſtrate, united with Giuliano de Medici, and the principal citizens of Florence, and eſpecially with thoſe who, having been in oppoſition to Soderini, or being relations, or declared friends of the Medici, were the moſt in their confidence, to give orders for a new reformation of the city. It was

UAB Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

thereupon ordained, by an intrigue of the ſignori, that a cabal of about twenty citizens ſhould determine among themſelves the mode of reformation in the ſtate; but even in this junto aroſe many conteſts, and various projects were propoſed. There were among them ſome who, without conſidering the forcible manner in which the Medici had returned, wiſhed to re-eſtabliſh the popular government, and maintain by all means the grand council, at leaſt in part, in its authority, and in order to give the government a head, would conſtitute a gonfalonier for one year, or two at moſt; and deſired farther, in order to give a greater perfection to the government, to make an addition of ſelect citizens to the council of eighty, who ſhould be, as a ſenate of the beſt men, for life, with a certain authority and full power, and with certain particular orders and preſcribed forms; and of this opinion were the greater part of thoſe citizens who had been in oppoſition to Sodorini, not ſo much from attachment to the Medici, as for other reaſons. The Medici, and their moſt avowed partiſans, and chiefly thoſe who in their oppoſition to Sodorini had diſcovered themſelves the moſt averſe to the popular ſtate, becauſe they did not think they could obtain pardon from the people, could ſcarcely hope to live in freedom, and were ſure to have no ſhare in the government, would, for their greater ſecurity, reſtrain the ſtate to its ancient form, and reform it by a convention, not believing that they could accompliſh it in the ordinary way, as it had been reſtrained in the houſe of Medici before the year 1494. And after many accommodating manœuvres of Giuliano de Medici, by his great facility and kindneſs with thoſe who deſired a large government, and to preſerve the grand council, it was concluded to paſs a law in this cabal, for

UAB Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

the reformation of this government, and it was accordingly propoſed in the grand council, and received with great applauſe; for every body was ſo diſpirited, and ſo terrified with the thoughts of a convention of the people, which was much talked of, and greatly deſired by thoſe who wiſhed to reſtrain the ſtate into an ariſtocracy, that this new law of reform was highly reliſhed, as it leſſened the authority both of the people and the grand council. By the new law it was ordained, that for the future the gonfalonier ſhould be created by the grand council for one year, who ſhould be diſqualified from holding the office for five ſubſequent years, and that all his connection ſhould be excluded during his year from holding any of the greater magiſtracies, ſuch as thoſe of the ſignori, the ſixteen gonfaloniers of the companies of the people, and the twelve buonhomini: the chief magiſtrate was alſo prohibited from holding any negociation or correſpondence with any other prince, republic, or lord, in or out of Italy; from opening any letters addreſſed to the ſignori or any other magiſtrate, without the preſence of two thirds of the ſignori his companions; or even any letter addreſſed to him alone, without the preſence of two at leaſt of the ſignori, who, under the pains of perjury, were obliged to ſhew ſuch letters to the other ſignori, if they found any thing in ſuch letters relative to the ſtate or public affairs. The ladies too, and families of the gonfaloniers, were prohibited from inhabiting the palace, and from ſending any letters or meſſages to any officer or magiſtrate abroad or at home; and the gonfalonier was aſſigned for his whole ſalary four hundred golden florins a year; and as to the mode of electing the ſenate, ſurpluſage, or optimates before mentioned, ſuch diſpoſition

UAB Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

poſition was made by this new law for the reformation of the government, that for the future, at all adminiſtrations, deliberations, and elections of magiſtrates, uſually made in the council of eighty, ſhould intervene, during their lives, all the then preſent ſignori, and all thoſe citizens who at any time had been gonfaloniers of juſtice, all thoſe who had ſat among the ten magiſtrates for war, and all who at any time had been elected ambaſſadors in the council of eighty to any prince or lord in or out of Italy; and to provide for thoſe families or ſocieties, in which there were not men of any ſuch deſcription, it was provided by the law, that ſuch families might claim as far as two members, if they had not the number of two, or if they had not one, with the ordinary qualifications, but no more; and that ſuch ſupplementary additions from the families ſhould not amount to more than fifty in the whole, to be elected in the council of eighty, with its new addition, giving of theſe fifty a convenient part to the leſſer arts, according to the order at that time in the city: and becauſe Giuliano de Medici, and ſome of his declared friends, were incapable, either by minority of age, or by having in their families two or more who came within the ordinary rules, it was provided by the law (that they might not be excluded) that by a reſolution of the ſignori alone, eleven more, beſides the fifty, might be elected, eight of whom might be under the age preſcribed of forty years. In this manner was the council of eighty, with its addition, to be conſtituted, and in it, from time to time, were to be created the ſignori, the ten magiſtrates for war, and the eight for the guard, in ſuch manner as thoſe magiſtrates were wont to be elected in the greater council, obſerving the order of elections

in the quarters of the arts, and all the forms which had been obſerved in electing ſuch magiſtrates in the greater council. And to facilitate ſtill further the public buſineſs, and to take away ſtill more effectually, both from the people and the great council, the opportunity and the power of diſarranging the public councils by withholding ſupplies of money, admoniſhed by many paſt examples, the law provided, that ſuch proviſions of money, and impoſitions of taxes, for the public occaſions, ſhould be paſſed, in the firſt place, in the council of eighty, with the addition, by two thirds of the black votes or balls, according to the forms of ballotting, and be concurred in the greater council by a diviſion of one half of the black votes, and one more. The law was paſſed,
1513. and the ſame day, in October 1513, and in the ſame council, they proceeded to the election of a new gonfalonier. At the firſt ballot there was no choice, but at the ſecond Giovambatiſta di Luigi Ridolfi was elected, and, in the preſence of the council, took upon him, with the other ſignori, the ſupreme magiſtracy.*

This plan of reformation, however, had greatly terrified the partiſans and moſt declared friends of the

* In queſto tempo, per ordine de' vincitori, fu fatto menzione nel libro publico, chiamato il prioriſta, del parlamento fatto, e, de' Medici reſtituiti alla patria, a piede di quel priorato, ch'era entrato in ufficio a di primo di Settembre 1512, eſſendo gonfaloniere di Giuſtizia Giovambatiſta Ridolphi, nel qual prioriſta, ſi notano tutti i ſignori priori, che alla giornata ſi fanno, et aggiunto à ciò come la nobiltà ſi era vindicata, e ridotta in liberta, e riformato, e ſtabilito il governo della città, ſecondo la volontà de gli ottimati, e patrizii. La quale diſtinzione di nobiltà, et ignobilta, confeſſo io ingenuamente non haver mai ſaputo fare, ancora che io ſia nato, et allevato nella medeſima patria. Ma la lezzione della preſenti memorie farà cognoſcere colle ſpeſſe mutazioni

the Medici, as it appeared to them they ſhould be in great danger, when an accommodation ſhould be made with the league, and the Spaniſh army ſhould be marched out of the dominions, of being again baniſhed from Florence, to their total ruin, that of the new conſtitution, and the whole houſe of Medici; and in this apprehenſion they were well grounded, for although there was in the new plan an attempt at three natural branches, yet the executive power, and the power of the purſe, were both left in the hands of the ariſtocracy, which would have inſtantly produced a diviſion both among nobles and people, and the deſtruction of the houſe of Medici, as well as of the feeble popular branch of the conſtitution. Here was the beſt poſſible opportunity for introducing the moſt perfect form, by giving the executive power to one of the Medici, the power of the purſe to the people, and the legiſlative power to both, together with the nobility: but either no man underſtood the ſubject, or too much ambition in the Medici, too much pride in the nobility, or too many prejudices in the people, or all three together, prevented it. The election too of Rodolfi, who was thought to be, as indeed he was, a ſpirited man, of a ce-

zioni d' animi, e di penſieri, e delle opere, quale ſia ſtata ſempre la diverſità, e la contrarieta de gli humori d' noſtri cittadini. Concioſia coſa che io hebbia veduto i figliuoli diſcordare da padri proprii, et i fratelli da i medeſimi fratelli nell' azzioni di queſta ſtoita favola del mondo, ſecondo che chiaſcuno è ſtato vinto, e traportato dall' empieto de' proprii appetiti. Nardi, lib. vi. p. 266.

Je n'ai pas pu comprende, j'amais, ce que c'eſt, que la nobleſſe; Qu'eſt ce que c'eſt, que la nobleſſe? ſaid one of the firſt ducheſſes in France. Ah madame, C'eſt un droit divin, ſaid a gentleman in company. Oui, tout come la royautè, tout de même, je vous comprend bien, replied the lady, who had too much ſenſe to pique herſelf on her divinity, or to believe a ſyllable of the matter.

lebrated houſe, moſt illuſtrious parentage, and of great reputation, increaſed the terror, eſpecially as Ridolfi, in the deliberations on the new reformation, had diſcovered himſelf much in favour of a popular life, and having been ordinarily conſpicuous in the faction of Frateſca, among whom he had been incorporated among the firſt after Valori, and having always, in all times, conjunctures, and circumſtances, favoured that party which was always in oppoſition to the houſe of Medici, as is manifeſt to any one who has any knowledge of thoſe times: whereupon many of the moſt open friends of the Medici, and thoſe who moſt dreaded a popular government, entered into cloſe concert with the cardinal de Medici, for the purpoſe of correcting the errors which Giuliano his brother, by his too great facility, had ſuffered to ſlide in. It was not difficult to diſpoſe the cardinal to this, as they found him, ſince the late reformation, under the ſame apprehenſions, and in the ſame diſpoſition with themſelves, neither himſelf, nor Meſſer Giulio, prior of Capua, his couſin, and a natural ſon, who remained of that Giuliano who died in 1478 by the conſpiracy of Pazzi, judging it poſſible ſecurely to continue in Florence, if the government remained in that manner in the hands of the people, and at the free diſcretion of the citizens: wherefore the cardinal came ſometimes into the city, for he had reſided in Prato when the reformation of the ſtate was made in Florence, and took lodgings in St. Antonio del Viſcovo, a place near the city, where he was viſited by a multitude of the citizens, under various pretences. There, diſcourſing with all concerning the condition of affairs as they happened, he began with great addreſs to repreſent to ſome, that it was neceſſary to think of ſome good method for ſecuring the

ſtate

ſtate and his houſe, dwelling only upon general obſervations, and not deſcending to any particulars with thoſe whom he believed to be deſirous of a popular government, but with his more confidential friends, and with thoſe whom he knew to be diſcontented with the new regulation of the government; and, finally, he opened himſelf to a few, ſhewing the neceſſity of a convention and a balia to a ſmall number of citizens, in whom they could confide, who might contract the ſtate to the form in which it ſtood before 1494, in the hands of the family of Medici. After theſe practices held at St. Antonio, the cardinal comes to Florence, reſolved to call a convention, and contract the ſtate: then began thoſe citizens, who may be called the blind, who had been ſo oppoſed to Sodorini, to ſee, when it was too late, and they had no longer power to provide a remedy, that danger now was at hand, which they had not been able to diſcern at a diſtance.

On the 16th of September, 1513, the convention 1513.
was aſſembled, the Medici and their friends in arms having ſeized the palace, which had been left without a guard, becauſe Ridolfi, when he entered on his office of gonfalonier, either from a want of jealouſy of the Medici and the viceroy, who was yet with his army at Prato, or for ſome other reaſon, not only had not armed the palace, as, in order to eſtabliſh the new government, it was neceſſary to do, but he had cauſed it to be diſarmed of the few guards which had been ſtationed there by the magiſtrates, after the privation and departure of Sodorini; wherefore it was eaſy for the Medici and their partiſans to ſeize the palace. The ſignori and the gonfalonier, and many other citizens, ſeeing the palace taken, and the abſolute determination of the Medici and their armed fol-

lowers to contract the ſtate, and that they could no longer ſupport the popular government, agreed with Giuliano de Medici, who was in council, and had orders from the cardinal what to do. The people were accordingly called together in convention, according to the ancient cuſtom of their parliaments, in the piazza; the ſignori mounted the roſtrum, and a balia was created, that is, a full power was given to fifty-five citizens for a year, with the faculty of prolonging it beyond that period according to occurrences, for the convenience and ſupport of the ſtate and the government, and with the faculty moreover of aſſociating to themſelves in the balia ſuch citizens as ſhould be thought uſeful to the ſtate. The firſt thing reſolved on was to add eleven members to their number, making in the whole ſixty-ſix, whoſe names Nerli * has preſerved. The next thing was to make a treaty with the league, and to pay well to obtain the conſent of the Spaniſh army to march out of Prato and the Florentine dominions. An ambaſſador was ſent to accompany the viceroy of Spain, and another, the locum tenens of Maximilian the emperor. A ſtrong guard was placed in the palace; Ridolfi renounced his office of gonfalonier; all the members of the family of Sodorini were taken up and diſperſed about in different confinements. A plan was eſtabliſhed for the appointment of all officers, and the ſum total of power was lodged in Giuliano de Medici, who, however, was to conſult with the cardinal, with Meſſer Giulio, with Lorenzo their nephew, the ſon who remained of Peter de Lorenzo de Medici: but when the new diſtribution of offices took place, freſh diviſions and diſſenſions

* Nerli, p. 116, 117, 118.

aroſe,

UAB
Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

arose, and secret plots were discovered, whose object was nothing less than the assassination of all the Medici. Among the conspirators were many powerful citizens. The chiefs of the party were beheaded, and the rest severely punished. At length the pope, Julius the Second, dies, and the cardinals in conclave,* on the seventh day, unanimously elected Giovanni cardinal de Medici, who assumed the name of Leo the Tenth, aged 1513. thirty-seven. This election gave great satisfaction to all Christendom; all men expecting, from the recollection of his father's great merit, and from the fame of his own liberality, benevolence, charity, and irreproachable morals (so says the historian, but his actions discover an ambition too powerful for his virtue) that Leo would prove an excellent pontiff, and, from the example of his ancestors, a lover of men of genius and learning. His first transaction was his coronation, which was performed with so pompous an appearance of his family, and all the prelates and nobles from all parts, and so great a concourse of the Roman people, that Rome had never seen so proud a day since the inundations of the barbarians: the standard of the church was carried by Alfonzo; that of the religion of Rhodes by Giulio de Medici, all in armour, and mounted on a noble courser, for he was by nature inclined to arms, though his destiny drew him to the church. Such magnificence confirmed the vulgar in their expectations of happiness from this pontificate, which was likely to abound in liberality and splendor, as the expences of that day amounted to an hundred thousand ducats: but men of better judgements were of opinion, that so much pomp neither

* Guicchiardin, lib. ix.—Nerli, lib. vi. p. 124.

became

became a pope, nor was ſuitable to the times, which required more gravity, ſimplicity, and moderation. This exaltation of Giovanni occaſioned great rejoicings in Florence,* for both the friends and enemies of the family were pleaſed, though for different reaſons; the former from the hope of benefits and advantages, and the latter from the expectation of ſecurity, and the univerſal tranquillity of the city, which they thought would ſucceed. There remained, however, a ſecret diſcontent in the hearts of the wiſe, as may well be imagined, who could foreſee at a diſtance, that ſo much grandeur in one family, who for ſixty years had held in their hands the ſupreme authority of the government, might in time be the means of their return, and enable them to reform the ſtate from a republic to an abſolute principality. Upon this glorious occaſion were liberated from the tower of Volterra, Valori, Folchi, Nicholas Machiavel, and all the others who, on account of the late conſpiracy, had been hitherto impriſoned; a conſpiracy which, if no farther attempts had been made, and the two who had been beheaded could have been reſtored to life, would now have been wholly forgotten. The Sodorini too were all ſet at liberty, becauſe the cardinal of that family had concurred with his vote in the creation of the pope. Cardinal Sodorini had been gained over to this election by a promiſe of the liberation of his relations, and that Lorenzo di Piero de Medici ſhould marry his niece, the daughter of his brother Giovanvetterio; but this alliance never took effect, becauſe that Alfonſina, mother of Lorenzo, would never conſent to it; to compenſate for which diſappointment, the pope propoſed that the

* Nerli, p. 124.

cardinal's

UAB Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

cardinal's niece ſhould be married to Luigi Ridolfi, his nephew by a ſiſter, and the cardinal at firſt ſeemed ſatisfied with the exchange, but it afterwards appeared that he took it very ill. A ſplendid embaſſy of twelve honourable and noble citizens was now ſent to the new pope from the city of Florence. In all this grandeur of the houſe, in a few days appeared at Rome Giuliano, Lorenzo, and Giulio de Medici, to conſult with the pope concerning ſeveral of their affairs, and the diviſion of their greatneſs among them: it was finally reſolved, that Giuliano ſhould remain at Rome, with the title of gonfalonier, and captain of the holy ſee; and by means of an alliance which he made with a lady of the blood of Savoy, aunt of the king of France, he ſecured to himſelf the duchy of Nemours, and thus he voluntarily gave up all pretenſions to the government of Florence. Lorenzo contented himſelf with the ſtate of Florence, and ſoon returned to govern it, in the ſame manner and form as his father and his other anceſtors had governed. Giulio was promoted to the archbiſhopric of Florence, vacant by the death of Coſmo de Pazzi, with the proſpect of being made a cardinal at the firſt ſubſequent creation which the pope ſhould make. In this manner, in the beginning of the pontificate of Leo, did the Medici divide among themſelves the ſtate, and their own power and emoluments. Lorenzo returned to Florence, and conſulted with the principal citizens about giving orders for reforming the government in all things, according to the intentions of the pope, reſolved on in Rome, to the ſtate it was in before, 1494. They were very attentive to haſten on the general ſcrutiny, becauſe of the abſence of ſo many citizens, who for various reaſons had gone to Rome, and after the creation

UAB Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

creation of the pope were not in haſte to return; and when it was finiſhed, imborſed, and begun to be uſed, a council of ſeventy was made by Lorenzo, for life, in the form and with the authority as in the time of his grandfather in 1482; and orders were alſo given to conſtitute a council of an hundred, which from ſix months to ſix months, according to the ancient cuſtom, ſhould be drawn; and into this council of an hundred, at their pleaſure, might enter all who had been gonfaloniers of juſtice; and in it were debated and determined all proviſions of money, impoſitions of taxes, and all laws and ordinances of moſt importance, which had been previouſly approved in the council of ſeventy: and to enlarge their ſyſtem ſtill more, and make it more univerſally ſatisfactory, they ordained farther, to draw from time to time the ancient councils of the people, and the commons, which might determine on the petitions of private perſons, which ſhould be firſt paſſed in the council of ſeventy; and in all caſes which could occur, and for the ſecurity of the ſtate, although they adopted theſe ordinary councils, they maintained always firm the authority of their balia, which was prolonged and maintained conſtantly in being until the revolution in the ſtate, which happened in 1527. The ſcrutiny ended, they created the ſeventy, and drew the other councils, and began to make another change of the ten for war, for the eight of their new plot, to return every thing to the ſtate it was in before 1494; and all theſe ordinances were thus renewed and perfected in December, 1513, Pandolfo Corbinelli being then gonfalonier; and the ſeventy were elected for a term only, but with ſuch power of confirmation, that they might be ſaid to be for life. Notwithſtanding all theſe precautions, and the abſolute

power

power of the balia, the diviſions ſtill continued among the principal citizens; ſome were for making the government more popular, others more ariſtocratical: and theſe diviſions, which continued till 1527,* gave much trouble to the Medici.

The affairs of the Medici and of the ſtate being thus ſettled, Giuliano began to think he had been overſeen, in leaving Florence to his nephew: and Lorenzo, amidſt ſuch grandeur in his houſe, begun to be diſcontented at remaining without any princely title, and at having no other than a civil rank in Florence; wherefore he ſhapes his courſe to Rome, and communicates his intention to the pope.

He returned in 1515, determined to be made captain-general of the Florentines; and this dignity was ſolemnly aſſumed by him from the hands of the gonfalonier of juſtice, who was at that time chimenti ſernigi, in the preſence of the ſignori, and of all the magiſtrates, and a great part of the people aſſembled in the piazza with the ſtaff of command, and the other public enſigns uſually given to a captain-general, with the greateſt demonſtrations of joy and univerſal rejoicings. In this manner began Lorenzo to depart from the ancient manners of his family, and to lay aſide in all things that mode of proceeding popularly in his dreſs, converſation, and intercourſe with the citizens, which had ever been obſerved by his predeceſſors. Having aſſumed his title and magnificence, he went to Lombardy, to make his court to the king of France, who was come to Italy to eſtabliſh his authority in Milan, which he 1515.

* Erano i cittadini appreſſo a'Medici molto diviſi, e dettero queſte diviſioni, che ſi mainternnero ſempre ne' primi cittadini del governo, dimolte difficulta a' Medici per infino al 1527. Nerli, p. 129.

had

UAB Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

had lately recovered. He became a great favourite with his majesty, from the great desire he had of agreeing with the pope, and because Lorenzo, in all his actions and conversation, discovered an attachment to the faction of the Guelphs and the politics of France. Soon afterwards an accommodation was made between the pope and the king, and the pope set out on a journey to Bologna, to have an interview with him. Passing through Florence, he made his entry into the city * with great pomp. Between the pope and the king many things were agreed on, for their mutual defence, and the maintenance of their power; and Lorenzo, because he eagerly wished to increase his importance, and obtain the title of duke, solicited the pope, under the auspices of France, to undertake an enterprise against Urbino, as it was thought the king could not fail of success, the pope having restored Parma and Placentia, two cities which Giulio had added to the state of the church when the French lost the state of Milan. But the project of an enterprise against Urbino was very disagreeable to Giuliano de Medici, and he warmly opposed it as an infamous ingratitude, considering the civilities and favours the family had received in their exile from that dukedom. The pope was advised to recall the Bentivogli to Bologna, and restore Modena and Reggio to the duke of Ferrara; but Giulio de Medici, says Guicchiardin, cardinal and legate of Bologna, whom the pope had sent to be a moderator and counsellor to the unexperienced youth of Lorenzo, moved at the infamy that would be cast on the memory of his legateship if Bologna was given

* Con magnifico apparato, con molta pompa, e con solemnita grandissima. Nerli, p. 129.

up

UAB Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

up to its old tyrants, and ſo great a number of the nobility, who had openly declared againſt them in favour of the apoſtolic ſee, ſacrificed to their revenge, diſſuaded it. Giulio, though of illegitimate birth, had been promoted to the cardinalſhip by Leo, in the firſt month of his pontificate, by means of witneſſes, who preferring the favour of men before the truth, depoſed, that his mother had obtained of his father Giuliano a promiſe of marriage. Giuliano this year came to Florence in ill health, and reſided ſometimes in the city, and ſometimes out of it in the neighbouring cities, not without exciting great jealouſy in Lorenzo, and Alfonſina his mother, who in the abſence of her ſon governed. The pope was in great perplexity, and could not determine whether to undertake the enterpriſe againſt Urbino, ſo much reſiſted by his brother, and ſo ardently deſired by his nephew; and he heſitated the more, becauſe he diſcovered that the king of France had conſented againſt his inclination. Giuliano was ſo ill, that he could not, but by his agents and letters, cenſure the project to the pope, and Lorenzo by his aſſiduous ſolicitations held the king well diſpoſed to his inclinations, and was continually about the pope with perſuaſions to undertake it. The interview between the pope and the king at Bologna being finiſhed, the former returned to Florence, apparently reſolved to give ſatisfaction to his nephew: yet he proceeded to take meaſures for the enterpriſe, on account of Giuliano, with ſome circumſpection. But the diſorder of Giuliano increaſing, he died at Badia de Fieſole, where he reſided for the benefit of better air, in March 1516. A few days after the pope left Florence, 1516. and returned to Rome.

Lorenzo

UAB Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

Lorenzo now remained, without any contradiction, heir in all things of the ſtate, the fortune, and the grandeur of the houſe of Medici; and being now more than ever warm in his deſire to be made duke of Urbino,* he was inveſted by the pope in conſiſtory: Lorenzo was put in command of an army, compoſed of the ſoldiers and ſubjects of the church and the Florentines; and the pope deprived† Franceſco Maria of theſe dominions by ſolemn ſentence, and gave the inveſtiture of the duchy of Urbino, in a conſiſtory, to Lorenzo his nephew, all the cardinals ſetting their hands to the bull.

1517. In the year 1517 certain cardinals formed a conſpiracy againſt the pope, and the cardinal Sodorini was found among the guilty; but upon confeſſion of their error, the pope excuſed them with great humanity; but upon this occaſion, in order to fill up the college, he made a new promotion of cardinals, among whom were his two nephews of the Salviati and Ridolfi families. At this time the citizens of the ſtate of Florence were in ſecret very diſcontented, becauſe that the duke Lorenzo, deſiring to reduce the government to the form of a principality, appeared to diſdain to conſult any longer with the magiſtrates and his fellow citizens as he uſed to do, and gave very ſeldom audiences, and with much impatience; attended leſs to the buſineſs of the city, and cauſed all public affairs to be managed by Meſſer Goro da Piſtoia, his ſecretary, who, either following the inclination of his own nature, or becauſe the duke had given him ſuch orders concerning what he ought to do, governed in ſuch a manner, and conducted ſo with the citizens, that there appeared

* Nerli, p. 130. † Guicchiardin, lib. ix.

UAB Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

in him more grandeur, and more of the qualities of a prince, and he made himſelf more honoured than any one of the houſe of Medici ever had done in the ſixty years that had paſſed between 1434 and 1494: and the citizens, who had borne ſo much envy againſt Galleatto de Medici, found, in the example of Goro, reaſon to acknowledge and repent of their error; for Galleatto, who had from the duke Lorenzo the ſame authority, and the ſame employment, before Goro, and was beſides of the family of Medici, did the public buſineſs of the palace, and went in perſon to confer with the citizens, and was ſatisfied with civilly ſerving his patron, and with being more in reality and leſs in appearance. Lorenzo now made a journey to France, having made an alliance with the king. In 1518 he returned with his lady, and the mar- 1518.
riage was celebrated with much pomp, rejoicings,* and feſtivity. Many citizens at this time, having diſcovered the inclination of the duke, and that he was determined to reduce the ſtate to the form of a principality, would not conſent to it. Some withdrew themſelves from public affairs, deſpairing of the commonwealth; others confined themſelves to their houſes, under pretence of ſickneſs; but others, having more courage and better ſupport, went to Rome, under the protection of the pope; and the duke, to make the laſt effort to diſpoſe the pope to reduce the ſtate of Florence to a principality, went to finiſh his nuptials at Rome, and carried with him Vettoſi and Strozzi, in whom he confided, and with whom he often conſulted; and after many intrigues with

* Si fecero le nozze ſontuoſiſſime, con molta pompa, allegrezza, e feſta grandiſſima. Nerli, p. 131.

UAB Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

the pope, they returned to Florence, determined to
1519. reform the ſtate. But in 1519 he died, about ten days after his wife, who, however, had left him a daughter, who was afterwards queen of France. Goro, and the citizens in his confidence, had ordered ſecretly the piazza to be fortified, and the guards doubled, and had cauſed to be aſſembled in Florence, from various places of the dominion, a good number of their friends and confidential partiſans, to aſſiſt, as occaſion might happen, in the preſervation of the public ſecurity, and in obſerving the conduct of thoſe citizens who had given any cauſe of ſuſpicion; and Antonia di Bettino da Ricoſoli was imborſed gonfalonier. The cardinal de Medici, who arrived two days before the death of the duke, being ſent by the pope to give orders, regulated all things to general ſatisfaction.* After the funeral of the duke, the cardinal entered into intimate conſultations with the principal citizens, and re-eſtabliſhed the government, according to the form and order which the pope had given to duke Lorenzo; he then remained, by order of the pope, in the government, to give further ſatisfaction to the citizens, whom he knew to be diſguſted with the proceedings of Goro in the life-time of the duke, and the great authority he had aſſumed, perhaps greater than the duke had given him; and reduced the buſineſs of the magiſtrates, elections, cuſtoms of office, and the mode of expenditure of the public money, in ſuch manner, that there appeared a very great and univerſal joy among the citizens, and there remained to the cardinal

* Nerli, lib. vii. p. 133.

UAB Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

no other or greater difficulties, than the uſual diviſions among the citizens of the ſtate; ſome of whom contended for enlarging, and others for reſtraining the elections of magiſtrates: wherefore, thoſe who wiſhed the ſtate more contracted, at the head of whom was Ridolfi, oppoſed themſelves to Salviati, who, by order of the pope, was returned to Florence with the cardinal, and he, for contrary reaſons, was oppoſed to them; and becauſe the cardinal went on, amuſing ſometimes one, and ſometimes the other party, and ſupporting both, their diviſions were much more apparent at this time, and the heads of each diſcovered themſelves with leſs diſſimulation than they had done in the life-time of the duke: indeed the diſſenſions of the citizens aroſe in all important affairs which the cardinal had to provide for, or to think of, in his government; whereas in the other, in the moſt important affairs they followed that which was ordered daily by the pope without any difficulty. The cardinal ſeems to have diverted the factions from any effectual oppoſition to his government, by playing them one againſt the other, and fomenting their mutual animoſities: for his government was very ſucceſsful and frugal, and money was ſaved in it to pay off the public debts. But the war ſoon followed, of the pope Leo the Tenth, and Charles the Fifth, who had lately ſucceeded Maximilian in the empire, againſt the French. The cardinal was ſent with his army, as apoſtolical legate, and went into Lombardy, leaving in his place, in the government of Florence, the cardinal di Cortona. The affairs of the pope and emperor ſucceeded proſperouſly againſt the French, who loſt Milan: but the pope, on the laſt of November, 1521, died, 1521.
and finiſhed, in the midſt of ſo much grandeur,

UAB Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

the legitimate ſucceſſion of the houſe of Medici, and the male line of the firſt Coſmo; who, by a public decree, was called the father of his country, and who, in 1434, had given riſe to the greatneſs of his family.

After the death of the pope, the cardinal ſuddenly departed from Milan, and returned to Florence, where he found that the ſignori had given good orders for the conſervation of the ſtate, and that Franceſco Vettori, who was gonfalonier of juſtice, the cardinal di Cortona, and the principal citizens in the government, had made every proviſion, and taken every precaution which occurred for the benefit and ſafety of the ſtate; and he found too, on ſo great an occaſion, of a ſudden and unexpected death of the pope, a ready inclination in all the principal citizens, and an univerſal deſire among the people, to maintain the ſtate in the hands of the cardinal de Medici; aud all this felicity aroſe from his good government, which, ſince the death of the duke Lorenzo, had been ſo univerſally agreeable. Conſulting now with the principal citizens, orders were given for defence in the war which Renzo da Ceri, by the favour of the French, had excited in Siena, with a view to change the government in Florence.

This war was fomented by the cardinal Sodorini, and occaſioned a freſh declaration againſt his family, that they were rebels, and involved them in greater calamities than they had ſuffered in 1512. During this war many citizens began to ſpeak, without reſerve, of a more liberal manner of living, and a new reform of the government, and reported publicly, that the cardinal, for want of relations and a legitimate ſucceſſion in his family, would be willing in a certain manner to

UAB Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

diſpoſe of the authority of the balia, and leave the government freely in the people, with a certain authority reſerved to a ſenate for life, to conſiſt of the beſt citizens, and reſerving to himſelf a certain authority and balia in ſome things during his life: and when the principal and moſt ſuſpected perſons in this war were ſecured, although an army was ſtill in Siena, theſe diſcourſes continued and increaſed. Many were ſo eager, and ſo drawn away by their wills and their love of novelty, that they began too ſoon to deſcend to particulars concerning the manner of reforming the government, which they believed and ſaid ought to be undertaken; and they propoſed the mode of electing the gonfalonier of juſtice, and ſome of them would have him for life, as he had been when Sodorini was elected in 1502, and others deſired he might be elected annually, as Ridolfi was in 1512. Such was the zeal of many, deceived by their credulity and the ardent paſſions which tranſported them, that they began to ſpeak more freely of the perſon to be elected, and Acciaioli and Vettori were named, and Gondi; but all agreed at laſt, the better to conciliate the cardinal, to leave, for the firſt time, the election wholly to him. Theſe practices went ſo far, that the citizens began to be publicly named and diſcriminated, who were in favour of the reformation of the government, and who were againſt it. That party of the citizens who had counſelled the cardinal to a large and comprehenſive diſtribution of honours, and who had ever taken the protection of the generality, appeared, upon theſe converſations of a reform, to give ſome attention to it; and that party which deſired to hold the public offices and honours in fewer families, deteſted and cenſured thoſe who talked of any reformation

at all; and the generality of the citizens ſtood neutral, expecting, however, with great deſire, that the reform would take place; and one claſs of young men, and eſpecially thoſe who had concurred in the riſe of Rucellai, ſolicited it, and diſcovered themſelves. In this manner was the whole city divided and confounded; the greater part of the citizens agitated, ſome with hopes, and others with fears; and many ventured ſo far as to write various models for ſuch a reformation, even in the preſence of the cardinal: and among theſe ſufficiently diſtinguiſhed themſelves Zanobi Buondelmonti and Nicholas Machiavel; and Nerli ſays he ſaw theſe writings, which were communicated to him by the authors at the time of theſe intrigues. They were alſo communicated to the cardinal, who pretended to hold them in high eſteem.* Alexander de Pazzi compoſed a moſt elegant and beautiful oration, in the name of the people of Florence, in praiſe of the cardinal, for the reſtoration of the commonwealth; which Nerli remembers to have heard recited before a large company at a ſupper, where, having obtained a copy, he ſent it to Rome to the cardinal Salviati. Theſe ſpeculations proceeded ſo far, and were ſo freely diſcourſed on, and in ſo many ways, that it began to appear to the cardinal that he had permitted them to run too far; and he thought of means to reſtrain them, but found, things had gone ſo much beyond his intentions, ſome difficulty to reſiſt their courſe. But fortune preſented him a convenient opportunity, which was this: There had been formed, at the

* E tutti, ſuoi ſcritti andavano in mano del cardinale, che moſtrava di tenerne conto, e di farne capitale grandiſſimo. Nerli, lib. vii. p. 137.

time

time of the riſe of Rucellai, a certain ſchool of young men of letters, and of elevated genius, among whom was Coſmo Rucellai, who died very young, though he had excited great expectations among the literati. This ſociety was much frequented by Nicholas Machiavel; and Nerli ſays, he was a moſt intimate friend of Machiavel, and had frequent converſations in this club.* Theſe gentlemen not only amuſed themſelves, but made a buſineſs and duty of exerciſing themſelves in the ſtudy of hiſtory, and in making obſervations and reflections upon it. At their requeſt Machiavel compoſed his diſcourſes upon Livy, and his treatiſe of military matters. Theſe perſons went on, thinking, by an imitation of the ancients, to effect ſomething that ſhould be grand and noble, and render them illuſtrious. At length they wrought themſelves up to the thoughts of a conſpiracy againſt the cardinal, and did not well conſider what Machiavel in his diſcourſes had written to them on the ſubject of conſpiracies; if they had well conſidered his reflections, they would either not have engaged in the deſign, or, if they had, would have proceeded in it with greater caution. The heads of this plot were Zanobi Buondelmonti and Luigi Allamanni. Their intention was to aſſaſſinate the cardinal de Medici, and thus reduce the city to a free government, and reſtore liberty to the people, as they enjoyed it before 1512. And after the death of Leo the Tenth, they ſent Batiſta della Palla, who was in the conſpiracy with them, to cardinal Sodorini, in order to inform him of their indignation againſt the cardinal, and to perſuade him, as an exile and an enemy of the Medici, to make, with Renzo da Ceri and the

* Guicchiardin, lib. ix.

family of the Sodorini, ſuch proviſions as they ſhould judge proper to conduct their deſigns, and to obtain intelligence of the progreſs of this war. But the enterpriſe not ſucceeding with ſignior Renzo as was expected, the plot was firſt ſuſpected, and at length, by degrees, diſcovered by the cardinal; and the principal perſons engaged in it were obliged to fly, and were declared rebels,

1521. particularly Buondelmonti, Allamanni, Palla, Bruccioli; and others were apprehended and beheaded; by which means the cardinal was again ſecured in the enjoyment of his government, as well as his life, and an end was put to all the vain deſigns and idle diſcourſes of a free government.

1522. In 1522 the cardinal contrived an interview at Leghorn, and at Florence, with Adrian the pope; in conſequence of which cardinal Sodorini was impriſoned in the caſtle at Rome, and prevented from fomenting further deſigns againſt the Medici, and the cardinal de Medici became a great favourite with the pope and the emperor. Having adjuſted with the pope all his affairs, the cardinal gave orders, that Hippolito, a natural ſon of the duke Giuliano, and Alexander, a natural ſon of the duke Lorenzo, ſhould be committed to the care of Roſo Ridolfi and Giovanni Corſi, that he might avail himſelf of them, in time, to maintain the reputation and authority of the ſtate in the houſe of Medici, in the ſucceſſion of the firſt Coſmo, who was called the father of his country, in the beſt manner that he could, being determined to exclude the other branch in the deſcendants of his brother Lorenzo. He proceeded, however, in this deliberation with much caution and reſerve, pretending to doubt of the brains as well as heart of Giovanni de Medici, of whom, in truth, he was jealous; for inſtead of meriting the

contempt

contempt of the cardinal, he had a liberality and a greatneſs of ſoul, which enabled him to acquire the higheſt fame in the military art, which he had purſued from his tender years: in ſhort, according to Nerli, who knew him, he was poſſeſſed of every virtue and quality of a great prince.

In September 1523, pope Adrian died; and, after a long conteſt, in which the cardinals were two months in the conclave, on the 19th of November the cardinal de Medici was created pope, and aſſumed the name of Clement the Seventh, and thus united the ſovereign authority, which he held in Florence, to the extenſive power of the church; upon which happy election, as it was called, there were great external ſigns of joy in Florence, in the fervor of which an event happened remarkable enough to be related:—in the vacancy of the pontificate many wagers had been laid concerning the new election; among many who loſt was Peter Orlandini, who being too importunately ſolicited by the winner to pay, anſwered in great warmth, that he would not pay, until it was determined whether the election had been made canonically or not. Theſe words were reported to the magiſtrates, and, after the importance of them had been conſidered by the cabal, Peter was ſummoned by the eight of the balia, and upon his appearance was ſeized, and beheaded in a few hours.—Soon after the creation of the pope, the Sodorini were reſtored to their country, becauſe, although at firſt their cardinal in conclave had been zealous againſt the Medici, his friends, and particularly the cardinal Colonna, had laboured to reconcile him, and ſucceeded ſo far, that his nephews were reſtored, and he remained afterwards in the good graces of his holineſs. Palla Ruccellai, with nine others, were ſent ambaſſa- 1523.

dors

dors to render the uſual homage to the new pope. With theſe ambaſſadors the pope intrigued, as he could no longer govern in Florence, to have one of the two young natural ſons ſent to govern the city. Some among the ambaſſadors, and other Florentines then at Rome, were inclined; others were timorous in diſcloſing their opinions; and ſome of them having notice of the ſecret, and of the will of the pope, and all of them well knowing that the pope had determined, in order to ſatisfy him, and conſtrained by neceſſity rather than ſwayed by any reaſon or inclination, requeſted of his holineſs one of the young men to govern the ſtate of Florence. The pope ſends Hippolito, the ſon of the duke Giuliano, under the guardianſhip of the cardinal di Cortona, becauſe he was yet too young for ſo great a government; and Ottaviano de Medici had the care of the family affairs, and the controul of the houſe and family of the Magnificent Hippolito, as he was called, and as his father had been intitled at the time of their exile, and when he had the title of duke of Nemours. Ottaviano was alſo to take the care of Alexander, the ſon of the duke Lorenzo. In this manner were diſpoſed all things relative to the ſtate of Florence and the houſe of Medici; and thus they remained for four years, until 1527, when a general ſcrutiny was made, which was very extenſive, and therefore made with much univerſal ſatisfaction.

1524. In 1524 a civil war broke out in Piſtoia, between the parties called Panciatiche and Cancelliere, and the party Panciatiche prevailing, expelled and baniſhed, as uſual, their adverſaries, and every thing was there ſoon ſettled. The pope did not much interfere in the war in Lombardy, between Charles and Francis, which followed that memorable

rable defeat of the French before Pavia, when the king was taken priſoner and conducted to Spain by the emperor. In this tranquillity of foreign affairs, the cardinal di Cortona had, however, enough to do to cement his government, amidſt all their diſcontents, and his own ungrateful manner of treating the citizens; for the beſt friends, as well as others, did not find in the government of the pope that which had been promiſed, nor thoſe conditions and qualities of profit and honour which they reliſhed ſo much in his mode of proceeding and government while he was cardinal: nor could the cardinal di Cortona perceive, until in 1527 it became very manifeſt, how much it imported to the benefit of the ſtate, and the houſe of Medici, that he ſhould ſtudy the character of the citizens, and the principles and motives of their diviſions and diſſenſions; eſpecially after the party, the moſt decided in favour of the Medici, and of conſequence the moſt odious to the generality, had been uncommonly weakened by the death of Allemanni, Corbinelli, Serriſtori, and ſome others, the moſt warm in their party, and the moſt jealous of any oppoſition to the preſent government. After them too Ridolfi died; but he, before his death, by an intermarriage with the Strozzi, had been ſomewhat cooled, and dreaded leſs than formerly a change. The other party, on the contrary, were much exalted in their hopes and confidence, as they had increaſed in reputation with the Strozzi, Capponi, and Guicchiardini, who, by their great quality and riches, drew after them a ſtrong band of honourable citizens: with theſe concurred Vettori, being a relation of Capponi, and an intimate friend of Philip Strozzi; and as to the Salviati, although Jacobo was ſhut up in Rome, there remained in Florence the ſons of

UAB
Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

of Alamanno, Averardo, and Piero, the couſins of Capponi and Franceſco Guicchiardini, and the relations of Matteo Strozzi. Having accumulated ſo much favour, ſo great abilities, ſuch credit, and ſo many intimate connections, this party began to be as bold as they were active and powerful; and Niccolo Capponi went on with the greateſt reputation increaſing it, diſcovered upon all occaſions ſuch popular principles and feelings, and had acquired ſo much popular benevolence, that thoſe who were deſirous of innovation, and a more liberal government, appeared to have found a ſufficient ſupport, whenever a proper opportunity ſhould occur of changing the government. Theſe cauſes, however, produced no effect while the affairs of the war between the grand princes ſtood in ſuſpenſe, and unaltered, as they did during the time that the king was priſoner to the emperor in Spain: but after the king had ranſomed himſelf, and recovered his liberty and his kingdom, being more determined than ever in his perpetual deſire of recovering the ſtate of Milan, and as it appeared to him, although he had left his ſons as hoſtages in the hands of the emperor, that the conditions of the convention for his liberation were too hard to be obſerved, not being able to compoſe his mind, being at all hazards determined to renew the war, and having found the princes of Italy in the ſame diſpoſition, he agreed with the pope and Venetians, and made with them a league againſt the emperor, in which the pope would have the Florentines named and comprehended. This league commenced the war in Lombardy; and in the army of the church, and for the pope, in place of a legate, and with the title of locum tenens of the holy ſee, was Franceſco Guicchiardini; and the comte Guido Rangoni,

UAB Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

goni, then governor of the people of the church, had the general government of the eccleſiaſtical ſtate; and Giovanni de Medici had the command of the infantry of that part abroad which was commanded by comte Guido; and there occurred in this war, between Giovanni and Guido, many diſſenſions: and with the king, in his camp, was the marquis de Saluzzo; and for the Venetians, the duke of Urbino. This war began about the year 1526*. The imperial generals, 1526.
to divert the pope from the war of Lombardy, invaded Rome itſelf, took the bourg of St. Peter, and plundered the palace of the pope himſelf; who, being beſieged in the caſtle of St. Angelo, was conſtrained to make a convention to his diſadvantage, to ſend Philip Strozzi to Naples as a hoſtage for the ſecurity of the treaty, which, among other conditions, contained a certain ſuſpenſion of arms. But all this ſucceſs of the imperialiſts could not move the pope from the war. The league ſent Giovanni de Medici to the relief of Rome; but he was killed in a ſkirmiſh, which relieved the pope from his jealouſy, though it expoſed his capital to ruin. After the death of Giovanni, thoſe citizens of Florence who deſired an alteration in the government began to take courage, and diſcover their intentions. They proceeded to ſound all the citizens whom they thought proper, encouraging them to the enterpriſe; and at the ſame time began the younger nobility to deſire the ſame with thoſe citizens who had encouraged and counſelled them, and to demand of the ſignori and the public, arms, covering their requeſt under a colour of wiſhing by ſuch means to be able to ſerve and

* Nerli, lib. vii. p. 144.

defend

UAB
Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

defend their country in ſo great and imminent a danger as appeared in the approach of a large hoſtile army. They deſired to be armed on no other account, and for no other end, than merely for the benefit and defence of the city. Veiled under ſuch colours, theſe youths were countenanced by all that party of citizens who deſired to enlarge the government, and had taken upon themſelves the univerſal protection of the people. But theſe young men entered principally into an intimate connection with Nicholas Capponi, with whom concurred all the other citizens who deſired to enlarge the government: and therefore, in the council, in the magiſtracy, and in all things, theſe youths were the favourites of Capponi, Strozzi, and Louis Guicchiardini, and they took ſuch courage as to conſult with them in ſecret. Cardinal di Cortona being, as he commonly was, very ſlow in reſolving, was ill qualified to put a ſtop to this ſecret intelligence, eſpecially as he was obliged to wait for inſtructions from Rome for every meaſure of his conduct. The diviſions among the citizens made him ſtill more timid, which was the reaſon that the ſpirits of theſe youths grew bolder every day. The pope ſent Gherardo Corſini to Florence to alter the fortifications of the city; but this meaſure was very unpopular. The news of the death of Giovanni de Medici threw the city into the utmoſt conſternation; and all theſe circumſtances aided the young men in their deſign.

The people univerſally, the citizens, and the young noblemen, were all become very licentious in ſpeech, very free and bold in expreſſing their conceits, and became very tumultuous and diſorderly, in armed parties in the ſtreets, in the night, affronting the guards and diſturbing the citizens

UAB Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

with impunity. At this time the pope ſent cardinal Cibo and Ridolfi to aſſiſt cardinal Cortona; but this had little effect.

In 1527 the French army began to turn their 1527.
march towards Tuſcany, the ſuſpected in Florence began to increaſe, and the youth became more ſyſtematical and ardent than ever in their deſire to be armed; which they now demanded with great confidence, as Louis Guicchiardini was appointed gonfalonier. Cortona aſſembled in council many citizens, to conſult upon things of ſuch conſequence. Nicholas Capponi began to council with great eloquence, and without reſerve, to ſay, that in treating of things of this importance, which concerned the ſafety of all, it was reaſonable to hold the conſultations in the palace, among a larger number of the citizens, that every one might more freely expreſs his ſentiments. Gherardo Corſini ſpoke in oppoſition to Capponi with ſpirit in favour of the ſtate: and while the principal citizens were engaged in theſe altercations, the two armies were approaching the city. The cardinal and the Magnificent Hippolito intended to ride out to the heads of the league, and to Guicchiardini, the pope's lieutenant, to concert meaſures for ſecuring the affairs of Florence in their preſent critical ſituation. There were in the piazza many circles of young men, who anxiouſly waited for diſturbances; and in the houſe of Peter Salviati was a great rabble of thoſe who, a little time before, had been concerned in thoſe nocturnal tumults which had been excited; the ſervants of the guard of the lieutenant of police; and within, with the gonfalonier, where thoſe chiefs, who at firſt, with more order and better counſel, had always managed thoſe intrigues which were called the petitions

for

UAB Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

for arms; and already in the palace were Niccolas Capponi, Mathew Strozzi, and Francis Vettori, to countenance the youths, and contrive that whatever might happen might follow in ſome order. But fortune, who had otherwiſe determined, cauſed to be ſpread an idle and falſe report, that the cardinal and Hippolito were gone, and had abandoned the ſtate, as not knowing how to maintain it any longer; and as theſe reports prevailed, there ſuddenly aroſe in the piazza a confuſed rumour, and they bawled out the name of Liberty! the People! and the palace on a ſudden was filled with citizens, youths, arms, and confuſion; and many began, as if they had already conquered, to lay hands on the ſignori; and thoſe citizens were threatened who did not ſay and do as this diſorderly multitude deſired. The more prudent ſort of perſons, elder and younger, endeavoured to preſerve ſome order, and propoſed various judicious plans; but the uproar was too great, and violence had got poſſeſſion. The detail of the errors and diſorders is too long to be recited; but nothing would content them ſhort of a declaration that the Medici were rebels, and the ſignori were compelled to this meaſure. Even Niccolas Capponi, and his colleagues, who were preſent amidſt ſuch diſorders in the palace, repented of the fallacy they had practiſed that day, and perceived that ſtates, which attempt to change the foundations of their government by means of popular tumults, though they may ſometimes eaſily effect the alteration, will always find it difficult either to ſtop or to regulate the movements of the people, of which important truth the hiſtory of Florence is full of fatal examples. The cardinal and Hippolito receiving intelligence of the tumults in Florence, returned

UAB Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

returned with Francis Guicchiardin, and ſome other reſpectable characters, and a military force; made an accommodation with the rioters, and reſtored the government of the Medici; made a new imborſation of the ſignori, and imborſed as gonfalonier, in 1327, Franceſcantonio Nori, and changed ſome of the ſignori for perſons leſs ſuſpected, and took every prudent meaſure to ſecure the peace of the city. But ſuch was the danger, that many abſented themſelves from the city through fear, not believing that the pope would pardon their behaviour. The city was in great confuſion, ſuſpicion, and diſſatisfaction: at this time the army turned towards Rome, which on the 6th of May 1527 was ſacked by the French in their turn, and the pope was again ſhut up a priſoner in the caſtle. Philip Strozzi flew to Florence with the news of the ruin of the pope, and began to promote a change in the government; and his lady, Clariſſa,* the daughter of Peter de Medici, ſiſter of the duke Lorenzo, very gravely and boldly ſaid to the cardinal Cortona and Hippolito, that they ought to fly from Florence, and leave the city and republic free to the citizens.

* See her ſpeech at length in Segni, p. 8. Biſognava prima, che in tali termini ſi faſſino condotte le coſe, governarſi co' cittadini di maniera, che ne' pericoli, e nelle ſtrettezze voſtre vi ſi aveſſono a mantenere amici, e in fede, ſiccome ne' paſſati tempi ſi governarono gli antichi miei, che colla gentilezza, e colla benevolenza più che coll' aſprezza, e col timore, ſi mantenevano fedeli gli animi de' cittadini Fiorentini, e poi in molti loro avverſi tempi gli ritrovarono coſtanti; ma voi, che coll' uſanze del viver voſtro avete, ancóra a chi nol ſapeſſe, ſcoperto i voſtri natali, e fatto chiaro a tuto 'l mondo, che non ſiete del ſangue de Medici (a non pure di voi intendo, ma ancóra di Clemente indegnamente papa, e degnamente prigione) che vi maravigliate voi, ſe ſete oggi in queſti travagli, ne' quali avete tutta queſta città contraria alla voſtra grandezza?

UAB Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

Upon this return of Strozzi, and in this ruin of the pope, Niccolas Capponi, Mathew Strozzi, and Francis Vettori, and all that party of citizens who had been humbled by the diſorders of the 26th of April, and the other party, who were in the confidence and league of the Medici, ſeeing the pope ruined and a priſoner, and no hope of aſſiſtance, gave way to fortune; ſome through fear, and others from hopes that were held out to them by thoſe citizens who deſired a change in the ſtate, and the ruin of the Medici. Cardinal Cortona, finding himſelf in ſuch affliction, and without any aſſignment of money, becauſe Philip Strozzi, who was at that time depoſitory of the ſignori, ſent out of Florence Franceſco del Nero, his deputy, with all the money which had been collected, a movement which was the moſt artful check in the whole game, made a certain capitulation between the city and the Medici, and went out of Florence with cardinal Cibo and the Magnificent Hippolito, on the 17th of May, 1527, without being baniſhed, and having the ſignori ſtill in their favour, who ſtood firm to the government and the houſe of Medici to the laſt. After their departure the capitulation was not obſerved, and cardinal Ridolfi, who remained in Florence, was conſtrained to depart; and in a ſhort time a popular government was introduced, ſo large and licentious, that Philip Strozzi, and all thoſe citizens who had ſuch an inclination to the change, and who were the heads and chiefs of the plan of reſtoring the ſtate to the people, were ſoon treated in ſuch an injurious manner, and in ſo many ways inſulted, that thoſe who incline to weep over the follies and vices of their fellow men, will have incitements enough for their tears in reading the ſtory. The hiſtory of Segni, which was intended

to

to record the tranſactions of the republic or popular ſtate from 1527 to 1530, begins with the eighth book of Nerli, and contains a circumſtantial relation of every particular; and this ſame Segni has written the life of his uncle Niccolo Capponi. Varchi too begins his hiſtory about the ſame time: ſo that this period is well deſcribed by a variety of hiſtorians.

After the reſolution taken by the cardinal di Cortona, and the principal citizens in the government, to reſign the authority of the balia, and to leave the ſtate, by agreement, liberally in the hands of the people, the balia aſſembled on the 16th of May, 1527, and the proviſion, by which liberty was reſtored to the people, and the government wholly conferred upon them, by the total annihilation of the balia, was received with great joy. But that, in ſo great a revolution, they might proceed without ſcandal, and that they might ordain a government, free, pacific, and quiet, as, perhaps, thoſe citizens had flattered themſelves they might do who were the principal authors of the change, and had been ſo zealous for it, although very different effects followed, as it generally happens to thoſe who place themſelves at the head of the people, and are the inſtruments of changing a government; they began by giving order and form to the government, that is, by taking the power into their own hands, inſtead of giving it up to the people: they gave authority to the ſignori, the colleges, and the council of ſeventy, and to the members of the balia, to make, as well as they could, a deputation of thirty citizens for each quarter, giving a convenient ſhare to the minor arts, according to the claſſes at that time in the city; and they ordered that ſuch deputation ſhould be made by ballot, among the ſignori, council, 1527.

magiſtrates, and the thirty for the quarters, who, thus ballotted for by the greateſt popular favour, or, in other words, who had the moſt black votes, ſhould be underſtood to be elected; to which number of one hundred and twenty citizens, together with the ſaid magiſtrates and counſellors, ſhould be given full authority to elect all officers, meaning ſuch as had been uſually made by the council of an hundred, until the 20th of June. All other officers were to be drawn from the ordinary purſes till the ſame 20th of June; after which day it was determined that the council of the people, called the greater* council, ſhould commence its authority: this greater council was determined to have the ſame authority, modes, orders, and forms, which it had before 1312, but with certain limitations and corrections. The new council of ſignori collegi were to be 120, the ſupernumeraries ſeventy, and the balia of twenty, to whom were given authority concerning the mode of making the new gonfalonier, and the council of eighty was revived in the ſame form as before 1512: then, in the abundance of their gratitude to the Medici, for permitting the popular government to be revived, they paſſed an indemnity to them and all their agents, and forgave Hippolito, Alexander, and the ducheſs, daughter of Lorenzo, late duke of Urbino. At laſt the old balia was annulled; but the new government had ſcarcely aſſembled, before freſh diſſenſions aroſe;† ſome would not obſerve at all the laws made as now related, eſpecially relative to the

* Conſiglio maggiore.

† Dopo queſti ordini coſi datè, cominciarono molti cittadini a dividerſi in molti modi, e ſi ſcoperſero molte varie ſette, et molte varie ſeditioni. Nerli, lib. viii. p. 155.

UAB
Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

greater council; but many, without waiting for the term preſcribed, would begin by aſſembling this council, and acting in it: and ſome were even for beginning tumultuouſly, and without waiting for any limitations or corrections, and without regarding this law in any degree. Many others were for removing before the time the ſignori by force, though, by the law, they were to continue the month of June; and becauſe the proviſion or law made by the balia for reſtoring peaceably the ſtate to the people was not obſerved, as indeed it was not, and becauſe the conceſſion and promiſe made by the Medici was not ſtrictly regarded, it was given out that they were returning with force to recover the ſtate which they had voluntarily quitted, and which was not taken from them by force, as many had vainly endeavoured a few days before; and many falſe rumours were created, propagated, and exaggerated, to terrify and confound the contending parties. Theſe at laſt divided themſelves into two principal factions; the Strozzi, Sodorini, &c. were the heads of one, and Niccolo Capponi of the other. They had a long ſtruggle to make the gonfalonier reſign, and get poſſeſſion of the palace. The greater council was brought into being and action before the time, and many other alterations were made about the choice of magiſtrates; but a tumult in the palace, with all the perſuaſions of Capponi, was at laſt ſufficient to prevail upon the gonfalonier to reſign. A new gonfalonier is now to be choſen, and new regulations are contrived for the election, and, among a multitude of candidates, Niccolo Capponi is choſen.

Niccolo Capponi had great qualities; but theſe alone were not the cauſe of his elevation; it was indeed the ſecret influence of the Medici intereſt

UAB Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

which decided the election in his favour. This was a very memorable example of electioneering, and resembles in so many of its outlines all other elections in general, that it enters into the essence of every government in one center, and is very interesting to every free citizen to consider it attentively. Sixty electors were drawn out of the purse of the grand council, each of whom was to nominate a citizen of fifty years of age; and among these sixty were to be ballotted for, in the greater council, six candidates for the office of gonfalonier. The six who upon this occasion had the most votes, were Carducci, Sodorini, A. Strozzi, Nero, Bartolini, and Niccolo Capponi. Each of these candidates had his distinct principles, system, and party. For Carducci were all that part of the citizens who most dreaded and hated the Medici, who wished for a licentious government, by means of which they could be revenged, by beating down every citizen who, under the government of the Medici, had any reputation, influence, or power. In Strozzi concurred a part of the same citizens, for the same reasons, but their ardor for him was cooled by the recollection of the part he had formerly acted against Savanarola in 1498. In Sodorini concurred all those citizens who loved a government both free and quiet, such as that which prevailed from 1502 to 1512, when Peter Sodorini was gonfalonier for life. The party of Medici were united to a man against him; with all other parties he was upon tolerable terms: and this is not only natural, but it is universally found in experience, that the monarchical party is most averse, in such conjunctures, to the aristocratical, and generally coalesces with the democratical, as these did upon this occasion in the choice of Capponi. The partisans

UAB Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

partisans of Nero and Bartolini were those only who hated all men who had ever held any place in government, and wished for such as were entirely new. Amidst so many competitors, and such a variety of parties and views, Capponi was elected, though he had held offices of high trust and confidence under the Medici. He had in the whole course of his life, public and private, been a wise, liberal, and irreproachable citizen; the reputation of his father and his ancestors had early rendered him illustrious: he had as much resolution as he had ambition, and had maintained the character of an honest man with all; that of a free republican with the popular party, and that of a man of honour and fidelity with the Medici themselves, who unanimously fell in with his views in the election; Naturam expellas furca, licet usque recurret. The dominant party will, in general, in this manner prevail, though their leaders are in banishment, and even though excluded by law. Capponi had married a daughter of Philip Strozzi, and this union of their families, and even the diversity of their characters,* had contributed to increase the influence of the former. After the election of the gonfalonier,

* L'integrita della vita, la temperanza, la severita, la parsimonia in allevar la famiglia ferono resplendere Niccolò sopra d'ogni' altro per dignità, e per un vivo esempio di virtù: quando in Filippo un modo di vivere sciolto, l'incontinenza, la piacevolezza, la grazia, la destrezza nel trattenere gli uomini, la liberaltà. la licenza, la concessione di se stesso fatta ora alla virtù, ora al vizio, ebbe forza di farlo amar sempre dalla gioventù, riverire dalla nobiltà, e accarezzare dal popolo, di tal maniera, che sebbene viveva in privata fortuna, era nondimeno come un principe. Varchi, lib. iii. p. 63. Segni Storie, lib. i. p. 12. Vita di Niccolo Capponi, p. 2.

UAB Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

they proceeded to the choice of the ſignori for three months. Thus the party of Capponi carried their point, and accompliſhed all this weighty buſineſs by the firſt of June, againſt the regulation that the old ſignori ſhould continue through the month.—One of the firſt ſteps taken under the new government, was an appointment, by a plurality of votes in the greater council, of five citizens, under the title of ſyndics of the commons, to examine the accounts of all thoſe who had handled the public money, or other property, from the year 1512. This was an invention of revenge and jealouſy, to deſtroy all the friends and inſtruments of the Medici: and many other ſchemes of perſecution againſt the party of Medici were contrived without the ſmalleſt diſcretion, and in ſpite of all the endeavours of Capponi and Philip Strozzi to prevent them. Among other ſchemes of perſecution, the moſt tyrannical imaginable, which this dominant party, now triumphant, practiſed againſt the minor party, was, at a time when a ſum of money (30,000 crowns) was wanted by the public, they made a law, that twenty citizens ſhould be *elected*, who ſhould be compelled to lend the public fifteen thouſand crowns each. Such is the ſenſe of liberty, and the ſacred regard to property, in a government in one center! This popular tyranny was carried to an exceſs ſo intolerable, that Philip Strozzi, the very father of the revolution, was obliged to fly to Naples, though his brother-in-law was gonfalonier; but returning ſome time after with Buondelmonit, they were both impriſoned for four years in the tower of Volterra, for making oppoſition to the new iniquitous taxes, and the adminiſtration of the ſyndics. Acciaioli

too,

UAB Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

too, who was then returned from his embaſſy in France, was impriſoned for being in arrear for part of a ſubſidy, which they had impoſed upon him, not only without equity, but beyond his ability. The gonfalonier could make no reſiſtance to this popular fury, which had now got the aſcendant; the great council, and their three months men the ſignori, governed without controul; and becauſe they could not glut their vengeance upon the perſons of the Medici, they took the images in wax of the popes Leo the Tenth, and Clement the Seventh, and ſcourged and deſtroyed them; and the magiſtrates themſelves were ſuppoſed to have excited the youths who were guilty of this outrage, ſo indecent in a catholic city: at leaſt no meaſures were taken to ſuppreſs or to puniſh the rioters. An order was given by the magiſtrates, the eight of the balia, that the arms and enſigns of the Medici ſhould be taken down in every place in the city and country, public and private, even in the private houſes of the family, even from the monuments over their tombs. All this was done, and many other invaſions of their private property committed, in direct contempt of the capitulation made with cardinal Cortona and the Magnificent Hippolito, when they reſigned the authority of their balia, and voluntarily left the ſtate to the people. It is aſtoniſhing that the people themſelves ſhould not have recollected, that this courage had come into their hearts only from the preſent calamity of the pope, which might ſoon be at an end, and themſelves made to feel the conſequences of their preſent folly: but in ſuch a tumult of popular paſſions there is never any reflection, prudence, or foreſight. All theſe things happened in the firſt months of the new government, while the pope was in the power of the

UAB Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

the imperialiſts, a priſoner in the caſtle of St. Angelo. The plague was now in Florence, and it was difficult to aſſemble the councils, eſpecially the greater council; a law was therefore made, that for the creation of officers, and the expedition of private petitions, the number of the greater council neceſſary to be preſent ſhould be only four hundred; but for the creation of the ſignori, the colleges, the ten of war, and the eight of the balia, the number of eight hundred muſt be full, as well as at the paſſing of new laws, and the impoſition of new taxes.

In December, the pope accommodated his affairs with the emperor, obtained his liberty, and retired to Orvieto for his greater ſecurity. This event increaſed the number of opponents to the preſent government in Florence, and brought again into reputation thoſe who had enjoyed it under the Medici. Two factions now broke out in the city. The rivals of Capponi began to raiſe their heads; and endeavoured to render unpopular not only the friends of the Medici, but Capponi, and all thoſe who had endeavoured to unite all parties for the general tranquillity. Carducci, A. Strozzi, and Sodorini, now formed a triumvirate, at the head of one faction, againſt Capponi and his adherents; and the young men and more active partiſans of each ſide armed themſelves, both under the pretence of defending the palace. This guard, thus compoſed of two parties, could not be united, and gave much trouble to the gonfalonier. The pope at this time made Hippolito a cardinal. A ſatirical libel was compoſed, printed at Siena, and ſcattered all over Florence, in which a picture was drawn of ſuch a gonfalonier as would be ſuitable to the preſent conjuncture; but it was in all things

UAB Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

things oppoſite to the character of Capponi, and very much reſembled Carducci. This device excited much licentious converſation in the city againſt Capponi, and many projects of a new gonfalonier at the approaching election. Theſe canvaſſings drove Capponi to a curious expedient to obtain his election. He had always maintained a good character with the friends of Savanarola the prophet, and in this time of the plague all men were ſeriouſly inclined, and the ſuperſtitious began again to be frantic. Niccolo took an opportunity, in the greater council, to make an oration upon the times, in which, by the aid of a retentive memory, he repeated, almoſt word by word, one of the moſt terrible ſermons of Savanarola, which predicted ſo many ſcourges to Italy and to Florence, and, after ſo much deſtruction, ſuch felicity to the Florentine people; and endeavoured to ſhew, that the times thus predicted were arrived. In the courſe of his harangue he wrought himſelf up to a fervour of enthuſiaſm, fell upon his knees before the whole aſſembly, and cried with a loud voice to God Almighty for mercy. His enthuſiaſm ſpread like a contagion, and the whole aſſembly fell upon their knees after his example, and cried out with a voice like thunder, "Miſeracordia!" as they had been uſed ſometimes to do when attending ſome of the moſt dreadful of Savanarola's lectures; and to complete his artifice, or his frenſy, he perſuaded the people, in commemoration of the tribulations, chaſtiſements, and judgements of God, and the better to ſecure the felicity promiſed by Savanarola, that they ought to elect, for the peculiar king of the people of Florence, Jeſus the Redeemer; and, as Savanarola had ſaid in ſome of his ſermons, that they ought to bear the enſigns of

of Chriſt, and the glorious name of Jeſus, over the gates of the palace. The propoſition was made in council, as ſoon as the gonfalonier had finiſhed his oration, that Chriſt ſhould be their king, becauſe, according to St. Paul, God had conſtituted him heir of all things; and Nerli, who ſays he was preſent among ſo many hundreds of citizens, declares, that there were not more than twenty * white beans, or votes, againſt the propoſition, when it was determined by ballot. Capponi, by this proceeding, made ſuch an impreſſion upon all orders, and gained ſo many partiſans, that, notwithſtanding all the combinations of the families of his competitors, he carried his election in June 1528.

1528. In 1528 began to be diſcovered, for they were no longer capable of diſſimulation, the pope's profound projects,† hitherto concealed with great art. An ardent deſire of reſtoring to his family their grandeur in Florence was deeply rankling in his mind; yet, by an hypocriſy, too natural to that as well as every other kind of ambition, he endeavoured, by public declarations in the moſt unequivocal terms, to perſuade the Florentines that nothing was further from his thoughts; that he only deſired the republic to acknowledge him as pontiff, as all other princes and ſovereigns had done, and that they would not perſecute

* *Ultimamente fece paſſare una proviſione, nel conſiglio* grande, ſopra di tutte l' altre notabiliſſima in queſto genere di pietà, per la quale fu eletto Geſù Chriſto ſignor noſtro per re della citta noſtra, con tutti i ſuffrage di quel popolo, eccetto che di 26, che tal decreto non approvarono. Era 'l titolo di queſta legge ſcritto ſopra la porta del palazzo de ſignori, in lettere d'oro, che dichevano G. H. S. X. P. S. Rex populi Flor. S. P. Q. F. Conſenſu declaratus annon, menſe die. Varchi, p. 122. Segni Vita di Capponi, p. 19.

† Guicchiardini, lib. xix. Nerli, lib. viii. p. 172.

in

in their private affairs his connections, nor take away the enſigns and ornaments which belonged to his family. With a commiſſion to this purpoſe he had ſent a Florentine prelate as his ambaſſador to Florence; but as he had not obtained an audience, he ſolicited, through the medium of the king of France, that they would ſend an embaſſy to him, earneſtly endeavouring to remove all their ſuſpicions, and by all appearances of candour, frankneſs, and familiarity in his dealings with them, to diſpoſe them to fall in with his inſidious deſigns. As all theſe devices proved unſucceſsful, he exerted himſelf to perſuade Lautrech, that as thoſe who governed in Siena were dependents on the emperor, it would be uſeful to his affairs to reſtore Fabio Petrucci to that city; but Lautrech, from the oppoſition of the Florentines, would not engage in it. Failing in this way, he laboured in ſecret with Pirro, who complained of grievances againſt the Sieneſe, that with eight hundred men, and ſome exiles from Chiuſi, he ſhould ſeize upon that territory, and endeavour by that means to govern Siena: but the Florentines inſinuating to the French ambaſſador, the viſcount de Turenne, that the pope aimed at nothing but diſturbing Florence by the means of Siena, the ambaſſador perſuaded him to give up the movement to Chiuſi.

Capponi, the gonfalonier, held at this time * with the pope a correſpondence, by means of Jacobo Salvati, by which the pope intended in time, and with patience, to overcome all difficulties, and obtain the reſtoration of his family; but the gonfalonier intended only to amuſe the pope,

* Nerli, p. 172, 173.

and

UAB
Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

and prevent him from undertaking any enterprise againſt the city with force. Thus both parties hoped to gain the advantage of time. Capponi gave hopes to the pope, that the city might be diſpoſed to agree with him, as they had been uſed to do with other pontiffs, provided his holineſs would content himſelf to leave in it the quiet enjoyment of its liberty. This correſpondence, though conducted with ſecrecy to avoid ſuſpicion, was communicated, however, to ſeveral of the firſt citizens in the government. Jacobo Alamanni, though he knew the correſpondence was conducted with the privity of the government and for the good of the ſtate, was excited by the competitors of the gonfalonier to ſeize with violence Serragli, who had been ſent by Salviati upon the buſineſs, and a great clamour was excited againſt the gonfalonier: freſh libels were publiſhed, and old ones reprinted; the young men were again excited tumultuouſly to demand arms, enſigns, and officers, to be elected by themſelves; and the triumvirate prevailed ſo far as to have a new ordinance for the militia, by which an imborſation ſhould be made of the young ſoldiers, and from time to time a number drawn, to keep the guard of the palace. This was no better than making the government priſoners to the oppoſition. Alamanni at length proceeded to ſuch violence, tumult, and outrage againſt the gonfalonier, that the ſignori, who, by the greater council were authorized to defend the palace, were obliged, in order to ſuppreſs this armed ſedition, to order him to be ſeized: he attempted to fly, but was made priſoner, condemned, and beheaded. This puniſhment excited freſh clamours againſt the gonfalonier, eſpecially among the

the young ſoldiers, who now reproached their own leaders, the triumvirate, for having concurred in the ſentence, although they had ſtimulated under-hand the offence. Perhaps, to remove Carducci and Strozzi out of the way of giving further diſturbance to the government, the firſt was appointed ambaſſador to France, and the ſecond to Venice. Both declined the employment; but as the laws would not permit any citizen to renounce an embaſſy without alledging juſt impediments, to be approved by the ſignori and colleges, they applied to be excuſed; but their reaſons were not admitted, and they fell under the puniſhment of admonition and other heavy penalties. Their arguments before the ſignori and colleges only ſerved to divide ſtill more and diſtract the public councils. Carducci at laſt went to France much againſt his will, but Strozzi was condemned and admoniſhed; and this again alienated many friends from the gonfalonier, and weakened ſtill further his party. But many grew weary of the endleſs confuſions and anxieties ariſing from this government in one center, and that center the nation. Thoſe who had been in reputation in the time of the Medici began to recover credit, and the faction of the triumvirate loſt ground. The young men too were divided, ſome warmly attached to the gonfalonier, and others as zealous againſt him, eſpecially thoſe who reſented the puniſhment of Alamanni. The gonfalonier, truſting to a good conſcience and upright intentions, proceeded in his negociations with the pope, with the participation of his principal colleagues in government; and this he thought the more neceſſary, ſince the ruin of the French army near Naples made him ſuſpect that the pope would reconcile

reconcile himſelf with the emperor; and indeed the pope at this time,* under a countenance of exquiſite diſſimulation, had all his thoughts taken up with the recovery of the government of Florence, ſtill amuſing the French ambaſſadors and the other confederates with various negociations, and ſpecious hopes of his adhering to the league. Nevertheleſs, moved partly by the dread of the grandeur of the emperor, and the ſucceſs of his enterpriſes, and partly by the hopes of inducing him more eaſily than he could the king of France to aſſiſt him in the reſtoration of his family to Florence, he had a ſtronger inclination to the emperor than to the king: to facilitate this deſign, he moreover moſt earneſtly deſired to draw to his devotion the ſtate of Perugia; to which end he was believed to have ſtimulated Braccio Baglione, who conſtantly attempted new diſturbances in that neighbourhood.

1529. In this conjuncture a freſh altercation happened in Florence, to the great misfortune of the government,† againſt Capponi, at the end of the ſecond year of his magiſtracy, excited principally by the envy of ſome of the principal citizens, who availed themſelves of the jealouſies and ignorance of the multitude. The gonfalonier in all his adminiſtration, as well as in this correſpondence, had two principal points in view; to defend againſt freſh attacks of envy or reſentment thoſe who had been placed in honour by the Medici, and even to communicate to them, in common with the other citizens, the honours and councils of the public; and in things of no moment to liberty, not to exaſperate the ſpirit of the pope. Theſe

* Guicchiardini, lib. xix. p. 170, edit. Venet. 1574. Nerli, p. 179.

† Guicchardini, lib. xix. Nerli, p. 179.

points

UAB Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

points were both of great utility to the republic, becauſe many of thoſe who had been perſecuted as enemies of the government, finding themſelves in ſafety, would have joined heartily with the others to defend it; and becauſe the pontiff, though he eagerly deſired the return of his family, would, if no freſh provocations were given him, have leſs incitements to precipitation, and leſs grounds for thoſe complaints he was continually making to other princes. But to this policy was oppoſed the ambition of many, who knowing that they ſhould be farther from a ſhare in the government, or have leſs influence in it, if the friends of the Medici, men undoubtedly of more experience and merit, were in it, minded no other buſineſs than that of filling the multitude with ſuſpicions of the pope and his party; calumniating the gonfalonier, that he might not obtain the prolongation of his magiſtracy for the third year, as not having a ſufficient hatred againſt the Medici. Capponi, unmoved at theſe ſlanders, and thinking it very neceſſary that the pope ſhould not be provoked, entertained him with letters and private meſſages, as before related; a practice which was begun and continued with the knowledge and approbation of the principal citizens in adminiſtration, and with no other end than to divert the pope from taking ſome violent meaſures. As fortune would have it, having dropped by accident and incautiouſly in the council chamber a letter from Rome, in which were ſome words capable of exciting ſuſpicion in ſuch as were uninformed of the original and foundation of the correſpondence, it fell into the hands of Jacobo Gherardi, one of thoſe who had ſeats in the ſupreme council, and were moſt bitter againſt the gonfalonier; certain ſeditious young men roſe in arms and ſeized the palace, retaining the gonfalo-

UAB
Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

nier in cuſtody, and calling together the magiſtrates and a multitude of citizens, tumultuouſly deliberated and reſolved that he ſhould be deprived of his office ;* which deciſion was confirmed by the larger council. Capponi was rendered incapable ; and it was ordained that the gonfalonier ſhould be for the future but for one year, and that his ſalary ſhould be reduced one-half. The oppoſition of the triumvirate had ſo turned the brains of the people by their intrigues, that a great change was made in the government, and Franciſco Carducci, a man proved by his paſt life, by his condition and his depraved views, to be unworthy of ſo great an honour, was choſen in his place. Capponi was brought to his trial, and defended himſelf with ſuch eloquence and ability, and ſhewed ſo clearly that his conduct, inſtead of being criminal, had been dictated by the principal perſons in government, and merely for the public good, that he was acquitted with honour, and accompanied home to his palace by almoſt all the nobility. Upon the privation of Capponi, the pope no longer entertaining any hopes but from force, ſent the archbiſhop of Capua in great haſte to the emperor, and, as Capponi had foreſeen, agrees to almoſt any terms that were demanded of him, in conſideration of having his family reſtored to Florence, and a natural daughter of the emperor given in marriage to his nephew Alexander de Medici, the ſon of Lorenzo, late duke of Urbino, whom the pope intended to inveſt with the ſecular grandeur of his houſe, becauſe that ſome time before, when he was ſick and in danger of death, he had made Hippolito, the ſon of Giuliano, a cardinal. The emperor ſtipulated to give twenty thou-

* Guicchiardin, lib. xix. Nerli, p. 180.

ſand

ſand ducats a year with his daughter, and to reinſtate the pope in the poſſeſſion of Cervia, Ravenna, Modena, Raggio, and Rubiera. And thus, by their continual factions and diviſions, the citizens of Florence found they had diſguſted both the king of France and the emperor: and thus it uſually happens when ſmall republics and petty princes intermeddle in the wars of great monarchs; the one in alliance thinks himſelf ill ſerved, while the other who is in enmity is moſt grievouſly offended, and vows revenge.*

The particulars of the negociations at Cambray; the contradictory repreſentations of their two ambaſſadors, Carducci and Cavalcanti, who were of different parties; the propoſitions of an accommodation with the emperor, made by the prince Doria through Louis Allamanni, and the rejection of them by the influence of Franciſo Carducci, the new gonfalonier, and thoſe citizens who were moſt jealous of the Medici and their party, are too tedious to relate, though they were rejected, and conſequently the republic ruined, by the confuſed method of treating of foreign affairs in a numerous and mixed aſſembly, according to the new conſtitution. The emperor now arrives in perſon from Spain, and all the ſtates of Italy ſent ambaſſadors to pay him their reſpects, except Florence. The triumvirate, with their new gonfalonier, were afraid that either ſome of the old friends of the Medici, or ſome of the friends of Capponi, who was at the head of the middle or neutral party, as it was called, would be ſent, and by this means come again into reputation; to prevent which they not only riſked the emperor's reſentment, but deprived themſelves of the means of

* Nerli, p. 184.

obtaining intelligence of any intrigue that might be begun between the pope and him. They ſet on foot, however, in order, as it was pretended, to unite the citizens, a ſubſcription and an oath, to maintain the preſent popular government: but although the ſubſcription was publicly opened in a book in the greater council, many reſpectable citizens would not ſubſcribe, as they knew it to be impoſſible to unite the citizens cordially in ſuch a plan. The animoſities of party grew warmer, and Pazzi, a friend of Capponi, of a very reſpectable character, was accuſed of uttering ſeditious words. The proſecution occaſioned great heat; Pazzi was tried and acquitted, and Rinieri would have been impriſoned for his falſe accuſation, if the gonfalonier and his party had not ſcreened him from juſtice. In this manner did the gonfalonier, to increaſe his authority, and to make himſelf feared, ſeek every opportunity, and employ every means, to depreſs his adverſaries; and if he had ſucceeded againſt Pazzi, he intended to have purſued others with ſtill greater animoſity.

1529. About the middle of Auguſt, the emperor arrives in Genoa, and all the reſt of Italy ſending him ambaſſadors, a freſh effort was made in Florence; and, as it could not now be prevented, the gonfalonier conceived another advice to defeat it. He prevailed to have the powers and inſtructions ſo confined, eſpecially againſt agreeing with the pope, that they could obtain no other anſwer from the emperor than, "Firſt accommodate your affairs with his holineſs." But this was not all the evil: in ſuch governments nothing can be done, with any degree of ſatisfaction to the public, but by gratifying every party; if one clamorous faction is left to excite a cry, all is confuſion. Upon this occaſion four ambaſſadors had been appointed,

UAB
Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

ed, Strozzi, Capponi, Sodorini, and Girolami, who could no more agree among themſelves than with the emperor or the pope. They could never agree in writing their diſpatches. Sodirini and Girolami, to maintain their city in the French intereſt, and in its obſtinacy not to agree with the pope in any manner, would not concur with Strozzi and Capponi in writing clearly and plainly what the emperor had ſaid to them. In September, the united armies of the pope and the emperor reſolved on taking poſſeſſion of Perugia, and the pope gave notice to Malateſta Baglioni to depart from that city. Malateſta demands of Florence men and money to defend it. In order to give the moſt pointed offence to the pope, and to make their defiance the more conſpicuous, they affected to extend it not only to his perſon but to the pontifical ſee. They reſolved in Florence to ſend three thouſand men to the aid of Malateſta, to prevent the church from recovering one of its principal territories; but with all this aſſiſtance, Malateſta was driven out of Perugia, and marched to Florence, in conſequence of an order from the gonfalonier, without the knowledge of the ſignori, or council of ten, and againſt their judgements, as well as the general ſenſe of the citizens, who almoſt unanimouſly deſired an accommodation with the pope. A clamour now aroſe againſt the gonfalonier and his friends, which obliged them to call to council many citizens of the other parties, whom they had long neglected, who carried a reſolution to ſend other ambaſſadors to the pope with more ample powers of accommodation. But the gonfalonier had ſubtilty enough to defeat this reſolution, although it had been taken with very general ſatisfaction, by delaying the commiſſion; and proceeded to take meaſures for the de-

fence of the city againſt the confederated army. Many of the principal citizens, alarmed at theſe delays, harangued freely in council in favour of an accommodation; but theſe were inſulted in the ſtreet by the youth of the gonfalonier's party, for their freedom of ſpeech in council. This occaſioned a public complaint, and ſo much general indignation, that the gonfalonier was obliged to give way, and diſpatch the ambaſſadors with full powers: but he had ſtill the art to delay the deliberations in council upon the terms of accommodation. The ambaſſadors met with ſome difficulty to find the pope, and could not agree among themſelves. Sodorini goes to Lucca; Strozzi to Venice; Capponi reſolves to return to Florence, and labour openly and decidedly to perſuade his fellow-citizens into an accommodation, and Girolami returns to oppoſe him.* Capponi is taken ſick, and dies at Carfagnana; Girolami, therefore, had a larger field opened to his † ambition to be gonfalonier, to which end he accommodated his diſcourſe variouſly to different parties

* Segni, Vita di Niccolo Capponi, p. 42.

† Infra le cagione, atte a rovinare la repubblica, una, e non la manco ſono i cittadini, che favoriti, e fattiſi capi del popolo, mentreche ora per ritenere quella grandezza, e ora per racquiſtarla, cercano di fare ogni coſa, che piace alla moltitudine, nè s'avveggono, che diſtruggono quella liberta: e queſto è confermato, con molti eſempi dell'antiche repubbliche della Grecia, e piu modernamente con quelli della Romana dove ſi vede, a chi conſidera quelle ſtorie con buono guidizio, i cittadini popolari, eſſere ſtati piu cagione della ſua rovina, che quegli, che favorivano l'autorità del ſenato. Sienmi di ciò teſtimonio in prima i Gracchi, di poi Mario, e Ceſare ultimamente, i quali ſebbene con oneſte cagioni di ſollevare il popolo graſſo, cercarono di compiacergli, ebbono nondimanco ſotto queſto preteſto nedeſimo naſcoſto il veleno, che eſtinte appoco quella republica. Non è dubbio, che, leggendo queſta ſtoria, ſi potra conchiudere queſto medeſimo, che

ties of the citizens: from thoſe whom he to be deſirous of peace, he diſguiſed his ſentiments, and concealed his late conduct; to the neutral party he propoſed, that the city ſhould ſtand upon its defence, and make the beſt preparations for it, but be ready to receive, or even to propoſe, any reaſonable terms of accommodation on the firſt favourable opportunity; but with the faction of the gonfalonier, knowing their reſolution to be fixed to ſee the city periſh rather than yield to any accommodation, he opened himſelf in private without reſerve, and declared himſelf devoted to their ſyſtem. It is the general opinion of hiſtorians, as well as of Segni, "that the di-
"viſions of the citizens into parties under the
"triumvirate, and afterwards of thoſe perſons of
"middle rank, who, by means of their diſcords,
"came after them into power, as Carducci, Caſ-
"tiglione, and others, were the true cauſe of the
"loſs of their liberties; for theſe perſons, though
"few in number, among a people jealous of their
"liberties, and full of parties and various hu-
"mours, found it eaſy to agitate their fellow-
"citizens in ſo violent a manner, as to make
"them reſolve upon ſuſtaining a ſiege, and to
"render the defence glorious. And although it
"is not denied that the pope gave a provocation
"to this, and would have tried every method to
"recover Florence, yet the difficulties were ſo
"great, that it is not doubted he would have
"been contented with reaſonable conditions, ra-
"ther than venture on ſo atrocious and ſo impi-
"ous a war."

che i capi del popolo, Sodorini, Strozzi, Carducci, mentreche opponendoſi a Niccolo Capponi, per farſi piu grandi, è venire in piu grazia, indebolirono aſai quel governo. Segni, Storie, lib. iv. p. 102.

UAB Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

We pass over all the marches of armies, and intrigues of negociation between the king of France, the emperor, the pope, the Venetians, &c. which occured before the fifth of October,
1529. 1529, when the prince of Orange advanced before Florence, and laid siege to the city, which was now well fortified, and contained a strong garrison. Valori was sent by the pope as his commissary to the army, and with him went a large number of Florentine exiles (of whom there was always a multitude scattered and wandering about all Italy, and waiting for the motion of troubled waters) who now joined the united army of the pope and emperor. As these had relations and connections in the city, an alarm was excited; and, to intimidate every one from the thoughts of an accommodation, the signori resolved that five-and-twenty citizens should be declared suspected of disaffection to the popular government, and confined in the palace under a strong guard: and, to complete their plan of terror against any one who might speak of an accommodation, they cut off the head of Carlo Cocchi, for saying that it would be better to restore the Medici than to hazard the war, and for talking of a parliament. There is not in the whole history a fact more curious than this, as it lets us into the true character of this government. It was always called the popular government, but it was really an aristocracy; and the members of it dreaded an assembly or convention of the people,* which they called

* E per dare più spavento, e per mettere piu terrore, a chi pur ancora volesse ragionare d'accordo, presero certa occasione contro a Carlo Cocchi sopra una querela, par la quale era Carlo accusato, ch' egli avesse detto, quando si ragionava largemente, e molto liberamente nell' universale dell accordo, che

called a parliament, as much as they did the Medici: and ſoon after, the ſame ſentence and execution was paſſed upon Fra. Rigogolo, for daring to ſpeak of an accommodation.* And by theſe arts and means did this ariſtocratical tyrant, the gonfalonier, ſpread ſuch a terror among the citizens, that no man dared to oppoſe his will; and he obtained and exerciſed more power than the magiſtrates, the cabal (pratiche), the ordinary council, or the laws; and he uſed it accordingly in the moſt arbitrary manner, in raiſing money by various illegal meaſures, by diſcarding magiſtrates and diſſolving councils at his pleaſure, and in doing all other things that an unbridled deſpot could do. It would be tedious, and it is unneceſſary to relate all the particulars of his arbitrary conduct; of the aſſaults and ſallies, in one of which the prince of Orange was killed: the hopes, fears, deliberations, diſtreſſes, and famine of a ſiege, which does infinite diſhonour to this pope, who had no right to ſubject the city; and of a defence which was made by the obſtinacy of an ariſtocratical junto for purpoſes of ambition, equally reprehenſible, though coloured with a pretence of a popular government, but which was by no means conducted by the ſpirit of liberty, or upon any principle of a free people: on the contrary, it was conducted,

che fuſſe piutoſto da voler rimettere i Medici, che aſpettare la guerra, e conteneva la querela, che Carlo in un certo modo aveſſe in quel ſuo parlare meſcolato anche il nome tanto odioſo al governo popolare del *parlamento*. Nerli, lib. ix. p. 199.

* Onde meſſono tale ſpavento, e tanto terrore nell' univerſale percagione, de cittadini ſoſtenuti e per quelle eſecutioni, che s'erano fatte, chi piu non era rimaſo in Firenze chi pure ardiſſe non ſolo parlare dell' accordo, o della guerra, ma non era anche chi aveſſe in animo a contraorſi a quelli della ſetta del gonfaloniere in coſa alcuna. Nerli, p. 199.

from firſt to laſt, without regard to any law or conſtitution, and againſt the ſenſe of a great majority of the people. The defence was ſuſtained from October to Auguſt, on the ninth day of
1530. which month, 1530, four ambaſſadors were deputed to treat with Don Fernando da Gonzaga, who, ſince the death of Orange, had the chief command of the army, and the next day a convention was concluded. The principal articles were, that the city ſhould pay eight thouſand ducats for removing the army; that the pope and the city ſhould give authority to the emperor to declare, within three months, what ſhould be the form of government, "ſalva nondimeno la liberta,"* with a reſervation of liberty; that a pardon ſhould be underſtood, for every one, of all injuries done to the pope, his friends, and ſervants; and that Malateſta ſhould remain with two thouſand foot, for the guard of the city, until the emperor's declaration ſhould arrive. It is made a queſtion, whether the general who commanded in Florence was or was not a traitor to his cauſe. Varchi is very ſanguine in the affirmative, and produces letters in evidence; but the citizens and garriſon were reduced to ſuch extremities for proviſions, that they could not have held out three days longer. The pope, on his part, was not very anxious to fulfil his treaty. While the money was

* In primis, che la forma del governo abbia da ordinarſi, e ſtabilirſi dalla Maeſtà Ceſarea infra quattro meſi proſſimi avvenire, *intendendoſi ſempre conſervata la liberta.* Nerli, lib. xi. p. 144.—Intendendoſi ſempre, che ſia conſervata la liberta. Varchi, lib. xi. p. 429.—Che la citta rimaneſſe libera nel modo che' ell' era, rimettendo ſolamenti i Medici, e tutti gli altri cittadini, fatte ribelle, da quel governo. Segni, p. 125. Nardi, lib. ix. p. 382. Muratori, Annal. tom. x. p. 213. anno. 1530. Laugier, Hiſt. de Veniſe, lib. xxxv. tom. ix. p. 385. Guicchiardini, lib. xix.

getting

getting ready to pay off the army, Valori, the apoſtolic commiſſary, in concert with Malateſta, having called together the people in the piazza, according to the ancient cuſtom of the city, to make a parliament, the magiſtrates and others conniving at it through fear, inſtituted a new government contrary to the treaty, giving authority by this parliament to twelve citizens, who adhered to the Medici, to ordain, in their own manner, the conſtitution of the city, who reduced it to that form which prevailed before the year 1527. The army received their money; the Italian officers defrauded their ſoldiers, whom they diſmiſſed to ſeek their fortunes without their pay; the Spaniards and Germans marched into Siena, to new-model the government of that city: and Malateſta returned to Perugia without any further declaration from the emperor, and left the city of Florence at the arbitrary diſpoſition of the pontiff.

Now began the puniſhments of the citizens; for thoſe in whoſe hands the government was left, partly for the ſecurity of the ſtate, and partly by the hatred conceived againſt the authors of ſo great calamities, and the reſentment of private injuries, but principally becauſe ſuch was the intention of the pope, brought the principal citizens concerned in the late government to a trial, and they were ſentenced to death and executed; others were confined, without much regret, ſympathy, or pity, from any party: for the friends of Capponi, and all the real friends of liberty, regarded them as the cauſes of preventing an accommodation, and the ruin of their country, while the Medici conſidered them as their bittereſt enemies. The pope ſends the archbiſhop of Capua to take care of the government, who, by the pope's orders, and to give more general ſatisfaction

tion to the citizens, cauſes the balia to be increaſed in number to one hundred and thirty-ſix, makes a general ſcrutiny for offices, regulates commerce, makes a new imborſation of the ſix magiſtrates, renews the purſes, and diſpoſes all other things according to his inclinations: but a quarrel ariſes between the cardinal Hippolito de Medici and the duke Alexander, and a contention for the ſovereignty of Florence; but the pope and the emperor determine it in favour of Alexander.

1531. In 1531 the ordinance of the emperor arrived, and is formally accepted. Many of the beſt citizens, ſome of whom had always been friends of the Medici, with great reluctance gave up the idea of a free government; they ſtill ſolicited the pope againſt reducing the republic to an abſolute principality, but they could not agree among themſelves: ſome were for a dukedom, limitted only by councils: others for reſtoring the ſtate to the form it was formerly in under the Medici: and others for a more rational diſtribution of power. But the pope was determined, if he could, to make his family and friends ſecure.

1532. In 1532 the pope's intentions were made known, and twelve citizens were appointed to reform the ſtate; the ſignori and the gonfalonier were aboliſhed: a council of two hundred was created, and a ſenate of forty-eight. The ſenate of forty-eight was to have the whole legiſlative and executive power, and the council of two hundred were merely to conſider private petitions, and ſuch things as ſhould be referred to them by the ſenate. Four perſons, members of the ſenate, were to be high counſellors of the duke, and Alexander and his heirs were made dukes, and heads of the

ſtate,

UAB
Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

ſtate. Guicchiardin's account is,* that the pope interpreted the article in the treaty, which had ſtipulated pardon, not according to the ſenſe, but the letter, not to comprehend crimes committed againſt the ſtate, but only injuries to the pope and his friends. Six of the principal delinquents were adjudged by the magiſtrates to be beheaded, others to be impriſoned, and a great number baniſhed. By theſe proceedings the city was weakened, and thoſe who had been concerned in the late troubles reduced to great neceſſities, and the power of the Medici became more free, more abſolute, and almoſt monarchical in Florence, which remained exhauſted of money by ſo long and grievous a war, deprived within and without of many of its inhabitants, its houſes and property deſtroyed abroad, and more than ever divided within itſelf; and this property was rendered yet more diſtreſſing, by the neceſſity of procuring, for ſeveral years, proviſions from foreign countries, ſince there had been no harveſts nor ſeeds ſown. The emperor, in declaring the form of government, neglecting the ſalvo of liberty, pronounced, according to the very inſtructions the pope had ſent him, that the city ſhould be governed by the ſame magiſtrates as in the times when the Medici ruled it, and that Alexander, who was the pope's nephew, and his own ſon-in-law, ſhould be the head of the government, and be ſucceeded by the children, deſcendants, and neareſt relations of the ſame family. He reſtored to the city all the privileges granted by himſelf or his predeceſſors, but on condition to be forfeited whenever the citizens ſhould make any attempt againſt the grandeur of the family of Medici; inſerting,

* Guicchiardini, lib. xx.

throughout

throughout the decree, words which ſhewed it to be founded not only in the power conceded to him by the people and the parties, but alſo on the imperial dignity and authority. The ſpirit of families, and the ambition peculiar to it, is, when once thoroughly enkindled, a raging flame, extinguiſhable only by death; every new gratification of it is only a freſh addition of fuel to the burnings. The paſſion of Hercules, Cæſar, and Mahomet, had now full poſſeſſion of Clement the Seventh; and the domination ſo perfidiouſly acquired over that noble city, where his anceſtors had laid the foundation of their power in a popularity among the baſeſt dregs of a mob, was not ſufficient ſatiate it. The pontiff had fixed in his heart an ardent appetite for an alliance with France; his ambition and thirſt for this kind of glory, which, inſtead of being a virtue, is a deteſtable vice, ſtimulated him the more, that being only of a private family, he had obtained for one natural ſon a natural daughter of ſo powerful an emperor, he now hoped to procure for his legitimate niece a legitimate ſon of a king of France; and he was not diſcouraged from this pretenſion by the jealouſy that the king of France might form claims for his ſon and daughter-in-law on the ſtate of Florence. By various negociations he at length accompliſhed an interview with the king of France at Marſeilles. The pontiff exerted his uſual diſſimulation to perſuade all the world, that he went to this interview chiefly to finiſh the peace, to treat of an interprize againſt the infidels, to reduce Henry the Eighth, king of England, to his duty: in ſhort, with a ſingle view to the public good. But he could not conceal his real motive, when he ſent his niece on board the gallies which the king of France had ordered,

ordered, with the duke of Albany, her uncle, to Nizza. Theſe gallies, after having conducted the lady to Nizza, returned to Piſa, and on the fourth of October, 1532, took the pope, with many of his cardinals, and landed them in a few days at Marſeilles. He made his entry in form: the king did the ſame. They lodged in the ſame palace, and made mutual demonſtrations of uncommon affection. The king, deſirous of gaining the pope's heart, requeſted him to ſend for his niece to Marſeilles, which the pope, though he pretended to treat firſt of public affairs, moſt cordially deſired.* As ſoon as Catharine de Medici arrived, the marriage was celebrated with Henry, the ſon of the king of France, and conſummated immediately, to the infinite joy of the pope, who, negociating with the king in perſon, completely gained his confidence and affection. 1532.

The pope returned from Marſeilles, and ſoon after, in 1534, he died. Alexander had taken effectual meaſures to diſarm all the citizens of Florence, friends as well as enemies, and thought himſelf now ſecure. Philip Strozzi, however, was highly diſguſted and provoked, both with the duke and pope, becauſe he had not been able to procure one of his ſons to be made a cardinal, as his lady Clariſſa had often promiſed him; and becauſe two of his ſons had been taken up, with ſome other young gentlemen, in the licence of a maſquerade, and committed to priſon by the lieutenant of the police, and becauſe of ſome quarrel ariſen between Peter his eldeſt ſon, and Salviati, a favourite of Alexander: in this diſguſt he went with his ſons, as ſoon as he could obtain their liberty, to France. After the death of the pope, 1534.

* Nerli, p. 270.

animoſities

animoſities increaſed between the duke Alexander and the cardinal Hippolito, and Philip Strozzi goes from France to Rome; and as great diviſions aroſe in Florence, on account of the difference between the duke and the cardinal, and their negociations with the emperor, as had exiſted under the former government. Hippolito, on a journey to meet the emperor, though in high health and ſtrength, is taken violently ill on the road, and dies, not without ſtrong ſuſpicions of poiſon. The death of the cardinal relieves the duke from all apprehenſions of his intrigues; but Philip Strozzi, and the exiles from Florence, began to think of negociating with the emperor, and went to Naples to meet him. Alexander too goes to Naples: and there aroſe great diſputes before the emperor about the form of government; Strozzi and the exiles endeavouring to obtain a reſtoration of that kind of freedom which had been enjoyed formerly under the Medici. But Alexander marries the ducheſs Margarite, the emperor's daughter, and returns to Florence, leaving Strozzi and the exiles diſappointed.* Lorenzo di Pierfranco de Medici had accompanied Alexander to this interview with the emperor at Naples, and there had entered into intimate friendſhip with Peter Strozzi† and the other Florentine exiles, and conceived that deſign of aſſaſſinating his friend and patron, which he afterwards executed with ſo many circumſtances of cool deliberation, inſidious malice, and execrable villany. He was a young nobleman, in greater favour with the duke than any other. To him, after their return from Na-

* Nerli, p. 286. Segni, lib. vii. p. 199. Adriani, Hiſt. di ſuoi Tempi, p. 9.

† Varchi, p. 547.

ples

ples to Florence, were communicated all the duke's private amours, as well as all the moſt important councils of the ſtate; and the more effectually to ſecure his confidence, Lorenzo had acted the part of ſo active an inſtrument, as to have drawn upon himſelf an univerſal odium among all parties in Florence, but particularly among the grandees and nobles. At the ſame time he held ſecret intrigues and intelligence with Philip Strozzi,* and all the exiles abroad, and at home ſo artfully affected an averſion to arms and public affairs, and to be wholly devoted to his ſtudies and his pleaſures, that the duke and his courtiers called him "The Philoſopher."† Varchi informs us,‡ that he received his information of this horrid action from the only perſons who could be capable of relating the whole truth, becauſe they were the only witneſſes of it, and agents in it; from Lorenzo himſelf in the city of Paluello, eight miles from Padua, and from Scoronconcolo his confident in the houſe of Strozzi in Venice.

Lorenzo was born in Florence, the 23d of March, 1514, the ſon of Pierfranceſco di Lorenzo de Medici, grand nephew of Lorenzo, brother of Coſmo, and of Maria, the daughter of Tommaſo di Paolantonio Sodorini, a lady of uncommon prudence and benevolence, from whom, his father dying early, he was educated with conſummate diligence and care: but he had no ſooner acquired a knowledge of the claſſics, in which his genius enabled him to make a rapid progreſs, than he was taken from the care of his mother and his tutor, and begun to diſcover a reſtleſs and inſatiable diſpoſition to plunge himſelf in vice, and ſoon

* Segni, p. 199. † Ibid. p. 200.
‡ Varchi, lib. xv. p. 587.

UAB Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

afterwards, in imitation of Philip Strozzi, to make a jeſt of every thing divine and human, and to aſſociate himſelf with perſons of baſe condition and character, rather than with his equals. Theſe by continual flatteries, and fomenting his paſſions, led him into vice and folly of every kind, particularly into all the extravagances of brutal appetite in his amours, reſpecting neither ſex, age, condition, or ſecrecy. While he ſought an intercourſe with all, he affected to eſteem none; yet he had an equally extravagant paſſion for glory, and left no empirical artifice unattempted, in his words or actions, by which he thought he could acquire a name, either of a gallant man or a ſhrewd one. He was nimble and active, rather lean than otherwiſe, and for this reaſon he affected to call himſelf Lorenzino: he never laughed; at moſt he only ſmiled. His air and action was more remarkable for grace than elegance, and his countenance was dark and melancholy. In the flower of his youth, although he was beloved beyond meaſure by the pope, Clement the Seventh, he had formed in his mind a project, as he ſaid himſelf, after he had killed the duke Alexander, to aſſaſſinate his holineſs. He corrupted Franceſco di Rafaello de Medici, the rival of the pope, a youth of excellent erudition, and the moſt promiſing hopes, to ſuch a degree of profligacy, that he ſeemed to be quite another character, and becoming the deriſion of the whole court of Rome, he was ſent back, to avoid a greater diſgrace, as a madman, to Florence. At this time he fell into diſgrace with the pope, and gave univerſal diſguſt to the Roman people, by another reaſon:—One morning, in the arch of Conſtantine, and in other places of Rome, many ancient ſtatues were found without their heads. The pope was ſo exaſperated, that, not thinking

UAB Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

thinking of Lorenzo, he gave orders, that whoever had done the miſchief, excepting only the cardinal de Medici, ſhould, without proceſs, trial, or delay, be hanged up by the neck. The cardinal was obliged to go to the pope, and intercede for Lorenzo, as a young man, and paſſionately fond, like all their anceſtors, of ſuch antiquities; but it was with difficulty he could appeaſe the indignation of the pope, who called him the infamy and reproach of the houſe of Medici. Lorenzo, however, was obliged to depart from Rome, with two public proclamations after him, one forbidding him to remain any longer in that city, and the other promiſing not only impunity, but rewards, to any one who would kill him; and Franceſco Molza, a man of great eloquence, and celebrated for his knowledge of the Grecian, Roman, and Tuſcan literature, made a public oration againſt him in the Roman academy, in which he covered him with all the reproaches poſſible. With all this infamy he returned to Florence, and began to make his court to the duke Alexander; and he underſtood ſo well the arts of hypocriſy and flattery, and counterfeited ſo perfectly an abſolute ſubmiſſion to him in all things, that he made him believe he was a faithful ſpy upon the exiles abroad, holding at the ſame time, under this ſimulation, ſecret practices with theſe fugitives, and every day ſhewing letters received from them jointly or ſeverally. To remove every ſuſpicion of any daring enterpriſe, he affected the character of a coward, and would neither exerciſe in arms nor wear them about him, ſo that the duke took a pleaſure in rallying him upon his puſillanimity. He affected to be wholly devoted to books and ſtudies, walked much alone, and appeared to have no ambition for honours, or deſire of property, in

ſo remarkable a manner, that they called him the philoſopher. He complied with the inclinations of the duke in all things, and favoured him in all occurrences, eſpecially againſt ſignor Coſimo, his ſecond couſin, againſt whom he bore an unbounded hatred, either becauſe they were of different, or rather contrary characters by nature, or by reaſon of a law-ſuit of very great importance, which Coſimo had inſtituted againſt him for the inheritance of their anceſtors. By all theſe artifices the duke was deluded into a confidence in Lorenzo, ſo perfectly ſecure, that not contented with employing him as a pimp in his amours with all ſorts of women, religious as well as ſecular, virgins, wives, or widows, noble or ignoble, young or old, he now engaged him to conduct to him a ſiſter of his own mother by the father's ſide, a young lady of admirable beauty and equal modeſty, who was the wife of Lionardo Ginori, who lived not far from the door of the back front of the palace of Medici. Lorenzo, who waited only for a ſimilar opportunity, repreſented to him that the intrigue would be attended with difficulty, though not from himſelf, for in one word all women were alike; and upon this occaſion their proſpects were the better, becauſe the huſband was at Naples, where he had ſpent much of his fortune in diſſipation. Although he had never dared to ſpeak to the lady on the ſubject, he affirmed to the duke that he had, and that he had found her very obſtinate; but he promiſed that he would never ceaſe to ſeduce her, by bribes, flatteries, and every ſpecies of corruption, until he brought her to condeſcend in all things to their will. In the mean while he went on entertaining, not only by his actions but with words, one Michele del Tovalaccino, by means of the before-named Scoronconcolo, for whom he

UAB
Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

had procured a pardon for a murder he had committed, though a reward had by proclamation been ſet upon his head. To theſe ruffians he often complained of a certain intriguing perſonage at court, who, without the ſmalleſt provocation, had bantered, ſlandered, and inſulted him with his jokes upon all his words and actions, but that in the name of God——. At theſe words Scoronconcolo, perceiving his meaning, ſuddenly cried, "Name him only, and let me alone to ma-"nage him; he ſhall never give you another ill "word or look." Here the converſation ended for the preſent, but Scoronconcolo finding himſelf every day more and more careſſed and loaded with favours by Lorenzo, at length preſſed him more earneſtly to name his enemy, and not to doubt of his being ſoon put out of his way. Lorenzo anſwered, "Alas! no: it is a great favou-"rite of the duke, whoever it is." Scoronconcolo replied, in the language of a bully, "I will "aſſaſſinate him if he were Chriſt himſelf." Lorenzo then perceived that his deſign had ſucceeded, and having invited him one day to dinner, as he often did, notwithſtanding the remonſtrances of his mother, and the reproaches of the world, ſaid to him, "Courage! courage! in that affair, "which you promiſed me ſo bravely! I am ſure "you will not fail me; and I will never fail you, "at any time, in any thing in my power. I am "ſatisfied and reſolved, but wiſh to find the means "of doing the buſineſs with a ſure hand. I "will contrive to conduct him to a place where "there can be no danger, and have no doubt we "ſhall ſucceed." The ſame night appeared to him to be the moſt proper time, becauſe that ſignor Alexander Vitelli was abſent upon an excurſion to the city of Caſtello, and he took that op-

portunity, after ſupper, to whiſper in the ear of the duke, and to ſay to him, that at laſt, by the promiſe of money, he had diſpoſed his aunt to comply, and therefore he muſt watch his opportunity, and come alone, and very cautiouſly, into his chamber, taking particular care, for the honour of the lady, that no one ſhould ſee him either enter or go out, and that he himſelf would go immediately for her. It is certain that the duke, having put on a robe of ſatin lined with fur, according to the Neapolitan faſhion, went out to walk with four of his courtiers, whom he ſoon diſmiſſed, ſaying, he wiſhed to be alone, and ſoon after went to the chamber of Lorenzo, where he found a good fire, and he ſoon ungirded his ſword, and threw himſelf down on the couch. Lorenzo ſuddenly ſeized his ſword, and winding haſtily the belt round the hilt, ſo that it might not be eaſily unſheathed, laid it at the head of the duke, behind his pillow, and adviſed him to repoſe himſelf; ſecures one door, that no one might come in, and goes out at the other to find Scoronconcolo, and ſays to him in a tranſport of joy, "My dear brother, "now is the moment! I have ſhut up in my cham-"ber that enemy of mine, and he is faſt aſleep." "Let us go," ſays Scoronconçolo; and when they were on the broad ſtair aſcending to the chamber, Lorenzo turns about and ſays, "Don't mind "whether it is a friend of the duke or not, "mind you only to ſecure his hands." "I will "do it," replies his truſty friend, "if it is the "duke himſelf." "Every thing is ſo prepared," ſays Lorenzo with a joyful countenance, "that he "cannot eſcape from our hands; let us make "haſte." "Let us go," ſays Scoronconcolo. Lorenzo lifted up the latch and let it fall again. At the ſecond attempt he entered, and cried out,

"Signor,

"Signor, are you aſleep?" Having no anſwer to this queſtion, at one thruſt with his ſword he pierced him through from ſide to ſide. This ſtroke alone had been mortal, for paſſing through the reins, he had perforated the diaphragm which divides the upper ventricle, where are the heart and the other vital members, from the lower, where are the liver and the other members of nutrition and of generation. The duke, who either was aſleep, or remained with his eyes ſhut as if he had ſlept, receiving ſuch a blow, leaped up on the bed, and threw himſelf backwards to fly towards the door, making uſe of a ſtool which he had ſeized on for a ſhield; but Scoronconcolo, ſeizing an opportunity, gave him a ſtroke with a knife upon the viſage, which laid open one of his temples, and cleaved the greateſt part of his left cheek; and Lorenzo having dragged him back upon the bed, held him reverſed, and bore upon his back with the whole weight of his body; and that he might not cry out, attempted to ſtop his mouth with his fingers, ſaying, "Signor, doubt not." Then the duke, aſſiſting himſelf as well as he could, ſeized the fingers between his teeth, and bit them with ſuch rage, that Lorenzo, having fell upon his back, and not being able to handle his ſword, was obliged to call out for help to Scoronconcolo, who running to his aid, and taking his aim ſometimes on one ſide, and then on the other, was not able to ſtrike Alexander without ſtriking firſt or at the ſame time Lorenzo, held faſt by his arms and teeth. He then attempted to pierce him with the point of his ſword between the legs of Lorenzo; but making no other impreſſion than to bore the bed, he laid his hand on a knife, which he had by accident about him, and fixed it in the throat of the duke, whom he butchered as if he had been a

bullock: he was already, however, very near expiring from the effects of the firſt blow, by which he had loſt ſo much blood as to have overflown almoſt the whole chamber. It ought not to be forgotten, that through the whole of this tragical ſcene, while Lorenzo held him under, and he ſaw Scoronconcolo groping about him with his ſword and knife to murder him, he never once complained, or begged for mercy, or let go his hold of thoſe fingers which he held firmly between his teeth. The duke, as ſoon as he was dead, ſlided off the bed upon the floor; but they took him up, all over beſmeared with blood, and placed him again upon the bed, and covered him with the ſame pavilion with which he had concealed himſelf before he firſt fell aſleep, or made a ſhew of being aſleep, which, in the opinion of ſome, he artfully did, becauſe, knowing himſelf unſkilful in the ceremonies of politeneſs, and that the lady whom he expected was a miſtreſs in elegant converſation, he wiſhed to avoid in this manner the neceſſity of exchanging fine ſpeeches with her. Lorenzo, after he had diſpoſed of the duke, partly to ſee whether they had been heard, and partly to recover his ſpirits, much exhauſted by fatigue, placed himſelf at one of the windows which overlooked the broad ſtreet. Some perſons in the houſe, particularly madam Maria, the mother of Coſimo, had heard a noiſe, and a trampling of feet; but no one had aroſe, becauſe Lorenzo with this view had for ſome time before brought into this chamber companies of his comrades, drinking, rioting, and making a ſhew of quarrelling, crying, out, "Murder! treaſon! you have killed me!" and other exclamations of that kind. When Lorenzo had repoſed himſelf, he made Scoronconcolo call one of his footmen, named Freccia, and ſhow

him

UAB
Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

him the dead body, which he recognized with ſuch aſtoniſhment and horror, that he was with difficulty reſtrained from alarming the whole houſe. To what purpoſe he did this, he neither explained to the hiſtorian, nor was he able to conjecture, unleſs it was upon the ſame principle, that nothing which Lorenzo did, from the moment of the death of Alexander to the time of his own death, or many years afterwards in Venice, ever ſucceeded, or appeared to be well judged. He took from Francis Ziffi, his maître d'hotel, a ſmall ſum of money, all that he had by him in caſh; and taking with him the key of the chamber, goes out of the houſe with Scoronconcolo and Freccia, and having previouſly obtained from the biſhop of Marzi a licence for poſt-horſes, under colour of going to his country ſeat of Cafaggiuolo, to ſee Giuliano, his younger brother, who he pretended had written to him that he was at the point of death with the cholic, went directly to Bologna, where he dreſſed his fingers, which were found marked for life, and there related to Silveſter Aldobrandini, the judge, the whole tranſaction: but the judge, thinking it a romantic fiction, would not believe it, and very imprudently neglected to take any notice of it, until the arrival of the chevalier Marſilia, who, with ſome others, went in purſuit of Lorenzo. The latter, in great haſte and fatigue, arrived at Venice on the Monday night, and informed Philip Strozzi, that under that key, which he held out to him, he had locked up the duke Alexander, with his throat cut, and dead of many wounds. Philip very readily believed him, embraced him, and called him his Brutus, and promiſed him that he would marry his two ſons, Peter and Robert, to his two ſiſters. Lorenzo excuſed himſelf for not having aſſembled the

UAB
Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

the people after the death of the duke, for three reaſons. One was, that there were at the houſe ſeveral other popular citizens; but this was never heard of nor believed by any one. Another was, that he had left it in commiſſion with Zeffo to open the chamber early in the morning, and go in queſt of Giulian Capponi, and other citizens, lovers of liberty, and tell them what they ſhould find in it. Thirdly, that Scoronconcolo had not ceaſed to ſtimulate him to depart, ſaying to him every minute, "Let us ſave ourſelves, we have done "but too much." But thus much is certain, that as no conſpiracy was ever ſo deliberately meditated before the fact, nor more completely executed, ſo none was ever ſo ſtupidly and vilely conducted after the fact; nor was there ever any one from whence reſulted effects more contrary or more hurtful to the perpetrator, or ſo proſperous and profitable to his enemies, the firſt of whom, without all controverſy, was the ſignor Coſimo.

"I will not diſpute," ſays Varchi, "whether this act was cruel or compaſſionate, commendable or blame-worthy, ſince no man can reſolve that queſtion, and give a true anſwer to it, who does not know for what reaſon, and to what end, Lorenzo was induced to commit it. If he was urged to ſo great an enterpriſe not to obtain the government of Florence, which, upon the death of the duke without legitimate deſcendants, would fall to him, but merely to deliver his country from a tyrant and reſtore her liberty, as he affirmed, I ſhould think that no praiſes that could be given him would be high enough, and no rewards could be beſtowed upon him which would not be below his merit." Is it not aſtoniſhing that ſuch an hiſtorian ſhould admit of a doubt, whether the motives of Lorenzo could be good ones? Is it poſ-

ſible

ſible to read his own hiſtory, and not ſee that this ſtruggle was merely between different branches of the ſame family of Medici for the ſovereignty, and that there was not a ray of public virtue or love of liberty left in any of them? Strozzi, the rival family of Medici, had married a Medici, and could not bear that Alexander ſhould rule. His character was too vile to be redeemed from infamy by his hypocritical affectation of republican ſimplicity, and his renouncing all titles but that of Philip; but he had great family connections, and was countenanced by France, and therefore might poſſibly recover his influence and power in Florence. This made it dangerous for the hiſtorian to mark the conduct of Lorenzo with that decided indignation which it merited. Some were of opinion that he was moved to this action merely by the malice of his nature, and the depravity of his own heart; others thought that he ventured on this danger to cancel the ignominy of the two Roman proclamations, and the oration made againſt him by Molza; others thought him agitated ſolely by a deſire to make his name immortal, an ardent paſſion, that with all his crimes and vices had always incredibly tormented him. The right of a nation to depoſe a tyrant, and to deſtroy him if he cannot be otherwiſe depoſed, is as clear as any of our ideas of right or wrong. In the Roman republic it was made an early and a fundamental law, by the ariſtocratics however, that it ſhould be not only lawful, but meritorious and glorious, to kill a tyrant; and Brutus therefore acted the exalted part of the beſt citizen. But if the right of ſingle citizens, when good and virtuous, and intending only the public good, to kill a tyrant was as clear as that of treading on the head of an adder, or hunting down a devouring

ing wolf, it would by no means follow that one tyrant might claim a right to deſtroy another, merely to take his place. The people of Florence were now ſo totally devoted to the Medici family, that there was no party among them but what was headed by ſome branch of it: the blood of the Medici muſt in all events govern them; and the difference between them was worth very little. Strozzi and Lorenzo were worſe than Alexander; and the only tolerably good man among them was Coſimo, whom they all hated, but whom Providence was pleaſed to call to the government in this awful manner. The ſilly tales of prognoſtics, the enthuſiaſm of the diſciples of Savanarola, and the confuſions and terrors among the principal people upon the firſt ſuſpicion and final diſcovery of the duke's deſtiny, are not worth repeating. The council of forty-eight were aſſembled, but were not agreed in opinion. Canigiani propoſed, that in place of the deceaſed duke, Guilio, his natural ſon, ſhould ſucceed; but there was no other perſon preſent, who did not either ſmile at his folly, or expreſs an indignation; for beſides that the child was not five years old, this was known to be the inclination and ſecret motion of cardinal Cibi, Lorenzo's brother, who wiſhed to be the tutor, and therefore governor of the city. After him was propoſed the ſignor Coſimo de Medici, who knowing nothing of what had happend, was at Mugello, fifteen miles from Florence, at his country ſeat of Trebbio. At this nomination all appeared to be ſtruck, and looking at one another, ſeemed ready to accept it, every one knowing that Coſimo was the next heir, after Lorenzo, according to the declaration of the emperor; but Palla Rucellai, without doubt in favour of Philip Strozzi, to whom he was attached, oppoſed warmly this

UAB Biblioteca de Ciències Socials

this propoſition, and ſaid, that ſo many citizens, and of ſuch conſequence, were abroad, that nothing of importance, eſpecially ſo great an affair, ought to be determined on; and notwithſtanding all that was urged by Franceſco Guicchiardini, and Franceſco Vettori, he perſiſted obſtinately in his objections, and occaſioned ſome confuſion in council. At another day, however, Coſimo was elected head of the commonwealth, accepted the truſt, and behaved in it with ſo much wiſdom, that thoſe who, from his moderate and compoſed behaviour before, believed him to be poſſeſſed of but mean abilities, were reſtrained to confeſs, that God had granted him diſcretion with the dukedom.

Intelligence was ſcattered throughout all Italy, with incredible celerity, of the death of Alexander; and, by all the Florentine exiles, the name of Lorenzo di Pierfranceſco de Medici was exalted in praiſes to the ſkies, not only as the parallel of Brutus, but greatly ſurpaſſing him. Varchi wonders that ſo many citizens of ſo great prudence, and eſpecially Guicchiardini, who conducted the whole of this election, ſhould have ſuffered themſelves to be ſo far blinded and tranſported by their ambition or avarice, or both, as not to ſee what they were about. Indeed, no man is ever to be praiſed, perhaps never to be juſtified, in conſenting to the ſurrender of a free government; and Guicchiardini appears much to blame for not endeavouring to new-model the commonwealth upon this occaſion. But moſt probably he knew, what Varchi himſelf confeſſes,* that the Florentines were at this time all either avaricious or ambitious, and the major part of them proud, envious, and malicious; and therefore that none of them

* Varchi, p. 621.

could

could be truſted by him, or by each other. He probably believed that delay, or any attempt to reſtore liberty or reform the conſtitution, would only give an opportunity to Strozzi, Lorenzo, and the exiles, to aſſume the dukedom in reality, under the alliance of France; he moreover probably thought it impoſſible, among an ignorant people, and ſo many corrupt factions, to amend the conſtitution, and that a ſovereignty in one was preferable to their old fluctuating ariſtocracy, diſguiſed under the name only of a popular ſtate.—The exiles were ſtill reſtleſs, and endeavoured to excite freſh wars againſt their country; but Coſimo, by his abilities, addreſs, and activity, defended his authority, and was afterwards confirmed, not only as head of the ſtate, but as duke and ſovereign. And here ended the ſhadow of a free government.

Let me now requeſt you, my dear Sir, to run over again, in your own mind, this whole ſtory of Florence, and aſk yourſelf, whether it does not appear like a ſatire, written with the expreſs and only purpoſe of expoſing to contempt, ridicule, and indignation, the idea of "A Government in one Center," and the "Right Conſtitution of a Commonwealth?" If you ſuſpect that this mean ſketch is in any degree varied, by prejudice, from the truth, read over any hiſtorian of Florence, as Machiavel, Guicchiardin, Nerli, Nardi, Varchi, Villany, or Ammirato, and then ſay, whether it is not a libel upon Turgot and Nedham. From the beginning to the end, it is one continued ſtruggle between monarchy and ariſtocracy; a continued ſucceſſion of combinations of two or three parties of noble, rich, or conſpicuous families to depreſs the people on the one hand, and prevent an oligarchy, or a monarchy, from ariſing up among themſelves on the other. Neither the firſt family,

nor

nor any of the others their rivals, made any account of people, excepting now and then for a moment, for the purposes of violence, sedition, and rebellion: instead of devising any regular method for calling the people together, with a reasonable notification before-hand, of the time, place, and subject of deliberation, a little junto of principal citizens concert a plan in secret among themselves, give notice previously to such as they please, their own dependents and partisans, order the bells to be rung, and a little flock of their own creatures assemble in the piazza. There the junto nominate a dozen or a score of persons for a balia, to reform the state at their pleasure: no reasonable method of voting for them, no instructions given them; the people huzza, and all is over. What ideas are here of the rights of mankind? what equality is here among the citizens? what principle of national liberty is here respected? what method is this to obtain the national sense, the public voice? Can this be called the voice of God? When the balia is appointed, what is the question before them? Is there any inquiry how the government can be made a fair, equal, and constant representation of the nation, and a sure instrument for collecting the public wisdom? The imborsations are made, and eight hundred names are put in the purses. These alone are citizens; all the rest are to have no vote. These appoint the signori, a small council, for the ordinary administration, and the gonfalonier, who has no more power nor so much dignity as a doge of Venice. The great council is the center in which all authority is collected, and he who had most influence in it, governed in reality, whoever were the signori or the gonfalonier; consequently the council and signori too were always divided into parties,

ties, at the head of whom were always two of the moſt noted families; and the only queſtion really was, which ſhould be firſt. As the waves and winds determined, ſometimes one and ſometimes another prevailed, and took vengeance of their opponents by baniſhments and confiſcations. The executive power was ſometimes managed by the ſignori, and ſometimes by the grand council: the judicial power was always the tool of the prevailing faction. Was there one year, one moment in the whole hiſtory, when the citizens could be truly ſaid to enjoy the bleſſings of liberty, equality, ſafety, and good order? If you fix your eye upon any period, from the beginning to the end of the republic, and ſuppoſe the gonfalonier poſſeſſed of the whole executive power, with a negative upon the legiſlature, the ſignori and grand council made ſeparate and independent branches of the legiſlature, though elected periodically by the people, and the judges made during good behaviour, would not thoſe terrible diſorders have been prevented? The negative to the gonfalonier is not propoſed, becauſe he is a wiſer or a better man than others, but merely as a conſtitutional inſtrument of ſelf-defence; without it, he cannot defend the legal authority which the conſtitution has given him, but the executive power will be pared away, or wreſted out of his hands, by the encroaching diſpoſition of human nature in the two houſes. If he wantonly uſes his negative for other purpoſes, a caſe that can rarely happen, a new gonfalonier muſt be appointed; but if his miniſters are made reſponſible for the advice they give him, the two houſes will always have a remedy. An honeſt repreſentative of the commons will always have another remedy, by withholding ſupplies.

As

As this account of Florence was introduced by ſome reflections of a modern author, it cannot be concluded with more propriety than by ſome others from the ſame able and liberal writer. In his Parallel of the Italian Republics of the middle Ages with thoſe of ancient Italy, he ſays,* "Whoever ſhall read, in the Annals of the cities of Lombardy, and in the Chronicles of Tuſcany, how the people paſſed ſo frequently, both in external wars and in civil factions, from battles to peace, and from domeſtic life to arms and hoſtilities, and that perpetual ſucceſſion of accords, rebellions, and tumults, will be apt to believe that he ſees, copied under different names, the wars of the Romans with the Latins and the Volſci, and the continual quarrels of the plebeians with the patricians, and the animoſities of the ſenate againſt the tribunes; and ſometimes it will happen to him, that in reading, for example, the Florentine hiſtory of Scipione Ammirato, he will think he has in his hand a tranſlation into his own language of Livy. The manner of proclaiming and proſecuting war, and of concluding peace, which was practiſed by the ancient Italians in the time of Camillus and of Pirrhus, is not very different from that which we obſerve in the age of Frederic the Second and the Manfreds; and, in the internal concerns of the cities, both in the one and the other period, the cruelty and the ſcorn of the nobles towards the plebeians, and the injuſtice of the people in their demands, as ſoon as they had diſcovered their own ſtrength, and had begun to lay their hands on the government: the

* Danina, Revoluzione d'Italia, lib. xii. cap. v. vol. ii. p. 241.

one and the other were animated with the ſame ſpirit, agitated by the ſame humours, and ſubject to the ſame revolutions. That ſupreme love of their country, which on occaſions of public danger ſilenced and appeaſed their private quarrels and enmities, reigned equally at all times in both: the ſame ſimplicity of manners, the ſame ſeverity of life, the ſame patience of poverty and fatigue. To this is to be added, the uſe and exerciſe of arms, by which every little nation, if it cannot make extenſive conqueſts, at leaſt may preſerve its own liberty. Finally, he will obſerve with pleaſure, how, after the ancient Italians, and thoſe people who in the middle ages aroſe from the ruins of the kingdom of the Lombards, and of the ſecond weſtern empire, the cities which appear to have had the narroweſt territory, and the moſt modern original, not only maintained their freedom for a long time, but increaſed in power and dominion; whereas the moſt able and the moſt ancient paſſed more eaſily under the yoke, either of tyrants of their own, or of foreign powers. We ſhall ſee, in like manner, a great reſemblance in the fortune of the tyrants of the ancient Italian cities, and thoſe of the republics of Tuſcany and Lombardy, in the age of Frederic the Second, and the following; and may very well find arguments to compare Eccelino of Romagna with Tarquin the Proud; the marquis Oberto Pelavicino, Buoſo da Doara, and Martino della Torre, with Porſenna, king of Chiuſi, and with other like princes or ſupreme magiſtrates of the ancient Tuſcans, Latins, Campanians, and Samnites. From which we have ſhewn, that the free and independent cities paſſed ſometimes under the yoke of ſome powerful citizen, who made himſelf its maſter, or under the dominion

dominion of a tyrant of ſome other neighbouring city: ſo that a ſignior of Padua, of Milan, or of Verona, obtained the government of many other cities of Lombardy, equally free and independent."

LETTER II.

Machiavel's Plan of a perfect Commonwealth.

DEAR SIR.

MACHIAVEL, from his long experience of the miſeries of Florence in his own times, and his knowledge of their hiſtory, perceived many of the defects in every plan of a conſtitution they had ever attempted. His ſagacity too perceived the neceſſity of three powers; but he did not ſee an equal neceſſity for the ſeparation of the executive power from the legiſlative. The following project contains excellent obſervations, but would not have remedied the evils. The appointment of officers in the council of a thouſand would have ruined all the good effects of the other diviſions of power. There is ſome doubt about the time when it was written: Nerli and Nardi think it was addreſſed to Clement the Seventh, but the Engliſh editor ſuppoſes it was Leo the Tenth, and his opinion is here followed.—About the year 1519, Leo the Tenth,* being informed of the

* Diſcourſe upon the proper Ways and Means of reforming the Government of Florence. Eng. edit. vol. iv. p. 263.