

## XIII.

## TWO MILLIONS AND HALF IN THREE MONTHS.

[*Letters of Florentine envoys to the Signoria* published by IODOCO DEL BADIA in the *Miscellanea fiorentina* — *Archivio storico italiano*, documents relating to the *Mercenary companies* published by CANESTRINI, *Processo dei traditori di Prato*, in series 3rd, vol. X, part 1st — In MURATORI [*R. I. S.*] anonymous *Pisan chronicle* — D. M. MANNI, *Biografia dell' Acuto* — RANIERI SARDO, *Cronica pisana* — Lucca State Archives, *Contract of the Commune with the Holy Company* — Documents in the State Archives of Siena.]

1375.  
June 21.

The Florentine ambassadors wrote from Bologna, *before sunrise in the morning* (the urgency of the affair did not let them sleep) a letter to the Signoria, of which a copy, like many other intercepted epistles, went to repose in the archives of Siena.\* Very interesting circumstances result from this.

The Company was encamped near Imola; it was very numerous, and well provided with *bombarde* and with iron implements for use in war against walled towns; the soldiers threatened to take the Italian cities of whose internal discords they were aware, and foretold new invasions of companies as soon as peace should be concluded between France and England, then belligerent: they would not specify precisely the object of their imminent march, but the envoys suspected that once the Company had penetrated into Tuscany, they would take the Pisan road or that of Montepulciano where it was thought they had an understanding with the inhabitants.

The Florentine ambassadors acted in accordance with those of Pisa, and kept them informed how the negotiations were going, and the Pisans on their part, knowing that Hawkwood was not willing to come to terms with

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\* For precaution two copies of important letters were sent, one by the direct route and the other by way of Vernia and the Casentino.

all Tuscany at once (for he shewed himself especially ill disposed towards Pisa on account of arrears of pay and because they had not kept their promise of giving him a fortress), advised the Florentines to make their own agreement, reserving the right to aid Pisa, — which aid it appeared they could not deny, because if Pisa were conquered, Florence and other Tuscan cities would be lost.

In respect to Florence, the Company had already formulated its pretensions, viz: 130 thousand florins in four rates between June and September: and yet they seemed to repent having asked too little, in comparison with what they might have gained by taking prisoners for ransom.

The personal opinion of the ambassadors was not very favorable to the agreement. According to them, the citizens ought to have shut themselves up in Florence and let the Company burn up the country as they chose, because "that which did not take place to-day, would very soon happen" (*quello che non è oggi savà tosto*). In fact some good men had forewarned them that the Company kept its promises but badly, and would not abstain from plundering on the way. At least the ambassadors wished to make the first rate of payment to the English, as small as possible.

But they had instructions to conclude the compact at any cost, and that same morning went to the camp accompanied by Pietro di Murles agent of the Cardinal Legate, by Ruggiero Cane\* and by the Viscount of Savoy "captain of Piedmont," which three persons were to take the part of mediators.

The agreement was concluded, drawn up, and signed

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\* As we shall see, this Cane took part in many successive negotiations during the war of the "eight saints," because he was a man much trusted by Bernabò Visconti, and familiar with Hawkwood. He was the son *nobilis viri Adoazzi Canis de Casali de Luagij Pedemontium* (see Document XXIV) and perhaps of the same house as De Canis, the Pope's usher.

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at the camp near an old bridge on the via Emilia, built by the Countess Matilda. The signatures on the part of the Company were those of Hawkwood captain general, the two marshals, the constable, and twelve more between councilors and *caporali* (knights).

This deed is important as a type of those *condotte* which we might call "guaranteed" or "reserved;" it will be sufficient to cite the principal clauses:

"That neither the Company nor any of its men shall for five years injure the commune, the city, the country, or district of Florence, nor her dependent towns unless the Company should be regularly engaged by some lord or commune, and even if legally hired, it shall abstain from hostilities for three months, excepting only in case that the Republic of Florence should make war on the Pope, Bernabò Visconti, or the Count of Savoy (because the Pope had an alliance with the one, and a truce with the other).

"All those who enter into the Company shall be bound to take the above oath.

"The Commune gives in recompense 130,000 florins in gold, of just weight and of the Florentine mint, of which 40,000 shall be paid in June, 30,000 in July, 30,000 in August, and 30,000 in September.

"Moreover in case the Communes of Pisa, Siena, Lucca, or Arezzo should come to terms with the Company, the latter may pass over the Florentine territory, on the condition of giving four days notice to the Priors and Gonfaloniere, and of marching by reasonable and fit roads, according to their destination, and under the guidance of those deputed by the Commune for that office: and that they shall pass by amicably, paying the price of provisions and doing no damage, — nevertheless they may take without payment wine, poultry, and litter for the horses.

"That during their march, the knights and men may

enter Florence so long as not more than one hundred are within the walls at the same time.

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"That the Commune of Florence shall have the faculty of denying passage and provisions to the Company, if it be not in the pay of either Pisa, Siena, Lucca or Arezzo, and of subsidizing the said Communes her allies, with money or troops, against the Company as against any other enemy.

"Finally that for the said term of five years, the Commune shall not treat of taking any one or more persons out of the Company, to engage them in her own, or other service."

This agreement was immediately approved by the Florentine Signoria, — which in consequence deliberated, that the chamberlains of the Commune might pay the sums decided on, either to Hawkwood or to his procurator.

June 26.

Meanwhile the Company crossed the Apennines at Firenzuola. Two new Florentine envoys, Doffo de' Bardi and Giovanni Ducci, accompanied it in the quality of commissaries. Bardi on account of preceding embassies was already intimate with the English, and Hawkwood seemed, at least in words, to carefully regulate the march in good faith. But in fact, the soldiers only abstained from capturing prisoners and from incendiarism, while they robbed with a free hand; "they go wherever they please by ones, twos, or threes, finding out every crag of Apennines and cutting down the corn." The mountaineers demanded from the commissaries permission to fight these plunderers, but when Spinello Alberti interfered citing the terms of the compact, the commissaries were obliged to command the mountaineers to abstain from every hostile act, and to sell to the English the commodities they required. It ended of course in the English "taking the commodities and paying no money."

The Florentine "orators" ventured to speak to Hawkwood in favour of the Sienese, but the captain loftily replied

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Thus menacing Tuscany, and amicable only with Florence, Hawkwood neared Prato. It appears that the Cardinal had given him the commission, not only to starve out Florence by cutting off her roads, but to occupy Prato where an act of treachery was already arranged.

At least the Signoria, in a diplomatic manner, afterwards accused the Cardinal of it, while in Prato they arrested as traitors the notary Ser Piero da Canneto, and a grey-friar priest, who, when tried in Florence, were convicted, tortured, and buried alive with their heads downwards. We may hold that Hawkwood revealed the plot, which would explain how the Signoria "considering the terms" ultimately concluded with Hawkwood, "and inasmuch as his nobility and the exercise of his valour might be able in many ways to work for the honour of the Commune of Florence," should have assigned him an annual pension for life of 1200 florins. At the same time, besides liquidating the expense of 77 florins, contracted by the Florentine mission of Spinello Alberti and his companions, they deliberated to give 400 florins to the nobleman Gozzo Battaglia da Rimini "for his services and expenses in treating with Hawkwood on behalf of the Commune."

The first rate of 40,000 florins was not paid at the time specified, that is in June, perhaps on account of a short absence of Hawkwood, and therefore by a deed stipulated at the monastery of Nicosia in Valle di Calci, it was agreed that the payment should be received by hand of the noblemen John Foy, knight, Bernard Rammise (Ramsay?), Robert Sever, and William Tilley as procurators of the Company and of its captain general; and it was paid to them in Montopoli.

Thus we see that the English had passed into Pisan territory; and as soon as they appeared on the Serchio, amidst a rush of fugitive peasants, the great bell of the Campanile of Pisa was rung for the defence, and the citizens placed strong guards at the gates, and on the walls, day and night. The inhabitants of the valley of Calci felt themselves secure amidst the folds of Monte Pisano, but a squadron of eight hundred English, passing the mountain from the North, fell upon them, and thus assailed above and below, before and behind, they were easily routed and plundered.

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June 28.

Stationing their general quarters at Nicosia, the English at length deigned to listen to Maccaione and Agliata, again sent by the Commune of Pisa, and they agreed for 30,500 florins, thus divided: — 3000 to Hawkwood as his pension for five years at the rate of 600 florins a year: 2500 to John Thornbury and Cook, Englishmen (the chief lieutenants), these to be paid within a day, — and to the Company 15,500 florins due within ten days, and 12,500 in September. Besides this, the entry into the city was conceded to two thousand five hundred soldiers, provided they were only armed with sword and knife, and that they would leave it again in the evening.

July 3.

The Pisans were punctual in payment; the English abstained from incendiarism and from "making prisoners and slaves," — but not from other injuries, — until they passed into the territory of Volterra.

Such vast sacrifices of money weighed very heavily on the treasuries of the Tuscan cities. Florence was obliged to have recourse to several extraordinary taxes and forced loans; for example, Piero de' Corsini was, on that occasion, obliged to expropriate certain rustic possessions, situated outside the walls in a place called *in Polverosa*, where we shall in future behold Hawkwood as peaceful proprietor.

1375. Taxes not sufficing, Florence was constrained to make wretched exactions of small sums from debtors, and humiliating entreaties for subsidies to the Communes allied to her.

As it was well understood, in spite of the hypocritical protests of the Cardinal Legate, that the English had come down to Tuscany in agreement with him, — the Tuscan republics were induced to turn against the Church, thus breaking the Guelphic Confederation.

June 25. Florence was the first to decide, and to set the example, she notified to Pisa, Siena, Lucca and Arezzo that she had leagued herself with Bernabò Visconti "considering the great peril in which we are now placed owing to the sudden and unforeseen coming of the English Company, and knowing how formidable and dangerous we may yet expect its stay in Tuscany to be." She did not hesitate to impose rates on the clergy, defying ecclesiastical censure; and in this too she was imitated by the Sieneese, who hearing from their ambassador, the notary Ser Iacopo di Ser Gano, how much money the English demanded, resigned themselves, only attempting to include Cortona and Montepulciano in the ransom and deliberating to raise a tax of 20,000 florins on the clergy, a forced loan of 3 florins on a thousand from the citizens, a loan of 12,000 florins from the Municipalities of the country, and the loan of a sum not determined, from the feudal lords of the Communes and their dependents.\* They were even reduced to the extreme measure of putting their hands on some hereditary moneys deposited with the bankers, for example on 300 florins which had belonged to the defunct bishop of Siena.\*\*

We perceive that Hawkwood carried out his threat of being exigent with Siena, for, besides the money, he wanted

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\* See Document XX.

\*\* See Document XXI.

provisions\* and even wine and sweetmeats to feast merrily withal.\*\* 1375.

Having received the money from Pisa, the Company passed to Laterina, where they drew the second rate of the Florentine contract and menaced Arezzo; the third Florentine rate was paid at Bibbiena after Arezzo had been obliged to compound for 8500 florins. July 31. August 28.

The English were inexorable in exaction, — would they have been so faithful to their contracts? They much doubted this at Florence, saying "that in mercenary soldiers there is neither faith nor pity. Their hands are venal, and they turn themselves where they can find the greater gain." *Nulla fides pietasque viris qui castra sequuntur*, — the quotation is from Filippo Villani. It was reported that Hawkwood would have taken the first opportunity to prove the truth of the intelligence, and even to treat personally with the Pope's Legate.

To keep him in good faith, the Florentine Signoria, not content with sending Giorgio Scali to him as envoy, thought of calling from Milan that Ruggiero Cane who had assisted them in the treaty of peace, and had a great influence over the English captain, who seemed to have a very reserved and inaccessible manner. "He is the only one," they wrote to Bernabò, "to whom Hawkwood is accustomed to confide his most secret designs, and who knows his weaknesses and his good moments."

And as Cane was late in starting and then was detained some days by illness at Lucca, the Signoria wrote and rewrote to Hawkwood that he should "patiently put up with the delays of his desired friend, and most faithful counselor." At length Cane arrived at the English camp, and soon understood clearly that Hawkwood expected the an-

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\* See Document XXII.

\*\* See Document XXIII.

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Second half  
of  
September.

nual pension of 1200 florins would be assured to him even if he should leave Italy. The Signoria immediately consented, only making the proviso "except that he enter the service of the Church, when we do not choose to give him anything," and recommending Scali and Cane to persuade him to enter the service of Florence and Bernabò Visconti, or "at least keep him free from the Church."

Like their captain, the English soldiers were evidently held in great estimation at Florence, for Scali, the ambassador, received the following instructions: "In regard to the other brigade, do the best you possibly can, — especially with the English, — to bring them into the pay of ourselves and Messer Bernabò, on such terms that those who come to us, shall be obliged to serve freely against every other man in the world, otherwise we will not give them a *grosso* (a small coin)." In fact Cane procured for the league four hundred lances, and four hundred archers, who by their own stipulation must have voluntarily deserted the Company, since their compacts forbade the Florentines to treat with, or induce any soldier to leave it.

October 3.

While his friend Ruggiero Cane was busying himself with Hawkwood on account of the Florentines, the Lieutenant John Thornbury was exerting his persuasions on behalf of the Cardinal Legate, Hawkwood resisted for a long time, but in the end he gave in, and Cane was able to write to the Cardinal: "It has been a serious task to bring back your captain into your service.... he would no longer remember anything he had promised. I remedied this however, and he was satisfied with promises and my word of honour." Hawkwood had found by experience that the money of the Florentines was much more certain than that of the Church; and precisely at this time the treasurer Alberti arrived at the English camp at Staggia, to effectuate the payment of the last rate.

Septemb. 30.

In those same days Hawkwood exacted other large

tributes from Lucca and Siena; the agreement with Lucca amounted to six thousand florins, against the usual promises to treat the Lucchese territory in a friendly manner.\* We cannot give the exact cipher of the contract with Siena, but it cannot have been less than fifty thousand florins.

Anyhow, between Florence, Pisa, Lucca, and Arezzo, the English Company had obtained in little more than three months 174,800 florins in gold, which with those of Siena would amount to nearly two millions and a half of francs, — an enormous sum for those times, — without counting the annuity of 1200 florins, assured to Hawkwood.

Perhaps the latter was persuaded that he had drained Tuscany quite dry, and therefore he decided to treat with the Church.

#### XIV.

##### A CARDINAL AS HOSTAGE.

##### HAWKWOOD AS LANDED PROPRIETOR.

[GHERARDI, *La guerra degli otto santi* — PIERO BUONINSEGNI, *Cronaca — Chronicles of Gubbio — Chronicles of Rimini* — Poem in the *Chronicle* of the ANONYMOUS FLORENTINE — *Archivio storico italiano*, 1<sup>st</sup> series, v. XVI, part 2<sup>nd</sup>. Inventory of the goods restored to the Abbot of Montemaggiore.]

The Florentine Signoria finding that the greater part of the English remained with Hawkwood in the service of the Church, hastened, by calling on the troops of Bernabò Visconti, to put the Genoese, Pisans, and Lucchese on the defence against the probable movements of the Company. Septemb. 25.

But the latter marched on Siena instead, and Florence was warned directly, for Ruggiero Cane and Spinello Al-

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\* See Document XXIV.