

XV.

THE SLAUGHTER AT FAENZA. — HOSTILITY WITH BOLOGNA.
OCCUPATIONS IN TIME OF TRUCE.

[*Chronicle of the ANONYMOUS FLORENTINE in the Documents of Italian history, v. VI — Stenese chronicle by NERI DI DONATO — DELLA PUGLIOLA, Bolognese chronicle — GHIARDACCI, Storie bolognesi — Diary of SER NADDO DA MONTECATINI — Chronicle by MARCHIONNE STEFANI — Consulte e pratiche of the Commune of Florence, State Archives of Florence — BONOLI, Storia di Cotignola — Document concerning the fortifications of Cotignola, copied from Prof. Domenico Vaccolini and cited by Canonico Balduzzi, Acts and memoranda of the R. Deputation of national history for the province of Romagna, 3rd series, v. II, fasc. I — BONINCONTRI, Annals — CORIO, Storie milanesi — GIOVIO, Elogia, ec.]*

1376.

Here the figure of Hawkwood appears in a sinister light, and the only excuse we can make for him is that the authority of the captains over the mercenary companies was not so complete, as in a well ordered army, and so they could not always bridle the excesses of the soldiery, nor be held wholly responsible for them, as for things premeditated and commanded by themselves.*

The city of Faenza was governed by the bishop of Tarragona with the title of Count of Romagna. He fearing that the people of Faenza might follow the example of their neighbours at Bologna and participate in the general rebellion, called Hawkwood and the English to garrison the town; — they came, but it was to plunder, not to man the forts.

March 24.

The bishop-count had scarcely posted them within the walls, when he went off, leaving everything to their tender mercies; and they began to run about the streets crying: "Long live the Church." Hawkwood quickly made a pro-

* In fact it is only as an exception in some Florentine contracts with the Condottiere that we find this clause: "That at the request of the commander the notary of the troop shall dismiss those stipendiaries who are not obedient, or do not give true service."

clamation that every citizen or countryman must consign his arms whether of offence or defence, in the rooms of the fortress, under pain of fine and bodily punishment (*pena l' avere e la persona*).

And soon after, without loss of time, the Englishmen, crying this time, "Long live Sir John Hawkwood, death to the Church" (*Viva Messer Giovanni Aguto, muoia la Chiesa*), hurled themselves on the *goods and persons*; indeed to be more at their ease, they drove out the men, the old people and children, keeping in the city only young women and girls, *a loro posta e per vitupero, trattando ignominiosamente le vergini e le matrone a guisa di meretrici e di schiave vilmente vendute*.

The Sienese chronicle says that two constables fought a duel for the possession of a nun, and that Hawkwood, like a new Solomon, plunged his dagger into the unfortunate creature exclaiming: "Half for each." This is probably a fantastic embellishment, the above mentioned chronicle being very hostile to Hawkwood, from whom Siena had more than once to suffer oppression, and extortions. If we may believe Marchionne Stefani, the bishop-count was particularly greedy in the matter of this kind of spoil, for standing at the gate where the women went away (for many were spared by the knights, who were pitiful of them), he turned them back saying: *Torna addietro: questa sia buona per la masnada*, and besides he would not allow the convents to be spared, but had them put to the sack and treated just like the more worldly abodes.

Other historians and chroniclers, although deploring the excesses of the English in Faenza, do not speak of bloodshed, nor were useless cruelties habitual to those soldiers, who were more than anything avaricious of gain.

"Everything that was in Faenza was appropriated by the Company," this we can easily believe, the more so that the Company laid claim to large credits for arrears

1376. of pay, — while the captain, for his part and account, had obtained the castle and land.

When this news reached Bologna, the indignation was general, and the temptation to make reprisals was very great, since the citizens had in their hands Filippo Puer one of the principal constables, Cook the cavalier, and several other soldiers, together with the illegitimate children of Puer and two young sons of Sir John Hawkwood, who had remained there when the Company marched forth on the Granarelo expedition. But they were afraid to take strong measures, and contented themselves by treating them as hostages, confining Puer in the house of Salvuccio Bentivoglio, and putting the other soldiers in prison.

Even this was enough to excite the anger of Hawkwood, and to provoke fierce menaces. The Bolognese sent Roberto da Saliceto to try and make terms, but he wrote that "he could do nothing, because there are no worse people in the world (*perchè al mondo non v'è peggior gente*), they demanded such tremendous terms that if they had been citizens of Faenza they could not have wanted more." Saliceto returned to Bologna, terrified out of his wits, and thanking God that Hawkwood had not taken him prisoner.

The question became grave, so much so as to preoccupy also the Signoria of Florence. The Florentines were anxious that the Bolognese should enter into a decisive campaign, as their allies against the Church, and would have wished to procure an agreement between them and Hawkwood, as a preparation towards detaching that valuable captain from the ecclesiastical service; but they feared to make matters worse by interfering, and they moreover doubted whether peace between Bologna and Hawkwood might not mean war to Florence. It was therefore resolved to let Bologna alone, as best understanding her own busi-

ness, and to remind her that the Florentine men-at-arms were already in the field.

This much we find from the *Consulte e pratiche*, or report of the business transacted in the councils of Florence, in which there met together with the Signoria (or in war time with the *Otto di balia* *) the Gonfalonieri,** the twelve Buonomini *** and the Captains of the Guelph party.

They are therefore documents of great interest, because they reflect, day by day, the public opinion then prevalent in Florence, and reveal the mechanism of government from behind the scenes, and the private reasons of the events in which the Florentine Republic took part.

Hawkwood, without so many councils, passed directly on to practice. Exhorted thereto by the Cardinal Legate who had taken refuge at Ferrara, he invaded the Bolognese territory, treating it "with fire and the sword," which decided Bologna to formally enter the League of Florence against the Pope.

The English were encamped at Medicina, and Hawkwood flashed out from the camp in person, with four hundred lances, and for three days rode towards Ponte Maggiore, sacking, burning, and taking prisoners about four hundred peasants. Thus hard pressed the Bolognese took courage, and this time threw into prison all the English who were in the city, not excluding Hawkwood's two little

1376.

April 21
and May 18.

May 16.

May 25.

* The *Otto di balia*, which was called in war times the *Otto di guerra* (Eight of war), was a council first created during this very war, and it took the place of the Signoria, or was added to it, in the general war council. Its office was to decide on matters of expense, and means of raising funds etc. in time of war. In peace, it was a council of eight which ruled the political economy of the city. — (Translator.)

** The *Gonfalonieri* were the heads of the different quarters of the city. Each quarter had four *gonfalons* or standards, the bearers of which were called into council on special occasions. — (Translator.)

*** The twelve *Buonomini*, or good men, was a council formed of three elders (Anziani) from each quarter. Its sittings lasted three months, and it was called into council with the Signoria on especial occasions. — (Translator.)

1376. sons. This was all that was necessary; paternal affection outweighed the fury of the captain. To regain the hostages, a truce of sixteen months was accorded — while the prisoners, and even the cattle taken as spoil, were restored.

Having got his children back, Hawkwood employed the armistice in arranging his affairs and insuring his territorial lordship.

Having by this time squeezed out of Faenza all that was worth having, he decided to cede the empty husk to Alberto d'Este Marquis of Ferrara, some say for 60,000 ducats, some 40,000, others 24,000 florins.

In agreement with the Pope who, above everything, feared the city getting into Bernabò Visconti's hands, the Marchese settled the account with the English, taking from them the pledge which they had in hand: and the cession was made the following year.

1377.
April 28.

Meanwhile the affair being concluded, Hawkwood took up his abode at Bagnacavallo, a well fortified town in which nothing was lacking, and without more ado, he began to enlarge and strengthen his contiguous possession, Cotignola. In those days, fortifications were of the greatest efficacy, as artillery was either not yet employed, or used in exceptional cases and rudimentary form. We might even say that Cotignola was reconstructed by him from its very foundations; — hitherto we have only seen him as the rapacious vandal, now we behold him as an architect.

A century before this, the people of Faenza and Forlì had made a strong fortress at Cotignola, but in Hawkwood's time it was in a very bad state, perhaps because it no longer corresponded to good military rules, the town being very small and not capable of holding a sufficient garrison. Hawkwood enlarged it to five times the size, surrounding it with new walls, a deep moat, and bulwarks. A plan is still existing in the Archives of Cotignola which

minutely describes this rebuilding, and shews us that besides several small forts, and the various suburbs, he also erected a "large and royal palace with dungeons like a very stronghold" (*magnum et regale palatium cum foveis in modum fortissimi loci*).

According to Bonincontri, an historian little trustworthy in regard to facts, he had even thought how this enlarged town was to be populated, and proposed prizes to immigrants, — but in practice he seems to have done the opposite thing, seeing that to build the above-mentioned strong palace, he had to take away from Giovanni Attendolo, son of Muzio and father of the Sforza, a possession which was contiguous to his own and imposed a tribute in favour of Giovanni and his descendents on all those who wished to build houses within the new circuit.

This shews that the English captain was not a tyrant without a sense of justice, capable of expropriating possessions without recompense, and it proves besides that the tradition of the rise of the great family of the Sforza from a poor peasant was unfounded.

Hawkwood kept for some years the lordship of Bagnacavallo and Cotignola; that he had leisure to complete the works we have mentioned, which he began towards the middle of the year 1376, is placed beyond doubt by the map we have cited, in the Archives of Cotignola.*

Near Cotignola, arose in those days, the Castle of Cunio, afterwards completely destroyed in the 16th century; the ruling count was Alberico da Barbiano, whom we shall soon find in the field as condottiere of some troops (Italian

* Another mention of Hawkwood's dominion might be perhaps gleaned from Pietro M. Carantho, a learned man of Cotignola, who wrote of the events happening in his native place as he had heard of them from his ancestors, or seen them with his own eyes. Thus says Leandro Alberti (*Descrizione d'Italia*), but this Carantho does not appear in the *Bibliografia storica degli Stati pontifici*, by Ranghiasi, nor do we know whether his history has ever been published.

1376. ones at last), and fighting even against the English, and against Hawkwood. In Cotignola there was also that Muzio Attendolo son of the Giovanni mentioned above, who was then a boy of seven years old; — he began the career of arms at the earliest age (Giovio asserts without foundation that he was a pupil of Hawkwood's), and by this career the Sforza had the good fortune to found their dynasty.

1381. Indeed some years after, when Hawkwood, as we shall see, was despoiled of his lordship, this same Muzio Attendolo was created Count of Cotignola, by Pope John XXII, and the lordship passed to his descendants the Sforza, who gave to Cotignola the title and privileges of a city, amongst which privileges may be classed the ancient jocosé spectacle of the *Sega vecchia* (old saw) at mid-lent, which has lingered to our own days.

1414. It is probable that Hawkwood fortified and built also at Bagnacavallo, but no memorial of this exists except some possessions left to his heirs and a street which still has the name of *Strada Aguta* (Hawkwood street). This opens towards the east of the city and terminates in an open space marked on the old maps as *Commenda* (Commandery) *di San Giorgio*; near there was a fortress called the "Bastion of Villanova," so it must have been a military road opened by Hawkwood, to ensure communication between the capital of his feudal territory, and that rampart, which was perhaps built by himself and certainly was held by him to be important.

On the other hand, we have at Cotignola a well preserved monument of Hawkwood, especially interesting from its military character. We may therefore be permitted to linger awhile in this little city, an inheritance of two of the most celebrated condottieri who held the sword of command in Italy.