Chapter XI

CATHERINE IN ROME

WITH THE completion of Catherine's book, her greatest spiritual work was now achieved; her mission on earth was nearly at an end. The return of Gregory XI to Rome had represented her maximum effort of co-operation in the important historical events of her time. In dictating the last words of her book, the invocation to the Trinity, she completed the legacy of her rich spiritual life, and established for all times her significance as a mystic. She was to live for about a year and a half longer, her activity was still to be assiduous and astounding, she was to write affecting wonderful letters, to urge the Pope, the Cardinals, prelates, and monks, friars and statesmen to defend the Church and purify it; but all this work, however admirable, was to show no markedly original character such as would increase her greatness in our eyes.

She still threw herself into the struggle and longed for the triumph of Urban's cause; but she was distressed at the realisation of her own powerlessness, and watched with a breaking heart the non-fulfilment of her desires. She had moments of joy, and after the battle of Marino it seemed for a fleeting moment as if her dreams were to be realised. Too soon the gloom returned and perturbing visions caused her great distress. She had always loved men, and still loved them; she wanted them to be good and happy, she believed in their salvation, but when she saw them at work she felt disillusionment and horror. Men find it easier to sink to the level of beasts than to rise God-ward. She knew this and grieved over it. During her trances and visions the earth seemed to be transformed into Paradise, and she saw the human and the divine merged in perfect harmony; but as soon as she looked around her she saw the Church contaminated by sin and

torn asunder by strife within. It was as if the earth were doomed to become the realm of disorder, with the spirit of evil triumphant over it.

Everyday life is far from ideal, and Catherine's senses told her this; but the ideal is greater than life, and therefore she would not renounce it. She preserved the purity of her ideal by immersing herself more and more in prayer. She loved men and believed in their salvation. If experience disillusioned her, no matter; she must rise above sordid reality; if the conduct of men often saddened her, the ideal still gleamed and sang in her soul. The wickedness of the world cannot be eliminated; but the ideal is a superior reality, a sublimated reality, as it were, and Catherine, the prophet of the ideal, soaring in spirit to the azure heavens, was trying to drag all humanity behind her. She did not succeed. But who ever did? Who ever will? Nevertheless it must be attempted, and with all one's might. In the measure of the effort made is seen the measure of the soul, and by this straining after the ideal there is established an indispensable continuity between the lower world and the higher. Catherine lived to spiritualise herself and all mankind; she wanted to raise to the ideal level that heavy and dull reality which is the sad heritage of the earth, and which sometimes caused her such agitation, fear and distress. Even when her body was tormented she felt her soul filled with surpassing sweetness, and becoming light and transparent like a divine spirit: *foris cruciatibus humanitatis, intus triumphis divinitatis.* So the earthly was merged with the heavenly and until shortly before her death Catherine always felt herself an integrating part of the humanity she loved and wished to save. When she realised how little she could do for men she invoked for them a baptism of Blood, the Blood of Christ that purifies all men and binds them together as brothers. Only a few moments before her death did she finally cease from every desire and invocation for men, and turn to God alone, with a long sigh of surrender and with unspeakable joy.

She arrived in Rome on November 28th, 1378. Twelve days previously Charles V, King of France, had declared for the anti-Pope, and eight days previously Giovanna, Queen of Naples, had officially taken the same step; the next day the Emperor Charles IV died in Prague, and in Rome Urban VI issued a new

Bull, condemning Clement and various schismatic Cardinals and prelates. Catherine arrived in the Eternal City accompanied by some of her fellow Tertiaries and many disciples. She was glad to be there. Her arrival in Rome was in fulfilment of her last desire, insistently expressed to the Pope in the letters she had written to him on September 18th and October 5th, from which we have already quoted. Hers was an official visit because this time she had insisted on Fra Raimondo's procuring from Urban VI a written command, so as not to scandalise the Tertiaries of Siena and those of her fellow citizens who accused her of being a 'gadabout'.

In Rome she immediately sought and obtained an interview with the Pope. Nothing is known of their conversation—Lando di Francesco, writing on November 30th, 1378, to the Lords Defenders of the People and City of Siena, informs us that 'Messer the Pope saw and heard her very willingly. What she asked of him we do not know, but we know that he was glad to see her.' Probably Urban VI was glad to find in her a staunch supporter of his legitimate claim.

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It was a very critical moment for the Pope. Rome was for the most part faithful to him, likewise Florence and Tuscany, with Perugia and other cities of central Italy; but the Queen of Naples and the King of France had abandoned him. Urban's chief problem at that moment must have been to think of some way to win back the confidence, loyalty and support of these two rulers. Possibly, while Catherine was speaking to him, he was planning to send her on a mission to Giovanna of Naples. He knew that the people of Naples were for him; in the summer of 1378 the populace had assaulted the Bishop of Mural, who had preached against Urban. But the popular rising had had no influence over the Queen's decisions, and therefore it was necessary to find some means of persuading her to abandon the schismatic cause. No one could do this better than Catherine, who had been in correspondence with Giovanna and was a most persuasive orator, who had shown exceptional activity in Florence in the Papal cause, and with her undoubted holiness would be of great help

to Domenico d'Afragola, the principal preacher in Neapolitan territory of the Crusade against the anti-Pope. Hence the Pope's plan to send Catherine to Naples, in the company of Catherine of Sweden, also famous for her own sanctity and as the daughter of the saintly Brigid. This plan was communicated to Fra Raimondo da Capua, who informed the two Catherines. Both Catherine of Sweden and Fra Raimondo were averse to the project, the former most decidedly, the latter more timidly. When Fra Raimondo explained to Urban the uselessness and dangerous nature of this mission the Pope understood and gave up the idea. This renunciation was a disappointment to Catherine of Siena, who had for long cherished a hope of going to Naples to speak with Queen Giovanna, and who was always ready to undertake for Christ's sake difficult missions involving the risk of death and requiring boundless faith for their accomplishment. She thought it was cowardly to give up this plan and protested with some violence—an attitude which her confessor and friend admired, although he carefully forebore to bring the plan up again for further discussion.

At that time the Pope and Fra Raimondo were beginning to be seriously perturbed by the trend of events in France, and especially by the attitude assumed in favour of Clement VII by the King, Charles V. No precise or official news had yet been received in Rome, but it was known that the King had received the two Papal Ambassadors, Niccola di San Saturnino, a Dominican and Master of the Sacred Palaces, and Arnaldo, Bishop of Famagusta. He had received them on the 11th or 12th of September in Paris, in the Palais de la Cité, and allowed them to plead the cause of the Schismatics before six Archbishops, thirty bishops, many Abbots, Prelates and Doctors of Law and Theology. This was clearly a grave matter for the Roman Papacy and on the 21st of November Ambassadors were sent to the King of France to try to avert the danger that the King might help the Schismatics or become one himself.

It is not our task here to outline the history of the relations between France and the Schismatics. It has been presented with a wealth of documents, a lively historical sense, clarity, fairness and breadth of view by Noël Valois. Some details of Fra Raimondo's mission have been set in a new light, and very astutely,

by Père Laurent. What matters for our story is to understand how events in France were judged in Rome at the time of Catherine's arrival there.

Urban VI had no political intuition and knew little or nothing of men. If he had been a shrewder observer he would have realised that the agreement reached between the Limousin and French Cardinals was sure to result in intense propaganda for their cause in France and he would necessarily have adopted some useful counter-measures. Perhaps Urban counted on the loyalty of the French people and the various Universities of France—but this was a misplaced trust, because although popular opinion was at first in Urban's favour it could easily be deflected, by a shrewd king, towards a belief in the legitimacy of Clement VII, and this in fact came to pass. It is true that already in June, two Ambassadors from Urban, Cicco Tortello and Pietro di Murles, had gone to Charles V to inform him of the validity of the election of Bartolomeo Prignano, and it is also true that in Paris on the 16th of June 1378 they had defended his legitimacy publicly in the King's presence; but, unknown to the Pope, Pietro di Murles was a secret agent of the schismatic Cardinals, and in a private audience with Charles V he had denied what he had asserted in public.

When he had sent new ambassadors to Charles V, the Pope turned his attention to French affairs, perhaps because the struggle he was engaged in, first with the Cardinals and then against the anti-Pope, absorbed nearly the whole of his activity.

Modern historians are inclined to think that Urban's diplomacy, as shown in his dealings with France and the King of France, was short-sighted and weak, because he had no well-thought-out plans to put at once into action. Pastor attributes to him the vast design of wishing to free the Papacy from French influence, but here the great historian is surely prejudiced by his own wish, and has ignored the message Urban VI sent to Charles V: 'Although I am an Italian, yet I have always been, and I am now, by choice, a Frenchman. I want to satisfy the King in all matters concerning him, his honour and his advantage, more than any preceding Popes, though Frenchman themselves, have done. I will do much more, with great generosity and without seeking a reward.'

In politics Urban had no genius for taking the initiative, and preferred to counter-attack rather than to attack. The few

successes he enjoyed during his Papacy were due not to his own carefully constructed plans but to the conditions which regulated the balance of power in Europe, and which various sovereigns were concerned with. He acted energetically in certain cases, but without being able to secure any advantages for the Papacy or for Italy. He succeeded in overcoming some of his most powerful and dangerous enemies, but in such a way that the leaders responsible for these successes soon became even more dangerous enemies of his. Having no breadth of political vision, events often took him by surprise and dictated his course of action. Although he was courageous in adversity he had no skill in bending the will of others to his own. He could mould neither States nor events nor men; and his desire for world domination led him in the end to a dreary solitude.

He must have felt indignant surprise when he heard that the representatives of the Cardinals had been ceremoniously received by the King. He immediately nominated two Ambassadors to go to Charles V bearing such instructions as might serve to dissuade him from schism. This time his Ambassadors were well chosen for their loyalty to him: Giacomo Ceva, Marshal of the Curia, and Fra Raimondo da Capua. When Catherine arrived in Rome the mission of her confessor and friend had already been decided upon; nevertheless Fra Raimondo was perplexed. He was always ready to do his duty when his life was not thereby imperilled, but he had a presentiment this time that his new task might be a very dangerous one. Certainly he would have preferred to remain simply the chief preacher of the Crusade against the Schismatics; he had been given this position on the 8th of November of that year. But he could hardly refuse this new honour, however dangerous. Urban, as Pope and as his friend, counted on him; moreover, it was a grave crisis for the Church; the political power of the Papacy was at stake; he could hardly refuse a mission that might prove to be of the greatest service to the Church. He knew that, come what might, he must strive to do his duty and set out for France, but he could not shake off a lively fear of the Corsair galleys, in the pay of the Schismatics, who were lying in wait at the mouth of the Tiber and along the Tyrrhenian coast. He had to go by sea, because on land all the passes and roads were carefully guarded by hostile militia, and it

would have been folly to try to slip through. Before departing he wished to speak with his friend Catherine who, with her wonderful insight, might foretell the course of events.

As soon as he had a chance to speak to her at some length he eagerly opened his heart to her, certain that she would counsel him according to God's will, but with a faint unconfessed hope that she might disapprove of his departure. Instead, although she grieved to lose her friend again so soon, she rejoiced to hear of Fra Raimondo's new mission, and not only persuaded him to obey the Pope but, affirming that Urban VI was the legitimate Pope, added: 'I want you to set yourself to preach and defend this truth, for it is your duty to do this for the truth of the Christian faith'.

It was a command that could not be questioned: a command that thrilled and fortified Fra Raimondo's soul; but it must be admitted that, in spite of this encouragement, he still felt some qualms of fear; in his heart he would have preferred to hear Catherine tell him to stay peacefully in Rome, as we see clearly from his account many years later, when the worthy Dominican still remembered the sadness that had fallen upon his soul: 'I did as she said, and bent my neck to the yoke of obedience'.

Perhaps it was with the intention to help her friend, inexperienced as an Ambassador, that Catherine gave him a letter for Charles V. About two years before she had written to the King at the Duke of Anjou's request, to beg him to desist from waging war against the English, so as to be free to lead a great Crusade against the infidels. Probably Catherine did not know that her letter had never reached him, and thought he still must remember her. In any case, she considered it was her duty now to defend the Church, and so it was necessary in these circumstances to warn the King of the French not to fall into the snares of self-love and of those incarnate devils, Clement VII and all the schismatic Cardinals. So she wrote to him, urging him to reject 'the advice of those who live in darkness' and not to give credence to the false accounts in circulation about the election of Urban VI. If, she said, after having read this letter, he still remained sincerely in doubt and did not wish to compromise himself by giving due obedience to Urban, he should at least remain neutral: 'If you do not want to do good, at least do not do evil'. And why had he not

appealed to God's faithful servants, who alone could enlighten him, to learn how the Conclave had been conducted? In writing this she probably thought of her own saintly friends, who might have given him good information and advice; it may be that she would willingly have gone herself to speak with the King, to convince him of Urban's legitimacy. In any case, for the moment, he could ask for information from the University of Paris: 'You have the fountain of knowledge there close to you', she wrote. Had she known that, while she was writing, most of the Doctors of that University had already decided for the Schismatics, she would probably have indignantly referred to that famous seat of learning as a 'fountain of all iniquity'.

There is very little in this letter that the Clementines could not easily have refuted. It is full of intense religious feeling, but, politically speaking, the arguments brought forward are weak. It is not one of Catherine's best effusions. It contains repetitions of thought already, and perhaps better, expressed in preceding letters. She makes no careful study of the events that have occurred, or of the causes underlying these events, and she reports as certain truth the most unreliable rumours that were then current in Rome. In fact Catherine knows very little about what has happened, and although she writes with great sincerity and a certain vigour of style her arguments seem very ineffective. One wonders, also, why she did not write to the Duke, Louis of Anjou, who had shown such a liking for her in Avignon.

Meanwhile, Fra Raimondo had to set out on his mission. Catherine accompanied him as far as his port of embarkation. She was anxious to be near him, for she had some doubts about the energy and courage of her beloved master and disciple. When he went on board the galley at Ostia, and she saw the mooring ropes cast off, she gazed at him with eyes full of tears. As the ship began to sail away she knelt on the quay and made the sign of the Cross with her upraised hand, in the direction towards which the ship was moving, thus invoking for him God's help in his struggle against the elements and the perverse will of men.

It is natural for the Christian to desire the Church to be guided by saintly counsels, as it is also natural, in times of corrupt morality, to wish to replace a sinful clergy with priests who lead blameless lives. These were Catherine's desires. During her

stay in Rome her chief aim was the reform of the Church. She saw it corrupt and disunited, but she believed that its wounds could be healed and its unity restored. She was sure God would give His aid in the work of reformation, and therefore it was necessary for His servants to labour with the utmost zeal and trust in Him. While she visited the Churches of Rome her soul was thrilled by continual reminders of the blood of the martyrs, and she was sure that that blood would still have the power to heal the Church. The Pope agreed with her that a radical reform was needed—in fact, this was the point on which they found themselves most closely in agreement, and it was this consideration that enabled her to pass lightly over his grave defects of character, so that although she knew his violent and autocratic nature had alienated even his own collaborators, yet she loved him tenderly. He had understood the importance of her own plan—to form a Papal Council of saints, mystics and ascetics, and from this beginning to set out to reform the Church.

In the letter she sent to Fra Raimondo at Pisa, soon after his departure from Rome, written to encourage him to persevere in his mission to France, we find a succinct reflection of Catherine's thoughts on Church reform: 'We see this Bride all dismembered. But I hope that in His supreme and eternal goodness God will make her members whole once more, of sweet odour and not putrid, and that these members will be re-fashioned on the bowed shoulders of God's faithful servants, lovers of truth, by their many labours, sweats and tears, and humble and continual prayers. And in our labours we shall find refreshment, rejoicing in the reformation of this sweet Bride.'

According to Catherine only the Saints, the ascetics and the mystics could thoroughly reform the Church. It never occurred to her that these men, humble, pure, and powerful in the realm of the spirit, might prove to be mediocre or incapable administrators of earthly affairs. She did not distinguish between the religious and the political Church, because she judged politics solely as an expression of faith, and would willingly have renounced all temporal power if she had thought it was in any way harmful to the power of the spirit. As there had to be a Papal State she thought of it as a vast religious community, in which human passions should have no power to hurt, and all men

should love each other like brothers, with their thoughts fixed on God. It seems hardly credible that she thought such a State could be set up on earth, within a given period of time. She may not have hoped for its establishment during her life, but she certainly thought it would come about through the rule of the servants of God. If the Church had holy men to guide it she believed it would become holy—and from this to the setting up of the Kingdom of God on earth was but a short step.

With this idea clear in her mind, she insisted that Urban should surround himself with pious and devout men, and more particularly with those hermits, monks and friars whom she herself knew and whose holiness she revered. During December 1378 she often saw the Pope: 'Catherine of Monna Lapa is here, and the Holy Father has spoken to her many times, and sent for her many times', the Sienese Ambassador, Lando di Francesco, wrote on December 27th, 1378, and added that she obtained from the Pope whatever she desired. Urban, who was after all very pious, came under Catherine's spell, and, at least for a short time, seems to have shared her belief that the schism could be overcome by spiritual weapons alone, and therefore at this time he willingly listened to her and granted her requests. Her logic in speech or writing, considered from a strictly Christian standpoint, seemed to him invincible. So he approved of her plan of gathering her friends together in Rome to form a Papal Council, that was to eliminate schism and restore unity, purity and strength to the Church, and on December 13th he drew up a Bull to be sent to all the people she indicated. This Bull very evidently reflects Catherine's own thought, and some of its passages, stripped of their ceremony, might have been dictated by her: 'We believe and hope that in the present terrible storm that threatens to wreck the Church, more help will be gained, for God's cause, through the prayers and tears of the righteous, than through the weapons of war, and human prudence'. With this note of confidence he appealed to all righteous members of the Church to weep and pray without ceasing, to obtain by this means the intervention of God to save the Papacy from ruin.

Fawtier is surprised that Urban VI did not entrust to Catherine herself the task of gathering together in Rome the devout friends on whose assistance she relied, but instead gave this charge to

Fra Bartolomeo Serafini, the Prior of the Carthusian Monastery of the little island of Gorgona. Possibly the Pope's motive in doing this was the desire to avoid involving Catherine too much in Church affairs, because some members of the Curia and some ecclesiastics might have been scandalised to learn that a woman, even if she were a much admired Saint, was the promoter, and, in a certain sense, the head of a Council whose function was to exercise a reforming influence on the Pope and his Church. 'Our sweet Holy Father, Pope Urban VI, the true supreme Pontiff, wishes to apply a remedy necessary for the reformation of Holy Church; that is, he wishes to see the servants of God by his side, so that their counsels may be a guide to himself and to Holy Church'. But it may be that Catherine herself did not want to be made prominent, and so advised Urban to turn to her friend, Fra Bartolomeo Serafini, reserving to herself, in a purely private capacity, the task of gathering up her friends.

We do not know what part the Carthusian Prior of Gorgona played in this attempt to form and direct the new Papal Council, but we have four letters written by Catherine, in which she exhorts and encourages her friends to obey the Pope's invitation, and to set out without delay for Rome, where an extraordinary mission awaited them, that of guiding both Pope and Church. The plenary meeting was to have been held on January 17th, 1379. The first to be invited were: Fra Bartolomeo Serafini of Ravenna, Fra Giovanni Upezzinghi of Calcinaia, the Prior of the Carthusian Monastery of Pisa; the Vallombrosan Giovanni of the Cells; the Augustinian William of Fleete; the Dominican Taddeo of Orvieto; the Franciscan Leonardo of Montepulciano; Fra Luca of the Florentine Umiliati, and Pietro of San Casciano. We do not know to which Order this last-named belonged.

These were the names immediately suggested to the Pope by Catherine, and those which came first to her mind; but other names also were suggested, and sent to the Prior of Gorgona, so that he might get into touch with all these devout men. Among others, we learn from Catherine's letters, were the Augustinian Antonio of Nice, the Spoletan hermits Andrea da Lucca, Fra Baldo and Fra Lando, and also Fra Paolino of Nola. Not a numerous group, to be sure, for such a capital undertaking, but it was Catherine's belief that even a few people could reform the

world, provided they were rooted in holiness and ready to give their lives for the cause. These were therefore the friends on whose devotion she relied.

Certainly, when we consider these Papal Counsellors today, even from the religious point of view they seem to us, with one or two exceptions, of mediocre character, similar to dozens of others we could pick out in any age and any place; but Catherine was not looking far afield; she preferred to choose men who were spiritually akin to her, who breathed the same warm religious atmosphere. It seemed to her futile to go out of her own circle to look for future reformers worthy of her esteem; and therefore she turned only to those she knew, telling them their hour had come; they must hasten to answer God's call: 'Let the servants of God come forth, let them come forth to announce the truth and sustain it, for now their hour has come'.

With this ringing certainty in her words she roused the lukewarm, encouraged the faithful, and exhorted all the Caterinati to fight for Urban VI and to hasten the end of the Schism. Not the slightest ripple of doubt shook her confidence in the immediate success of her plan; she was certain that the future was in her hands, and in those of her Saints. The reform of the Church, for so many years desired and prayed for, was about to take place. She rejoiced; at long last the Church would become truly Christian.

Meanwhile the news she received was anything but consoling. Fra Raimondo da Capua, after having eluded the danger of the Corsair ships in the pay of Clement VII between Rome and Pisa, and later between Pisa and Genoa, had set out from Genoa to Ventimiglia, where he had learnt that the roads and passes of France were guarded by the Schismatics' militias under the leadership of the Count of Génevois. Terrified, the worthy Dominican was tempted to turn back on his tracks. He tells us himself that a confrère of his, of those parts, sent him a letter of warning telling him not to continue his journey, because his enemies were determined to kill him. Perhaps this was an exaggeration on the part of one Friar or the other, because in all probability the Schismatics merely sought to take him prisoner, as they had done with his more courageous fellow Nuncio, Giacomo Ceva, who had continued his journey. Fra Raimondo

was too easygoing by nature to venture himself in hazardous undertakings; he did not want to be hindered, or, worse still, molested; he loved and admired Catherine, but had never succeeded in imitating her scorn of this life of the body; so, at Ventimiglia, as soon as he realised he was in serious danger, he turned back to Genoa.

Catherine was displeased as soon as she heard of this. She had hoped that Fra Raimondo would overcome his timid nature; perhaps she had illuded herself that she had, by her own example and words, infused into him energy, faith and courage; but now she had to acknowledge that when the choice came her beloved master and disciple thought only of himself and of his own safety. She was distressed, even a little annoyed; her thoughts of him were tinged with sadness; yet she never ceased to be compassionate and motherly with Fra Raimondo; she wrote him a letter in which she developed, enriched and adapted to her own purpose the words of St Paul to the Corinthians, or those similar words he addressed to the Hebrews, where he affirms that he who is fed on milk is a child ignorant of what he does, while men of mature age and wisdom feed on solid food. For Catherine, Fra Raimondo is at this moment a suckling child, for he wishes to make the best of both spiritual and temporal worlds without running any risk; unfit for battle, he does not understand the grandeur of those souls who, for a just cause, fling themselves fearlessly into the fight. For her the joys of prayer and meditation acquire a greater value if they are preserved, or gathered, during action; to be content with contemplation alone is to be content with an incomplete or maimed spiritual life. In her own case action did not diminish contemplation but followed after it, and therefore was contained in it. The brave fighting man has passed out of his childhood and bears in his own body the wounds of Christ. Catherine knows this from experience; her vivid and powerful contemplation, experienced in ecstasy and trance, had never suffered any diminution when she had hurled herself, body and soul, into the fight to defend Christ and the Church. In raising oneself to the third Heaven one must never lose touch with the earth; it is instead the third Heaven that must come down to flood the soul of the seeker after righteousness. In action, the delights of contemplation become more precious, and

serenity more radiant. Those who fight always enjoy calm weather even in a stormy sea; in bitterness they taste great sweetness; with humble little means they acquire measureless wealth; while scorned and torn asunder by the world they gather themselves more perfectly into union with God. 'While suffering hunger, nakedness, false accusations, violence and insults, they feed themselves more perfectly on immortal food.' But her beloved Father and disciple had not been able to join such proven warriors: 'You were not yet considered worthy to be on the field of battle; but, like a child, you were thrust behind; and you fled willingly, and were delighted with what God had conceded to you on account of your weakness'.

This was a grave reproach for Fra Raimondo, but Catherine did not want to humiliate him too much, and so, half-jestingly, half-affectionately, she called him 'my naughty little Father', almost as if she were caressing him to make him smile. She loved him and understood and excused his weakness; yet she wanted him to be more courageous in the future: 'How blissful would have been your soul and mine if with your blood you had cemented a stone in the wall of Holy Church, for the love of the Precious Blood!'

On reading these words Fra Raimondo must have shuddered, but he may also have reflected that this was too lofty a vision for common man. Catherine was athirst for martyrdom, but she could hardly expect her Caterinati to show the same enthusiasm. He was ready to work assiduously for the good of the Church, but not beyond the limits of human possibility; he was no hero to court death voluntarily and deliberately for the sake of the cause he was defending.

Catherine, however, did not want her master to feel too much ashamed of having been afraid: 'Really we have cause for tears when we see that our scanty virtue has not deserved such a reward'. In this use of 'we' and 'our' we see the delicacy of her feelings. She has been harsh—now she tries to soften the effect. She feels herself responsible for Fra Raimondo's weakness. If she had prayed and insisted more earnestly, her master would certainly have had more courage. Therefore he must not be cast down; he must banish shame, raise his head, and be ready to acquire new energy to be able to do later on what now seemed

impossible. He must enter the heart of his divine Master, drown himself in the Blood of Christ, inebriate himself with the Blood; then he would become valiant and daring in the battle and rejoice. Like a priestess invoking power from Heaven she demands for Fra Raimondo Blood, and more Blood and still more of the saving Blood of Christ, which would enable him one day to plunge into the battle 'like a manly knight, for the honour of God, the welfare of Holy Church and the salvation of souls'.

Other sorrows fell upon Catherine during these days. While she was endeavouring to gather around herself and around the Pope ascetics and contemplatives, who were to purify the Church, she heard rumours which threw doubts upon the future results of her labours. People were asking what such a Commission of pious men could hope to achieve in a moment of such crisis for Christianity. When Catherine heard of these doubts and questionings, she was annoyed and grieved. What valid reasons could be cited to justify the scorn thrown upon her plan, and what proof had these murmurers that the work she had undertaken with such enthusiasm would be in vain? Had God not granted her the certainty that with the help of the Holy Spirit she would be able to achieve great results in Church reform? Why should she doubt? 'I confess that Thou hast promised soon to fulfil my desires. . . . I thank Thee, O lofty and eternal Trinity, because Thou hast promised soon to strengthen Thy Bride.' It was impossible to doubt these divine promises. Therefore it was the sceptics who were deceiving themselves and others; she was sure she was acting according to God's commandments. So she declared, with sudden imperiousness: 'And I, presumptuously, say that this shall be done!' Determined as she is to overcome the scepticism of her critics, nevertheless the doubt shown by some of God's servants about the value of the Papal Council she had planned creeps even into her own mind, subtle as a breath of wind. It shall be done, even if not all at once. It shall be done, even if only in part. And then she thinks: it shall be done, even if no concrete results are obtained, because the impress of our desire and determination cannot be cancelled, and will be sufficient. She reflects further, and her confidence in the outcome of her effort decreases. Is success really necessary? It may be that the plan will fail; nevertheless her conscience will be at rest, and this is what matters most.

Her confidence, that had seemed at first unassailable, has been shaken; the impulsive strength that had set out to overthrow all barriers has been checked. She begins to admit the possibility of failure. This decline of confidence shows how prudently and dispassionately she examined her own work, without hiding from herself the probability of a negative result. In her own words: 'And if we do not now achieve our principal aim, at least the way will have been opened. And even if nothing comes of it, we shall have shown in the sight of God and of His creatures that we have done all we could, and our conscience will be relieved. So in any case it is well.'

A still greater disappointment awaited her later on when some of the ascetic hermits declined the Pope's invitation to come to his aid. She could not understand this. For her there was a time to speak alone with God and a time to go out among men bearing a flaming torch to light their path. Woods and wildernesses are delightful, but if the pleasure they give us becomes a constant necessity of our life they are doing us harm by making us selfish. Christ is prodigal of His love towards His faithful, but on condition that they are manly, spend themselves in the service of others, and know how to fight when need arises. They must know how to oppose not only the invisible powers of darkness, but the enemies of the Church too. When God's honour is at stake His servants must come out of their forests and form a compact band, in battle array. The woods, full of perfume and song, and the sunlit solitudes must be left behind, and the solitaries must experience at close quarters the shock of human passions, so as to realise to the full the violence of self-love and the tragic drama that torments Christian folk. They must hasten to where the Church and the Pope are most endangered, ready with militant speech and strengthening counsel, throwing in all the forces of the spirit to avert the fall of Christendom.

Alas! Catherine is obliged to witness grievous defections in her Family; she sees her friends the hermits, like Fr William of Fleete and Fra Antonio of Nice, 'deceived by consolations and hopes, treated as if they were revelations', and suffers very much. Why do they turn a deaf ear to the Pope's appeal which it is clearly their duty to answer? The Bachelor replies saying that 'he who is bound by divine obedience need not obey the commands of

creatures', but surely that is not obedience to creatures when one obeys a call to compose the Schism that is tearing Christendom asunder? They must be frank with themselves and acknowledge their laziness and selfishness. They would like to have order, peace and serenity everywhere without stirring a foot to help to bring about this happy state of things; but it is not in this way that mankind can be won for Christ. Happily there are some servants of God, friends of hers, Fra Andrea of Lucca and Fra Paolino of Nola, who, although weary with age and infirmities, have given up the delightful life of the forest and the austere joys of their hermitage to come to Rome. Theirs is an example to imitate. Catherine believes in the power of example and hopes that the sorrow her friends have caused her may bear a future gain. Her wrath is soon appeased: Father William has shown irreverence in ignoring Urban's honourable invitation; nevertheless he is a great servant of God and must be considered with humility and affection. If the Bachelor has grieved her, the fault may even be her own, for in her 'ignorance and faultiness' she has not known how to exhort him to become a warrior in his neighbour's cause. Moreover, in the lives of contemplatives there are at times mysterious actions that grieve those who observe them, but the fault may lie with the observers who fail to understand the profound and hidden motives for these actions, which, on further reflection, may prove to be according to God's will. So Catherine suspends her judgment, which might have led her to accuse them, and refrains from the slightest condemnation of her friends.

* * *

The Council of ascetics and mystics desired by Catherine was a very real and vivid conception of her soul. She thought of it as an indispensable means of renewing the life of the Church, and for its formation and success she would willingly have given her life.

Urban VI thought of it very differently. He was anxious to establish the strictest morality among his clergy, and believed the help of these saintly men would be useful for that purpose; so when Catherine proposed to him her plan of reform with the help of these ascetics he approved of it and at once did what he

could, by means of his Bull, to support her plan. He did not however attribute to it the decisive importance that it had in Catherine's eyes; to him it was a mere detail in the vast field of Papal policy. He may have thought that much more than a Council of monks was needed to raise the prestige of the Church and overthrow the power of Clement VII, supported as he was by soldiers, bishops, Cardinals, Princes and Kings. Urban needed money to pay for militias and to arm them, so that he could answer force with force. In those days he was not even sure of his own headquarters; he had had to give up residence in the Vatican because from Castel Sant'Angelo the Clementines were bombarding the whole Borgo. Meanwhile some important European States had not yet pronounced on his legitimacy; others declared themselves neutral, others again opposed him. He could hardly be expected, in these circumstances, to trust solely to the prayers of the devout. He was not a Saint, and was not slow to call in the aid of armed men, that he considered more effective than spiritual forces.

The last months of 1378 and the first weeks of 1379 were full of uncertainty, suspicion and anxiety for the Church. The Pope and the anti-Pope were continually seeking and preparing new moves and counter-moves, initiating local offensives, and thrusting at each other's weakest points with accusations and condemnations. There was for both sides a succession of alternating disappointments and hopes. Urban was appealing for allies and supporters, and thought Catherine would be useful to him. His first consideration was to make sure of the loyalty of central Italy; Catherine, who had already been of great service to the Holy See, could and should be of use now in the Papal cause. Rome, Tuscany and Umbria, united together, might exercise a very great influence over the rest of Italy. Urban became a paladin of the cause of Italian unity, and pointed out the harm that the schismatic Cardinals, most of them French, had done to his country. He declared himself anti-French. It is to be noted, however, that he displayed very different sentiments about France and the French when he wrote letters to the Court of Charles V or gave instructions to his Ambassadors at that Court. In this moment, however, the Italians were all irritated by the wrongs they had endured at the hands of the French prelates, and so they were glad to hear assertions that appealed to their national pride. Urban

tried to turn this situation to his own advantage. If the Papacy could succeed, he thought, in securing the allegiance of the whole of Italy, it would then be easy enough to cast doubts on the election and achievements of Clement VII, and little by little, all Europe would come to acknowledge Bartolomeo Prignano as the true Vicar of Christ. The schismatic Cardinals and the anti-Pope had been, it was true, more swift to defend their cause at the various European courts, and they had with great skill convinced Charles V of the validity of the election of Fondi, thus gaining a great advantage over him; but if he, the true Pope, could win the adherence of the whole of Italy, he could then direct a careful and well-planned propaganda in his own favour and induce Charles V and his followers to reconsider the course of events, review their own attitudes, and, as a necessary consequence, abandon the anti-Pope and attach themselves to him. So the unity of the Church, the desire of the whole Catholic world, would be achieved.

It was therefore essential to have the whole of Italy recognising him as legitimate Pope, so as to be able to secure for himself a safe centre for the irradiation of his authority in Europe. That is why Urban VI was in these days so concerned about the schismatic Queen, Giovanna of Naples, about Otto of Brunswick, Giovanna's fourth husband and the administrator of Monferrat, about Amedeo VI of Savoy, who had declared for the anti-Pope, about the Count of Fondi and Francesco da Vico, and Giordano Orsini. These were enemies to be feared; they had many supporters, they were combative and could count on the service of famous militias, eager and ready to fight. Urban's most urgent need was to find soldiers to support his cause, so as to set army against army.

Meanwhile, the use of spiritual and diplomatic weapons was certainly not to be neglected; in fact, Urban excommunicated the anti-Pope and the schismatic Cardinals, statesmen and prelates; he proclaimed a Crusade against the Schism, charging certain valiant Religious to preach it in Italy and beyond her borders; he sent the pamphlet '*De Fletu Ecclesiae*', composed by the jurist Giovanni di Legnano in support of his legitimacy, to various European courts and the most famous centres of study; he nominated Ambassadors to defend his cause; he made use of Catherine's labours; he honoured Philippe d'Alençon, the ex-

Archbishop of Rouen who was now a Cardinal, with such ceremonious pomp that 'if he had been a Pope he could not have been treated with more honour', as Cristoforo da Piacenza observes. This was to ingratiate himself with the French clergy, in spite of Charles V, to whose family the Cardinal belonged.

Above all, Urban was now aiming at gathering together an army, in which he placed more confidence, for the victory of his cause, than in the prayers of holy men and women. During the first months of 1379 he begged for money from those states of Central Italy that had remained on his side, and availed himself of Catherine's epistolary eloquence for this purpose.

He also succeeded in winning over to his cause the Company of San Giorgio, with Alberigo da Barbiano as its leader, and this at a time when Clement VII was also doing his best to take the Company into his pay. This was the most successful move Urban had yet made.

Meanwhile, the Clementines had maintained the initiative in warlike operations. In Rome, Urban was obliged to live in Santa Maria in Trastevere, because the French captains Pierre Gandelin and Pierre Rostaing, the defenders of Castel Sant' Angelo, were reducing the Borgo to ruins. Viterbo was an excellent centre for the mercenary troops who raided the surrounding countryside and even pressed up to the gates of Rome. From Marino Giordano Orsini and his men controlled the territory of the Alban mountains. Pietro Bernaldez, a Catalan pirate in Clement's pay, guarded the mouth of the Tiber and the Roman shores; further south, at Traetto, Capua and Naples were the mercenary companies of Brittany, Gascony and the Langue d'Oc. In Northern Italy the armies of Otto of Brunswick and Count Verde were ready to come down as far as Naples to support the Clementines. There were other important centres for the Schismatics in other cities of Italy, and many more abroad.

Until this moment all had gone in the anti-Pope's favour; the Schism was spreading, and some States, uncertain which way victory would turn, remained on friendly terms with both Pope and anti-Pope, as did Gian Galeazzo Visconti, or else declared themselves neutral. However, towards the second half of January 1379 fortune turned against Clement VII. He fell ill of tertian fever. The castle of Cesena (a name of ill augury: did Clement

remember the massacre of the citizens of Cesena ordered by him about two years previously, which had made his name execrable to all Italians?) was sold to the Urbanites by the Clementine Captain whose duty it was to defend it. Francesco Marescotti, formerly Archbishop of Pisa and now Cardinal Bishop of Preneste, a friend of Catherine's and appointed Legate of Campania, reduced most of his territory to obedience to Urban, and was the first Urbanite to win a victory over the French militias.

His success, although of modest proportions, seemed to turn the tide in favour of Urban's troops. Meanwhile, Castel Sant' Angelo was surrounded by his mercenaries. The Captains of the Castle asked the schismatic Cardinals to send men and provisions —they were running short of both—and at the beginning of February the Schismatics ordered their generalissimo, Count Louis de Montjoie, to go to their aid. The concentration of troops took place at Latingeto, about ten miles from Fondi. Meanwhile, Onorato Caetani, the Count of Fondi, ordered Nicola da Ceccano to occupy Carpineto, a large town in the Lepini hills which, if it were to fall into Urbanite hands, would prevent any freedom of manoeuvre on the part of the Count's own troops. Nicola da Ceccano occupied the town with three hundred horse and a large band of infantry, but failed to get possession of the citadel. When he heard of this the Cardinal Legate, Francesco Marescotti, sent Caetano Caetani, Onorato's brother and a loyal Urbanite, with the militias stationed in the neighbourhood, to the help of the defenders of the fortress. Arriving by night and with the help of a full moon—a brilliant moon, writes Cristoforo da Piacenza—the Legate's militias entered the castle, joined the defenders and fell upon the Gascons who were occupying the town. There was 'a most fierce battle', which ended in victory for the Urbanites; of the troops of Onorato Caetani and the Gascon Company more than a hundred dead were left on the field, and 120 horses and 140 foot soldiers were taken prisoner. The rest sought safety in flight.

The news of this defeat was a great blow to Clement VII, who was ill and incapable of leading in person the campaign against Urban. It was certainly exaggerated at the time by popular rumour, and although it was a serious setback for the Clementines, it did not lead directly to the defeats they were to suffer later on, nor was it in itself such a grave defeat as to cover the

Clementine troops with ignominy. Certainly, however, the warlike fame of the Gascons had suffered, and the Urbanites gained self-confidence, while the feeling of the population of Central Italy became more hostile to the French Cardinals and their Italian supporters.

The condition of the garrison of Castel Sant' Angelo was also becoming critical. The Count de Montjoie did not come to the defenders' aid, nor did he make a decisive attack on the Papal troops. After establishing his headquarters at Marino, he raided the countryside around, without achieving any positive results beyond exasperating the peasants and wasting precious time. Meanwhile in Rome there was increased activity in the Urbanite cause. Cardinal Giovanni Fieschi arrived in the city with a great following, ready to fight the Schismatics. The Ambassadors of the King of Aragon, and the Flemish Ambassadors, had important colloquies with the Pope; the Ambassadors of the King of Hungary were planning with Urban to undermine the power of the Queen of Naples. The Curia was already speaking of Clement VII as sick of the dropsy, incapable of further activity; and it was said that the schismatic Cardinals repented their rebellion and would willingly have submitted to Urban if they had not been so much in the power of the Queen of Naples.

There was some truth in the rumour about Clement's illness: he was gravely ill. The tertian fever obliged him to change his residence; he went from Fondi to Sperlonga, fifteen kilometres away as the crow flies. Some of the Cardinals preceded him there; Clement himself arrived on March 30th, having travelled with a certain pomp and distributed largesse (to the sum of twenty-four florins) to those who had gathered to see him pass.

In the months of February and March the political activity of the anti-Pope was left to the King of France, ably seconded by the diplomatic skill of Louis, Duke of Anjou, but, on the whole, it met with ill success. Clement must have had the impression that things were not going well for him in Italy. He had reason to fear that the Company of San Giorgio, with its Captain Alberigo da Barbiano, would soon pass into Urban's pay; he saw that the military operations, conducted by his skilful Captains, were disconnected and inconclusive; he fully realised the aversion the Italian people felt for him and for the schismatic Cardinals, and

he knew the keen desire of these latter to abandon Italy again for Avignon. These indications, and others unknown to us, sufficed to show Clement that he would never succeed in imposing his authority in Italy and that, if he stayed there, he would find himself in difficulties. In fact, we learn from Noël Valois of the precautionary measures taken by the anti-Pope and his Cardinals for their personal safety while they were staying at the Castle of Sperlonga: 'From twelve to fifteen sentinels mounted guard at night on the castle walls; all doors that were not strictly necessary, and any windows through which an enemy might creep, were closed or walled up. Three cannons with their munitions arrived from Gaeta on April 18th. Timber was cut in the woods around the castle to construct a palisade; the intention was to complete with scaffolding an unfinished stone tower, and to build projecting platforms for defence above the "curtain" between the bulwarks.' There was a continual coming and going of couriers between Sperlonga and Fondi, Sperlonga and Marino—an interchange of messages, orders, news, warnings and advice. Evidently there was some uncertainty in the Clementine camp, and the little band at Sperlonga felt anxious.

It was at this juncture that Clement VII violated the intangibility of the temporal power of the Church in Italy by conferring upon the Duke of Anjou the kingdom of Adria, formed of Papal territories. The Bull sent to the Duke on April 17th, 1379, by the anti-Pope, granting him this kingdom, proves that Clement already considered his position in Italy to be hopeless, and was therefore willing to spoil the Church of important possessions in order to transfer them to anyone who could command an army powerful enough to establish him as Pope in Rome.

But still more powerful blows were inflicted on Clement towards the end of April. The Captains of Castel Sant'Angelo had for many months maintained an admirable resistance, surrounded as they were on all sides with moats, dykes and trenches, machines of war and watchful guards, so that 'a bird could hardly have got out'. The scanty stores of food, diminishing every day, made a continuation of the defence impossible. No reply came to the besieged garrison's appeal for help. The exhausted defenders had been willing to surrender since February, but on honourable terms; the Romans, however, insisted they would treat with the

French only '*cum laqueo ad collum*'. Therefore the defence continued as bravely as its diminishing resources would permit. Non-combatants were sent out of the Castle, to economise the food supplies; munitions were sparingly used. Meanwhile the besieged appealed to the Clementine army for reinforcements. No help came from Marino. At last Captain Bernard de la Salle succeeded in entering Rome by night with a large band of mounted soldiers, hoping to be able to join the garrison of Castel Sant' Angelo, but the Canons of San Giovanni in Laterano perceived his presence and at once gave the alarm. Immediately the Roman militias took up arms and Cardinal Giovanni Fieschi, at the head of a troop of horse, attacked the anti-Papal band, put them to flight, and pursued them as far as Marino.

This was the second defeat for the Breton and Gascon Companies; their reputation was rapidly declining. The Papal troops were overjoyed and began to feel confident of victory. New militias were formed to fight the anti-Pope's French troops, and Companies, like that of Apulia, were enrolled to attack the Count of Fondi. A warlike enthusiasm took hold of the citizens and country folk of Central Italy. Towards the middle of March the Curia heard with great relief that the Company of San Giorgio, then at Perugia, would soon proceed south to fight on Urban's side.

From abroad too the news was now more encouraging. The German Diet and the new Emperor, Wenceslas, acknowledged Urban VI as true Pope and declared themselves ready to defend him. The King of England, Richard II, sent word that, as far as he was concerned, Urban was the true Pope and any Clementine Ambassador who dared come to his country to assert the contrary would be speedily arrested.

Such a change of fortune in their favour inflated the pride of the Romans and Urbanites, who began to be bold and arrogant towards the Clementines. The Castle of Sant'Angelo was still resisting the attacks of the Roman troops towards the end of April. The resistance had cost and was still costing unheard-of sacrifices; the defenders were reduced to four ounces of bread a day and cooked herbs and roots. The miserable ration of bread was almost exhausted, the wounded were increasing in number, and the breaches opened by the enemy in the castle walls were a

source of grave anxiety for the garrison. What were they to do? For two months already they had been trying to negotiate an honourable surrender with Giovanni Cenci, the commander of the besieging troops, but meanwhile the fight dragged on. On April 27th it was realised that further resistance was impossible; the garrison saw it could hold out no longer, and surrendered. This was a grave defeat for the French, and the third in less than three months. The Clementines began to lose heart, while the Urbanites became bolder. On April 16th Clement had tried again to buy back into his service the Company of San Giorgio: in vain, the Italian mercenaries were for Urban. The only course of action now left to the Breton and Gascon troops was to attack and overcome Alberigo da Barbiano, but the Clementine troops had lost the initiative in the war and preferred to remain on the defensive.

The generalissimo of the Clementines, Louis de Montjoie, had perhaps hoped to subdue Rome by starvation, and was therefore guarding all roads and communications, and raiding the surrounding countryside. These frequent looting expeditions and devastations merely served to content his soldiery, but could not be a serious preparation for war. He had no single and considered plan of battle. When he heard that the Company of San Giorgio had left Ponte Lucano, to the south of Tivoli, to march towards Marino, and observed that it had divided itself into three bands to prepare for battle, he also did this, and taking command of one band himself, he entrusted another to Sylvestre Budes, and the third to Bernard de la Salle. Montjoie had twice as many men as Alberigo, and his were hardened troops proved in battle. Perhaps he was confident of crushing the eighty lancers, of whom each enemy squadron was composed, with his own six hundred lancers; perhaps he underestimated the warlike capacity of the new Italian Company. As soon as he saw that the enemy was about to launch an attack, he himself attacked with great fury and fell upon the squadron commanded by Galeazzo Pepoli. This squadron, assailed with such violence, fell back and was thrown into confusion. Alberigo at once saw its danger and immediately, with great daring, hurled his own squadron, followed by his other troops, into the gap. The onrush of the French was checked and the retreating troops took heart once more. The soldiers of both

sides plunged into the mêlée as if drunk with slaughter, and the battle flared up in a general fury.

Alberigo soon emerged as victor. Inspired by his example the Company showed powerful strength and performed miracles of daring and courage. They were determined to win at all costs. The Gascons and Bretons began very slowly to yield ground, then gave way, and finally fled. The Company of San Giorgio remained victorious in the field.

As soon as Alberigo da Barbiano wrote to the Pope about this victory, and the news spread in Rome, there were great rejoicings in the Curia and among the Urbanites. Foreign countries, far and near, were informed of the event, so that the Pope's victory might everywhere be celebrated. It was a victory that had a moral significance quite out of proportion to its modest dimensions, and it became a sort of rallying point of national pride. Was there an awakening of Italian consciousness in Central Italy? Urban VI hastened to declare that Italy had been freed of the barbarians. He may have had joyful hopes of a final liquidation of the anti-Papal movement, and have thought that after such a crushing defeat of the French troops it would no longer be possible for Clement to bolster up his prestige again: then everyone, at home and abroad, would be forced to recognise Urban as the true Vicar of Christ.

In fact, the Clementine army was virtually demolished: three hundred dead, Louis de Montjoie, Sylvestre Budes and Bernard de la Salle all taken prisoner, and with them fifty corporals and two hundred and fifty other men-at-arms. The victor took a booty of five hundred horses. The hundreds of Bretons and Gascons who fled in disorder were scattered and panic-stricken, and could represent no further threat, even if they joined forces with a hundred Italian lancers and the militias of the Caetani and the Orsini, still faithful to the anti-Pope.

Clement VII understood in that moment that he had lost Rome. It would have been foolish to hazard another military adventure, or even to prepare for dogged resistance at Sperlonga. Prudence demanded he should go to a safer place, and he decided to withdraw to Naples, where he would be under the protection of Queen Giovanna.

On the morning of May 9th he took ship in the port of

Gaeta with three Cardinals, and set sail for Naples where he arrived the next day, about mid-day. He was honourably and ceremoniously received; the Queen welcomed him at the gate of the Castle dell' Ovo, where a great gala banquet had been prepared for him.

The anti-Pope hoped to be able to rest in Naples, and to plan, with the Queen and her Government, his next moves in Italy; but hardly had he arrived when the people rioted to protest against his presence. For some months past Urban VI had been busy with propaganda among the Neapolitans, and had succeeded so well that as soon as Clement arrived in Naples the population showed their hatred of him. The riot was a serious demonstration against Clement and also against the Queen for supporting him. The people attacked the palace of the French Archbishop, and the monastery of San Pietro ad Aram, which had a schismatic Cardinal for abbot; then, still shouting and cursing, they ran to the Castle dell' Ovo, crying: 'Death to Clement and his Cardinals! Death to the anti-Christ! Death to the Queen, also, if she defends him!' and to emphasise still more clearly their loyalty to the Roman Pope they added: 'Long Live Pope Urban!' The popular rising was too violent and extensive to be quelled with force, and the populace gave no signs of returning to calm, but continued to demonstrate against the anti-Pope and the Queen. Clement soon began to fear for his own safety and that of his followers. 'All Italy, land and sea, was for Urban, who had succeeded in unifying it around himself.' While this thought saddened Clement, he was tormented by the fear that Urban was plotting to seize him, alive or dead. At that moment he could think of nothing better to do than to take ship once more, with the three Cardinals who accompanied him, and return to the Castle of Sperlonga. So, on May 13th, a sorrowful and frightened man, he set out once more by sea.

The next day, at Sperlonga, he must have reflected very seriously about his own situation, and that of his schismatic Papacy that he was resolved to save. The forces still at his disposal were very scanty; the help that he might expect from the King of France, from Louis of Anjou, Amedeo of Savoy and the other powerful schismatic leaders, would take long to come; at this moment he was without supporters in central and southern Italy and might

easily be taken prisoner. He paid a brief visit to Fondi, to ascertain more facts, and returned to Sperlonga convinced that no plan for war, or for resistance, could possibly succeed in Italy. He decided therefore to set out for Avignon with the few faithful who had remained with him. Meanwhile he may have received the news that Queen Giovanna, unable to quell the revolt of her people, had on May 18th proclaimed the legitimacy of Urban VI and was sending Ambassadors to Rome to offer the Pope her full and complete submission. In any case, he saw that the dangers that beset him increased with every day and that his residence at Sperlonga might have a disastrous end. On May 22nd, with all his court, except for two Cardinals, Clement VII left Italy and set sail for Marseilles. It was a long, dangerous, even at times a terrifying, voyage. Finally, on June 20th, he reached Avignon.

When Urban VI heard that his enemy had set sail for France he felt joy mingled with chagrin; joy because his redoubtable foe would no longer molest him at close quarters, chagrin because he would have felt safer if he had been able to capture him. Perhaps he now hoped that the union of the Italian States around his person would soon produce the union of Catholic Europe and the end of the Schism. But if he hoped for this he was deceived, for it was after the arrival of Clement in Avignon that the Schism settled down, became ordered, defined and consolidated, and crushed the Church for forty years, inflicting wounds that tore Christendom asunder and disturbed men's minds so powerfully that it prepared the way for the future Reformation.

The vicissitudes of Papal fortune that we have been describing were known to Catherine, almost, one might say, experienced by her. Very often the disciples, friends and admirers who went to stay with her for an hour, or for some days, as if her house were a charitable hospice, brought her information about the Schism; the Curia gave her semi-official news, and she heard the popular rumours about the events and people most talked about. Hearing and observing all, she was still convinced that political events must in the end become religious events; her general and fundamental outlook on the Schism was the same as that of the Pope and the Curia. She trembled with fear or indignation when she heard what Clement VII and his supporters were doing, and hurled crushing invective against the Schismatics. She saw herself as the

paladin of the Papacy, and wrote to everyone affirming that Urban VI was the true Pope and the schismatic Cardinals incarnate fiends.

When examined dispassionately, her arguments, common to all good Urbanites of the time, have no great value either historically or dialectically, but she animated them with such profound conviction that she imparted her fervour to others. The historical facts interested her only to a certain extent, and were never the main source of her contention; it was the moral and religious significance of events that was all-important to her.

Towards the end of 1378 she wrote to Queen Giovanna of Naples, when it was known that the Queen had become a Schismatic. Her letter tries to be historical and objective, but instead is polemical and accusing. She relates the history of the Conclave that had elected Urban, without conceding to the Cardinals any attenuating circumstances; she ignores the threats of the Roman populace, and deduces Urban's legitimacy from the austerity of his life. If Giovanna wishes to understand the difference between Urban VI and the Schismatics she must consider the conduct of Clement VII, of the Cardinals who have elected him, and of their followers, and then think of what Bartolomeo Prignano's life has always been. There is no righteousness in those men. Is there a Saint or a just man among them? She must remember that where there is no virtue there is no truth; therefore 'their lives show they do not speak the truth'. And who can believe men who are strangers to truth? Or, worse still, accept them as leaders of a religion that is founded on virtue? Who is the anti-Pope if not 'a man of iniquity, a devil, and therefore acting like a devil'? And, being a devil, what confidence can he inspire? Had the Schismatics no better candidate to elect? Their spiritual and moral poverty is complete, else 'why did they not elect a just man?' Here is the clue to the illegitimacy of Clement VII. It is useless to find out whether or not the election took place according to the rules; useless to refer to canon law for enlightenment; the proof that Robert of Geneva is not the true Pope lies in the fact that we know him to be unjust, for justice can never be in accordance with injustice. Whether or not the Cardinal of Geneva possesses political gifts is beside the question. If a Pope is not virtuous, every other quality of his, however precious, becomes

injurious and therefore wicked: the Vicar of Christ must be a model of virtue. On this point—and here lies the profound meaning of letter 317, from which we have quoted—all Christians must agree with Catherine.

Why then has Queen Giovanna become a Schismatic? Through the counsels of the King of France and her own ministers? For political reasons? All this has certainly had its part in forming her decision, but according to Catherine it was due, more than anything else, to her sensual nature, because 'unsteady and passionate as you are, you have let yourself be ruled by passion. O wretched passion! Through this I see you changed, and reduced to the condition of a fickle woman without constancy.' This also is a purely moral judgment, and the Saint goes on to predict the inevitable judgment of God that she sees already suspended above the Queen's head. As she loves the Queen and wishes to save her soul, she begs her to abandon political schemes, ambitions and associations, and turn all her strength to the subduing of her own passions. She must reform her life, return to truth; only by so doing will she free herself from evil and, drawing near to the fountain of purity, lead a prosperous and happy life. If, instead, Giovanna prefers to live in falsehood, then the wrath of God will fall upon her: 'If you do not change your ways and correct your life, cleansing it from all error . . . the Supreme Judge who allows no fault to pass unpunished, unless the soul purges itself with heartfelt contrition, confession and penance, will give you such a punishment that you will be set as a terrifying example to warn any who should ever wish to rebel against Holy Church'.

She turns this threat at once into a prayer: 'Return to your fold, be ruled by your shepherd lest the infernal wolf devour you'. The past is written in everlasting characters, and time is a terrible witness unless we repent of the evil we have done; but if we are contrite God wipes out the past, and then only the present and the future acquire meaning and life. Therefore Catherine's request becomes insistent and imploring: 'There is still time, dearest mother, to appease the judgment of God. Return to the obedience of Holy Church, recognise the evil you have done, bow down beneath God's powerful hand, and He, who regards the humility of His handmaid, will be merciful to you; He will soften the wrath He feels for your sins.' Liberation will therefore come from God,

and what joy it will be to breathe again great draughts of purity and feel the soul, free from all sin, become lighter and ever lighter. Purity is given through the Blood of Christ, for His Blood works miracles: 'Through Christ's Blood you will graft yourself on Him and bind yourself to Him with the bond of charity, in which charity you will recognise and love the truth; the truth will raise you out of falsehood, you will dissipate all darkness, you will have vision and knowledge of the mercy of God. In this truth you will be fed, but in no other way.'

This epistle is so full of urgent and indignant appeal as to seem the bearer of an imperious divine command. Another letter sent to Giovanna (letter 348 of Tommaseo's edition) is more tranquil and affectionate. It was probably written before the battle of Marino. Reading it immediately after letter 217 the style seems faded. There are spurts of indignation which is at once smothered in pity, and the latent violence is lulled to wistfulness. As Giovanna is persisting in schism, to the ruin of her soul, she must be begged and implored to withdraw from error: 'Do not make my eyes weep rivers of tears over your poor little soul, or over your body; for I consider your soul as if it were my own. . . . When I consider your soul I see that it is dead, because it is separated from your body; it is persecuting not Pope Urban VI, but our truth and faith.' Catherine writes very sadly. She had placed great hopes in Giovanna of Naples as leader of a Crusade against the infidels. But the Queen had accepted schism and persisted in it. Catherine's heart was sore. She would have wished to be near her, speak to her, engulf her in a flood of loving kindness, enlighten her soul, save her from schism. 'O how blissful my soul would be if I could come down there to you, and offer my life to give you all the blessings of Heaven and earth, to take away from you the knife of cruelty with which you have killed yourself, and to help you to use the knife of compassion which kills vice; that is, that with the holy fear of God and the love of truth you may robe and bind yourself in His sweet will!' The dark threats of the preceding letter have now given place to phrases of more general application: 'We must fear God and tremble beneath the rod of His justice'. And although she wishes to frighten the Queen, she does not now predict disasters for her in life and after death as a direct chastisement from God, but sets before her the

threat of being declared a heretic by the Pope, and so losing her kingdom. Now, however, this grave threat, instead of being severely presented, is explained and almost mitigated: 'And if I consider your condition as regards these temporal and transitory goods that pass away like the wind, you yourself have already forfeited them; it only remains now for you to receive the final sentence of confiscation and to be publicly declared a heretic'. We do not know for certain whether Catherine was here quoting the Pope's intention concerning the kingdom of Naples. Baluzio refers to various witnesses who reported that since the end of 1378, Urban VI had been planning to give the throne of Naples to Carlo of Durazzo, and to force Giovanna to retire to a nunnery; this was a very likely plan for Urban to think of, and it is also quite possible that Catherine was repeating his wishes in her letter, or echoing the rumours current in the Curia about the necessity of dethroning the schismatic Queen.

In any case Catherine's intention was kind; she wanted to warn the Queen of a grave danger, and to save her from ruin and shame: 'My heart breaks and cannot break, for the fear I have that the devil may so darken the eyes of your intellect that you will suffer grave disaster and shame and confusion. I would gladly suffer even more—to save you.'

Catherine wrote not only to the Queen of Naples, to try to induce her to repent and return to the obedience of the Pope of Rome; but she wrote also to a Neapolitan gentlewoman, an intimate of Giovanna's, so that she also might sow the good seed of truth in the Queen's heart.

During these four months preceding the battle of Marino, Catherine was employing all her energies in religious activity and in propaganda for Urban's cause. She had frequent interviews with the Pope, and was a trusted and authoritative interpreter of his will. When she heard that the Ambassadors of the anti-Pope had visited Siena to persuade the city to take the part of Clement VII, she immediately set her disciples to work with her own enthusiastic energy in support of Urban. Pagliaresi wrote at once to Cristoforo Guidini and to Stefano Maconi to ask them to inform him which citizens of Siena sided with the anti-Pope, and which could be considered loyal to Urban. The Pope needed this information. Catherine herself, in her spiritual letters to friends

and disciples, often referred, sometimes merely *en passant*, to Urban's legitimacy and to the urgent needs of the Church—so as to make sure that the group of her Caterinati and friends were reminded of the justice of the Pope's cause, and so that his supporters might continually increase. When she heard that Urban needed money to continue the war against the Schismatics she at once despatched to the Signoria of Florence a fiery sermon on ingratitude. She had known them at first hand, these Florentine Signori; they were selfish and avaricious, and she told them so: 'Your subjects are not fed at the Commune's breast with justice or brotherly charity; everyone (in power) pursues his own particular ends with deceit and lies, and no one cares for the common good. Everyone seeks power for himself, not the welfare and good government of the city.' These are truths hurled in the faces of the Signori who, like all politicians of every age and place, think more of satisfying their own ambitions and their thirst for wealth or power, than of the needs of those they rule. However, these observations and reflections of Catherine's do not end, as one might logically expect, in a warm appeal for the better treatment of the Florentine people, but take a winding road and arrive at the conclusion that our chief neighbour is the Pope, and therefore we owe to him supreme gratitude, and the Signori of Florence have the duty to come to his aid. Had the Florentines not received great benefits from Pope Urban a few short months previously, when they made peace with him? Had the Pope not mercifully re-admitted them to the fold of Holy Church? They must remember, then, the graces they had received, and support Urban and his cause with generous disbursements of money.

This just and vibrant letter, when considered in detail, is certainly ill-constructed. Catherine would have written more effectively if, in the first few lines, she had simply appealed to the Signori of Florence to help the Pope because he was in need, according to their bounden duty as citizens and as Christians. But very often the direct purpose for which she wrote her letters got overlaid with general and religious reflections, which were, after all, those nearest to her heart; the original intention reappeared on the surface, here and there, but the link that bound it with her other thoughts was so subtle as to make it appear almost extraneous. This is a further proof that political propaganda was never

felt as a natural need of Catherine's soul, and that when she made use of it, it was in the cause of religion. Those letters of hers that are mainly political in content are very few, because she nearly always smothered politics in an exuberance of religious matter. This does not mean that she had no use for ecclesiastical politics; in fact, she accepted them as a necessary complement to the life of the Church. Her way of thinking is the consequence of her passionate apostleship, which induced her to believe every victory won for the Papacy was a victory won for Christ in the consciences of men.

Simpler, more direct, and therefore more powerful are the letters she sent to the rulers of Perugia, and, some months later, to the rulers of Siena. In these she boldly presents the problem of Urban's need of support from his faithful, and declares it is the duty of these governments, who have received benefits from him, to give him every help they can. The supreme Pontiff needs money; they must send him their offerings at once if they wish to show they understand what gratitude is, not only the gratitude of individuals, but the gratitude of States.

While she wrote these encouraging and comforting letters to distant friends and disciples she continued to direct the spiritual children she had with her in Rome, and helped and guided those Religious who had accepted her invitation to come to Rome, who were to direct their efforts towards making the Church one and holy. She procured Indulgences for all her friends, to enable them better to defend Urban's cause, a cause she considered to be as worthy as a Crusade. She had not given up the idea of a Crusade against the infidels, of which she had dreamt for so many years and which she was determined to set in action; this campaign against Schism was a secondary Crusade, and prayer alone would secure its triumph. She wrote to Monna Agnese da Toscanella: 'Concerning what you sent word to me about, of going to the Holy Sepulchre, I do not think the time is right for it now; I think it more according to the sweet will of God that you should stay here, and cry out continually with heartfelt grief before His countenance, with great sorrow to see Him so wretchedly reviled, and especially by that heresy that has been started by wicked men to corrupt our faith, saying that Pope Urban VI is not the true Pope'.

The real, the great Crusade against the infidels is not then to be set aside for any other; it is only postponed till a better time. It could not be abandoned, for it had a universal significance, as an attempt to convert the whole world. So Catherine continued to think of it as a future event, and wrote to Don Pietro of Milan who had expressed his desire to take part in the Holy Expedition, advising him to hold himself in readiness because she intends, as soon as the opportunity presents itself, to ask the Pope to proclaim the Crusade: 'Again I reply to you and promise you that when the time comes, so long desired by you and other servants of God, and when it is possible for me to ask for permission from the Vicar of Christ, I will do so willingly, so that your holy desire may be fulfilled'.

The thought of the Crusade never left her. On May 30th, when the Urbanite cause seemed about to triumph—the anti-Pope had set sail for France—Catherine was thinking about it with great longing and, desiring to hear it at last proclaimed, she wrote to Urban: 'These servants of God will be the soldiers who will give you total victory, not just victory over wicked Christians, who are members cut off from holy obedience, but over the infidels—for I have a great desire to see the standard of the Holy Cross raised above their heads. And now it seems as if they come to invite us. It will then be doubly joyful to go.'

The familiarity that Catherine had acquired with the Pope and his court did not blind her to the defects of either. Faced with a danger so grave as Schism, she understood that it was useless to remain fixed in an uncompromising attitude towards moral and religious questions, observing a strictness which, if absolute, would also be barren of good results; nor was it a moment to inveigh too much against those who, in the Church, failed to practise an integral Christianity. In the sad times through which they were passing it was necessary to be comprehensive and generous: 'You cannot all at once wipe out those human faults that are commonly committed within the Christian community and chiefly among the clergy', she wrote to Urban. Nevertheless, it was her mission to insist that at least the Cardinals should be irreproachable. Otherwise, what advantage would the Church have gained when, on September 18th of the previous year, it had reconstituted the College of Cardinals? If the new Cardinals were to follow in the footsteps of the old, what would the Church gain?

'I tell you that the divine Goodness complains that His Bride has been divested of her old trees (the schismatic Cardinals), who had grown old in vices, in pride, filth, avarice and the practice of simony; and now the new trees (Urban's Cardinals), who should confound those vices with their virtues, begin to stray and to follow the same pattern.' But the responsibility for this is to be attributed partly to the Pope himself: 'Your Holiness has not that concern for this matter that you should have', observes Catherine, and, becoming bolder, she advises Urban to discipline his own impulsive and choleric nature: 'For the love of Christ Crucified, mitigate a little those impulsive outbursts of your own nature. Chastise your nature by means of holy virtue.' With supernatural strength he is to discipline his natural temperament and so become a worthy Vicar of Christ. Has she not prayed to Christ, saying: 'I desire that Thou shouldst make of Thy Vicar another Christ'?

Urban VI, besides indulging to excess his own autocratic temper, was ever ready to grant unjust privileges to his relations; Catherine knew this and rebuked him for it—a rebuke without harshness, veiled with much praise that she really thought he deserved. 'You have by nature a great heart', she told him; 'you are zealous for the good of the Church, you have the character of a reformer, but that is not enough. You need to acquire supernatural virtue because he who trusts to nature only, when the time comes that he must punish people who are very near to him, withholds his hand and is afraid to strike.' Without appearing to do so, she has aimed well and struck her target.

But Catherine's ideas on how to set about ecclesiastical reforms gave her no peace, and made her insist to Urban: 'Surround yourself with virtuous men, those I have indicated to you; give them the chief offices in the Church; let them advise and guide you. My devout friends are among God's familiars, and will never let themselves be corrupted, neither by flattery nor by wealth. They have been admitted to the divine mysteries, and judge human events with detachment and clarity; they grieve over the filth that has made the Church putrid, and pray without ceasing that she may soon be cleansed. Trust yourself to them, and God's honour and your own will shine again, and the Schism will come to an end because heresy is extinguished in the good and holy fame and odour of virtue.'

It was then the moral and spiritual life of the Church that most interested Catherine, while she learnt with some trepidation of the warlike events that were taking place in Rome and the surrounding country during those weeks. She longed for the triumph of the Urbanite cause. We do not know whether she realised the significance of the skirmish at Carpineto, but she certainly rejoiced at the fall of Castel Sant'Angelo and the victory of Marino. 'Four weeks ago', she wrote to Urban on May 30th, 1379, 'we have seen in a most memorable way how the power of God has worked wonders by means of His vile creature, so that we clearly see that it is He who works, and not human power. Let us then give the glory to Him and be humbly grateful.'

The emphasis laid on the 'vile creature' (herself) through whose means God had worked His miracles, has led some writers to deduce that she played some part in the conclusion of negotiations for the surrender of Castel Sant'Angelo; but surely Catherine's assertion is of too generic a nature to permit such a precise explanation. The 'wonderful works' may include the fall of Castel Sant'Angelo, but also the victory of Marino and Clement VII's flight from Italy. It is natural to suppose that the Saint, in her anxious thoughts and prayers, followed the vicissitudes of the struggle, and that she may even have advised Giovanni Cenci, whom she held dear, to be generous in his dealings with the French, but this does not mean (as even Tommaseo thought) that she had a hand in the negotiations themselves. We have no reason to think these were difficult, long or complicated. The defenders of the Castle were short of food and could no longer continue the resistance, and the soldiers of the anti-Pope found themselves unable to succour them. Surrender became an absolute necessity, so that in the end no protracted discussion was needed between besiegers and besieged. It may therefore be asked why Catherine attributes to herself such a large share in the major events of those days, and why she insists to Urban on the part she has played. She does this to make it quite clear what power there is in the prayers of God's friends. For her all historical events take place either in the devil's domain or in Christ's; as the Clementines belong to the devil they must be utterly defeated, and who can do this but Christ Himself? But how can He intervene unless He be implored to do so by folk who are dear to Him? That is why Catherine

pours out her tears and prayers before Christ, and strives to raise to His throne her longings and her impulses of love. She has not the slightest doubt that God grants her prayers; in fact, what she prays for comes to pass.

She has prayed for the fall of Castel Sant'Angelo, and it has surrendered. She has prayed for victory for the Urbanites and, sure enough, Alberigo da Barbiano has defeated the schismatic troops. She has wanted the anti-Pope to be humiliated and defeated, and now she hears of Clement VII, beaten, fleeing from Italy. All this is a sure sign of the divine answer to the prayers of God's servants; she knows God fulfils her desires. Therefore, without the slightest fear of complacency, she asserts that 'the power of God has performed wonders through His vile creature'.

The battle of Marino moved her profoundly and stirred her imagination; in the mercenaries of the Company of San Giorgio she saw not professional soldiers, ready to fight for whoever paid best, but idealists, ready to venture their lives in a sublime cause. 'You are knights who have entered the fight to give your lives for the love of life and your blood for love of the Blood of Christ Crucified', she wrote to Alberigo da Barbiano and his corporals, on May 6th, 1379. But her imagination soared yet higher, and she thought of the adventurers as martyrs: 'Now is the time of the new martyrs. You are the first to give your blood. What is your reward? An infinite reward: life eternal.' The end achieved makes her forget, at least momentarily, the ugly means that had been used to reach it.

Urban's cause is the Church's, and therefore Christ's most holy cause: 'In serving the Church and the Vicar of Christ you serve Him'. The valiant warriors who have fallen in battle defending Urban VI may have been venal, violent and rapacious, but dying for Christ they are purified by His Blood, and so must be numbered among the 'new martyrs'. Yet her enthusiasm wanes as soon as she detaches her thoughts from the results of the battle of Marino, and from those who died or were wounded on the field, to meditate on the Company of San Giorgio as it really is. She has heard rumours that some of the Company, bribed by offers of higher pay, have passed into the service of Clement VII. She grieves over this and hopes none of the others will follow their wretched example; otherwise the Pope will soon be without

defenders, and the ruin of the Church will be at hand. In her letter to Alberigo, which Professor Gardner calls a prose poem in honour of Christian chivalry, she mingles appeal with advice, exhortation with rebuke, and prayer with thought. 'Your soldiers', she tells him, 'rob and devastate. This is not their task; they should stick to fighting, for the understanding and the body cannot attend to two things at the same time, pillaging and fighting.' The Saint conceives of fighting as a sacred function, and of the soldier as the strict defender of justice and truth. As, however, the leaders and men of the Company do not share her ideas about this, Catherine insists that the Captain, Alberigo, shall inform his men about their great mission, and oblige them to purify themselves, that is, to go to confession. Deprecating the desertion of some of the Company to the Schismatics, she warns him: 'Be always on your guard against treachery, within or without'. In fact, to avoid possible treachery she advises Alberigo to choose for his officers 'manly and faithful men, the most righteous you can find', and above all begs him to offer himself to 'sweet Mother Mary', taking her as his advocate and defender. By acting thus he will make sure of having a perfect army, that will be ever victorious, winning for itself extraordinary fame on this earth, Christ's garden. She admires him now but will admire him much more in the future, if he remains loyal to Urban VI. Moreover, she is ready to pray for him, as Moses prayed for his people while they fought and won through his prayers. The same day on which she wrote to Alberigo Catherine wrote also to the 'Lords Banderesi and Four Good Men, Governors of the Republic of Rome'. Her soul was overflowing with joy for the fall of Castel Sant'Angelo, and for the Company's victory at Marino —but in the midst of her joy and gratitude she was perturbed by the conduct of the Romans. Which of them had acknowledged Giovanni Cenci's merits, his fortitude, loyalty and frankness? Who had rendered thanks to God for the victory of Marino? Who was caring for the Company's wounded? Who appreciated the example Urban had set in going bare-footed in procession from Santa Maria in Trastevere to the tomb of the Apostles? The Romans showed the victors nothing but ingratitude, lukewarmness of feeling, uncharitableness, carelessness and envy. Observing this, Catherine feels impelled to write to the Banderesi, to show

them very clearly the disillusionment they have caused her. It is a letter that ought to have shaken the consciences of the rulers, a closely reasoned and fervent sermon on the evils of ingratitude; one feels the writer's clear conviction that politicians and soldiers can be reasoned with as well as men of the Church. She does not perceive that the Romans judge events from a point of view opposite to her own. For Catherine the fall of the Castello and the victory of Marino mean a long step towards the unity of the Church and the conquest of the world for Christ, so that she thought of Cenci and the Company of San Giorgio as instruments of Christ working for the establishment of His kingdom on earth. Therefore they were worthy of admiration and gratitude. For the Romans, instead, both victories were important because they gave a greater security to Rome and a little more tranquillity to the surrounding countryside; but they were not considered as initiating a general period of welfare or future bliss. Giovanni Cenci had certainly directed with valour the siege of Castel Sant' Angelo up to the moment of its surrender, but the courage and skill of all those who had fought had been no less than his. Why should he be exalted as if he had greater merits than all the other leaders? Some prominent men in Rome extolled his courage, others belittled it. Envy or malice may have prompted these rumours which were frequent in the City. As for the Company, what had it done, after all, beyond what it was paid to do? Why should the Romans be grateful to these mercenaries? If the Roman people neglected to care for the Company's wounded it was because of the general dislike for mercenary soldiers, who in fact habitually tyrannised over the States they were serving and supposedly defending; they often raided and pillaged the whole territory. Why should the people be kind and considerate to them? There was, moreover, another reason for the antipathy felt in Rome for Alberigo's soldiers. The city was short of corn, and the responsibility for this scarcity was readily laid to their door.

This way of judging events was far removed from Catherine's conception, for she detached herself from all selfish considerations to imagine and to will a perfect way of life for the Church and for all Christendom. She wanted the Papacy to triumph, and therefore she insisted that the Banderesi should be charitable,

peaceable, and grateful to the victors of Marino, who had not yet completed their task, for they had other battles to fight in Urban's cause, and other victories to win before they could bring about the desired result: one Shepherd of one Church.

The victory of Marino spurred on Urban, now confident of success, to attempt by diplomatic means to turn France away from her flirtation with the anti-Pope, and to make Charles V recognise him as the legitimate Pope. France could not be ignored, for she was the most important Catholic state of that time, and her religious policy was imitated by several lesser States. Urban therefore decided to nominate an Ambassador to send to Charles V, and on Catherine's advice he chose Raimondo da Capua, who had remained at Geneva after the failure of his earlier mission. At once he sent him Bulls and instructions, and to spare him the dangers and obstacles that had previously prevented him from completing his journey he now informed him of a safer route through territories governed by the Kings of Aragon and England, both officially loyal to Urban.

As soon as he arrived at the French court Fra Raimondo was to plead Urban's cause with arguments based on the instructions he had received, somewhat ingenuous and, in certain details, mistaken instructions. Urban VI and the Curia had not been informed about the success the astute schismatic Cardinals had enjoyed at the French Court, nor had they understood the character of Charles V. Fra Raimondo's instructions were not based on powerful or original arguments, but merely repeated the already threadbare Urbanite themes in an effort to prove the legitimacy of Urban VI, a legitimacy which was said to be demonstrated by the fact that universities, Princes, Kings and the Emperor himself had adhered to his cause. Urban was described as 'very French' by choice, although Italian by birth; the French were reminded of all the benefits that had been granted to them to please their King, and they were promised further help and advantages in the future and reminded of the sudden and significant death of the schismatic Cardinal of Thérouane, Aycelin de Montaigu; the surrender of Castel Sant'Angelo and the victory of Marino were given a superhuman character as if God had willed them to exalt Urban and show he was the true Vicar of Christ.

These somewhat feeble arguments were rendered even less

efficacious by the addition of some palpable falsehoods due to wrong information. How could Fra Raimondo have asserted at the French Court, without making a fool of himself, that a disfiguring mark or 'tau' had appeared on the face of Clement VII, soon after his election as anti-Pope, as a token of divine punishment? How could he have declared to the French that the Universities of Orleans, Toulouse and Paris had taken Urban's part, without calling forth categorical denials or half-pitying smiles? What proofs had he to show that neutral Spain was Urbanite? If Fra Raimondo had arrived at the French Court and followed his instructions, not only would he have failed to convince Charles and his Court, but he would have done harm to Urban's cause. Urban, however, had not the slightest doubt about the arguments he thought were in his favour, and was already congratulating himself on excellent results from the French mission.

The month of May seemed full of good augury for the Papacy. The consequences of military success were such as to fill the Pope and Curia with joy. The future smiled upon them. Clement VII had found no shelter at Fondi or at Sperlonga, or even in the kingdom of Naples; he had fled to Avignon; the Company of San Giorgio was winning victory after victory and conquering more lands for the Holy See; Urban's enemies, such as Giovanna of Naples and Giordano Orsini, were submitting to the Pope. There was therefore another region of Italy to add to the many European states who had declared for Urban. The Pope could dream of still greater power, of a Papal realm vast enough to include at least the whole of Europe, and he could indulge his ruthless imagination by picturing to himself his rival overthrown, soon to be crushed, and the schismatic Cardinals morally and materially demolished. He also expected the Clementine Kings, Princes and prelates to return humbly to their obedience to him. In this hour of triumph, on June 12th, 1379, he launched an Encyclical that rang out like a song of victory. Events had confirmed him as the only true Head of the Church; who now could doubt of it? What sincere mind could deny the evidence of his victories? Surely God was with him. Perhaps in these joyful days he thought of Raimondo da Capua's arrival at the Court of Charles V and imagined him using all his eloquence to defend the

Urbanite cause. Perhaps he thought also that the University of Paris would listen eagerly to the arguments he expounded, and resolve finally to side with Urban, while Charles himself, struck with wonder at the Urbanite Nuncio's exposition, would repent having supported the anti-Pope and would appeal to him, the true Vicar of Christ, for mercy. Then he, Urban, with severe and ceremonial gesture, worthy of the great Papal tradition, would grant him mercy and forgiveness, and have the King at his side ever afterwards, to defend the Church.

These were bright and attractive dreams, but lasted no longer than a strip of blue sky seen between stormy clouds that part to close again. The Schism continued and was consolidated; in fact, it became still more dangerous for Urban. When Clement VII arrived in Avignon he was welcomed with great rejoicings and festivities. Charles V, with subtle political skill, encouraged his nobles to take Clement's part; the schismatic delegates worked most zealously in the European Courts, arousing sympathy and finding support. There were Saints, prelates, politicians, jurists and warriors who believed in Clement and defended him. It was no longer possible to eliminate permanently either of the contendant parties; the Pope of Rome and the Pope of Avignon were now both strong enough to stand up to each other. Even in Italy there were still skirmishes between Clementines and Urbanites, and there was always the threat of a major war with France. The Queen of Naples had submitted to the Pope to avoid a popular rising and the dissolution of her kingdom; but she was ready to return to the Clementine faith as soon as a favourable occasion presented itself. Urban VI suspected this and therefore was her enemy. In fact, in the Curia it was well known that the Pope considered Giovanna's submission to be false, and was threatening to punish her. There were rumours of negotiations between Urban and the Hungarian Ambassadors with the intention of dethroning the Queen. The Pope had not troubled to hide his aversion for her and his intention to punish her, as he showed in his Encyclical of June 1st, in which he referred to her as *'Joanna quoque olim regina Siciliae'*.

For her part, the Queen watched Urban's political activity with distrustful anxiety. Not wishing to let herself be caught in his net, she maintained close relations with the Court of France, and

especially with Louis of Anjou, hoping he might come to her help if need arose. When, however, she saw that she would receive nothing but humiliation and injury from Pope Urban, she withdrew the Ambassadors she had sent to Rome and persecuted Bishop Bozzuto and the other Urbanites in her kingdom. She sided with Clement once more, at first privately but, as soon as the General Chapter of the Franciscans, held at Naples on October 1st, 1379, had declared for him, she also publicly proclaimed her own adherence, and that of her State, to the Clementine cause.

But setting herself thus in opposition to Urban brought much nearer the fearful threat of an invasion of her kingdom by the King of Hungary. Aware of this danger and in an attempt to avert it, the next year, with Clement VII as her mediator, she recognised Louis d'Anjou as her adopted son, reserving for him all rights of succession in her realm: those same rights that she had for so long reserved for Carlo of Durazzo. This expedient was to lead to most unhappy results, but at the time it gave the Queen a sense of confidence and security. If she were attacked by the Hungarians, Louis of Anjou would be obliged to fight for her, and was powerful enough to be sure of victory. So, thought the Queen, she could be sure of remaining on the throne of Sicily during her lifetime.

Catherine, caught up in the net of Papal politics, wished the Pope to triumph, but, as we have said, her purpose differed from his. Both worked for the unity of the Church, Urban to satisfy, at least partially, his thirst for power, Catherine in the hope that men would draw closer together in concord, fear of God, goodness, love, peace and happiness. She had accepted the war as a necessary means of defeating the 'infernal devils', and she had rejoiced in the victories won by the Mercenary Companies, only as necessary preludes to greater spiritual victories in the Church. She agreed with the Pope's attempt to detach France from Clement by means of persuasion and diplomacy, because she considered the help of France to be indispensable to the Church in its effort to put an end to the Schism and establish religious unity in Europe. But she was soon to suffer disappointment, fear and grief. Her master and disciple, Fra Raimondo, was among the first to cause her suffering. She had insisted on his being sent again as Papal Nuncio to Charles V—a delicate and privileged mission

—but now he wrote to her that he had not even attempted his task. Once more he had shown himself faint-hearted. He had certainly understood that his diplomatic gifts were indispensable in those difficult circumstances, but he had been afraid of the consequences to himself. He was afraid of responsibilities, afraid of death. He was a man of little faith. Catherine was profoundly troubled as she meditated on the meaning of faith, so closely united to love. 'It seems that where there is faith there is love too, and where love is, there is faith.' He who has faith is ready to endure death, if the need arise; he whose courage fails him is without faith. Hence she concluded that there are Christians upright in thought and life but not regenerated by the Holy Spirit. Face to face with this conviction Catherine did not wish to lay the fault on others but characteristically blamed herself for the failure of Fra Raimondo's mission, and wrote to him in such a way as to show him, through her indirect accusation, how ill he had behaved. 'Am I always, because of my faithlessness, to shut the gates against Divine Providence? Alas! it is indeed so, unless Thou, O God, of Thy mercy unmake me and make me anew. Therefore, Lord, unmake me and break the hardness of my heart, that I may no longer be the clumsy tool that mars Thy work.'

We must be unmade and made anew if we wish to be real Christians. But Catherine proceeds to widen her target and accuses not herself only but Fra Raimondo too. 'And I pray you, dearest Father, to pray very fervently so that I, together with you, may be bathed in the Blood of the humble Lamb, which will make us sturdy and faithful. We shall burn with the fire of divine charity: we shall be, by His grace, doers, not undoers or spoilers.' These last words must have pierced Fra Raimondo's heart very deeply. Pondering them, he may have felt a cold sweat break out on his brow. But Catherine now attacks him more directly, no longer associating herself with him in this spiritual disloyalty to God, but accusing him alone, and somewhat sternly. 'If you had been faithful you would not have wavered so much, or felt such fear of God, and of me.' Has he realised the injury he has inflicted on the Church by withdrawing from the mission he has received from Christ-on-earth? Out of cowardice he has 'found some way of throwing the burden to the ground', and impatiently she cries: 'and if you could not get there upright, you could have gone on

all fours, and if you could not go as a Friar you could have gone as a pilgrim, and if you had no money you could have begged your way'. These are words which indicate an unbendable will, before which Fra Raimondo must have felt small and puny, and may even have trembled with shame. Catherine had put great faith in Fra Raimondo's mission and had hoped that he might win France back for Urban. She was discouraged by the failure of her spiritual father and son, and her hopes fell. She examined her conscience for the reasons for such a grave defection, and wondered if she could be the cause. She searched the innermost depths of her soul, but could find no fault there; in this matter she was clean and innocent. If the Church was threatened by disaster the fault could not be attributed to her. She had done all she could to ward off the dangers that events seemed to threaten. There was something mysterious in all that was happening; she must acknowledge it and bow her head. Not even her most fervent prayers had had the power to change the course of events; it was a sign, therefore, that God willed it so, and we must put all our trust in Him, and remain tranquil. Our inner peace must on no account be disturbed. 'So I tell you that although I wish you had gone, nevertheless I have set my mind at peace about it, because I am sure that nothing happens without its own mysterious meaning; and also because I have satisfied my conscience by doing all I could to send you to the King of France. May the Holy Spirit now have mercy on us, for we, for our part, are poor workers.'

The Saint was hoping to remodel the worthy Dominican after her own desire, but she had not realised that natures like Fra Raimondo's cannot be changed. It is impossible to make strong and daring those who naturally fear physical suffering and death. She had hoped to inspire him with her own heroic spirit, but these transformations cannot be effected from outside; it is only our own inner spirit that can change us, only by a supreme effort of our own will that the impossible can be achieved. Grace itself is powerless to act on us, against our will. Fra Raimondo was too peace-loving, too much afraid of suffering and death, to be capable of heroic energy; he loved God and mankind, but not to the point of braving dangers that could be avoided; he considered supreme sacrifices to be futile. Catherine wanted to convince him of the contrary, and reminded him that our efforts to avoid

dangers are all in vain because we can never escape them, and in this connection she quoted to him the example of the Abbot of Sant' Antimo, who 'for fear, and so as not to tempt Providence', left Siena and came to Rome, thinking by so doing to flee from imprisonment and find safety, and he was at once clapped into prison 'with that punishment you know of'. This example, however, did not suffice to shake Fra Raimondo out of his fear; he preferred to stay peacefully in Genoa preaching the Crusade against the Schismatics, rather than to brave the perils of a journey and a mission which might end in imprisonment or death.

In spite of this renewed proof of his weakness, Catherine went on urging him to be manly. 'Do not be a weak woman when the moment for action comes.' But her confident and bright hopes were doomed to failure; she saw that all her efforts were in vain, and was plunged into sadness. The reasons for this failure she now sought and found in her own faulty nature. Many other things had gone awry for her in those days, and the fault was hers alone —because of her sins and wickedness. 'Day and night I have laboured for God for many purposes, and all of these, because of the ineptitude of those who were to further them, but chiefly because of my own iniquities that hinder any good results, have been in vain'; she sees that although she has consumed so much of her ardent energy in the effort to transform evil into good, she has met with no success; she has felt her own will bend in contact with the hostile realities of life. This grieves her so much that the whole earth seems to grow dark to her, and life is no longer worth living: 'and so alas! we see ourselves overwhelmed, while the offences against God increase—and I drag on my weary life. May God in His mercy soon draw me away from this life of darkness.'

Another blow fell upon her when Queen Giovanna of Naples deserted Urban for the second time. In the last letter which we quoted Catherine had written to Fra Raimondo: 'We see in the kingdom of Naples a worse disaster than that which befell the former time'. The joy Catherine had felt when the Queen had returned to the Urbanite camp had changed to apprehension and fear. The kingdom of Naples exerted great influence in the struggle with Schism in Italy because by siding with Clement it had, to a certain extent, neutralised Urban's victories. This must be avoided, and Catherine decided to go to Naples, but was prevented by the dangers of the journey, either by land or by sea. So she sent there, in August 1379, her 'diplomat' disciple, Neri di Landoccio, with the Abbot Lisolo, to propagate Urban's cause, and, with the piety of their lives and their abundant prayers, 'to atone for all the offences they see committed against God'. They were to try to speak to the Queen also, and to convince her that the Schism was an impiety. Catherine wrote directly to the Queen, a letter distilled from her tears, a supreme effort of persuasion. She tried to break Giovanna's heart so that she might offer it, in sacrifice, to God. Catherine loved Giovanna. She had never met her but she had carried on an eager interchange of letters with her. The last missive she had received from the Queen had been particularly welcome, because it had announced her abandonment of the anti-Pope and her return to the Urbanite obedience. Catherine had accepted this as a divine answer to her own ceaseless prayers and intercessions. Now, however, she had seen that the Queen was not sincere and that the Pope was right to distrust her. Her grief was therefore great. She had nursed some illusions about Giovanna's future; she had imagined her taking an important part in the Crusade against the infidels; she had dreamt of her as the defender of the Church and a loyal friend to herself and to Urban. This relapse of Giovanna's into schism was like the clean cut of a knife that lopped off her desires and hopes. Catherine's disconsolate soul was filled with melancholy. Nevertheless, she never despaired; the light that shone within her soul might languish and grow pale, but it never flickered out. Her moral sufferings, her distress for mankind 'made of the off-scourings of the earth', grieved her and caused her pain but could not darken her lively and confident soul. She was an apostle and so she could never fail to bear love to all men, and never cease her labours for the salvation of their souls.

Queen Giovanna was, without doubt, a tremendous sinner, but none the less she was one of God's creatures. She had rebelled against Christ's Vicar on earth to follow the anti-Christ and his incarnate devils; but she had a soul that must not be left to damn itself. However severe the punishment she justly deserved, she could not be abandoned to herself. She must be sought out, loved, corrected; in the end Christ would triumph in her soul. So Catherine wrote to the Queen with a sad heart, but from this

sadness found a message of love. She did not refer to the punishment Urban intended to inflict on her—the confiscation of her kingdom, nor to the negotiations concluded between Urban VI and the King of Hungary, the other Louis of Anjou, to her injury. Catherine probably considered that material punishments were the legitimate consequence of the evil she had done, and therefore must be accepted reasonably and humbly. They were in the logical order of things. She wanted to save the Kingdom of Naples for Urban, and Giovanna's soul for God. Therefore she pleaded with the Queen to abandon 'the darkness of heresy', and return to the true Church. Giovanna had been guilty of pride because she had not recollected herself in prayer and meditation so as to arrive at the knowledge of her own 'not being'; nor had she ever wished to confess to herself that she, like all the rest of mankind, was but 'a sack full of stench, offensive on every side'. Through this lack of serious thought the Queen had been irreverent towards the Vicar of Christ, and because she had no self-knowledge she had fallen into ignorance, which makes men like brutish beasts. But when did a human creature ever wish to be considered a 'brutish beast'? Certainly Queen Giovanna would not wish this. So she must turn to the light, that would be revealed to her in the 'cell of self-knowledge', the only light that nourishes 'the beauty and dignity of the soul'. If she wished to be a real Queen she must robe herself in divine splendour, crown herself with celestial truth. She must think, moreover, that she had inalienable duties towards her unhappy subjects, now plunged, as the sad result of her own conduct, into the misery of civil strife. 'How is it that your heart does not break', she asks her, 'to see your subjects divided because of you, one choosing the white rose and another the crimson rose, one holding to the truth and another to falsehood? Yet your subjects were all alike created from the pure white rose of the eternal will of God, and re-born in grace, in that most ardent crimson rose of Christ's Blood, in which Blood we were washed from sin by holy baptism, for God has ransomed us Christians and gathered us all together in the garden of Holy Church.' All creatures are then glorious and subject to baptism which is the privilege of the Church and may only be obtained by means of the supreme Pontiff who holds the keys of the Blood: Pope Urban VI.

According to Catherine, the Queen understood well the righteousness of Urban's cause; but it was not enough to know this, as Giovanna had confessed to her in a letter a short while back; she must express this knowledge in active co-operation and obedience. She must answer for her disloyalty to Urban and must accept the punishment she had deserved; after all, her own declarations made at the time she abandoned Clement were enough to condemn her now. There were no excuses, no extenuating circumstances. Catherine could not believe that Giovanna's letter to her had been insincere, or her conversion to Urban's cause merely feigned. She was too optimistic to imagine that Giovanna had been employing subterfuge or political cunning in her dealings with her—therefore this time also she thought she herself must be the cause of the persistence of evil in the Queen. For this reason divine justice was causing her, Catherine, to suffer; was it not a great grief to know that Giovanna was now an enemy of the Church? The letter the Queen had sent to her was undoubtedly sincere, but immediately afterwards her intellect had been darkened through following the advice of wicked counsellors and allowing herself to become subject to diabolical illusions. At present Giovanna was indulging in a false slumber, from which she must awake to return to the sincerity of heart that had dictated the letter that had filled Catherine with such joy. She must decide at once, however, and not let other harmful days go by, for time passes never to return. 'Sweetest mother, for the love of Christ Crucified, be sweet to me and not bitter; return to your own self and slumber no longer in this sleep of falsehood, but arouse yourself in the little time that is left to you. Do not wait on time, for it will not wait on you.' Her prayer becomes more eloquent: 'Acknowledge the great goodness of God and His mercy towards you, embrace virtue, return to Urban VI who will welcome you as a daughter. . . . For the love of Christ Crucified do not linger any more in what is death for your soul, lest this wretched and scandalous infamy should linger after your own death. For the death of the body follows hard after you all the time, after you as after everyone else, and especially after those who have completed the course of their youth.'

With these words Catherine is trying to prepare the Queen for death, or rather to receive with resignation a possible command

from Urban VI to withdraw to a convent to live a life of penance. She would have had to obey such an order at once, and therefore it was necessary for her, from now onwards, to convince herself that she had done great harm to the Church, harm for which she could make reparation only by placing herself wholly in the hands of the Pope of Rome. The Saint knew that, virtually, Giovanna had already been deposed, and it is almost as if she wished to surround her with the warmest affection, so that she might still feel a Queen, but in the inner realm of the spirit.

The year 1379 brought another grief to Catherine, a sorrow more circumscribed than those we have been considering, but nevertheless most poignant, caused by the sad end of Giannozzo Sacchetti. Giannozzo had felt a poet's enthusiasm for the saintly Catherine, a sincere but passing love; Catherine instead loved him like a dear son. She hoped she had converted him finally, and enlightened his dark soul; but Giannozzo soon forgot the teaching, counsels, prayers and love of his 'little Mother' and let himself be dragged into politics, which led him later on into a disastrous quagmire. He may often have remembered the peace he had felt when in spiritual communion with the saint, but his will was not strong enough for him to be a faithful disciple. He was exiled from Florence and joined the Hungarian army in the siege of Treviso; then he got involved in the preparation of a plot against the Florentine government, for which purpose he returned to Florence. There he was denounced, discovered, arrested and tried, and on October 18th, 1379, he was executed. He had already been arrested in the previous April in Florence, we are told for debt, and had been imprisoned in the gaol called the 'Stinche'. Catherine had heard of this and been distressed for him. She wrote to Francesco di Pipino, who had been to visit him in prison, to thank him for his kind action, and ordered him never to abandon Giannozzo, but to help him to the extent of his power. She begged him also to give a message to her unhappy friend: 'Tell him from me that he must be a good knight, now that God has set him in the field, and his weapon must be true patience, humbly bowing his head to the sweet will of God'. She thought he had been wrongly accused, and defended him. Perhaps she was right in considering him innocent; in fact, shortly afterwards he was released. Catherine had promised to write to him directly, but we

do not know whether she did this. In any case, Giannozzo's sad fate could no longer be averted, and the Saint's spirit could exercise no further influence over him, nor hold him back from the abyss into which he was falling.

Little by little Catherine's political activity decreased as she concentrated all her energy in her religious life. Fawtier exaggerated when he asserted that 'during 1379 and 1380 her preoccupations became strictly religious, as if, feeling her end approaching, she was beginning to detach herself from the things of this world'. We have seen that for Catherine politics could not be considered apart from religion, and therefore a truly religious person had to be politically minded also, though naturally the converse was not true. Towards the end of 1379 we begin to notice, in her surviving letters, a diminution of political interest, not due, however, to the thought of her approaching end, but more probably because the political ideas she defended no longer aroused a lively interest in her circle.

Once Clement VII had established himself in Avignon and had the support of France, it was no longer possible to foresee an early end to the Schism. Urban VI became more and more intolerant and autocratic. He gladly received Catherine in frequent audiences, but used her only for political missions of minor importance. The Queen of Naples, even after receiving Catherine's latest appeal, gave no sign of having repented her relapse into schism. The kingdom of Naples seemed likely to become the scene of cruel warfare between the French, led by the Duke of Anjou, and the Hungarians, led by Carlo of Durazzo. Here and there in Italy and in other parts of Europe the war dragged on. Almost all thought of a future Crusade had vanished, and the Curia of Rome was busy challenging the Curia of Avignon, both sides bolstering up their causes not only with denunciations, accusations, excommunications and threats, but with any other violent means they could find, as if the Church were a courtesan disputed between rival contendants. The judgment pronounced by the monks of Saint Denys was crude but true: Clementines and Urbanites, 'aflame with passion, tried to rob each other of possession of the Church as if they had found her in a bawdy house'. In such an atmosphere of strife no wonder the morality of the clergy became corrupt, and the faithful, bewildered and

disgusted, grew indifferent or sceptical. Such great fissures appeared in the fabric of the Church that men feared it might crash to the ground. Even the Dominican Order, which had remained compact since its foundation, became divided and enfeebled, showing signs of decadence, after the Master General of the Order, Elia of Toulouse, had transferred his allegiance to Clement. Catherine's plan of instituting in Rome a Council of pious and holy men to guide the Church and the Pope seemed to have failed in its purpose. In such a state of chaos what could Catherine do? To whom could she turn for help for the reform she so much desired?

Today we can see that these painful and inconclusive ordeals through which the Church was passing served to renew its strength. This grave crisis was needed to teach it to adapt itself to the new political principles of European States; but Catherine could not foresee this or realise that the Schism had its own profound reasons, inasmuch as it helped men to be more conscious of eternal religious values, and better able to distinguish them from power proceeding from mere territorial possession or individual supremacy. Did the Schism not compel the faithful to desire a pure and disinterested Church? In this way, even in its apparent negations, it contributed to the process of the Church's evolution. If Catherine had been able to foresee its historical consequences she would have ceased from her efforts to propagate the cause of Urban VI, and she would have directed all her energies towards her own salvation and that of her fellows. But her ideas were those of the Middle Ages, in which she lived. Her judgments on contemporary events were related to the immediate consequences that might be expected to derive from them, and as in that moment the Church appeared to be on the brink of ruin, her suffering was acute.

She was certainly aware of the general collapse at the end of the fourteenth century in Rome and most of Italy; she wished to check it, and for her the only remedy seemed to lie in the reacquired unity of the Church. This unity, which was to heal the world's wounds, was the constant theme of her sermons; she never ceased to proclaim Urban VI as sole Vicar of Christ, without whom there would be no peace or happiness among men.

This theme runs through all the letters she wrote in 1379, and

inspired all the political activity entrusted to her by the Pope. It may seem to us of very limited scope, but how could it have been otherwise? Where could Catherine have found other vital ideas, or essential elements for political propaganda? For her Urban's legitimacy signified the unity of the Church: hence her enthusiasm. She grafted an institutional concept of external and transient character on to her religious faith, so that it acquired the golden reflections of her own fervour.

Fawtier, reflecting on the significance of the Orations Catherine composed in 1379, concludes with the assertion that the Saint, disillusioned by the conduct of men, was appealing to God to have mercy on mankind that seemed to have no conscience. 'These prayers give us important indications of Catherine's state of mind during her last years, while she was in Rome and could judge at their true worth those to whose cause she had dedicated herself. Does the frequency of these prayers indicate an unfavourable verdict? Are we to believe that the spectacle of human weaknesses had led her, more than in former years, to set all her hope of success, particularly in Church reform, in God alone?' The Orations, to which Fawtier refers, belong mostly to February and March of 1379, but surely we are not to believe that it was only during those months that Catherine felt the need to entrust to God alone the destinies of His Church? Her state of mind in 1379, as we infer it from her Orations, had not changed since she wrote the 'Dialogue'. Do we not find in the 'Dialogue', even more than in the Orations, the expression of her need to confide the course of all human events to God's hands, because men seemed incapable of constructive skill? We must always remember that Catherine was above all a Religious, and so the sense of the divine predominated in her. Nor should it be forgotten that the pessimism, which rises in her soul at the sight of men's vile actions, is never absolute, just as it is never absolute in any Christian; she dominates it by virtue of her inborn certainty that souls can and must be saved at all costs; this comes to pass through the will and power of God, certainly, but also through the operation of men. In an Oration dated February 20th, 1379, turning to God to give Him thanks, she says: 'Thou hast deigned to choose me for this work', that is, so that through the labour of God's servants, 'a wall may be built to prop up Holy Church'. Her faith in her own

labours, and consequently in those of others too, remained strong, and she was always eager to act for the good of men. She was a social apostle, *par excellence*, and therefore thought it was her duty to spend her last energies for the salvation of the Church and its reform; it mattered little whether she met with disappointment.

Therefore, if Catherine's political activity was more limited towards the end of 1379, the reason is not to be found in the unfavourable judgment she is obliged to formulate about the men for whom she is fighting and hoping for victory; but in the fact that she had no other thesis to put forward but that of the legitimacy of Pope Urban, in whose cause all sacrifices must be made. His triumph was to lead to the unity of the Church, and thence to a general confession of faith in Christ which would bind all men as brothers; only thus could they arrive at the reign of peace and universal well-being on earth; a heavenly prelude to the other Heaven, to be enjoyed after the death of the body.

The unity of the Church, for Catherine, was a supreme aim that justified and legitimised even war, which she otherwise condemns. The letter she wrote to Louis I, King of Hungary and Poland, is a proof of this. In it she begs the King to come down swiftly into Southern Italy, to fight for Urban against the Schismatics. She almost commands him to abandon any other war, however important it may seem to him. 'You must make peace with all your other enemies', she says, because enmity and warfare are atrocious things and keep men far removed from virtue and love; instead, war against the enemies of the Church is holy, being the fruit of love for Christ. It may be that the political content of this letter was suggested to her by the Pope, as the following passage suggests: 'Have pity on our Father, Pope Urban VI, who watches with great sadness his little sheep being borne away by the infernal wolf. It is true he finds his only consolation in his Creator, for he has set his hope and faith in Him alone. And he still hopes that God will inspire you to take up this burden [the war against Giovanna of Naples] for the honour of God and of Holy Church.' The conception of a holy war to convert and unify men—a conception that struck deep roots in Christianity—reappears in Catherine and is ardently defended.

Today we deplore any war not waged to defend a nation's natural boundaries, but Catherine deplored every war that was

not to defend the ideal boundaries of the Church. As the Church stands for order, unity and love, whoever introduces disorder, confusion, division and hatred is an enemy of the Church and therefore to be eliminated. If this enemy is an entire people, or a strong ruler, then recourse must be had to a just war, to restore the peace and unity of Christendom. 'The whole world is torn asunder; it is running on the road to Hell, and no one can stop it', she wrote to Louis of Hungary, who had fought for the Crusades and was a powerful supporter of Urban VI. She appealed to him anxiously to fight for Christ and His Vicar, and in this way to reduce, at least partially, the division that was ruining the Church. He must come, and speedily: 'But I beg you to come, and to delay no longer'.

Catherine was impatient, and so was Pope Urban VI. The King of Hungary's army was about to arrive at Treviso, where it was to join the Genoese and Francesco da Carrara in fighting Venice; but such a war might drag on for a long time, and in the meantime the Schismatics would have time to reinforce themselves, while the Hungarian army was growing weaker; afterwards, what would happen? The Pope feared for his pontificate, Catherine for the future peace of the world. Her appeal became more urgent. Who supported the Schism except Clement VII and Queen Giovanna? It was therefore an imperative duty to overthrow these two leaders: 'and will you permit the anti-Christ, the limb of Satan, and a mere woman to overthrow all our faith in darkness and confusion?' She added: 'And if you and the other leaders who have the power, do not act now with energy and diligence, you will be ashamed of this before God, and severely rebuked for the negligence and lukewarmness of your hearts'.

Catherine's ingenuousness, in spite of the warmth of her appeal, must have amused Louis of Hungary if he read her letter. It seemed to her a most natural thing for the King to break off his war against Venice, simply declaring that henceforward he considered himself to be a friend of the Serenissima Republic, because he was resolved to undertake none but just wars, that is, wars against enemies of the Church. What consequences would such a declaration have had beyond arousing discontent and rancour among his allies, who would have proceeded with their war against Venice without his aid? But Catherine was sure that once

the King of Hungary had conquered the kingdom of Naples peace would once more descend, at least in Italy, and the unity of the Church, her constant aim, would be achieved. Her hopes shone even brighter: as soon as Queen Giovanna heard that Louis was marching his army towards Naples she would at once return to her loyalty to Urban. So there would be no battles, no deeds of violence. 'Much good will result from your coming', she wrote to the King; 'perhaps this truth will triumph without the need for human intervention, and this poor little Queen will turn from her obstinacy, either for fear or for love.' A complicated political and religious problem could hardly be solved with more simplicity! But the solution, in spite of its attractions, remained but a Utopian dream.

In support of Urban's campaign against Queen Giovanna, Catherine wrote also to Messer Carlo of Durazzo, the general commanding the Hungarian troops in the war against Venice. Some historians have been amazed to see the Saint begging help for the Church from a man so depraved in feeling and conduct, but it must not be forgotten that Catherine was in the Pope's service, and he must certainly have done all he could, personally or through his Curia, to persuade Catherine that excellent and lasting good may be achieved even by evil means.

Carlo of Durazzo, called also Messer Carlo della Pace, belonged, like the King of Hungary and the Queen of Naples, to the Angevin dynasty. He had been brought up at Giovanna's Court and had married her niece Margarita. He was intelligent, fond of the sciences and of poetry, and full of ambition, longing to have a kingdom of his own. The Queen of Naples was fond of him and treated him with royal generosity, even declaring him, while he was still at her Court, the heir to her throne. He was shrewd but dishonest, and has remained famous for his ingratitude and cruelty. Among the many public and private deeds that sullied his name the most execrable was this war he undertook against his former protectress and benefactress, and, most infamous of all, his responsibility for her assassination. Gardner is right in affirming that no excuse can be found for the conduct of this wretched man who was rich, powerful and in favour with the King of Hungary, and might therefore have been expected to control the ambition which led him to stain himself so shamefully. Nor is it possible

to justify Urban VI for having made use of this unprincipled man for his own purpose, urging him to possess himself of the kingdom of Naples and even crowning him as King.

Catherine wrote to him to beg him to hasten down into Italy to fight the Schismatics, using words like those she had used in her appeal to Louis of Hungary: 'Come speedily, and do not delay, for God will be with you. There is no time to wait, for delay is dangerous. Then come and hide yourself in the ark of Holy Church, under the wing of your Father Urban VI, who holds the keys of Christ's Blood.' Why was he to 'hide' in the ark of Holy Church and place himself under the Pope's protection? Was Messer Carlo not himself coming to defend the Pope and the Church? But Catherine knew of his depraved life, and therefore she wished him to submit to a seven-fold process of purification before he became the Church's paladin. It would have been impossible to accuse the Schismatics of licentious life if men of impure morals were to be employed in Urban's cause. Therefore almost the whole of her letter to Carlo of Durazzo is a sermon with a purifying purpose—a very long sermon because Catherine finds it difficult to arrive at the main theme of her letter and invitation. Warnings follow warnings, with repeated reflections on the necessity of having a pure soul, almost as if the Saint could not find words powerful enough to convince her correspondent of sin, and cleanse his soul to make it more worthy of the task to which he had been called. In certain points the letter is a real, if veiled, act of accusation. The 'wicked pleasures', the 'slime of filth', the 'perverse law that binds our members', the 'degrading thought' are deliberately mentioned, so that Carlo may see his own darkened soul, as in a glass. She quotes historical and moral examples to jolt his conscience, speaks of the vices and virtues, and tries to make them real to him. Her reflections on Christian nobility are intended to make him give up his dissipated way of life and rebuild for himself another, all purity and love. After such a wealth of meditations and reflections she thinks she has prepared the ground sufficiently for the conversion of Carlo della Pace, and so she writes to him: 'God has chosen you to support Holy Church, so that you may be an instrument for rooting out heresy, confounding falsehood, and exalting the truth, dissolving the darkness and revealing the light of Pope Urban'.

One wonders whether Catherine really thought that her words would act like purifying fire on Carlo of Durazzo, destroying the seed of corruption in his soul. It is quite possible that she believed that, after reading her letter, he would eagerly follow her advice, and so make himself worthy of the undertaking which she confided to him, for she was an irrepressible optimist and always expected the best from everyone. Her desire to see him become 'a manly knight' was so great that little by little it transformed itself, first into hope, then into certainty. 'I know you will be manly', she tells him, 'you will try to accomplish God's will without any thought for yourself.' She seems already to enjoy a foretaste of his conversion, and is sure that her enthusiasm must make the soldier who reads her words desire to purify himself. But complete purification does not lie within her power; she can incite souls to turn to God, and lead them to the altar of repentance, no further; for complete purification they need the Pope's help and his responsibility. With her own fervent faith she can prepare Carlo for righteousness, but the conclusive act of cleansing belongs to the Pope alone. If Urban loosens him from his black sins Carlo may become a manly knight. Urban alone holds the keys of Christ's Blood; unless he, the guardian, unlock the treasure house, there will be no total cleansing. That is why Carlo must shelter beneath the wing of his Father to receive full absolution and salvation. Catherine entrusts the conscience of the Condottiero of the Hungarians to Urban, who is to become responsible for his purity of intentions. Can we really blame her for her misplaced trust in Messer della Pace, who came to fight Giovanna of Naples, not for the Church's benefit or glory but to satisfy his own ambition and lust for power? After defeating the militia of Otto of Brunswick he took Queen Giovanna prisoner and had her strangled. This crime casts an ugly shadow over him and, we must admit, also over those who invited him to fight the Queen. Yet Catherine had no part in these shameful events, for although she also appealed to him to take up arms against Giovanna she did so very unwillingly, and chiefly to satisfy the wish of the Pope, to whom after all, as we have seen, she entrusted the final purification of the Angevin's intentions. If Urban did not take any pains to cleanse Carlo's conscience, Catherine cannot be held responsible, and the reproach must be cast at the Pope himself, who welcomed

Carlo with praises and festive rejoicing, exculpating and blessing him and finally crowning him King of Apulia, that is, of Naples.

Her interview with the Pope, her attendance at various offices of the Curia to ask for news and instructions and to beg for Indulgences for her friends and disciples, took up a great deal of Catherine's time and wearied her. In her own house there was a continual coming and going of foreigners, sight-seers, admirers, disciples and friends, especially those who came from Siena, whom she helped and consoled in many ways. All could be guests at her table, and food had to be found for all by sending her fellow Tertiaries to beg alms in the streets of Rome, or by going herself to do so. Then there was the time she spent at Mass and after her Communion, the time passed in private prayer, meditation and ecstasy, in visiting churches and attending services, in speaking of sacred subjects with theologians and ascetics, and the many hours spent in charitable work of all kinds, dictating letters, receiving the visits of petitioners for spiritual or material gifts, and advising her disciples—all this is but a slight idea of her laborious and exhausting days. Because of her so many preoccupations she had to neglect a little her distant disciples. She would have liked to have all her Caterinati, particularly her Sienese followers, in Rome, united around herself, to cheer them with her smile, preach to them her fiery sermons, and inspire them with the longing for perfection, joy and heavenly bliss. Not being able to do this, she followed them in thought, offering them constantly to God, and procured for them Indulgences to help them to keep their souls on the spiritual heights. She had perforce to reduce her epistolary correspondence; perhaps she thought she had already infused into her disciples enough fire of charity to keep them united with her in thought and prayer, and bound to each other too, were it but to honour her and conform to the spirit that animated her. This was the hope of a Saint and a Saint's illusion. Her Sienese disciples felt forsaken as soon as they were left alone, and soon dispersed. Cristoforo Guidini was already writing to his friend Pagliaresi on January 14th, 1379: 'Tell our little Mother that we are all fallen apart; she must give us some rule which, out of respect for her, we can obey, and which may gather us together in memory of her, and she must write to us sometimes, remembering her little lost sheep—although, to be sure, we know that

she remembers us constantly in her prayers'. Her disciples were sure that Catherine prayed for them, but they were incapable of that effort of inner concentration which would have made them feel her alive and still near to them; they did not vibrate with the same feelings and thoughts that made her a friend of God; they were still children in the ways of the spirit. The notary Guidini confessed with sorrow that the Caterinati were all dispersed less than two months after Catherine's departure, and he had reason to be sorrowful, for it was a proof that they had never learnt through self-knowledge, but always needed to be advised, ruled and inspired by her. Begging their Mother to call them together once more and remember her little lost sheep, they showed that in spite of their love for Catherine and their longing to have her always near them, they had never assimilated her spirit.

When Neri di Landoccio gave his friend Guidini's message to their Mother Catherine must have felt some disappointment at receiving this proof of her failure to infuse into her disciples the love that would have held them together. After all her teaching and all the streams of spiritual light she had poured over them, she still found them fleshly-minded, as St Paul would have said. It was not a consoling result, but it is the destiny of nearly all men to remain such disciples all their lives. Very few can create their own intimate life of the soul, in which they may reach the freedom that permits them to share in the universal communion. Most men never find themselves, and even when taught to do so they never succeed in freeing themselves of the bonds of the senses, but demand rules, methods, guides—are constantly in need of masters and pastors. When these fail them they lose heart, and despair. Catherine understood her children's spiritual weakness, and perhaps it was after receiving Guidini's sad and affectionate appeal that she wrote to Maconi: 'Comfort all those children of mine, and tell them, one and all, that they must forgive me if I do not write, because it is very difficult for me just now'. She always hoped for support from her disciples, and during 1379, when she needed their help in enterprises very near to her, she saw how half-heartedly or unwillingly they answered her call. On December 9th, 1379, she gave Maconi an important charge, and revealed how well she knew her disciples' weakness when she told him: 'Be fervent in this work, and not lukewarm, and spur on your

elder brothers of the Company to do all they can in this matter I am writing to you about. If you will only be what you ought to be, you will set fire to all Italy, not only just where you are.' But she alone possessed this spiritual fire, and although she knew how to kindle it in the consciences of her disciples they did not learn how to fan it to a flame in their hearts, so as to diffuse it in Siena and the rest of Italy.

Although it was very difficult for Catherine, during her stay in Rome, to write letters to her disciples, we have nevertheless a considerable number dictated during 1379. Some are short notes, reminders, messages, announcements, reproofs or warnings; others are detailed spiritual instructions, analyses of Christian living, reflections on the love of God, or on intellectual light, and some letters are like tracts on asceticism or mysticism, vivified by personal experience. If we except half-a-dozen of these letters, sent to friends in Milan, Genoa, Padua, Venice, Orvieto and Toscanella, the others are addressed, for the most part, to the Caterinati in Siena, Florence and Naples. Her correspondents were not numerous. In Siena was Maconi, in Florence Francesco di Pipino and his wife; in Naples she wrote to several people because she wanted all her faithful to try to influence the conscience of the Queen and people of Naples in Urban's favour.

Catherine's religious personality is revealed in these letters of 1379 as substantially the same as that revealed in her 'Dialogue', though it does not stand out in such bold relief. The letters show no loftier flights and no more intimate knowledge of the human heart. They are more highly coloured and more personal, but less intense and thoughtful than the 'Dialogue'. In the latter we find abstractions which some critics, we think mistakenly, consider weaken the force of her spiritual inspiration, whereas in her letters it is feeling that predominates, and overpowers us. If one were to compare the 'Dialogue' and the spiritual letters to two different kinds of landscape, one could say that her letters have the hot vibrant colours of a southern scene, which fills us with instant joy. Everything stands out clearly: the varied colours of earth, trees, crops, herbs, flowers, people and mountains are all as distinct as if they issued fresh from the artist's hand; there is a vigorous vitality in the shades, the curving lines, the perspective. Life could not be presented with greater spontaneity and exuber-

ance; our eyes are dazzled by such a radiant, spacious and joyous vision: we are enraptured.

The 'Dialogue', instead, is rather like those grey, subdued landscapes which, because they are the fruit of a profound and meditative creative art, seem remote from actual life. At first sight they baffle our searching glance; we must observe them very attentively to discern their vital warmth. These landscapes with their hues of greenish grey, pearly violet, silvery rose and faded yellow may be persuaded to yield up to us a wide range of colours and to reveal a profound creative sense; nevertheless, most onlookers will prefer scenes that present more vivid colours and contours with less mystery. Hence most readers prefer Catherine's devout letters to her 'Dialogue', because the latter requires a great effort to be understood.

Certainly, the letters are full of human appeal, for Catherine was writing in an attempt to form real Christians; she urges men to love, shows the way to purity of conscience, to the divine light in which the soul must bathe itself, to happiness. She neglects no detail of healthy living, and it would be easy to extract from the letters a manual of wisdom more vital than the philosophy of the Stoics, more lofty than that of the Platonists, for, although less closely and profoundly reasoned than these, it is more loving and all-embracing. In these letters of 1379 the usual themes recur: self-knowledge and the knowledge of God; the three enemies of man that must be overcome: the world, the flesh and the devil; men must shun vice and pursue virtue; they must be just and enforce justice in others; they must bathe in the Blood of Christ; practise charity; kindle the fire of divine love; be humble, faithful and pure; seek perfection; read in Christ as in a book wherein all wisdom is to be found; despise wealth; suffer with others; yearn with love for others; soar in prayer to God . . . all subjects that the Saint divides and sub-divides, finding ever new elements for continuous meditation.

She wanted to see her disciples grow more like herself and so she poured out for them all the best her heart and mind could offer. Wherever she passed she touched all hearts with her angelic smile, and had more power than Dante's Beatrice to make men nobler and gentler. Sometimes her words re-echoed the emotion she felt in her familiar conversations with God, but her disciples

did not understand her and wondered at the expression of her face and voice, which they could not interpret in the language of the spirit. When she was far away her children eagerly awaited her letters that soothed their hearts and filled them with heavenly joy. She did not succeed in giving them her wisdom in the ways of God, but she inspired them with such faith and veneration that as soon as she left them they felt lost and even longed for death.

She wrote to some new disciples and friends during the second half of 1379. They were priests or gentlewomen, or devout simple Neapolitans. There was the Florentine Bartolomeo Usimbardi with his wife Orsa, the Carthusian Pietro of Milan, the Venetian bishop Correr, and, most interesting of all, the Sienese Andrea Vanni. He was already a painter and politician before he came under Catherine's influence. He belonged to the Government of the Reformers, and held various diplomatic posts under the Commune of Siena. In 1373, when Gonfaloniere of Justice, he was sent as Ambassador to Gregory XI in Avignon; in 1376 he was appointed Rector of the Cathedral Office of Works; in September and October 1379 he was an elected Captain of the People. Perhaps through some of his friends among the Caterinati such as Cristoforo Guidini, he was brought into contact with the Saint; we do not know when or why. We know that he became her friend. Catherine wrote him three letters, presumably during these two months of office, but these letters tell us nothing of the time or degree of their friendship. As they have come down to us they contain only exhortations and advice. We gather only that Catherine does not treat Vanni with the familiarity she generally showed to her favourite disciples. She warns and counsels him affectionately, but her tone is somewhat reserved. She wants him to be just and devout; she begs him to be humble, to observe the commandments of God, but she does not seek to impose her will on him. 'And I beg you, dearest son, in your present situation to be reasonable and just to the humble as well as to the great, to the poor as to the rich; and give to each one equally his due, according to holy justice, tempered with mercy.' And she develops this theme of justice more amply: 'to be just with others we must first be just with ourselves; the many evil happenings in Siena, in Italy, in the world are all caused by the lack of justice; justice makes us severe towards those who sin against it, justice is not out

for its own ends, or for the advantage of those near and dear, but for the universal good of all'.

Justice must be accompanied by humility, which is like low-lying ground in which 'the tree of life' is planted. Stormy winds blow from the heights, devastating all, but on reaching the valley they become feeble and are soon spent. Pride, impure thoughts, offences, mockery and insults are the stormy winds that are powerless against a humble soul, for humility is rooted in love and bears fruits of patience and many other virtues. He who possesses humility is sheltered from all evil. Andrea Vanni must possess justice, humility and patience and he will be a strong man. Did this mean that Catherine considered him weak and inconstant? Perhaps that is why she wrote: 'wishing to see you constant and persevering in virtues, not like a leaf that turns in the wind'. This phrase alone is not enough to sketch for us the character of Andrea Vanni, but it may be accepted as suggesting the truth.

We can form no picture of Andrea from Catherine's three letters to him, but he showed his utter devotion to her in painting her portrait. Art historians, critics and scholars agree in recognising its authenticity; Fawtier alone denies it. His arguments are subtle and thoughtful, but neither exhaustive nor convincing. For example, he ignores the testimony of the 'Necrologi di San Domenico di Siena', in which it is asserted that Gabriele di Davino Piccolomini was buried on November 12th, 1399, in the Church (of San Domenico) in the corner near the Chapel of the Tertiaries, 'underneath the portrait of the blessed Catherine of Siena'. This picture is in fact the portrait of the Saint which in 1667 was cut out, by order of the Marquis Ferdinando di Vandeneinden, and re-set in the Cappella delle Volte, where everyone, from that day to this, has been able to admire it.

Fawtier is surely mistaken when, to prove that the portrait is not Vanni's work, he compares it with other works by the same painter, and particularly with the polyptich in the Church of Santo Stefano alla Lizza. He will not admit that they are by the same artist because they do not present identical characteristics; but this is absurd because the two works are born of totally different inspirations. The polyptich was made to order, and although it is grandiose and gives proof of remarkable intellectual effort, it shows none of that emotion with which the memory of a

dearly loved person may enrich a work of art. The portrait of Catherine is a spontaneous tribute of affection, and therefore has a spirituality of its own, while the polyptich remains a picture of more purely external appeal. The difference in origin of these two pictures explains the coldness and hardness we notice in the Madonna and Child Jesus of the polyptich, and the softness, sensitiveness and vibrant warmth we find in the Saint's portrait. The picture represents an attentive application of some artistic canons of Sienese painting of the fourteenth century; the portrait represents a unique effort on the part of the painter, who wants to escape from conventional designs to grasp and portray the mystical atmosphere which surrounded Catherine, and which he had felt and admired. Therefore it is natural that her portrait should be lively and show the touch of a loving hand. Moreover, Fawtier's artistic canons, by means of which he would like to demolish all proof of the authenticity of Catherine's portrait, do not really stand up to criticism. He asserts that the polyptich is Vanni's, and that it has certain qualities in common with the portrait; then he proceeds to point out the differences. In the Madonna of the polyptich 'the face is rounder, the eyes more open, the lips less full and, finally, the hands quite different in that the fingers, instead of tapering, are square at the ends, and with an exaggerated space between each one'. According to Fawtier, then, Andrea Vanni should have painted Catherine as identical with the Madonna of the polyptich, even if she was in actual fact different, or else he should have reproduced Catherine's portrait as his Madonna in order to be recognised as the artist responsible for both. He should have foregone that beauty of half-shut eyes and drooping glance which he must so often have admired, and we should not have seen the pupil, half-disclosed, that gazes downwards and yet seems to see worlds far removed, and the gleaming white of the cornea that draws our attention, outshining the other whites of her lilies and wimple. All this he should have renounced, lest anyone should cast a doubt on his authorship. As for her hands, if Catherine's were delicate and tapering—and surely Andrea must often have observed and admired them—why ought he to have drawn them as short and square? When he painted Catherine's portrait he clearly remembered her appearance and was trying to be faithful to this lively memory, whereas when he

painted his Madonna he was following a convention and so observed more closely the instructions of his school.

Like all her disciples, Andrea Vanni had come under Catherine's fascinating spell, but instead of showing his devotion in letters full of fervent and melancholy love, as the others did, he painted her, after her death, in a fresco which has great pictorial beauty, but which is, above all, the loving record of his love and an attempt to represent in the Saint's figure the elevation of the human spirit to the point of union with God.

In his portrait Catherine, in queenly humility, seems to partake of both earth and heaven, and all around her is an atmosphere of peace. She is not in an ecstasy; she regards the devout woman disciple, who kneels at her feet, with tenderness and calm; her half-shut eyes hold the beauty of heaven. Her nose is strongly formed and contrasts with the sad but loving mouth. The lines of her profile, when carefully observed, are soft and yielding; the shadows seem lit from within. The perfect oval of her face is gentle and sweet and of indescribable beauty. Her expression changes; sometimes she has a look of mortal weariness, which gives her the appearance of a mature woman, sometimes her face is suffused with energy that rises from the depths of her soul and renews her youth. One might read in her face the experience of centuries and think she knew the dread secrets of the dark abyss and the harmony of the heavenly spheres. Desires, too, are there, but clear and bright like the sun's rays.

The folds of her wimple veil a brow accustomed to profound reasonings that can keep pace with the powerful impulses of her heart. It is a vast brow, for vast were the thoughts that dwelt there, which knew of one barrier only, God Himself. Everything else must be clearly illumined and understood, because for her the intellect was light.

Here Catherine is as if seen in a vision, yet none the less a woman of flesh and blood. Flesh and blood like ourselves, because like us she suffers and loves. Like us she knows enthusiasm and dejection, but unlike us she knows how to deny herself for the sake of men, and she loves God above all else. The consolations she gives are gentle, subtle and suggestive; her will is unbreakable. She smiles at us rather mournfully, and we are compelled to rise and follow her.

The devoted woman who kneels before her adds to the impression of her greatness. As she kisses the finger-tips of the Saint's right hand she seems to be imploring for herself the miraculous power that flows from that slender hand. Perhaps Vanni also had felt this devotion and had felt the distance that separates a poor mortal from a Saint. In the suppliant's eyes there is a longing for a better world, the same longing the painter himself had felt when he had begun to love and follow Catherine.

The artist and mystic had met and understood each other. The mystic revealed to the artist some of the secrets of God, and the artist, with his unerring intuition, saw deeply into the Saint's heart, and was inspired to portray for future ages and future men the love and suffering he found there.