

less, for he felt within himself the power of God and he defied prince and pope alike and preached the wrath of God and the repentance of man.

It was then that he delivered those wonderful sermons, not abounding in glittering generalities, but describing in the plainest language every vice and laying bare every abuse so that a mirror was held up to the souls of his hearers, in which they saw their most secret faults ringed as with fire. Filled with the ecstasy of inspiration he no longer resisted the impulse of his soul but became the mouth piece of God, the interpreter of themselves to the people. He foretold the bloodshed and sack of cities, the passage of armies and the desolation that was to come upon Italy, and now as we read those sermons they seem like pages of history in which are portrayed the "sack of Prato, the storming of Brescia, the battle of Ronca, and the cavern massacre of Vicenza."

It was in 1492 that, in a pious frenzy, he saw that memorable vision and cried: "O Italy! O Rome! I give you over to the hands of a people who will wipe you out from among the nations! I see them descending like lions. Pestilence comes marching hand in hand with war. The deaths will be so many that the buriers shall go about the city crying: 'Who hath dead?' 'Who hath dead?' and the one shall bring his father and another his son. O Rome! I cry again to you to repent. Repent, Venice! Milan, repent!" 'Twas then that he prophesized the death of Lorenzo, of the King of Naples, of the Pope and the scourge of Italy. Lorenzo died in a few months and now the priest, turned prophet, turns statesman and by his indomitable perseverance, his remarkable genius and his God-given eloquence, he makes of the beautiful, mundane city of Florence a theocratic republic—God was their supreme ruler and Savonarola interpreter to them.

Now at the pinnacle of his success, in the plentitude of his powers, he poured forth day by day words so impassioned that the people were wrought to a pitch of pious frenzy never before, never since, equalled. Pleasure loving Florence was completely transformed and the streets that once echoed with the dissolute songs of Lorenzo now sounded with hymns of praise; Puritanic plainness prevailed; husbands and wives parted to enter the convent and "marriage became an awful rite seldom permitted."

But alas! the fervor of the people was too hot to last. They