

## PANFORTE DI SIENA.

FIRST PAPER.

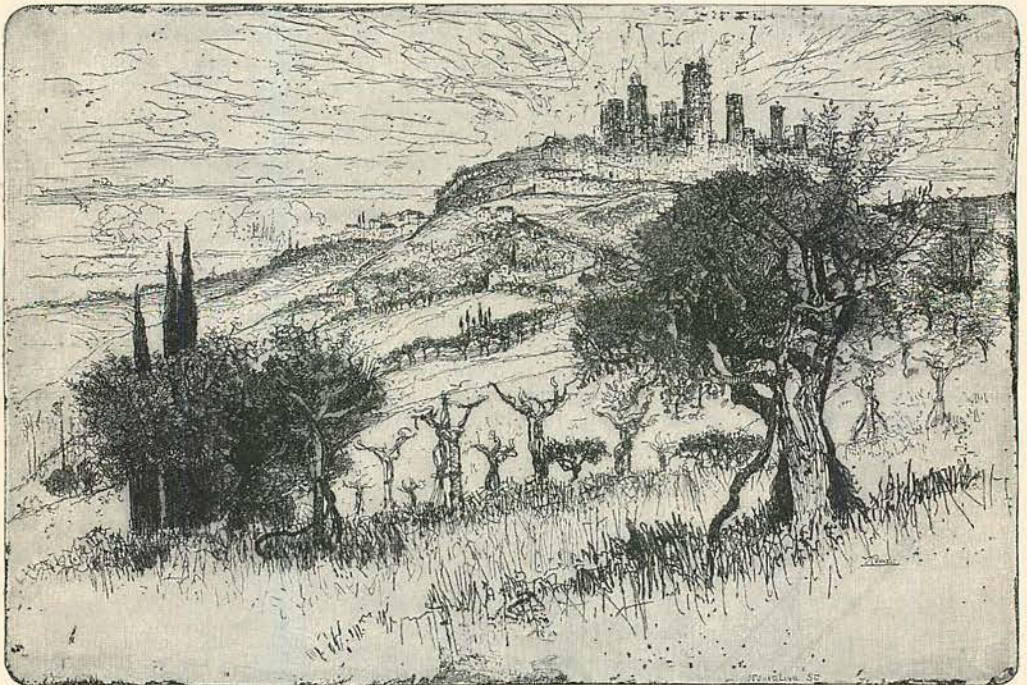
I.



MONTH out of our winter at Florence we gave to Siena, whither we went early in February. At that time there were no more signs of spring in the landscape than there were in December, except for here and there an almond-tree, which in the pale pink of its thronging blossoms showed delicately as a lady's complexion in the unfriendly air. The fields were in their green arrest, but the trees were bare, and the yellow river that wandered along beside the railroad looked sullen and cold under the dun sky.

After we left the Florentine plain, we ran between lines of reddish hills, sometimes

thickly wooded, sometimes showing on their crests only the stems and tops of scattering pines and poplars, such as the Tuscan painters were fond of putting into their Judean backgrounds. There were few tokens of life in the picture; we saw some old women tending sheep and spinning with their distaffs in the pastures; and in the distance there were villages cropping out of the hill-tops and straggling a little way down the slopes. At times we whirled by the ruins of a castle, and nearer Siena we caught sight of two or three walled towers which had come down from the middle ages apparently with every turret in repair. Our course was south-westward, but we were continually mounting into the cold, thin air of the volcanic hill country, at the summit of which the old Ghibelline city still sits capital, proud of her past, beautiful and noble even among Italian towns, and wearing in her mural crown the cathedral second in splendor and surprise only to the jewel-church in the belt of Venice.



A MOUNTAIN TOWN.

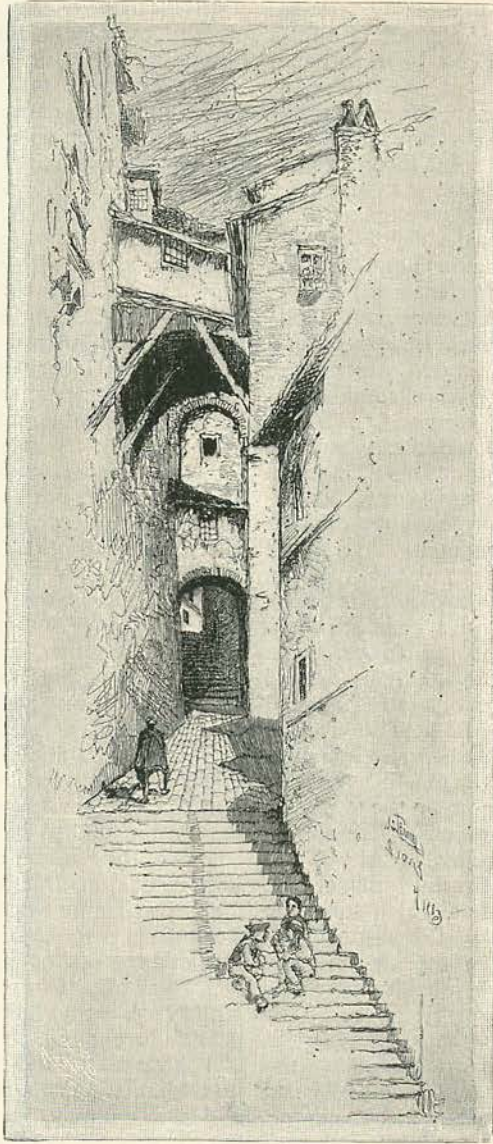
It is not my habit to write such fine rhetoric as this, the reader will bear me witness; and I suspect that it is a prophetic tint from an historical sketch of Siena, to which, after ascertaining the monotony of the landscape, I could dedicate the leisure of our journey with a good conscience. It forms part of "La Nuova Guida di Siena," and it grieves me that the title-page of my copy should have been lost, so that I cannot give the name of an author whose eloquence I delight in. He says: "Siena is lifted upon hills that rise alluring and delicious in the center of Tuscany. . . . Its climate is soft, temperate, and wholesome. The summer sojourn is very grateful there on account of the elevated position and the sea breezes that, with an agreeable constancy, prevail in that season. . . . The panorama of the city is something enchanting. . . . Every step reveals startling changes of perspective, now lovely, now stern, but always stamped with a physiognomy of their own, a characteristic originality. From all points is seen the slim, proud tower of the Mangia, that lifts among the clouds its battle-mented crest, its arrowy and exquisite shaft. Viewed from the top of this tower, Siena presents the figure of a star — a figure formed by the diverse rays or lines of its streets traced upon the shoulder of the hills. The loveliest blue of the most lovely Italian sky irradiates our city with the purest light, in which horizons magnificent and vast open upon the eye. . . . The hills and the plain are everywhere clothed with rich olive groves, festive orchards, luxuriant vineyards, and delightful bosks of oak, of chestnut, and of walnut, which form the umbrageous breathing-places of the enchanting landscape, and render the air pure and oxygenated." The native inhabitants of this paradise are entirely worthy of it. "No people in Italy, except, perhaps, the Neapolitans, has the wide-awake-mindedness, the liveliness of character, the quickness of spirit, the keen-witted joyousness of the Sieneſe. . . . The women dress modestly, but with taste. They are gracious, amiable, inclined to amusement, and affectionate in their families. In general their honesty gives no ground for jealousy to their husbands; they are extremely refined in manner, and renowned for their grace and beauty. The comeliness of their figures, the regularity of their lineaments, as well as their vivid coloring, which reveals in them an enviable freshness of fiber and good blood purified by the mountain air, justly awaken the admiration of strangers. . . . In the women and the men alike exist the sweetness of pronunciation, the elegance of phrase, and the soft clearness of the true Tuscan accent. . . . Hospitality and the cordial

reception of strangers are the hereditary, the proverbial virtues of the Sieneſe. . . . The pride of the Sieneſe character is equal to its hospitality; and this does not spring from roughness of manners and customs, but is a noble pride, magnanimous, worthy of an enlightened people with a self-derived dignity, and intensely attached to its own liberty and independence. The Sieneſe, whom one historian has called the French of Italy, are ardent spirits, enthusiastic, resolute, energetic, courageous, and prompt beyond any other people to brandish their arms in defense of their country. They have a martial nature, a fervid fancy, a lively imagination; they are born artists; laborious, affable, affectionate, expansive; they are frank and loyal friends, but impressionable, impetuous, fiery to exaltation. Quick to anger, they are ready to forgive, which shows their excellence of heart. They are polite, but unaffected. Another trait of their gay and sympathetic character is their love of song, of the dance, and of all gymnastic exercises. . . . Dante called the Sieneſe *gente vana* (a vain people). But we must reflect that the *altissimo poeta* was a Florentine, and though a sublime genius, he was not able to emancipate himself from that party hate and municipal rivalry, the great curse of his time."

But for that final touch about Dante, I might have thought I was reading a description of the Americans, and more especially the Bostonians, so exactly did my author's eulogy of the Sieneſe embody the facts of our own character. But that touch disillusioned me: even Dante would not have called the Bostonians *gente vana*, unless he had proposed to spend the rest of his life in London. As it was, I was impatient to breathe that wondrous air, to bask in that light, to behold that incomparable loveliness, to experience that proverbial hospitality and that frank and loyal friendship, to mingle in the song and dance and the gymnastic exercises; and nothing but the sober-minded deliberation of the omnibus-train, which was four hours in going to Siena, prevented me from throwing myself into the welcoming embrace of the cordial city at once.

## II.

I HAD time not only to reflect that perhaps Siena distinguished between strangers arriving at her gates, and did not bestow an indiscriminate hospitality, but to wander back with the "New Guide" quite to the dawn of her history, when Senio, the son of Remus, flying from the wrath of his uncle Romulus, stopped where Siena now stands and built himself a



A STREET IN SIENA.

castle. Whether the city got her name from Senio or not, it is certain that she adopted the family arms; and to this day the she-wolf suckling the twins is as much blazoned about Siena as about Rome, if not more. She was called *Urbs Lupata* even by the Romans, from the wolf-bearing seal of her chief magistrate; and a noble Roman family sent one of its sons as early as 303 to perish at Siena for the conversion of the city to Christianity. When the empire fell, Siena suffered less than the other Tuscan cities from the barbarian incursions; but she came under the rule of the

Longobard kings, and then was one of the "free cities" of Charlemagne, from whose counts and barons, enriched by his gifts of Siennese lands and castles, the Siennese nobility trace their descent. These foreign robbers, whose nests the Florentines went out of their gates to destroy, in their neighborhood, voluntarily left their castles in the Siennese territory, and came into the city, which they united with the bishops in embellishing with beautiful palaces and ruling with an iron hand, till the commons rose and made good their claim to a share in their own government. Immunities and privileges were

granted by Cæsar and Peter, and at the close of the twelfth century a republican government, with an elective magistracy, was fully developed, and the democratized city entered upon a career of great material prosperity. "But in the midst of this potent activity of political and commercial life, Siena more than any other Italian city was afflicted with municipal rivalries, intestine discords. To-day the nobles triumphed and hurled the commons from power; to-morrow the people took a bloody revenge and banished every patrician from the city. Every change of administration was accompanied by ostracism, by violence, by public tumults, by continual upheavals;" and these feuds of families, of parties, and of classes were fostered and perpetuated by the warring ambitions of the popes and emperors. From the first, Siena was Ghibelline and for the emperors, and it is odd that one of her proudest victories should have been won against Henry the son of Barbarossa. When that emperor threatened the free cities with ruin, Siena was the only one in Tuscany that shut her gates against him; and when Henry laid siege to her, her people sallied out of Fontebranda and San Marco, and fell upon his Germans and put them to flight.

The Florentines, as we have seen, were of the pope's politics; or, rather, they were for their own freedom, which they thought his politics favored, and the Siense were for theirs, which they believed the imperial success would establish. They never could meet upon the common ground of their common love of liberty, but kept battling on through four centuries of miserable wars till both were enslaved. Siena had her shameful triumph when she helped in the great siege that restored the Medici to Florence in 1530, and Florence had her cruel revenge when her tyrant Cosimo I. entered Siena at the head of the imperial forces fifteen years later. The Florentines met their first great defeat at the hands of the Siense and of their own Ghibelline exiles at Montaperto (twelve miles from Siena) in 1260, when the slaughter was so great, as Dante says, "che fece l'Arbia colorata in rosso"; and in 1269 the Siense were routed by their own Guelph exiles and the Florentines at Colle di Val d'Elsa.

A story is told of an official of Siena to whom the Florentines sent in 1860 to invite his fellow-citizens to join them in celebrating the union of Tuscany with the kingdom of Italy. He said, Yes, they would be glad to send a deputation of Siense to Florence, but would the Florentines really like to have them come? "Surely! Why not?" "Oh, that affair of Montaperto, you know,"—

as if it were of the year before, and must still, after six hundred years, have been ranking in the Florentine mind. But perhaps in that time it had become confused there with other injuries, or perhaps the Florentines of 1860 felt that they had sufficiently avenged themselves by their victory of 1269. This resulted in the triumph of the Guelphs in Siena, and finally in the substitution of the magistracy of the Nine for that of the Thirty. These Nine, or the Noveschi, ruled the city for two hundred and fifty years with such unscrupulous tyranny and infamous corruption that they "succeeded in destroying every generous sentiment, in sapping the noble pride of character in the Siense population, and if not in extinguishing, at least in cooling, their ardent love of liberty," and preparing them for the rule of the ever-dreaded one-man power, which appeared in the person of Pandolfo Petrucci in 1487. He misruled Siena for twenty-five years, playing there, with less astuteness and greater ferocity, the part which Lorenzo de' Medici had played a century earlier in earlier rotten Florence. Petrucci, too, like Lorenzo, was called the Magnificent, and he, too, passed his life in sensual debauchery, in political intrigues ending in bloody revenges and reprisals, and in the protection of the arts, letters, and religion. Of course he beautified the city, and built palaces, churches, and convents with the money he stole from the people whom he gave peace to prosper in. He, too, died tranquilly of his sins and excesses, his soul reeking with treasons and murders like the fascinating Lorenzo's; and his sons tried to succeed him like Lorenzo's, but were deposed like Pietro de' Medici and banished. One of his pleasing family was that Achilles Petrucci who, in the massacre of St. Bartholemew at Paris, cut the throat of the great Protestant admiral, Coligny.

After them, the Siense enjoyed a stormy and intermittent liberty within and varying fortunes of war without, till the Emperor Charles V., having subdued Florence, sent a Spanish garrison to Siena with orders to build him a fort in that city. The Spaniards were under the command of Don Hurtado de Mendoza, who was not only, as my "New Guide" describes him, "ex-monk, astute, subtle, fascinating in address, profound dissimulator," but also the author of the "History of the War of Granada," and of one of the most delightful books in the world, namely, "The Life of Lazarillo de Tormes," Spanish rogue and beggar, for whose sake I freely forgive him on my part all his sins against the Siense; especially as they presently drove him and his Spaniards out of the city and demolished his fort.

The Siense had regained their freedom, but they could hope to keep it only by the help of the French and their allies the Florentine exiles, who were plotting under the Strozzi against the Medici. The French friendship came to little or nothing but promises, the exiles were few and feeble, and in 1554 the troops of the Emperor and of Duke Cosimo — him of the terrible face and the blood-stained soul, murderer of his son, and father of a family of adulteresses and assassins — came and laid siege to the doomed city. The siege lasted eighteen months, and until the Siense were wasted by famine and pestilence, and the women fought beside the men for the city which was their country and the last hope of liberty in Italy. When the famine began they drove out the *useless mouths* (*bocche inutili*), the old men and women and the orphan children, hoping that the enemy would have pity on these hapless creatures; the Spaniards massacred most of them before their eyes. Fifteen hundred peasants, who tried to bring food into the city, were hung before the walls on the trees, which a Spanish writer says "seemed to bear dead men." The country round about was laid waste; a hundred thousand of its inhabitants perished, and the fields they had tilled lapsed into pestilential marshes breathing fever and death. The inhabitants of the city were reduced from forty to six thousand; seven hundred families preferred exile to slavery.

Charles V. gave Siena as a fief to his son Philip II., who ceded it to Cosimo I., and he built there the fort which the Spaniards had attempted. It remained under the good Lorraine dukes till Napoleon made it capital of his Department of the Ombrone, and it returned to them at his fall. In 1860 it was the first Tuscan city to vote for the union of Italy under Victor Emmanuel — the only honest king known to history, says my "New Guide."

### III.

It is a "New Guide" full of the new wine of our epoch, and it brags not only of the warriors, the saints, the popes, the artists, the authors, who have illustrated the Siense name, but of the two great thinkers in religion and politics who have given her truer glory. The bold pontiff Alexander III., who put his foot on the neck of the Emperor at Venice, was a Siense; the meek, courageous St. Catherine, daughter of a dyer, and the envoy of popes and princes, was a Siense; Sallustio Bandini, the inventor of the principle of Free Trade in commerce, was a Siense; and Socinus, the inventor of Free Thought in religion, was a

Siense. There is a statue to Bandini in one of the chief places of Siena, but when my "New Guide" was written there was as yet no memorial of Socinus. "The fame of this glorious apostle," he cries bitterly, "who has been called the father of modern rationalism, is cherished in England, in France, in Italy, in Switzerland, in Holland, in Poland, in America. Only Siena, who should remember with noble pride her most illustrious son, has no street named for him, no bust, no stone. Rightly do the strangers who visit our city marvel at neglect which denies him even a commemorative tablet in the house where he was born — the Casa Sozzini, now Palazzo Malavolta, 21 Via Ricasoli." The justness of this censure is not impugned by the fact that the tablet has since been placed there; perhaps it was the scorn of my "New Guide" which lashed the Siense to the act of tardy recognition. This has now found stately utterance in the monumental Italian which is the admiration and despair of other languages:

"In the first Half of the 17th Century  
Were born in this House  
Lelio and Fausto Sozzini,  
Scholars, Philosophers, Philanthropists.  
Strenuous Champions of the Liberty of Thought,  
Defenders of Human Reason against the Supernatural,  
They founded the celebrated Socinian School,  
Forecasting by three Centuries  
The doctrine of Modern Rationalism.  
The Siense Liberals, Admiring, Reverent,  
Placed this Memorial.  
1877."

I wandered into the court of the old palace, now involuntarily pea-green with mold and damp, and looked out from the bow-shaped terrace bulging over the garden behind, and across the olive orchards — But I forgot that I was not yet in Siena.

### IV.

BEFORE our arrival I had time to read all the "New Guide" had to say about the present condition of this city. What it was socially, morally, and personally I knew already, and what it was industrially and commercially I learned with regret. The prosperity of Siena had reached its height in the thirteenth century, just before the great pest appeared. Her people then numbered a hundred thousand, from which they were reduced by the plague to twenty thousand. Whole districts were depopulated within the walls; the houses fell down, the streets vanished, and the plow passed over the ruins; wide gardens, olive orchards, and vineyards still flourish where traffic was busy and life was abundant. The

"New Guide" does not say so, but it is true that Siena never fully recovered from this terrible stroke. At the time of the great siege, two hundred years after the time of the great pest, she counted only forty thousand souls within her gates, and her silk and woolen industries, which still exist, were vastly shrunken from their old proportions. The most evident industry in Siena now is that of the tanners, which hangs its banners of leather from all the roofs in the famous region of Pontebranda, and envelops the birthplace of St. Catherine in an odor of tan-bark. There is also a prosperous fabric of iron furniture, principally bedsteads, which is noted throughout Italy; this, with some cotton-factories and carpet-ooms on a small scale, and some agricultural implement works, is nearly all that the "New Guide" can boast, till he comes to speak of the ancient marchpane of Siena, now called Panforte, whose honored name I have ventured to bestow upon these haphazard sketches of its native city, rather because of their chance and random associations of material and decorative character than because of any rivalry in quality to which they can pretend. I often saw the panforte in shop-windows at Florence, and had the best intention in the world to test its excellence, but to this day I know only of its merits from my "New Guide." "This specialty, wholly Siennese, enjoys, in the article of sweetmeats, the primacy in Italy and beyond, and forms one of the principal branches of our industry. The panforte of Siena fears no competition or comparison, either for the exquisiteness of its flavor or for the beauty of its artistic confection: its brown paste, gemmed with broken almonds, is covered in the *panfortes de luxe* with a frosting of sugar, adorned with broideries, with laces, with flowers, with leaves, with elegant figures in lively colors, and with artistic designs, representing usually some monument of the city."

## v.

IT WAS about dark when we reached Siena, looking down over her wall upon the station in the valley; but there was still light enough to give us proof, in the splendid quarrel of two railway porters over our baggage, of that quickness to anger and readiness to forgive which demonstrates the excellence of heart in the Siennese. These admirable types of the local character jumped furiously up and down in front of each other, and then, without striking a blow, instantly exchanged forgiveness and joined in a fraternal conspiracy to get too much money out of me for handling my trunks. I willingly became a party to their plot

myself in gratitude for the impassioned spectacle they had afforded me; and I drove up through the steeply winding streets of the town with a sense of nearness to the middle ages not excelled even in my first visit to Quebec. Of Quebec I still think when I think of Siena; and there are many superficial points of likeness in the two cities. Each, as Dante said of one, "*torregia e siede*" ("sits and towers" is no bad phrase) on a mighty front of rock, round whose precipitous slopes she belts her girdling wall. The streets within wander hither and thither at will; in both they are narrow and hemmed in with the gray façades of the stone houses; without spreads a mighty valley—watered at Quebec with the confluent St. Lawrence and St. Charles, and walled at the horizon with primely wooded hills; dry at Siena with almost volcanic drought, and shut in at the same far range by arid and sterile tops bare as the skies above them, yet having still the same grandeur and nobility of form. After that there is all the difference you will—the difference of the North and South, the difference of the Old World and the New.

I have always been a friend of the picturesque of the Cathedral Place at Quebec, and faithful to it in much scribbling hitherto, but nothing—not even the love of pushing a parallel—shall make me pretend that it is in any manner or degree comparable to the old and deeply memoried Piazza Vittorio Emanuele at Siena. This was anciently Piazza del Campo, but now they call it Piazza Vittorio Emanuele, because, since the Unification, they want some piazza of that dear name in every Italian city, as I have already noted; and I walked to it through the Via Cavour which they must also have, and how it was I failed to traverse a Via Garibaldi I do not understand. It was in the clearness that follows the twilight when, after the sudden descent of a vaulted passage, I stood in the piazza and saw the Tower of the Mangia leap like a rocket into the starlit air. After all, that does not say it: you must suppose a perfect silence, through which this exquisite shaft forever soars. When once you have seen the Mangia, all other towers, obelisks, and columns are tame and vulgar and earth-rooted; that seems to quit the ground, to be not a monument but a flight. The crescent of the young moon, at half its height, looked sparsely over the battlements of the Palazzo Communale, from which the tower sprang, upon the fronts of the beautiful old palaces whose semicircle incloses the grand space before it, and touched with its silver the waters of the loveliest fountain in the world, whose statues and bas-reliefs darkled above and

around a silent pool. There were shops in the basements of some of the palaces, and there were lamps around the piazza, but there seemed no one in it but ourselves, and no figure broke the gentle slope in which the ground shelves from three sides towards the Palazzo Comunale, where I left the old republic in full possession when I went home through the thronged and cheerful streets to bed.

I observed in the morning that the present Italian Government had taken occasion over night to displace the ancient Siennese signiory, and had posted a sentry at the palace door. There had also sprung up a picturesque cluster of wooden-roofed market-booths where peasant women sat before heaps of fruit and vegetables, and there was a not very impressive show of butter, eggs, and poultry. Now I saw that the brick-paved slope of the piazza was moss-grown in disuse, and that the noble Gothic and Renaissance palaces seemed half of them uninhabited. But there was nothing dilapidated, nothing ruinous in the place; it had simply a forsaken look, which the feeble stir of buying and selling at the market-booths scarcely affected. The old Palace of the Commonwealth stood serene in the morning light, and its Gothic windows gazed tranquilly upon the shallow cup before it, as empty now of the furious passions, the mediæval hates and rivalries and ambitions, as of the other volcanic fires which are said once to have burned there. These, indeed, still smolder beneath Siena, and every August a tremor of earthquake runs through her aged frame; but the heart of her fierce, free youth is at peace forevermore.

## VI.

WE waited at the hôtel forty-eight hours for the proverbially cordial reception of strangers which the "New Guide" had boasted in his Siennese. Then, as no deputation of citizens came to offer us the hospitality of the city, we set about finding a lodging for ourselves. At this distance of time I am a little at a loss to know how our search, before it ended, had involved the complicity of a *valet de place*; a short, fat, amiable man of no definite occupation; a barber; a dealer in bricabrac; a hunchbackling; a mysterious *facchino*; and a were-wolf. I only know that all these were actually the agents of our domiciliation, and that without their intervention I do not see how we could ever have been settled in Siena. The valet had come to show us the city, and no caricature of him could give a sufficient impression of his forlorn and anxious little face, his livid silk hat, his threadbare coat,

his meager body, and his evanescent legs. He was a terribly pathetic figure, and I count it no merit to have employed him at once. The first day I gave him three francs to keep away, and went myself in search of a carriage to drive us about in search of rooms. There were no carriages at the stand, but an old man who kept a book-store let the lady of the party have his chair and his *scaldino* while I went to the stable for one. There my purpose somehow became known, and when the driver mounted the box, and I stepped inside, the were-wolf mounted with him, and all that morning he directed our movements with lupine persistence and ferocity, but with a wolfishly characteristic lack of intelligence. He had an awful face, poor fellow, but I suspect that his ravenous eyes, his gaunt cheeks, his shaggy hair, and his lurking, illusive looks, were the worst of him; and heaven knows what dire need of devouring strangers he may have had. He did us no harm beyond wasting our time upon unfurnished lodgings in spite of our repeated groans and cries for furnished ones. From time to time I stopped the carriage and drove him down from the box; then he ran beside us on the pavement, and when we came to a walk on some uphill street he mounted again beside the driver, whom he at last persuaded to take us to a low tavern darkling in a sunless alley. There we finally threw off his malign spell, and driving back to our hotel, I found the little *valet de place* on the outlook. He hopefully laid hold of me, and walked me off to one impossible apartment after another,—brick-floored, scantily rugged, stoveless, husk-mattressed, mountain-bedsteaded, where we should have to find our own service, and subsist mainly upon the view from the windows. This was always fine; the valet had a cultivated eye for a prospect, and there was one of these lodgings which I should have liked to take for the sake of the boys playing *mora* in the old palace court, and the old lady with a single tooth rising like an obelisk from her lower jaw, who wished to let it.

A boarding-house, or *pension*, whose windows commanded an enchanting panorama of the Siennese hills, was provided with rather too much of the landscape indoors; and at another, which was cleanly and attractive, two obdurate young Englishmen were occupying the sunny rooms we wanted and would not vacate them for several days. The landlord conveyed a vivid impression of the violent character of these young men by whispering to me behind his hand, while he gently tried their door to see whether they were in or not, before he ventured to show me their apartment. We could not wait, and then he tried

to get rooms for us on the floor above, in an apartment belonging to a priest, so that we might at least eat at his table; but he failed in this, and we resumed our search for shelter. It must have been about this time that the short fat man appeared on the scene, and lured us off to see an apartment so exquisitely unsuitable that he saw the despair and reproach in our eyes, and, without giving us time to speak, promised us a perfect apartment for the morrow, and vanished round the first corner when we got into the street. In the very next barber's window, however, was a notice of rooms to let, and the barber left a lathered customer in his chair while he ran across the way to get the keys of a shoemaker. The shoemaker was at dinner, and his shop was shut; and the barber having, with however great regret, to go back to the customer left sleeping in his lather, we fell into the hands of the most sympathetic of all bricabrac dealers, who sent us to the apartment of a French lady,—an apartment with a northern exposure as sunless as fireless, from which we retreated with the vague praises and promises of people swearing in their hearts never to be caught in *that* place again. The day went on in this vain quest, but as I returned to the hotel at dusk I was stopped on the stairs by a mysterious *facchino* in a blouse; he had been waiting there for me, and he whispered that the priest, whose rooms the keeper of the pension had tried to get, now had an apartment for me. It proved that he had not quite this, when I went to visit him after dinner, but he had certain rooms, and a lady occupying an apartment on the same floor had certain others; and with these and one more room which we got in the pension below, we really sheltered ourselves at last. It was not quite a realization of the hereditary Siense hospitality, but we paid almost nothing for very comfortable quarters; and I do not see how a party of five could be better housed and fed for twenty-five francs a day in the world.

We must have been almost the first lodgers whom our good ecclesiastic and his niece had ever had, their enterprise being so new; the rooms were pretty and fresh, and there was a comfortable stove in our little parlor—a *franklinetto* which, three days out of four, did not smoke—and a large kerosene lamp for our table included in the price of two francs a day which we paid for our two rooms. We grieved a good deal that we could not get all our rooms of Don A., and he sorrowed with us, showing us a jewel (*giojello*) of a room which he would have been so glad to give us if it were not already occupied by a young man of fashion and his dog. As we stood looking at it, with its stove in the corner,

its carpet, its chest of drawers, and its other splendors, the good Don A. holding his three-beaked classic lamp up for us to see better, and his niece behind him lost in a passion of sympathy, which continually escaped in tender Ohs and Ahs, we sighed again, "Yes, if we could only have this, too!"

Don A. nodded his head and compressed his lips. "It would be a big thing!" ("*Sarebbe un' affarone!*") And then we all cast our eyes to heaven, and were about to break into a common sigh, when we heard the key of the young man of fashion in the outer door; upon which, like a party of guilty conspirators, we shrank breathlessly together for a moment, and then fled precipitately into our own rooms. We parted for that night with many whispered vows of esteem, and we returned in the morning to take possession. It was in character with the whole affair that on the way we should be met by the hunchbackling (whom I find described also in my notes as a wry-necked lamb, probably from some forcible contrast which he presented to the were-wolf) with a perfectly superb apartment, full of sun, in the Piazza Vittorio Emmanuele, looking squarely upon the Palazzo Communale and the Tower of the Mangia. I was forced to confess that I had engaged my rooms.

"A pity for you!" cried the hunchbackling, passionately.

"I have promised," I faltered. "One must keep one's promises, no?"

"Oh, you are right, you are right," said the hunchbackling, and vanished, and I never saw him more. Had he really the apartment to which he pretended?

## VII.

NO MORE, probably, than I had the virtue which I affected about keeping my promises. But I have never been sorry that I remained true to the word I had given Don A., and I do not see what harm there can be in saying that he was an ex-monk of the suppressed convent of Monte Olivetto, who was eking out the small stipend he received for his priestly offices in the next parish church by letting these lodgings. All the monks of Monte Olivetto had to be of noble family, and in one of our rooms the blessed candle and crucifix which hung on one side of the bed were balanced by the blazon of our host's arms in a frame on the other. Yet he was not above doing any sort of homely office for our comfort and convenience; I saw him with his priest's gown off, in his shirt-sleeves and knee-breeches, putting up a bedstead; sometimes I met him on the stairs with a load of fire-



wood in his arms, which I suspect he must have been sawing in the cellar. He bowed to me over it with unabashed courtesy, and he and Maddalena were so simply proud and happy at having filled all their rooms for a month, that one could not help sharing their cheerfulness. Don A. was of a mechanical turn, and I heard that he also earned something by repairing the watches of peasants who could not or would not pay for finer surgery. Greater gentleness, sweeter kindness never surrounded the inmates of hired lodgings than enveloped us in the manners of this good priest and his niece. They did together all the work of the apartment, serving us without shame and without reluctance, yet keeping a soft dignity withal that was extremely pretty. May no word of mine offend them, for every word of theirs was meant to make us feel at home with them; and I believe that they will not mind this public recognition of the grace with which they adorned their gentle poverty. They never intruded, but they were always there, saluting our outgoing and incoming, and watchful of our slightest wish. Often before we could get our key into the outer door Maddalena had run to open it, holding her *lucerna* above her head to light us, and hailing us with a "*Buona sera Loro!*" (Good-evening to them — our lordships, namely) to which only music could do justice.

But the landlord of the pension below, where we took our meals, was no less zealous for the comfort of his guests, and at that table of his, good at any price, and wonderful for the little they gave, he presided with a hospitality which pressed them to eat of this and that, and kept the unstinted wine a-flowing, and communicated itself to Luigi, who, having cooked the dinner, hurled on a dress-coat of impenetrable antiquity and rushed in to help serve it; and to Angiolina, the house-keeper, who affected a sort of Yankee old-maid's grumpiness, but was as sweet of soul as Maddalena herself. More than once has that sympathetic spirit, in passing me a dish, advised me with a fine movement of her clasping thumb which morsel to choose.

We took our rooms in the belief that we were on the sunny side of the house; and so we were; the sun obliquely bathed that whole front of the edifice, and I never can understand why it should not have got indoors. It did not; but it was delightful in the garden which stretched from the rear of our palace across to the city wall. Just under our windows — but far under, for we were in the fourth story — was a wide stone terrace, old, moss-grown, balustraded with marble, from which you descended by two curving flights of marble steps into the garden. There, in the early March

weather, which succeeded a wind-storm of three days, the sun fell like a shining silence, amidst which the bent figure of an old gardener stirred, noiselessly turning up the earth. In the utmost distance the snow-covered Apennines glistened against a milky white sky growing pale blue above; the nearer hills were purplish; nearer yet were green fields, gray olive orchards, red plowed land, and black cypress-clumps about the villas with which the whole prospect was thickly sown. Then the city houses outside the wall began, and then came the beautiful red brick city wall, wandering wide over the levels and heights and hollows, and within it that sunny silence of a garden. While I once stood at the open window looking, brimful of content, tingling with it, a bugler came up the road without the wall, and gayly, bravely sounded a gallant *fanfare*, purely, as it seemed, for love of it and pleasure in it.

I call our garden a garden, but it was mostly a succession of fields, planted with vegetables for the market, and closed round next the city wall with ranks of olive-trees. Still, next the palace there were flowers, or must have been in summer; and on another morning, another heavenly morning, a young lady, doubtless of the ancient family to which the palace belonged, came out upon the terrace from the first floor with an elderly companion, and, loitering listlessly there a moment, descended the steps into the garden to a stone basin where some serving-women were washing. Her hair was ashen blonde; she was slimly cased in black silk, and as she slowly walked, she pulled forward the skirt a little with one hand, while she drew together with the other a light shawl, falling from the top of her head, round her throat; her companion followed at a little distance; on the terrace lingered a large white Persian cat, looking after them.

#### VIII.

THESE gardens, or fields, of Siena occupy half the space her walls inclose, and the olives everywhere softly embower the borders of the shriveled and shrunken old city, which once must have plumply filled their circuit with life. But it is five hundred years since the great pest reduced her hundred thousand souls to fifteen thousand; generation after generation the plow has gone over the dead streets, and the spade has been busy obliterating the decay, so that now there is no sign of them where the artichokes stretch their sharp lines, and the tops of the olives run tangling in the wind. Except where the streets carry the lines of buildings to the ten gates, the city is

completely surrounded by these gardens within its walls; they drop on all sides from the lofty ledge of rocks to which the edifices cling, with the cathedral preëminent, and cover the slopes with their herbage and foliage; at one point near the Lizza, flanking the fort which Cosimo built where the Spaniards failed, a gaunt ravine—deep, lonely, shadowy—pushes itself up into the heart of the town. Once, and once only, so old is the decay of Siena, I saw the crumbling foundations of a house on a garden slope; but again and again the houses break away, and the street which you have been following ceases in acreages of vegetation. Sometimes the varied and ever-picturesquely irregular ground has the effect of having fallen away from the palaces; the rear of a line of these, at one point, rested on massive arches, and buttresses sprung fifty or seventy-five feet from the lower level; and on the lofty shoulders of the palaces, here and there, was caught a bit of garden, and lifted with its overhanging hedge high into the sun. There are abundant evidences of that lost beauty and magnificence of Siena—she has kept enough of both—not only in the great thirteenth and fourteenth century structures in the Via Cavour, the Via del Capitano, and the neighborhood of the Palazzo Communale, but in many little wandering, darkling streets, where you come upon exquisite Gothic arches walled up in the fronts of now ordinary houses, which before some time of great calamity must have been the portals and windows of noble palaces. These gave their pathos to walks which were bewilderingly opulent in picturesqueness; walks that took us down sharp declivities dropping under successive arches between the house-walls, and flashing out upon sunny prospects of gardens; up steep thoroughfares climbing and crooking up from the gates below, and stopping as if for rest in successive piazzas, till they reach the great avenue which stretches along the high spine of the city from Porta Camollia to Porta Romana. Sharp turns everywhere bring your nose against some incomparable piece of architecture, or your eye upon some view astonishingly vast, and smiling or austere, but always enchanting.

The first night we found the Via Cavour full of people, walking and talking together; and there was always the effect of outdoor liveliness in the ancient town, which is partly to be accounted for by the pungent strength of the good air. This stirs and sustains one like the Swiss air, and when not in too rapid motion it is delicious. In March I will own that its motion was often too rapid. It swept cold from the Apennines, and one night it



A HIGH BREEZE.

sifted the gray depths of the streets full of snow. The next morning the sun blazed out with that ironical smile which we know here as well as in Italy, and Via Cavour was full of people lured forth by his sarcastic glitter, though the wind blew pitilessly. "*Marzo matto!*" (Crazy March!) said the shopman, with a sympathetic smile and impressive shrug, to whom I complained of it; and I had to confess that March was no better in America. The peasants, who took the whole breadth of Via Cavour with their carts laden with wine and drawn by wide-horned dun oxen, had their faces tied up against the blast, which must have been terrible on their hills; and it roared and blustered against our lofty eyrie in Palazzo Bandini-Piccolomini with a force that penetrated it with icy cold. It was quite impossible to keep warm; with his back planted well into the fire-place blazing with the little logs of the country, and fenced about on the windward side with mattresses and sofa-pillows, a suffering novelist was able to complete his then current fiction only at the risk of freezing.

But before this, and after it, we had weather in which the streets were as much a pleasure to us as to the Sienese; and in fact I do not know where I would rather be at this moment than in Via Cavour, unless it were on the Grand Canal at Venice—or the Lungarno at Florence—or the Pincio at Rome—or Piazza Brà at Verona. Any of these places would do, and yet they would all lack the strictly mediæval charm which belongs to Siena, and which perhaps you feel most when you stand before the Tolomei palace, with its gray Gothic façade, on the richly sculptured porch of the Casino dei Nobili. At more than one point the gaunt Roman wolf suckles her adoptive twins on the top of a pillar; and the olden charm of prehistoric fable mingles with the interest of the city's proper life, when her peo-

ple fought each other for their freedom in her streets, and never trusted one another except in some fiery foray against the enemy beyond her gates.

Let the reader not figure to himself any broad, straight level when I speak of Via Cavour as the principal street; it is only not so narrow and steep and curving as the rest, and a little more light gets into it; but there is one level, and one alone, in all Siena, and that is the Lizza, the public promenade, which looks very much like an artificial level. It is planted with pleasant little bosks and trim hedges, beyond which lurk certain cafés and beer-houses, and it has walks and a drive. On a Sunday afternoon of February, when the military band played there, and I was told that the fine world of Siena resorted to the Lizza, we hurried thither to see it; but we must have come too late. The band were blowing the drops of distilled music out of their instruments and shutting them up, and on the drive there was but one equipage worthy of the name. Within this carriage sat a little refined-looking boy,—delicate, pale, the expression of an effete aristocracy; and beside him sat a very stout, gray-mustached, side-whiskered, eagle-nosed, elderly gentleman, who took snuff out of a gold box, and looked like Old Descent in person. I felt, at sight of them, that I had met the Sieneze nobility, whom otherwise I did not see; and yet I do not say that they may not have been a prosperous fabricant of panforte and his son. A few young bucks, with fierce trotting-ponies in two-seated sulkies, hammered round the drive; the crowd on foot was mostly a cloaked and slouch-hatted crowd, which in Italy is always a plebeian crowd. There were no ladies, but many women of less degree, pretty enough, well-dressed enough, and radiantly smiling. In the center of the place shone a resplendent group of officers, who kept quite to themselves. We could not feel that we had mingled greatly in the social gayeties of Siena, and we wandered off to climb the bastions of the old Medicean fort—very bold with its shield and *palle* over the gateway—and listened to the bees humming in the oleander hedge beneath.

This was toward the end of February; a few days later I find it recorded that in walking half-way round the city outside the wall I felt the sun very hot, and heard the birds singing over the fields, where the peasants were breaking the clods with their hoes. The almond-trees kept blossoming with delicate courage all through February, like girls who brave the lingering cold with their spring finery; and though the grass was green, with here and there daring dandelions in it, the landscape generally had a pathetic look of

winter weariness, when we drove out into the country beyond the wall.

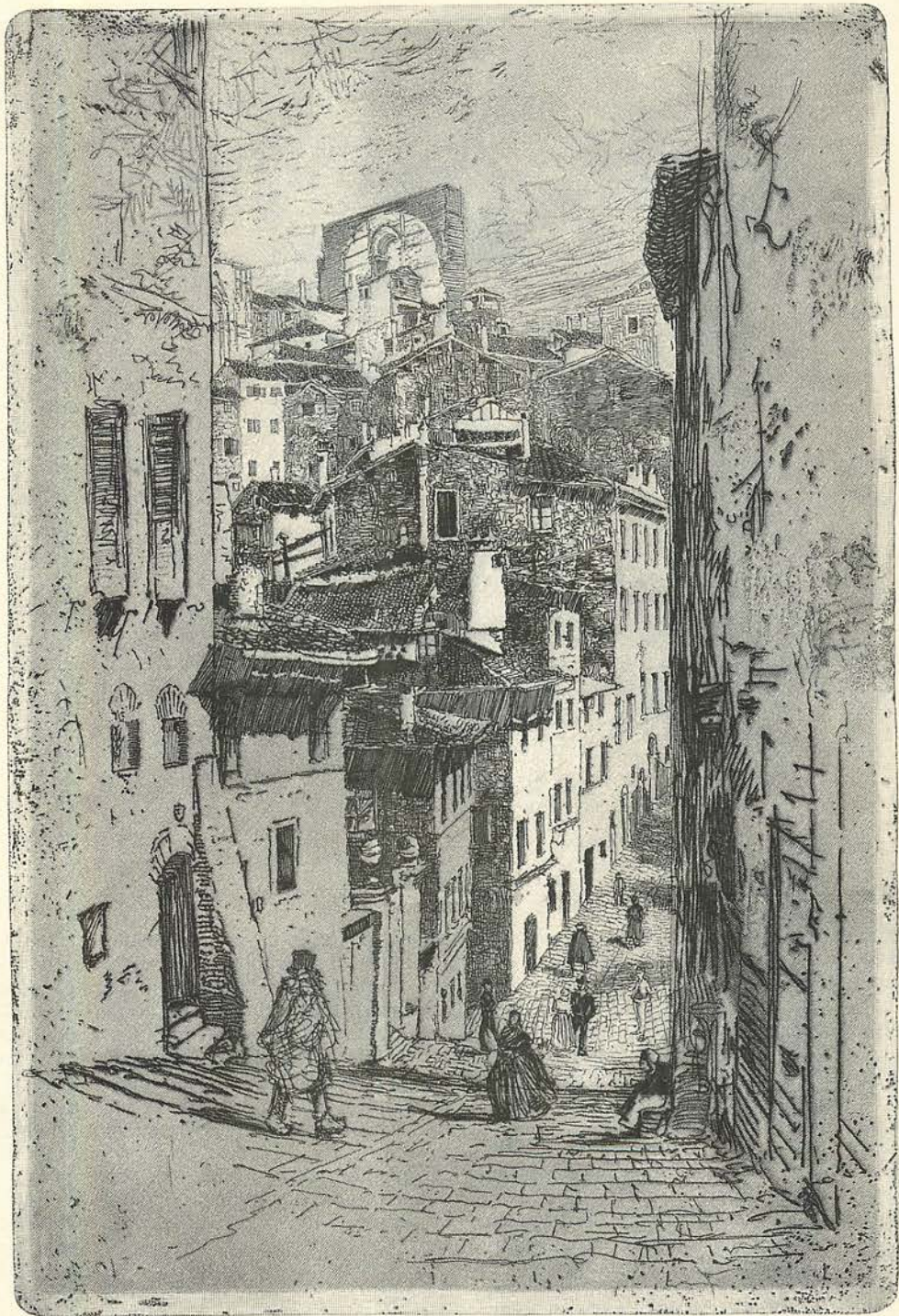
It is this wall with the color of its red brick which everywhere warms up the cold gray tone of Siena. It is like no other city wall that I know, except that of Pisa, and is not supported with glacis on the inside, but rises sheer from the earth there as on the outside. With its towers and noble gates it is beautiful always; and near the railway station it obligingly abounds in repaired spots which look as if they had been holes knocked in it at the great siege. I hope they were.

It is anywhere a study for a painter,—preferably a water-colorist, I should say,—and I do not see how an architect could better use his eyes in Italy than in perusing the excellent brick-work of certain of the smaller houses, as well as certain palaces and churches, both in the city and the suburbs of Siena. Some of the carved brick there is delightful, and the material is treated with peculiar character and feeling.

## IX.

THE ancient palace of the republic, the Palazzo Communale, is of brick, which allegorizes well enough the multitude of plebeian wills and forces that went to the constitution of the democratic state. No friend of popular rule, I suppose, can boast that these little mediæval commonwealths of Italy were the homes of individual liberty. They were popular tyrannies; but tyrannies as they were, they were always better than the single-handed despotisms, the *governo d'un solo*, which supplanted them, except in the one fact only that they did not give continuous civil peace. The crater of the extinct volcano before the Palazzo Communale in Siena was always boiling with human passions, and for four hundred years it vomited up and engulfed innumerable governments and forms of government, now aristocratic and now plebeian. From those beautiful Gothic windows many a traitor has dangled head downwards or feet downwards, as the humor took the mob; many a temporizer or usurper has hurtled from that high balcony ruining down to the stones below.

Carlo Folletti-Fossati, a Sieneze citizen of our own time, has made a luminous and interesting study of the "Costumi Sieneze" of the middle ages, which no reader of Italian should fail to get when he goes to Siena, for the sake of the light which it throws upon that tumultuous and struggling past of one of the bravest and doughtiest little peoples that ever lived. In his chapters on the "Daily Life" of the Sieneze of those times, he speaks first of the world-wide difference between the American



JHEWHITNEY SC

UP AND DOWN IN SIENA.

[ENGRAVED BY J. H. E. WHITNEY AFTER THE ETCHING BY JOSEPH PENNELL.]



UNDER THE ARCHES IN SIENA.

democracy and the mediæval democracies. He has read his De Tocqueville, and he understands, as Mr. Matthew Arnold is beginning to understand, that the secret of our political success is in the easy and natural fit of our political government, the looseness of our social organization; and he shows with attractive clearness how, in the Italian republics, there was no conception of the popular initiative, except in the matter of revolution, which was extra-constitutional. The government once established, no matter how democratic, how plebeian its origin, it began at once to interfere with the personal affairs of the people. It regulated their household expenses; said what dishes and how many they might have at dinner; clipped women's gowns, and forbade the braid and laces on their sleeves and stomachers; prescribed the fashion of men's hats and cloaks; determined the length of coats, the size of bricks, and the

dimensions of letter-paper; costumed the different classes; established the hours of pleasure and business; limited the number of those who should be of this or that trade or profession; bothered in every way. In Siena, at a characteristic period, the Signiory were chosen every two months, and no man might decline the honor and burden of office except under heavy fine. The government must have been as great a bore to its officers as to its subjects, for, once elected, the Signiory were obliged to remain night and day in the public palace. They could not leave it except for some grave reason of state, or sickness, or marriage, or the death of near kindred, and then they could only go out two at a time, with a third for a spy upon them. Once a week they could converse with the citizens, but solely on public business. Then, on Thursdays, the Signiory — the Nine, or the Twelve, or the Priors, whichever they chanced to

be — descended from their magnificent confinement in the apartments of state to the great hall of the ground floor, and heard the petitions of all comers. Otherwise, their official life was no joke : in the months of March and April, 1364, they consumed in their public labors eleven reams of paper, twenty-one quires of parchment, twelve pounds of red and green sealing-wax, five hundred geese-quills, and twenty bottles of ink.

Besides this confinement at hard labor, they were obliged to suffer from the shrieks of the culprits, who were mutilated or put to death in the rear of the palace ; for in those days prison expenses were saved by burning a witch or heretic, tearing out the tongue of a blasphemer, striking off the right hand of a perjurer or bigamist, and the right foot of a highwayman. The Sienese in course of time became so refined that they expelled the mutilated wretches from the city, that they might not offend the eye, after the infliction of their penalties ; but in the mean while the Signiory could not bear the noise of their agony, especially while they sat at dinner ; and the execution-grounds were finally changed to a remote quarter.

It is well enough for the tourist to give a thought to these facts and conditions of the times that produced the beautiful architecture of the Palazzo Communale and the wonderful frescoes which illumine its dim-vaulted halls and chambers. The masters who wrought either might have mixed the mortar for their bricks, and the colors for their saints and angels, and allegories and warriors, with human blood, it flowed so freely and abundantly in Siena. Poor, splendid, stupid, glorious past ! I stood at the windows of the people's palace and looked out on the space in the rear where those culprits used to disturb the Signiory at their meals, and thanked heaven that I was of the nineteenth century. The place is flanked now by an immense modern prison, whose ample casements were crowded with captives pressing to them for the sun ; and in the distance there is a beautiful view of an insane asylum, the largest and most populous in Italy.

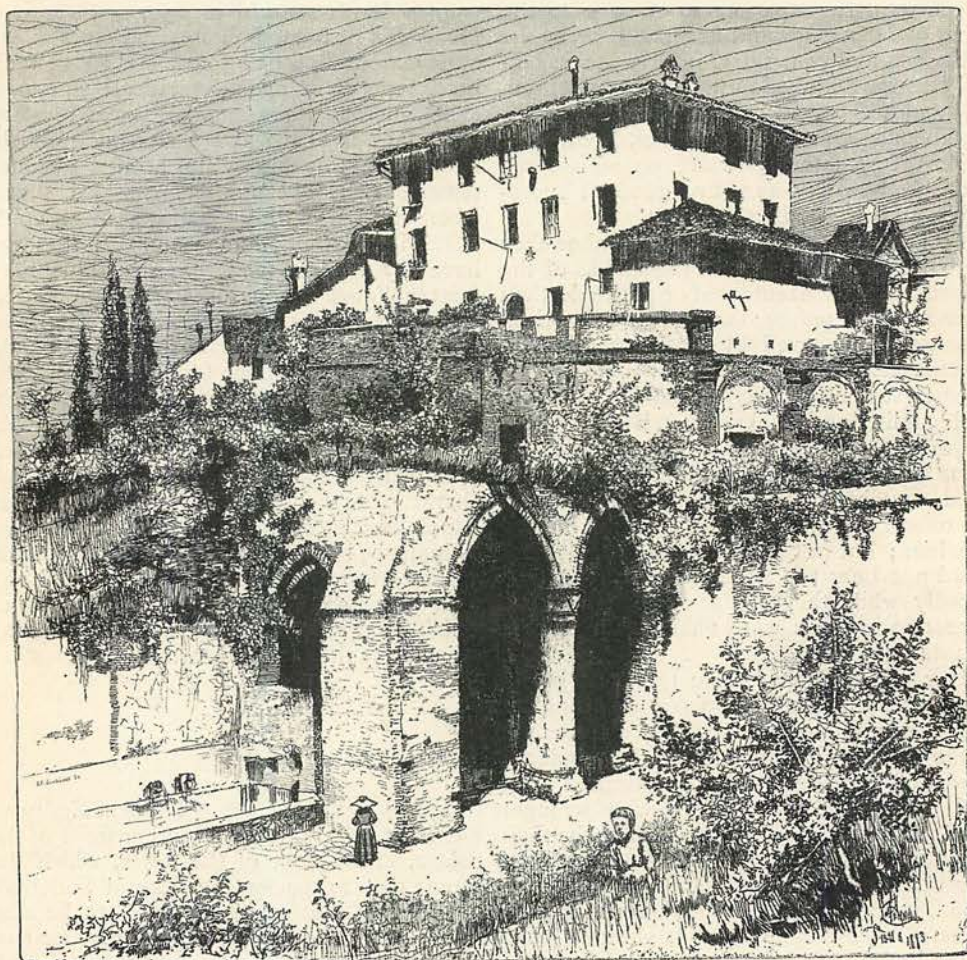
I suppose the reader will not apprehend a great deal of comment from me upon the frescoes, inexpressibly quaint and rich, from which certain faces and certain looks remain with me yet. The pictures figure the great scenes of Sienese history and fable. There are the battles in which the republic triumphed, to the disadvantage chiefly of the Florentines ; there are the victorious encounters of her son Pope Alexander III. with Barbarossa ; there are allegories in which her chief citizens appear. In one of these — I think it is that

representing " Good and Bad Government," painted by Lorenzetti in 1337 — there is a procession of Sienese figures and faces of the most curious realistic interest, and above their heads some divine and august ideal shapes,—a Wisdom, from whose strange eyes all mystery looks, and a Peace and a Fortitude which, for an unearthly dignity and beauty, I cannot remember the like of. There is also, somewhere in those dusky halls, a most noble " St. Victor " by Sodoma ; and I would not have my readers miss that sly rogue of a saint (" We are famous for our saints in Siena," said the sardonic custodian, with a shrug) who is represented in a time of interdict stealing a blessing from the pope for his city by having concealed under his cloak a model of it when he appears before the pontiff ! For the rest, there is an impression of cavernous gloom left from many of the rooms of the palace which characterizes the whole to my memory ; and as I look back into it, beautiful, mystical, living eyes glance out of it ; noble presences, solemn attitudes, forms of grandeur faintly appear ; and then all is again a hovering twilight, out of which I am glad to emerge into the laughing sunshine of the piazza.

## X.

A MONUMENT of the old magnanimity of Siena is that Capella di Piazza in front of the palace, at the foot of the tower, which the tourist goes to see for the sake of Sodoma's fresco in it, but which deserves to be also revered as the memorial of the great pest of 1348 ; it was built in 1352, and thrice demolished and thrice rebuilt before it met with public approval. This and the beautiful Fonte Gaja—as beautiful in its way as the tower—make the piazza a place to linger in and come back to at every chance. The fountain was designed by Giacomo della Quercia, who was known thereafter as Giacomo della Fonte, and it was called the Gay Fountain in memory of the festivities with which the people celebrated the introduction of good water into their city in 1419. Seven years the artist wrought upon it, and three thousand florins of gold the republic paid for the work, which after four hundred years has been restored in all its first loveliness by Tito Sarocchi, an admirable Sienese sculptor of our day.

There are six fountains in all, in different quarters of the city ; and of these, the finest are the two oldest, Fonte Branda of the twelfth century, and Fonte Nuova of the fourteenth. Fonte Branda I will allow to be the more famous, but never so beautiful as Fonte Nuova.

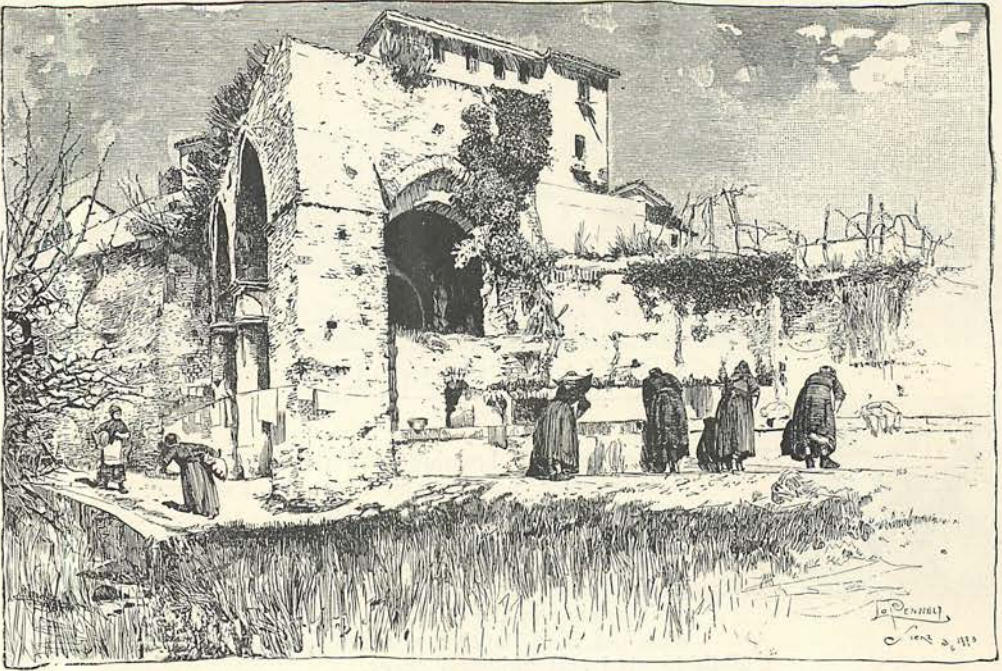


FOUNTAIN OUTSIDE OF THE WALL AT SIENA.

They are both as practicable now as when they were built, and Fonte Nuova has a small house atop of its arches, where people seem to live. The arches are Gothic, and the delicate carved brick-work of Siena decorates their sharp spring. Below, in the bottom of the four-sided structure, is the clear pool from whose affluent pipes the neighborhood comes to draw its water (in buckets hammered from solid copper into antique form), and in which women seem to be always rinsing linen, or beating it with wooden paddles in the Latin fashion.

Fonte Branda derives a world-wide celebrity from being mentioned by Dante and then having its honors disputed by a small stream of its name elsewhere. It, too, is a lovely Gothic shape, and whenever I saw it wash-day was in possession of it. The large pool which the

laundresses had whitened with their suds is used as a swimming-vat in summer; and the old fountain may therefore be considered in very active use still, so many years after Dante dedicated the new fountain to disputed immortality with a single word. It was one of those extremely well-ventilated days of March when I last visited Fonte Branda; and not only was the linen of all Siena blowing about from balconies and house-tops, but, from a multitude of galleries and casements, hides of leather were lustily flapping and giving out the pungent aroma of the tan. It is a region of tanneries, and some of them are of almost as august a presence as the Fonte Branda itself. We had not come to see either, but to pay our second visit to the little house of St. Catherine of Siena, who was born and lived a child in this neighborhood, the good Contrada



WASHING-DAY — SIENA.

dell' Oca, or Goose Ward, which took this simple name while other wards of Siena called themselves after the Dragon, the Lion, the Eagle, and other noble beasts and birds. The region has therefore the odor of sanctity as well as of leather, and is consecrated by the memory of one of the best and bravest and meekest woman's lives ever lived. Her house

here is much visited by the curious and devout, and across a chasmed and gardened space from the fountain rises high on the bluff the high-shouldered bulk of the church of San Domenico, in which Catherine was first rapt in her beatific visions of Our Lord, conversing with him, and giving him her heart for his in mystical espousals.

*W. D. Howells.*



FROM THE CATHEDRAL.



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## PANFORTE DI SIENA.

SECOND PAPER.



EW strangers in Siena fail to visit the house where that great woman and saint Caterina Benincasa was born in 1347. She was one of a family of thirteen or fourteen children, that blessed the union of Giacomo and Lapa, who were indeed well-in-the-house as their name is,

being interpreted; for with the father's industry as a dyer, and the mother's thrift, they lived not merely in decent poverty, but in sufficient ease; and it was not from a need of her work nor from any want of piety in themselves that her parents at first opposed her religious inclination, but because (as I learn from the life of her written by that holy man, G. B. Francesia), hearing on every side the praises of her beauty and character, they hoped to make a splendid marriage for her. When she persisted in her prayers and devotions, they scolded and beat her, as good parents used to do, and made her the household drudge. But one day while the child was at prayer the father saw a white dove hovering over her head, and though she said she knew nothing of it, he was struck with awe and ceased to persecute her. She was now fourteen, and at this time she began her penances, sleeping little on the hard floor where she lay, scourging herself continually, wearing a

hair shirt, and lacerating her flesh with chains. She fell sick, and was restored to health only by being allowed to join a sisterhood, under the rule of St. Dominic, who were then doing many good works in Siena. After that our Lord began to appear to her in the Dominican church; she was likewise tempted of the devil; but Christ ended by making her his spouse. While her ecstasies continued she not only visited the sick and poor, but she already took an interest in public affairs, appealing first to the rival factions in Siena to mitigate their furies, and then trying to make peace between the Ghibellines of that city and the Guelphs of Florence. She pacified many family feuds; multitudes thronged to see her and hear her; and the Pope authorized her to preach throughout the territory of Siena. While she was thus dedicated to the salvation of souls, war broke out afresh between the Sienese and Florentines, and in the midst of it the terrible great pest appeared. Then the saint gave herself up to the care of the sick, and performed miracles of cure, at the same time suffering persecution from the suspicions of the Sienese, among whom question of her patriotism arose.

She now began also to preach a new crusade against the Saracens, and for this purpose appeared in Pisa. She went later to Avignon to beseech the Pope to remove an interdict laid upon the Florentines, and then she prevailed with him to remove his court to the ancient seat of St. Peter.

The rest of her days were spent in special miracles, in rescuing cities from the plague; in making peace between the different Italian states and between all of them and the Pope; in difficult journeys; in preaching and writing. "And two years before she died," says her biographer, "the truth manifested itself

so clearly in her, that she prayed certain scribes to put in writing what she should say during her ecstasies. In this manner there was soon composed the treatise on Obedience and Prayer, and on Divine Providence, which contains a dialogue between a Soul and God. She dictated as rapidly as if reading, in a clear voice, with her eyes closed and her arms crossed on her breast and her hands opened; her limbs became so rigid that, having ceased to speak, she remained a long hour silent; then, holy water being sprinkled in her face, she revived." She died in Rome in 1380; but even after her death she continued to work miracles; and her head was brought amidst great public rejoicings to her native city. A procession went out to receive it, led by the Senate, the Bishop of Siena, and all the bishops of the state, with all the secular and religious orders. "That which was wonderful and memorable on this occasion," says the *Diario Senese*, "was that Madonna Lapa, mother of our Seraphic Compatriot,—who had many years before restored her to life, and liberated her from the pains of hell,—was led to the solemn encounter."

It seems by all accounts to have been one of the best and strongest heads that ever rested on a woman's shoulders—or a man's, for the matter of that; apt not only for private beneficence, but for high humane thoughts and works of great material and universal moment; and I was willing to see the silken purse, or sack, in which it was brought from Rome, and which is now to be viewed in the little chamber where she used to pillow the poor head so hard. I do not know that I wished to come any nearer the saint's mortal part, but our Roman Catholic brethren have another taste in such matters, and the body of St. Catherine

has been pretty well dispersed about the world to supply them with objects of veneration. One of her fingers, as I learn from the *Diario Senese* of Girolamo Gigli (the most confusing, not to say stupefying, form of history I ever read, being the collection under the three hundred and sixty-five several days of the year of all the events happening on each in Siena since the time of Remus's son), is in the Certosa at Pontignano, where it has been seen by many, to their great advantage, with the wedding-ring of Jesus Christ upon it. Her right thumb is in the church of the Dominicans at Camporeggi; one of her ribs is in the cathedral at Siena; another in the church of the Company of St. Catherine, from which a morsel has been sent to the same society in the city of Lima, in Peru; her cervical vertebra and one of her slippers are treasured by the Nuns of Paradise; in the monastery of Sts. Dominic and Sixtus at Rome is her right hand; her shoulder is in the convent of St. Catherine at Magnanopoli; and her right foot is in the church of San Giovanni e Paolo at Venice. In St. Catherine at Naples are a shoulder-bone and a finger; in other churches there are a piece of an arm and a rib; in San Bartolomeo at Salerno there is a finger; the Predicatori at Colonia have a rib; the Canons of Eau-Court in Artois have a good-sized bone (*osso di giusta grandezza*); and the good Gigli does not know exactly what bone it is they revere in the Chapel Royal at Madrid. But perhaps this is enough, as it is.

## II.

THE arched and pillared front of St. Catherine's house is turned toward a street on the level of Fonte Branda, but we reached it from the level above, whence we clambered down to it by a declivity that no carriage could descend. It has been converted, up stairs and down, into a number of chapels, and I suppose that the ornate façade dates from the ecclesiastic rather than the domestic occupation. Of a human home there are indeed few signs, or none, in the house; even the shop in which the old dyer, her father, worked at his trade, has been turned into a chapel and enriched, like the rest, with gold and silver, gems and precious marbles.

From the house we went to the church of San Domenico, hard by, and followed St. Catherine's history there through the period of her first ecstasies, in which she received the stigmata and gave her heart to her heavenly Spouse in exchange for his own. I do not know how it is with other Protestants, but for myself I will confess that in the place where so many good souls for so many ages



THE RETURN FROM THE FOUNTAIN.



A CITY GATE.

have stood in the devout faith that the miracles recorded really happened there, I could not feel otherwise than reverent. Illusion, hallucination as it all was, it was the error of one of the purest souls that ever lived, and of one of the noblest minds. "Here," says the printed tablet appended to the wall of the chapel, "here she was invested with the habit of St. Dominic; and she was the first woman who up to that time had worn it. Here she remained withdrawn from the world, listening to the divine services of the church, and here continually in divine colloquy she conversed familiarly with Jesus Christ, her Spouse. Here,

leaning against this pilaster, she was rapt in frequent ecstasies; wherefore this pilaster has ever since been potent against the infernal furies, delivering many possessed of devils." Here Jesus Christ appeared before her in the figure of a beggar, and she gave him alms, and he promised to own her before all the world at the Judgment Day. She gave him her robe, and he gave her an invisible garment which forever after kept her from the cold. Here once he gave her the Host himself, and her confessor, missing it, was in great terror till she told him. Here the Lord took his own heart from his breast and put it into hers.

You may also see in this chapel, framed and covered with a grating in the floor, a piece of the original pavement on which Christ stood and walked. The whole church is full of memories of her; and there is another chapel in it, painted in fresco by Sodoma with her deeds and miracles, which in its kind is almost incomparably rich and beautiful. It is the painter's most admirable and admired work, in which his genius ranges from the wretch decapitated in the bottom of the picture to the soul borne instantly aloft by two angels in response to St. Catherine's prayers. They had as much nerve as faith in those days, and the painter has studied the horror with the same conscience as the glory. It would be interesting to know how much he believed of what he was painting—just as it would be now to know how much I believe of what I am writing: probably neither of us could say.

What impresses St. Catherine so vividly upon the fancy that has once begun to concern itself with her is the double character of her greatness. She was not merely an ecstatic nun: she was a woman of extraordinary political sagacity, and so great a power among statesmen and princes that she alone could put an end to the long exile of the popes at Avignon, and bring them back to Rome. She failed to pacify her country because, as the Sienese historian Buonsignore confesses, "the germs of the evil were planted so deeply that it was beyond human power to uproot them." But nevertheless, "she rendered herself forever famous by her civic virtues," her active beneficence, her perpetual striving for the good of others, all and singly; and even so furious a free-thinker as the author of my "New Guide to Siena" thinks that, setting aside the marvels of legend, she has a right to the reverence of posterity, the veneration of her fellow-citizens. "St. Catherine, an honor to humanity, is also a literary celebrity: the golden purity of her diction, the sympathetic and affectionate simplicity of expression in her letters, still arouse the admiration of the most illustrious writers. With the potency of her prodigious genius, the virgin staintlessness of her life, and her great heart warm with love of country and magnanimous desires, inspired by a sublime ideal even in her mysticism, she, born of the people, meek child of Giacomo the dyer, lifted herself to the summit of religious and political grandeur. . . . With an overflowing eloquence and generous indignation she stigmatized the crimes, the vices, the ambition of the popes, their temporal power, and the scandalous schism of the Roman Church."

In the Communal Library at Siena I had

the pleasure of seeing many of St. Catherine's letters in the MS. in which they were dictated: she was not a scholar, like the great Socinus, whose letters I also saw, and she could not even write.

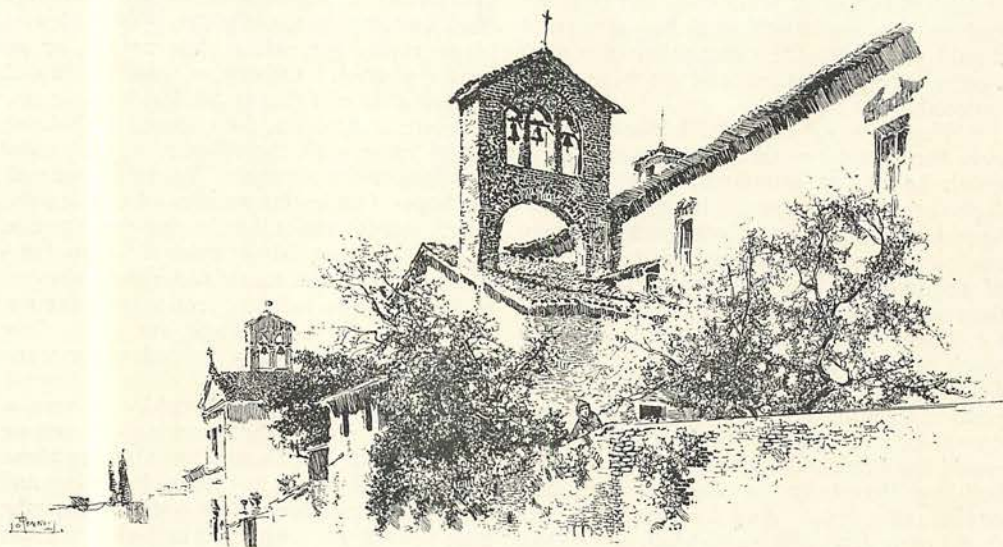
### III.

A HUNDRED years after St. Catherine's death there was born in the same "noble Ward of the Goose" one of the most famous and eloquent of Italian reformers, the Bernardino Ochino whose name commemorates that of his native Contrada dell' Oca. He became a Franciscan, and through the austerity of his life, the beauty of his character, and the wonder of his eloquence he became the General of his Order in Italy, and then he became a Protestant. "His words could move stones to tears," said Charles V.; and when he preached in Siena, no space was large enough for his audience except the great piazza before the Public Palace, which was thronged even to the house-tops. Ochino escaped by flight the death that overtook his sometime fellow-denizen of Siena, Aonio Paleario, whose book, "Il Beneficio di Cristo," was very famous in its time and potent for reform throughout Italy. In that doughty little Siena, in fact, there has been almost as much hard thinking as hard fighting, and what with Ochino and Paleario, with Socinus and Bandini, the Reformation, Rationalism, and Free Trade may be said almost to have been invented in the city which gave one of the loveliest and sublimest saints to the Church. Let us not forget, either, that brave Archbishop of Siena, Ascanio Piccolomini, one of the ancient family which gave two popes to Rome, and which in this Archbishop had the heart to defy the Inquisition and welcome Galileo to the protection of an inviolable roof.

### IV.

It is so little way off from Fonte Branda and St. Catherine's house that I do not know but the great cathedral of Siena may also be in the "Ward of the Goose"; but I confess that I did not think of this when I stood before that wondrous work.

There are a few things in this world about whose grandeur one may keep silent with dignity and advantage, as St. Mark's, for instance, and Nôtre Dame and Giotto's Tower, and the curve of the Arno at Pisa, and Niagara, and the cathedral at Siena. I am not sure that one has not here more authority for holding his peace than before any of the others. Let the architecture go, then: the inexhaustible treasure of the sculptured marbles, the ecstasy of Gothic invention, the splendor of the mosaics, the quaintness, the grotesqueness, the magnifi-



SIENESE WALLS AND GARDENS.

cence of the design and the detail. The photographs do well enough in suggestion for such as have not seen the church, but these will never have the full sense of it, which only long looking and coming again and again can impart. One or two facts, however, may be imagined, and the reader may fancy the cathedral set on the crest of the noble height to which Siena clings, and from which the streets and houses drop all round from the narrow level expressed in the magnificent stretch of that straight line with which the cathedral-roof delights the eye from every distance. It has a preëminence which seems to me unapproached, and this structure, which only partially realizes the vast design of its founders, impresses one with the courage even more than the piety of the little republic, now so utterly extinct. What a force was in men's hearts in those days! What a love of beauty must have exalted the whole community!

The Sienese were at the height of their work on the great cathedral when the great pestilence smote them, and broke them forever, leaving them a feeble phantom of their past glory and prosperity. "The infection," says Buonsignore, "spread not only from the sick, but from everything they touched, and the terror was such that selfish frenzy mounted to the wildest excess; not only did neighbor abandon neighbor, friend forsake friend, but the wife her husband, parents their children. In the general fear, all noble and endearing feelings were hushed. . . . Such was the helplessness into which the inhabitants lapsed that the stench exhaling from the wretched huts of the poor was the sole

signal of death within. The dead were buried by a few generous persons whom an angelic pity moved to the duty: their appeal was, 'Help us to carry this body to the grave, that when we die others may bear us thither!' The proportion of the dead to the sick was frightful; out of every five seized by the plague, scarcely one survived. Angelo di Tura tells us that at Siena, in the months of May, June, July, and August of the year 1348, the pest carried off eighty thousand persons. . . . A hundred noble families were extinguished." Throughout Italy, "three-fourths of the population perished. The cities, lately flourishing, busy, industrious, full of life, had become squalid, deserted, bereft of the activity which promotes grandeur. In Siena the region of Fonte Branda was largely saved from the infection by the odor of its tanneries. Other quarters, empty and forsaken, were set on fire after the plague ceased, and the waste areas where they stood became the fields and gardens we now see within the walls. . . . The work on the cathedral, which had gone forward for ten years, was suspended, . . . and when resumed, it was upon a scale adjusted to the diminished wealth of the city, and the plan was restricted to the dimensions which we now behold. . . . And if the fancy contemplates the grandeur of the original project, divining it from the vestiges of the walls and the columns remaining imperfect, but still preserved in good condition, it must be owned that the republic disposed of resources of which we can form no conception; and we must rest astounded that a little state, em-

broiled in perpetual wars with its neighbors, and in the midst of incessant party strife, should undertake the completion of a work worthy of the greatest and most powerful nations."

"When a man," says Mr. Addison, writing from Siena in the spirit of the genteel age of which he was an ornament, "sees the prodigious pains and expense that our forefathers have been at in these barbarous buildings, one cannot but fancy to himself what miracles of architecture they would have left us had they only been instructed in the right way; for when the devotion of those ages was much warmer than it is at present, and the riches of the people much more at the disposal of the priests, there was so much money consumed on these Gothic cathedrals as would have finished a greater variety of noble buildings than have been raised either before or since that time." And describing this wonderful cathedral of Siena in detail, he says that "nothing in the world can make a prettier show to those who prefer false beauties and affected ornaments to a noble and majestic simplicity."

The time will no doubt come again when we shall prefer "noble and majestic simplicity," as Mr. Addison did; and I for one shall not make myself the mock of it by confessing how much better I now like "false beauties and affected ornaments." In fact, I am willing to make a little interest with it by admitting that the Tuscan fashion of alternate

courses of black and white marble in architecture robs the interior of the cathedral of all repose, and that nowhere else does the godless joke which nicknamed a New York temple "the Church of the Holy Zebra" insist upon itself so much. But if my business were iconoclasm, I should much rather smash the rococo apostolic statues which Mr. Addison doubtless admired, perching on their brackets at the base of the variegated pillars; and I suspect they are greatly to blame for the distraction which the visitor feels before he loses himself in the in-

exhaustibly beautiful and delightful detail. Shall I attempt to describe this? Not I! Get photographs, get prints, dear reader, or go see for yourself! Otherwise, trust me that if we had a tithe of that lavish loveliness in one structure in America, the richness of that one would impoverish the effect of all the other buildings on the continent. I say this, not with the hope of imparting an idea of the beauty, which words cannot, but to give some notion of the wealth poured out upon this mere fragment of what was meant to be the cathedral of Siena, and to help the reader conceive not only of the piety of the age, but of the love of art then universally spread among the Italians.

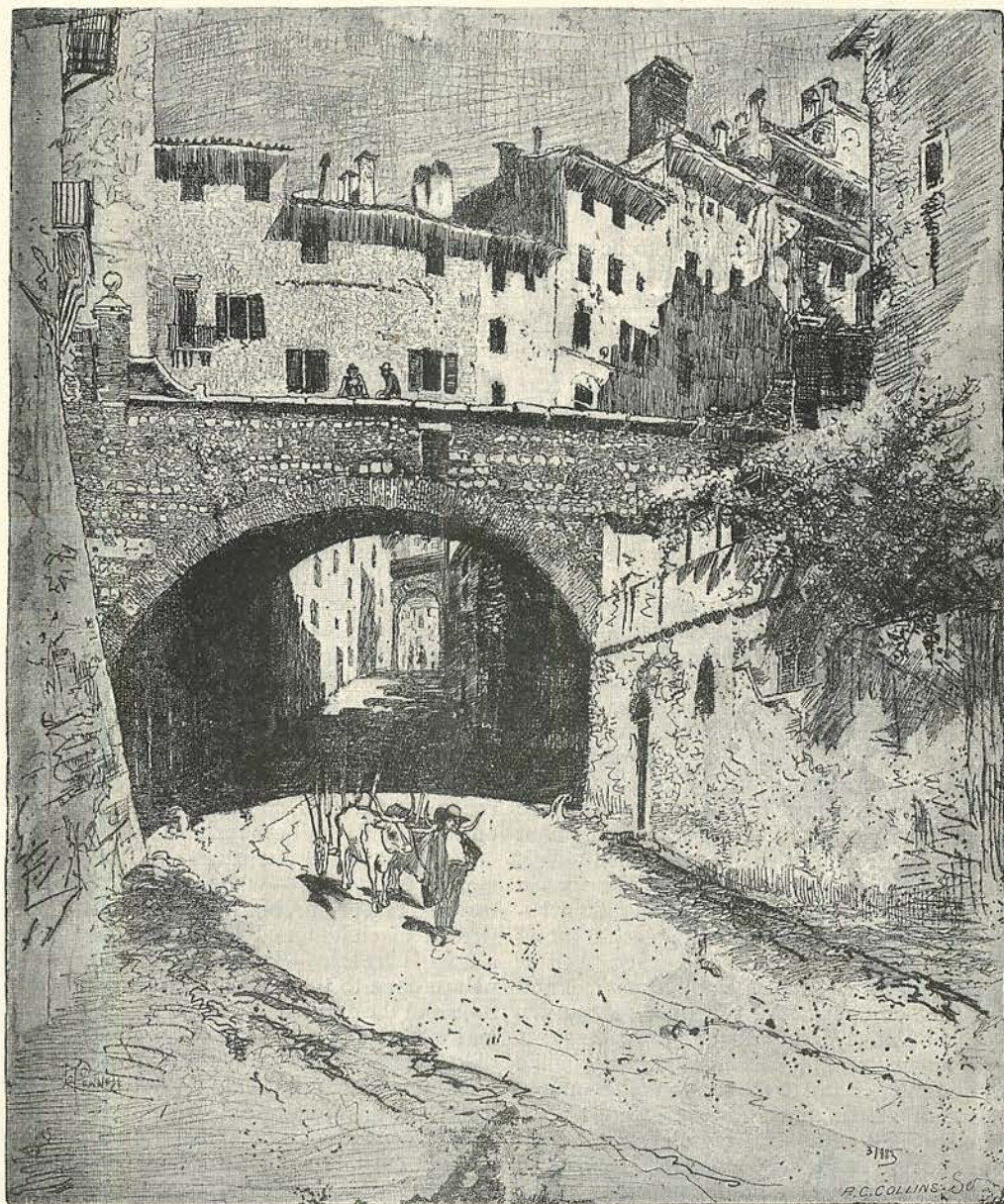
The day was abominably cold, of course,—it had been snowing that morning,—when we first visited the church, and I was lurking about with my skull-cap on, my teeth chattering, and my hands benumbing in my pockets, when the little *valet de place* who had helped us not find a lodging espied us and leaped joyously upon us, and ran us hither and thither so proudly and loudly that one of the priests had to come and snub him back to quiet and decorum. I do not know whether this was really in the interest of decency, or of the succession of sacristans who, when the *valet* had been retired to the front door, took possession of us, and lifted the planking which preserves the famous engraved pavement, and showed us the wonderful pulpit and the rich chapels, and finally the library all frescoed by Pinturicchio with scenes from the lives of the two Siense Piccolomini who were Popes Pius II. and III.

This multiplicity of sacristans suffered us to omit nothing, and one of them hastened to point out the two flag-poles fastened to the two pillars nearest the high altar, which are said to be those of the great War Car of the Florentines, captured by the Siense at Montaperto in 1260. "How," says my "New Guide," "how on earth, the stranger will ask, do we find here in the house of God, who shed his blood for all mankind, here in the temple consecrated to Mary, mother of every sweet affection, these two records of a terrible carnage between brothers, sons of the same country? Does it not seem as if these relics from the field of battle stand here to render Divinity accomplice of the rage and hate and vengeance of men? We know not how to answer this question; we must even add that the crucifix not far from the poles, in the chapel on the left of the transept, was borne by the Siense, trusting for victory in the favor of God, upon the field of Montaperto."

I make haste to say that I was not a stranger disposed to perplex my "New Guide" with



A MEDIEVAL SIENSE.



AN ARCHWAY IN SIENA. ENGRAVED BY R. C. COLLINS FROM THE ETCHING BY JOSEPH PENNELL.

any such question, and that nothing I saw in the cathedral gave me so much satisfaction as these flag-poles. Ghibelline and Sienese as I had become as soon as I turned my back on Guelphic Florence, I exulted in these trophies of Montaperto with a joy which nothing matched except the pleasure I had in viewing the fur-lined canopy of the War Car, which is preserved in the Opera del Duomo, and from which the custodian bestowed upon my devotion certain small tufts of the fur. I have no question but this canopy and the flag-poles are equally genuine, and I counsel the reader by all means to see them.

There are many other objects to be seen in the curious museum of antique and mediæval art called the Opera del Duomo, especially the original sculptures of the Fonte Gaia; but the place is chiefly interesting as the outline, the colossal sketch in sculptured marble, of the cathedral as it was projected. The present structure rises amid the halting fragments of the mediæval edifice, which it has included in itself, without exceeding their extent; and from the roof there is an ineffable prospect of the city and the country, from which one turns again in still greater wonder to the church itself.

I had an even deeper sense of its vastness—the least marvelous of its facts—and a renewed sense of the domestication of the Italian churches, when I went one morning to hear a Florentine monk, famed for his eloquence, preach in the cathedral. An oblong canopy of coarse gray canvas had been stretched overhead in part of the great nave, to keep his voice from losing itself in the space around and above. The monk, from a pulpit built against one of the pillars, faced a dais, across the nave, where the archbishop sat in his chair to listen, and the planked floor between them was thronged with people sitting and standing, who came and went, as if at home, with a continued clapping of feet and banging of doors. All the time service was going on at several side-altars, where squads of worshipers were kneeling, indifferent alike to one another and to the sermon of the monk. Some of his listeners, however, wore a look of intense interest, and I myself was not without concern in his discourse, for I perceived that it was all in honor and compassion of the captive of the Vatican, and full of innuendo for the national government. It gave me some notion of the difficulties with which that government has to contend, and impressed me anew with its admirable patience and forbearance. Italy is unified, but many interests, prejudices, and ambitions are still at war within her unity.

## VI.

ONE night we of the Pension T. made a sentimental pilgrimage to the cathedral, to see it by moonlight. The moon was not so prompt as we, and at first we only had it on the baptistry and the campanile—a campanile to make one almost forget the Tower of Giotto. But before we came away one corner of the façade had caught the light, and hung richly bathed, tenderly etherealized in it. What was gold, what was marble before, seemed transmuted to the luminous substance of the moonlight itself, and rested there like some translucent cloud that “stooped from heaven and took the shape” of clustered arch and finial.

On the way home we passed the open portal of a palace, and made ourselves the guests of its noble court, now poured full of the moon, and dimly lighted by an exquisite lantern of beaten iron, which hung near a massive pillar at the foot of the staircase. The pillar divided the staircase, and lost its branchy top in the vault overhead; and there was something so consciously noble and dignified in the whole architectural presence that I should have been surprised to find that we had not stumbled upon an historic edifice. It proved to be the ancient palace of the Captain of the People—and I will thank the reader to imagine me a finer name than Capitano del Popolo for the head of such a democracy as Siena, whose earliest government, according to Alessandro Sozzini, was popular, after the Swiss fashion. Now the palace is the residence and property of the Grattanelli family, who have restored it and preserved it in the mediæval spirit, so that I suppose it is, upon the whole, the best realization of a phase of the past which one can see. The present Count Grattanelli—who may be rather a marquis or a prince, but who is certainly a gentleman of enlightened taste, and of a due sense of his Siena—keeps an apartment of the palace open to the public, with certain of the rooms in the original state, and store of armor and weapons in which the consequence of the old Captains of the People fitly masquerades. One must notice the beautiful doors of inlaid wood in this apartment, which are of the count's or marquis's or prince's own design; and not fail of two or three ceilings frescoed in dark colors, in dense, close designs and small panels, after what seems a fashion peculiar to Siena.

Now that I am in Boston, where there are so few private palaces open to the public, I wonder that I did not visit more of them in Siena; but I find no record of any such visits but this one in my note-books. It was not for want of inscripational provocation to pene-





ONE OF THE LISTENERS.

trate interiors that I failed to do so. They are tableted in Siena beyond almost anything I have seen. The villa outside the gate where the poet Manzoni once visited his daughter records the fact for the passing stranger; on the way to the station a house boasts that within it the dramatist Pietro Cossa, being there "the guest of his adored mother," wrote his Cecilia and the second act of his Sylla; in a palace near that of Socinus you are notified that Alfieri wrote several of his tragedies; and another proclaims that he frequented it "holding dear the friendship" of the lady of the house! In spite of all this, I can remember only having got so far as the vestibule and staircase — lovely and grand they were, too — of one of those noble Gothic palaces in Via Cavour; I was deterred from going farther by learning it was not the day when uninvited guests were received. I always kept in mind, moreover, the Palazzo Tolomei for the sake of that dear and fair lady who besought the traveler through purgatory —

"Ricorditi di me, che son la Pia;  
Siena mi fè, disfecemi Maremma,"—

and who was of the ancient name still surviving in Siena. Some say that her husband carried her to die of malaria in the marshes of the Maremma; some, that he killed her with his dagger; others, that he made his servants throw her from the window of his castle; and none are certain whether or no he had reason to murder her — they used to think there could be a reason for murdering wives in his day; even the good Gigli, of the Diario Senese, speaks of that "giusto motivo" Messer Nello may possibly have had. What is certain is that Pia was the most beautiful woman in Italy; and what is still more certain is that she was not a Tolomei at all, but only the widow of a Tolomei. Perhaps it was prescience of this fact that kept me from visiting the Tolomei palace for her sake. At any rate, I did not visit it, though I often stopped in the street before it, and dedicated a mistaken sigh to the poor lady who was only a Tolomei by marriage.

There were several other ladies of Siena, in past ages, who interested me. Such an one was the exemplary Onorata de' Principi Orsini, one of the four hundred Senese noblewomen who went out to meet the Emperor Frederick III. in 1341, when he came to Siena to espouse Leonora, Infanta of Portugal; a column near Porta Camollia still commemorates the exact spot where the Infanta stood to receive him. On this occasion the fair Onorata was, to the thinking of some of the other ladies, too simply dressed; but she defended herself against their censure, affirming that the "Sieneze gentlewomen should make a pomp of nothing but their modesty, since in other displays and feminine adornments the matrons of other and richer cities could easily surpass them." And at a ball that night, being asked who was the handsomest gentleman



A HOME AT SIENA.

present, she answered that she saw no one but her husband there. Is the estimable Onorata a trifle too sage for the reader's sympathy? Let him turn then to the Lady Battista Berti, wife of Achille Petrucci, who, at

to immortalize your name so long as the book of Montluc shall live; for in truth you are worthy of immortal praise, if ever women were so. As soon as the people took the noble resolution of defending their liberty, the ladies

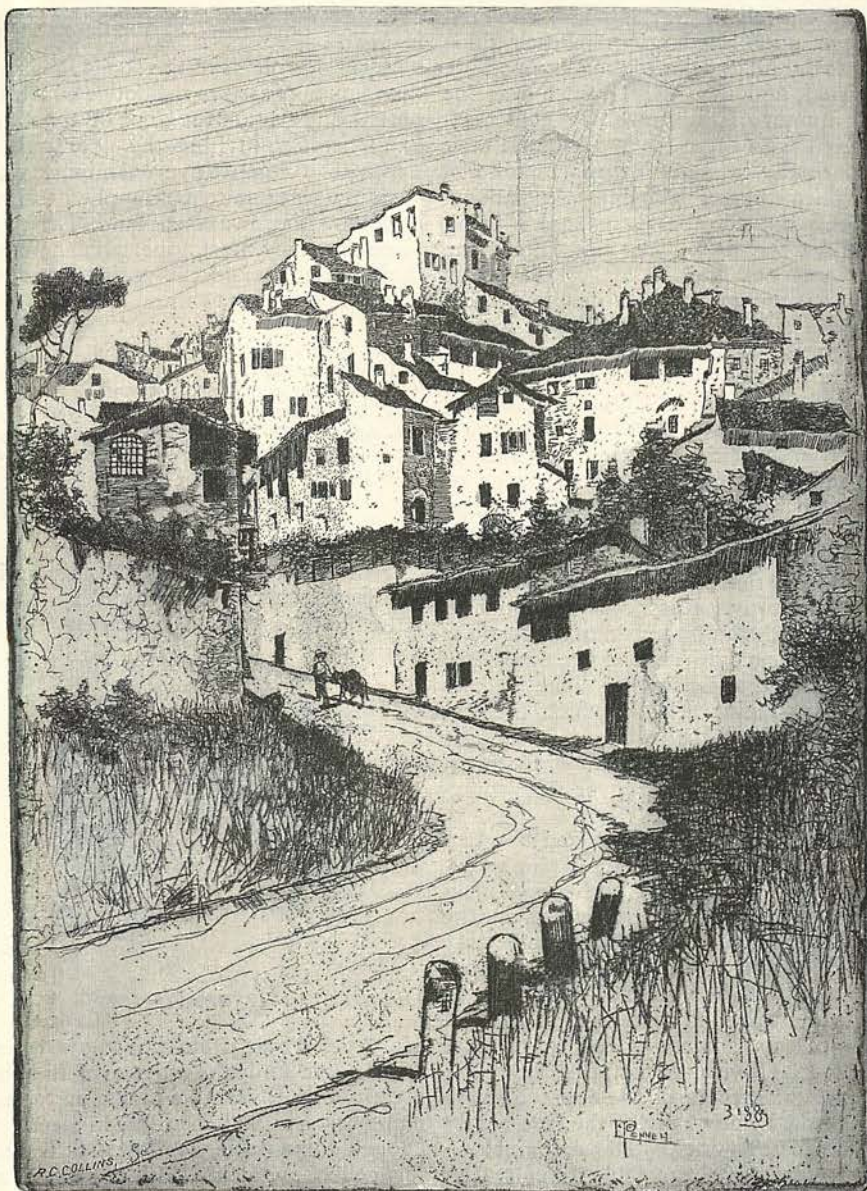


SIENESE FARM-HOUSE.

another ball in honor of the Emperor, spoke Latin with him so elegantly and with such spirit that he embraced her, and created her countess, and begged her to ask some grace of him; upon which this learned creature, instead of requesting the Emperor to found a free public library, besought him to have her exempted from the existing law which prohibited the wearing of jewels and brocade dresses in Siena. The careful Gigli would have us think that by this reply Lady Battista lost all the credit which her Latinity had won her; but it appears to me that both of these ladies knew very well what they were about, and each in her way perceived that the Emperor could appreciate a delicate stroke of humor as well as another. If there were time, and not so many questions of our own day pressing, I should like to inquire into all the imaginable facts of these cases; and I commend them to the reader, whose fancy cannot be so hard-worked as mine.

The great siege of Siena by the Florentines and Imperialists in 1554-5 called forth high civic virtues in the Sieneſe women, who not only shared all the hardships and privations of the men, but often their labors, their dangers, and their battles. "Never, Sieneſe ladies," gallantly exclaimed the brave Blaise de Montluc, Marshal of France, who commanded the forces of the Most Christian King in defense of the city, and who treats of the siege in his Commentaries, "never shall I fail

of the city of Siena divided themselves into three companies: the first was led by Lady Forteguerra, who was dressed in violet, and all those who followed her likewise, having her accouterment in the fashion of a nymph, short, and showing the buskin; the second by Lady Piccolomini, dressed in rose-colored satin, and her troops in the same livery; the third by Lady Livia Fausta, dressed in white, as was also all her following, and bearing a white ensign. On their flags they had some pretty devices; I would give a good deal if I could remember them. These three squadrons were composed of three thousand ladies — gentlewomen or citizenesses. Their arms were pickaxes, shovels, baskets, and fascines; and thus equipped, they mustered and set to work on the fortifications. Monsieur de Termes, who has frequently told me about it (for I had not then arrived), has assured me that he never saw in his life anything so pretty as that. I saw the flags afterwards. They had made a song in honor of France, and they sang it in going to the fortifications. I would give the best horse I have if I could have been there. And since I am upon the honor of these ladies, I wish those who come after us to admire the courage of a young Sieneſe girl, who, although she was of poor condition, still deserves to be placed in the first rank. I had issued an order when I was chosen Dictator that nobody, on pain of being punished, should fail to go on guard in his turn. This girl, seeing her



OUTSIDE A SIENESE GATE.

brother, whose turn it was, unable to go, takes his morion, which she puts on her head, his shoes, his buffalo-gorget; and with his halberd on her shoulders, goes off with the *corps de garde* in this guise, passing, when the roll is called, under the name of her brother, and stands sentinel in his place, without being known till morning. She was brought home in triumph. That afternoon Signor Cornelio showed her to me."

I am sorry that concerning the present ladies of Siena I know nothing except by the

scantiest hearsay. My chief knowledge of them, indeed, centers in the story of one of the Borghesi there, who hold themselves so very much higher than the Borghesi of Rome. She stopped fanning herself a moment while some one spoke of them. "Oh, yes; I have heard that a branch of our family went to Rome. But I know nothing about them."

What glimpse we caught of Sieneſe ſociety was at the theater—the lovely little theater of the Accademia dei Rozzi. This is one of the famous literary academies of Italy; it was

founded in the time of Leo X., and was then composed entirely of workmen, who confessed their unpolished origin in their title; afterwards the Academies of the Wrapped-up, the Twisted, and the Insipid (such was the fantastic humor of the prevailing nomenclature) united with these Rude Men, and their academy finally became the most polite in Siena. Their theater still enjoys a national fame, none but the best companies being admitted to its stage. We saw there the Rossi company of Turin—the best players by all odds, after the great Florentine Stentorello, whom I saw in Italy. Commendatore Rossi's is an exquisite comic talent—the most delicately amusing, the most subtly defined. In a comedy of Goldoni's ("A Curious Accident") which he gave, he was able to set the house in an uproar by simply letting a series of feelings pass over his face, in expression of the conceited, willful old comedy-father's progress from profound satisfaction in the elopement of his neighbor's daughter to a realization of the fact that it was his own daughter who had run away. Rossi, who must not be confounded with the tragedian of his name, is the first comedian who has ever been knighted in Italy, the theory being that since a comic actor might receive a blow which the exigency of the play forbade him to resent, he was unfit for knighthood. King Humbert seems somehow to have got over this prodigious obstacle.

The theater was always filled, and between the acts there was much drama in the boxes, where the gentlemen went and came, making their compliments to the ladies, in the old Italian fashion. It looked very easy and pleasant; and I wish Count Nerli, whose box we had hired one evening when he sent the key to the ticket-office to be let, had been there to tell us something of the people in the others. I wish, in fact, that we might have known something of the count himself, whom, as it is, I know only by the title boldly lettered on his box-door. The acquaintance was slight, but very agreeable. Before the evening was out I had imagined him in a dozen figures and characters; and I still feel that I came very near knowing a Siense count. Some English people, who became English friends, in our pension, had letters which took them into society, and they reported it very charming. Indeed, I heard at Florence, from others who knew it well, that it was pleasantly characterized by the number of cultivated people connected with the ancient university of Siena. Again, I heard that here, and elsewhere in Italy, husbands neglect their wives, and leave them dismal at home, while they go out to spend their evenings at

the clubs and cafés. Who knows? I will not even pretend to do so, though the temptation is great.

A curious phase of the social life in another direction appeared in the notice which I found posted one day on the door of the church of San Cristoforo inviting the poor girls of the parish to a competitive examination for the wedding-portions to be supplied to the most deserving from an ancient fund. They were advised that they must appear on some Sunday during Lent before the parish priest, with a petition certifying to these facts:

- "I. Poverty.
- "II. Good morals.
- "III. Regular attendance at church.
- "IV. Residence of six months in the parish.
- "V. Age between 18 and 30 years.
- "N. B. A girl who has won a dower in this or any other parish cannot compete."

## VIII.

THE churches are very rich in paintings of the Siense school, and the gallery of the Belle Arti, though small, is extremely interesting.



PICTURESQUE PEASANTS.

Upon the whole, I do not know where one could better study the progress of Italian painting, from the Byzantine period up to the great moment when Sodoma came in Siena. Oddly enough, there was a very lovely little Bellini in this collection, which, with a small Veronese, distinguished itself from the Tuscan canvases, by the mellow beauty of the Venetian coloring, at once. It is worse than useless to be specific about pictures, and if I have kept any general impression of the Siense work, it concerns the superior charm of the earlier frescoes, especially in the Public Palace. In the churches the best frescoes are at San Domenico, where one sees the exquisite chapel of St. Catherine painted by Sodoma, which I have already mentioned. After these one must reckon in interest the histories with which Pinturicchio has covered the whole library of the cathedral, and which are surpassingly de-

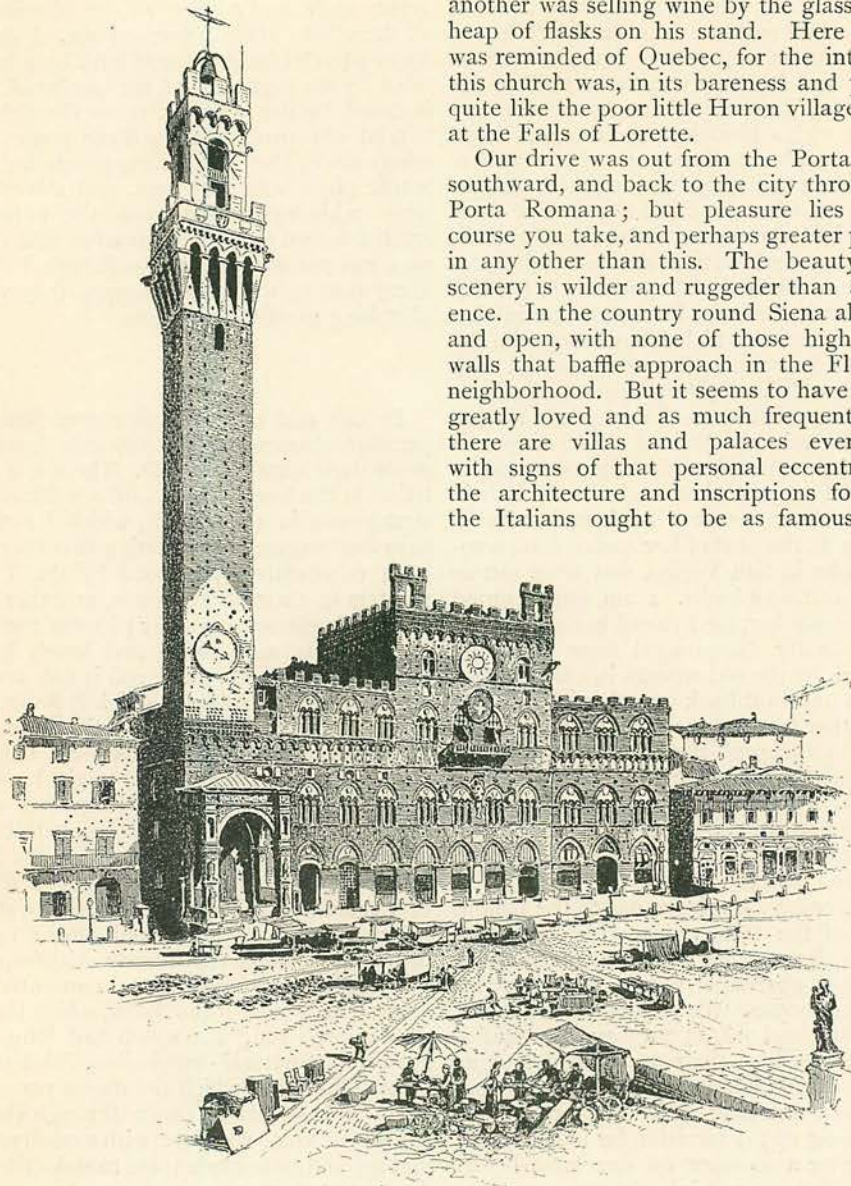
lightful in their quaint realism. For the rest, I have a vivid memory of a tendency in the Sieneſe painters to the more horriſic facts of Scripture and legend; they were terrible fellows for the Maſſacre of the Innocents, and treated it with a bloodier carefulneſs of detail than I remember to have noticed in any other ſchool; the moſt ſanguinary of theſe ſlaughters is in the Church of the Servi. But there is ſomething wholesome and human even in the moſt butcherly of their ſimple-minded carnages; it is where the allegoriſts get hold of horror that it becomes loathſome, as in that choir of a church, which I have forgotten the name of, where the ſtalls are decorated with winged death's heads, the pinions ſhown dropping with rottenneſs and decay around the ſkulls. Yet this too had its effectivenneſs; it ſaid what ſome people of that time were thinking; and I ſuppoſe that the buſt of a lady in a fashionable ruff, with a book in her hand, ſimpering at the buſt of her huſband in an oppoſite niche in San Vigilio, was once not ſo amusing as it now looks. I am rather proud of diſcovering her, for I found her after I had been diſtinctly diſcouraged from exploring the church by the old woman in charge. She was civil, but went back eagerly to her goſſip with another crone there, after ſaying: "The pictures in the roof are of no merit. They are beautiful, however." I liked this church, which was near our penſion, becauſe it ſeemed ſuch a purely little neighborhood affair; and I muſt have been about the only tourist who ever looked into it.

One afternoon we drove out to the famous convent of the Oſſervanza, which was ſuppreſſed with the other convents, but in which the piety of charitable people ſtill maintains fifty of the monks. We paſſed a company of them, young and old, on our way, bareheaded and barefooted, as their uſe is, and looking very fit in the landscape; they ſaluted us politely, and overtaking us in the porch of the church, rang up the ſacriſtan for us, and then, dropping for a moment on one knee before the door, diſappeared into the convent. The chapel is not very much to ſee, though there is a moſt beautiful Della Robbia there,—a Madonna and St. Thomas,—which I would give much to ſee now. When we had gone the round of the different objects, our ſacriſtan, who was very old and infirm, and viſibly foul in the brown robes which are charitable to ſo much dirt, roſe from the laſt altar before which he had knelt with a rheumatic's groans, and turning to the ladies with a malicious grin, told them that they could not be admitted to the cloiſters, though the gentlemen could come. We followed him through the long, dreary galleries, yawning with hundreds of

empty cells, and a ſenſe of the obſoleteneſs of the whole affair oppreſſed me. I do not know why this feeling ſhould have been heightened by the ſmallneſs of the gardened court incloſed by the cloiſters, or by the tinkle of a faint old piano coming from ſome room where one of the brothers was practicing. The whole place was very bare, and ſtared with freſh whitewash; but from the pervading ſmell I feared that this venerable relic of the paſt was not well drained—though I do not know that in the religious ages they valued plumbing greatly, anywhere.

## IX.

IN this and other drives about Siena the peculiar character of the volcanic landscape made itſelf continually felt. There is a deſolation in the treeleſs hills, and a wildneſs and ſtrangenneſs in their forms, which I can perhaps beſt ſuggeſt by repeating that they have been conſtantly reproduced by the Tuſcan painters in their backgrounds, and that moſt Judean landscapes in their pictures are faithful ſtudies of ſuch naked and lonely hills as billow round Siena. The ſoil is red, and but for the wine and oil with which it flows, however reluctantly, I ſhould ſay that it muſt be poor. Some of the hills look mere heaps of clay, ſuch as mighty geysers might have caſt up until at laſt they hid themſelves under the accumulation; and this ſeems to be the nature of the group amidſt which the battle of Montaperto was fought. I ſpeak from a very remote inſpection, for though we ſtated to drive there, we conſidered, after a mile or two, that we had no real intereſt in it now, either as Florentines or Sieneſe, and contented ourſelves with a look at the Arbia, which the battle "colored red," but which had long ſince got back its natural complexion. This ſtream—or ſome other which the driver paſſed off on us for it—flowed down through the uplands over which we drove, with a ſmall volume that ſeemed quite inadequate to ſlake the wide drought of the landscape, in which, except for the cypreſſes about the villas, no tree lifted its head. There were not even olives; even the vineyards had vaniſhed. The fields were green with well-ſtarted wheat, but of other huſbandry there was ſcarcely a ſign. Yet the peaſants whom we met were well dressed (to be ſure it was Sunday), and there was that air of comfort about the farmſteads which is ſeldom abſent in Tuſcany. All along the road were people going to veſpers, and theſe people were often girls, young and pretty, who, with their arms about one another's waists, walked three and four abreast, the wide brims of their ſtraw hats lifting round their faces like



TOWER OF THE MANGIA.

the disks of sunflowers. A great many of them were blonde; at least one in ten had blue eyes and red hair, and they must have been the far-descended children of those seigneurs and soldiers among whom Charlemagne portioned his Italian lands, marking to this day a clear distinction of race between the citizens and the contadini. By and by we came to a little country church, before which in the grassy piazza two men had a humble show of figs and cakes for sale in their wagon-beds, and

another was selling wine by the glass from a heap of flasks on his stand. Here again I was reminded of Quebec, for the interior of this church was, in its bareness and poverty, quite like the poor little Huron village church at the Falls of Lorette.

Our drive was out from the Porta Pisipini southward, and back to the city through the Porta Romana; but pleasure lies in any course you take, and perhaps greater pleasure in any other than this. The beauty of the scenery is wilder and ruggeder than at Florence. In the country round Siena all is free and open, with none of those high garden walls that baffle approach in the Florentine neighborhood. But it seems to have been as greatly loved and as much frequented, and there are villas and palaces everywhere, with signs of that personal eccentricity in the architecture and inscriptions for which the Italians ought to be as famous as the

English. Out of the Porta Camollia, in the Palazzo del Diavolo, which was the scene of stirring facts during the great siege, when the Siense once beat Duke Cosimo's Florentines out of it, the caprice of the owner has run riot in the decoration of the brick front, where heads of Turks and Saracens are everywhere thrusting out of the frieze and cornice. At Poggio Pini an inscription on the porter's lodge declares: "Count Casti de' Vecchi, jealous conservator of the ornaments of the above-

situated villa Poggio Pini, his glory, his care, placed me guardian of this approach."

The pines thus tenderly and proudly watched would not strike the American as worthy so much anxiety, but perhaps they are so in a country which has wasted its whole patrimony of trees, as we are now so wickedly wasting ours. The variety of timber which one sees in Tuscany is very small: pines, poplars, oaks, walnuts, chestnuts—that is the whole story of the forest growth. Its brevity impressed us particularly in our long drive to Belcaro, which I visited for its interest as the quarters of the Marquis of Marignano, the Imperialist general during the siege. Two cannon-balls imbedded in its walls recall the fight, with an appropriate inscription; but whether they were fired by Marignano while it was occupied by the Sienese, or by the Sienese after he took it, I cannot now remember. I hope the reader will not mind this a great deal, especially as I am able to offer him the local etymology of the name of Belcaro: *bel* because it is so beautiful, and *caro* because it cost so much. It is now owned by two brothers, rich merchants of Siena, one of whom lives in it, and it is approached through a landscape wild, and sometimes almost savage, like that all around Siena, but of more fertile aspect than that to the southward. The reader must always think of the wildness in Italy as different from our primeval wildness; it is the wildness of decay, of relapse. At one point a group of cypresses huddling about the armless statue of some poor god thrilled us with a note, like the sigh of a satyr's reed, from the antique world; at another, a certain wood-grown turn of the road, there was a brick stairway, which had once led to some pavilion of the hoop and bagwig age, and now, grown with thick moss

and long grasses, had a desolation more exquisite than I can express.

Belcaro itself, however, when we came to it, was in perfectly good repair, and afforded a satisfying image of a mediæval castle, walled and fossed about, and lifting its mighty curtains of masonry just above the smooth level of the ilex-tops that hedged it loftily in. Our carriage was ordered back out of the way, and walking into the court-yard we found one of the owners of Belcaro, helping himself to hitch up the fine dapple-gray which he presently drove to Siena, leaving us free of his castle. There was not very much to see within it, except the dining-hall, painted by Peruzzi with the Judgment of Paris. After we had admired this we were shown across the garden to the little lodge which the same painter has deliciously frescoed with indecenter fables and allegories than any outside of the Palazzo del Te at Mantua. Beside it is the chapel in which he has indifferently turned his hand, with the same brilliant facility, to the illustration of holy writ and legend. It was a curious civilization. Both lodge and chapel were extraordinarily bright and cheerful.

From these works of art we turned and climbed to the superb promenade which crowns the wide wall of the castle. In the garden below, a chilly bed of anemones blew in the March wind, and the top where we stood was swept by a frosty blast, while the waning sunshine cast a sad splendor over the city on her hill seven miles away. A delicate rose-light began to bathe it, in which the divine cathedral looked like some perfect shape of cloud-land; while the clustering towers and palaces and gates and the wandering sweep of the city wall seemed the details of a vision too lovely for waking eyes.

W. D. Howells.



GOING TO TOWN.