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Our lady of August and the pallo of Sien



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OUR LADY OF AUGUST  
AND  
THE PALIO OF SIENA.





OUR LADY OF AUGUST  
AND  
THE PALIO OF SIENA

BY  
WILLIAM HEYWOOD.

Noi ci traemmo alla città di Siena,  
La quale è posta in parte forte e sana,  
Di leggiadria, di bei costumi piena,  
Di vaghe donne e d' homini cortesi,  
Con aer dolce lucida e serena.



SIENA,  
ENRICO TORRINI, PUBLISHER.

—  
1899.

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FLORENCE, 1899. — Printed by G. BARBERA.

TO  
MY WIFE

I DEDICATE THIS BOOK  
IN MEMORY OF THE PALII  
WHICH WE HAVE SEEN  
TOGETHER.



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## PREFACE.

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As far as I am aware, with the exception of three or four fugitive articles which have appeared from time to time in some of the magazines, no account of the *Palio of Siena* has ever been written in the English language.

In the following pages I have endeavored to supply this want ; with what success I leave it to the reader to decide.

It only remains for me to express my heart-felt gratitude to Signor Cav. Alessandro Lisini, to Signor Francesco Ban-

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dini Piccolomini, to Signor Prof. Carlo Falletti-Fossati and to Signor Riccardo Brogi, for the courteous permission which they have accorded me to avail myself of their invaluable researches ; as also to the Rev. Signor P. A. Alessandri, who has most kindly provided me with much interesting information concerning the modern *Palio*.

WILLIAM HEYWOOD.

Siena, *Villa Venlena*, May 1899.

# CONTENTS.

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INTRODUCTORY .. .. .	Page	I
CHAPTER I... — Sena Vetus Civitas Virginis. .. .		11
» II.. — Of the Festival of Our Lady of August .. .. .		96
» III. — Ancient Sienese Pastimes .. .. .		116
» IV. — Of the Contrade of Siena, and herein of the evolution of the Palio .. .. .		147
» V.. — Santa Maria di Provenzano .. .. .		182
» VI. — The modern Palio .. .. .		196

## APPENDIX.

No. 1. — The seventeen Contrade. .. .. .	253
No. 2. — Benedictio Equorum et Animalium .. .. .	256
No. 3. — Sonetto ad Angelo Volpi .. .. .	258

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OUR LADY OF AUGUST  
AND  
THE PALIO OF SIENA.

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INTRODUCTORY.

At the junction of the three hills whereupon *Siena torreggia e siede*, in the very centre of the city, stands the many-memored PIAZZA DEL CAMPO. The same site was probably occupied by the vanished forum of the Roman Colony: and here, peradventure, it was that the old *Senensium plebes*, as fierce, intractable and tumultuous as their mediæval descendants, laid violent hands upon the senator Manlius Patritius.

Here, after the taking of Grosseto, on the day of St. Mary of August, in the year of grace 1224, "the Sienese, for joy of that victory, held high festival and lighted bonfires and closed the shops; "

while, in one of those same shops, on another gala-day, nearly a century later, Dante Alighieri stood, so absorbed in the study of an ancient codex that he read on undisturbed in spite of the shouts and laughter of the crowd who made merry without.

Here, four days after the battle of Montaperto, the men of Montalcino made submission before the victorious *Carroccio* "and were reconciled and accepted as subjects of the Magnificent Commune of Siena." Here Provenzano Salvani humbly begged alms of his fellow-citizens

. . . . per trar l' amico suo di pena.

Here, in later times, the *barattieri* set up their booths, walled with branches and roofed with canvas, wherein the good citizens of Siena might lawfully play *ad ludum zardi*. And here the candidates for knighthood erected their pavilions, and feasted all who came, giving and receiving gifts. Moreover, down to 1884—in which year the *mercato nuovo* was built where of old the criminals of the Republic were mutilated and put to death—

the daily market was held in the Piazza, the positions to be occupied by the vendors of the different wares being fixed by statute as early as the XIVth century.

Nor has the Campo lacked its scenes of carnage and of tumult. Again and again, have its stones been crimsoned with blood and blackened by fire ; and, scarcely a century ago, its beautiful old palaces looked down, calm and unmoved,—pray God for the last time—upon such a scene of ferocity and suffering as can never have been surpassed throughout all the “ splendid, stupid, glorious ” middle-ages. For here, on Friday 28th July 1799, in the name of the Blessed Virgin of Comfort and to the cry of *Viva Maria !*, a howling mob of fanatics, drunk with wine and slaughter, burned in one vast fire nineteen Jews, men and women together, using for their purpose the fragments of the Tree of Liberty, which had been set up before the Fonte Gaia, little more than three months earlier.

In a word, the history of its Piazza is the history of Siena.

But that with which we are at present concerned is the *Palio*; and for us the Piazza is chiefly interesting in view of that fact, since it is here that the *Palio* is run twice yearly, on the 2nd July and the 16th August.

And what manner of thing is this *Palio*?

Most of the Guide Books describe it as a horse-race. So it is in a sense; but such a definition, albeit perhaps verbally correct, is eminently calculated to mislead, and certainly implies, in one direction more, and in another less, than the actual truth. In fact, a single glance at the spot selected for the contest will show that, if indeed the *Palio* be a horse-race, it must of necessity be a very strange one.

The Piazza consists of a semicircular area paved with brick and surrounded by a roadway composed of flag-stones. The central or paved portion is shaped like a shallow cup, and has been not inaptly compared to the concave of a huge sea-shell; the ten converging lines of stone, which divide its

superficies, indubitably bearing some resemblance to conchyliaceous striations. But, I conceive that, for our purpose, it may best be likened to a colossal barber's basin, inclined at a considerable angle and flattened on the lower side. And it is round the rim or margin of this basin—which, of course, corresponds to the roadway spoken of above—that the Palio is run.

No course more manifestly unfitted for the urging of high mettled animals to their full speed could well be imagined; and its steep descent towards the Via di San Martino, with the dangerous turn in front of the Palazzo Piccolomini, have been responsible for many accidents. In August 1898, one horse was killed outright, and two more were so seriously injured that they died shortly afterwards. It is, however, no part of the mission of the Palio of Siena to encourage the breeding of high-class stock, and what little emulation is displayed by the animals which take part in it is generally purely artificial.

Then too, the word *palio* by no means in-

variably signifies a horse-race. The ancient Palio of Verona, to which Dante alludes, in the fifteenth canto of his *Inferno*, and which was run for the *drappo verde*, was a foot race; while the *bufalate*, which were so common in Siena in the first half of the seventeenth century, were also known as *palii*. Indeed, we may go further and state, without fear of contradiction, that the term does not necessarily involve any idea of a race at all; since, in its primary sense, it was nothing more than a banner or mantle, being in fact a corruption of the latin *Pallium*; and it only obtained its secondary meaning through the natural connection of ideas between the prize ordinarily offered for such a race and the race itself.

Thus a Florentine annalist of the XIVth century speaks of the banner of the Guelphs as *il paglio della Parte Guelfa*,<sup>1</sup> while Giovanni Villani,

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<sup>1</sup> *Diario d' anonimo fiorentino*, among the "Documenti di Storia Italiana," brought out by the Royal Commission for Tuscany, Umbria and the Marches. Vol. vi, page 298.

in the first book of his Chronicle, tells us how, on the feast of St. John the Baptist, it was ordained *che si corresse uno palio di sciamito*,<sup>1</sup> thus using the same word to describe, at one and the same time, both the race itself and the prize or trophy which was presented to the victor.

Moreover, if we ignore for the nonce, the original meaning and etymology of the word, and the peculiar unfitness of the Sienese Piazza to be used as a race-course, we shall find a further anomaly in the fact that the Palio has a distinctly religious character; the banner which is given to the winning *Contrada* being invariably ornamented with a representation of the Blessed Virgin, in whose honor, indeed, the race is run.

In 1363, the Sienese, hoping that by the intercession of Our Lady the pestilence which was consuming them might be stayed, ordered *quod camerarius et quatuor provisores Biccherne possint et teneantur emere palium facereque, quod pro eo*

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<sup>1</sup> VILLANI, I, 60.

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*curratur in proximo festo vencturo sancte Marie de mense Augusti, secundum modum hactenus consuetum.*<sup>1</sup>

Throughout the XIVth century similar races were run on various holy days, and in honor of divers saints; as, for example, on Corpus Domini and on the festivals of S. Ambrogio, of S. Ansano and of the other patrons of the city; while, in the autumn of 1359, a special palio was held to celebrate the arrival of certain sacred relics which had been procured for the Spedale della Scala. Indeed the organization of a palio, a tournament or a bull-fight seems to have become so usual a method of paying honor to the celestial powers that, when it was resolved, in 1526, to hold a more than ordinarily solemn festival of thanksgiving, it was felt necessary to declare that it was not intended to be a feast day " of bulls or other games devoid

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<sup>1</sup> *R. Archivio di Stato di Siena*, Cons. Generale, ad annum, fo. 39<sup>t</sup>. " Misc. Stor. Sen. " Vol. IV (1896), page 202.



of evil, but of spiritual things, such as confessions, communions and the like.<sup>1</sup> ”

Facts such as these put us upon enquiry, and may well lead us to suspect that not only is the Palio something more than a “ horse-race,” but that it may, perhaps, even possess other and more enduring features of interest than those which are suggested to our minds by the statement of the excellent Baedeker that it “ presents a very at-

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<sup>1</sup> Delib. di Balla ad annum, n° 110, c. 61-63, published by A. TOTI in his *Atti di Votazione della Città di Siena e del Senese alla SS. Vergine madre di G. C.* (Siena, 1870). Votazione IV, page 40. In *La Città diletta di Maria*, GIROLAMO GIGLI says: “ Debbesi riferire a conto di tributo verso Maria la festa del Corso del Palio in Piazza nel giorno della sua Visitazione; ” while, a few pages earlier, he attributes the “ frequenti castighi del Cielo, o di carestie, o di spopolazioni, o di altre rovine ” to the fact that the Festival of the Assumption was, in his day, no longer honored as of old. And in this connection he mentions “ quelle magnifiche rappresentazioni di quei pubblici insigni spettacoli, che ad onore della gran Signora si preparavano nella piazza del Campo; ciò erano Bufalate, Cacce del Toro e simili. ”

tractive scene.<sup>1</sup> " What it really is, it is the object of the following pages to explain. The subject is a wide one, and I warn the reader that in order to obtain a clear understanding of the origin and meaning of this strange mediæval custom, which has been handed down to us across the ages, it will be necessary to follow many and devious ways, some of which may seem at first sight to have no connection with the goal in view, but all of which will, I trust, be found to converge at last towards a common centre—the PALIO OF SIENA.

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<sup>1</sup> See Baedeker's *Central Italy* (edition of 1893), page 22.

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CHAPTER THE FIRST.

SENA VETUS CIVITAS VIRGINIS.

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Maria advocata  
Mediatrix optima  
Inter Christum  
Et Senam suam.

Assembled is in thee magnificence,  
With mercy goodnesse, and with swich pitee,  
That thou, that art the sonne of excellence,  
Nat oonly helpest hem that preyen thee,  
But often tyme, of thy benygnytee,  
Ful frely, er that men thyn help biseche,  
Thou goost biforn and art hir lyves leche.

CHAUCER, *Second Nun's Tale*.

I.

It is well known that at the dawn of the Communal Era the institutions of Italy, like those of the rest of Christendom, were soaked and permeated by feudalism, and that feudal also, at least in their inception, were the Communes themselves. Indeed the feudal theory was even extended to things celestial, and the Emperor, as lord paramount of the

world, was said "to hold direct from God." Bearing this in mind, we are the better able to understand the peculiar feelings with which the Sienese regarded the Blessed Virgin after the solemn act of dedication whereby, in 1260, they constituted themselves her vassals, and her the suzerain of their Commune and of its contado.

The occasion was one of special peril. The Florentines, who had invaded the Sienese territory without opposition by the way of the Val di Pesa, were advancing upon the city, and had sent ambassadors from their camp at Pieve Asciata to demand immediate surrender. The hostile army included levies from Bologna, Prato, Volterra, Samminiato, Colle di Val d'Elsa and San Gimignano, and was further augmented by troops from Orvieto, Perugia and Arezzo, to say nothing of a thousand knights under the Count Aldobrandino Rosso of Pitigliano, and six hundred Sienese *fuorusciti* under Pepo Visconti da Campiglia. In all they must have numbered close upon forty thousand fighting men. One chronicler says fifty-six

thousand; while Malavolti, without committing himself to any particular cipher, tells us that the army was "tremendo per la moltitudine, se non per altra qualità sua.<sup>1</sup>"

It was the 2nd of September and the Council of the *Ventiquattro*, the heads of the State, were in session in the Church of San Cristofano in the Piazza Tolomei, when the Florentine envoys arrived, and, "without making any reverence or obeisance," delivered their message in these words: "We will that this city shall be forthwith dismantled, and that all the walls shall be levelled with the ground, that we may enter and depart at our pleasure, and that we may so enter and so depart in such place as we may choose. And further, we will to place a *Signoria* in every Terzo of Siena at our pleasure; in like manner, to build forthwith a strong fortress in Camporegi, and to garrison and provision it, and to maintain the same for our magnificent and potent Commune

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<sup>1</sup> MALAVOLTI, II at cte 14, 15.

of Florence ; and this right quickly, without any delay. As for you, if ye do not do all that we have commanded you, ye may await with certainty to be besieged by our potent Commune of Florence. And we warn you that, in such case, we are resolved to have no pity. Give us then your answer at once."

And, continues the chronicler,<sup>1</sup> " the *Ventiquattro*, having heard at the mouths of the ambassadors these iniquitous and wicked demands, replied to them after this manner : ' We have heard and understood that which ye have demanded, and we bid you return to the captain and to the commissaries of your Commune, and to say unto them that we will give them an answer face to face.' Then the ambassadors departed from Siena, and went to the camp of the Florentines, which was now near to Montaperto. For,

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<sup>1</sup> *La sconfitta di Montaperto secondo il manoscritto di Niccolò di Giovanni di Francesco Ventura*, published by GIUSEPPE PORRI, in his " *Miscellanea Storica Sanese*." (Siena, 1844).

while the ambassadors were in Siena, they had departed from Pieve Asciata, and had pitched their camp between the Malena and the Valdibiena, in the level spot which is called *le Cortine*. And thither went the Florentine ambassadors, and delivered their message to the captain and to the commissaries as the *Ventiquattro* had said unto them, that they would answer them face to face. And then, the said troops, in the said place, be-thought them to encamp and to abide, awaiting the said reply of the Sienese."

Meanwhile in Siena was great dread, and more than one of the councillors, whether through treachery or through fear, advised that "in something the Florentines should be pleased and contented, lest worse things come upon us." Nor can we greatly marvel at their pusillanimity, when we remember that, for well-nigh a century, the City of the Lily had pursued her triumphant course, vanquishing all her enemies. At Asciano, at Montalto, at Calcinaia sull'Arno, at Montaia and at Pontedera, the Sienese had been hopelessly routed;

their contado had been overrun and devastated until the country folk had begun to migrate into Florentine territory, leaving their flame-blackened homesteads and ruined vineyards;<sup>1</sup> while Montalcino and Montepulciano had shaken off their allegiance and had allied themselves with the Guelph Commune. Verily the statement of Sanzanome, that he had never seen or heard that the Sienese had defeated the Florentines, was, with all its exaggeration, something more than an empty boast.<sup>2</sup>

However, there were gallant spirits in Siena who did not yet wholly despair; and by the influence of Provenzano Salvani and of the Count Giordano, who had been sent to the assistance of the city, by King Manfred, with a force of eight

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<sup>1</sup> See Professor ZDEKAUER'S edition of the *Costituto del Comune di Siena dell' anno 1262* (Milano, 1897). Distinction III, rubric 340.

<sup>2</sup> *Gesta Florentinorum* (Florentine edition), page 134. "Hoc tamen affirmo quod senenses superare florentinos non vidi nec audivi quod in bello fuissent in tabula cum eisdem."



hundred German men at arms, it was finally resolved to give battle to the enemy.

" Now the citizens of Siena had heard of the cruel demand of the Florentines,... and all the city was moved. And all the people left their dwellings and came to S. Cristofano; and so great was the multitude of the people who were in the Piazza Tolomei and through all the streets, that scarcely were they able to contain them.

" And when they beheld this, the *Ventiquattro*, who ruled and governed the city of Siena, forthwith assembled a council; and it was proposed to make a syndic, who should have full preeminence and power, and should embody in his own person the authority which belonged to the whole body of the citizens who ruled the Commune collectively; and that he should be empowered to give, grant, sell and pledge Siena and its contado as to him might seem advisable.

" As if inspired by God, the said Councillors, by common consent, chose for syndic a man of perfect and good life, and of the best qualities which at

that time could be found in Siena, by name Buonguida Lucari. To him was given full and free authority and power, as much as had the whole body of the city, as is said above. And, while this man was being elected syndic, our spiritual father, messer the Bishop, caused the bell to be rung to call together the clergy, and made to assemble all the clergy of Siena, priests, canons and monks, and all the religious orders, in the Church of the Duomo of Siena. And, all the clergy being gathered together as you have heard, messer the Bishop spake briefly to those clerics who were there, and said : *Tantum est ministri Virginis Dei, etc.* And in his discourse he taught all those clergy how it was their duty to pray to God, and to his most holy Virgin Mary, and to all the Saints for the people and for the city, that God would vouchsafe to preserve them from so great ruin and subjection ; even as he delivered Nineveh through fasting and prayer, that so it might please God to deliver Siena from the fury of the Florentines and from destruction at their

hands. And he commanded that every man should go in procession, bare-footed, through the Duomo, singing in a loud voice psalms and spiritual songs, with litanies and with many prayers.

" Now, while messer the Bishop was, as you have heard, making procession with his clergy in the Duomo, God, by reason of the prayers of the clergy and of all good people who prayed to him throughout the city—God, moved to compassion by the prayers of his mother, suddenly put it in the heart of the syndic, namely of Buonaguida, to rise and speak as follows. And he spake in so loud a voice that he was heard by those citizens who were without in the Piazza di S. Cristofano. ' As you, Signori of Siena, know, we have prayed the protection of the King Manfred; now, it appears to me that we should give ourselves, our goods and our persons, the city and the contado, to the Queen of Life Eternal; that is to Our Lady Mother, the Virgin Mary. To make this gift may it please you all to bear me company.'

" As soon as he had said these words, Buona-

guida stripped himself to his shirt, and bare-footed and bare-headed with a rope around his neck, came forth into the presence of all those citizens, and, in his shirt, betook himself toward the Duomo. And all the people who were there followed him; and those whom he met upon his way went with him; and, for the most part, they were bare-footed and without their cloaks, and no man had any thing upon his head. And he went bare-footed repeating over and over: ‘Glorious Virgin Mary, Queen of Heaven, aid us in our great need, that we may be delivered out of the hand of our enemies the Florentines—those lions who wish to devour us.’ And all the people said: ‘Madonna, Queen of Heaven, we entreat thy compassion.’ And so they reached the Duomo.

” And messer the Bishop went through the Duomo in procession. At the high altar, before Our Lady, he began to sing the *Te Deum laudamus*, in a loud voice. And as he began, Buonavida reached the door of the Duomo, with the people following him, and commenced to cry

with a loud voice : *Misericordia*—the said Buonguida and all the people, *Misericordia*—. At which cry messer the Bishop turned himself about with all his clergy, and come to meet the said Buonguida. When they were come together, each man made reverence, and Buonguida fell upon his face upon the ground. Messer the Bishop raised him up and gave him the kiss of peace ; and so all those citizens kissed one another on the mouth. And this was at the lower part of the choir of the Duomo.

" Then, holding one another by the hand, messer the Bishop and Buonguida went to the altar before Our Mother the Virgin Mary, and kneeled down with great crying and continual tears. This Buonguida remained stretched out upon the ground, and all the people and women, with very great weeping and sobbing, waited for the space of a quarter of an hour. Then Buonguida alone raised himself upon his feet and stood erect before Our Mother, the Virgin Mary, and spake many wise and discreet words, among which

were these : ‘ Gracious Virgin, Queen of Heaven, mother of sinners, to thee I, a miserable sinner, give, grant and recommend (*ti do e dono e raccomando*) this city and the contado of Siena. And I pray thee, Mother of Heaven, that thou wilt be pleased to accept it, although, to one so powerful as thou art, it is but a little gift. And likewise I pray and supplicate thee to guard, free and defend our city from the hands of our enemies the Florentines, and from whomsoever may desire to injure us or to bring upon us anguish and destruction.’

” These words being said, messer the Bishop ascended into the pulpit and preached a very beautiful sermon, teaching the people of unity and exhorting them to love one another, to forgive those who had done them wrong, and to confess and communicate. And he entreated them to unite to place this city and their persons under the protection of the glorious Virgin Mary, and to go with him and with his clergy in procession.

” And in this procession, before them all was

carried the carven crucifix which stands in the Duomo, above the altar of S. Jacomo Interciso, beside the campanile.<sup>1</sup> Next followed all the monks, and then came a canopy, and under the canopy was Our Mother the Virgin Mary. Hard by was messer the Bishop, and he was bare-footed ; and at his side was Buonaguida, in his shirt and with a rope about his neck, as you have heard. Then followed all the Canons of the Duomo, bare-footed and bare-headed. They went singing holy psalms and litanies and prayers. And behind them came all the people, bare-footed and uncovered, and all the women bare-footed, and many with their hair dishevelled, ever recommending themselves to God and to his mother the Virgin Mary, and saying *Pater nosters* and *Ave Marias* and other prayers.... And so they went in procession even to the Church of San Cristofano and into the Campo, and returned to the Duomo, where they remained to confess

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<sup>1</sup> This crucifix is said to be the one which is to be seen to-day above the altar of the first chapel in the northern transept of the Duomo.

and to receive the sacrament, and to make peace with one another. And he who was the most injured sought out his enemy to make with him perfect and good accord.

" And thereafter, when he had confessed and was in perfect charity with all men, the said Buonaguida left the Duomo with a little company, and returned to San Cristofano; and there, together with the *Ventiquattro*, as if inspired by God, they deliberated well and wisely.

" Now these things befel on Thursday the third day of September. And, nearly all night long, the people thronged to confess and to make peace one with the other. He who had received the greater injury went about seeking his enemy to kiss him on the mouth and to pardon him. In this they consumed the greater part of the night.

" And when the morning was come, the *Ventiquattro*, who ruled and governed Siena, sent three criers—into every Terzo one—proclaiming and crying: ' Valorous citizens, make ready! Arm yourselves! Take your perfect armour; and let



each man, in the name of Our Mother the Virgin Mary, follow his proper banner, ever recommending himself to God and to his Mother.'

" And hardly was the proclamation finished when all the citizens flew to arms. The father did not wait for the son, nor one brother for another ; and so they went toward the Porta San Viene. And thither came all the standard bearers. The first was that of San Martino, first from reverence for the saint, and also because that Terzo was near to the gate. The second was that of the city, with a very great army of people and well equipped. The third was the royal banner of Camollia, which represented the mantle of Our Mother, the Virgin Mary, and was all white and shining, fair and pure. Behind that banner came a great multitude of people, citizens, footsoldiers and horsemen ; and with this company were many priests and monks, some with weapons and some without, to aid and comfort the troops ; and all were of good will, of one mind and of one purpose, and well disposed against our enemies the

Florentines, who with so great vehemence had demanded things unrighteous and contrary to reason.

" Now, all the men being gone forth, those devout women who remained in Siena, together with messer the Bishop and the clergy, commenced betimes on Friday morning a solemn procession with all the relics which were in the Duomo and in all the churches of Siena. And they went from one church to another; the clergy singing divine psalms, litanies and prayers, and the women all bare-footed, in coarse garments, ever praying to God that he would send back to them their fathers, sons, brothers and husbands. And all with great weeping and wailing went on that procession, ever calling upon the Virgin Mary.

" Thus they went all Friday, and all that day they fasted. When even was come, the procession returned to the Duomo, and there they all knelt, and so remained while messer the Bishop said the litanies, with many prayers, to the honor and glory of God and of his and our Mother. There-

after they made confession; and also there were offered up many fervent prayers to the glory of God and of the Virgin Mary, always entreating her for the city of Siena, and for all its contado: 'Especially we beseech thee, Mother most holy, that thou wilt give assistance and valor and great courage to us, thy people, to the end that we may, by thy aid, obtain the victory over our enemies and over those who wish or are able to injure us; whereby the so great pride and wickedness of those accursed dogs and iniquitous Florentines may be abased and brought to naught. And also we pray thee, oh, Our Mother, that the Florentines may not have strength, nor courage, nor valor, nor any power of resistance against the people of Siena, who are thy people. And thou, Madonna our Mother, give help and wisdom to this thy city'.

"And now that we have told of messer the Bishop, our spiritual father, and of the devout citizens and women, how they besought God and his Mother Saint Mary to give victory to the

city of Siena and to its people, we will speak of the ordered legions of all the army.

" The day commenced to break ; and it was that blessed day Friday the third of September in the year aforesaid : so being drawn up in battle array they commenced their march towards the Bozzone. Ever the squadrons kept close together, that of the captain of the Commune of Siena, and that of Messer the Count Giordano.... So one company followed the other, always close together. And they held on their way towards the Bozzone. All went calling on the name of our Lord God, and of his Mother, the Virgin Mary ; and to her they ever commended themselves, beseeching her to give them help, and strength and courage and power against those wicked and perfidious Florentines. Thus praying, they came to the foot of a hill which is called the Poggio de' Ropoli. Which hill was over against the camp of the Florentines."

And, says Giovanni Villani, when the Guelph army, which was expecting with confidence the

surrender of the city, " beheld the Germans and the other knights and the people of Siena come towards them as though they intended to give battle, they marvelled greatly and were much afraid<sup>1</sup> "—a statement which is corroborated by the Sienese chroniclers, who embellish their narratives by the introduction of supernatural incidents ; for, they tell us that the Captain of the Florentines had with him a familiar spirit—*il diavolo rinchiuso in una lampolla*—who, being interrogated, informed him that he was foredoomed to die between the evil and the good (*fra 'l male e 'l bene*)—a saying which disquieted him greatly when he learned that the two streams between which he had encamped his army were called respectively *la Biena* and *la Malena*. Moreover that night the Florentine sentries " beheld as it were a mantle, most white, which covered all the camp of the Sienese and the city of Siena. And thereat they marvelled greatly, and some said: ' It is nothing

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<sup>1</sup> G. VILLANI, VI, 79.

but the smoke of the great fires which the Sienese have made'. But others said: 'Not so, for if it were smoke it would drift away, whereas this abideth ever in the same place, as ye see. Wherefore this must be more than smoke.' And there were those who said that to them it seemed to be the mantle of Our Mother the Virgin Mary, the guardian and defender of the people of Siena. So said many in the camp of the Florentines....

" And when this mantle was seen by the Sienese over the camp and over the city of Siena, they fell upon their knees upon the earth, with tears, saying: 'Glorious Virgin, we beseech thee that thou wilt protect us and deliver us out of the hand of our enemies, and that they may not have force or courage against us.' And all said: 'This is a great miracle; this is an answer to the prayers of our father messer the Bishop, and of his holy clergy, and of the righteous women and men who have remained in Siena in his company; and ever they are praying to God and to his Mother the Virgin Mary, beseeching them to give

us help and strength against those dogs the Florentines.' ”

With the more minute details of the battle itself :

lo strazio `e il grande scempio  
Che fece l'Arbia colorata in rosso,

we are not concerned. And indeed, the story has been told so often that it is not necessary to repeat it.<sup>1</sup> Suffice it to record the closing scenes of the grim tragedy. After the treason of Bocca degli Abati, when the men at arms had ridden amain out of the battle, and the foot-soldiers were scattered abroad in their flight, like seed cast by the hand of the sower, the flower of the Florentine

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<sup>1</sup> Probably the best description of the battle is to be found in C. PAOLI'S *Battaglia di Montaperti*, published in the "Bulletino della Società Senese di Storia Patria Municipale," volume II. This in connection with the *Libro di Montaperti* (vol. IX, of the "Documenti di Storia Italiana") should furnish all the information which can be demanded by the most exigent of students.

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army collected around the *carroccio*, and the banners which they had been given to guard; and there, at the foot of the Poggiarone, made their last memorable stand. Above them still floated the proud standard of the people of Florence, and better was it to die at its foot than to see it fall into the hands of the hated Sienese, or their own still more hated *fuorusciti*. Then spake they comfortable words the one to the other, each man bidding his fellow to be of good courage and to defend that *carroccio* and those banners which, in so many wars in the days that were past, they had followed to victory. They reminded each other that by no means must they bring shame upon the haughty name of Florentine, and that to survive were infamy. They kissed those honored trophies, and covered them with their bodies, and, long after all hope was dead and their allies and the bulk of their fellow citizens were already in headlong flight, they still fought on disdaining to yield. So determined was their resistance and so furious their valor that the whole Sienese army



failed to conquer them, and the *carroccio* was only taken when the last of its defenders lay stark in death at its side.<sup>1</sup>

Then, all being over, the victors, and more especially the Germans, vied with one another in befouling the Guelph ensigns, and in trampling them into the mire, thus revenging the great despite done to the royal standard of King Manfred on the day of Santa Petronilla. And from all the Sienese army arose a great shout. "They are broken! They are broken! Smite them, smite them, Oh valorous host. Let not one of them escape!" "And," writes the fierce old chronicler, "it was astonishing to see the great butchery that they made of those dogs of Florentines.... And

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<sup>1</sup> LEONARDO ARETINO, *Ist. Fior.*, lib. II.

Even the Sienese chronicler Aldobrandini, albeit in words of scant courtesy, testifies to the gallantry of the Florentines. "Ma come el peccatore, che è indurato nella mala vita, e che s'avvede della sua ruina e non la fugge, così s'avollieno loro come se fussero ciechi, tanto che capitavano male." See PORRI'S *Misc. Stor. Senese*, page 21.

the slaughter ever increased, and so furious was the press that if one fell to earth he might by no means regain his feet again, but was trampled to death. And so great were the piles of slaughtered men and of horses that it was difficult to pass them to smite what remained of the enemy. And the blood stood ankle-deep as it were a lake. Think ye how many were dead!.... Then rose the Malena and ran bank-high with blood, and flowed so strongly that it would have sufficed to turn four great water-mills. Such was the abundance of the blood of the Florentines and of their adherents which was shed that day.... And the valorous people of Siena ever followed them, butchering them as a butcher slays the animals in a slaughter house. And seeing this, those of Lucca, of Arezzo and of Orvieto, and likewise those of the Val d'Elsa, namely the men of Colle, of S. Gimignano and of Volterra, and certain folk of Prato and of Pistoia, and especially what few were left alive of the people of Lucca and of Arezzo—seeing this, to wit the great slaughter

that was made of them—suddenly turned aside and fled towards Montaperto; and there they made a stand, wotting well that they could not escape, so hotly were they pursued by the Sienese. And all those others fled this way and fled that, and knew not whither to go to save themselves. And each man cried: ‘I surrender myself prisoner:’ but there was none that would accept his surrender, for they smote them all with the sword. Wherefore it availed them nothing to say: ‘*Misericordia*, I surrender;’ for no man attended thereunto. And worse was their fate who prayed for mercy than theirs who died fighting.

” And beholding these things, the captain of the Sienese held council with the standard bearers, and with the Count Giordano, and with those valiant knights; and there spake the captain after this manner: ‘See ye what great butchery of men and of horses hath been made, and is being made here?’ And he was moved to compassion; and, that all might not die, he said: ‘To me it seems that we should do well to send a proclamation,

that they who wish to surrender shall be taken prisoners, and that he who will not yield shall be slain without pity'. And so was it done incontinently. And right glad were they who fled when they heard the proclamation to yield and to be received as prisoners. And they helped to bind themselves, so joyful were they to escape death.... And the number of the prisoners was twenty thousand; and there were not then in Siena as many men as there were prisoners. Think ye then how many were the dead. The number was incredible, for there were ten thousand dead, besides the horses which were slaughtered to the number of eighteen thousand. And, by reason of the great stench from the rotting corpses, they abandoned all that district. And for much time no one dwelt there, neither did any living thing come nigh it save only wild and savage beasts."

Thus was the ancient people of Florence broken and brought to naught—*rotto e annullato*.—The words are Villani's; and thus

fu distrutta  
La rabbia fiorentina, che superba  
Era in quel tempo sì com' ora è putta.  
.....

The night after the battle the victorious army encamped upon the hill of Ropoli, and on Sunday morning returned to Siena, having, according to the *Diario* of Gigli, first made a breach in the walls, in order that the *carroccio* might enter the city without lowering its great white banner. Then "went they all to the Duomo, and there, with great reverence and devotion, gave praise, and honor and glory to the most high God; and all returned thanks to Our Mother the Virgin Mary for the great honor and victory which she had given to her people."

The *antenne* of the Sienese *carroccio* were set up in the Cathedral;<sup>1</sup> and new money was coined,

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<sup>1</sup> True it is that, according to the popular tradition, the two great *antenne*, which may still be seen in the Duomo of Siena, are those of the Florentine *carroccio*. But the preponderance of evidence is strongly in favor

whereon, in addition to the ancient legend SENA VETVS, appeared the words, CIVITAS VIRGINIS. Moreover, in after years, it was provided by law that, when the great bell of the Mangia tower—the *campana comunis*—should be rung to assemble the magistrates of the Republic, its summons should commence with three distinct and separate strokes, in memory of the Angelic Salutation, and that if this formality were omitted, the proceedings of the session so irregularly convened should be null and void. So too, by a further statute, it was enacted that: *Nulla mulier meretrix nomine Maria possit in Civitate stare aut morari*,<sup>1</sup> while Professor Zdekauer informs us that, in the XIIIth century, when, according to the mediæval ritual, the sacrament of Baptism

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of the statement made in the text. See, on this subject, the remarks of A. LISINI, in the *Atti e memorie della R. Accademia dei Rozzi, sezione di Storia Patria Municipale* (new series), vol. III, pages 177-180; and compare C. PAOLI, in his preface to the *Libro di Montaperti*, page XLIII.

<sup>1</sup> GIGLI, *Diario* (edit. of 1854), vol. II, pages 186-187.

was administered only on the vigils of Easter and of Pentecost, the first female infant who was christened invariably received the name of Mary.<sup>1</sup> Nor did it remain unnoticed by later writers that two of the earliest victories of the Sienese—those of Montemaggio and Rosaio— had been gained upon a Saturday—the day especially sacred to the Madonna.

Touching this same battle of Rosaio, Girolamo Gigli, in his *Città diletta di Maria*, tells us that, among the ancient seals of the Commune of Siena, in the archives of the Spedale della Scala, there was one of the XIIth century, whereon was depicted the city, surrounded by the legend: *Salvet Virgo Senam veterem quam signat amenam*, together with a representation of the Virgin, seated above an altar, with the Holy Child in her arms and a rose in her right hand. On either side was an angel, and under foot a great and horrible serpent.

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<sup>1</sup> *La vita privata dei Senesi nel dugento*. (Siena, 1896), page 11.

This serpent (says he) is symbolical of the enemies of the Republic trampled under foot by the Blessed Virgin, and possibly has special reference to Frederic Barbarossa, upon whose head the great Pope of the Lombard League had set his heel, exclaiming : *Super aspidem et basiliscum ambulabis, et conculabis leonem et draconem*; while the rose, in the hand of the Madonna, may have been an allusion to Rosaio, where the armies of the same Frederic were routed by the Sienese, who fell upon them and slew them " following them until they found no one.<sup>1</sup> " And thus, he argues, Buonaguida was encouraged to dedicate the city to the Queen of Heaven, by memories of past protection and deliverance.

Nor shall I enquire into the correctness of that conclusion, because, if we accept it, the charming story of what followed the taking of Campiglia d'Orcia, in 1234, is altogether believable. And it I would not doubt.

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<sup>1</sup> See RONDONI, *Sena Vetus*, page 21.



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" And the said Campiglia (so runs the old chronicle) was sacked, destroyed and burned, because the defenders thereof refused to surrender. And they came all of them to a bad end, save only the women, who were sent to Siena; and no injury was done to them. And many of them were widows, in that their husbands had been slain in the battle . . . . And to those women, such of their husbands as had been made prisoners, were for pity's sake restored, because they had no means wherewith to pay a ransom . . . . And they were all led bound with a rope into our Duomo; and there, for the love of the Virgin Mary, who had given us so great a victory, they were released before the high altar.<sup>1</sup>" A fine contrast this, to the frantic grief of the poor women on the field of Montalto, and to the terror and despair of the Sienese ladies carried away to a life of shame in

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<sup>1</sup> *Croniche Senesi* by an unknown author, preserved among the Sienese Archives in the Palazzo del Governo. It is a paper codex of the XVIIIth century, which appears to be a copy of XIVth century chronicles.

Florence, after the attack upon Porta Camullia in 1230.<sup>1</sup>

I am afraid, however, that some of the statements made by the excellent Gigli are hardly to be received with implicit confidence, since, in his hands, every thing has reference to, and becomes typical of, the Queen of Heaven.<sup>2</sup> Thus, the white and black stripes on the marble walls of the Holy Sienese Church are emblematic of the purity and humility of the Virgin; or of those joyful and sorrowful mysteries whereby, as she told Saint

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<sup>1</sup> RONDONI, *Senà Vetus*, pages 43, 45, 47; SANZANOME, *Gesta Florentinorum* (edition cited), page 138; *Cronica di Buondone e Bisdomini*, in the Communal Library of Siena.

<sup>2</sup> "Ed io per me stimo, che non sia giudizio temerario il giudicar Mistero di Maria in tutte le cose del popolo Senese." GIROLAMO GIGLI, in *La Città diletta di Maria*.

MURATORI, in a note to the *Cronica Senese* (*Rer. Italic. Script.*, T. xv, 32, 33), speaking of Gigli, and particularly of his statements regarding the above mentioned seal, says: "In verità questi sbagli sono talmente massicci, che per iscusarlo altro non saprei dire, ch'egli era solo Poeta, e non Istorico."

Bridget, her life was ever divided between happiness and grief. The Balzana, the great black and white banner of the Commune, expresses the same idea ; and even the livery of the servitors of the Palazzo Pubblico was adopted out of reverence for two miraculous images of Our Lady—the one in Fontegiusta, which was covered with a blue veil ; and the other, known as the Madonna del Belverde, in the Church of the Padri Serviti.

Nevertheless, *La Città diletta di Maria* should be studied by all those who would realize what the worship of the Blessed Virgin meant, and still means, to the Sienese. While to such of my readers as cannot easily obtain access to that work, the following poetical invocation (therein quoted) may give some idea of the childlike confidence with which the people of Siena looked for assistance and protection to their Sovereign Lady and Advocate—the mother alike of the Most High God and of their native city :—

Tu, che per dar tutto il tuo latte a Siena,  
Il celeste Figliuol non tieni allato.

A strange metaphor ; but full of tenderness, and reverence, and simple faith.

## II.

Of the first dedication of the City, that of 1260, I have spoken somewhat at length. The four others which took place respectively, in 1483, in 1526, in 1550 and in 1555, may well be passed over with less particularity of detail, although they too, are instructive, if we would realize the two fold nature of the reverence which Siena has ever paid to Our Lady, first as the Queen of Heaven, and secondly, as the feudal superior and advocate of the city. And since they, like the beads of a rosary, are intimately connected one with another, I fear that, in order to understand their full significance, we must pay some slight attention to the thread of history which unites them.

After the miserable end of the youthful Corradino in the Piazza del Mercato of Naples, and the death of Provenzano Salvani at Colle in Val

d' Elsa, in June 1269, the government of the *Ventiquattro* could no longer maintain itself. It was abolished in 1270, and Siena became altogether Guelph, while six years later the democratic revolution was completed. By a resolution of 28 May 1277, it was provided that the magistracy of the Republic must be selected *de bonis et legalibus mercatoribus et amatoribus partis guelfe*, and that among their number must not be included *aliquis de casatis*—so that all the nobility were excluded from office. Thus was established that merchant oligarchy which, from the number of its chief magistrates, subsequently received the name of the *Ordine* or *Monte dei Nove*.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> From the fourteenth century to the sixteenth, the internal history of Siena is, in fact, the history of those celebrated factions which, under the name of *Ordini* or *Monti*, represented, at one and the same time, not only the political parties of the Republic, but also its social divisions.

As every body knows, a *Monte* included those who, while a certain form of government existed, had occupied the supreme magistracy. Thus, for example, those citizens of ancient birth, whose ancestors had ruled the

Under the new government the Commune enjoyed a long period of peace and of prosperity, possibly the most glorious in all its history. Strong in their alliance with Florence and with the other Guelph cities of Tuscany, the Sienese were able to increase their dominions in the Val di Chiana and in the Maremma, and to devote their energies to the embellishment of their city and to the reclamation of its contado. The Palazzo Pubblico

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Commune during the consular period, constituted the *Monte dei Gentiluomini*, while, in like manner, those who had been members of the *Nove Priori Governatori e Difensori* constituted, together with their sons and descendants, the *Monte dei Nove*. The same rule applied to membership in the other *Monti*, whether *dei Dodici*, *dei Riformatori* or *del Popolo*; and it was an established principle that no Sienese citizen, however great his wealth or preeminent his merit, could enjoy full civic rights unless he belonged to one or other of these orders.

The reader who is interested in the subject is referred to the article, by C. PAOLI, on *I Monti o Fazioni nella Repubblica di Siena*, published in the "Nuova Antologia" of August 1891. (Third series, volume 34, fasc. 15.)

was built, and the exquisite shaft of the Torre del Mangia rose proudly into space; the Duomo was enlarged and beautified, and in palace and cathedral alike, Sienese art, which had found its Cimabue in Guido, exhibited indisputable evidence of its growth and vitality in the works of Duccio di Buoninsegna, of the Lorenzetti and of Simone Martini. New industries sprang up and flourished; the ancient university was imbued with fresh life and vigor by the migration of scholars from Bologna; and in 1327 the *Nove* ordered a census of the citizens to be taken, which, according to Malavolti, showed an aggregate of over eleven thousand seven hundred families.

But, alas for Siena, her days of prosperity were numbered. In 1348, that terrible pestilence, which Agnolo di Tura describes, and of which he tells us that 80,000 persons died in the city of Siena alone, fell upon Italy. It was a blow from which the Commune never wholly recovered. In June 1357 the work on the new cathedral was definitely abandoned, and the demolition of all the

interior walls and vaults was resolved upon. In the same month—sad foretoken of the final result of the rivalry between the two proud cities—the Florentines began the work of rebuilding their Duomo on a larger scale: and thus, says Mr. Norton, each stone cast down from the marble walls of the Sienese Church might have served as a slab on which to inscribe the lost hopes of the city, to commemorate her former glory and to record her fall.<sup>1</sup>

While the Commune had been wealthy and prosperous, the merchant oligarchy had been able to maintain itself in power without much difficulty, albeit its rule offended every principle of equality and was cordially detested by the nobles and people alike, since both were equally excluded from any participation in the government. But now conspiracies and revolts became frequent, and finally, the arrival of Charles of Luxemburgh

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<sup>1</sup> E. C. NORTON, *Historical studies of Church Building in the Middle Ages*, published by Harper Bros. New York, 1880.



in Siena added fresh fuel to the flames of popular discontent. He was received with all due reverence by the magistrates, and with the wildest enthusiasm by the nobility and common people. But with the shouts of "Long live the Emperor!" mingled ere long the sinister cry of "Death to the *Nove*!" *Grandi* and *popolani* alike rose in furious revolt against the intolerant oligarchy which had so long monopolized all the offices and emoluments of the State. The *Priori* were thrust out of their palace, and their adherents were hunted through the city like wild beasts and slain without pity. "There was," says the chronicler,<sup>1</sup> "no man who would receive, or regard or hearken unto them;" "many infamous things were spoken against them; they were called thieves and traitors," "and he who could say any evil of them hesitated not to say it." The emperor openly aided the insurgents, and, after formally ratifying

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<sup>1</sup> NERI DI DONATO, *Cronica Sanese*, in Muratori, "Rer. Ital. Script.", xv, 147, 148.

the deposition of the magistrates and revoking every privilege which had been granted to them and to their faction, appointed a commission of twenty citizens to reform the State.

Thus ingloriously fell the once powerful government of the *Nove*, and in their stead ruled the *Dodici*, whom Pius II., in his Commentaries, terms *negotiatores abjecti*, a vulgar, incapable and turbulent crew, whose only settled line of policy appears to have been dictated by the intense and unreasoning enmity which they bore to the faction which they had supplanted.

From this period the Republic bid farewell for ever to peace and to prosperity. Political and class hatreds became yearly blinder and more uncompromising. New *Monti* sprang into being without diminishing the number of those already in existence, and the city was given over to violence and misrule. Tumults and street fighting were things of almost daily occurrence. The various factions were irreconcilable and were at one only in their lawlessness and greed of power. Grosseto,

Montalcino, Casole, Massa and other subject towns rose in rebellion against the distracted and enfeebled Commune, while the general misery of the time was increased by the frequent recurrence of the pestilence, by repeated and very terrible famines, and, above all, by the incursions of the companies of adventure which overran and desolated a great part of the contado.<sup>1</sup>

Exasperated by these afflictions, men became ever more selfish and cruel, and it seemed as if morality and virtue were clean forgotten and blotted out in all the earth. The turbulent passions of the age even penetrated the holy shelter of the cloister, and a contemporary chronicler has left us a terrible picture of those evil days, whose infinite miseries he attributes to some disastrous stellar influence. "At this time," he says, "there reigned in the world a planet which caused these

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<sup>1</sup> An excellent sketch of this period is given by A. LISINI, in the preface to his *Provvedimenti economici della Repubblica di Siena nel 1382*. (Siena, Enrico Torrini, 1895.)

things to happen. The monks of S. Austino slew their provincial with their knives at S. Antonio. In Siena there was great strife, and a young friar of Camporeggi killed in Siena a friar, the son of Messer Carlo Montanini. At Assisi the minor friars fought, and fourteen of them were slain with knives; while those of the Rosa of Siena fought and expelled six of their number. Among them of Certosa also were great dissensions, and their General came and removed them all. And so it seemed that all the religious orders were affected by strife and discord, nor was there any that escaped therefrom. So too was it with the laity; brethren and cousins, husbands and wives, neighbors and friends, were at enmity with one another; in all the world were divisions and sanguinary quarrels. I speak not more at large for very shame, albeit I could give innumerable instances. In Siena no man understood or kept faith, neither the gentlemen among themselves nor with their inferiors, nor the *Dodici* among themselves nor with others, nor the *Popolo*, to wit those who ruled,

with one another nor with others, in any perfect wise ; and so the world is all one darkness.<sup>1</sup> ”

Of the ills which the discordant and distracted Commune suffered at the hands of the Companies of Adventure a few words must be said. In 1342 the *Gran compagnia della Corona* invaded the Sienese contado, and the citizens, forgetful of their ancient prowess, made no attempt to expel the enemy by force of arms. Being summoned to take the field, “ many of them,” says Agnolo di Tura, “ were unwilling to go against so numerous and desperate a folk ; wherefore the *Capitano della Guerra* of Siena caused the headsman’s block and axe to be placed at the Porta Camullia to strike fear into the hearts of those who refused to obey him.” But, rather than entrust the safety of the state to so pusillanimous a militia, the government preferred to purchase the withdrawal of the invaders by the disbursement of 2852 florins. Later on 13,000 florins were paid to Fra Mòriale, together

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<sup>1</sup> NERI DI DONATO.

with large sums to the Companies of the Count Lando, of Anechino da Bongardo and to the *Compagnia Bianca*. And although, in 1363, the Sienese at last ventured to take the field against the *Compagnia del Cappello*, which was devastating the fertile region of the Val di Chiana, and completely routed the enemy, we find them, only eight months afterwards, paying 53,500 florins of gold to the captain of another band of marauders.

These Companies, composed for the most part, of English, Germans and Hungarians, were followed by a crowd of malefactors, procurers and women of loose character, drunk with blood and rapine. Ferocious and cruel, their character was well described in the legend which one of their most noted leaders bore upon his breastplate, written in letters of gold: "THE ENEMY OF GOD, OF PITY AND OF MERCY." By them the whole country side was laid waste, their numbers being frequently augmented by the barons and seigniors of the Sienese contado itself, who, finding themselves unable to defend their feuds and castles,

sold them to the Commune (which, as grasping as it was impotent, was ever ready to increase its dominions at any cost) and then, gathering together such of their retainers as were willing to follow them, enlisted under the banner of the nearest *condottiere*. The country folk despairing of adequate protection left their devastated fields and took refuge in the city, preferring rather to become part of the vast crowd of mendicants which thronged its streets, than to face the dangers of rural life in a territory so depopulated that it was overrun with wild beasts. And "this"—so runs the old record—"is seen so manifestly that every third day news cometh of children carried off by wolves.<sup>1</sup>"

In little more than twenty years, the Sienese

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<sup>1</sup> "Per cagione de le guerre molte bestie salvatiche sono moltiplicate et spezialmente di lupi: et questo si vede manifestamente che ogni terzo dì s'ode che essi lupi ànno guasti fanciugli senza altri danni grandi che fanno d'altre cose." See the records of the *Concistoro* for the year 1393, preserved among the Sienese Archives.

payed to the Companies of Adventure more than 275,000 florins, besides vast donatives of provisions and horses. The city was almost bankrupt; commerce was paralyzed; the workshops were closed, and all the vast accumulated treasure, earned by the toil and courage of past generations, in their long and dangerous journeys to the ultramontane fairs, had gradually been wasted in the payment of forced loans and of enormous taxes.<sup>1</sup>

In 1390 war broke out with Florence, and, in the last year of the century, the once haughty Republic, overwhelmed by the manifold calamities which had befallen her, "with her contado all destroyed and desolate, and her city impoverished and afflicted by pestilence and by famine," was compelled to accept the overlordship of the Duke of Milan and to do him homage as her seignior.

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<sup>1</sup> A. LISINI, *op. cit.*; see also ALFONSO PROFESSIONE, *Siena e le Compagnie di Ventura nella seconda metà del sec. XIV.* (Civitanova - Marche, 1898.)



His death, in September 1402, saved Florence from a like fate. And those Umbrian and Tuscan Communes which had been forced to submit to his authority, hastened to declare themselves once more free. In Siena the government of the *Dodici* was overthrown towards the close of the following year; and, by a resolution of the *Concistoro* of 1st November 1407, it was resolved that the Ducal arms should no longer be displayed in any part of the city.

But liberty as it was understood by the mediæval Republics was, in fact, liberty for one faction alone; while those who were in power almost invariably persecuted the rest of the citizens. At the end of the century Communes does not hesitate to declare that Siena was governed "plus follement que Ville d'Italie;<sup>1</sup>" and the judgment of the French historian is confirmed by the words of the patriotic Albot Lelio Tolomei, who, in 1551, publicly denounced the division of the State into

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<sup>1</sup> Lib. viii, c. ii.

*Monti* or *Ordini*, and attributed thereto all the evils which had befallen it. " We have (said he) reduced the city and the dominion to a condition of incredible poverty and weakness. We have filled all the towns of Italy with our own citizens; we have stained all our streets with blood; we have almost entirely lost what public reputation we may once have had. There is no father who is not troubled as to the education of his children in so corrupt a society; there is no man, however ignorant or low-born, that fears to discuss and to give his opinion on the most important doctrines of the faith. Few are there among us who are conspicuous for religion, for virtue or for valor, for letters or for art. How often have we seen innocent men suffer without remedy? And these things are the fruit of your *Monti* and of your factions. Forgive me if I speak the truth too plainly. God knows it is a grief to me to do so. The magistrates of the city have always been violent men and of little worth. . . . These same *Monti* and factions have been the cause of an in-

finite public blindness which has ever prevented us from seeing or realizing the horrible precipice which yawns at our feet . . . . What town have we, which we ourselves have not divided and ruined? How many years have passed since we have beheld any improvement worthy of the name? What city was ever so unenterprising and so luxurious? Where are the laws and the magistrates less regarded, and where is less heed paid to the public weal? <sup>1</sup> ”

What wonder, if even a tithe of this terrible indictment were true, that Siena should fall, and fall never to rise again?

For a few years, indeed, it seemed that under the able rule of Pandolfo Petrucci she might be able to maintain her independence; but upon his death that insane and almost superstitious dread which the mediæval Italians felt for “ the one man power ” (*il governo d' un solo*) thrust her onward to her fate. In vain Charles V. endeavored to

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<sup>1</sup> See B. AQUARONE, *Gli ultimi anni della Storia Repubblicana di Siena*, pages 213-214.

save her from herself. Had she been capable of self-government, she would have been more useful to him free than enslaved. But when the reformation carried out at his command by Monsignore di Granvela and Francesco Sfondrato, in 1541, had proved abortive, a complete change of policy ensued, and the order went forth that the Commune of Siena, which had become a by-word throughout Italy, and a dangerous nuisance to its neighbors, should be abated as such.<sup>1</sup>

Such in brief is the history of Siena from the thirteenth century to the sixteenth. Turn we now to those successive dedications to Our Lady, which have given to the city its name of *Civitas Virginis*, and which have colored alike its laws, its traditions and its art.

And first, of the dedicatiou of 1483.

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<sup>1</sup> See two lectures on the principal causes of the fall of the Sienese Republic, delivered, by C. FALLETTI-FOSSATI, in March and May 1883, before the R. Accademia dei Fisiocritici.

## III.

In 1480, the *Nove* had succeeded in overthrowing the government of the *Riformatori*; while, in 1482, the latter rose in rebellion; and several times in the course of a few months filled the city with bloodshed and with tumult. Finally the *Riformatori*, being worsted, were driven into exile; but, so far from accepting their banishment with resignation, they massed themselves upon the Florentine border and awaited an opportunity to return; intriguing perpetually with their friends and adherents.

In the month of July, their plans being matured, they moved upon Siena and succeeded in surprising the Palazzo Pubblico. Then the people rose against the *Nove* and, after several days fighting, completely overpowered them. The Cardinal Archbishop, Francesco Piccolomini, intervened to make peace, and many laid down their arms. Some of the Petrucci, however, refused to yield and took refuge in the houses of the Pecci and

of the Borghesi. The mob piled faggots against the doors and set them on fire. But the defenders, fleeing through the gardens behind, concealed themselves in the neighboring churches, and subsequently made good their escape under cover of the night.

As a result of this revolution the *Riformatori* were once more the predominant faction; but, since they had received material assistance from the *Dodici* and from the *Popolani*, they perceived that some concessions must be made to their allies. Therefore, besides admitting them to a share in the government, they provided, under color of a general pacification, that all class distinctions should be abolished and all the *Monti* reduced to one only, called *del Popolo*. In October, however, the *Popolani* succeeded in so manipulating the lots drawn for a new *Balia* that, of the thirty-six citizens who composed it, almost every one belonged to their own party.

Then, believing itself to be firmly settled in the saddle, the new magistracy showed its true

colors, banishing, proclaiming and fining all who opposed it. As a result of this short-sighted policy, the numbers of the *fuorusciti*, who had gathered about the Petrucci at Poggibonsi, increased daily; and, before long, they felt themselves strong enough to make some reprisals. On the night of the 1st of February 1483, they assembled at Staggia, and, just before daybreak, attacked the strong fortress of Monteriggioni, scaling its walls in three places and overpowering the sleeping garrison before they realized their danger.

The news created the utmost consternation in Siena; and, in their rage and terror, the government permitted all kinds of excesses against such of the citizens as were known to be favorable to the exiles. The aged father of Pandolfo Petrucci was brutally attacked in the streets and left for dead, wounded in thirteen places, although the poor old man had taken no part in any disturbance and was going quietly about his own affairs.

The *Priori* called out the militia, and Monte-

riggioni was invested. But theirs was no easy task. With its massive walls and twelve lofty towers it was well nigh impregnable. In 1254 the whole Florentine army had besieged it in vain, and in 1260 they had not dared to attack it, although they had encamped, from the 8th to the 12th of May, at the Badia all' Isola, little more than a mile from its western gateway. Nor were its present defenders minded to yield without a struggle. The *Signoria*, therefore, after an abortive attempt to take it by storm, sent to Siena and commanded that the parents, brethren and relatives of the *fuorusciti* should be seized and brought to the camp, in order that, in the event of a sortie, they might be placed in the forefront of the battle, and so be slain by their own kindred, or be hanged before the walls, if the rebels remained obstinate in their refusal to surrender<sup>1</sup>—a barbarity which carries the mind back to the days of the first Frederick and the siege of Crema.

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<sup>1</sup> See ALLEGRETTO ALLEGRETTI, *Diari Sanesi*. (Muratori, "Rer. Italic. Script.", xxiii, page 811.)



But not for that would the Noveschi yield, and only after fifteen days of continual conflict, when all hope of succour from Florence was dead, did they at last agree to evacuate the fortress on condition that their lives and property should be held sacred.

The besiegers gladly consented; but it seems that they had no intention of keeping their promise. The garrison were indeed permitted to depart, but they were declared rebels, and the property of Pandolfo and of his brother Cammillo was confiscated. Nor was the vengeance of the victors glutted by a mere bloodless retaliation. On Easter Tuesday five of the hated faction of the *Nove*, who had been held prisoners in the Palazzo Pubblico, were cast from its windows and came ruining down upon the stones beneath; while, little more than a week later, the unhappy Antonio Bellanti, who nine months before had laid down his arms at the bidding of the Cardinal Archbishop, was beheaded at the command of the *Signoria*.

If, however, the government hoped that, by violence and breach of faith, they could overawe their enemies, they were much mistaken; and the intrigues and conspiracies of Pandolfo and his companions, who had once more taken refuge in the Florentine territory, continued to cause them extreme uneasiness. Under these circumstances the celebrated jurisconsult Bartolommeo Sozzini was despatched to Florence with instructions to use every effort to persuade the neighboring Commune to refuse further sanctuary to the exiles. He was successful in his mission; but only upon condition that Siena would pay for the services required, by the surrender of San Paolo, of Monte Dominici, and of another castle in Chianti. The terms appear sufficiently hard ones; but the terrified *Signoria* did not hesitate to accept them, and doubtless deemed the curtailment of their frontier a small evil compared to the presence of a large body of desperate men in such close proximity to their city.

As a result of these negotiations, the *fuorusciti*

were ordered to leave the Florentine contado, and sought shelter in the States of the Church. Thence, having obtained the assistance of Rinaldo Baglioni and other gentlemen of Perugia, they invaded the Sienese Maremma in the month of August, and encamped near Saturnia. They were known to have with them only five hundred horse soldiers and two thousand footmen; but the very smallness of their number created the greater alarm, since it was believed that they would not have had the audacity to undertake such an invasion unless they were assured of effectual and speedy succour.<sup>1</sup>

The *Signoria* were at their wits end; and, in their panic, they bethought them to once more solemnly dedicate the city to the Virgin Mary, who, in time past, had so signally preserved it from peril. And this, it was urged, was the more necessary, because the admission of the suzerainty of the Duke of Milan, in 1399, had in a manner deprived our Lady of her feudal rights, and might

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<sup>1</sup> MALAVOLTI, III, at cte 87-88. See also AQUARONE, op. cit., pages 45-51.

have justly moved her to indignation. It was, therefore, unanimously resolved that Siena should be "restored and anew given and conceded to the Most Glorious Virgin, than whom there can be no more effectual or stronger protection and safeguard."<sup>1</sup>

At this period, as in 1260, the high altar of the Cathedral still stood beneath the cupola; and above it rose the celebrated ancona of Duccio, which Agnolo di Tura declares to have been the "most beautiful painting ever seen or made," and which "cost more than 3000 florins of gold." On the main panel was represented the Virgin enthroned, surrounded by saints and angels, while at her feet was inscribed the pious and proud legend:

MATER . SANCTA . DEI . SIS . CAVSA . SENIS . REQVIEL .  
SIS . DVCIO . VITA . TE . QVIA . PINXIT . ITA .<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The original documents with regard to this and subsequent dedications are preserved in the Archives of Siena. They have, however, been collected and published by A. TOTI, in his *Atti di votazione della Città di Siena* &c. (Lazzeri, 1870).

<sup>2</sup> Of this picture Mr. Norton gives an excellent des-

This, however, was not the same picture before which Buonaguida had "kneeled down with great crying and continual tears." That had been removed to the chapel of S. Bonifazio, and is the same which now stands in the so called *Cappella del Voto*. It was known as "Our Lady of Grace," or as "Our Lady of the large eyes" (*Madonna degli occhi grossi*) by reason of the number of silver eyes which had been presented as votive offerings, and which, up to the year 1458, had been hung about the picture, in much the same manner as the trinkets which now adorn the *Madonna del Bordone* in the Church of the *Servi di Maria*.<sup>1</sup> And, since "this Our Lady was she who had hearkened unto the people of Siena what time Florentines were routed at Montaperto,"<sup>2</sup> it was

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cription in his *Historical Studies of Church Building in the Middle Ages*. See also A. LISINI, *Notizie di Duccio Pittore e della sua celebre ancona*, in the "Bullettino Senese di Storia Patria," vol. v (1898), fasc. i, pp. 21-51.

<sup>1</sup> See *Misc. Stor. Sen.*, vol. i (1893), pages 10-11.

<sup>2</sup> *Anonymous Chronicle*. Ms. in the "Biblioteca Co-

resolved that to her the renewed dedication should be made.

Accordingly, on the 24th August 1483, the Magnificent Signori and the Captain of the People went in procession from their palace to the Cathedral Church, accompanied by all the magistrates of the Commune and by a great multitude of the citizens; and they came even to the choir, where were the lord Cardinal and divers Bishops. Thereafter was celebrated a solemn mass, upon the conclusion of which Master Mariano da Ghinazano ascended the pulpit and preached an eloquent sermon in praise of Our Lady. Then the lord Cardinal, walking between the Magnificent Prior and the Captain of the People, and followed by the others, approached the *Cappella delle Grazie* (Ca-

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munale di Siena." Others, however, declare that the *Madonna delle Grazie* was painted by Guido da Siena, immediately after the battle, and in gratitude for the victory. Cf. the Chronicle of Ventura (cited supra), page 46, and note.

*pella que vulgariter nuncupatur la Madonna de le Gratie ubi est ejus diva figura*): and there, surrounded by a crowd of persons of both sexes, Andrea Sani, the Magnificent Prior, reverently deposited the keys of the gates of the city, laying them upon the altar before the holy image of the Glorious Virgin. The Cardinal offered up a devout prayer especially composed for the occasion (*oratio quaedam devotissima ad propositum facta*): and the notary of the *Concistoro* formally published the contract of the presentation of the keys, whereby it was expressly stipulated that no one, of whatever rank, dignity or preeminence, whether ecclesiastical or temporal, should acquire or be deemed to have acquired any right by reason of the said ceremony, save only the Glorious Virgin herself: who was thereby constituted the "true feudal lady, guardian, defender and safeguard" of Siena and of the Sienese — *vera domina, custos, defensio et presidium nostrum* — while the Magnificent Signori, the Governors of the City for the time being, and their successors

were declared to be her immediate vassals and representatives, and to hold their offices direct from her. Then the Prior, rising to his feet, once more drew near to the altar, and with his own hands reassumed the keys, while the choir broke out into a loud *Te Deum*, which rolled and thundered upwards to the star-spangled roof of the Holy Sienese Church.

Of this ceremony, besides the proceedings of the *Concistoro* and of the *Consiglio della Campana*, we have a very curious record in the shape of one of the *Tavolette Dipinte*, preserved in the Palazzo del Governo among the Sienese Archives. As every visitor to Siena knows, these *Tavolette*, which were originally used as covers for the Books of Biccherna and of Gabella, constitute a kind of pictorial chronicle of the Commune.<sup>1</sup> In the *Tavoletta* of 1483, the Virgin is depicted as leaning forward to receive the keys at the hand of the

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<sup>1</sup> C. PAOLI, *Le Tavolette Dipinte della Biccherna e della Gabella nell' Archivio di Stato di Siena* (Siena, 1891).



Prior. Nor, in fact, did it seem for the moment that the renewed dedication of the city had failed of its purpose. The attack upon Saturnia failed; and the *fuorusciti*, being forbidden to enter the dominions of the Church, were compelled to take refuge in the contado of Perugia.

Four years later, however, in July 1487, the *Noveschi* returned glorious and triumphant with Pandolfo at their head. And the people, who a few years before had expelled him from the city, welcomed the exiles with shouts of joy. The public books record their return as being brought about "by the grace of God and of his Glorious Mother the Virgin Mary, Lady of this City;<sup>1</sup>" and, for a memorial of so auspicious an occasion, the conquerors caused to be painted on a *Tavoletta di Gabella* a ship bearing the arms and banners of the Commune, which is buffeted by contrary winds on a rocky coast. On high, the Virgin, clothed all in gold, and surrounded by angels,

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<sup>1</sup> "Delib. di Cons. Generale della Campana del 27 luglio 1487."

guides it into port. And so, with constant change, we see the celestial patronage adapt itself to the pleasure of the opposing factions, according to the momentary predominance of the one or the other.

#### IV.

We must now pass over a period of something more than a generation, and come to the year 1526.

Pandolfo has been dead for more than a decade, and his ashes lie in the Convent of the *Osservanza*, outside the Porta Ovile, whence, perchance, his spirit still looks out across the valley upon the city he loved so well. For, if it be true, as Tizio tells us, that he *turbabat humana et confundebat divina*, he was, at least, a great man, and wrought well for Siena, in spite of his cruelties and ambitions. It was the age of the Borgias, and we cannot measure the man of the XVth century by the standard of the XIXth.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Signor Falletti-Fossati in the second of the two lectures above referred to (page 92 and note 3) points

His son Borghese is dead too ; the youthful Fabio is in exile together with many of the *Ordine dei Nove*, and the assassination of Alessandro Bichi has once more given freedom to Siena. But, if free, she is in deadly peril, and that not only from her own *fuorusciti*, but from the gathering legions of foreign enemies.

. . . . .

The Petrucci and their adherents had ever shown themselves loyal friends and well-wishers of the Medici and of Florence, and now, in the days of their adversity, their cause was warmly espoused by the Medicean Pope, Clement VIIth. Therefore it was that, in 1526, the papal and Florentine troops took the field on behalf of the exiles, and advancing even to the walls of the city, occupied the suburb of Santa Petronilla, outside the Porta Camullia ; while, at about the same time,

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out, with justice, how extremely superficial is the view of Pandolfo's character taken by Burckhardt, in his *La civiltà del secolo del Rinascimento in Italia*. He was unquestionably a man of great political ability.

Andrea Doria appeared off the coast of the Sienese Maremma with a fleet of eight galleys, and possessed himself, without opposition, of Grosseto, Portercole, Santo Stefano and Talamone. What, then, could the good citizens do but appeal once more to their advocate and defender, Our Mother, the Virgin Mary ?

On Sunday the 22nd July, the magistrates of the Republic went in solemn procession to the Duomo, accompanied by a great silk standard upon which was painted, above, the assumption of the Madonna, and, below, the city of Siena ; and there presented themselves before the altar of Our Lady of Grace, to whom they consigned the keys of the gates according to the ancient rite. She was solemnly proclaimed the Lady and feudal Seignior of the Commune, and entreated to intercede with her son, Our Lord Jesus Christ, on its behalf, that he would vouchsafe to deliver it " from the Florentines and from Pope Clement VII., his enemies and ours " (*a manu inimicorum ipsius florentinorum et pontificis Clementis VII inimico-*

*rum nostrorum*<sup>1</sup>). Then, on the Wednesday following, the Sienese sallied forth from the Porta Camullia and from the Porta Fontebranda, and fell upon the enemy with such fury that they put them to the rout, killing more than a thousand of them.

It was a second Montaperto. Women and priests joined in pursuing and slaughtering the fugitives; and if, after the battle of the Arbia, Ursiglia, the huckstress "took and bound with the band which she wore upon her head thirty and six prisoners, all of the city of Florence,<sup>2</sup>" there did not lack a girl of twenty-one, by name Betta, who, after the battle of Camullia, "returned to Siena, leading with her a prisoner, whom she had taken and bound and laden with a barrel of wine, compelling him, at the point of her dagger, to walk whithersoever she would."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> A. TOTI, op. cit. "Votazione IV."

<sup>2</sup> Chronicle of Ventura, cited supra, page 73; Cf. the Chronicle of Aldobrandini, p. 23, and UGURGIERI, *Pompe Sanesi*, Titolo xxxiv, 35, &c. &c.

<sup>3</sup> GIGLI, *Diario Senese* (edition cited), II, 625.

Nor were divine manifestations wanting. Warriors clad in white raiment were seen fighting on behalf of the victors ; the picture of Our Lady, above the great gate of Camullia, was illuminated with an unearthly radiance ; and, as in 1260, the mantle of the Virgin, in the form of a cloud, spread itself over the city and the combatants.<sup>1</sup>

In the face of these portents no one could doubt the celestial interposition ; and the Sienese, in the hour of their triumph, did not forget to return thanks to her who had succoured them. Moreover, there may still be seen in the Church of San Martino, the patron of soldiers, a painting by Cini Giovanni, who himself took part in the battle, representing the miraculous intervention of the Madonna on behalf of her faithful city.

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<sup>1</sup> IBIDEM, page 626. The same author in his *Città diletta di Maria* says that the Madonna of the Antiporto of Camullia was painted by Simone di Martini, the friend of Petrarch, and that the face is that of madonna Laura. See, however, " Misc. Stor. Senese," vol. II (1894), page 3 et seq.

## V.

The Sienese helped in the great siege which restored the Medici to Florence in 1530; and, six years later, welcomed the Emperor with wild enthusiasm as he passed through their city.<sup>1</sup> Nor were they content with such fleeting demonstrations of regard as triumphal arches and flower-strewn ways. Within a week after the departure of their imperial guest, it was resolved by the *Collegio di Balìa* that a column should be erected in commemoration of the joyful event;—*ut* (so runs the record) *ad posterios transeat et a cunctis viatoribus, et erigi unam columnam cum pilastro in spatium porte nove et porte veteris.*<sup>2</sup>

A column in Siena to the honor of Charles V. ! Surely, in the light of subsequent events, no greater incongruity can be conceived. And yet, who shall say? If the Emperor did not prove

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<sup>1</sup> See AQUARONE, *op. cit.*, pages 125-159.

<sup>2</sup> *Deliberazioni di Balìa del 3 Maggio 1536*: "Misc. Stor. Senese," vol. III (1895), page 75.

the *Praesidium Libertatis Nostrae* which the applauding multitudes proclaimed him that April afternoon, he was at least destined to save the city from the anarchy and violence which had so long oppressed it. And, after all, it is difficult to deny that personal security, equal laws and peace to prosper in, afford more true liberty to the individual, even under *il governo d'un solo*, than all that fierce fever of Communal freedom, which, in those old days, made it so terribly easy a thing for a citizen to oversleep himself some fine morning, and, on his awakening to find the government changed, the gutters running blood, and the streets piled with hacked and battered corpses.

But this the old Sienese could not understand; and when, a few years later, the city was garrisoned with Spanish troops, and Don Diego Urtado di Mendoza, having ordered a general disarmament of the people, proposed to build a fortress upon the hill of San Prospero, they absolutely declined to believe that its only object was, as the Emperor assured them, "the con-



servation of justice, liberty and peace in Siena," or that it constituted, as he declared, "the only efficacious medicine for the disease from which their city suffered."

In vain they besought him to respect their ancient liberties. The work was begun, the necessary materials being obtained by the destruction of those towers with which, at that period, Siena was so thickly studded that, as an old writer quaintly remarks, *la città pareva un canneto*.<sup>1</sup> And Charles replied to the expostulations and prayers of the ambassador that "if the towers did not suffice, the palaces also should be levelled to the ground and used for the building of his fortress."

Then those poor Sienese, disarmed and helpless,

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<sup>1</sup> UGURGIERI, *Le Pompe Sanesi*, part II, page 307. The edition of the first part of the *Historie di Siena* of ORLANDO MALAVOLTI, published in 1574 by Luca Bonetti, was embellished by a frontispiece representing the city of Siena as it appeared before the destruction of its towers. This edition has now become extremely rare, but the frontispiece has been reproduced in the "Misc. Stor. Sen.", vol. II (1894), page 17.

overawed by a brutal and licentious soldiery, and knowing not whither to turn for aid, resolved, in their terror and despair, once more to dedicate their city to the Queen of Heaven.

On the 15th December 1550, the *Signoria* betook themselves to the Duomo "without sound of trumpets or other pomp," clad all in violet, and wearing their cloaks, as on Holy Friday. Before them went two pages, one bearing the banner of Our Lady, and the other a silver basin wherein were all the keys of the city. And all the people followed them. Then, high mass having been sung without sound of organ or other instrument of music, the creed said and the offertory taken, the Magnificent Prior, laying aside his cloak, bare-footed and bare-headed approached the high altar, whereon stood the picture of Our Lady of Grace, brought thither from its chapel in order that in all things the ceremony might conform with that *que facta fuit tempore sconficte Montis Aperti*.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> It may be well to notice, in passing, that, at the time of the dedication of 1550, the high altar was the

And there upon his knees he presented the keys to Messer Antonio Bensi, the Canon who that morning sang the mass, beseeching the Virgin to have mercy upon them, in these words :

" Mother of God, Immaculate, Our Lady and Advocate, if ever in time past Thou didst, with compassionate prayers, move Thy Only Begotten Son to pity toward this Thy city, we beseech Thee to-day, more than in any former time, to intercede with Him on its behalf. For, albeit Thou hast saved it many a time and oft from unforeseen dangers and from terrible wars, as on the day of Montaperto, and in that other and last battle of Camullia, yet, never heretofore hath it stood in so great peril and necessity as it doth to-day, when its sole benefactor and protector, Charles V., is

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same as that which we see to-day, and occupied the same position ; being flanked by the same bronze angels and surmounted by the same elaborate tabernacle.

The old altar was pulled down in 1506 ; and at the same time the picture of Duccio was divested of its ornamental frame work and transferred to the Opera del Duomo.

mind to build in it a fortress. And we, who have neither the power nor the will to resist him in any other wise than through Thy all-prevailing prayers, beseech Thee to plead with Thy beloved Son on our behalf, that He may vouchsafe to endue him (the said Charles) with a more pitiful spirit towards this his most loyal city, which hath never very greatly failed in duty either towards his Majesty or towards the Holy Empire.

" Change, we beseech Thee, this his purpose, whereby our fealty is but ill requited, and which, if carried into effect, must destroy not only our honor and our dignity, but also that dear liberty, which even unto this day we have preserved under Thy powerful guardianship and merciful protection.

" Behold, Virgin Most Holy, the hearts and minds of this Thy Sienese people, who, repenting of all their sins past, beseech Thee, kneeling and prostrate before Thy throne, to have mercy upon them, and to save them from the proposed fortress. And I, Thy servant and the least of Thy servants,

in the name of the Republic, and by the decree of the Most Honorable Senate, make unto Thee an everlasting vow, that, so long as by reason of Thy intercessions our dear and sweet liberty shall endure, so long shall there be wedded yearly, at the public cost, fifty poor maidens, with a dower of twenty-five florins each, to Thy honor and glory.

" Anew I consecrate to Thee our city ; anew I present to Thee, who art all powerful to guard them, those keys which have been entrusted to our keeping.

" Open therewith the Imperial heart ; remove from it the unnecessary project ; and dispose it rather to protect and succour us, who have ever been and ever will be the faithful vassals of Cæsar and of the Holy Empire. Finally, we pray Thee, enable this Thy people utterly to forget every injury which hath been done unto them, and unite Thou them in eternal peace and concord, that, so united and in amity with one another, they may be able, with quiet minds, to serve God and Thee

and his Imperial Majesty, and may for ever enjoy their cherished liberty."

Thus prayed the Magnificent Prior, and when he had finished, messer Antonio Bensi, the Canon, replied after this manner, turning himself toward the people :

" Your great and profound humility, Illustrious Signori, shows itself to be founded in faith, hope and charity. Your faith ye have shown by your desire to unite yourselves in spirit with Our Savior, receiving his most holy body ; your hope, by the consignment and restitution of the keys of your city to the Most Glorious Queen of Heaven ; your charity, by your vow touching the marriage of the young maidens so long as your free Republic shall endure.

" We, although unworthy of so high an office, accept your vows and oblations in the name of the Ever Blessed Christ and of his Immaculate Mother ; and we remind you that faith without works is dead ; that he who trusts in God with all his heart shall be immovable as Mount Zion ;

and that charity knits us to God. Be ye therefore of lively faith, of firm hope and of ardent charity, that so your desire may be fulfilled and your city preserved in true liberty, to the honor of God and of the Immaculate Virgin, Our Advocate, and of all christian people."

And, after they had communicated, and the Mass was finished, Ser Giusto, priest and sacristan of the Duomo, beckoned to the Lord Prior that he should go and take the keys which had been presented; wherefore, together with the Captain of the People and the other Magistrates, he drew nigh unto the high altar, and messer Antonio restored to him the said keys in the said basin, bidding him guard them well. So returned they to the Palazzo even as they had come.

And on the morning of the day following, the same being Tuesday the sixteenth day of December, the Illustrious Signori, the Captain of the People, the Standard Bearers, the Conservatori and Assistenti, the Judges, the Balía and all the other Magistrates of the City, betook them to the Ca-

thedral Church. And before them went the banner of Our Lady ; and after it were carried, in a silver basin, a silver crown, most beautiful to behold, and, wrapped in a cloth of white taffeta, the fifty warrants (*decreti*), to be presented to the fifty damsels, for their marriage dowries of twenty-five florins each. And they were all clad in fair apparel ; and the trumpeters blew upon the trumpets. And they went to hear high Mass, sitting in their accustomed seats. And when the creed was said the Lord Prior, at the time of the offertory, offered before the high altar the said crown, which the officiating priest received, with befitting words, in the name of Our Lady. Then the fifty damsels, who had been in the chapel of S. Giovanni, came and kneeled down before the high altar. And they were all clad in white with garlands of olive upon their heads. And to every each of them the Notary of the *Concistoro* presented her warrant. And there they abode until the Mass was finished. After which the monks and all the religious orders passed in procession through the



city, bearing before them the picture of Our Lady of Grace<sup>1</sup> under a canopy. And the fifty damsels followed after, and the *Signoria* and all the Magistrates, together with all the people of the city (*con l'universo popolo de la città*). And, when the said procession was finished, the *Signoria* returned to their Palace, and there they dined in state, together with the Standard Bearers, the Assistenti, the Conservatori, and the other persons whom it was usual to invite upon such occasions.<sup>2</sup>

Now, while these things were being done in Siena, Don Diego was at Rome. And when he heard thereof he was moved to anger and wrote to the *Signoria* that he hoped before long to

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<sup>1</sup> It seems that this picture was originally much larger. At any rate we know that it was cut down in the year 1455, by the order of the government, *ita comode portari possit ad processionem*. (Arch. di Stato in Siena. Delib. Concist. ad annum, at c<sup>ta</sup> 17. "Misc. Stor. Sen.", vol. I (1893), page 11.

<sup>2</sup> A. TOTI, op. cit. "Votazione v."

present to the Virgin the keys of the new fortress, upon which at that time about a thousand Spanish workmen were laboring.

In January three more companies of soldiers arrived from Lombardy ; and at the end of the following month, the new envoys who had been sent to the Emperor returned with the tidings that he was immovable in his purpose. The *Consiglio Generale* were in despair, and knew not what to do or whither to turn for aid. With sobs and tears the whole assembly fell upon their knees, beseeching the Virgin to succour them, vowing processions, and prayers, and offerings of every sort. That same night bands of disciplinants and flagellants went through the streets scourging themselves. The half crazy Brandano—the *pazzo di Cristo*, as he was called—wandered about prophesying and denouncing the wrath of God upon the Spaniards ; and the people wrought up to a frenzy of grief and superstition, looked every day to see some miracle wrought on their behalf.

But the heavens were dumb. The work of destruction went on; tower after tower was levelled to the ground, and the hated fortress rose stark and grey, overlooking all the city.

For seventeen long months Siena lay supine under the heel of the oppressor. Then, in a moment, all was changed. The ancient Republic remembered her youthful prowess, and, shaking off her lethargy, rose, and burst her bonds, and fought and triumphed as of old. After three days of furious conflict, the Spaniards were driven ignominiously from the city; and the great black and white banner of the Commune once more floated from the Mangia tower over a free Siena. The abhorred fortress was razed to the ground; men, women and children laboring to demolish it with such ardor that, as an eye witness has told us, "more of it was destroyed in an hour than could have been rebuilt in the space of four months." Thirty great cannons, which the fugitives had left behind them, were ranged as trophies in front of the Palazzo Pubblico, and the picture of

Our Lady of Grace was borne in solemn procession through the streets.<sup>1</sup>

## VI.

It is related that, when the Spanish garrison departed from Siena, messer Ottavio Sozzini saluted their captain Don Franzese, and said: "Signor Don Franzese, whether we be friends or whether we be foes, this much I say, that in good sooth thou art a gallant gentleman, and in all such things as touch not the welfare of the Republic, Ottavio Sozzini is ever thy friend and servant." Whereto, with tears in his eyes, Don Franzese made answer: "Much do I thank thee for thy kindly thoughts of me; nor will I ever give thee reason to think otherwise." Then, turning to the other Sienese youths who stood by, he said: "Valorous gentlemen, verily ye have done a great feat of arms

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<sup>1</sup> AQUARONE, op. cit. In connection with the destruction of the fortress, two of the *Tavolette Dipinte*, of the year 1552, are interesting, both for their topographical particulars, and for the accustomed allegory of the protecting Madonna.

to-day. But be ye prudent in time to come. Ye have offended too great a man."

Words which proved all too true; for this was the last triumph of Siena; and in 1554 the armies of Charles and of Cosimo closed around the devoted city.

I have no intention of describing the death throes of the Republic. Traces of the devastations wrought by the Spaniards are still visible in the neighborhood of the city; and, even to-day, the name of Marignano is one of evil augury in Sienese ears. Thinking to break the courage of the besieged by sheer brutality, he perpetrated such revolting cruelties that his very soldiers could scarcely be forced to carry out his orders. The trees about Siena seemed to bear dead men rather than leaves; the weaklings and children, who were thrust forth from the gates, in order that what little food remained might be given to the warriors, were ruthlessly slaughtered; and peasants, who were found hiding some scanty fragment of bread were burned to death over slow fires.

The battle of Scannagallo determined the fate of the Commune. But however greatly we may blame the recklessness of Pietro Strozzi, he at least fought valiantly, and the result might well have been otherwise but for the treachery of the French cavalry, who, bought with Spanish gold, fled without striking a blow.

Meglio dei vili cavalli di Franza,  
Le nostre donne fecero provanza,

sang the Sienese. And assuredly never have women shown themselves more capable of heroic deeds than did the ladies of Siena. But neither courage, nor valor, nor self-sacrifice availed anything, and in the spring of 1555 the garrison was forced to capitulate.

During the last days of that great siege, when, wasted with toil and hunger "those who might not die, greatly envied those who were dead," the people turned yet once more to the Madonna, and, on the 24th March, again dedicated to her their city and its contado according to the ancient

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ritual.<sup>1</sup> But, angered, as some said, by the merciless expulsion of the non-combatants—*le bocche inutili*—Our Lady refused to hearken, and little more than a month later the end came—and the Republic of Siena was no more.

Since then nearly three centuries and a half have passed away, but the Sienese have not forgotten. They rejoiced, as at the consummation of a vengeance long deferred, when the great Republic of the West annihilated the once mighty navies of Spain; and the modern Florence is hardly more beloved than she was four hundred years ago, when, by manifest proof of answered prayer and of celestial interposition, Siena knew herself "the city beloved of Mary," and accounted the Florentines and the Medicean Pope as equally the enemies of the Almighty and of her free Commune.

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<sup>1</sup> A. TOTI, op. cit. "Votazione vi."

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## CHAPTER THE SECOND.

### OF THE FESTIVAL OF OUR LADY OF AUGUST.<sup>1</sup>

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Of the numerous religious festivals which are celebrated in Siena, that of mid-August, in honor of the Assumption of the Virgin, has ever been the most important.

Then—during all the days of the free Commune—homage was solemnly paid to Our Lady

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<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this chapter, I have availed myself largely of the invaluable work of CARLO FALLETTI-FOSSATI, *Costumi Senesi nella seconda metà del secolo XIV* (Siena, 1881)—a book which, as Mr. Howells justly remarks, "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."



by the city and by its contado. Then, too, was held a great fair which lasted for seven days—*tribus diebus ante festum Sancte Marie de Augusto et tribus diebus post*<sup>1</sup>—whereof a faint and far-off echo may yet be heard on the 12th and 13th of August, when the *contadini* drive their long-horned oxen to the cattle market in the Piazza d'Arme outside the Porta Camullia. And then, was run the most splendid and solemn Palio of all the year.

Preparations for the coming festivities commenced early in July, when a commission of prominent citizens was appointed to carry out the instructions of the *Signoria*, in order that the day commemorative of the beatification of the Mother of God and *Advocata civitatis Senarum* might be celebrated with befitting pomp. And so great was the desire displayed by successive magistracies to excel their predecessors in magnificence and ostentation, that, in the XIVth century, it was

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<sup>1</sup> L. ZDEKAUER, *Il Constituto del Comune di Siena dell' anno 1262*. Dist. 1, rubric 195, page 80.

found necessary to prohibit the expenditure of more than 400 lire (equivalent in modern money to nearly five thousand francs) over and above the sum of 100 florins of gold, which was devoted yearly to the purchase of the palio. " Nevertheless (so runs the resolution) it shall be lawful, for the honoring of the said festival, to spend on fifiers, trumpeters and buffoons such amount as shall seem right to our Magnificent *Signori* and *Gonfalonieri Maestri*, according to the number of such persons who shall be employed. And the money, so due to the said fifiers, trumpeters and buffoons, shall be paid by the *Camarlingo di Biccherna* personally, into the hands of them, the said fifiers, trumpeters and buffoons.<sup>1</sup> "

On the first Saturday of August, the *banditore* of the Commune, clad in a red tunic, with the arms of the Republic on collar and sleeves, rode through the city, announcing, to the sound of the trumpet, the approach of the annual fair ;

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<sup>1</sup> R. ARCH. DI STATO IN SIENA, *Tesoretto*, f. 203.

and, from day to day, as the month advanced, the good people of Siena beheld an ever increasing number of strange faces on their streets, already thronged with foreign merchants and their attendants.

The festival itself began on the morning of the fourteenth. At the appointed time the *Priori*, with the other magistrates of the Republic, left the Palazzo Pubblico and betook themselves to the Cathedral, ranging themselves in order as their names were called by the Notary of the *Concistoro*. They were preceded by trumpeters wearing the blue and green livery of the *Signoria*, and by servitors of the Palace, who cleared a passage for the procession through the assembled multitudes. These were followed by the Palio, borne on high above a great car, which, according to popular tradition, was none other than the *carroccio* of Florence captured in the battle of Montaperto.<sup>1</sup> Next came those who carried the

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<sup>1</sup> As a matter of fact the Florentine *carroccio* was probably broken up and burned, shortly after its cap-

*cero istoriato*—a votive candle painted with scriptural or allegorical scenes having a more or less direct reference to the Madonna. Lastly, accompanied by the banners of the Commune, of the People, and of the *Terzi*, marched the *Signori*, the *Rettori forestieri*, the *Vessilliferi*, the *Consiglieri* and all the other officials of the Republic. Each man bore in his hand a candle which he was bound to offer as a private citizen; and on reaching the Duomo, all this mass of wax was

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ture. Such was the usual custom; and its almost sacred character, combined with the fact that every injury and affront which was offered to it, was considered as touching the honor of the city to which it belonged, naturally rendered it the subject of studiously offered indignities. "The coverings were dragged in the mire, the standard cut down, and the car itself hacked to pieces, the banner alone being preserved to adorn the triumph. In one of the small rival contests, a Guelph *carroccio* was taken by the Ghibellines, and the Guelph annalist bitterly complains that the 'insolent' foe slew the oxen, roasted them with the wood of the *carroccio*, and offered to the captives a portion of the repast." See M. A. MIGNATY'S *Sketches of the Historical Past of Italy*; and compare C. PAOLI'S edition of the *Libro di Montaperti*, pages XLIII, XLIV of preface.

deposited with the person appointed to receive it. Then, on the conclusion of the religious services, the procession reformed and returned to the Palazzo Pubblico in the same order as it had come.

According to the *Diario* of Gigli, the cortège was further increased by the presence of the horses which were destined to take part in the Palio of the following day, and which were led to the door of the Cathedral to be blessed. This was, however, I conceive, an innovation of comparatively modern times, and probably originated about the middle of the seventeenth century.<sup>1</sup>

The *Signoria* having returned to their Palace, the *compagnie* or *parrocchie* of the city, one by one, to the sound of music, and each with its

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<sup>1</sup> Among the *Deliberazioni di Balìa* of August 1666, we read : —

“ Ordenormo al Coadiutore Vaselli che facci imbasciata al Cancelliere di Biccherna che facci sapere a tutti li Barbireschi che la vigilia dell' Assuntione della Beatissima Vergine Nostra Signora sieno con i lor Barberi doppo l' Illustrissima Signoria con el torchietto conforme l' ordini.”

proper banner displayed, proceeded to the Cathedral; because every inhabitant of the city and of the suburbs, save only the poor, the sick and those who had grave personal enmities, was obliged, on the Vigil of the Assumption, to offer to the *Opera del Duomo* a wax candle, the weight whereof was proportioned to the *lira*<sup>1</sup> of the individual who presented it. In the XIIIth century offerings of candles were also obligatory for the festivals of St. Boniface, and of St. George who after the battle of Montaperto was considered as one of the protectors of the city; while it would appear that about the year 1234, candles were regularly presented on the vigils of St. Nicholas and St. Andrew, and at the feast of Candlemas

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<sup>1</sup> This tax was first imposed in Siena on the 28th March 1201, each citizen being assessed according to the value of his possessions. MALAVOLTI, parte 1<sup>a</sup> at cta 40<sup>t</sup>. See RONDONI, *Sena Vetus*, page 67; BANCHI, *Gli Ordinamenti economici dei Comuni toscani nel Medio Evo, e segnatamente del Comune di Siena*, in the "Atti della R. Accademia dei Fisiocritici," Serie III, vol. II, fasc. 2, pp. 15 et seq.

(*S. Maria Candelora*). Possibly the latter offerings had no other sanction than that of custom, but it is beyond question that those which were made on the 14th of August were compulsory.

In fact the Costituto of 1310 explicitly provides that "each and every person, to whatsoever *contrada* or registration district (*libra*) he may belong, who dwells in the city of Siena, be held and is obliged to go on the vigil of Saint Mary the Virgin of the Month of August, to the said church (to wit, the Duomo) in company with those of the Contrada wherein he dwells; and, although he may be registered for the purpose of taxation in another registration district (*allibrato in altra libra*), yet every man shall go with those of the Contrada in which he dwells. And he who shall do otherwise shall be punished with a fine of xx soldi in money; and the persons aforesaid shall go to the said church with candles and without torches, by day and not by night....<sup>1</sup>"

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<sup>1</sup> See the Costituto of 1310. — Stat. del Com. di Siena, n° 19, f. 20, and compare *Il Frammento degli*

These processions lasted the greater part of the day ; and, thereafter, while the principal officials of the Commune, to the number of ninety-seven, banquetted in the *Sala del Consiglio*,<sup>1</sup> the populace danced in the *piazze* and held high revelry throughout the city.

The next morning the magistracy, with great pomp, once more betook themselves to the Duomo, and on their return to the *Palazzo*, the processions recommenced; but no longer of the inhabitants of the city. For now it was the *massari*<sup>2</sup>

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*ultimi due Libri del più antico Constituto senese*, published in the "Bulletino Sen. di St. Patria," vol. I (1894), page 149. Dist. v, rubrics 36-37.

<sup>1</sup> As to the banquets of the Signoria see C. FALLETTI-FOSSATI, op. cit., page 149. In the "Misc. Stor. Senese," vol. III (1895), page 177, is printed the bill paid in 1538 for the dinner of the Signori del Collegio di Balla on the 15<sup>th</sup> August, of that year.

<sup>2</sup> "Massari si dicono in molte ville e terre del contado di Siena i priori o i primati del luogo." — POLITI, *Diz. Tosc.*, page 419: the more general sense appears, however, to be "heads of families," "householders;" and in this sense it is used in the Constituto of 1262. See edition ZDEKAUER, Dist. III, rubric 321, line 37 on



of the subject towns, who, in the names of their respective communities, and according to the terms of their submissions to the Republic, bore offerings of candles ornamented and plain (*ceri fioriti e semplici*) and of palii, some of which were of the costliest. Thus the city of Cortona, in 1359, undertook to send annually, for thirty-five years, a palio of scarlet lined with miniver, together with a horse with scarlet housings. Chianciano, the Counts of Giuncarico, Montalcinello, Montepulciano, Gerfalco, Radicofani, the abbey of S. Salvatore, Cotono, Monticello, and other towns and other Seigniors were obliged to furnish palii of the value of from ten to a hundred florins of gold, which were carried to the Cathedral and hung from iron rings placed there for the purpose. Other communities were only compelled to pay certain

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page 374. Compare also, for the various meanings of the word the glossaries at the end of volumes 1 and 3, of the *Statuti Senesi*, in the "Collezione di opere inedite o rare dei primi tre secoli della lingua," under the heads "massarizia," "massaro."

annual sums together with a candle, while others yet again brought money, palii and candles. For example, the Abbey of San Salvatore, besides the palio and a cero fiorito, paid 400 florins; Casole 40 lire and a candle of two hundred pounds; Grosseto 400 florins by way of tribute and fifty florins of gold in wax: Montalcino 30 lire and a candle of as many pounds; Massa seventeen hundred florins without counting the wax. And so, in like manner, all the tributary towns paid proportionately according to the *tassagione*.<sup>1</sup>

In those days, it is said that, at the second pillar to the right as one enters the Duomo, there stood a marble pulpit from which were sum-

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<sup>1</sup> R. Arch. Biccherna Corredo, n° 746. It seems almost superfluous to remind the reader that this custom of exacting offerings of candles from tributary towns and seigniors, for the festival of the Assumption, was by no means peculiar to Siena, although there the presentation was made with unusual pomp and circumstance.—RONDONI, *Sena Vetus*, p. 18. Cf. A. F. GIACHI, *Ricerche storiche volterrane* (edit. of 1887), pages 78, 79 and document XI in the appendix to Part I; L. FUMI, *Codice Diplomatico della Città d'Orvieto*, XLI, LXX, &c. &c.

moned the tributary cities in the order of their submission.<sup>1</sup>

And verily, from the XIIIth century onward it must have been a goodly sight to behold, filing off among the poor *massari* and answering to the call of the *Camarlingo dell'Opera del Duomo*, the Counts of Santa Fiora, the Seigniors of Campiglia, of Baschi and of Sciarpenna, the Cacciconti, the Cacciaguerra, the Ardingheschi, the Aldobrandeschi, the Pannocchieschi, and the other feudatories of the Republic—Counts Palatine, Frank and Longobard barons, of noble blood and ancient lineage, but all of them forced to bow their haughty necks and do reverence to the free Commune, with its upstart aristocracy of traders and of artisans. Moreover, when we recollect that in the XIVth century the inhabitants of each little community were distinguishable by their special costumes; that the number of subject towns and cities amounted to considerably over two hundred; and that some

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<sup>1</sup> GIGLI, *Diario* cit. II, 105.

of them were compelled to send as many as twelve or more *massari* to represent them, we can imagine, if only dimly, what a kaleidoscopic display of color and of form that thronging multitude must have presented, with its infinite diversities of apparel, varying from the rich silks and velvets of the nobles to the coarse stuffs worn by the *contadini*. Nor can we doubt that every good citizen must have felt his heart swell with pride as he beheld, in the ever increasing mountain of candles, heaped up beneath the ample vault of the Sienese temple, an indisputable proof of the power and greatness of his beloved Republic. On that day, as on the preceding one, the *portatori* of the Cathedral were subjected to unusual fatigue, for it has been calculated that, on those two occasions, they had to handle more than 30,000 pounds of wax, which was devoted to the benefit of the Opera del Duomo.<sup>1</sup>

The religious ceremonies being finished, the Si-

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<sup>1</sup> Stat. del Com. n° 3. — C. FALLETTI-FOSSATI, op. cit., pages 208-213.

*gnoria* gave a second banquet, to which were invited the *Vessilliferi Maestri*, the *Centurioni*, and other officials, together with the representatives of Grosseto, Soana, Sarteano, Chianciano, Orbetello and twenty-four other communities. Upon what grounds the rest were excluded I cannot say.

On the evening of the fifteenth the city was illuminated, tar-barrels were lighted in the Piazza, and between the lofty battlements of the Mangia tower the ruddy flames of great torches waved and sputtered in the wind. On the surrounding hills were kindled bonfires, as upon the vigil of St. John ; while, on far-off Amiata, a mighty pyre flared to heaven in token of her subjection to the Republic.<sup>1</sup> For three days longer the fair continued ; then, little by little, the amusements ceased, the jugglers and buffoons received their pay and betook themselves elsewhere, the foreigners left the city, and the good poeple of Siena returned to their ordinary mode of life.

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<sup>1</sup> A custom which is still observed on the evening of the 14<sup>th</sup> of August.

But we must not forget the Palio. Where, or precisely at what hour, it was run I do not know: although it is quite certain that, in the early days of the Commune, nobody had conceived the idea of adopting the Campus Fori as a race course. Later on, when Gigli wrote his *Diario*, it seems that the starting point was the monastery of Santuccio, near the Porta Romana, and that the race terminated in the Piazza del Duomo.<sup>1</sup> In the XIIIth and XIVth centuries, however, it was probably run outside one of the gates of the city, possibly in the great Via Francigena towards the Porta Camullia. This I deduce from the fact that, by the *Statuto* of the year 1337, it was provided that, on the day of the Palio, no one should ride through the city or the suburbs, *nè per alcuna strada dal luogo dove si dava la mossa sino alla città di Siena*.<sup>2</sup>—an enactment which shows that the race was run towards the city; and most likely over a straight course where the speed and en-

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<sup>1</sup> *Diario* cited, II, p. 110.

<sup>2</sup> See C. FALLETTI-FOSSATI, *op. cit.*, page 207.

duration of the horses could be tested. Moreover, we know that, up to the beginning of the XIVth century, the condition of the city itself was such as to entirely preclude the notion that the Palio could have taken place within its walls. Many even of the principal streets were still so crooked and irregular that it was difficult to traverse them at all, and certainly not on horseback. A good example of the existing state of things may be found in the *Statuto dei Viari*, which provides for the enlargement of the road leading to the church of the minor friars, which, we learn, was so narrow and low that, when the monks came forth to accompany a funeral, they were constrained to lower the cross which they carried before they could pass through it.<sup>1</sup> "In the Valle Piatta is a certain narrow street (where dwells Pennuccio the baker) which is exceeding dark; and it

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<sup>1</sup> ARCH. DI STATO IN SIENA, *Statuto dei Viari*, R. XXIII: "tantum arcta quod quando Fratres exinde cum cruce transeunt pro aliquo morto sepelliendo, oportet ipsam crucem flectere."

is said that in that place, in the evening, are done many grievous and dishonest things, and that assassins lie in wait there to fall upon passers-by and to slay them: *ideo* this street shall be closed at both ends and sold to the highest bidder.<sup>1</sup> Names such as *Malfango*, *Pantaneto*, *Malborghetto*, *Malcucinato*, and the like, speak for themselves as to the condition of the thoroughfares to which they were applied; while the fact that the Statute permitted the building of *loggiati*, supported upon posts or piles and overhanging the public highways for a third part of their width, affords some idea as to the conveniences which they offered for equestrian exercise.<sup>2</sup>

Moreover, in those days when everything was done in the streets, what an interruption of all the ordinary avocations of life a Palio run through

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<sup>1</sup> *Statuto dei Viari*, R. CCLXVIII. L.

<sup>2</sup> L. ZDEKAUER, *La vita pubblica dei Senesi nel dugento*, pages 33-37. See also the Constituto of 1262, III, 32: "Quod omnibus sit liberum hedificare super viis comunis."



the city would have caused. In the streets they piled up timber for sale; in the streets they loaded their mules; in the streets the tanners hung out their leather to dry; while, in the streets also, and preferably in the neighborhood of the Church of the *Frati Predicatori* and in the Piazza del Campo, the people satisfied certain unmentionable but necessary functions—a habit which the Constituto of 1262 endeavored to restrain, and not without good reason, when we remember that the swine, which roamed freely through the city for the greater part of the year, were then practically the only scavengers.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> L. ZDEKAUER, *La vita privata* &c., page 23. It is true that all these things were forbidden by the Constituto of 1262; but I take it that the very fact of such prohibition, satisfactorily proves the anterior existence of the thing or habit prohibited.

With regard to the custom of permitting swine to run loose in the streets, we may notice that, as late as the end of the XIVth century, it was provided, as a matter of economy, that only six male pigs of S. Antonio were to be permitted to be kept in Siena. *Prov. economici della Rep. di Siena nel 1382*, edited by A. LISINI, pages 45, 46, § LXVIII, and pages 60, 61, § LXXXIII.

It is not known in what year the Sienese first commenced to run the Palio in honor of Our Lady of August; but it at least seems reasonably certain that, if this custom did not actually originate in 1238, some modifications in the regulations which governed the race were introduced at about that date. For we find it recorded, in the *Libro dei Pretori*, that, during the term of office of the potestà Pietro Parenzi, a certain Ristoro di Bruno Ciguarde was fined 40 soldi *quia cum currisset palium in festo Sante Marie de Augusto, et fuisset novissimus, non accepit sune*<sup>1</sup> *sicut statutum fuit pro novissimo*. The penalty was by no means a mild one if we take into consideration the value of the soldo of that period, and it seems that it would have been even more severe, had the amount not been decreased *ex qualitate persone* who was condemned to pay it.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Sune* is possibly the same as *sunnis*, which in mediæval latin is equivalent to *obstaculum*, being derived, according to Wéndelinus, from the German *sun* or *son*.

<sup>2</sup> ARCH. DI STATO DI SIENA, Lib. dei Pretori, 1232-42 at cta 137.

For the rest, it appears that the *nerbate*<sup>1</sup> which are so vigorously administered on the 2nd of July and 16th of August by the modern *fantini*, have an ancestry which, if not noble, is certainly extremely ancient, since it is provided by the Constituto of 1262, that those *qui currerent eques* shall not be held responsible for the homicide or wounding of a fellow citizen, provided *predicta maleficia non committerent studiose*.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The word *nerbata* means a blow given with a *nerbo* or whip made "dal membro dei bovi o vitelli staccato sbucciato e seccato."

<sup>2</sup> Edition ZDEKAUER, V, 191.

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## CHAPTER THE THIRD.

### ANCIENT SIENESE PASTIMES.

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In Italy, in the Middle Ages, many pastimes were indulged in besides running the Palio. Pisa had her *Giuoco del Ponte*, Arezzo her *Giuoco del Pomo*, and Perugia her *Battaglia de' Sassi*; while in Florence, up to the beginning of the XVIIIth century, the youth of the city were wont to divert themselves with the *Giuoco del Calcio*; which seems to have been the prototype of our modern foot-ball, and which probaby bore a certain similitude to the *Pallone* of Siena. Moreover, during the XIIIth and XIVth centuries the *Elmora* was extremely popular throughout Tuscany, the Sieneſe, in particular, displaying an extraordinary predilection for the game.

As to this latter ; it was played in Siena in the Piazza ; those who took part in it being armed with lances and swords of wood. Their heads were protected by caps or helmets made of rushes, and they carried leather shields. It was, in fact, a mimic battle. But such was the ardor of the combatants that fatal results were by no means uncommon ; and the same Statute to which we have already referred, as excepting the riders in the Palio from the ordinary penalties for wounding and homicide, extends the like immunity to those *qui vulnerarent pro ludo et in bataglia que fieret in Campo Fori ut consuetum est.*

In 1238, Pietro Parenzi of Rome, potestà of Siena, in order as far as possible to prevent accidents, instructed Orlandino, the *Castaldus communis*, not to permit such of the citizens as were insufficiently armed to take part in the contest ; a restriction which seems to have been highly resented by a certain Adota di Canaccio who doubtless considered that as a free-born Sieneſe : he was entitled to get his head broken at his own

good pleasure. At any rate, he attempted to join in the game without his shield, and clad only in a leather jerkin. Orlandino requested him to retire, and, in his resentment at so outrageous a curtailment of his liberty, he so far forgot himself as to exclaim: "A fine Potestà this of ours; bad luck to him!"—A piece of disrespect to the first magistrate of the Republic for which he was condemned to pay a fine of sixty soldi.<sup>1</sup>

However, notwithstanding all precautions, one or more citizens lost their lives every year; and at last the Elmora was prohibited altogether by the Constituto of 1262;<sup>2</sup> although it continued

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<sup>1</sup> Libri dei Pretori del 1238, a cta 136. "Item Adotam Canacii in LX sol., quia, cum Orlandinus, castaldus comunis, mandato Potestatis ivisset ad custodiendum, ne homines inhermes irent inter armatos in bactallia in Campo Fori, et invenissent dictum Adotam cum mantello vel pelle inter armatos, et redarguissent eum quod ita manebat, et dixissent ei quod Potestas preceperat eis quod facerent admoveri inhermes ab armatis, dixit ei dictus Adota: — Vada cum mala fortuna! Ecce pulcre Potestates! —"

<sup>2</sup> Distinction v, rubric CLXXXVIII.

to be played for more than a quarter of a century longer, in spite of the law.

The incidents which preceded its final abolition are thus described by Agnolo di Tura, and are generally attributed to the year 1291 :

“ In Siena there was a great battle of Elmora, after this manner, that the Terzo of San Martino and the Terzo of Camullia fought with the Terzo di Città, on such wise that the Terzo di Città was driven back even to the Chiasso delle Mora. And there did they receive succour from the Casato, and from the Piazza Mannetti, and of Casa Scotti and of the Forteguerri. Then began they to cast stones, and afterward they fought hand to hand with great assault of battle. And thither came well nigh all Siena ; either to join in the fray or to interpose to separate the combatants. But so great was the confusion and shouting that no man might hear himself speak ; neither were they able to stop the battle. Whereby it befel that there were slain x gentlemen, besides many of the baser sort ; and many were wounded ; until,

at last, the Terzo di Città was victorious, and drove back the Terzo di San Martino and that of Camullia until they thrust them forth from the Campo. And, in good sooth, if messer Pino the potestà had not forced his way into the *mêlée* with his folk and compelled those men to lay down their arms, there would have been a greater slaughter. And, by reason of this battle, it was ordained that from thenceforth the game should not be played with staves and with stones, but that they who joined therein should use their fists alone (*E per questa battaglia si levò via, che non si giocasse con battaglia di pertiche, nè di sassi, ma si giocasse a le pugna per meno scandalo*) and on this wise had the game of the *Pugna* its commencement in Siena; and so they abolished the other battles. And it was perilous; and it seemed that the state itself was endangered in that the passions of the people were aroused by much fighting. And this befel on All Saints day."



Such is one account of the origin of the *Giuoco delle Pugna*: but, according to other writers, it is much more ancient.

Thus it is related that, in the year 935, the French nobles, who had succeeded to the castles of the Longobards in the Sienese contado, and who lived in a perpetual state of warfare with one another, were compelled to compose their petty quarrels by reason of the ravages of the Moors and Saracens, who, having surprised and destroyed Genoa, passed into the Maremma of Tuscany and sacked Roselle. Alarmed by this common peril, the said nobles resolved to unite their forces and to take refuge in some strongly fortified city. For this purpose Siena was selected; and that the more readily, because the descendants of the French gentlemen who had settled there in the days of Charlemagne were willing to extend a welcome to their fellow countrymen.

The Sienese, however, refused to admit them, "fearing that this new folk, being unaccustomed to obey the laws and the magistrates, would af-

ford an occasion of disunion and division among the people." Nevertheless, in the end and after much insistence, they were permitted to build huts in the neighborhood of the city and to hold a market for the necessities of life outside the gates. Before long, ill blood was engendered between the townsfolk and their new neighbors, who, according to Bartolommeo Benvoglianti, inhabited the two castles of Camullia and Montone.

The Piazza del Campo, or *Campus Fori* as it was then called, was situated in the midst of these *resedi*, and was divided breadthwise by a great wall, and lengthwise by the rain-water. Here were held the markets; and here the Sienese and the French frequently quarrelled and fought; for, when the citizens came thither to sell their wares and ventured to encroach upon that part of the Campo which the new-comers had appropriated as their own, these latter were ill content to behold them vending their wares within their boundaries; so that from words they came to blows and bloodshed, the people hurrying from every side

to give support and assistance to their respective factions. These conflicts were long and stubborn : and, after one party or the other had been put to the rout, the victors naturally plundered the booths of the vanquished, seizing as booty such eggs, cheese, fowls and other edibles as they found therein. And this, says Benvoglianti, occurred especially *inanti ai giorni della quaresima, quando le robe si comprano più care.*

Later on, when the original city—the ancient *Castel Vecchio (Castellum Vetus)*—and its suburbs were all united within one circuit of walls, these time-honored conflicts long continued to be commemorated at Carnival time, in the same spot, by means of divers popular games, all of which retained the semblance of actual battles. Such were the Elmora and the *Giuochi Giorgiani*, which were initiated after the battle of Montaperto ;<sup>1</sup> but

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<sup>1</sup> Some writers treat the *Giuochi Giorgiani* as practically identical with the Elmora. See AQUARONE, *Dante in Siena* (edition of 1889), page 33, and " Misc. Stor. Senese," vol. II (1894), page 92. But compare the

the most popular of them all was that of the Pugna; whereafter, as late as the middle of the XVth century, the victors were wont to sack the shops of the cheesemongers and wine-sellers according to the ancient usage<sup>1</sup>—a custom which, one would suppose, can hardly have commended itself to mere tradesmen; and which we may, perhaps, compare with the strange prescriptive right, claimed by the Roman populace, of plundering the Pope's palace immediately after his decease.<sup>2</sup>

"Some think (says Tommasi) that this game was permitted because it was less dangerous and barbarous than those others which were prohibited, and also as being of some public utility—not only

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Chronicle of Ventura (cited *supra*), pages 96, 97 and notes.

<sup>1</sup> B. BENVOLIENTI, *Trattato dell'origine e accrescimento della città di Siena* (trad. da FABIO BENVOLIENTI), Roma, 1571. Cf. MALAVOLTI, 1<sup>a</sup> parte at cta 12<sup>t</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> See MILMAN, *History of Latin Christianity* (London, 1867), vol. III, Book v, chapter VII, page 245.

as affording an outlet whereby old enmities might harmlessly evaporate, which otherwise would have led to the drawing of weapons and to death, but also as accustoming the citizens to range themselves in order of battle, to attack and to stand upon the defensive.... thereby rendering them valiant and ready to fight, and to a certain extent inuring them to bloodshed, all of which things make men more apt and eager for military service. But I believe that the reason why our ancestors favored the Pugna, and allowed it to obtain the countenance both of law and of custom, was that it was an obvious token and record of the antiquity of the city. For we read in the History of Livy, that Tarquinius Priscus, after the defeat of the Latins and the sack of Apiolæ, constructed the Circus Maximus; and that, among the other spectacles and public games then exhibited to the people, was that of the Pugna—he having sent for players from Tuscany.<sup>1</sup> And because, in Tus-

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<sup>1</sup> T. LIVIUS, *Hist.*, 1, 35. "Equi pugilesque ex Etruria maxime acciti."

cany, to play at the Pugna is, and ever hath been the prerogative of the Sienese people, I am persuaded that these players came from Siena. And hence it is, by reason of this tradition, that the game hath ever been held in such high esteem by our city, and was so greatly favored by the people. And it hath ever been deemed a seemly thing to play thereat, yea, even for a noble or a magistrate.<sup>1</sup>”

As to the way in which the contest was carried on, I cannot do better than quote the excellent description of Professor Falletti-Fossati, in his *Costumi Senesi*.<sup>2</sup>

“On Carnival Sunday (says he) two great tents were set up in the Piazza; one towards the Via S. Martino, and the other near the mouth of the Casato, wherein those citizens assembled who where desirous of taking an active part in the game....

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<sup>1</sup> TOMMASI, I, II, 83.

<sup>2</sup> Pages 199-202.

" While the spectators are arriving, the combatants are preparing for the fray, divesting themselves of their outer garments, and, if I am not mistaken, binding silken *diploidi* upon their fists, to deaden the force of their blows. At the sound of the trumpet, they issue forth in two companies, which are again subdivided into smaller bands; and, under the command of two captains, advance into the upper part of the Piazza, confronting one another, and ready to contend fiercely for the victory. They march forward in orderly array, obedient to the voices of their leaders, with their fists clenched and close to their breasts, arousing admiration in the beholders.

" At a given signal the first ranks join battle, supported and then replaced by the second and third rows, until the fight becomes general. Blows fall rapidly; each man knows that the eyes of relatives and friends, of the principal citizens, and of the *Signoria* themselves, are upon him; and inspired by the thought, fights stubbornly for the honor of his particular *parrocchia* or *compagnia*,

determined to win fresh laurels or to preserve those already gained in former contests. Ponderous are the blows struck. The sweat rolls down the faces of the players, and ever and anon one of them retires injured. The excitement is intense; through all the crowded Piazza no sound is heard save the voices of the captains, the dull thud of blows, and the broken exclamations of the combatants. From the surrounding palaces, with their gaily ornamented windows,.... comely matrons and dark-eyed maidens watch the struggle, ready to shout *evviva* to the victors; while the people, restraining themselves with difficulty from taking part in the fray, espouse the cause of one or the other party; now loudly applauding a vigorous blow, now with straining eyes and bated breath following the vicissitudes of the game, and now shouting encouragement to those who are giving way; striving, so to speak, to aid them by the intensity of their gaze and by the contraction of their muscles.

" The conflict has lasted about half an hour,



and the result is still doubtful. Neither can the spectators know as yet which of the two companies will be beaten out of the Piazza—for this is what must decide the victory; the object of those who come from the Casato being to drive their adversaries towards the houses of the Piccolomini, while they who come from S. Martino must, if they would win, force their opponents towards the Porta Salaia or the Costarella. But the decisive moment approaches. See! a company wavers, loses ground, is hotly pursued and takes shelter in the Costarella. Here, if anywhere, they must make their final stand, favored by the narrowness of the street and the steepness of the ascent. The *mêlée* becomes fiercer every minute; blows are redoubled, and the game bids fair to develop into a bloody battle, strewing the Piazza with dead and wounded. The people applaud and hiss, the fury of the combatants is at its height, when, at a signal from the managers of the festival, ice cold water is flung upon the heads of the fighters from the windows of the

neighboring palaces; and if the cold of the season assisted by the water be not enough to allay their excitement, stones will be cast at them to separate them.

" Thus the conflict ceases. But the game is not yet ended; for the less seriously injured of the players on both sides, forgetting the blows which they have given and received, join hands, and running to the middle of the Piazza, dispose themselves in a circle, to dance to the sound of musical instruments." And so the festival terminates in merriment and mutual good-will.

" This game of the Pugna," says Gigli, ".... is certainly one of the most beautiful and attractive which hath ever been practised in Tuscany, because it is noble, it doth not weary the mind, neither causeth it terror nor dread of any ill, but giveth great joy to them that look thereon. And it may be watched without fear, because they who play thereat use not weapons wherein lyeth danger, but their fists alone. Herein doth it differ

from the Pisan game, wherein the *targhe*<sup>1</sup> which are employed may occasion very grievous injury.... Neither doth our game demand great mental application like those of Florence and of Lucca which are too studied, ordered and precise.... Nathless it is lively and spirited and needeth some skill, if only to know how to smite at the right moment; not to miss the mark nor to be taken unawares; to withdraw at the right time; to run

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<sup>1</sup> The *Targa* or *Targone*, used in the *Giucoco del Ponte*, is described as "an instrument made of board the fifteenth of a *braccio* in thickness. Its length was a *braccio* and two thirds; its width at the top somewhat more than the third of a *braccio*, and at the bottom the sixth of a *braccio*. It was wielded by means of two handles," and, in spite of its name and shield-like form, was in fact an offensive weapon, the adversary being struck with the narrow end of it.—See *L'Oplo-machia pisana ovvero La Battaglia del Ponte di Pisa descritta da CAMILLO RANIER BORGHI, nobil pisano, &c.* In Lucca, MDCCXIII.

To save the reader trouble, I may remind him, that a *braccio* is equal to 0.5836 metres, and a metre to 39.37 inches. I would work the sum out for him, had I not well-grounded apprehensions as to the result of any arithmetical efforts of my own.

wilily so as to deceive the enemy, and to adopt other similar stratagems.... And the spectators, if well the game be used, may recognize therein the vivacious and cheerful disposition of our folk, who have ever been dowered with kindly and courteous manners; observing that if any man be badly smitten and beaten he changeth not therefor his ancient friendship for his companion into hatred. And for this gentle spirit the Sienese were greatly praised by San Bernardino in his preachings. And it is a tradition among us that this saint urged the citizens to play at the game of the Pugna; albeit in his sermons, which are preserved in manuscript and which contain many wholesome teachings, there is naught to be found touching this matter.... It cannot however be denied that our Brandano indirectly lauded the game when he spake and prophesied, saying, "Woe unto thee, Siena, when thou shalt no longer play the Pugna (*Guai a te, Siena, quando non farai più alla pugna*). Yet, peradventure, this saying was put into his mouth by someone

unto whom it seemed a thing impossible that this amusement should ever be abandoned by the Sienese, since it was beloved by them, and suited to their tastes."

However, in spite of all which the diarist has to tell us of the gentle and innocent nature of the game, it seems hardly to have been a drawing-room diversion, and, on more than one occasion, proved well nigh as sanguinary and violent as the Elmora.

Thus in 1324 (old style) "on the Sunday before Carnival, the same being the third day of February, a game of Pugna was played in Siena. Those of the Terzo of San Martino with those of the Terzo of Camullia numbered 600 each; and there came against them those of the Terzo di Città; whereby it befel that there was in the Campo of Siena much folk stripped to their doublets, with caps of cloth upon their heads; and these were furnished with cheek-pieces which covered the cheeks and were worn for the protection of the face and head. And they wrapped handkerchiefs about their hands according to custom.

And playing at the Pugna on this wise, the two Terzi cast out the Terzo di Città from the Campo; and they commenced to throw stones. Then certain persons took staves; and so they fought in the Campo. Thereafter they armed themselves with shields and helmets and with lances and swords and spears; and so great was the uproar in the Campo that all the world seemed upside down for the multitude of folk that was therein. And all the soldiers of the Commune came armed into the Campo, and likewise the Potestà of Siena with his attendants. And the *Signori Nove* made proclamation that the battle should cease, but so great was the uproar that they took nothing thereby, nor could they separate the combatants. The *Capitano della guerra* with his folk and the Potestà of Siena thrust themselves between those that fought, but nothing could they do to stop the conflict. Then were slain certain horses of the soldiers, and thereafter died one of the soldiers also. And ever there came more people into the Campo by all the ways that led thereto, with

cross-bows and with axes and with bills. And the battle ever increased; and neither the *Signori* nor any others that were there were able to remedy so great ruin. Wherefore the Bishop of Siena, with the priests and friars of all the orders in Siena, came into the Campo in procession, bearing the cross before them; and they commenced to pass through the battle.... And at last, they who fought were separated by reason of the prayers of the said Bishop and of all the priests and friars. And so the battle ceased. And while yet the battle continued, or ever the Bishop had come, the Saracini and the Scotti cast many stones from their windows, on such wise that they who were struck thereby were minded to set fire to the houses of those folk on the side of the Campo. And a son of Ser Martino da Gallena slew a worker in wood (*un Maestro di manaia*) of the Terzo of San Martino; wherefore they of San Martino twice set fire to the shops. So that, when the battle was done, it was seen that four men had been killed therein. Now therefore, when the tumult was over, the *Signori*

*Nove* took council concerning the said battle and slaughter and arson.... And it was resolved that from thenceforth they should play no more at the Pugna.<sup>1</sup> ”

However, we may doubt if this resolution had anything more than a temporary effect; since we know that, more than two centuries later, when Charles V. visited Siena, a game of Pugna was played in the Piazza in his honor, which he watched from the window of the *Sala del Concistoro*, and “ in which he took marvellous great delight.<sup>2</sup> ”

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<sup>1</sup> AGNOLO DI TURA, *Cronica Sanese*, ad annum. Cf. TOMMASI, II, lib. IX, p. 218; PECCI, *Storia del Vescoवाद della Cillà di Siena*, page 267. There had previously been another serious disturbance on the occasion of a game of pugna, in 1317, see MALAVOLTI, part 2, at c<sup>ta</sup> 79. From the Constituto of 1262-1270, Dist. v, Rubric 33, it appears clear that the chroniclers have not greatly overcolored their picture; while the date therein mentioned demonstrates that Agnolo di Tura is mistaken when he asserts that the *giuoco delle pugna* had its origin in 1291. It seems to have been played concurrently with the Elmora.

<sup>2</sup> See the last part of the history of TOMMASI,



Another favorite pastime of the Sienese was the *giuoco del Pallone*, which appears to have been sometimes played in connection with the Pugna. It was, I think, a species of foot-ball; the ball, or Pallone, being thrown into the Piazza from the Torre del Mangia.<sup>1</sup> However, we know but little about it; and in Sozzini's account of the game which took place in 1555, during the last great siege, he speaks as if it were a common amusement in his day, and gives no particulars whatever as to the method of play.

On the 13th January, says he, "at midday, many Sienese youths met together in the Piazza del Campo; and, having stripped themselves to their doublets, they joined hands and danced, forming a circle so great that it filled more than half

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which has never been printed, owing to the death of his wife Livia Cinuzzi in 1628, before she had completed the task of editing her deceased husband's work; also AQUARONE, *Gli ultimi anni della storia repubblicana di Siena*, page 154.

<sup>1</sup> C. FALLETTI-FOSSATI, op. cit., page 193.

the Piazza. Thereafter two captains having been chosen, the said youths were by them divided into two equal parties; and they played a very beautiful game of Pallone for two hours or more. And all those French gentlemen stood looking on; and they were amazed at our madness (*e stupivano delle nostre pazzie*), in that the same youths, who the very day before had done battle with the enemy, to-day played at Pallone.

" Now Bernino the cheesemonger, a valorous youth, had three days before made prisoner a Spanish gentleman, the same being a goodly man; and it was his whim to go and fetch him; and he caused him to strip to his doublet and to put on the *banda rossa*,<sup>1</sup> and to play at Pallone. And he was more admired than all the other players because he was swift of foot; nor was there any man that could run as he did.

" And when the game of Pallone was finished,

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<sup>1</sup> Referring, as I suppose, to the colors worn by the opposing sides. See AQUARONE, *Dante in Siena*, page 34, and GIGLI, *Diario Senese*, II, page 491.

the trumpets sounded, and each man went to his Terzo; and they played a fair game of Pugna, whereof Monsignor Montluc took so great pleasure that he well nigh wept for very joy, saying that never had he beheld more gallant youths than they. And there were those that answered him, saying: 'Bethink you how we shall encounter our enemies when thus we do among ourselves who are friends.' And, when the game of the Pugna was ended, a voice was heard crying: *Alle guardie, alle guardie*. And anon they departed all from the Piazza to take their arms; and each man went to his appointed post.<sup>1</sup>

Possibly the reader will share in the amazement of the French gentlemen who watched that game of Pallone, when it is remembered what privations the Sienese were suffering at the time; how, for months, never a week had gone by but some friend

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<sup>1</sup> ALESSANDRO SOZZINI, *Diario delle cose avvenute in Siena dai 20 Luglio 1550 ai 28 Agosto 1555* (G. P. Vieusseux, Firenze, 1842), pages 353, 354.

or relative of those players had died in one of the many furious sorties which were becoming matters of almost daily occurrence ; how well-born and once wealthy citizens fought bravely during the day, and then, at night, with unshaken courage, begged alms, " for the love of God," from door to door ; how even the very women—delicately nurtured ladies and those of the lower classes alike—rivalled their husbands and brothers in valor and devotion, laboring on the ramparts, together with priests and artisans and *contadini*.

Ever since the preceding September there had been great scarcity of wine in Siena, so that " there were those who drank water, and vinegar mingled with water ; and, when a little wine was found, they who would buy it paid thirty-three lire a barrel (*barile*), while many bought it in small quantities for twenty-five soldi a *boccale*.<sup>1</sup> " In October, there being a lack of meat, the citizens had begun to butcher asses, and those not

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<sup>1</sup> A *boccale* is about half a fiasco.

of the fattest; but so great was the demand therefor that no ass would have remained alive within the walls had not the government prohibited, under heavy penalties, the further slaughter of those animals. We have, moreover, numerous accounts of country folk who were intercepted while attempting to bring supplies into Siena, and hung by the besiegers, "so that the city had no fresh meat." And, only the day before the game of which we are speaking was played, the captains had been compelled to give the Sieneſe companies a few hours of repose, "because they were utterly worn out by continual labor by day and also by night; which thing (adds the diarist) was passing grateful to the soldiers and more especially to me.<sup>1</sup>"

Perhaps too, we may find in these facts the reason why, by comparison with those gaunt and war-wasted Sieneſe, the Spanish prisoner of Bernino, the cheesemonger, *era benissimo in gambe*,

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<sup>1</sup> SOZZINI, *Diario* cited.

and why there was no man *che facesse li corsi che faceva lui.*

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Sigismondo Tizio tells us that Siena was founded under the influence of the second sign of the Zodiac, and that she owes thereto the affability and hospitality of her inhabitants, the beauty and allurement of her women, and, above all else, the love which her populace hath ever borne for festivals and games.<sup>1</sup> And indeed, it was never possible for those old Sienese to remain depressed for long. Scarcely was the great siege at an end than we find the people making merry because the *fonte Gaia*, after having been dry for many months, was once more running water: *Ne fece festa ed allegrezza*, writes Sozzini. And, a few pages further on, he relates how the entire city was moved to laughter by the waggery of certain

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<sup>1</sup> BIBLIOTECA COM. DI SIENA, Ms. B. III, 6. TITII *Histor. Senens.* Tom I; RONDONI, *Tradizioni popolari e leggende di un comune medioevale e del suo contado* (Firenze, 1886), page 32. Compare TOMMASI, I, 55.

Germans who, being on guard in the Piazza, clothed with corselets and morions the marble saints which adorn the *Cappella*. That same August the refugees in Montalcino commemorated the Assumption of Our Lady with all the accustomed pomp; and on the evening of the fifteenth, *si fece una caccia di tori nella Piazza grande da basso, avanti il Palazzo con gran letizia generale e giostre, livriere, balli e canti per tutta la terra*; <sup>1</sup> while, a year or two later, the good Sienese, forgetful of their vanished liberty and of the friends and relatives who were still languishing in exile, celebrated the carnival season with more than ordinary abandon, and "with so great familiarity and licence between the young men and women that—as the Florentine Niccolini wrote to his master—the city appeared to be the kingdom of Venus."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See *Misc. Stor. Senese*, vol. III (1895), pages 12, 13.

<sup>2</sup> The letter referred to bears date 23rd Feb. 1557, and is preserved in the Archives at Florence. (See *Misc. Stor. Senese*, vol. III, pages 42, 43.)

"Qui s'è fatto per l'universale un allegro Carno-

Of the other pastimes of the Sienese but little need be said in this place. The more ancient are enumerated by Falletti-Fossati in his *Costumi Senesi*; while, with regard to such of them as are intimately connected with the evolution of the Palio, I shall have something to say in the following chapter. Suffice it here to mention that from very early times tournaments appear to have been popular in Siena. In a chronicle by an unknown author, preserved among the archives of the city, we read of *una nobile e bella giostra* which was held in 1225 on the meadow outside the Porta Camullia. The victor was a certain Bon-signore of Arezzo, and he received "an exceeding swift horse, all clothed on with silk, together with armour of fine steel befitting an approved and prudent warrior." The second prize was a helmet with the arms of the Commune, and the third a

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vale con molti parentadi, comedie et banchetti, non però di grande spesa, ma con tanta domestichezza et licentia di giovani con le donne che pare che sia il regno di Venere " &c.



sword and steel gauntlets.<sup>1</sup> Later on, it seems that tournaments were held in the Piazza;<sup>2</sup> and it is obviously to this form of diversion that Folgare da San Gimignano refers in the sixth of his sonnets to the members of the *Brigata Spendereccia*:

Di maggio si vi do molti cavagli  
e tutti quanti siano affrenatori,  
portanti tutti, dritti corritori,  
pettorali e testiere con sonagli,  
bandiere e coverte a molti intagli  
e zendadi di tutti li colori,  
le targhe a modo degli armeggiatori,  
violet, rose e fior c'ogni uom' abbagli;  
e rompere e fiaccar bigordi e lance,  
e piover da finestre e da balconi  
in giù ghirlande e in su melarance;  
e pulzelle giovene e garzoni  
baciarsi ne la bocca e ne le guance,  
d'amor e di goder vi si rasoni.

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<sup>1</sup> See RONDONI, *Sena Vetus*, page 70.

<sup>2</sup> See, among the *Tavolette*, in the Archivio di Stato, that of 1610, which depicts a tournament in the Piazza del Campo.

Verses which D. G. Rossetti has translated as follows, in his " Early Italian Poets : "

I give you horses for your games in May,  
And all of them well trained unto the course,  
Each docile, swift, erect a goodly horse ;  
    With armour on their chests, and bells at play  
    Between their brows, and pennons fair and gay,  
Fine nets, and housings meet for warriors  
Emblazoned with the shields ye claim for yours,  
    Gules, argent, or, all dizzy at noon day :  
And spears shall split, and fruit go flying up  
In merry interchange for wreaths that drop  
    From balconies and casements far above ;  
And tender damsels with young men and youths  
Shall kiss together on the cheeks and mouths ;  
    And every day be glad with joyful love.

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CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

OF THE CONTRADE OF SIENA

AND HEREIN

OF THE EVOLUTION OF THE PALIO.

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I.

Even as the city of Florence was divided into *Sesti*, so is that of Siena divided into *Terzi*; and these *Terzi* are, in their turn, subdivided into *Contrade*, or wards, which, at the present time number in the aggregate seventeen; although formerly they were much more numerous.

As to the origin and *raison d'être* of the Contrade, it has usually been assumed that they represent the divisions of the city which were made for military purposes in the days when the backbone of the communal army consisted of traders and artisans. And this theory appears to be ac-

cepted by no less an authority than Professor Zdekauer, who in his learned "Dissertation on the Statutes of the Commune of Siena up to the Compilation of 1262," identifies the *contrade* with those ancient subdivisions of the *pedites* of the various Terzi which were known by the name of *popoli*<sup>1</sup>—a position which, if it can be sustained,

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<sup>1</sup> See page XXXXV of the *Dissertazione sugli Statuti del Comune di Siena* which precedes the text of the *Costituto* in prof. ZDEKAUER'S edition, and especially note 2.

At the beginning of the XIIIth century the fundamental division of the body politic, both for civil and military purposes, was that of *Milites* and *Populus*. Cavalieri and people alike, were divided into three companies; each of which marched under its own banner (*VI gonfalones, tres ad opus militum et tres ad opus peditum*). And the number of these companies was undoubtedly based upon the division of the city into Terzi. The banners, both of the milites and populi, were given in public parliament, assembled either *in Campo post Sanctum Paulum*, or *in platea ante Ecclesiam maiorem*; but, while the people took oath before the *carroccio*, the milites swore upon their standards.

As to the subdivision of the Companies into *popoli*: the Terzo di San Martino and the Terzo di Città contained 12 *popoli* each, while the Terzo di Camullia had only 11.

goes far towards proving the correctness of the statement of the chronicler Andrea Dei that the Sienese commenced *a far le compagnie per la città delle contrade* in the year 1209.

Others, however, reject entirely the idea of any connection between the Contrade and the ancient military companies, declaring that the former are a product of the XVth century, and were in their inception practically what they are to-day, i. e. associations formed for the purpose of assisting at the public festivals of the city, and of increasing their splendor and popularity.

In support of this view it is pointed out that the two earliest records which we have of the Contrade are assignable respectively to the years 1482 and 1494, and have reference, the one to a Palio run in honor of St. Mary Magdalene, and the other to *un bellissimo giuoco delle pugna* which was played on Carnival Sunday in the Piazza del Campo.<sup>1</sup> Moreover it is noticeable that even so

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<sup>1</sup> The first document referred to is a loose sheet of paper placed within the *Libro di Biccherna* of 1482.

voluminous a writer as Sigismondo Tizio<sup>1</sup> makes no mention whatever of the Contrade—a circumstance from which no other deduction appears to be possible than that in his day they were institutions of very little importance. And we are still more inclined to admit that this must have been

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The Contrade mentioned therein are those of the GIRAFFA and the CHIOCCIOLA.—The *giuoco delle pugna* of 1494 is recorded in the contemporary chronicle of ALLEGRETTO ALLEGRETTI (MURATORI, *Scriptores rerum italicarum*. Tom. XVIII, p. 840), the Contrade mentioned being those of the GIRAFFA, the DRAGO, the CHIOCCIOLA and the ONDA.

<sup>1</sup> Sigismondo Tizio, who flourished at the end of the XVth and beginning of the XVIth centuries, was the parish priest of San Vincenzo (to-day the Chièsa dell' Istrice). He wrote, with his own hand, a history of Siena from its origin up to the second decade of the XVIth century, in ten enormous volumes, in moderate latin. And this monumental work, although discursive and disconnected, is always, valuable to consult. The original is preserved in the Biblioteca Chigiana in Rome: but the Biblioteca Comunale of Siena possesses a copy, made in the last century by the Ab. Galgano Bichi, to which is prefixed a biographical notice. See also the article of G. MILANESI, in the *Bullettino Senese di Storia Patria*, vol. I (1894), page 101.

the case when we find that later on, in the XVIth and XVIIth centuries, public documents and contemporary chronicles, alike, abound with references to jousts, bull-fights, pugna, and races, both of horses and of buffalo, in which the Contrade intervened with their proper comparse and ensigns.

Neither should the fact be overlooked that, for some time after the Contrade had assumed their modern form, the military companies continued to exist as distinct and separate bodies, the officials, organization and banners of the former being entirely different from those of the latter who still acknowledged their subordination to the three Gonfalonieri of the Terzi, and looked to the *Capitano di popolo* as their supreme head. While finally, it is argued that it is quite impossible that the origin of the Contrade can be traced back to the military companies because, by the statutes of those companies, as reorganized in 1310, it was expressly provided *quod nullus de civitate Senarum vel burgis, faciat sotietatem cum aliquibus personis pro ridda vel ballis seu corteis faciendis*.

*Et quod aliqui de civitate Senarum vel burgis non induant se de novo de aliquo panno neque ad modum Scotobrini neque ad alium modum alterius ludi vel forge, et quod ballando vel ridando vel aliquo modo ludendo, non vadant per civitatem Senarum vel burgos, under a penalty of 25 lire.*<sup>1</sup>

However this may be—and the question is by no means as yet settled—for the last four hundred years, the Contrade have been a distinctive feature

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<sup>1</sup> A. LISINI in the *Misc. Stor. Senese*, vol. 1 (1893), pages 26, 27.—The enactment quoted is from the *Statuto del Capitano di Popolo* of 1310 at cta 26.— I admit that to me the argument does not appear altogether convincing; and it seems clear from the following passage that, whatever may have been the case in earlier times, in the XVIth century the military Companies as well as the Contrade were wont to take part in the public festivities:—“Creorno in tutte le quarantotto Contrade i lor capi di caccia, con quattro Signori principali della festa; e li centurioni de' Terzi messero in ordine le lor Compagnie; e cosi, il giorno entrarono in Piazza, tutti benissimo vestiti, con le livrée di drappo di variati colori, con le lor macchine delli animali di legname per offendere i tori.” — SOZZINI, *Diario*, page 27.



in Sienese life, the like of which is not to be found in any other Italian city.

## II.

In the XVIth century, when the Contrade began to take a prominent part in the promotion and management of the public festivals, the *Caccia de' tori* was the favorite diversion of the Sienese youth. But it seems rather to have been indulged in as occasion offered than, like the modern Palio, to have been associated with fixed and definite dates. It was, in fact, merely one of the many spectacles and games with which the pleasure-loving people of Siena were wont to amuse themselves, and had to hold its own against numerous rivals. For example, Sozzini tells us that on the 15th August 1553 the customary bull-fight was not held, in order to make way for a Venetian acrobat who performed in the Piazza, balancing himself upon a rope, which was suspended between the Chiasso largo and the summit of the palazzo Cerritani and then drawn taut by means

of a windlass. " And (says the diarist) the Piazza was full of folk that came thither to look on ; and it was a most beautiful sight."

Nevertheless, in spite of all other attractions the Caccia de' tori was, as I have said, emphatically the pastime of the period.

The Contrade were wont to enter the Piazza clad in the most gorgeous costumes (*livrée—compare*) each leading its own bull, and accompanied by huge *macchine*, made of wood, which as a rule represented gigantic birds or beasts, but were, in fact, miniature fortresses wherein those who took part in the game might seek refuge from the infuriated animals. Each Contrada was naturally desirous of outdoing its rivals, not only in the dexterity and courage of its players, but also in the sumptuousness of its *livrèa* and equipments ; and since these *macchine* often cost a considerable sum, two or more neighboring Contrade sometimes combined together for the purpose of appearing with one *macchina* of extraordinary magnificence ; and thus, their partnership being continued for

several years, became, in fact, a single Contrada, adopting the name of the animal which had been represented by their joint *macchina*;—a state of things which seems to account very satisfactorily for the nomenclature and banners of the modern Contrade.

The Caccia de'tori flourished in Siena for more than a century, and then, having been forbidden by the Council of Trent as too perilous, was finally suppressed in 1590 by an edict of the Grand-duke Ferdinand I.<sup>1</sup> But those good Siennese, after so many centuries of Pugna, Elmora and bull-fighting, could not settle down to any sport which did not possess at least a spice of danger, and races on buffalo-back became the fashion. The course was three times round the Piazza; sometimes, perhaps, as many as twenty Contrade entered for the race; and the regulations which were made with regard to buffalo which had broken through the barriers being brought

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<sup>1</sup> See *Misc. Stor. Senese*, vol. 1 (1893), page 12.

back to the track at the same spot at which they had left it,<sup>1</sup> seem to imply possibilities which must have been extremely unpleasant for nervous spectators, particularly if the *palco de' cani*<sup>2</sup> was thronged in those days as it is at modern Palio.

It is difficult to imagine such a race; but I think that, if by chance the reader has seen something of ranch life, and has had the good fortune to be present when some reckless "broncho-buster" has undertaken to ride a range steer, he will agree with me that as a rule the steer does not lend himself with any special enthusiasm to the prolongation of the entertainment, and can in a measure realize what those *Bufalate* must have been like.

Occasionally, and more especially in the Carnival season, the *Bufalate* were superseded by *Asinate*, a species of entertainment which was, I

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<sup>1</sup> See *Misc. Stor. Senese*, vol. IV (1896), pages 54-56.

<sup>2</sup> The Sienese call the centre of the Piazza, where those who cannot afford to buy seats stand to witness the Palio, *il palco dei cani*.

believe, described for the first time by signor Cav. Alessandro Lisini, in the *Miscellanea Storica Senese* of May 1896.

" These *Asinate* (says he) were, in fact, merely a variation of the ancient *giuoco delle pugna*, being in all essential respects nothing more nor less than fist fights. As a rule they were promoted by one of the Contrade; and the promoters, of course, made themselves responsible for the cost of the prizes.

" On the day appointed for the spectacle those Contrade which desired to compete—to the number of not less than six nor more than ten—entered the Piazza in a body, with their banners displayed and with their Capitani and Alfieri, or, as it was then expressed, with their *Sargentina*. Each of them was followed by a band of thirty *pugillatori*; and they brought with them an ass, bare-backed and without any trappings whatever, but painted all over instead with the colors displayed by the Contrada.

" The *pugillatori* were lightly clad, and with

caps upon their heads ; their doublets and hose being of various colors, according to the livery of the particular Contrada to which they belonged. They were not permitted to carry weapons of any sort ; consequently staves and whips and even the wearing of finger rings were strictly prohibited, under a penalty of fifty scudi in gold, accompanied by the administration of the strappado. The rope to be used for that purpose was always in evidence upon such occasions, as a tacit admonition not only to the players, but also to such of the spectators as might feel disposed to infringe the regulations laid down for the seemly observance of the festival. Thus was justice rendered both speedy and efficacious.

" The various companies made the circuit of the Piazza displaying their banners, throwing them aloft and catching them, as is done at a modern Palio. Thereafter at a given signal each Contrada deposited its flag in a position assigned to it by lot, and then the Capitani and Alfieri retired, together with the rest of the spectators, into the

centre of the Piazza which was surrounded for the occasion by a palisade. Each group took up its position opposite to its own banner; and thus a circular track was left clear for the players.

" A second signal was given; the asses were led to the starting post, while the players disposed themselves at their pleasure around the Piazza or behind their own animals, taking up such positions as appeared to them most likely to conduce to victory in the impending struggle. And then commenced the race, if race it can be called.

" A third signal, and those unfortunate asses were taken by storm. The whole body of the *pugillatori* flung themselves upon them, all endeavoring to mount at once—these trying to thrust them onward, those to drag them back. And so the opposing parties swayed now this way and now that, fought and rolled on the ground and showered blows upon one another's heads and bodies, amid the deafening yells, hisses and applause of the spectators. Rarely did a player succeed in keeping his seat for more than a few

paces before he was hurled to the ground, and this in spite of a regulation which existed against soaping the animals. Sometimes a hostile company succeeded in surrounding ass and rider alike, and in carrying them bodily out of the Piazza—thus excluding them from further participation in the contest unless both the ass and his rider should succeed in re-entering at precisely the same spot as they went out.

” The animal to which the prize was awarded was that one which had first made two complete circuits of the Piazza in the midst of all this confusion and tumult. And if the *pugillatori* reissued from the contest bruised and bleeding, the pitiable condition of those wretched asses can well be imagined. The game, which often lasted nearly an hour, being over, the winning Contrada received 40 scudi; while an additional 20 scudi was distributed as prize-money among the members of the victorious team.”

I do not know whether an Asinata was ever run in honor of a saint; but it would seem to



be a suitable tribute to have offered to Sant'Antonio.<sup>1</sup> And those old Sienese possessed a fine sense of humor.

Meanwhile, throughout the sixteenth century, the Caccie de' tori, the Bufalate and the Asinate were frequently varied by horse races. And in the summer of 1581, in particular, the Contrade vied with one another in running Palii of every description.

In that year, on the occasion of "a Palio which is run by ancient custom on the day of San Bernardino," a number of accidents occurred, which left the real merits of the horses contending therein quite an open question. Thereupon a new race was organized and a new palio offered by one of the Contrade, to which was added a prize *a chi usciva con più bella inventione*. "And

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<sup>1</sup> I do not, of course, refer to St. Anthony of Padua, but to *S. Antonio del porco*, the patron saint of dumb animals, whose picture, to-day, adorns the slaughter-house in Fontebranda!

there (writes Federigo of the Counts of Montauto, Governor of Siena) were seen divers fantastic devices ; whereby was born a friendly emulation among all the other Contrade, so that there were but few that desired not to promote the running of a separate Palio, some with horses, and some with mares, and some with saddle mules taken from under (*levate di sotto*) the foremost doctors and principal ecclesiastics of the city, and others, yet again, with buffalo, in imitation of the ancient Roman custom. And there remains not any fable or history which hath not been represented in some form, accompanied ever with beautiful music and ingenious compositions.... Moreover there prevaieth extraordinary and universal gaiety, so that, after the races be over, the victors go in triumph through the city, visiting the most ancient Contrade, and holding well-nigh open house....”

Nor, in the midst of all this revelry and riot, were the poor and needy forgotten. Young maidens were lavishly dowered, and prisoners

were set free, their fines being paid by the Contrade.

However the sensation of the year was afforded by a race run on 15th August for *un palio superbo di broccato, che superi il valor di tutti gli altri*, and which was presented by the Contrada dell'Aquila; for, on that occasion, the horse of the Contrada del Drago was ridden by a peasant girl named Virginia.

So novel and unexpected an event almost produced a revolution in Siena. Not a few youths became enamoured of the fair *contadinella*, and the Governor himself, albeit jestingly, professed to have been smitten by her charms, remarking, in allusion to her suitors, that he doubted not that she was capable not only of managing old race-horses, but also of breaking young and unruly colts. In her honor an anonymous poetess composed certain verses, which were published in 1581, "*alla loggia del Papa*," in a little book which also contained divers other rhymes relative to the festivities of that year. In those verses it is de-

clared that the eyes *de la moltitudine infinita* were fixed upon Virginia, and that all besought heaven to shield her from peril and to grant her the victory. This, however, was not to be. "For *la più bella invenzione* the Contrada del Drago received *una collana di scudi 40 o più*. A silver cup of the value of about 20 scudi was carried off by the Contrada del Montone; and, lastly, the palio itself went to that of the Onda." But the *contadinella*, although she did not win the race, was presented by the Governor with a fine horse, which was probably about as acceptable a gift as he could have chosen for that *vergin nudrita in aspri boschi*.<sup>1</sup>

It is to be observed that none of these races were run in the Piazza, but probably, in most cases, over the same course as continued to be

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<sup>1</sup> See two letters from Federigo delli Conti da Montanto, Governor of Siena, to Antonio Serguidi the Grand-ducal secretary, preserved in R. Archivio di Firenze, filza Medicea, n. 1875 (carteggi di Siena). They are printed by CARLO CARNESECCHI, in the *Misc. Storica Senese*, vol. II (1894), pages 72-75.

used for the Palio of the 15th August up to the time of its abolition. And in this connection it is well to recall the fact that neither in the XVIth century nor afterwards, had the Contrade any connection whatever with the promotion or management of those ancient Palii which were run annually on the festivals of St. Mary of Mid-August, of San Pietro Alessandrino, of St. Mary Magdalene and of Sant'Ambrogio Sansedoni. These were under the exclusive control of the Commune, and, whatever may have been the custom at an earlier period, the horses which took part in them from the XVth century onwards ran without riders, even as they do to-day in the Roman races and in the Palio of Acquapendente.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Of these ancient Palii the latest survivor was that of St. Mary of Mid-August, which continued to be run on the 15th of August, long after the Palii of July 2nd and August 16th had become regular annual events. Indeed it was not abolished until the latter half of the XIXth century. It was run from the Convent of Santuccio, near the Porta Romana, through the whole length of the Via Ricasoli and up the Via di Città to the Piazza di Postierla. There a kind of canvas curtain was

The earliest notice which we have of a horse-race in the Piazza is attributable to the year 1605, when it was proposed to measure the course over which the Palio of Mid-August was ordinarily run *dalla Chiesa degli Angeli, sotto porta Romana, dove si dà la mossa, sino alla colonna del Duomo, fine del corso*, and to ascertain how many cir-

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stretched across the street, and the horses turned down the Via del Capitano, the winning post being in the Piazza del Duomo. The track was covered with sand for the occasion, and many of the side streets were fenced with canvas in order to keep the riderless animals in the proper course. The visitor to Siena may still see, affixed to the walls on either side of the Via de' Pellegrini where it joins the Via di Città, certain pieces of iron which were used to support the posts to which the canvas was hung.

The race, which was run in the morning, and which, of course, caused a complete cessation of all traffic for the time being, created no special enthusiasm, and was kept up simply as a time-honored custom. From the nature of the course nobody could catch more than a passing glimpse of the horses as they swept by; and, when, some thirty years ago, it was proposed to suppress it, no objection was offered, and thus a relic of the XIIIth century passed silently into oblivion.

cuits of the Piazza it would be necessary to make to cover the same distance.<sup>1</sup> This project seems to have been duly carried out, but it would be a mistake to suppose that the race thus run had any connection with the modern Palio, since it was not until after the abandonment of the Bufalate, about the middle of the XVIIth century, that the Contrade inaugurated the contests which we see to-day. And these, if we ignore their religious aspect, are much more closely connected with the Pugna and the Asinate than they are with the ancient Palii.

### III.

From the beginning of the XVIIth century the Feast of Our Lady of Provenzano became well-nigh the principal holiday of the Sienese year. It was celebrated on the 2nd of July, the day of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin; and on the evening of the festival a display of fireworks was

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<sup>1</sup> See *Misc. Stor. Senese*, vol. IV (1896), pages 71, 72.

wont to be given in the Piazza di Provenzano in front of the newly constructed church. The neighborhood, however, was none of the best, and every year the celebration gave rise to so much disorderly conduct that it was deemed prudent to seek out some other method of commemorating the occasion; and, towards the middle of the century, the Signori Nobili, to whom was entrusted the superintendence of the Festa, resolved to inaugurate annual horse-races in the Piazza del Campo, to be run between the various Contrade.

It is to this decision that we owe the modern Palio of July. But it is impossible to state with any certainty the precise date of its commencement. Girolamo Macchi, who occupied the office of *Scrittore maggiore* in the Spedale della Scala during the last twenty years of the century, tells us that *questo Palio.... viene dall'anno 1656 in qua*;<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The *zibaldoni* of G. MACCHI are preserved among the Sienese Archives.—See *Misc. Stor. Senese*, vol. v (1898), pages 93-95, where some interesting extracts are printed.



while some of the Contrade possess catalogues of winners of races which go back to 1651. These, however, are of more than doubtful accuracy, and bear every appearance of having been compiled in the eighteenth century. Moreover our faith in them is still further shaken when we remember that no Palio could be run without the permission of the Magistrates of Biccherna, who were obliged to enter a minute thereof in their official books, and that the first of such entries has reference to the race of July 1659.

However, while it would be interesting if possible to ascertain in what year the Contrade commenced to run their Palii in the Piazza, the matter is one of minor importance, and we may turn without regret to the consideration of the manner in which the races were conducted—a point upon which we fortunately possess ample information.

When the time of the festival drew near the two Signori Nobili, who were elected annually, presented their petition to the Governor of Siena,

who, during the XVIIth century, was almost always one of the princes of the House of Medici. To him they set forth " the desire of the Contrade to run a Palio in the Public Piazza on the day of the feast. And to that end, they prayed his Serene Highness to be pleased to command the magistracy of Biccherna to give orders to the *Comunità delle Masse* to carry sand into the said Piazza, on the day of the festival, *sotto pena della Cattura*; and also to cause public proclamation to be made that no one should venture to molest the horses during the race;" and then concluded with the formula that *di tanta grazia ne sarebbero rimasti in perpetuo obbligati*. His Highness, in order to save paper, or labor, or both, was wont to write at the foot of the petition *Concedesi*: and thereafter all further formalities became the business of the officials of Biccherna, who forthwith nominated two deputies and a starter (*mossiere*) with full authority in the premises, and sent a public crier through the city to announce the forthcoming race; the text of such

proclamation being afterwards affixed to the principal door of the Ufficio di Biccherna.

Such of the Contrade as desired to take part in the race were obliged to give notice of their intention so to do before 4 p. m. (*ore 22*) on the 22nd of June, depositing 8 lire for the hire of a horse. And woe to that Contrada which sought to enter its name after the appointed hour had passed. Complaints and protests poured in from every direction, and its exclusion was almost a matter of course.

On the 29th of June, after vespers, the selection of the horses which were to take part in the Palio was made outside the Porta Camullia. A larger number of animals than were actually needed for the race were in attendance at the so called Palazzo dei Diavoli (*Palatium Turcorum*); and their speed was tested over a course extending from that place to the little church dedicated to San Bernardino just outside the city gates. The winning horse was awarded a *testone*, but was excluded from the race; and the two deputies im-

mediately proceeded to select from the remainder a number equal to that of the Contrade which desired to compete; and then the animals so chosen were distributed by lot—the ceremony taking place on the steps of the said church.

If any Contrada to which a horse had been assigned refused to accept it, the right of taking part in the Palio was thereby lost for ten or twelve years. If, after the horses had been distributed, any of them were injured or crippled during the *prove*, the Contrade were held responsible therefor to their proprietors; the damages being assessed by the *pubblico Stimatore del Tribunale delle Collette Universali*. But an animal once received could by no means be exchanged for another. In 1706 the horse of the Contrada dell' Istrice became so lame that the Istriciaioli requested to be given another in its stead. More than seven Contrade entered their protests, and although, after the most violent opposition, the Governor finally permitted an exchange to be made on this particular occasion, he expressly

stated that his action must not be regarded as creating a precedent.

Up to the beginning of the XVIIIth century the Contrade were allowed to try their horses in the Piazza at any hour of the day ; and so greatly did they abuse this privilege that it became almost impossible for the merchants and shopkeepers to attend to their business, and was the cause of considerable peril to those citizens whose avocations compelled them to pass through the Campo. At last the nuisance became so intolerable that, in the year 1707, the *Quattro Provveditori di Biccherna* decreed that *prove* should be run only twice daily, at specified hours in the morning and the afternoon, and that each *prova* should be limited to three or four rounds, exception, however, being made with regard to the morning of the day on which the Palio was run.

Until 1721 the number of the Contrade which took part in the race varied from year to year, since it was purely a voluntary matter whether they entered their names or not, although too

persistent an abstention was apt to lead to disqualification.

In 1693 the Contrada di Spadaforte demanded permission to compete, but the other Contrade contested its right to do so on the ground that not only had it not been represented at any of the public festivals for many years past, but further had never heretofore taken part in the Palio. Their opposition was successful and the Spadaforte was suppressed.<sup>1</sup> About a quarter of a century later the Aquila narrowly escaped a like fate, when, in

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<sup>1</sup> It has been stated, but apparently without any foundation in fact, that on the occasion of the Palio of July 1675, a dispute arose between the *Spadaforte* and the *Lupa*, each claiming the victory; and that the former, together with the men of the Contrade of the Vipera, of the Orso, of the Leone, of the Gallo and of the Quercia, raised a tumult and insulted the judges; for which insubordination they were suppressed (RICCARDO BROGI, *Il Palio di Siena* (Siena, 1894), page 22).—However of all this the public documents contain no record; while Girolamo Macchi, who left a fairly complete catalogue of the Palii which were run in his day, makes no mention of any such event.—See *Misc. Storica Senese*, vol. v (1898), page 94.

August 1718, it claimed its right to run for the first time—and this, although it had held a high position among its peers more than a century earlier, and was the first of the Contrade to be ennobled, having (it is said) received that distinction at the hands of Charles V., when he passed through Siena in 1536.<sup>1</sup> Its admission was vehemently opposed by the Onda, the Tartuca, the Pantera and the Selva; but it was eventually recognized by the Magistrates of Biccherna as a true and legitimate Contrada.

In 1702 a regulation was passed that from that date no Contrada should be permitted to take part in the Palio unless it was able to bring into the Piazza, on the day of the race, a following of at least twenty persons. And, on the occasion of the arrival in Siena of the Princess Beatrice Violante of Bavaria, when all the Contrade were ordered to take part in the procession which went forth from the Porta Camullia to welcome her,

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<sup>1</sup> The Contrade nobili are four, to wit—Oca, Nicchio, Bruco, and Aquila.

the Leocorno finding it impossible to obey the summons by reason of its extreme poverty, the Collegio di Balía resolved forthwith to suppress it; and, although milder councils subsequently prevailed, the delinquent Contrada was suspended for ten years, and was even forbidden to display its banner. Nor was this its first offence: since, in the preceding year, it had been unable, for the same reason, to contribute towards the cost of a triumphal arch which was erected near the monastery of Santuccio on the arrival of Alessandro Zondadari, the newly appointed Archbishop of Siena. However in 1718, on the petition of the inhabitants of Pantaneto, the remainder of its punishment was remitted.

In those days, as at the present time, the 2nd of July found the whole population astir. All the Contrade were busy with their preparations, which were often of the most elaborate description. Thus in 1717, great efforts were made to render the Palio especially splendid, by reason of the pres-



ence of the above mentioned Princess Violante of Bavaria. Ten Contrade took part in the race, and each vied with the other in the magnificence of its appointments. They entered the Piazza by the Via del Casato, in the following order:—

The Tartuca, with a car; the Bruco; the Chiocciola, with a car; the Onda, with a car; the Istrice; the Torre, with a car; the Lupa; the Nicchio, with a car; the Oca; the Giraffa, with a car.<sup>1</sup>

The Torre won the race with a horse called *Gioia*; and in addition to the palio, the same Contrada obtained the first prize for its *comparsa*; while other prizes were bestowed upon the Onda, the Chiocciola, the Tartuca and the Giraffa. In fact, in those days it was usual to award a prize not only to the winner of the race, but also to the Contrada which made the most seemly appearance in the Piazza.

These second prizes consisted of silver cups

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<sup>1</sup> A picture of the car of the Giraffa upon this occasion may be seen in the *Misc. Storica Senese*, vol. iv (1896), page 104.

or goblets, and, when no *comparsa* was of sufficient merit to entitle its Contrada to such a reward, the silver cup was either given to that Contrada whose horse had run second in the race for the palio, or a new race was run immediately after the first, from which the winning Contrada was excluded.

At a convenient hour, the Contrade assembled before the Church of S. Agostino, and, on the arrival of the Governor in the Piazza, the Deputies, having received from him *buona licenza*, gave the signal for the procession to start.

The Contrade made the circuit of the Piazza, waving their banners, and then retired, together with their cars, into the centre; thus leaving the course free. In the meantime, the *fantini*, having mounted their horses and received their whips (which were made of leather, and whereof the handles were not allowed to exceed the third of a braccio in length), moved towards the starting post. At the sound of a trumpet the rope fell,

and the race commenced. That horse which, at the third circuit, first passed the judges' stand was declared the victor. But the palio was never consigned to the men of the Contrada themselves. It was presented to their *Protettori*; and to them only provisionally, since they were held responsible for its safe-keeping, and were obliged to restore it to the Commune after two or three days, receiving, in its stead, a silver basin or its equivalent in money, which varied from forty to sixty scudi, according to the munificence of the Deputies appointed for the feast of S. Maria di Provenzano. Rarely was the palio itself given as a prize to the winning Contrada.

As a rule, the victors deposited the silver basin in the Church of their Contrada; but, not unfrequently they petitioned the Governor to permit the race to be run anew, by the other Contrade, on the occasion of the Festival of Our Lady of August; offering as a prize the silver basin which they had themselves won. The Contrada which promoted the race naturally assumed the direction

thereof and bore all the expenses. By it were nominated the Deputies, and by it the horses were distributed in such place as suited its convenience, while the prize was increased or diminished at its pleasure. The honor of initiating these Palii seems to belong to the Oca, which, having won the race of July 2nd 1701, offered to defray the cost of another race to be run in the following month, and added a prize for the second horse.

By degrees this practice grew to be so common that, before the end of the XVIIIth century, the Palio of the 16th of August had become as regular an event as that of July, and finally, after the abandonment of the ancient Palio of the 15th of August, was recognized as the principal festival of the Sienese year.

The Commune assumed the management of the August Palio in 1802.

For the rest, by reason of an accident which happened on the 2nd of July 1720, and which caused the death of two of the spectators, the regulations governing the Palio were altered; and

thereafter only ten Contrade were permitted to run at one time. The new rules came into force in July 1721.

NOTE. In the present chapter I have availed myself to a considerable extent of an article by Signor Cav. Alessandro Lisini, entitled *Notizie su le Contrade di Siena*, published in *Miscellanea Storica Senese* of 1896 (and also, I believe, in pamphlet form). This work contains several important documents illustrative of the Palio, and is accompanied by an *Elenco dei Pali corsi dalle Contrade nella Piazza del Campo dal 1692 al 1800* (signed *Al*), which is embellished with numerous interesting pictures of ancient *macchine* and *comparse*. No reader of Italian who is interested in the subject should fail to purchase it, as it affords access to a vast amount of valuable information which it is difficult to obtain elsewhere.

See, also, the *Relazione delle pubbliche feste date in Siena negli ultiimi cinque secoli*, by AGOSTINO PROVVEDI (Siena, 1723).

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## CHAPTER THE FIFTH.

### SANTA MARIA DI PROVENZANO.<sup>1</sup>

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Donna, se' tanto grande e tanto vali,  
Che qual vuol grazia, ed a te non ricorre,  
Sua disianza vuol volar senz' ali.

La tua benignità non pur soccorre  
A chi dimanda, ma molte fiate  
Liberamente al dimandar precorre.

In te misericordia, in te pietate,  
In te magnificenza, in te s' aduna  
Quantunque in creatura è di bontate.

DANTE, *Il Paradiso*, xxxiii.

In the last chapter, I remarked that, towards the beginning of the seventeenth century, the Festival of Our Lady of Provenzano had become

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<sup>1</sup> See FRANCESCO BANDINI-PICCOLOMINI, *La Madonna di Provenzano e le origini della sua chiesa* (Siena, 1895), to which work I am indebted not only for most of the facts contained in this chapter; but also, to a great extent, for the form in which I have presented them to the reader.

well-nigh the principal holiday of the Sienese year. And, while, in that place, I did not desire to break the thread of my narrative by entering into a lengthy digression, I conceive that that statement needs some explanation, if only that the reader may clearly understand the reason for the difference which exists between the palii which are presented to the victorious Contrade on the 2nd of July and on the 16th August.<sup>1</sup>

Unfortunately it will be necessary to go back some four hundred years; but, for all that, the story which I have to tell will not occupy many pages.

To the eastward of the Church of San Cristofano, where the land begins to slope rapidly downwards in the direction of the Porta Ovale,

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<sup>1</sup> On the banner destined for the victorious Contrada in the Palio of August is painted a picture of the Assumption; while on that which forms the prize for the race of 2nd July is represented the *Madonna della chiesa collegiata di Provenzano*.

there stood, at the beginning of the XIIIth century, the houses, the warehouses and the towered palaces of the Salvani and Provenzani. Sprung from the same common stock, these families were further united by constant intermarriages, by mutual interest and by political creed, forming a wealthy and powerful mercantile *consorteria*, the complex ramifications of whose vast trade extended through every region of Italy, into Germany, France and the East.

With the memory of the *castellare*—or *castellaccia*, as it was then called—of the Salvani and Provenzani, the names of two persons are intimately connected, both of whom are immortalized by Dante.

One of them is that jealous and haughty Sapia who, in June 1269, looking out from the walls of Castiglioncello Ghinibaldi, beheld the rout of her fellow citizens of the Ghibelline faction, and took such joy thereof, that, lifting her brazen face to heaven, she cried aloud to the Almighty,

. . . . . Omai più non ti temo.



And much need had she to pray the Florentine poet

Se mai calchi la terra di Toscana  
Che a miei propinqui tu ben mi rinfami,

for in that battle Provenzano Salvani miserably lost his life, and his death was almost immediately followed by the ruin of his house.

The body of the great Ghibelline leader was found upon the field of Colle by messer Cavolino dei Tolomei who had fought in the Guelph army. And he, rejoicing in the death of his enemy, hewed off the gracious head that had planned so nobly for the welfare of their common city. Stuck upon the shaft of a spear, it was carried in triumph through the streets of Siena—the infamous trophy not of victory but of vengeance. At that outrage all the people murmured, and even the Guelph party were filled with doubt and terror, scarcely realizing, as yet, that, with the death of its noblest son, the power of the proud Ghibelline house had passed away. At first not even his bitterest foes dared to propose anything to the injury of his

family; and it seems probable that the mutilated corpse received honorable burial in the Church of San Francesco.<sup>1</sup> But the Guelph nobles were eager for revenge, and ere long the *Consiglio Generale e del Popolo* decreed that the palaces, houses and towers of the Salvani and of the Provenzani should be levelled to the ground. The Potestà swore *destruere et destrui facere radicibus palatium et turrim et Casamentum filiorum Salvani et filiorum Provenzani*. Messer Deo dei Tolomei was selected to superintend the work of destruction, which was carried out with such reckless fury that the Church of San Cristofano suffered considerable damage from the masses of falling masonry which came shattering down upon its roof.

Thus did the Guelphs repay the despite and injury suffered in 1267, when, with the approval of Provenzano Salvani, the streets of Siena had been cumbered with the wreckage of their ruined

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<sup>1</sup> V. LUSINI, *Storia della Basilica di S. Francesco in Siena* (Siena, 1894), pages 31, 32.

palaces. Gladly would they have blotted out his name from their history and their city. And Dante records how in his day

. . . . . appena in Siena sen pispiglia  
Ond'era sire.

Yet was he not altogether forgotten. Hard-by the houses of the Provenzani and Salvani there stood a gate, which, as long as it existed, the common folk continued to call by its ancient name of Porta Provenzano, while the surrounding district was long known as the *Contrada di Provenzano*. Nevertheless, after the fall of the great Ghibelline, no more stately palaces were seen within its boundaries, and in the middle of the XVth century the most respectable dwelling to be found thereabouts was that of a certain Ser Mariano Umidi, an apothecary.

For the most part the Contrada was occupied by vast warehouses wherein was stored the silk of the Piccolomini della Triana and of the Ugurgieri; by great stables, and by inns frequented by muleteers, who, in those days when goods were

transported almost exclusively on pack-saddles, drove a thriving business. The neighborhood was none of the best. Writers of the XVIth century tell us that the few respectable people who lived there were compelled to keep their windows closely shuttered that they might not hear or see the execrable and shameful things which were done and said therein. And, if a man did an ill deed, it was usual to say, *Staresti bene in Provenzano*, or *Tu sei stato in Provenzano*.

Nor was the social or moral condition of the district improved when large numbers of the troops summoned to Siena by Don Diego were quartered in San Francesco. The armies of those days were composed of men of all nations and were accompanied by a crowd of camp-followers, the major part of whom were women. These subsisted entirely upon the pay of the soldiers, and, being unable to find lodging in San Francesco, naturally took up their abode in the adjacent *Contrada di Provenzano*. And thus, at least as far as regards the four years during which the Spaniards remained

in Siena, we can well believe the statement of contemporary chroniclers that no lady of gentle birth could venture to enter that part of the city unless accompanied by a sufficient escort. Nor can we wonder that the celebrated prophecy of Brandano—*Siena vedrai tutte le tue donne andare a Provenzano*—should have seemed to his hearers rather a prediction of universal immorality than of any good.

And yet the saint or madman—call him which we will, he was always a patriot—spoke truly; for at the beginning of the XVIIth century a noble fane arose in that once despised Contrada, and the Madonna di Provenzano almost supplanted Our Lady of August in the affections of the Sienese people. Indeed so great did her reputation become that, in 1718, the Prince Antonio Chigi did not hesitate to offer to the Opera of her temple a palio of brocade which had been won by his horse on the Festival of the Assumption.

According to Giovanni Antonio Pecci, Brandano, in his discourses, used to lay especial stress

upon the glories of the Queen of Heaven; and, not content with preaching in the Piazza del Campo and on the steps of the Duomo, was wont publicly to recite litanies, together with a paraphrase in the vulgar tongue of the *Ave maris stella*, before those numerous representations of the Blessed Virgin which stood in the highways of the city, both in front of the houses and at the confines of the Contrade.

More particularly was it his habit to prostrate himself before an image of Our Lady which was placed between the two windows of a humble dwelling in the Via de' Provenzani di sotto.<sup>1</sup> There he often prayed with the people, and there, doubtless, he uttered most of those vaticinations of his touching the future celebrity of the Con-

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<sup>1</sup> A representation of this house—the *Casa de' Miracoli* as it was afterwards called—may be seen in one of the *Tavolette di Biccherna*. It was painted at the command of Federigo Segardi who was Chancellor of Biccherna from July 1592 to January 1595 (old style). It depicts the visit of the *Signoria* to the miraculous image.

trada, which seemed to his hearers so obscure and so ambiguous.

After his death, in May 1554, it was only natural that his followers should approach his favorite Madonna with ever increasing devotion. But I think that, even apart from the prestige and example of the dead saint, the inhabitants of Provenzano would have regarded that particular image with feelings of reverence and affection, since past events had made it typical to them not only of religion but of patriotism.

For, upon one occasion, during the occupation of Siena by the Spaniards, certain soldiers of the garrison chanced to be making merry in a house the windows of which looked out upon this very Madonna. And of that ribald crew one was found blasphemous enough to raise his arquebus and to fire at the sacred image. The bullet missed its mark, and the gentle face was uninjured; but the arms which supported the lifeless body of the Divine Lord were shattered. The news spread through the city, and not only were the

people moved to fierce anger at so wanton an outrage, but therein was found also ample and convincing proof that the enemies of the Commune were equally the enemies of the Almighty. And from that day forward, Saint Mary of Provenzano lacked neither prayers, nor flowers, nor burning candles.

Towards the end of the century, Siena was afflicted by a very grievous famine, which was followed by a pestilence; and, in 1594, the people, rendered almost desperate by their prolonged sufferings, resolved, as their fathers had done before them, to implore help of the ever pitiful Mother of God.

They naturally desired to make their vows and supplications to the same *Advocata Senensium* whose intercessions had so often availed to save their city in the days of the Republic. But this, to the great scandal and grief of all pious folk, proved to be practically impossible by reason of the furious contest then raging between Monsi-



gnor Ascanio Piccolomini, Archbishop of Siena, and the historian Giugurta Tommasi, at that time Rector of the Opera del Duomo. And thus it came to pass that, while peace was banished from the sacred walls of the Holy Sienese Church, the people flocked to prostrate themselves before Our Lady of Provenzano, whose image had, as we know from the sworn testimony of eye witnesses, already acquired a certain reputation for working miracles.

And now, on the first of July, the Vigil of the Feast of the Visitation, while workmen were engaged in decorating her shrine, she once more displayed her power.

Seated in the same street was a certain Giulia di Orazio, a woman of notoriously evil life, who was tormented by an incurable malady. She, beholding these preparations, commenced to scoff at those who made them, and at the Blessed Virgin. That same evening, about dusk, she felt herself compelled by some mysterious force to go and kneel before the sacred image, beseeching pardon

and health. On the following day, she returned once more to offer up the same petitions, and, a few hours later was made perfectly whole. So that, when her doctor arrived, as was his wont, to treat the sore produced by her illness and removed the bandages which covered it, he found, to his amazement, that every trace of disease had entirely disappeared.

The woman hastened forth to offer praise and thanksgiving for the mercy vouchersafe, narrating with emotion, to all those who stood by, the great salvation which had been wrought on her behalf. The tale passed from mouth to mouth, and, ere night fell, the prophecy of Brandano had been fulfilled, the whole population thronging to the once despised Contrada di Provenzano to pray to the miraculous Madonna.

For the rest, I am not concerned to speak of the infinite number of votive offerings and oblations which poured into that humble dwelling ; varying, as they did, from the silver-gilt goblet sent by

the Prince of Transylvania, Moldavia and Walachia to a straw hat *con trina turchina e oro con un fiore*; from a pair of buffalo to a load of charcoal.<sup>1</sup> Nor is it necessary, in this place, to detail the steps taken to construct a fitting temple for the reception of the wonder-working Madonna. Suffice it to state that the Church of Santa Maria di Provenzano, commenced in the autumn of 1595, was completed sixteen years later, and that, on the 23rd October 1611, the sacred image was transferred thither with all due pomp, the Grand-duke Cosimo II., himself, being present at the ceremony.

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<sup>1</sup> ARCHIVIO DELL' OPERA DI PROVENZANO, *Libro delle Oblazioni*, commenced 12th July 1594.

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## CHAPTER THE SIXTH.

### THE MODERN PALIO.

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As if some maiden dead for centuries past  
Drawn from the dusty couch whereon she lay,  
And slowly gathering life, should rise at last  
Warm with the breathing beauty of to-day ;  
As if some planet lost for many an age  
Could light the world with its forgotten gleam,  
And take through heaven its shining pilgrimage  
To its old place ; so dawns on us this Dream.

MISS GERTRUDE FORD.

Narrano che Pietro Leopoldo, pregato dai Senesi  
a favore del Manicomio, rispondesse : Chiudete le  
porte, e il manicomio è bell' e fatto. Ma oh che  
bel manicomio da fare invidia ai savi !

Prof. GIUSEPPE RONDONI.

Siena slumbers amid her olive groves and  
vinyards, her fierce hates and fiercer loves for-  
gotten long ago. Yet twice a year she awakens  
into life again ; and the Faery Prince, who has  
power to snap the charm that binds her, is none  
other than the Palio. At its coming the med-  
iæval city is herself once more ; the old passions

blaze forth anew—a little softened, perhaps, by their modern setting, but none the less for that the same. And the rivalry between the Contrade recalls the clamorous years of the free Commune.

For in modern Siena the *patria* is no longer the city but the Contrada. And between hostile Contrade the strife is as bitter and the enmity as unappeasable as ever it was between the cities of the Balsana and of the Lily, in the days of Farinata and of Manfred.

In his inimitable work, *Il Palio di Siena*, Signor Riccardo Brogi, by whose wit and wisdom I would not thanklessly profit, relates that a certain *panterino* (to wit an inhabitant of the Contrada della Pantera), being laid up by a very painful complaint, and desiring to express to a sympathizing visitor how intolerable were his sufferings, declared, with perfect seriousness, that he would be moved to pity if God should inflict the like even upon a *selvaiolo*, that is to say upon an inhabitant of the Selva—the Contrada which is

conterminous with the Pantera, and its most jealous rival—a statement which is thoroughly typical of those animosities, and which, I think, clearly indicates their depth and malignity.

Of old, the Sienese and the Florentines fought not only with the sword and with the lance, in the hills of Chianti and in the valley of the Elsa, but with *rappresaglie* and intrigues; with slanders, gibes and insults; in prose and in verse; in novels, in legends and in history,<sup>1</sup> and so, to-day, the Contrade contend not only with *nerbate* in the Piazza, but with bribes and menaces. They speak evil things of their rivals, and lose no opportunity of doing them despite and injury.

Thus the story is told how, in the early eighties, there being a feud between the Tartuca and the Chiocciola, certain persons belonging to the former Contrada went by night to the Church of the latter, and emptied a sack full of snails on the steps of the sacred edifice, with the result that

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<sup>1</sup> See RONDONI, *Sena Vetus*, page 38.

on the following morning the whole façade was covered with clinging molluscs and with slimy tracks. The insult, of course, gained point and venom from the fact that the snail is, as the name of the Contrada itself implies, the device and emblem of the Chiocciola. And I confess that, to my mind, the insolent jest possesses a distinctly mediæval flavor, and differs rather in degree than in kind from the methods of the XIIIth century, when, for example, in 1233, *Florentini fecerunt exercitum contra Senenses.... et appropinquaverunt civitatem cum machinis, et projecerunt asinos in civitatem.*

Some two years ago, to the unbounded delight of the Contrada dell'Oca, its hereditary enemy, the Torre, which had made quite certain of winning the Palio, lost the race by a mischance. The youth of Fontebranda hurried up the steep hill to S. Domenico, and having overpowered the sacristan, rang the great bell of that church with a vigor which cannot have failed to impress upon their disappointed rivals how keenly their discom-

future was appreciated. Last year the Torraioli had their revenge ; for the Oca, having won the Palio of July, thought to repeat its victory in August, and might have done so had not the *fantini* of the Bruco and of the Torre flung themselves in front of the *fantino* of the Oca, and utterly spoilt his start by a perfect hail of blows. Then, the race being over, the women of the Torre demonstrated their joy by waving banners in the Piazza.

In this connection it is perhaps worth mentioning that neither the Bruco nor the Torre had the smallest chance of winning themselves. It was purely a question of paying off old scores, and, although as a matter of fact the Tartuca carried off the Palio, the Torraioli were quite contented. The *nerbo* which had done such good service in the hands of their *fantino* was presented, as a suitable token of respect, to the priest of their Contrada ; and he, having already more than one of such souvenirs of satisfactorily executed vengeance, kindly offered it to me. It hangs on the wall of my study, facing me as I write.



Later on, I saw the helmet of the *fantino*, and the numerous dents which adorned its superficies adequately demonstrated that the *nerbate* which were given upon that occasion were entirely reciprocal.

It is said to be extremely rare for a girl to find a lover in a hostile Contrada; and, should she marry such an one, husband and wife will separate on the day of the race; the woman returning to her father's house, there to exult or weep over the Palio which has been won or lost.

Reader, if these things seem incredible, and if you wish to ascertain for yourself whether this enthusiasm and these animosities really exist, you can very easily do so. Go down into Fontebranda a day or two before the Palio, and talk with some good Ocaiolo—Daniele, the custodian of the swimming-baths, would be an eminently suitable person.—Lead him to speak of the Contrada della Torre, and you will hear strange things. Even the names of its streets condemn it. What self-respecting person would live in a Via Pul-

ceto? Cleanliness, honesty and righteousness are unknown among its inhabitants. In a word, they are Torraioli, and their very fountain, at the foot of the Piazza del Mercato, is a *fonte putrido*. Then, when you have heard enough, adjourn to some wine-shop in the Via Salicotto, and enquire into the character of the Ocaioli. I think you will be satisfied.

But it is time to turn to the race itself.

On the evening of the 12th August, the Piazza presents a scene of unusual animation. In preparation for to-morrow's *prove*, cartloads of sand are being emptied and scattered on the paved roadway which forms its circumference, while in front of the shops, which occupy the basements of the surrounding palaces, workmen are erecting wooden seats, which rise one above another like steps, until they reach more than half way to the balconies overhead. Primitive enough in structure, they are, nevertheless, sufficiently strong to bear the weight of the crowd with which they

will be packed on the day of the race, and give to the ancient Piazza all the appearance of a vast amphitheatre.

On the morning of the 13th, the good people of Siena are early astir, and, by eight or nine o'clock, the *pianata*<sup>1</sup> is thronged with persons awaiting the official *prove* which must be run before the horses can be assigned to the ten Contrade which, whether by right or by good fortune, are destined to take part in the race.<sup>2</sup> As the minutes slip by the crowd increases, and, taking advantage of the shade cast by the Torre del Mangia, extends itself across the Piazza in a wedge-shaped mass. Ever and anon a horse is led past and disappears in one of the gateways of the Palazzo Pubblico—a sorry looking animal

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<sup>1</sup> The Sienese term that part of the Piazza del Campo which is immediately in front of the Palazzo Pubblico *la pianata*.

<sup>2</sup> In each of the two Palii seven Contrade run because it is their turn to do so (*d'obbligo*), and three because their names have been drawn to take part in the race (*a sorte*).

enough, as a general rule, and smacking more of the lineage of Rosinante than of Bucephalus; for, as I think I have hinted before, the Palio of Siena is an institution but little calculated to afford encouragement to the raising of thorough-bred stock.

When all the horses have arrived—to the number of between fifteen and twenty—three or four of them are mounted by jockeys (*fantini*), in the pay of the Commune, and ridden towards the Costarella; whence at a given signal they start to race round the Piazza.

In the *prove*, no more than in the Palio itself, are the animals saddled. The *fantini* must ride bare-backed or not at all; and the spectacle is often a sufficiently amusing one. The old horses who know the Piazza follow the track without giving much trouble; but those who have had no experience of the game, on reaching the dangerous corner opposite the Palazzo del Governo, generally display an uncontrollable desire to pursue their wild career in a straight line, and, in spite

of the frantic efforts of their riders, rush headlong down the Via San Martino.<sup>1</sup> Here, in front of the shops, between that street and the Cappella di Piazza, is erected a hoarding which is faced with heavy mattresses; and rarely is it that their existence fails to be justified by the event, for at this spot there is nearly always a fall or two. More than one of the *fantini* generally part company with their horses and go to *spianare materasse*, as the phrase is. Sometimes too, a horse will bolt up the Via del Casato, flinging his rider on the hard ground, amid the laughter, yells, jeers and derisive comments of the spectators, who, with charming impartiality, distribute their abuse about equally between the unruly horse and his luckless rider.

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<sup>1</sup> From this incident, repeated annually, the phrase *È andato a San Martino* has come to be used metaphorically among the Sienese. For example, it might be applied to a man who had taken a wrong train. And indeed a short residence in the city will convince the visitor how greatly the Palio has colored the language of the common people.

When, at last, all the horses have been tried in batches of three or four at a time, the Captains of the Contrade retire to discuss their respective merits or demerits, and to select such ten of them as may appear best fitted to take part in the Palio. The object, of course, is to obtain ten animals of as nearly equal speed as possible, and therefore, if, in the *prove* which have just been run, any horse should have shown himself manifestly superior to his companions, he will promptly be discarded.

Finally, after more or less discussion, the necessary ten are agreed upon, and are forthwith decorated with large numbers painted upon their hind quarters.

Two urns—made of glass, in order that no suspicion may arise concerning the *bona fides* of so delicate and important an operation—stand upon a table just within the central entrance of the Palazzo. In one of these are deposited the names of the competing Contrade, in the other numbers from 1 to 10, corresponding with the

numbers upon the horses. Each name and each number has been previously enclosed in a small wooden box of cylindrical shape, not unlike a needle-case; and the two urns, which are so constructed as to be capable of receiving a rotatory motion by the turning of a handle, are made to perform several rapid revolutions, thus thoroughly mixing their contents.

The moment is a solemn one. The Captains of the Contrade, and such of the crowd as can squeeze themselves into the narrow hall-way press around the table. Expectation is visible on every face, and only the XIVth century saints of Bartolo di Fredi look down unmoved.

And here let me pause. The theme is too lofty for my grovelling northern wits. It is a tale which a Sienese should tell; and I will avail myself once more of the vivid pen of Signor Riccardo Brogi.

"A number is extracted, and one of the Communal servants calls in a loud voice: *Quattro*.—A murmur runs through the crowd. It is a well-

known horse.—Last year it won the Palio for the Chiocciola.

" ' *Dio landi!* It's a no account beast, that,' exclaims a vendor of fish as he lights his pipe. The old fellow wants it for the Torre, and then, ye Saints, he would sing another tune.

" The name of a Contrada is drawn. There is a moment of intolerable suspense. At last the servitor shouts: *Oca!* And immediately the cry of *Oca! Oca!* is taken up and repeated by a hundred voices. The horse, which is, in fact, the pick of the whole lot, or, to adopt the expression which is generally used upon these occasions, a *cavallo bono*, is led off in triumph by the Ocaioli, who proceed through the streets towards their Contrada, shouting *Oca! Oca!* until they are hoarse.—As a matter of fact, what they really shout is *Oa! Oa!*, for the Sienese, albeit they speak the purest Tuscan, never sound a hard *c* if they can avoid it.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> " Veramente si grida solo *Oa! Oa!*, perchè i Senesi.... mangiano i *c* come le ciliegie."—Such are the



" The boys fling their hats into the air. The Captain, as self-satisfied and important as if the satisfactory result of the draw were due exclusively to his own personal merits, turns his steps also in the direction of Fontebranda, where the horse, which has arrived before him, is now reposing in a comfortable stall, provided with excellent forage, and tended with loving care. Certainly he has never fared better in his life; but then it is he, poor beast, who must win the Palio. There is, it is true, another almost equally good; but that matters nothing, the Ocaioli will bethink them to provide a *fantino* of the best, and one especially gifted in the use of the *nerbo*; for this year the race is likely to be fiercely contested.

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words used by Signor Brogi; and I beg to state, once for all, that I cannot pretend to translate him literally. To attempt to do so would be an injustice both to him and to myself.

I very strongly recommend those who appreciate good Italian, and who would enjoy the humors of the Palio from a Sienese stand-point, to purchase his work. Laughter they will not lack.

" 'Look,' cry the women, as the horse passes, 'How sweet he is. Pretty dear, if only he could speak!' (*Badate come è carino! Gli manca il parlare, piccino!*)

" But their vocabulary fails them. They cannot find words strong enough to sing his praises.

" If, however, as often happens, the fickle goddess had sent them a bad horse—a *cavallaccio*—his reception would have been very different. All available invectives and every kind of abuse would have been heaped upon him and upon his unhappy proprietor. Nor would that have been the worst of the matter. He would possibly have been kicked and cudgelled, and perhaps even left in his stable forgotten and unfed, until such time as his owner, seeing that Sant'Antonio was helpless to succour his *protégé*, should have had recourse to the authorities. For in Siena there is no Society for the prevention of cruelty to animals.<sup>1</sup> "

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<sup>1</sup> That this custom of treating a bad horse with disrespect is one of considerable antiquity is proved

On the evening of the 13th there is a *prova*. This is succeeded by another on the following morning, and so on twice a day until the 16th. But none of the six *prove* which precede the Palio need any description. They are all very much alike, being simply a series of trial races, run by ten horses ridden by *fantini*, wherein sometimes one Contrada is victorious and sometimes another. Only the *prova generale*, which takes place on the evening of the 15th, is run with any degree of solemnity. For, for it the municipality offers a prize.

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by the following incident, related by Girolamo Macchi, under the year 1711:—

"A dì 2 luglio 1711 in giovedì si corse il solito palio in Piazza con le contrade in n.º di 16, e fu per mostra un Baccino d'argento, e la più corriera e brava di tutte fu la Contrada del Bruco che vense il Palio; e invece del suddetto Baccino, dai Signori della Festa gli fu dato n.º 60 Talleri; e la Contrada della Tartuca, che hebbe gattivo cavallo, lo messero in barroccio con un pagliaccio e lenzuola, e ce lo posero a diacere legato e ci era il medico manescalco e dottore Asino. E la Contrada della Lupa erano da n.º 50 uomini a cavallo e fu bella festa."

On the morning of the Feast of the Assumption, high mass is sung in the Duomo, where the boards, which usually cover so large a part of the pavement, have been removed. From the columns hang the banners of the Contrade, and the face of the Madonna delle Grazie is disclosed to view. A vast crowd throngs the sacred edifice, and Our Lady of Mid-August is worshipped as of old.

That night the Sienese do not sleep. Instead they prepare for the Palio with a banquet, and until the dawn of day celebrate the Festival with wine and wassail; even as centuries ago King Olaf and his vikings drank '*Skoal to the Lord!*' And let it not be thought that this drinking is slight or perfunctory. The Queen of Heaven is not so dishonored.

It is true that, like the poet Wordsworth, most Italians have "a miserably low standard of intoxication;" but no such slur can be cast upon the Sienese. They drink, and drink deeply, as becomes the men whose forefathers prepared for

the battle of Montaperto with a breakfast of roast meats washed down with *perfetti e solenni vini e bene vantaggiati*. Indeed all the consolation which I can offer to the total abstainer in this regard, is to be found in the fact that, in the latter half of the XIVth century, Siena, with a smaller population, consumed annually nearly two and a half million litres of wine more than she does to-day.<sup>1</sup> However, the supply is still perfectly adequate for the seemly observance of the Festival of Our Lady of Mid-August.

And now, at last, the east is whitening into dawn, and the day of the Palio has begun. All is excitement and bustle. There is no time to

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<sup>1</sup> The calculation is based upon the returns of 1879, since which time the population has, of course, increased.—See C. FALLETTI-FOSSATI, *op. cit.*, p. 67. In order that I may not be suspected of overestimating the capacity of the modern *Contradaio*li for liquid refreshment, I beg to refer the reader to the following statement of Signor Brogi (page 53): *Le Contrade si preparano al Palio con un banchetto. Tutta la notte si beve.... e come si beve!*

eat. The hours are passed in going from house to house, through the streets, through the shops, and through the piazze, in taking council together, and in stimulating the hate which exists between Contrada and Contrada ; while overhead the Campanone <sup>1</sup> roars forth its summons to all the country round.

In the afternoon the whole population is afoot — men, women and children, old and young, rich and poor,—their numbers being augmented every minute by the vast crowd of country folk who are pouring into the city through all its nine gates.

About two o'clock a deafening beating of drums begins in each Contrada. Knights in armour, accompanied by pages with flowing locks and clad in bravery of silk and velvet, are seen passing to and fro. It seems as if the years had rolled backwards and the long dead warriors of the old Republic had left their graves in San Francesco

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<sup>1</sup> The great bell in the Mangia tower, which is rung on civic festivals, and days of national rejoicing.

and the Duomo to gladden the world yet once again with sheen of satin and flash of burnished mail.

Destrier e corsiere,  
Masnate e bandiere,  
Coraccie e lamiere  
Vedrai rimutare.

And now it is high time for the visitor to decide whither he will go to see the ceremonies which precede the race.

Of course, if he is behind the scenes and is very certain which Contrada will be victorious, he had better take advantage of that knowledge. But let him not be so mistaken as to imagine that the horse which has won the majority or even all of the *prove* will necessarily win the Palio. Hitherto the *fantini* have ridden without their *nerbi*. There have been treaties and alliances made, which may render it impossible for the best horse to win. For this is no common race. It is warfare. And, if the victory cannot be obtained by speed and strength, it must either be purchased or stolen.

As for me, I shall go down into Fontebranda; for the good Ocaioli always want to win if they can. They are a stalwart folk, and worthy descendants of the men who, being thrust forth from the city on the night of the 27th July 1552, marched round the walls to join messer Piccolomini at San Lazzaro, and, a few hours later, burned down the Porta Romana in spite of a sharp fusillade from some fifty musketeers who stood on guard there—thus commencing the revolt against the Spaniards.<sup>1</sup> Nor are their methods less strenuous to-day. With them the end justifies the means; and, if any efforts of theirs can accomplish it, the Palio will be brought to Fontebranda.

The church of the Contrada dell'Oca, in the Via Benincasa, is none other than the lower chapel in the house of St. Catherine. And hither is led

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<sup>1</sup> This exploit of the Fontebrandini is narrated by Sozzini in his *Diario*. See also AQUARONE, *Gli ultimi anni della Storia Repubblicana di Siena*, pages 271-274.



the horse which is about to compete for the Palio to receive the priestly benediction.

Does the idea shock you? It need not do so. The service is a reverent one enough, and the people pray earnestly to God and to "the sweetest of the saints" to grant them that which is very near their hearts, the victory of their beloved Contrada.<sup>1</sup>

The priest, in surplice and stole, waits at the foot of the high altar. Hard-by stand the members

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<sup>1</sup> The faith of the people in the power of their patron Saint is real enough. Last year, when the horse of the Drago was killed in one of the *prove*, I am told that a youthful seminarist did not hesitate to declare that, in his opinion, the death of the unfortunate animal was due to the intervention of Saint Catherine, who was doubtless aware that the Drago had always been hostile to the Oca.

But the Saint is expected to live up to his or her responsibilities, and Signor Brogi relates how a Contrada, which suspected its celestial patron of having accepted a bribe from its rival in the shape of a *grosso voto d'argento*, removed the sacred image from its place in the church and flung it into one of the public wells. The hint appears to have been taken, for the Contrada in question won the next Palio.

of the *comparsa* gorgeous in their mediæval costumes ; while, here and there, kneeling figures, in postures of earnest supplication, testify that the ceremony about to take place is no empty formality.

Above the panelling which runs around the sacred edifice are set numerous shields, painted with the coats of arms of the *Protettori* of the Contrada—an office once of great importance, but which, in these days, is bestowed upon any gentleman who is willing to pay a small annual subscription.

And now the horse is led into the house of God, accompanied by the *fantino* who stands erect with his helmet on his head, like one of the grandees of ancient Spain in the presence of his sovereign.

The prayers are short, and, of course, in Latin. Translated they run as follows :

Our help is in the name of the Lord.

*Who made heaven and earth.*

Lord, hear my prayer.

*And let my cry come unto Thee.*

The Lord be with you.

*And with thy spirit.*

Let us pray.

O God, our refuge and strength, who art the author of all godliness; be ready, we beseech thee, to hear the devout prayers of thy Church; and grant that those things which we ask faithfully we may obtain effectually; through Christ Our Lord. *Amen.*

Let us pray.

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, who didst preserve thy glorious Saint Anthony, though tried by manifold temptations, unharmed amid the tempests of this world; grant, we beseech thee, that we, thy servants, may profit by his bright example, and, by his merits and intercession, may be saved from the dangers of this present life; through Christ Our Lord. *Amen.*

Let us pray.

LET this animal receive thy blessing, O Lord, whereby it may be preserved in body, and freed from every harm, by the intercession of the blessed Anthony; through Christ Our Lord. *Amen.*

Then the priest sprinkles holy water over the horse, and the people leave the church.

Of course, there are some persons who regard the belief in supernatural interference with the

affairs of life as "eminently irreligious."<sup>1</sup> To them this service may seem childish, or worse; but not, I think, more so than many of the petitions embodied in our own Book of Common Prayer. And indeed, if God be "the only giver of all victory," and, in truth, a father to whom we may make known all our needs, both spiritual and temporal, then, there is no word to be said against it.

To my mind, I confess, the irreverence, if any there be, is to be found in the mental attitude of those foreigners—English and Americans, for the most part—who, entering God's house, make no attempt to understand the prayers offered up, and, prejudging the whole ceremony, regard it merely as a curious instance of puerile superstition, forming part of the afternoon's amusement.

The benediction being over, the various members of the *comparsa* betake themselves, in ordered

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<sup>1</sup> See BUCKLE'S *Hist. of Civilization in England* (London, Longmans Green and Co, 1867), vol. III, page 365.

array, to the Piazza di Giordano Bruno in front of the Church of Sant'Agostino.

This spot, besides being the official rendezvous of the Contrade, whence they will pass through the Via del Casato into the Piazza del Campo, is the place established by custom for the so called *partiti*. Here the magnates of the Contrada which expects to win the Palio, make verbal stipulations with the *fantini* of friendly Contrade, and bargain as to the sums to be paid in the event of victory—sums which not unfrequently run to some thousands of francs;—here, by the power of gold, a horse, which has shown itself of the swiftest in the preparatory races, is suddenly transformed, as by magic, into as sorry a jade as that whereon Petruchio came to claim his bride, unable to crawl round the Piazza at more than a snail's pace.—Here contracts are entered into touching the price to be paid for each blow of the *nerbo* well and truly administered to the *fantino* of a hostile Contrada, and this often with no hope of victory, but merely to destroy the chances of an enemy.—

Here ancient treaties are ratified and new alliances made over the excellent wine of Beppe del l'Arco.—Here, in a word, it is arranged who shall win the Palio.

Meanwhile the whole population is pouring into the Piazza del Campo, and filling it from end to end with motion and with color.

Minute by minute the crowd increases, until it seems, at last, as if even that vast amphitheatre could hold no more.

The windows and balconies are gay with tapestry and hangings of a thousand hues; and there, looking down from their ancient palaces upon the seething throng beneath, may be seen fair and gracious figures, whose mien and carriage make us think regretfully of the dear dead ladies of the Siena of long ago—of the Lady Forteguerria with her following of damsels dressed in violet; of the Lady Piccolomini and her company clad in rose colored satin, and of the girls in white who were led by the Lady Livia Fausta,

singing that song in honor of France, which Blaise de Montluc regretted so greatly that he had not heard; of those twenty-two ladies whose incomparable loveliness was sung by Eurialo Morani Ascolano; and last of the unhappy Pia, whose piteous *ricordati di me*

Comes tender as a hurt bird's note

across the centuries, and moves to tears to-day.

Yet am I afraid that, for all the pathos of her story, if *la Pia* should come to life again, and should occupy a seat next to the reader, he would soon begin to find many and adequate excuses for the *magnificus et potens miles dominus Nellus*; since, in the Italy of the XIIIth century, garlic was held to be an exquisite and aristocratic thing; and doubtless Pia Tolomei, and Madonna Laura, the beauteous friend of Petrarch, and Beatrice Portinari, Dante's love, instead of breathing sweet odours, poisoned the air with the fumes of that humble vegetable; while the kisses of the hapless Francesca, that "lily in the mouth

of Tartarus," must have reeked of onions and the like.<sup>1</sup>

But if we are to wake the dead and people the modern Piazza with them, on this one day in all the year when we hold the spell to call them hither, we need not seek to tear away the kindly garment which has been woven by the long-drawn centuries, and which leaves them sweet and gracious and desirable, and only hides from sight the sordid details we would rather not remember. The fault is mine; and, if the reader is disgusted with what he may consider an uncalled for introduction of disagreeable facts, let him forget the high-born ladies and turn his attention to the common people. There were fair enough women among them too, and I offer him as a suitable

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<sup>1</sup> L. ZDEKAUER, *La vita privata dei Senesi nel dugento*, pages 28 et seq. See also the *Statuti Senesi scritti in volgare ne' secoli XIII e XIV*, per cura di L. BANCHI (Bologna, 1871), vol. II, page 21, where, in the *Statuti della Gabetta di Siena dal MCCC I al MCCC III*, a separate chapter is devoted to *le cipolle, agli e scalogne*.



subject for resuscitation that *bella Salicottina* whose love the great Pandolfo bought so dearly. Let him do what he can with her. I will not interfere.

And now, I ask myself whether the last two paragraphs have been a digression. I really do not know. Past and present are so closely interwoven in Siena that it is hard to sever them; and of this I am quite certain that the more thoroughly we can recall the vanished years, the more we shall enjoy the Palio.

But let us return to the modern crowd.

Did you ever lie upon your back in the woods and watch the shimmer of the sunlight through the quivering leaves?

Did you ever see a field of wheat, besprinkled with poppies and ox-eyed daisies, swaying wave-like in the wind?

Did you ever look into a kaleidoscope?

If so, and if your imagination is strong enough to combine all of the impressions so received, you will have some idea of what the Piazza of Siena looks like on the evening of the 16th of August,

when every foot of its broad surface is thronged with an expectant multitude. Color there is in abundance. But that is not all. That which especially strikes the eye is the great straw hats worn by the *contadine*, combined with the perpetual and unwearied waving of fans,—fans of all sizes and of every hue. The effect is absolutely unique. It is a scene which I cannot describe. Only by the three questions which I have asked above can I hope to convey to my readers any idea of that wonderful sight; unless, indeed, it may be likened to a parterre of gorgeous flowers hovered over by a thousand butterflies.

But while we have been talking time has flown. Hark! the first gun is fired, and the *Carabinieri* on horseback are clearing the course. There is no ill-temper and no jostling, for an Italian crowd is as courteous and obliging as is the individual Italian; and soon the circular track runs clear and bare, like a broad ribbon, encompassing the huge shallow basin of the Piazza.

Then a second gun is heard, and entering from the Via del Casato, the Contrade appear, one by one, splendid with the many-hued costumes of their various *comparse*.

First comes the standard bearer of the Comune, richly clad and gallantly mounted; the great black and white banner of Siena flouting the breeze as proudly as it did of yore when more than ten score towns and cities owed fealty to the old Republic.

Next march the trumpeters in the livery of the Palazzo, with plumes in their caps, and *alle trombe i paventi di Ermisino divisati a nero e bianco*, as has been the custom, if we may believe the chroniclers, ever since the days of the Count Bandinello.<sup>1</sup>

Then follow the *comparse* of the ten Contrade which are to compete for the Palio; each *comparsa* being composed of a *Capitano* or *Duce*, of two *Alfieri*, of five pages, of a drummer, of the

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<sup>1</sup> TOMMASI, I, 121.

*fantino* on horseback, and of a *barbaresco*, who leads the horse which is to take part in the race.

And, as each *comparsa* in turn enters the Piazza, the Alfieri display, to the roll of the drum, their two banners, gay with various colors, and ornamented with the crest of their Contrada. These are manœuvred with extraordinary agility and grace. The Alfieri cause them to revolve about their necks, pass them between their legs, and whirl them around their bodies in a thousand fantastic ways; ever and anon throwing them into the air and catching them again; and, through all these complicated movements, manage to keep them displayed and fluttering.

This *sbandierata* continues during the whole of the procession, and forms one of the most picturesque sights which it has ever been my lot to witness, the entire circuit of the Piazza being filled with waving banners, now sweeping gracefully along the ground, and now rushing upward thirty feet in air.

In Siena there is a kind of school for instruc-

tion in this art, where novices may be initiated into all the secrets of the business.

Immediately after the first ten Contrade, comes the *carroccio* drawn by four horses and decorated with the municipal oriflamme, with the banners of all the Contrade and with the Palio, *ornato secondo l'antica foggia, da consegnarsi in premio alla Contrada vincitrice*; for, in these days, the Palio itself is retained; the silver basin which surmounts it being returned to the Commune.

Lastly, the *comparse* of the seven Contrade which do not take part in the race make the circuit of the Piazza, with the same pomp and circumstance as did the other ten.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> I have described the procession as it is upon ordinary occasions. Sometimes it is more elaborate. In August 1898, for example, the cortège represented faithfully a popular festival of the XVth century, the costumes being reproduced from contemporary documents and designs. Of the procession in 1887, when the King and Queen visited Siena, a full account will be found in the work of Signor Brogi. HERCOLANI, in his *Storia e costumi delle Contrade di Siena* (Firenze, 1845), says that the car which appears in the procession is intended

And now the question arises, whether or not I shall describe the *comparsa* of each individual Contrada. It seems the proper thing to do, but it would occupy several pages, besides giving me a good deal of trouble; while I doubt if it would particularly interest the reader. If he is in Siena, he can see the thing for himself. If he is elsewhere, I don't believe he will care a rap to be acquainted with the fact that the colors of the Contrada dell'Oca are red, white and green, and that it displays upon its banner a goose surmounted by the royal crown, and decorated with the cross of Savoy; or that the crest of the Torre is an elephant with a tower on his back, and that its colors are blood red with white and blue stripes. Moreover, a description of that sort conveys nothing to the mind unless one states the relative proportions of the various colors, and the exact size and direction of the stripes—and that would waste far too much time.

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to represent the *carroccio* taken from the Florentines at Montaperto. Compare page 99, *supra*.

Suffice it then to say that it would be difficult to name a color or shade which is not represented in one or other of the *comparse*, and that an average rainbow would seem a hueless and pallid thing beside the scene in the Piazza of Siena on the evening of the Palio.

The great clock in the Torre del Mangia strikes seven. Two stout ropes are stretched across the track close to the Costarella, of which one is long enough to entirely obstruct the course, while the other is somewhat shorter, leaving a gap of, perhaps, a couple of yards in width, through which the horses and their riders may enter. Then, when they are all between the two ropes, the longer one will, at a given signal, be permitted to fall by means of an ingenious piece of mechanism called the *verrocchio*; and a start, as equal as possible under the circumstances, will be afforded to the several competitors.

A drum sounds, and the ten *fantini* mount their horses and issue forth from the *Corte del*

*Potestà*. But how different is their appearance now from that which they presented during the procession! Then, they were "gorgeous as the sun at midsummer," clothed on with samite and with gold. Now, all their bravery is discarded in favor of coarse canvas doublets, decorated on the back with the emblems of their several Contrade, and of trousers of the same humble material. Now, instead of the glittering helmets crowned with nodding plumes which, so lately, we admired, they wear plain metal headpieces, painted with the colors of their Contrade—ugly enough, it is true, but affording an adequate protection against the *nerbate* which will so soon assail their wearers. And look! Each man holds in his hand the famous *nerbo*—grasped, be it understood, not where, with paternal forethought, the municipal authorities have attached a string, intended to be wrapped about the wrist, but by the thin end, in order that the blows dealt may not lack in effectiveness and force.

And here I must perforce indulge in a di-



gression if I would stand well with the ladies. I know that for them the number of blows exchanged between the jockeys matters nothing. A *fantino* with an eye more or less is an affair of infinitesimal importance. He is only a man. It is the fear lest the poor dear horses should suffer which wrings their tender hearts, and may rob the race of half its enjoyment. I can, however, assure them that, in spite of the *nerbate*, there have been horses which loved the Palio, and in a measure shared in the general enthusiasm. Among these was the celebrated *Stornino*, whose name, some quarter of a century ago, was a word to conjure with in Siena. For, had he not won innumerable races? And did he not enter into the spirit of the sport as keenly as any Contradaiole of them all? He was a small white horse, the property of a country *curato*, and generally as well behaved and docile a beast as you would wish to find. But, when the time of the Palio drew near, he changed his habits and manifested extreme excitement and uneasiness. He

ate little and at irregular intervals, refused to be ridden, and became fretful and hard to handle. Nor did he recover his wonted equanimity until such time as he was led into the Piazza. Then he realized that the long sighed for moment was at hand, and by every equine gesture displayed his satisfaction and delight.

It is a pretty story and a true one, being vouched for by no less a man than the author of the *Nuova Guida*.<sup>1</sup>

The horses move towards the starting post. The signal is given. The rope falls, and they spring forward under a perfect hail of blows—blows, be it remembered, which are administered not by their own riders to stimulate their efforts, but by other *fantini*, anxious to retard their progress. And this, notwithstanding Article x of the regulations governing the race, which prohibits the jockeys *percuotersi fino a che, data la mossa*,

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<sup>1</sup> E. A. BRIGIDI, *Le Contrade* (Siena, 1875).

*non saranno arrivati alla Fonte Gaia.* Sometimes—so little is this rule regarded—they take time by the forelock to the extent of fiercely attacking an adversary even before the signal for the start is given and the rope has fallen.

"Hold on!" cried the *fantino* of the Oca, last August, to the *fantino* of the Bruco, who had commenced a premature assault, "Hold on! Wait till we've started." "Not I," replied the other, who had a *cavallaccio* of the worst order, "If I don't hit you now I'll never get a chance to."

And so the race begins.

Words fail me to describe the scene which follows. "That human ocean"—the expression is Signor Brogi's—"gives vent to a yell, so loud and so prolonged that it would be safe to wager that it can be heard for a mile around the city.

"It is a fearful din; a veritable crack of doom....

"Men and women scream; leap into the air; shout encouragement to the competitors; curse the laggards; invoke the Saints, especially S. Antonio, calling upon them to guide the horse of

their particular Contrada to victory and to break the neck of the horse of the Contrada which they hate. The air is rent with the howls of a crowd beside itself with excitement, compared to which the blare of the trumpets and the shout of the people before Jericho must have been a whisper. Verily, if noise could shatter them, the palaces of Siena would have toppled long ago.

"The most fanatical actually lose their voices with shouting, and, no longer able to speak, gesticulate like men possessed and stamp upon the ground....

"In the midst of all this babel, the horses string out in a long line, and the *fantini*, even when they know that they have no further hope of victory, strike out furiously with their *nerbi*, slashing and cutting at their neighbors as if their lives depended upon the vigor of their blows."

Not so many years ago, the jockeys were not confined to the use of the *nerbo* alone, but were permitted also to seize their opponents and to drag

them off their horses. Then, often enough, two *fantini*, in a close, if unfraternal, embrace would fall together and fight out their battle on the ground, while their horses continued their wild career, with the result that occasionally one of them would succeed in winning the Palio by his own unaided efforts.<sup>1</sup>

In this connection a story is told—whether it be legend or fact I do not know—of a small and ancient horse which had run in so many Palii that it knew every foot of the ground and every trick of the game, but which was unable to keep up with the others when weighted with a rider.

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<sup>1</sup> In the XVIIth century such a victory would appear to have been impossible, as I deduce from the following entry made by Girolamo Macchi in the list of the Palii won by the Contrade in his day:—

"CIVIETTA, 1664. — Il 2 luglio, cioè dato che fu la mossa, cascò il fantino della Lupa e il cavallo, era il primo, attese a correre e si mantenne primo, e perchè quello della Civietta era il secondo fu ordinato dal Serenissimo Principe Mattias, fu ordinato, darsi a questa Contrada; perchè il Palio fu risoluto lo venca il fantino e no il cavallo."

To obviate this difficulty, the Contrada which received him constructed a bridle and reins of cardboard, carefully fashioned to look like leather, and directed their *fantino* to fall off as early in the race as possible. This he did, and the old horse carried off the prize alone; all efforts to seize and stop him being rendered futile by the fragile character of his head-gear, which, of course, broke to pieces at the slightest pull.

Formerly, behind the mattresses (which, as I have already explained, skirt the lower side of the track between the Via S. Martino and the Cappella) it was customary to erect a stand, the occupants of the front seat of which were able to rest their elbows upon the top of the said mattresses. And here in 1864 a curious incident occurred. The Montone and the Torre were well ahead of the ruck; and the latter was gaining. As they rounded the so called *voltata di S. Martino*, the abruptness of the turn, of course, sent them close under the mattresses; and there, the Torre attempting to take the lead, the *fantino* of

the Montone naturally began to use his *nerbo* with vigor and precision. But, fortunately for the former, immediately above their heads sat a good lady whose sympathies were entirely with the Torre; and she, leaning forward, caught the jockey of the Montone by his helmet, adjuring him not to smite. The unexpected check dismounted him, and in his fall he brought his rival down as well. The two horses finished the race alone, that of the Torre being foremost—a fact whereof sufficient evidence is to be found in the lists of the winners of the Palio preserved in the archives of the various Contrade; since, in most of these, under the date of August 1864, we may read the significant words: "*Torre, rubato.*"

Memorable, too, among Palii was the race of July 2nd 1788, which was run by seven Contrade only, since the Giraffa and the Pantera were so determined that the Lupa, which had a *cavallo bono*, should not win that they willingly sacrificed their own chances of victory, to prevent their

enemy from even starting. First they held him back with a tempest of *nerbate*. and then, as if that were not sufficient, all three *fantini* descended from their horses and fought with such fury in the middle of the track that they had to be separated by the soldiers ; while the Chiocciola, which had been looked upon as a rank outsider, carried off the prize.

And now the gun has been fired for the last time, and the race is lost and won.

In a moment the track is filled with the people of the victorious Contrada. They crawl under or vault over the barriers ; they rush wildly forward from every part of the Piazza, and, at the risk of being trampled under foot by such of the horses as have not yet been pulled up, fling themselves upon their *fantino*. They embrace him ; they kiss him ; they struggle to clasp his hand ; they raise him upon their shoulders, and, with deafening shouts of exultation, bear him to the judges' stand, where hangs the coveted Palio, around



which are already waving all their banners, mingled with those of the allied Contrade which have come to do honor to their triumph.

" This enthusiasm (says La Farina) enables us to understand how a victor in the Olympic games could be deemed worthy of statues and of temples, of the songs of the Greek maidens, of the adoration of the whole of Greece, and of the odes of Pindar, worthy of Zeus alone.... In this mediæval Sienese festival still lives the vivacity, the warmth, the energy, which made us great in art and in civilization, which set a Cathedral in every little town and which reared those many public and private monuments in whose presence the foreigner still stands speechless with wonder and with delight.<sup>1</sup> "

At last the silken Palio, surmounted by its silver basin, is lowered.

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<sup>1</sup> See the *Storia e costumi delle Contrade di Siena*, del Conte ANTONIO HERCOLANI (Firenze, 1845). The book is, I believe, out of print, but a copy is to be found in the Communal Library of Siena. It abounds with picturesque incidents, and should be perused by every brother scribbler who desires to write of the Palio.

A hundred hands are held out to receive it, and a fresh roar of triumph breaks forth from the delighted crowd.

Preceded by the drummers and followed by the Alfieri with their flags, the glorious proof and fruit of victory is borne to the Church of Santa Maria di Provenzano, where thanks are rendered to Our Lady, and where the *fantino* and his horse are blessed a second time, while the sacred edifice is filled with waving banners and resounds to delirious cries of joy and exultation.<sup>1</sup>

And so, Our Lady of Provenzano having been duly honored, the triumphal procession departs for its own Contrada to render thanks once more; and this time to its own especial Saint, in the

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<sup>1</sup> This visit to the Church of Santa Maria di Provenzano, although undoubtedly as much a part of the ceremonies proper to the day as even the benediction of the horse (See AQUARONE, *Dante in Siena*, page 35), is often omitted; and that too on the 2nd July—the Festa of that Madonna—since the victors in their excitement frequently carry the Palio direct to their own Church to give laud and honor to their own Saint, entirely forgetting the claims of Our Lady.

Church where a few hours before the horse and the *fantino* received their first benediction. Thus, if it be the Oca that is victorious, the Palio will be carried to the house

That saw Saint Catherine bodily,  
Felt on its floors her sweet feet move,  
And the live light of fiery love  
Burn in her beautiful strange face,

and will there be left upon the high altar close to Neroccio's exquisite statue of the Saint. Nor do I think that she will be troubled thereby. She was too full of kindest human sympathy for that; while, if the story which the Pisans tell of her be true, she may even rejoice that the good people of Fontebranda have brought home their trophy to her shrine without injury to life or limb. For it is said that she chanced to be in Pisa at the time of the playing of the *Gioco del Ponte*, " and there, in the Church of Santa Cristina, held loving communion with her and our Crucified Lord; when, on a sudden, she was startled by a noise of trumpets and of drums.

But the Saviour bad her fear not, telling her that the sounds which she heard proceeded from no other cause than a game which was commonly played among the Pisans. And she, being moved thereto by lively charity, effectually besought Him that never, for all time to come, might any evil happen, by reason of that game, to them that played therein.—Which thing was granted to her by the divine mercy." So runs the legend. And surely, if even amidst the joys of Paradise she still remembers this world of sorrow and of sin, the home of her childhood, the sheer street and the pungent smell of its tanneries must be nearer to her heart than the alien city, for all its magnificent sweep of quay and broader and more level ways.

. . . . .  
The Contrada is full of men with *fiaschi* in their hands, for the Captain has given orders that all comers shall drink at his expense, and wine flows like water. Merriment reigns supreme, and the *fantino* is the hero of the hour. And, in fact,

the poor devil deserves some compensation for all that he has gone through. Very rarely is he a member of the Contrada for which he rides, and generally not even a Sienese. His employers fully realize that he is not stirred by the same patriotism as they are and that for him the only considerations are pecuniary ones. Accordingly he has been practically imprisoned ever since he entered the service of the Contrada, and has never under any circumstances been allowed to go about alone.<sup>1</sup> Otherwise attempts would have been made to corrupt him, and he would probably have sold the race for a larger sum than he could hope to make by winning it. Like the *Condottieri* of the XIVth century, who were hired by the Communes to fight their battles for them, he has been the subject of profound distrust; but, like them, in the hour of victory he becomes a hero—nay, almost a demi-god. Nor are the women less

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<sup>1</sup> There is a striking analogy between the treatment of the modern fantini and that of the foreign Potestà in the XIIIth century. See RONDONI, *Sena Vetus*, page 59.

willing than the men to show their appreciation of his merits. Kisses he may have in abundance from pretty girls who, on any other occasion, would repulse his advances with scorn; and perhaps, if he be so minded, even dearer favors yet.

On the morning following, the race, all the members of the *comparsa*, dressed as they were at the time of the procession, and accompanied by the horse and the *fantino*, carry the Palio through the city—avoiding, however, those Contrade with which they have old scores to settle. They perform *sbandierate* under the windows of the *Signori Protettori*, and distribute sonnets in praise of their Contrada and of its *invitto campione*, to whom are imputed a world of noble qualities. As to him, poor fellow, he does not seem much puffed up by the praises so lavishly showered upon him, and that, often enough, for the best of reasons, that he is quite incapable of reading them.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See APPENDIX, No. 3, and Signor BROGI's *Palio di Siena*, cited *supra*.

Everywhere money and drinks are given to the youthful hero, until, before evening, he has acquired a little hoard which should suffice to support him for the best part of a year, and a headache which will keep him in bed for several days.

Lastly, a week or two after the race, a banquet is given by the victorious Contrada. Tables are set out in one of the streets, which is ornamented for the occasion with banners and with lights; while, from all the windows, are hung tapestry or brightly colored table cloths or spotless linen. Sometimes, too, the horse himself, decked with gala trappings and exquisitely groomed, graces the festivities with his presence, standing, at the foot of the table, before an improvised manger filled to overflowing with the most succulent and enticing forage: and, always, if it be the Oca which has won the Palio, one or more live geese form a prominent feature in the decorations, irresistibly recalling to our minds the days of the free Communes, when the *Signoria* of Siena

kept a wolf in the *Sala del Mappamondo*, and when the Marzocco of Florence was typified by *uno giovane e bello leone* which was confined *nella corte del palagio de' Priori legato con una catena*.<sup>1</sup> The geese, too, are tied in some manner, and I imagine that, of all those who are present, they are probably the least gratified by the proceedings of the evening.

The people feast till midnight. All is mirth and jollity; and even if, by accident, some too patriotic Ocaiolo should drink a glass of wine more than is good for him, it does no harm whatever; for the wine of Chianti is no breeder of enmity or strife, but rather tends to fill him who uses it with love and charity to all men.

Such, Reader, is the Palio. And, in reviewing its curious mixture of religious rites and

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<sup>1</sup> GIGLI, *Diario*, II, 260 (edition cited); *Misc. Stor. Senese*, vol. I (1893), pages 28, 29; G. VILLANI, VIII, 62; *Diario d'Anonimo Fiorentino*, vol. VI of the *Documenti di storia italiana* (cited supra), page 453; &c., &c.



purely secular enthusiasms, it is well, not only to remember its origin, but also to bear in mind the fact that, in the words of a modern writer, "Italy is above all lands the home of human nature—simple, unabashed even in the presence of its Maker," and that "perhaps we do not sufficiently account for the domesticity of the people of the Latin countries in their every-day-open church. They are quite at their ease there, whereas we are as unhappy in ours as if we were at an evening party; we wear all our good clothes, and they come into the houses of their Father in any rag they chance to have on, and are at home there.<sup>1</sup>" And, strange as their tumultuous method of giving praise to God and to His Mother must necessarily seem to our colder northern temperaments, they are quite as likely to be right as we are. Indeed, I have little doubt that most of us would be as much scandalized as Michal was, should we behold another David "leaping and

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<sup>1</sup> W. D. HOWELLS, *Tuscan Cities* (The English Library edition), page 107.

dancing before the Lord." For us perfunctory praises offered up in the words of a rigid and monotonous liturgy are more respectable, and therefore—of course—more pleasing to the Almighty.

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## APPENDIX.



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No. I.

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THE SEVENTEEN CONTRADE.

*Terzo di Città.*

1. CONTRADA DELLA TARTUCA  
The Ward of the Tortoise.
2. CONTRADA DELLA CHIOCCIOLA  
The Ward of the Snail.
3. CONTRADA DELLA SELVA  
The Ward of the Wood.
4. CONTRADA DELL' AQUILA  
The Ward of the Eagle.
5. CONTRADA DELL' ONDA  
The Ward of the Wave.
6. CONTRADA DELLA PANTERA  
The Ward of the Panther.

*Terzo di San Martino.*

7. CONTRADA DI VAL DI MONTONE  
The Ward of Val di Montone.
8. CONTRADA DELLA TORRE  
The Ward of the Tower.
9. CONTRADA DEL LEOCORNO  
The Ward of the Unicorn.
10. CONTRADA DELLA CIVETTA  
The Ward of the Owl.
11. CONTRADA DEL NICCHIO  
The Ward of the Shell.

*Terzo di Camollia.*

12. CONTRADA DEL DRAGO  
The Ward of the Dragon.
13. CONTRADA DELL' OCA  
The Ward of the Goose.
14. CONTRADA DELLA GIRAFFA  
The Ward of the Giraffe.

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15. CONTRADA DEL BRUCO  
The Ward of the Caterpillar.
16. CONTRADA DELLA LUPA  
The Ward of the Wolf.
17. CONTRADA DELL' ISTRICE  
The Ward of the Porcupine.

NOTE. Such of the *Contrade* as are called by the names of animals have adopted those animals as their emblems. Thus the *Lupa* bears as its cognizance a she-wolf suckling the twins, the *Civetta* an owl, and the *Chiocciola* a snail. The *Selva* displays upon its banner a rhinoceros beneath a tree, the *Onda* a dolphin, the *Val di Montone* a ram rampant, and the *Torre* an elephant with a tower on its back. Of all the *Contrade*, the *Nicchio*, alone, is not represented by any living thing, assuming as its device a shell surmounted by the Grand-ducal crown.

As to the extent and confines of the various *Contrade*, see GIGLI, *Diario* (edition cited), volume II, pages 7-II.

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No. 2.  

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## BENEDICTIO EQUORUM ET ANIMALIUM.

Adjutorium nostrum in nomine Domini.

*Qui fecit cælum et terram.*

Domine, exaudi orationem meam.

*Et clamor meus ad te veniat.*

Dominus vobiscum.

*Et cum spiritu tuo.*

Oremus.

Deus refugium nostrum et virtus: adesto piis  
Ecclesiæ tuæ precibus. Auctor ipse pietatis, et  
præsta, ut quod fideliter petimus, efficaciter conse-  
quamur. Per Christum Dominum nostrum. *Amen.*

Oremus.

Omnipotens sempiterne Deus, qui gloriosum  
beatum Antonium variis tentationibus probatum,



inter mundi hujus turbines illæsum abire fecisti ;  
concede famulis tuis, ut et præclaro ipsius profi-  
ciamus exemplo, et a præsentis vitæ periculis ejus  
meritis et intercessionem liberemur. Per Christum  
Dominum nostrum. *Amen.*

Oremus.

Bene✠dictionem tuam, Domine, hæc anima-  
lia accipiant, qua corpore salventur ; et ab omni  
malo per intercessionem beati Antonii liberentur.  
Per Christum Dominum nostrum. *Amen.*

*(Deinde aspergatur aqua benedicta.)*

No. 3.

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XVI AGOSTO MDCCCXCVIII

AL MERITO E VALORE IN ACERBA ETÀ INCOMPARABILI  
DEL FANTINO

ANGELO VOLPI COGNOMINATO BELLINO  
CUI

LA CONTRADA DELLA TARTUCA  
DEVE L'ONORE E L'ALLEGREZZA INSPERATI  
DELLA 34<sup>a</sup> VITTORIA  
NELLA CORSA ALLA TONDA  
TRIBUTO DI GRATITUDINE E DI LODE.

SONETTO.

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Nuovo trionfo nell'equestre agone  
onor, letizia alla Tartuca accresce ;  
ed ai fervidi evviva il tuo si mesce  
nome, o invitto di noi gentil campione.

Grecia di lauro profonda corone  
agli Olimpici eroi : l'alta or ne cresce  
fama l'età, fama che all'ardue è sprone  
opre onde ignavia e codardia rincesce.

Festoso a Te dei nostri cori il grido  
che l'affetto appalesa e l'esultanza,  
fabbro per noi d'onor, concordi alziamo.

Sempre memore Tu, sempre a noi fido  
quel plauso renderai ch'oggi a Te diamo  
di novelle vittorie alma speranza.

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