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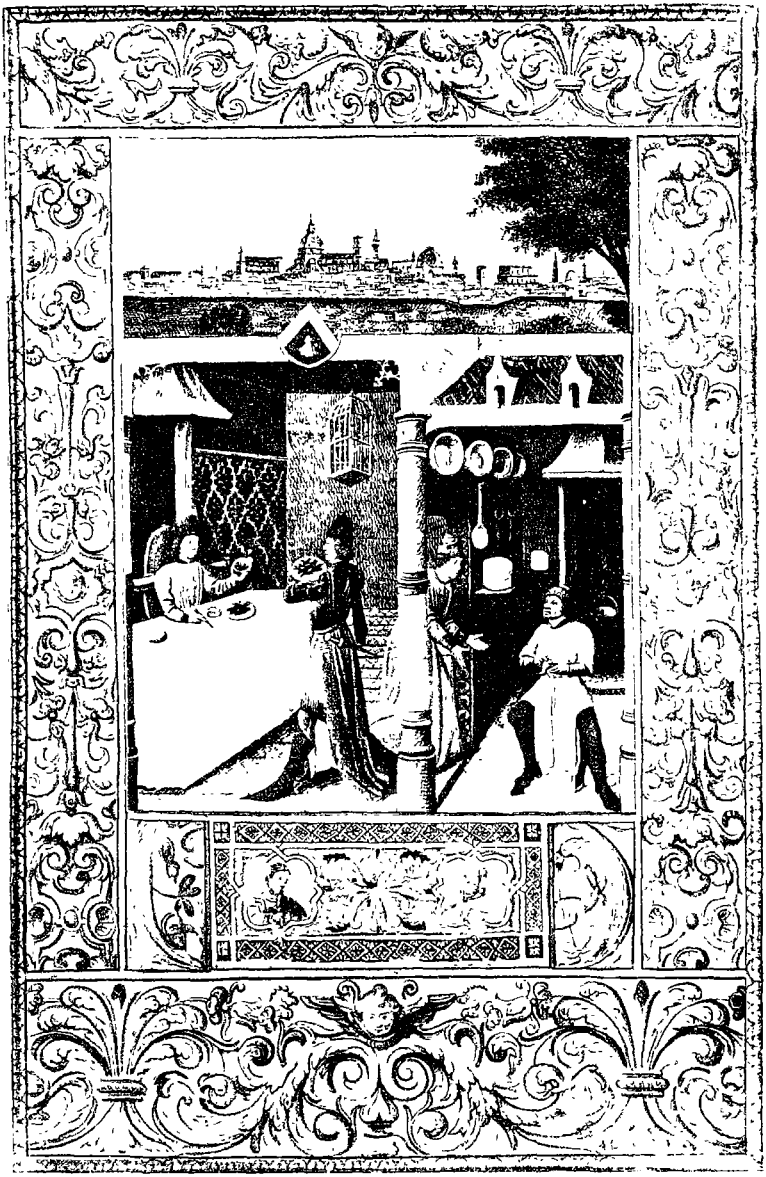
# THE GUILDS OF FLORENCE



A FLORENTINE MERCHANT ENJOYING THE FRUITS OF HIS ENTERPRISE

FOURTEENTH CENTURY

# THE
# GUILDS OF FLORENCE

BY

EDGCUMBE STALEY

ILLUSTRATED AFTER MINIATURES IN ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS
AND FLORENTINE WOODCUTS

WITH
BIBLIOGRAPHICAL AND CHRONOLOGICAL TABLES

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# PREFACE

"FIRENZE, la Bellissima e Famosissima Figlia di Roma" —was no mere metaphor of Dante, but a very true title of the First of Modern States.

The cumulative energies of the Florentines had their focus in the corporate life of the Trade-Associations, and in no other Community was the Guild-system so thoroughly developed as it was in Florence.

A complete and connected History of the Guilds has never been compiled. The present work is put forth, perhaps rather tentatively than exhaustively, to supply the omission.

The subject is a large one, and the founts of information are many and various. I have tasted at many springs and drunk from many wells—and my subject-matter has been drawn from the following sources:—(1) Manuscripts—Twelfth to Sixteenth centuries; (2) Printed matter—Books and Periodicals; (3) Letters from Authorities and Friends; (4) Personal Knowledge of Florence and the Florentines.

In the study of Manuscripts I have entered largely into the labours of such experts as Emily Baxter, Guido Biagi, R. Davidssohn, Lewis Einstein, F. T. Perrens, J. A. Symonds, and Pasquale Villari, and I have freely used their readings.

This I have done because of initial difficulties of time and emolument for original research. The early Constitutions and Statutes of many of the Guilds were written in an almost insolvable mixture of abbreviated Latin and vernacular Tuscan —the deciphering of which would easily consume any man's natural life-time. When I sought for some student to undertake, even a superficial survey, I was met with the crushing but practical reply—"the game is not worth the candle!"

In the Catalogue of Printed Books, etc., in my Bibliography, I wish to indicate the following as most helpful :—Biagi's "Private Life of the Renaissance Florentines," Cantini's "Legislazione Toscana," Cibrario's "Della Economia Politica del Medio Evo," Davidssohn's two works, Einstein's "Italian Renaissance in England," Hyett's "Florence: her History and her Art," Ildefonso's "Delizie degli Erudite Toscani," Perrens' "Histoire de Florence," Peruzzi's "Storia del Commercio e dei Banchieri di Firenze," "Leader Scott's" Works, Symond's Works, Villanis' (G., F., and M.) Works, and Villari's Works.

Quite invaluable have been "Collections of Tuscan Laws, etc.," "Le Consulte," "L'Osservatore Fiorentino," "The Florence Gazette," and "Statuta Populi et Communis Florentiæ, 1415," published at Friburg in 1778—indeed, the last of these authorities I have used fully as representative of the middle period of the epoch of the Renaissance.

My correspondence has placed at my disposal most useful assistance from the late Rev. S. T. Baxter and Mrs Baxter ("Leader Scott"), Dr Biagi and Dr Villari, of Florence; Signore Lisini, of Siena, and Mr Langton Douglas, of London. To all of whom I beg to offer my heartiest acknowledgments.

In the same category I tender sincere thanks to Mr G. F. Barwick and the Staff of the Reading Room at the British Museum—for useful services always courteously rendered; to Miss A. R. Evans—the devout student of Florentine lore—for helpful research work; to Miss E. De Alberti—for excellent translations of Italian works; and to my publishers—for urbanity and kindly consideration.

. . . . . .

Omissions are unavoidable in a work of this character and scope, and further, I readily admit that I have not completely brought down my information to the latest date of my period :—*e.g.* "The Guild of Bankers and Money-Changers" and "The Guild of Silk." This in no sense affects the purpose I have had in view, nor tells against the usefulness of my work.

Where dates are in dispute I have chosen those which best fit into my general scheme. The British equivalents, which I have attached to the various coins current in Florence, are those which most nearly express the mean of the constant variations in value—for example, I have taken the gold florin of 1252 as worth about ten shillings throughout the whole work.

In many places, and especially in the last four chapters, I have followed my own line in attribution and criticism, regardless of conventional ideas. What I say, for instance, about Giotto and his Campanile, about the Comacine Guild, and about the Religion of the Florentines, I maintain upon their simple merits. My generally optimistic view of the pre-eminence of Florence and her people over all her rivals I am entitled to hold and to set forth, from the nature of the case. She was not only the Head of the Tuscan League, but the Head of Modern Civilization.

I have purposely avoided giving prominence to individuals—except the Medici, and I have abstained from dealing critically with the work of the Renaissance artists and writers—all of whom, it has been my effort generally to show, were the protegés of the Guilds, in their corporate capacity, or of influential merchants.

With respect to the Italian words which are plentifully and necessarily scattered all through the publication, something must be said. First of all, I have chosen obsolete and old spellings as being more in harmony with the times and circumstances under notice than modern renderings, for example:— Cronica not Cronaca, Calimala not Calimara, Tiratolo not Tiratoio, or Tiratorio, Notaio not Notaro—and so forth. In the second place—the meanings,—which I have usually added in the text to Tuscan words,—are those which I consider best suited to the subject in hand. Where Dictionary meanings have failed me I have not hesitated to supply my own, in absolute accord with the context.

The Illustrations are from many sources. Illuminated Manuscripts at the British Museum and at the Laurentian Library in Florence have been laid under contribution. Whilst unhappily not retaining the exquisite colouring of those gem-like miniatures

they have been reproduced both in their original dimensions and also by enlargement, but this has undoubtedly coarsened their delicate penmanship.

A very interesting feature in these beautiful pictures is to be noted—that, whereas the Florentine artists who drew them so skilfully have given us figures in Florentine costumes of the periods, they have added accessories of architecture, furniture, foliage, and the other details of the backgrounds, in terms of local environment. Both in Paris and in Flanders the superiority of the handiwork of Florentine illuminators was fully recognised, and such artists received warm welcomes and handsome remunerations.

The production, in the text, in their original sizes, of some of the splendid Florentine woodcuts of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries has laid me under obligation to many kind people, and among them, Messrs Kegan Paul & Co. for numbers 2, 15, 37, 41, 48, 54, 56, 59, 60, 61, from Kristeller's "Early Florentine Woodcuts," Bernard Quaritch, Esq., for numbers 68 and 69—and also for the reproduction, from a MS. Miniature, of number 28.

I have further to acknowledge the kindness of Messrs. Sampson, Low & Co. for permission to reproduce woodcut number 52, of J. M. Dent, Esq., for number 7, of the Archivio di Stato Sienese (Signore A. Lisini) for Plate XXIX., and of Dottore G. Biagi for three plates from his "Private Life of the Renaissance Florentines."

The small shields of arms, which appear at the end of certain chapters, are reproduced from drawings I made for the purpose. They are copied from sculptural and pictorial adornments upon the façades of the Guild Shrine of Or San Michele and the Palazzo della Mercanzia, and upon the overdoors of Guild Residences, the Zecca, and other buildings—some of which indeed were removed in the last century.

The indexing of such a comprehensive work has been no light matter. I have endeavoured to give prominence to trades, traders, trade-customs, and trade-processes rather than to enume-

rate ordinary historical names and facts. This holds true also in the Chronological Table.

The inception, development, and completion of my task have enriched me with all the pleasurable toil and profitable enjoyment of my fascinating subject. My enthusiastic love of the "City of the Lily" has been a hundredfold enlarged as I have worked through my story of "The Guilds of Florence."

E. S.

LONDON, 1906

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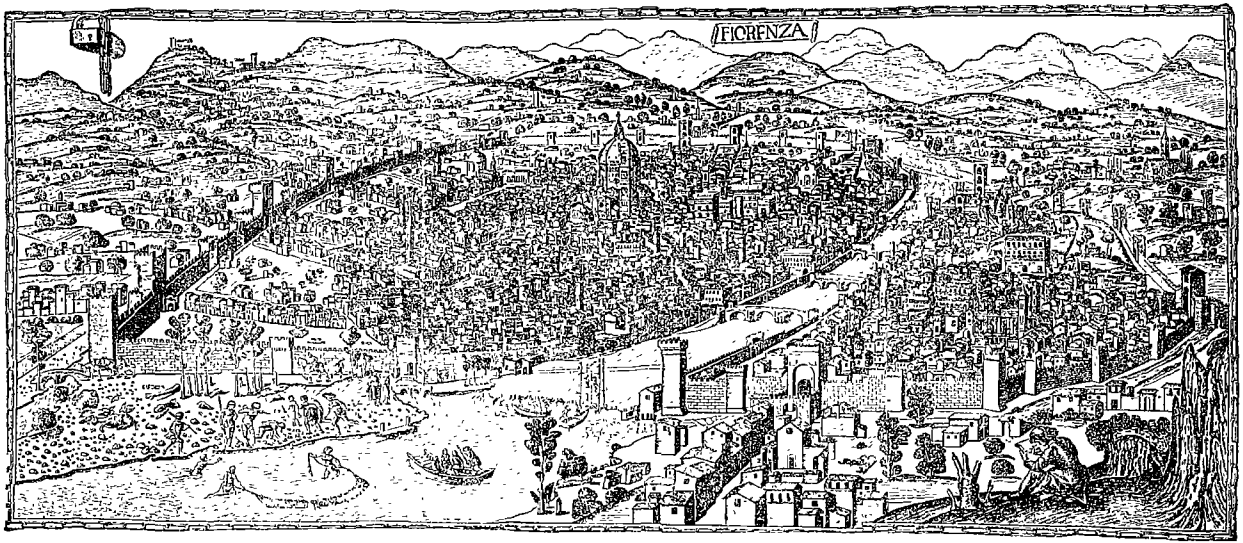



A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF FLORENCE ABOUT THE YEAR 1391

# THE GUILDS OF FLORENCE

## *LE ARTI DI FIRENZE*

### CHAPTER I

### FLORENTINE COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

I. FORMATIVE FORCES. Geographical position. Climate of Tuscany. "A favoured Race." Origin of Florence. Roman influences. Barbarian inroads. Charlemagne. "*Firenze la Bella.*" The Popes. *Collegium.* The Commune.

II. POLITICS AND PARTIES. Countess Matilda. *Grandi* and *Popolani.* Six *Sestieri.* Six Consuls. Early Records wanting. The *Umiliati.* Feuds and warfare. "*Mutar lo Stato!*" Guelphs and Ghibellines. Battle of Campaldino. Machiavelli's views.

III. EDUCATION AND CULTURE. The Campanile—"Gospel of Labour." Boastings—"*Il Spirito del Campanile.*" Shopkeeper—gentlemen. Dante's opinion of "*Le Genti di Firenze.*" Learning—the companion of daily life. Petrarch's aphorism. The University of Florence. Boccaccio. English travellers in Tuscany. Thomas's Diary.

IV. TRADE ROUTES AND SEA POWER. Roman roads. Commercial agents. Buonaccorso Pitti. *Ostellieri.* Commercial Treaties. Vastness of Florentine commerce. Foreign Consuls. Six maritime Consuls. The "*Arte del Mare!*" Florentine navy. International law. Reprisals. Florence head of the Tuscan League.

THE classic Vale of Arno was, in latest of the Dark Ages, the wholesome nursery, where fair Florence—gentle nurse—fostered three young sisters:—Art, Science, and Literature.

No invidious Paris fared that way, casting apples of discord before the fascinating Graces of the Renaissance. No question ever arose as to whose was the subtlest witchery, but each developed charms, distinct and rare, yet not outrivalling one the other. With harmonious voices blended, and ambrosial tresses mingled, the three interlaced their comely arms, and tossing with shapely feet the flowing draperies of golden tissue, which softly veiled the perfect contours of their beauteous forms, they gaily danced along. Their enchanting rhythm was the music of the new

Civilisation:—it we know—and them—but what of their origin? whence came they? and who were their forebears?

. . . . . .

Commerce and Industry,—well-matched and well-mated pair,—very early made their busy home by Arno's healthful bed. Sheltered by the gracious cliffs of Fiesole and the umbrageous woods of San Miniato, they stretched their vigorous limbs along the virgin fields and pregnant uplands, dipping themselves anon, and theirs, in the tonic stream. Invigorated by the crisp Tuscan breezes, and cheered by the sunlit cerulean skies, they set about the rearing of their sturdy family.

Industry,—fond Mother,—kept by the domestic hearth, unwearyingly nourishing and encouraging her children,—some of whom are chiselled upon Giotto's famous Campanile,—whilst Commerce,—energetic Father,—ranged the wide world over for markets for his wares, returning, ever and a day, with hands well filled with gold and other treasures rare.

Together this strenuous pair evolved, from Nature's generous womb, the woolly web, the silky tress, and brilliant dye, which, sagely intermixed, by cunning hands, well dowered her growing offspring with health, and wealth, and wisdom too.

. . . . . .

To the intelligent student of Florentine History it comes as a matter of no surprise that her people,—so violent in political quarrel, so refined in culture, and so magnificent in circumstance,—was all the while a nation of shrewd business men—enterprising merchants, skilful artisans, and diligent operatives.

From the twelfth to the end of the sixteenth centuries Florence easily held the first place in the life and work of the known world: she was in fact Athens and Rome combined! The reason of this pre-eminence must be adjudged to three potentialities:—accidents of climate, geographical position, and peculiarities of race.

The climate of Tuscany,—a highland country of hills and plains,—partook neither of the enervating temperature of the indolent south, nor yet of the rigour of the frozen north. Men

throve mightily under stable atmospheric conditions which aided healthful labour and inspired enterprise.

Geographically, Florence was the Mistress of the intercourse of the world. In her hands she held all the northern roads to Rome, whilst, Colossus-like, her feet were placed upon the waterways of Venice and Genoa—the emporiums of the south. From Pisa she ruled the seas.

The race of Tuscans was a fusion of many vigorous strains: Etruscan, Greek, Latin, and Teuton. Each ingredient had its special function in forming a people, physically and mentally, equal to any and every task they chose to set themselves. Dino Compagni describes the Florentines of the fourteenth century as "*formati di bella statura oltra le Toscani*," and calls them, "the favoured race."

Vigour of mind and body, and the free exercise of industrial instincts, were the germs whence sprang all the splendid characteristics of the Florentines of the Renaissance.

The Muse of Shelley sings thus:—

> "Florence, beneath the Sun,
> Of cities, fairest one!"
>
> . . . . . .

The origin of Florence is wrapped in mystery and obscurity. Fiesole is said to have been one of her maternal forbears, and Dante calls:—

> "Etruscan Fiesole—the hilly cradle of a noble race." [1]

Anyhow at a very remote period the warlike people of the hills were wont to descend to the river banks to barter with such intrepid lowlanders as adventured themselves so far.

At the junction of the Fiesolean stream,—the Mugnone,—with the Arno, gradually sprang up a small settlement of peaceful men and women, and there centred the primitive markets of the countryside. This settlement speedily became a town of considerable size and importance, and was known to the Romans, civilly, as *Fluentia*.

[1] "Inferno," xv. 61-3.

When Julius Cæsar came to Fiesole to avenge a Roman defeat, wherein the Consul Fiorinus had been slain, he changed its name, —marked on his military chart as *Campus Martis*,—to Fiorentia, in honour of his kinsman's memory.

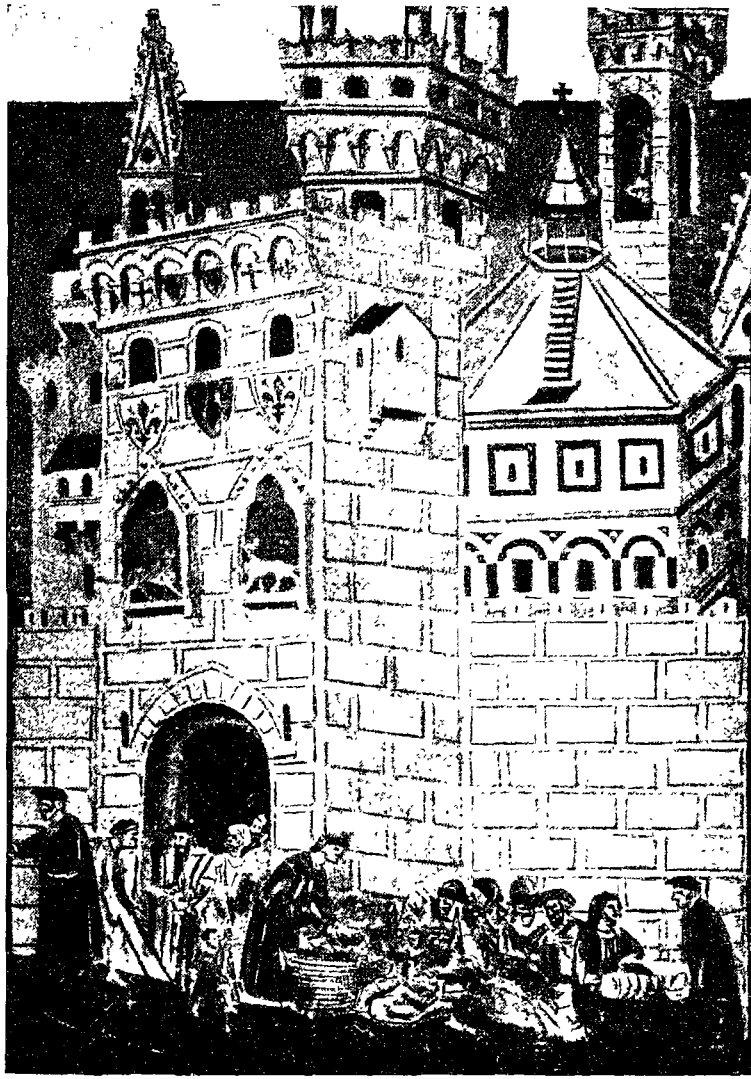
Florus ranks Florence with Spoletium, Interamnium, and Præneste as, "those splendid *municipia* of Italy"; and Pliny includes "*Fluentini vel Florentia*" in his list of Romano-Etruscan Colonies.

Whilst dates are all uncertain we know that the Romans re-built the town on the usual *Castrum* plan of intersecting streets, and lived there amid all the usual edifices of a Roman commercial city. A great impetus was given to her growth and trade by the making of the splendid Flaminian road, which crossed the Arno at the point where the Ponte Vecchio still unites the two portions of the modern city.

The civilisation and prosperity of the Roman *Castra* were swept away by the wild inroads of the barbarians from the North. Wave after wave of savagery rolled over all the land. Goths, Vandals, Longobarbs, and Saxons worked their will amid Arno's smiling fields and pleasant gardens. Last of all came Totila,—the "Scourge of God,"—and hewed in pieces the remnants of her folk, and made of fair Florence nothing but a dunghill and a waste.

Roman farmsteads, villas, baths, and theatres were levelled to the ground. Where, by busy gate and teeming quay and mart, had gathered crowds of skilful toilers,—from fruitful fields and prolific flocks, from sea and riverside, from busy looms and noisy shops of smiths,—instead were ruined walls and battered portals. Behind the scattered stones slouched the craven sons of hard-working sires. Their hands, devoid of honest crafts, sought only their fellow's pelf.

Along with the conquering Longobarbs, or Lombards, came many a German family, to whom tracts of Italian land were assigned for habitation and for culture. Attracted by its fruitful promise many a bearded and fur-clad barbarian settled on Tuscan soil, and there, too, their chieftains built their castles—employing



AN EARLY MARKET-PLACE BY THE BAPTISTERY OF SAN GIOVANNI

the pressed labour of the wretched people of the land. From these strongholds did they exercise over-lordship on plain labourers and rough workmen, whilst they, one and all, rendered due homage to their liege.

The barbarians came, and the barbarians went, hundreds of years rolled by, and nought but the ancient Christian shrine of San Giovanni remained to tell where Florence once had been. There, under its sheltering eaves, the good Baptist,—the second Patron of their weal: warlike Mars deposed,—rallied the frightened relics of a city's throng, and the driven refugees from Fortune's frown.

By the river bank clustered frail hovels,—the homes of simple fisher-folk,—adding their quota to a new township; and boats began once more to drop adown the stream in search of food and gain. Men breathed again, their hopes revived, and dreams of life and peace, of health and work were theirs. The old fire in their blood awoke the lion of their energies, and up, out of the ashes of the dead, phœnix-like, sprang another Florence.

Under the virile rule of good Queen Theodolinda who, at Ravenna, held her Court, in the years between 556 and 625, busy hands unearthed the blocks of Roman masonry, and around the budding city they threw the *Primo Cerchio*—the first mediæval wall. A turn in the tide of misfortune had set in and fair Florence raised proudly aloft her head to greet the Monarch of the West.

In 786, Charlemagne entered through her gates with an imposing retinue. He found her people rebuilding the Romano-Lombardic town and bestirring themselves in many useful industries.

The wise king noted the vigour and the intelligence of the townsfolk, and recognised especially their skill in dressing skins and wool. Greatly did he encourage these worthy crafts and granted new privileges. By decree [1] he extended the *Comitatus* or *Contado* to a three miles radius from the Baptistery. The tears he is said to have shed at Leghorn over the sight of intrusive

[1] G. Villani, Lib. iii. cap. 1-3.

Viking ships sapping the resources of Tuscany, must have been brushed aside, as, approvingly, he bestowed upon the new city the title :—"*Firenze la Bella!*"—and beautiful she was—a flower-basket—in the words of Faccio degli Uberti :—"*Che lira posta una gran cest dei fiori!*"

Two sapient Popes—Adrian I. and Leo III.—did much in the eighth and ninth centuries to encourage the arts and crafts. No Italian could at that time do foundry work, consequently Greek artificers in gold and bronze, especially, were invited to settle in Rome. Rich silken hangings, which could not be manufactured in Europe, were imported from the East, and men were set to work to imitate them.

Paschal I., Gregory IV., and Sergius II. took up the mantle of their predecessors, and encouraged industrial arts of all kinds. Bas-reliefs in metal and sanctuary lamps, glass vessels for the Mass and ornamental glass work, mosaics in pottery, lapidary objects encrusted with gems, enamel painting, fresco decorations, and many other ornamental and useful crafts were fostered not only in the Eternal City, but by craftsmen who travelled all over Italy and made settlements in Florence, and other places.

And still the toilers toiled and still the city grew until, in 825, there was established, as in other centres of population, a *Collegium*, —a commercial university for the Arts and Crafts,—under the auspices of the Emperor Lothair. This was the Coronation of Florence. Every head of a family, and every captain of a trade, became a ruling councillor in the popular government by public meeting.

Fief of the Romano-German Empire in the tenth century, Florence commercially governed, taxed, and defended herself. Her influence and her example were extended on every side. Her markets attracted dealers and adventurers from every land : her industries workmen and apprentices. By liberating the peasants of the soil from the sway of feudal lords she became the mistress of their destinies as well as of her own.

By all these means Florence laid the foundations of the only

free government possible in the Middle Ages—that of the Commune.

. . . . . .

It is a question of unusual difficulty to determine precisely the end of the Middle Ages and the beginning of the Renaissance. Italians, and Florentines in particular, never quite sank to the dismal level of other peoples—their faculties and energies were always far more acute and less benumbed than those of most of the inhabitants of the States around them. In a word Florence was a precious lantern, which burnt with unquenchable brilliance, and illuminated all the cities of Europe.

Bonifazio III., Marquis of Tuscany, died in 1076, and left his titular sovereignty to his daughter, the Countess Matilda. Popularly known as "The great Countess," she dwelt at Lucca, holding frequent Courts in Florence—when not engaged sword in hand upon the field of battle. Her fame was such that very many of the children born in Florence, and the *Contado*, were ever after named "Tessa," or "Contessa" in her honour.

Matilda was renowned for her strict administration of justice, and, in the earlier years of her reign, she presided in person in the Court of Pleas, aided by assessors, whom she chose from among the *Grandi*, or leading citizens. She greatly encouraged the industries and the commerce of the Commune, and readily sanctioned the warlike expeditions of the *Popolani*, or traders, against the aggressive nobles of the Empire. The Countess, nevertheless, had ambitions, beyond the circumscribed limits of the *Contado*, and left the city magnates to govern its affairs, pretty much as they liked.

In 1078 Florence was encircled by her Second Wall, and, at the same date, she was divided into six *Sestieri*—or Wards—each under the presidency of a *Buonuomo*, chosen by Matilda from the families of the *Grandi*. This magistrate administered justice, governed the population, and commanded the armed men, of his ward.

In 1101 the Countess made a prolonged stay in Florence, and

called together into Council the *Anziani*, or Ancients—heads of *Grandi* families, and also the *Capitudini* or heads of *Popolani* trades, —to frame a Constitution for the government of the Commune. In this instrument the *Buonuomini* adopt a new style, one indicative of personal authority and independence, namely :—Consul—a title hitherto borne only by supreme rulers of States.

Upon the death of Matilda in 1115 no one took her place as ruler of Florence, but the government of the city was carried on by the Six Consuls—who thus became the Rulers of the Commune. Florence at the same time threw off her allegiance to the Emperor, and proclaimed herself mistress of her own fortunes.

The yearly records of the city which have been preserved, begin only in the twelfth century. Eighteen of these,—written on the back of Sheet 71 of Codex 772 in the Vatican Palatine Library, —cover the years 1110 to 1173. A longer series of Records, running from 1107 to 1247, is preserved in Codex 776 in the Magliabecchian Library in Florence. In these documents are entries of the names of Consuls and other officers of State, together with notes of contemporaneous events connected with the progress,—political and commercial,—of the inhabitants of Florence. It has been truly said: "Merchants made her history, and merchants have chronicled the same."[1]

All the while another agency was at work, in the Middle Ages, which kept alive skilful toil and enterprising trade—the agency of the monasteries. In these institutions manual labour was prescribed to prevent idleness. Some communities indeed were founded mainly upon co-operative principles: for example, the *Umiliati* or The Humble Fathers of St Michael of Alexandria.[2]

The Order originated in the banishment of numbers of Italians, chiefly Lombardians, into Germany by the Emperor Henry I. in 1014. These exiles associated themselves together, in religion and in toil, by working at various trades, more particularly that of dressing wool. Returning to their own homes in 1019, they retained their

[1] Dr Davidssohn, "Geschichte von Florenz" (Preface).
[2] L. Pignotti, "Storia della Toscana," vol. iii. p. 266, note.

PATRONESS OF INDUSTRIES (COUNTESS MATILDA?)

organisation, and kept up their occupations, whilst their diligence and integrity were renowned far and wide.

Down to 1140 the *Umiliati* were laymen, but in that year the Order was changed into one composed solely of men of Holy Order. It is true that they no longer worked themselves, but they gathered around their monasteries and cells, everywhere, great numbers of lay-workers, of all ages and of every class, whose labours they directed, and whose morals they protected. The head of this early Labour Bureau was called "*Mercato.*"

In no other city or republic did the Humble Fathers achieve anything like the success which marked their work in Florence. Indeed, in some places, the industry entirely failed to attract workers; for example, in Pisa,—where they had commenced operations about the same time as in Florence,—they were obliged, in 1302, to beg alms to maintain their factory; and, a few years later, they were obliged to give up operations and quit the place entirely. In Florence it was very different, and their advent in 1238 was warmly welcomed, and its importance recognised by the shrewd manufacturers and operatives.

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Three conditions appear to have been constant in the political and commercial history of Florence, which, viewed in connection with their possible effect upon one another, were absolutely contradictory. First:—the incessant warfare—feuds, brigandage, and reprisals, which kept the population in a constant turmoil. Florence herself fomented some of these, as, by degrees, she acquired rural districts, and went on to conquer and to annex more distant townships and lands. Second:—the extraordinary frequency with which the form of government was changed: "*Mutar lo Stato*" became a household proverb. Magistrates one day acclaimed and trusted, were on the morrow disgraced, dismissed, and even slain. Third:—the amazing prosperity of the city, and the rapid increase of trade associations or Guilds, under fixed rules and duly elected officers. In truth, on one and the same day, a man might be called upon to fight to the death in

some fell conflict, to exercise his privilege with respect to the franchise of the city, and to undertake some new industrial enterprise!

The following is the refrain of a Folk Song of Old Florence, sung by the sorrowing women, as they looked in vain for the return home of the bread-winners:—

"Gather up his tools and bring them
With his apron of brown leather.
Father, wilt thou not be going
To thy work this summer weather?
Father slain and brother wounded—
They have struck them down together!"[1]

The strife between Guelphs and Ghibellines which actually commenced soon after the death of the Countess Matilda, was a struggle for supremacy on the one hand, between a democracy of merchants and traders,—aided by their work-people,—and, on the other, an aristocracy of nobles and soldiers of fortune,—backed up by their retainers. The names were first used in Florence in 1215, but were originally given by the Emperor Frederic II.,—the former to designate the upholders of the Pope,—the latter to distinguish the adherents of the Empire.

The Battle of Campaldino on June 11, 1285, proved, by the victory won for Florence, the progress made in commercial enterprise and prosperity. In spite of the many and lengthy wars with all her neighbours, Florence was in a good and happy condition. Her population was increasing rapidly in number and in wealth. Every man was making money in his trade, and everything went merrily like a marriage bell. Festivals and feasts were multiplied, children went about clothed in new garments of fine cloth and silk, and women, with garlands of fresh flowers and coronets of silver and of gold,—the work of cunning craftsmen,—sang and danced the livelong day.[2]

But the triumph of Campaldino was brief. Beneath the brilliant robes of her nobles and her merchants and the goodly garments

[1] Old Tuscan Folk Songs, "*Vocero.*"

[2] G. Villani, "Cronica," vii. 131.

of her artisans and her peasants, there rankled still the class-hatred, which had ever threatened her internal peace.

The constant feuds and factions which distracted Florence, from the first day, when, in 1177, the Uberti tried to seize upon the Lordship, until the very end of the Republic, did nothing more or less than winnow parties and thresh out policies, leaving behind as a substantial result a solidarity which had no equal in Europe. Her rulers were men of sterling grit, and her laws,—forced by exigency of circumstances,—were perspicuous for liberty, large mindedness, and justice.

Merchants of the "*Calimala*"—the finishers of foreign woven cloth—for example, carried on their business undaunted by troubles at home. Its members belonged to all and every party in the State. When the feud of the *Donati* and *Cerchi* was at its height, thirty-eight merchant-families sided with the former—the *Neri* or "Blacks," and thirty-two with the latter—the *Bianchi* or "Whites"—whilst as many more were neutral.[1]

Machiavelli has, in his "History of Florence," given an excellent and sententious view of the vicissitudes to which governments are subject. He says:—"The general course of changes that occur in States is from a condition of order to one of disorder, and from the latter they pass again to one of order. For as it is not the fate of mundane affairs to remain stationary, so when they have attained their highest state of perfection, beyond which they cannot go, they of necessity decline. And these again, when they have descended to the lowest, and by their disorders have reached the very depth of debasement, they must of necessity rise again, inasmuch as they cannot go lower."[2]

"Cities that govern themselves under the name of Republics, and especially such as are not well constituted, are exposed to frequent revolutions in their government."[3]

"The causes of nearly all the evils which afflict Republics are to be found in the great and natural enmities that exist between

[1] Villani, v. 38.

[2] Machiavelli, "Le Istorie di Firenze," Lib. v. sect i.

[3] Machiavelli, Lib. iv. sect i.

the people and the nobles, which result from the disposition of the one to command, and the indisposition of the other to obey."[1]

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Perhaps the most perfect, and certainly the most beautiful, building in Florence is the famous Campanile. Vasari says:—"Giotto not only made the design for this bell-tower, but also sculptured part of these stories in marble, in which are represented the beginnings of all the arts." These stories are told in panels of hexagonal shape, not in the conventional and devotional manner of the age, but freely from the standpoint of everyday life. Giotto gloried in his Florence and in her progress, and so he has adorned his Campanile with the records of her industries and of her commerce.

His first subjects are "The Creation of Adam," and "The Creation of Eve"; next he presents "The labours of Adam and Eve"—the man working patiently with his spade, the woman with her laden distaff;—and then "Jabal—the father of such as have cattle,"—setting forth man's pastoral work. After Jabal follows his brother, "Jubal—the father of all who handle harp and organ." Tubal Cain is next in order,—the instructor of the art of working in metals. Labour in the vineyard, personified in Noah, succeeds; and here ends the Scriptural subjects so called. The seven Arts and Sciences follow in turn—Astronomy, Arithmetic, Geometry, Grammar, Logic, Rhetoric and Music,—each pourtrayed in a separate panel.

Three panels are devoted to the crafts of Building, Pottery,[2]

[1] Machiavelli, Lib. iii. sect. i.

[2] Some say this panel represents a Physician in his chair, attending to his patients. His pose is that commonly depicted in the examination of urine, and a similar pose is seen in woodcuts of the end of the fifteenth century: *e.g.* Jacopo de Cessolis's *Il Giuocchio delle Scacchi*, printed by Antonio Miscomini, in 1493, where the doctor, or apothecary, as the *Quenis Pawne*, is testing some ointment or other mixture. Others assert that the panel exhibits a master-potter examining earthenware vessels, made in the *Contado*, and brought into the city by women with wicker bearing-baskets, as was the custom. Probably the panel represents *both* Medicine and Pottery—the row of *boccali*, *albarelli*, etc., on the shelf indicating the useful purposes served by the Potters' craft, and indispensable in the prosecution of the Science of Healing.

CAMPANILE AND DUOMO

and Wool-weaving—the special industries of Florence. A dignified group comes next,—probably illustrative of the Judicial function,—and then three subjects, setting forth man's mastery over land, and air, and sea—a horseman, an aeronaut (Dædalus), and a ship with its crew of navigators.

Pastoral industries follow:—Ploughing and Transport, with Painting—Apelles, and Sculpture—Pheidias. These chiselled pictures of life and life's activities have made of Giotto's Campanile a pulpit, whence for all time is preached the "Gospel of Intelligent Labour."

The Florentines of old looked down with ill-disguised contempt upon the citizens of other States, and especially upon the inhabitants of cities which they had conquered. These in their turn had petty rivalries amongst themselves—Siena, Pisa, Volterra, Montepulciano, San Gimignano, and the rest. Nothing pleased the citizens of Florence more than to boast of their victory in 1260 at Montaperti, and of other successes, when they met people from the defeated cities.

This peculiarly Tuscan characteristic led every city to boast of its own importance, and of the superiority of its public institutions and buildings. The "*Spirito del Campanile*," as it was called, was nowhere else more rampant than in Florence, where everybody seemed to be only too ready to disparage his neighbour, whilst he vaunted his own eminence, or the excellence of his craft, or the superiority of his City.

The Florentines were essentially a nation of shopkeepers, but, at the same time, they were a Republic of independent gentlemen. Whilst industrious beyond all their contemporaries, and frugal beyond the generality of men, their leisure was marked by creations in Art, Science and Literature, and their table distinguished by mirth, erudition and hospitality.

Each party in the State in turn sought to outdo the other in the advancement and adornment of his well-beloved city. Fine work set on foot by one party was elaborated by another. Wealth, honour, and dear life itself, were ever at the service

of the State. Each man was, first of all, a citizen, and then a private individual. The glory of "*Firenze la Bella*" was the true seal of family distinction.

The Commune flourished amazingly amid the invigorating influences of constant political disturbances, and became the centre of such a high and generous mental culture as has not a compeer in the world's history. This culture was a democratic trait, not the exclusive possession of the few; and, as a true characteristic of the Florentines of the twelfth to the sixteenth century, it is exhibited in the architecture of Arnolfo, the painting of Cimabue, the sculpture of Giotto and the poetry of Dante.

Speaking of the Acts, Statutes, and Laws of Florence, Dante represents the people as superior to all others in Italy for civil virtues, incorrodible faith, sincerity in religion, and noble charity. He considered that all these excellent qualities were the foundation upon which rested the commercial pre-eminence of the city.

Florence was a Republic of merchants and artisans, and her citizens, distinguished as *Nobili* and *Popolani*, were united in the general designation "*Le Genti di Firenze*,"—"The People of Florence."

A very important feature in the extraordinary enterprise and success of the merchants and craftsmen of Florence was the influence of education and literature upon all classes of the population. The commonest people were casuists, metaphysicians, diplomatists, keen observers of human nature, and instinctive judges of character.

In the Middle Ages learning was regarded almost exclusively as the handmaid of religion, but in the era of the Renaissance it was looked upon as the companion of everyday life.

One of the civil phenomena of the times of the Republic of Florence,—and one very difficult to understand from our present point of view of educational economy,—was the union in the persons of merchants and artisans, of fine literary taste and scholarly culture, with rare qualifications for political office and keen instincts for commercial enterprise.

Industry, the object of which is ordinarily the supply of necessaries and luxuries, was, from the first, a means of power or at least amelioration in all the regions of human civilisation. It furnished Florentines with a Royal Road to the highest summits of Art, Science, Literature and Discovery. Whether nobles, merchants, craftsmen, or operatives, they have come down to us as philosophers, rhetoricians, astronomers, writers, poets, painters, sculptors, architects, and the rest.

So keen was the interest displayed by all classes in all and everything which made for greater knowledge and ability in the prosecution of their various crafts, that teachers of every degree did not lack attentive audiences. In a letter of Petrarch to Boccaccio he calls the Florentine intellect quick and subtle rather than grave and mature:—"*O ingenia magis æria quam matura!*"

Historians, such as Ricordano Malespini, Dino Compagni, and Giovanni Villani, tell us many interesting stories about the universality of education in Florence in their days. Tailors left their benches to attend the Greek lecture, Blacksmiths laid aside their hammers for the pen of history, Woolcarders found time to study law, Barbers sought the chair of poetry, and Butchers went in for literary research, and so forth. There was "no one," says Dino Compagni, "in Florence who could not read," and "even the donkey-boys sang verses out of Dante!"

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The initiation of the University of Florence was accomplished in the same manner as that which called the Guilds into existence. It was the consequence of the great movement towards association which began to sweep over Europe early in the eleventh century.

By the middle of the thirteenth century the association of learning and industry was fully recognised as a necessity for successful commercial pursuits. Classes were, from time to time, established for higher technical culture, and at length, in 1349, the "*Studio Fiorentino*" was founded with an annual endowment of two

thousand five hundred gold florins,—about £1200 sterling,—Clement VI. granting the Papal Bull for the recognition of the faculties.[1]

The development of the University was rapid:—in 1348 there were only six *scholæ*,—faculties,—under as many teachers, whilst in 1421, there were forty-two Professors, and by 1472, a great number of branch academies and technical schools were thriving amazingly. To the University of Florence belongs the distinction of the foundation of the first chairs of Greek and Poetry in Italy—the former in 1360 and the latter in 1373.

Among the earliest professors was Messere Filelfo, who had, in the latter part of the fourteenth century, as many as four hundred pupils belonging to leading families. In 1360 Giovanni Boccaccio —the first Professor of Poetry—introduced Leontius Pilatus to the *Signoria*, by whom he was appointed first Professor of Greek. His appointment proved to be a great incentive for the Florentines to enter enthusiastically into the study of antique monuments, whence resulted their superiority in the subtilties of the plastic art.

The Statutes of the "*Universitas Scholarum*,"—as the legal title had it,—were submitted to the "*Approbatores Statutarum Artium Communis Florentiæ*"—"The Revisers of Guild Statutes for the Commonwealth of Florence." They were drafted in the same spirit and order as the Statutes of the Guilds, with corresponding offices, byelaws, etc.

Quite young boys were admitted to matriculate, as in the Guilds, and it was possible for a pushing youth to attain his doctorate or degree at the age of seventeen.

Every student was required to be of legitimate birth, and a registered native of Florence. There was no age limit and no class qualification. Each was allowed an honorarium of one gold florin per month,—a beggarly amount in truth,—but medical students, who lived under very strict rules with respect to dissections, etc.,—were privileged to receive an allowance of red wine and spices—"just to keep up their spirits!"[2]

[1] Rashdall, "Universities of Europe," vol. ii. pp. 46-50.
[2] Statuta Populo Florentiæ, p. 74.

A LATIN GRAMMAR MASTER AND HIS PUPILS, FLORENCE. FIFTEENTH CENTURY.

Four licensed merchants were appointed money lenders, or pawnbrokers, for students, who were forbidden to borrow of any other persons; these officials were styled "*Feneratori*"—usurers. No student might carry arms of any kind.

The Rector was elected annually by the votes of the whole of the students, who had attained the age of eighteen, and to him were accorded discretionary powers over the whole University.

Theological students looked to Rome for preferment and benefactions. In a Roll of the University of the year 1404 some students are mentioned as having asked the Pope for, and having obtained, two or three or more benefices—mounting up in their gross revenues to the annual value of three hundred gold florins more or less apiece![1]

Strict sumptuary laws were enacted. Students were forbidden to wear garments of fine or "noble cloth"—as the highly finished Florentine cloth was called; whereas Professors were allowed this rich material. Black was prescribed for ordinary use, but on State occasions scarlet robes were worn ornamented with fur and gold embroideries.

A few only of the distinguished men connected with the University of Florence can be named here:—Leonardo Bruni Aretino, (1369-1441)—the reviver of the study of Greek, Leon Battista Alberti, (1405-1472)—architect and scientist, Angelo Poliziano, (1414-1494)—philosopher and writer, Antonio Minucci, (1431-1487)—reader-in-law and history, Pico della Mirandola, (1461-1494)—theologian and moralist, and Leonardo da Vinci, (1452-1519) engineer and humanist.

English travellers in Tuscany,—and there were many especially in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries,—saw of course very much to astonish them. Two of these, Sir Richard Guylforde and Sir Richard Torkington, were the first to give expression to their impressions in writing. Their "Diaries,"—made in 1506 and 1516 respectively,—were dictated by the spirit of mediævalism. The

[1] Statuta Populo Florentiæ, p. 383.

civilisation of the Renaissance, which they encountered, seems to have been quite beyond their comprehension. The things which struck them most strongly were the manufacture of glass at Murano, and the use, by the Venetians, of basins and ewers in their daily ablutions![1]

In the middle of the fifteenth century two other English travellers went on their separate ways through Italy. They were far and away more intelligent, and more in touch with the movements of the age, than the pair which had preceded them. Great admirers of the Florentines, they eulogise both their characteristics and their customs.

Hoby's "Diary" is full of personal experiences. Everybody with whom he had intercourse charmed him by their gentlemanly manners. He was, later on, induced, solely from this experience, to write his famous translation of "*Il Cortigiano.*" The richness of domestic decoration also impressed him. He slept, he says: "in a chamber hanged with cloth of gold and velvet," whilst on the bed was, "silver work, and the bolsters were of rich silk."[2]

Thomas's narration[3] is of a more ambitious character; he contrasts the universities of Italy, wherein the students were mostly gentlemen, with similar English centres of education, where, as he writes, "there mean men's children are set to school in hope to live upon hired learning." The Italians, he says: "are modest in dress and neat at table and sober in speech." Regarding the division of classes he was impressed by the fact that the leading merchants were, for the most part, gentlemen. "If there are," he writes, "three or four brothers, one or two of them go into a trade; and, in case there is no division of their father's patrimony, then the merchants work for their brothers' benefit, as well as for their own. And inasmuch as their reputation does not suffer by reason of their trade, it follows that there are more wealthy men in Italy than in any other country."

He admired too the skill and comparative wealth of the

[1] Camden Society, 1881. [2] Egerton MSS. 2148. British Museum.
[3] "A Historie of Italie," 1549.

working classes. "I regard," he writes, "the Italian artificers as being the finest and most inventive workmen of all others." He adds, later on,—speaking of the cities of Lombardy in particular,—"there is almost no craftsman's wife that hath not her gown of silk, and her chain of gold!"

With respect to Florence, all classes struck him by their talkativeness, and their manifest desire to appear eloquent. "He is not," he writes, "reputed a man among them that cannot play the orator in his tale, as well in gesture as in word." The Academy was one of the most interesting sights he saw during his visit. He describes how the learned Florentines, from various grades of society, met there,—the Duke amongst them. One, chosen beforehand, would ascend the pulpit and deliver an oration lasting more than one hour. "Never have I heard," writes the narrator, "reader in school, nor preacher in church, handle themselves better."

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After the fall of the Roman Empire the trade routes, with their hostelries and posts for horses, were restored by Charlemagne, and maintained by successive Emperors and their feudatories. Three kinds of establishments were provided by the Imperial Government for their couriers and for foreign expeditions. 1. *Civitates*, in the towns—where numbers of horses were kept for despatch anywhere throughout the State. 2. *Mutationes*, in the villages—where relays of animals were stabled for immediate use. And 3. *Mansiones*, in the country—where men and horses, engaged in long and wearisome journeys, might rest awhile.

Generally commercial travellers from Florence were men travelling in companies, but frequently enough all the members of a family went abroad with father or son, who had received the appointment of resident agent, in a foreign city, of some rich business house.

The interests of the forwarding company were supposed to be the principal object of these journeys, but, as a rule, a good deal

of quite natural self-interest was associated with the expedition, which was never devoid of adventure and romance.

A notable soldier, merchant, diplomatist and man of letters, Buonaccorso Pitti, in his Chronicle,[1] relates how he accomplished his journeys in France and Germany in the year 1395. "Being obliged," he writes, "for the service of the Florentine Republic to undertake a mission to Paris I set out on the 28th of January of the same year. I took the road to Friuli, and spent thirty-five days among the snow with the diggers clearing the glacier, before I was able to pass with ten oxen. I stopped in turn at Constance, Basel, and Langres. . . . I returned by way of Burgundy and Germany. After my arrival at Treviso, I sent on my laden pack horses to Padua, whilst I went on to Venice. I left Venice on the 22nd of March, rested at Mestre, and was at Padua that night. On the morning of the 23rd I set out, with two good riding horses belonging to the Lord of Padua, and, without eating and drinking, I reached Ferrara at eight o'clock that evening. Here I hired some of the Marquis' horses, and went on to San Giorgio, within ten miles of Bologna. In the morning, before sunrise, I arrived at Bologna, and taking two fresh horses I reached Scarperia late at night. I arrived in Rome early in the morning of March 25th.

This distinguished Florentine, who had already, in 1374, been sent as Ambassador to Paris was also something of a financial plunger. He made hazardous investments, gave and accepted loans at high rates of interest, and was addicted to selling for a fall—as we now say. One day he was rolling in riches, and the honoured guest of princes and wealthy merchants; the next, he was out of elbows, and could not raise a few *soldi* for a shave at Burchiello's!

Many of the agents of Florentine commercial houses became famous in the annals of their city no less than in the greater world of Europe. Filippo degli Scolari,—a traveller for the "*Calimala*" in Hungary,—was appointed cashier to the king, and director of

[1] Cronica, (?) 1396.

the currency. He restored the kingdom and was named Governor of Servia and Captain-General. Castruccio Castracani,—a member of the Interminelli banking-house,—who was exiled in his youth for a trivial offence, raised himself as a soldier and a statesman until he was elected Lord of Lucca. Farinata degli Uberti—merchant, soldier and statesman, became the master of

COMMERCIAL TRAVELLER OR AMBASSADOR. FIFTEENTH CENTURY.

Tuscany. Niccolo Acciaiuoli—a member of the noted steel manufacturing house,—ruled the kingdom of Naples as dispenser of Justice.

Along the trade routes were *Ostellieri*—Commercial Inns—at the disposition of the members of the Guilds. The *Ostellani* undertook to lodge and feed Florentine merchants and their agents upon their journeys, and to store their merchandise. These men were under the observation and order of the Guild Consuls and visiting inspectors. They were forbidden, under penalty of losing their licences, to participate in mercantile speculations. They were

established in Paris, Caen, Arles, Perpignan, S. Gilles, and other places in France, and also throughout Flanders and Germany.

Trade routes crossed and re-crossed one another, but all converged upon Florence; and over these her merchants entered into arrangements with their respective rulers. In early days, however, it was a common practice for the hill tribes to swoop down upon pack trains, which conveyed to and fro consignments of merchandise. To safeguard her commercial interests Florence entered into many treaties with her neighbours: Pisa—1171; Lucca —1184; Signori del Mugello, who were robber chieftains—1200, for safe conducts; Bologna—1203, against reprisals; Faenza—1204, with respect to jurisdiction; Perugia—1218, concerning the wool and silk trades; Maremma chieftains—1251, for security of cattle droves, etc. Several treaties were made with Siena and Pisa which treated of territorial as well as commercial policy.

With respect to sea-borne merchandise, the chief ports for the trade of Florence were Ancona, Rimini, and Venice, on the east, and on the west, Pisa, Leghorn, and Genoa.

The commercial relations of Florence grew apace. Goro Dati glories in the fact that,—as he puts it,—"The Florentines were well acquainted with all the holes and corners of the known world."[1] In the fourteenth century more than three hundred agents were despatched every year upon commercial journeys.

Resident Florentines were first appointed Consuls at foreign ports in 1329. The qualification for this important office was simply citizenship, but only such men as might be expected to extend the fame and influence of Florence, by their own personal force of character and aptitude for business, were chosen.

These officers were established in Eastern ports, where each was assisted by a secretary,—with a monthly salary of four gold florins,—two assistants and a native dragoman. Each Consul had three horses at his disposal. He was forbidden to engage in trade, or to act in any way for other States. His salary was paid by rates levied upon merchandise entering and leaving the port.

[1] Goro Dati, "Istoria di Firenze," Lib. iv. p. 56.

In London the income of the Florentine Consul was obtained by percentages upon the *Lettere di Cambio*,—bills of Exchange,—and upon the values of cargoes sold and bought. At Constantinople, Lyons, Bruges, and other principal trading centres similar rates were in force. Florentine merchants and bankers were found in numbers everywhere, in Turkey there were fifty-one houses, in France—twenty-four, at Naples—thirty-seven, and so on.

The first substantial gain to the Republic was the concession of land at various foreign ports for the erection of residences for the Consuls, offices, warehouses, hospitals, and churches. Between the year 1423 and the end of the century resident Florentine Maritime Consuls had been appointed at Alexandria, Naples, Majorca, Constantinople, in Cyprus, and away on the shores of the distant Black Sea, and in Persia, India, and China.

To each of these high officials were attached Chancellors, Purveyors, Interpreters, Inspectors of all kinds, and clerks, and quite a numerous body-guard of men-at-arms. In short, miniature Florences sprang up everywhere, and claimed, and obtained, equal rights, privileges, and honours as were accorded to the mother city. The expenses of these establishments were borne by freight dues on cargoes entering and leaving port. Pisa was the most accessible port in Tuscany, and she was well worth all the sacrifices which the wars with her brave and industrious inhabitants cost the men of Florence. She had a Consul all to herself, who ranked as the chief magistrate of a great maritime Guild, or University, in connection with the "*Calimala*" merchants of the capital city. The bulk of the raw wool imported by the Woollen Manufacturers, and the foreign cloth consigned to the "*Calimala*," was landed on her quays, and despatched thence to Florence, or to the several depots established at Prato, Empoli, Volterra, and Poggibonsi.

It is impossible to say exactly when the Florentine merchants and venturers first turned their attention to the acquisition of maritime facilities. Probably the successes of the Pisans, the

Genoese, and the Venetians, opened their eyes to the possibilities before them. Naturally the three cities did all they could to impede the rivalry of their inland sister, and probably, had not their own internal dissensions played such an important part in their commercial prosperity, they would have succeeded in hampering her ambitions.

Apparently the first actual step taken by Florence to acquire seaboard rights was in 1254, when Pisa granted free import and export to Florentine merchandise. The treaty of that year was the ground-work of the many disputes between the rival cities which led to the ultimate downfall of Pisa. For many a long year however Florentine merchants were content to make use, by hire, of the ships of maritime States.

Rosso Bazzaccari, a ship-master of Pisa, in 1279, lent his fine new vessel the *San Pietro* to Nasico Nassi,—a merchant of Florence,—to transport from Porto Pisano two hundred mule loads of goods to Palermo.[1]

The power of Florence was so great in 1285 that the people of Pisa, wishing to maintain good relations, sent an embassy to the Florentine Government. The ambassadors took with them great opaque glass bottles of what purported to be rich white Vernacera wine by way of presents; but they were found to be full of gold florins![2]

Many treaties were made with Pisa for the benefit of Florentine transport trade. These were all more or less favourable, although the Pisans did not hesitate to tax Florentine goods when and how it suited them. In 1329 Florence was placed upon the same footing as Pisa, and her merchandise was relieved of all restrictions. In 1356 the port of Talamone was acquired from the Sienese, in consequence of Pisa's reversion to taxation, and the Florentine merchants hired fourteen war galleys to protect their trade from the Genoese and Pisans. The capture of Pisa in 1406 gave Florence possession of the whole seaboard of Tuscany.

Two other ports were acquired by Florence in the early part

[1] Archivio di Pisa, Atti Pubblichi. [2] Villani, vii. 97.

of the fifteenth century:—Porto di Venere, a small harbour in the Gulf of Genoa, in 1411, for the sum of eight thousand four hundred gold florins—as a check to Genoese trade; and Livorno—Leghorn—in 1421 for one hundred thousand gold florins.

In 1421 *I Sei Consoli del Mare*—Six Maritime Consuls—were elected over and above the trade Consuls already established at Pisa. All six resided at Pisa till 1426, when three were stationed in Florence. Their duties were in the main similar to those of the Consuls of the Guilds. In fact the sea and its navigation were annexed to the Republic of Florence and were enrolled among her *Arti!*

The three Consuls at Pisa were occupied mainly as follows:—1. To watch all the commerce of the Port. 2. To encourage traders and navigators to use that Port. 3. To prevent contraband and to protect Florentine merchandise. 4. To prepare the way for commercial treaties with other cities and states. 5. To examine all bills of lading and ships' business papers. 6. To inspect the crews, and supervise the wages paid out. 7. To inspect the vessels, and undertake repairs. 8. To keep accurate ledger accounts, etc. etc.

The three Consuls resident in Florence were required:—1. To receive and file reports from Pisa. 2. To furnish every sort of shipping information, which they were required to post in the loggia of the Mercato Nuovo and in other public places. 3. To approve the appointment, or the reverse, of all men named for foreign consulates. 4. To receive complaints and suits in respect of marine matters, and to adjudicate thereupon. 5. To make representations to the Council of State in cases requiring official interference, etc. etc.

The Sea Consuls settled the number of the crew of each vessel and its armament, and appointed the officers; but relatives of the Consuls could not be enrolled. Vessels taking the Eastern route sailed usually in September, those to the west in February. Fifteen days before their departure public notice was posted. Merchants, skippers, and crew, were permitted to reside at Pisa

fifteen days before departure and ten days after arrival, but on no account for a longer period.

Contracts with seafaring-men were drawn up by the Maritime Consuls. Sometimes they loaned galleys at a monthly, or yearly, rental, reserving certain rights and extorting certain conditions. For example, in 1429, to Domenico Dolfini a galleon was consigned for five years, on condition that he made five voyages annually, freighted his vessel with gold, silver, wax, and some thousand pieces of Florentine made cloth, and discharged his cargoes only at Porto Pisano.

Both at Pisa and in Florence the Maritime Consuls were charged with numberless responsibilities outside their technical authority. For example, at Pisa, the three Consuls performed the functions of the old city magistrates, and had the superintendence of the forests, fisheries, etc., in the neighbourhood of the city, and of the export of native grown corn, together with the duties of the drainage and cultivation of the land.

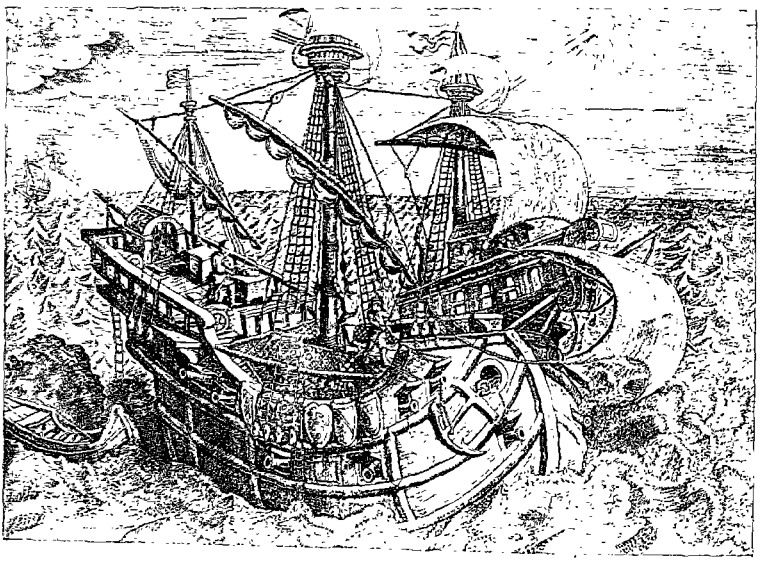
The "*Arte del Mare*" was an immediate and immense success. In the year of its initiation six guardships were completed in the Port of Livorno—which had been declared a free port for Florentine merchandise. Through her Maritime Consuls Florence encouraged foreign workmen to settle at Pisa and Livorno, and at her minor ports, who were masters of shipbuilding. To each man was granted a gold florin a month for the space of two years with free quarters for ten years. Shipwrights and caulkers were exempt from all taxes for a period of twenty years.

Four broad beamed galleons—*Galee di Mercato*, and six shallow bottoms—*Fuste*, were put on the stocks forthwith, and one of each was launched month by month. The timber came from the Forests of Cerbaie in Tuscany, which were declared State property, in 1427, and the Mugnone saw-mills were erected at the public expense.

The cost of this first Florentine mercantile fleet was charged upon the revenues of the *Corte di Mercanzia*,—Tribunal or Chamber of Commerce,—whereof one hundred thousand gold florins were set

apart each month. The command of the squadron was given to Andrea Gargiolli, a citizen and merchant of Florence, and he was appointed also Superintendent of Marine at Pisa.

Direct sea-borne commercial relations with England seem to have existed since 1329, and in 1385 Sir John Hawkwood was sent as ambassador to Florence to negotiate a Treaty of Commerce; but not until the year 1441 did the Republic despatch a Florentine



A "GALEE DE MERCATO." A MERCHANT VESSEL, SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

built and manned fleet to English ports. Ten galleons sailed that year to England and ten to Barbary, whilst the ensign of "The Florentine Lily" flew in every port in Europe and the East.

Freights by other than Florentine galleons were subjected to a rigid tariff, which had a tendency to rise with the increase of trade. In 1457 the tax upon each piece of foreign cloth delivered at Porto Pisano, amounted to one gold florin, but some years after the large sum of sixty gold florins was extorted.

By the year 1458 quite a considerable fleet of armed vessels was collected at the mouth of the Arno, to convoy the galleons of

commerce. The earliest trade routes by sea were,—eastward, Tunis, Alexandria, Cyprus, Jaffa, and Constantinople, westward, Sicily, Majorca, Barcelona, Marseilles, Algiers. Certain vessels traded direct with British and Flemish ports. The voyages were accurately timed, and so regulated that a serviceable connection was maintained between all ships at sea. Porto Pisano was the ultimate rendezvous of all freight vessels.

The first private merchant ships were built in 1480, and to their owners were conceded the rights hitherto held by the six Maritime Consuls. They were permitted to sail when and how they liked, and to load whatever freight their owners, or skippers, desired; but all parties interested in the enterprise were placed under the same conditions as had obtained previously. Beyond this owners paid toll for the use of the piers, harbours, and warehouses.

By the end of the fifteenth century the merchant navy of Florence numbered eleven great and fifteen small galleons—all in full commission, and her special galleon-florin,—coined in 1422,—at the instance of Taddeo Cenni, a Florentine merchant at Venice, was in free circulation at high exchange. In short the "*Arte del Mare*," "the Guild of the Sea," was the parent of the present day syndicate of Lloyds!

The invention of the compass did very much to simplify the trade routes by sea—voyages were shortened, coasting pirates were eluded, and ports of call became unnecessary.

The oversea commerce of the Renaissance and its development led to the world's supremacy of Florence in material prosperity and social progress. Goro Dati, writing about this ascendancy, valued the stationary funds of the Republic in his day—the middle of the fourteenth century—at twenty million gold florins.[1]

. . . . . .

What is now called International Law was entirely unknown in old Florence and her borders. Nothing appeared to those busy traders more reasonable than to shut the door against neighbours

[1] Goro Dati, "Istoria di Firenze," c. viii. pp. 129-131.

who would not submit to their terms, and to impose taxes upon all foreign products. Hence the treaties with Siena, Volterra, Pisa, Genoa, Lucca, Arezzo, and other communes and cities, were dictated rather from commercial than from political motives.

Contracts of assurance were usually made out for all consignments whether of goods or bullion. They were aimed against three chief contingencies—accidents by land, risks by sea, and depredations of light-fingered gentry in general. The premiums paid by Florentine merchants ranged from six to fifteen per cent. of the declared value of the goods.[1]

The question of reprisals or retaliation was always very important in the policy of the Florentine merchants. The origin of the system goes far back to the days of Frederic II. In 1239 the Podesta of Pisa, having failed to forward to the Vicar of the Empire, Gebhard d'Arnstein, the sum of nearly five thousand pounds due to Count Ridolfo di Capraja, the latter received authority and license to "make distraint for that sum upon the goods and persons of the Pisans." The custom grew apace, until in 1298 the merchants of Florence put reprisals into force against Perugia—for the sum of six hundred *lire*, Fano—for two thousand, Spoleto—for two hundred and fifty, Pisa—for fifty-five, and Forli —for fourteen hundred. Each of these towns had borrowed money from Florentines, or had distrained merchandise on its way to or from Florence. Viterbo, Venice, and Padua came in for similar treatment.[2]

Against Sinola, where, in 1297, a sumpter-mule laden with fine Florentine cloth had been stolen, the Podesta, with the advice of the Consuls of the Seven Greater Guilds, accorded a sum of two-hundred and forty gold florins, for the value of the goods, two hundred for damage, and forty for expenses attached to the suit. The same year the Pisans were adjudged a fine of eight hundred *lire* against the pillage of a ship laden with corn.

Under date August 14, 1329, Ser Nerio Mici di Bibbiena com-

[1] G. A. L. Cibrario, "Della Economia Politica del Medio Evo," vol. ii. p. 244.
[2] Provvisione ix. 174, 185, 208, etc.

plained to the Officials of the *Mercanzia* that he had suffered highway-robbery, in the Borgo Ghiaceti. He asserted that he cried out, "*Accor' uomo! Accor' uomo!*"—"Help!—Help!"—but that no one came to his assistance. Then he tabled a list of the articles of which he had been despoiled:—a wreath of gold and silver, four fine mitre ornaments, six fine linen mitres, three dozen broad decorated belts, two dozen embroidered filagree belts, three dozen black leather belts, three dozen belts of plaited hair, two dozen pairs of breeches, two dozen San Ghalgano belts, twenty yards of imitation *Piste*,—woollen cloth,—two pairs of tailor's scissors, two ounces of crushed silver, twelve feet embroidery in fine gold, eighty measures of silver, one red fur lining for a man's cloak, one knife chest with four knifes, three dozen fine leathern pouches, six dozen plain pouches, one purse wrought in gold, and very many other articles of various kinds. The unfortunate man then entered a legal process, and claim for damage, against two unknown inhabitants of Borgo Ghiaceti.[1]

With respect to the levying of retaliations upon cities and towns outside Tuscany, the difficulties were, naturally, very great. It frequently taxed, to the utmost, the patience and the ingenuity of her merchants and their agents to avoid a resort to arms. Indeed many of the minor military expeditions, of which the Florentines were so lavishly fond, were due to this question and its solution.

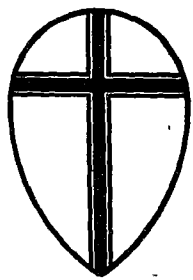
Questions of retaliation were constantly cropping up between Florence and her great rivals Genoa and Venice, and, as a rule, they were settled to the advantage of the tactful and resourceful men who led her destiny. With respect to foreign nations, the immense wealth and influence of the Florentine merchants, and the heavy monetary responsibilities incurred by rulers and leading men with Florentine bankers, had undeniable force in the settling of trade disputes.

All questions of retaliation or reciprocity were submitted to a

[1] Dr Davidssohn, "Forschungen zür Älteren Geschichte von Florenz," p. 190.

Tribunal sitting in Florence, composed of a Judge from the establishment of the Podesta, and one from that of the Captain of the People, and their findings were approved, or not, by the Priors and their assessors. As head of the "Tuscan League of Cities," Florence held a predominant place, and her law was smartly laid down for the acceptance of her allies.

In later days such matters came before the Tribunal of the *Mercanzia* with the assistance of the three resident Maritime Consuls and delegates from the interested states or cities.



*Stemma del Popolo di Firenze.*
A red cross upon a white field.

ARMS OF THE MERCANZIA—FLORENTINE LILY ON BALE OF CLOTH

[See page 87]

## CHAPTER II

## GENERAL HISTORY OF THE GUILDS

I. ORIGIN.—*Collegia Opificum et Artificium.* Community of interest. Mutual protection. Lothair. First Florentine Consuls. *Potente, Grasso, Minuto.* Ancient families. *Consorterie*, or "Society of Towers." *Compagnie*, or "Trade Corporations." Early notices of Trades.

II. DEVELOPMENT.—*Buonuomini*, or Trade Consuls of Guilds. The council of the "Heads" or "Priors" of the Seven Greater Guilds. First List of Guilds—seven Greater—fourteen Lesser. *Podesta*—Guido Novelli. *Gonfalonieri.* Standard Bearers. Military element. Charles of Anjou. Five Intermediate Guilds. Struggles between Capital and Labour. Giano della Bella. Second List of Guilds—twelve Greater, nine Lesser. "Defender of the Guilds." Freedom of industry. The "*Ordinamenti della Giustizia.*" A Code of Guild Statutes. Financial Position of the Guilds. Duke of Athens. "*Le Potenze.*" The "*Parte Guelfa.*" The "*Ciompi*" Rising. Michele Lando. Three Workmen's Guilds—*Artieri e operai.* Numberless minor trade associations. Third List of Guilds. Four Universities of Trades under the Medici. Shrinkage and decay.

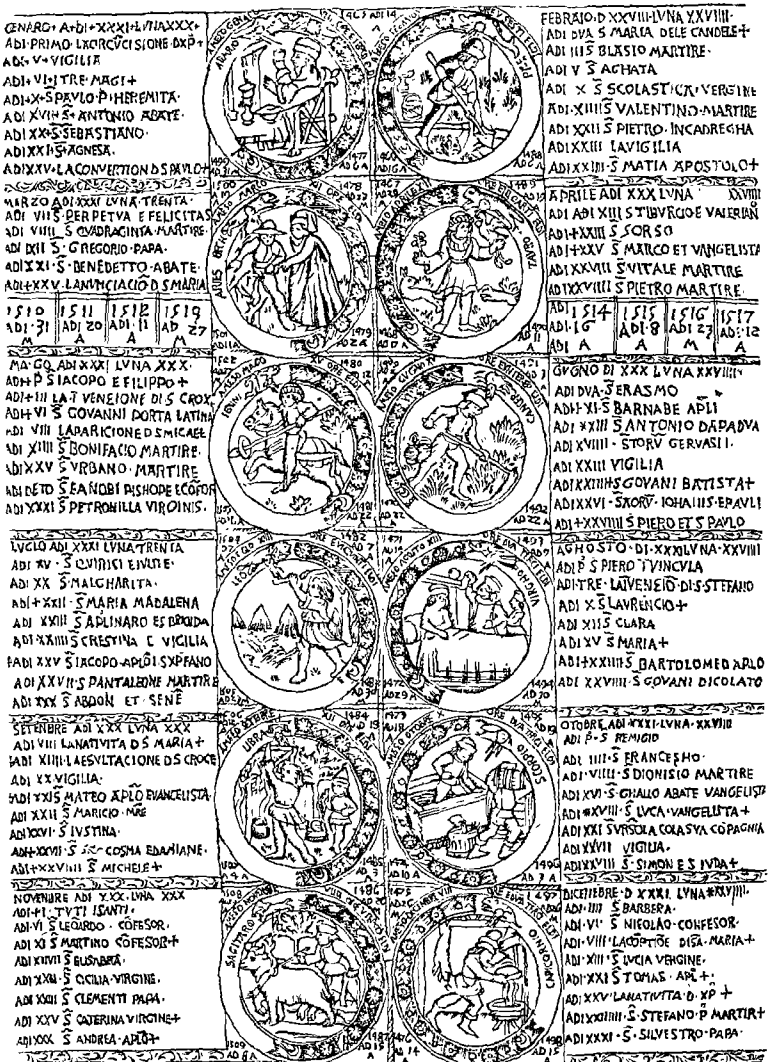
III. CONSTITUTION.—Compulsory Guild membership. *Scioperati!* Conditions and Rules. Apprenticeship. Women eligible. Officers. Differences and disputes. Emigration of Artisans. Pains and Penalties. Sundry Prohibitions. Hours of work. Public clocks.

THE Origin of the Florentine Guilds has been rightly traced to the Corporations of Merchants and Artisans, which existed in Rome under Numa Pompilius. They were called "*Collegia*" or "*Corpora Opificum et Artificium.*"

These "Colleges," which by their constitutions could be mobilised for military purposes, also bore the name of "*Scholæ*"—"Schools" or "Professions." In times of peace they were styled "*Scholæ Artium*," but in war they were enrolled as "*Scholæ Militum.*"[1]

Men of like age, instincts, tastes, and occupations forgathered in the several "*Scholæ*," which safeguarded their common interests and looked after their morals and general well-being. Each

[1] Dr Giuseppe Alberti, "Arti e Mestieri," Milano 1888, chap. i.




A CALENDAR. With Rondels of monthly occupations—calculated for the Feast of Easter from 1465 to 1517.

"*Schola*" was furnished with a staff of duly qualified and legally appointed teachers, who instructed young men and boys in the duties and responsibilities of craftsmanship. Under the supreme authority of the State each "*Schola*" or "*Collegium*" was governed by its own officers chosen from among, and by, its admitted members, the chief of whom were designated "Consuls."

For a lengthy period the "*Scholæ*" flourished exceedingly, and were productive of immense benefit to all classes. From the fall of the Roman Empire, however, until well into the ninth century, the "*Scholæ*" seem to have suspended their benevolent operations: anyhow very little is heard of them or their members. Ceaseless feuds and devastating wars scattered far and wide merchants and artisans alike. The lamp of industry and the torch of commerce were extinguished. The land was laid bare, cities and towns were destroyed, or became camps of mercenary soldiery.

Still some of the industries and enterprises which the "*Scholæ*" had fostered were carried on fitfully and uncertainly in families, or by individuals working alone, without regular organisation. When the stress of adversity became less severe, and security of life and property were more assured, traditions, which had been handed down in secret from father to son, again became formularies.

Community of interest—the needs of mutual defence, and the advantages of co-operation, once more asserted themselves. Here and there sprang up revivals of something of the economy of the old Roman "*Collegia.*" This was the condition of things in Italy when, in 825, the Emperor Lothair issued his "*Constitutiones Olonenses*," wherein eight cities and towns of northern Italy were named as suitable centres of population for the establishment of new "*Collegia*" or "*Scholæ.*"

These were Bologna, Cremona, Florence, Ivrea, Milan, Padua, Turin, and Venice. The "*Scholæ*" in each place bore a different designation, each indicative of the special industrial economies of the several cities. For example:—at Bologna—"*Compagnie*," at Florence—"*Capitudini*" or "*Arti*," at Padua—"*Fragili*," at Venice —"*Consorti*" or "*Matricole*"; whilst Rome retained the original

style of "*Collegium*" or "*Universitas.*" It is not a little interesting to note that in the case of Florence, the title "*Capitudini*,"—Heads of Families, exactly expresses her political constitution, whilst the designation "*Arti*" indicates her industrial characteristics.

Apparently the Florentines were somewhat slow in availing themselves of the provisions of Lothair's "*Constitutiones.*" Rome had Consuls at the head of her industries in 901, Ravenna in 990,—where the Corporations of Butchers, Fishermen, Merchants and others were regularly organised,—and Ferrara in 1015. Florence made no distinct sign until the first year of the twelfth century. For nearly three hundred years she had been going through an almost countless succession of petty strifes and class jealousies until at length we find her people in two camps, *Grandi*—the nobles and *Popolani*—the traders.

These nobles were the lineal descendants of the old Teuton lords, who, after playing the rôle of robber-captains, made overtures to the traders, and were by them received as leaders of punitive and aggressive expeditions against raiders and their strongholds. As early as 1081 a joint expedition against bands of robbers, which infested the territory of Florence, and despoiled the trains of pack mules passing to and fro, proved the wisdom of united action between noble and trader.[1]

Some of these *Grandi*, such as the Uberti, the Donati, the Alberti, the Caponsacchi, the Gherardi, the Lamberti, and the Ughi united the life of landed proprietors with the occupation of city magnates.[2]

Many noble families were also allowed a ruling influence in the affairs of the trade associations, and not a few scions of nobility sought admission as active agents in commercial pursuits.[3] These nobles laid aside their titles, and even changed their names that their absorption into the industrial life of the Commune might be

[1] F. T. Perrens, "Histoire de Florence," vol. i. p. 190.
[2] P. Villari, "Two Centuries of Florentine History," vol. i. p. 93.
[3] S. Ammirato, "Dell' Istorie Fiorentine," Lib. iii. pp. 288-290.

complete. The Tornaquinci, Popoleschi, Tornabuoni, Giachiotti, Cavalcanti, Malatesta, and Ciampoli were among the *Grandi* who thus threw in their lot with the *Popolani.* Speaking of the early noble families associated with the trade of Florence Dante says :—

> "Already Caponsacco had descended
> To the market from Fiesole : and Guida
> And Infangato were good citizens." [1]

In this way the division of the population into two parts was modified, and we find Florence arranged in three classes: 1. *Potente*—the ruling-class, 2. *Grasso*—the middle-class, and *Minuto* —the working-class.

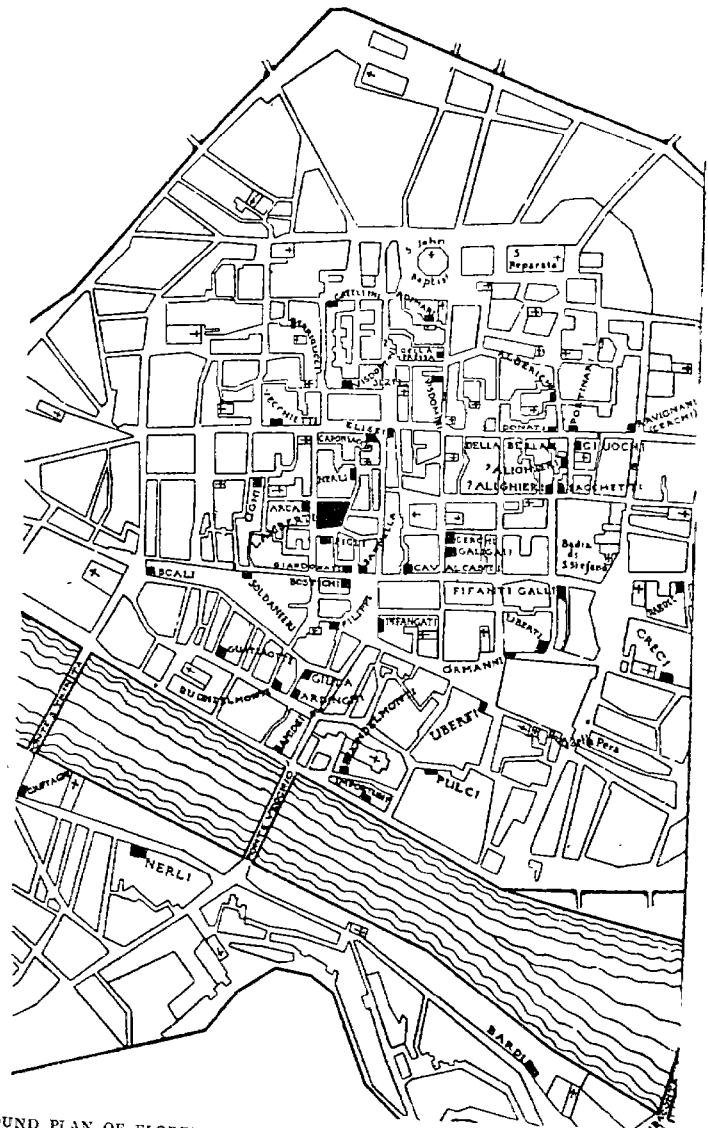
The population of Florence, her trade, and her fame, increased by leaps and bounds ; but along with her prosperity a dangerous rivalry was developed between the noble families and their retainers, and the merchants and their workpeople. The latter, whilst readily admitting nobles into their trading and industrial societies, resented the *Grandi* claims to pre-eminence in the control of public affairs.

Usurpation of power, on one hand, was met by encroachment of privilege, on the other. A spirit of rancour was engendered which for many generations embittered the conditions of Florentine life. The breach between the two extreme parties in the Commune widened gradually, and the influence of the middle-class was ineffectual to bridge the gulf.

The nobles formed themselves into defensive organisations under the designation of *Consorterie*—or *Societa delle Torre*— Society of the Towers. Each *Consorteria* consisted of a noble family,—or a union of noble families,—their households and dependants. They built embattled palaces, which served them as residences in times of peace, and as fortresses in times of popular tumult: "*Famiglie di Torre e Loggie*" became a common expression for families of distinction.

Early in the thirteenth century there were upwards of seventy

[1] "Paradiso," canto xvi. 121-123.




GROUND PLAN OF FLORENCE IN THE THIRTEENTH AND FOURTEENTH CENTURIES
WITH THE NAMES OF THE PRINCIPAL FAMILIES

"Towers," and twenty of them had "Loggie," or arcades, for festivities and show. Some of them rose to a height of 270 feet, but in 1250 they were all pulled down to a height of fifty feet in compliance with the demand of the *Popolani*. It is a thousand pities that no pictured representation of Florence and her Towers has been preserved; probably she presented a far more imposing appearance than even San Gimignano does to-day.

Of the noble families who as early as 1186 had Towers within the city boundaries were the Uberti, Malespini, Amidei, Buondelmonti, Donati, Adimari, Pazzi, Tosinghi, Ubaldini, Caponsacchi, Amieri, Nerli, Vecchietti, Tornaquinci, Soldanieri, Abati, and Infangati.

To counteract the power of the nobles the traders ranged themselves in *Compagnie*—Companies or Corporations; each one being made up of families of merchants engaged in similar industries, and their workpeople. These *Compagnie* were not only associations, with fixed rules and regulations for the prosecution of the trades, but they were also bands of men, trained in the art of self-defence, and quite able to give a good account of themselves in days of conflict.

Researches into the Archives of Florence[1] reveal the existence of the following traders and trades during the eleventh and twelfth centuries:—

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 934. | "Amalpertus — diaconus et medico" | Minister and doctor. |
| 1021. | "Florentius—paliarius" | Straw-seller. |
| 1028. | "Ursus—pistor" | Baker. |
| 1031. | "Martinus—caballarius" | Horse-jobber. |
| 1032. | "Casa Florentii Sarti" | Tailor's shop. |
| 1038. | "Johannis, qui tornario vocatus est" | Turner. |
| „ | "Olivus—faber" | Smith. |
| 1050. | "Setherimus—pellicarius" | Skinner. |
| 1070. | "Paganus, qui vocatur vinadro" | Wine-merchant. |

[1] Dr Davidssohn, "Forschungen zur Alteren Geschichte von Florenz."

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1073. | "Aezo—sellarius" | Saddler. |
| 1076. | "Barone—scutarius" | Shield-maker. |
| 1084. | "Bonus f. Johannes baro" (for "barullo") | Hawker. |
| 1087. | "*Rusticus—Calzolarius*" | Shoemaker. |
| „ | 'Ildebrandus q. Petri qui fuit vocatur marmorajo" | Stonemason. |
| 1089. | " . . . —tegularii" | Tilers. |
| 1090. | "Johannes f. Rodolfo, pugnitore" | Dagger-maker. |
| 1091. | "Benzolus—pentelarius" | Potter. |
| 1094. | " . . . . Curtis di Marmorio" | Stone-sculptor. |
| 1095. | "Vivenzo—aurifex" | Goldsmith. |
| 1096. | "Petrus—tintore" | Dyer. |
| 1098. | "Paganuccio—galligario" | Tanner. |
| 1101. | "Sichelmus—stafarius" | Stirrup-maker. |
| 1104. | "Bonizo—olearius" | Oil-merchant. |
| 1108. | "Florentius—clavajolus" | Lock-smith. |
| 1110. | "Martinus—beccadore" | Butcher. |
| 1113. | "Johannes—zocolarius" | Wooden-shoe maker. |
| 1128 | "Florentius—spaliarius | Armourer. |
| 1132. | "Beriguallo f.—barlittario" | Cooper. |
| 1136. | "Scartone—pettinario" | Woollen-comb maker. |
| 1139. | "Lupaccia—lo tricco" | Fruit and vegetable seller. |
| 1141. | "Bernerius—Campanarius" | Bell-founder. |
| 1146. | "Johannes(faber)f.—Brictonis" | Knife-maker. |
| „ | "Uguicione—calderarius" | Copper-smith. |
| 1147. | "Bernardus—mugnarius" | Miller. |
| 1148. | "Petrus f. Petri—pelliparius" | Clothpresser. |
| 1158. | "Marcellus—tabernarius" | Tavern-keeper. |
| 1184. | "Ildebrandus—catularius" | Paper-maker. |
| 1188. | "Arigito—piezicario" | Victualler. |
| 1191. | "Ugolinus—granario" | Corn chandler. |
| „ | "Martinus—pignolajuo" | Maker of fine linen. |
| 1193. | "Guerius—tonditor" | Fleece-shearer. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1195. | "Martinellus—orciolarius" | Dealer in glazed-pots. |
| 1198. | "Bartholus—speciale" | Apothecary. |
| 1199. | "Reinaldus—pancone" | Carpenter's-bench and Loom-maker. |
| 1205. | "Perinus—corregiarius" | Strap-maker. |
| 1207. | "Guillelmus—barbiere" | Barber. |
| 1209. | "Cice—pergamenarius" | Parchment-dresser. |
| 1211. | "Ristoro f. Pieri—buorsajo" | Purse-maker. |
| „ | "Servodeo—osste" | Inn-keeper. |
| „ | "Ispenello—kasciajulo" | Cheese-merchant. |
| „ | "Albizi di Fferrare—pezzaio di Lung' Arno" | Ragseller. |

. . . . . .

Ammirato gives an account of how the city was governed in 1204,[1] and the order of precedence for the magistrates. At the head were two Consuls—called the Military Consuls,—precursors of the *Podesta* and *Capitano del Popolo*,—then three Priors of the three principal Guilds,—"*Calimala*," "Wool," and "Bankers,"—next six Senators of the City, one Officer of Justice, twelve "*Buonuomini*," "Good Men"—two representing the people of each *sestiere*,—and lastly, Special and General Councils of influential citizens,—the latter including all the above officials with the exception of the members of the Special Council. In addition six Syndics or Inspectors were appointed by the three Priors—one for each *sestiere*, who reported to them daily all that passed—public and private—in their several quarters.

This magistracy exhibits the immense power of control in public business,—both commercial and political,—exercised by the representatives of the Guilds, for the six Senators of the city were appointed—one by each of the six Greater Trades,—in fact they were the Consuls of the Guilds.

The year 1204 is also memorable for a treaty between Florence and Siena, which, whilst safeguarding the liberties of the Sienese, vastly increased the renown and the fortune of the Florentines.

[1] Ammirato, Lib. i. pp. 62-67.

This document is the first which bears the signatures of the Priors of the Trades or Guilds.

In the Government of Florence several sub-councils bore their part. One of these,—the third in dignity and authority,—was the "*Consiglio delle Capitudini delle Sette Arti Maggiori*"—the "Council of the Heads of the Seven Greater Guilds." This Council was summoned whenever new taxes had to be levied, and in all matters which concerned the trade and progress of the city.

In 1236 Thirty-six *Buonuomini* assembled in council at the residence of the Consuls of the "*Calimala*" merchants, by special ordinance, to determine the styles and precedence of the principal trade-corporations working in Florence. They placed them in two divisions which they called "Greater" and "Lesser Guilds," respectively—accentuating thus the distinction between the *popolo grasso* and the *popolo minuto*. In the former category they arranged in the following order:—1. "*Giudici e Notai*"—Judges and Notaries; 2. *Mercatanti o Arte di Calimala*—Merchants of the "*Calimala*"; 3. "*Cambio*"—Changers of Money; 4. "*Lana*"—Woollen-Manufacturers; 5. "*Seta*," Silk-Manufacturers; 6. "*Medici e Speziali*"—Doctors and Apothecaries; 7. "*Pellicciai e Vaiai*"—Skinners and Furriers.

In the second category were placed the following Crafts:—1. "*Beccai*"—Butchers; 2. "*Calzolai*"—Shoe-makers; 3. "*Fabbri*"—Black-smiths; 4. "*Cuoiai e Caligai*"—Leather-dressers and Tanners; 5. "*Muratori e Scarpellini*"—Builders and Stone-masons; 6. "*Vinattieri*"—Wine-merchants; 7. "*Fornai*"—Bakers; 8. "*Oliandoli e Pizzicagnoli*"—Olive-oil merchants and Provision-dealers; 9. "*Linaiuoli*—Linen-manufacturers; 10. "*Chiavaiuoli*—Lock-smiths; 11. "*Corazzai e Spadai*"—Armourers and Sword-makers; 12. "*Coreggiai*"—Harness-makers and Saddlers; 13. "*Legnaiuoli*"—Carpenters; and 14. "*Albergatori*"—Inn-keepers.

The year 1266 was a most important one in the annals of the Guilds. Count Guido Novelli, who had been *Podesta* for two years in succession, and was virtually absolute master of Florence, invited two members of a quasi-religious Order in Bologna, to follow

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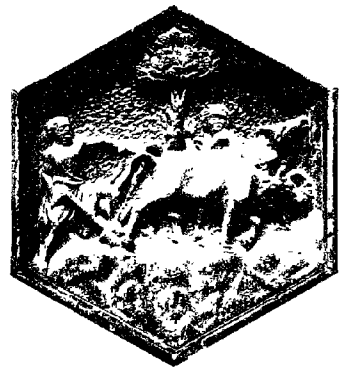

2

3

4

5

GIOTTO'S "HISTORY OF LABOUR."—CAMPANILE PANELS

1. BOATMEN OF THE ARNO
2. PLOUGHING ON THE CONTADO
3. WEAVING WOOL
4. BLACK-SMITHING
5. DOCTOR AND POTTERY

him in the Chief Magistracy. The Order, or Club—for such it really was,—was called "*Fratelli della Santa Maria Vergine*"; but, in jest, "*Capponi di Chinto*"—"Crowing cocks"! Its members were young men of good family of the degree of knight, who, through the gaiety and luxury of their lives, were popularly known as *Frati Gaudenti*—Jolly-Fellows!

The two "Frati" in question were Roderigo degli Andalo, and Catalamo de' Malavolti,—the former a Ghibelline and the latter a Guelph.[1]

The new *Podestas* were duly installed in the Badia—the official residence of the Head of the State. To assist them a Council of Thirty-six *Buonuomini* was chosen by Novelli, composed of Merchants and Artisans in equal numbers, and one half Ghibellines and one half Guelphs.

This Council met daily in the Offices of the "*Calimala*" Merchants to give counsel to the *Podestas* to deliberate for the common good, and to provide for the expenses of the Government of the Republic. The business that first engrossed their attention was the reorganisation of the Guilds. Two aims were kept in view; First, their greater efficiency in industrial and commercial enterprise, and, Secondly, their adaptation to the warlike circumstances of the times.

The Council drew up a list of the six more important Corporations, placing the professional "Guild of Judges and Notaries" at the head, as in 1236. After a careful and detailed examination of all existent regulations and provisions,—the outcome of traditions and customs,—the Council drafted a tentative Constitution generally suitable for the several Guilds.

In each Guild were appointed three chief officers:—(1), "*Consul*"—as the representative of the Guild in the supreme Government of the Republic; (2), "*Capitudo*,"—Head or Master, —as the controller of the internal affairs of each Guild; (3), "*Gonfaloniere*,"—Standard-bearer or Leader,—as the director of civil functions and military affairs.

[1] Villani, vii. 13.

The last appointment was an absolute novelty, and it indicated an important development of the political character of the Guilds, no less than a new departure in the Government of the Republic. To each "*Gonfaloniere*" was committed the care of a Standard, or Banner, upon which was emblazoned armorial bearings there and then assigned to each Guild, the free use of the same being allowed to the craftsmen, who thus became bands of armed citizens, to be called to their Standards when occasion required. "These Standards, Banners, and Ensigns," says G. Villani, "were ordered to the intent that if any one of the city rose with force of arms, the members and associates of each armed Company or Band, might under their *Gonfalon* stand for the defence of the people and Commonwealth."[1]

These Bands were called "Companies of Militia," which in the city numbered twenty and in the *Contado* ten to twenty. According to the same authority, there were in the year 1338 twenty-five thousand men between the ages of sixteen and seventy capable of bearing arms.

Documents[2] of the year 1266 prove conclusively that the policy which dictated, and brought to a successful issue, the arrangement of the Guilds in that year, was strongly opposed by the Ghibelline *Podesta*, acting in sympathy with the *Grandi*. But the popular movement was too strong for him, and he had not only to yield, but to smooth the way for an alliance with the Pope.

The new constitution of the Guilds was distinctly democratic in character, and raised violent opposition from the aristocratic party in the State, who ultimately succeeded in sweeping away the Thirty-six *Buonuomini*, and restoring the ascendency of the Ghibelline nobles.

King Charles of Anjou, who in 1268 usurped the office of *Podesta*, revived the Guelphic influence. He recalled the "Thirty-six," but appointed a sort of private advisory Council of twelve *Grandi*. To allay popular feeling against reactionary government, Charles accepted a Council of One Hundred, taken

[1] Villani, xi. 92.

[2] Archivio Fiorentino, Atti Pubblichi, 1259-75.

exclusively from the *Popolani*, to assist his Privy Council. At the same time the Consuls of the Seven Greater Guilds were constituted a Court of Final Appeal in all causes, political and commercial.

The *Popolo Minuto*,—the members of the Lesser Guilds,—were entirely ignored, and consequently a vast political and social antagonism was called into existence, which, later on, broke out in destructive revolution.

Below the *Popolo Minuto*,—which consisted really of only those members of the Lesser Guilds who had received the franchise,—was the great body of the population,—the *Ciompi*, or working classes,—"Wooden Shoes," as they were called derisively, with no civic rights of any kind. They were denied the privilege of free association, in Companies, Corporations, and Craft Guilds, and the conditions of labour were nearly as hard as had been those of the early inhabitants of Florence, under the system of the old Lombard lords.

Times however were changing, and there was an ever rising ambition among the lowest classes to attain at all events the freedom of the franchise, and the power of trade-association, if not the right to a share in the government of the Republic. Forces were slumbering which needed very little awakening, and that awakening was not far off.

. . . . . .

Gradually, but surely, the Lesser Guilds were rising in importance, not only on account of the number of their members and the social status which their increased wealth gave them, but because of the investment of money which members of the Greater Guilds effected in the various minor Crafts.

What was really a levelling-up of classes was achieved in 1280, when five of the Lesser Guilds had attained such influential positions, that they were publicly acknowledged as a group apart from the other nine, and were designated *Arti Mediani*, "The Intermediate Guilds." They were in order of importance as follows:—

1. "*Beccai.*" Butchers—wholesale and retail.

2. "*Calzolai.*" Shoe-makers and leather workers.

3. "*Fabbri.*" Smiths and workers in metals.

4. "*Maestri di Pietre e di Legnami.*" Master-masons of stone and wood.

5. "*Rigattieri.*" Retail-cloth and Linen-merchants.

The Five Intermediate Guilds—to whose chief officers the distinction of Consul had not yet been accorded,—were often invited to join the deliberations of the Consuls of the Seven Greater Guilds on equal terms. Such occasions were April, 1285, September, 1287, July, 1293 and January, 1297.[1]

At the election of Priors in 1293,—among whom was Giano della Bella,—along with well known members of the families of Albizzi, Gualterotti, and Peruzzi there spoke Lapo Salterelli—a Judge, —and Dino Pecora—a butcher. These associated consultations were usually held in the Baptistery of San Giovanni, and were presided over by the Podesta and by the Capitano del Popolo.

These Five Intermediate Guilds do not appear to have taken any steps for actual enrolment among the Seven Greater Guilds. The reason may possibly have been that their antecedents and associations were dissimilar. There is ever a social gulf between the leisured and professional classes and the ranks of the tradesman and the artisan.

Probably however we must look a little more thoroughly into a question which presents such an unexpected aspect. Emancipation from a position of inferiority—social and political—and incorporation by a higher circle of prestige and influence, must have had vast attractions for the shopkeepers and superior workmen of Florence. On the other hand the danger of absolute absorption into an elaborate system of civic life, wherein the dominant powers were supreme in rank, wealth, and authority was quite apparent.

The rôle of the Five Intermediate Guilds was that of holding a balance between the two political elements of the time—the

[1] "Le Consulte della Repubblica Fiorentina," vol. i. pp. 75-97.

aristocracy and the democracy. By joint action they were enabled to check the ambitious usurpations of the nobles and merchants and, at the same time, to restrain the revolutionary aspirations of the working classes.

A very well written manuscript,[1] preserved in the British Museum, entitled "*Il Foro Fiorentino overo degli Uffizi antici della Citta di Firenze. Trattato di Tommaso Forli,*" has the following "List of the Guilds" under the date 1282 :—

I. *Twelve Greater Guilds.*

1. Giudici e Notai.
2. Kalimala.
3. Lana.
4. Cambio.
5. Seta.
6. Medici e Speziali e Merciai.
7. Vaiai e Pellicciai.
8. Beccai.
9. Calzolai.
10. Fabbri.
11. Maestri di Pietre e Legnami.
12. Rigattieri.

II. *Nine Lesser Guilds.*

1. Vinattieri—Wine-merchants.
2. Albergatori maggiori—Greater Innkeepers.
3. Venditori del Sale—Dealers in salt.
4. Galigai grossi—Master Tanners.
5. Corazzai e Spadai—Armourers and Sword-makers.
6. Chiavaiuoli e Ferraiuoli—vecchi e novi—Lock-smiths and workers in iron old and new.
7. Sanolacciai e Coreggiai e Scudai — Harness-makers, Carriage-builders and Shield-makers.
8. Legnaiuoli grossi—Master-carpenters.
9. Fornai—Bakers.

The same authority says that this order was retained until

[1] MS. no. 28.178. B. M.

1415, when the Guilds were again arranged as Seven Greater and Fourteen Lesser, and so continued until 1534.

In 1282, Bartolo de' Bardi, of the "*Calimala*" merchants, sitting for the *sestiere* of Oltrarno, Rosso Bacherelli, of the "Bankers," sitting for San Piero Scheraggio, and Salvi del Chiaro Girolamo, of the "Wool-merchants," sitting for San Pancrazio, were elected Priors. They held office for two months, and assumed the right of residence with the Captain of the People, in the Badia, and "by their lordly manner, created an aristocracy among the Traders."[1]

During their tenure of office a new officer was created, with the title of "*Difensore dell' Arti e degli Artefici, e Capitano e Conservatore della Pace*"—"Defender of the Guilds and Crafts, and Captain and Keeper of the Public Peace." The first holder of this dignity was Bernardino della Porta—a wool-merchant of renown. Thus there were three supreme magistrates—the *Podesta*—or President of the Republic—a foreigner; the Captain of the People—a noble; and the Defender of the Guilds—a merchant.

To the "Defender" were attached two councils composed exclusively of members of the three Senior Guilds. The following year, through the incessant representations of their Consuls, three more Priors were added, Ghanus Detaineti for the "*Arte della Seta*"; Viezus Vecosii for the "*Arte de' Medici e Speziali*"; and Toginus Aurifex for the "*Arte de' Pellicciai e Vaiai*." At the same time the title of the "Defender of the Guilds" was changed to "Captain of the Guilds," and he took precedence of the "Captain of the People," immediately after the *Podesta*.

The ever-growing wealth of the Merchant Guilds and the strongly aristocratic tendencies of their members awakened feelings of discontent and jealousy in the Craftsmen of the Lesser Guilds.

Whilst in theory all citizens strove for the common good, in practice differences arose from time to time, and, under many pretexts, became more or less acute between the members of the several Guilds with respect to customs, processes, privileges, and monopolies.

[1] "Le Consulte," pp. 116-140 (Dr Hartwig).

Merchant and artisan alike did not hesitate to break with old established methods. Questions as to price and sample, and business agreements, which had ruled industries for years, were openly disregarded. Each man sought to take advantage of his neighbour, in short a sort of inner-toll system was erected between trade and trade, and between man and man.

To such a pitch did these vexations reach, that on June 30th 1290 the Priors issued a Decree which re-established the freedom of trade, and prohibited custom-dues, and compositions, of every kind within the limits of Florentine territory. Secret Inspectors were appointed to see that no craftsman, whether belonging to the Greater or to the Lesser Guilds, attempted infractions of the liberty of labour and of sale.[1]

On July 3rd of the same year two Decrees were passed by the Priors, which prohibited Merchant Guildsmen under heavy penalties from creating monopolies, compacts, and agreements, for spurious sales. Every sort of business procedure calculated to lead to the imposition of arbitrary prices for commodities was also strictly prohibited.[2]

Any merchant or trader guilty of neglect of these provisions was subject to legal proceedings and was liable to a fine of one hundred pounds. Moreover the Guild, to which such an one belonged, was mulcted in a penalty of five hundred *lire* for not enforcing the decrees; and the Consuls, Rectors or Priors were each fined two hundred *lire*.

Other Decrees were passed in 1291 and 1292. In the latter year the Consuls and Heads of all the Guilds met in Conference, and added one more severe regulation to the Code of Prohibitions—namely, erasure from the Matriculation Registers of the respective Guilds, of the names of offenders convicted of fraud and falsification of every sort and kind.

Appeals to the Pope, to the Emperor, or to any foreign power or prince, were severely punished; and the Notaries who assisted

[1] Archivio del Stato di Firenze, Provvisione iv. p. 29.
[2] Provvisioni ii. c. 24-25, c. 30-31, and iv. c. 175-177.

in drawing up such appeals, were punished by suspension from their offices. These measures,—Draconian almost in character,—formed efficient bulwarks against usurpations and encroachments on the part of the Merchant aristocracy upon the liberties and rights of the Artisan democracy.

Liberty of industry was always a distinguishing mark in the political constitutions of the Republic. In 1475 the *Signoria* actually passed a Law enacting that every man was free to gain his living as he liked, without reference, as to capacity, to judges of law and doctors of medicine; and without let or hindrance from unscrupulous citizens.

A conspicuous and important landmark in the liberties and trade of the Republic was fixed by the passing of the "*Ordinamenti della Giustizia*," which became law on January 18th, 1293. They have been called the Magna Charta of Florence. Their sponsor, if not actually their author, was the famous Giano della Bella, who, although belonging to the noble house of Pazzi espoused the popular side.

This famous Edict, which contained twenty-four paragraphs or provisions, was promulgated for the protection of the people against the increasing usurpations of the nobles. The three principal provisions were:—

1. The exclusion of the *Grandi* from the Government.
2. The punishment of the *Grandi* for offences against the *Popolani*.
3. The extension of the powers of the Craft-Guilds.

Up to this period the office of Prior had been always open to any *Grande* who was a member of a Guild. This privilege was henceforth to be enjoyed only after the noble had renounced his rank with the public approval of the Council of State.

Among the penalties was sentence of death upon any noble who, either by his own hand or by that of a paid agent, took the life of one of the people. His property was also ordered to be confiscated, and his house razed to the ground.[1]

[1] P. E. Giudici, "Storia dei Comuni Italiani," Bk. vi.

The "*Ordini*,"—as they were also called,—confirmed the number and order of the Guilds; and, at the same time, enacted that every member and apprentice should be required, upon entry, to take a solemn oath, for the maintenance of peace and concord.

The promotion of trading companies alien to the Constitutions of the Guilds, and agreements and contracts, unsanctioned by recognised commercial law and custom, were made capital offences. Any Guild entering upon such transactions, or condoning them, was declared liable to a fine of one thousand *lire*, and its Consuls, five hundred each.

The passing of the "*Ordini*" of course roused angry and powerful opposition on the part of the nobles and aristocratic merchants. Their resentment was in a sense shared by many of the craftsmen and shopkeepers, who depended upon the patronage of the richer citizens.

By the end of the thirteenth century a vast number of trade customs and business usages had become fixed, which, whilst in some measure safe-guarding the interests of the Guilds, led to more or less confusion and uncertainty in commercial matters.

In 1300 a revision of these Statutes, Regulations and Bye-laws was determined upon by the Heads of the Guilds in consultation with the Chief Magistrates. On April 4th a "Commission of Seven Merchants" was appointed with power to choose other seven members, Neri Berri being named President, and hence the Commission is known by his name. The fourteen Commissioners were secluded in the monastery of the Servite Brothers for many days; food, stationery and thirty-two *lire* being allowed to each Commissioner.[1] Their deliberations were attended with unanimity, and they embodied their resolutions in the form of Statutes which, in 1301, received the approval of the Consuls of the Guilds and of the Chief Magistrates of the Republic. They were entitled "The Statutes of the University of Commerce of Florence."

[1] Provvisione x. 216-226.

The Statutes were made generally applicable for all the Guilds, and the embodiment of them, in the form of a charter of incorporation, provided each Guild, whether of merchants or craftsmen, with the main part of its corporative constitution. The "*Calimala*" Guild, as being the leading trade organisation of the city, led the way by adopting the new Code.

The signatures[1] attached to the report of these deliberations are interesting as showing not only the order of precedence at that date of the Seven Greater Guilds but also the various degrees and styles of the signatories. The names of "Judges and Notaries" come first, they are six—one for each *sestiere*, and of these three are judges, styled "*Dominus*," and three are notaries—one being styled "*Dominus*," and the other two simply Ser or Messere. Next in order come the signatures of the four Consuls of the "Guild of Doctors and Apothecaries;" two are styled "*Magister medicus*"—the others have no title.

Then follow the names of the three Consuls of the "Guild of Bankers and Money-changers," they have no titles, but one is distinguished as "Piero Borgi who has his office in the old market," and so forth. Four Consuls of the "Merchants of *Calimala*" come next, without any distinguishing titles; and they are followed by the six Consuls of the "Guild of Wool," also untitled, except the first, who is styled "*Ser Notarius*"—a lawyer wool-stapler!

The "Por San Maria Merchants" are represented by four Consuls —three untitled and the fourth is styled "*Dominus*"; and last come the four Consuls of "the Skinners," each of which has the name of his special constituency added: 1. "*de populo Sancti Stephani a Ponte*," 2. "*de populo Sancte Cicilie*," 3. "*de populo Sancte Marie Ughi*," and 4. "*de populo Sancte Liberale.*"

The financial position of the several Guilds at the beginning of the fourteenth century may be understood by their proportionate co-relation in the payment of taxes levied by the State. On October 1321 the Guilds were mulcted in the following amounts:—

[1] "Le Consulte," vol. i. p. 27.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| The Guild of Wool | 2000 | gold florins. |
| The Guild of Silk | 400 | „ |
| The Guild of Doctors and Apothecaries | 330 | „ |
| The Guild of Butchers | 325 | „ |
| The "*Calimala*" Guild | 320 | „ |
| The Guild of Judges and Notaries | 100 | „ |
| The Guild of Bankers | 100 | „ |
| The Guild of Masters of Stone and Wood | 80 | „ |
| The Guild of Locksmiths and Workers in Iron | 80 | „ |
| The Guild of Carpenters | 50 | „ |
| The Guild of Flax | 38 | „ |

The Guild of Skinners and Furriers only 200 *lire*, whilst the smallest contribution was that of the "Society of Cross-bow Makers"—eight *lire!*

The Duke of Athens began his term of office as *Podesta* in 1342, by yielding to the solicitations of the nobles and more prominent merchants, but, when he saw that his overtures met with distrust, and that a movement was being made to curtail his authority, he looked about him for some other source of support.[1] By way of currying favour with the lower people, at the head of the Priors, whom he nominated, he placed a butcher, and with him three merchants and three artisans. This course met with violent opposition, but the Duke persevered in his democratic policy.

His own position was largely due to the favour of the populace, and consequently he was bound to make some returns. Of the inferior classes he always spoke as "*Le bene Popolo*"—"The good people."—Among smaller, but quite significant, measures, he permitted the "Association of Wool-Carders,"—subordinate hitherto entirely to the Guild of the Wool-merchants,—to have and to display a banner of their own, bearing upon it a Lamb. To the "Association of Wool-Dyers,"—who represented that they were oppressed by the two great Guilds of "*Calimala*" and "Wool," he

[1] Villani, xii. 8.

conceded the privilege of being ruled by *Capitudini* of their own free choice.

For the benefit of the lowest orders of the population the Duke formed six *Brigate* or Societies—one for each *sestiere*, with the style of "*La Potenza*" or Local Authority. The duties of these Societies, which were comprised of the more prominent men or leaders of the lower classes, in each quarter, were to elevate the tastes and pursuits of the people, and to encourage them to emulate the fashions of the better-to-do citizens.[1]

These measures proved to be encouragements and incentives to the people to seek, by fair means or by foul, a general betterment of their social and political condition. The way was thus made clear for the terrible "Rising of the *Ciompi*" in 1378, which registered the high-water mark of democratic ascendency. Several causes contributed to the accomplishment of this *coup d'état.*

Jealousies and feuds between the nobles and the aristocratic merchants of the Greater Guilds were incentives to imitation on the part of the operatives. The *Parte Guelfa* through its immense wealth and power had become an instrument of oppression. The promise of liberty and equality made by the discomfiture of the Ghibellines was not redeemed. Espionage and tyranny were rife. Every man's hand seemed raised to oppress those beneath him in position or in wealth. Such were the embers of a smouldering fire, which only needed the torch of revolution to kindle into a portentous conflagration.

Piero degli Albizzi in 1370 made no secret of the intention of his family to convert the Republic into an Oligarchy. The Ricci, the Strozzi, and other influential families sided with the Albizzi. The *Popolo Minuto* saw the danger which threatened the liberty of the tradespeople and artisans, but in Salvestro de' Medici,—whose family ranked among the first of the *Popolo Grasso*,—the popular cause found a true champion.

Salvestro was appointed to the office of *Gonfaloniere di Giustizia*

[1] Marchionne di Coppo Stefani, "Delizie degli Eruditi Toscani," viii. 566.

in 1370, and he at once summoned an assembly of the people in the Palazzo Vecchio. An immense throng filled, not only the Palace, but the Piazza della Signoria. Upon Salvestro's threat to retire from office, under the opposition of the oligarchical party, dire confusion arose, and, at the height of the excitement, Benedetto degli Alberti looked out of a window and shouted :—"*Viva il Popolo!*"

This was the spark which fell upon inflammable material. The cry was re-echoed through the city. Shops were closed and the whole of the populace was under arms. The *Parte Guelfa* also armed, but did not dare to provoke an encounter with the masses, who surged up from every quarter of the city.

The Consuls of the Greater Guilds intervened, but to no effect, and the armed Companies of the Guilds under their banners marched into the Piazza. The "*Ciompi*" supposed these Bands were arrayed against them, and at once the spark blazed into flame, which devoured the palaces of the Albizzi, Pazzi, Strozzi, Soderini, Castiglionchi, Caviccioli, Buondelmonti, Serragli and of other noble families. Fire was put to the Residences of the Consuls of the Guilds, and some of them were wholly destroyed, whilst the archives, documents, and the rolls of matriculation, of many of the Guilds were ruthlessly consumed.

A reign of terror followed, and the city was given over to pillage and outrage. At length an attack was made upon the Supreme Magistracy sitting at the Palazzo Vecchio. The magistrates fled, and the mob, headed by a wool-comber called Michele Lando, bearing the Gonfalon of Justice, which had been seized at the Office of the *Gonfaloniere*, rushed into the Council Chamber.

Lando turned about, and facing his followers, cried out, "See the Palace is yours, and the city is wholly in your hands. What will you do now?"

"Make you *Gonfaloniere di Giustizia!*" was the tumultuous reply.

A new Government was installed on July 23rd, consisting of nine Priors,—three from the Seven Greater Guilds, three from the

Fourteen Lesser Guilds,—and three from three new Guilds of Operatives,—the latter being enrolled in response to the demand of the victorious democracy.

Lando was confirmed in the office of *Gonfaloniere di Giustizia*, "who," as writes Dino Compagni, "in courage, prudence, and goodness surpasssed any citizen of that time, and deserved to be remembered among the few who have done good to their country."

The other demands of the "*Ciompi*" were agreed to, namely:—1. The reduction of the taxes, 2. The increase of State interest upon workmen's savings, 3. The rescinding of laws against small debtors, 4. The recall of exiled workpeople, and 5. The extension of the municipal franchise. The three new Guilds, with the assistance of the "Nine of Commerce" and the "Ten of Liberty," were established under rules and regulations similar to the Statutes of the Greater Guilds.

The first of these Subordinate Guilds was made up of nine or ten thousand Wool-washers, Wool-sorters, Wool-beaters, Wool-combers, and Wool-carders, who had hitherto been attached to the Great Wool Guild. To this Corporation was granted a banner bearing a figure of the Angel of Judgment with a sword and a cross.

The Second Guild was composed of Dyers, Fullers, Carding-comb-makers and Loom-makers, and Weavers of wool, silk and flax: their banner displayed a white arm upon a vermilion field, the hand holding a sword upon which was inscribed "*Giustizia*"—"Justice."

The Third Guild united together Sheep-shearers, Butchers, Menders of skins, Hosiers, Knitters, Tailors, Makers of doublets, of banners, of church ornaments, of sandals, etc. etc. Their banner bore the Divine Arm with a red sleeve, thrust out of a cloud and holding a branch of olive.

The latter two Guilds numbered only some four thousand members between them, hence the first of the three held a position of greater importance; and, by reason of its members belonging

WORKMEN

LATE FOURTEENTH CENTURY

WORKMEN

MIDDLE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

to one industry alone,—that of wool,—it presented a much more homogeneous appearance than did the other two Corporations.[1]

There is much uncertainty as to the manner in which the Statutes of 1301 were adapted to the peculiar conditions of the new Corporations. Nevertheless there are entries in the Records of the six *sestieri*, and in those of the Councils of the *Capitudini* or Priors of the Three new Guilds, which show that their officers ranked as equals with those of the other Guilds in the tenure of public office. For example:—in *Santo Spirito* are named Giovanni dei Capponi, Woollen-manufacturer of the "Guild of Wool-merchants," and Leoncino de Francino, Carder, of the "Guild of Wool-workers"; in *San Giovanni*—Giovanni di Bartolo, Spicer and Apothecary of the "Guild of Doctors and Apothecaries," and Benedetto da Carlova, Sandal-maker of the "Guild of Workmen and Artificers."[2]

The Incorporation of these three Guilds gave much satisfaction to the humbler and rougher citizens. The labouring class, though viewing with natural envy the pleasanter lot of their richer fellow-citizens, were really animated with the grand old Florentine spirit. This natural leverage, which was a constant force for the amelioration and advancement of every class, was based upon the universal sense and appreciation of high ideals.

Prospects of contentment, however, were speedily dimmed, and the newly enfranchised craftsmen became once more restive. They began to assume the manners, and even the dress of the richer citizens, and to cultivate a taste for the exercise of arms.

The old spirit of insubordination was not dead, and men refused to work under the existent conditions of labour. *Giostre*, or Tournaments, and feasting in the Markets, had fascinations which were undeniable. Workshops were closed, and the streets were filled with idlers and merry-makers. Disorder and rioting soon became the order of the day. The axiom, "if a man wishes to eat he must work," was ignored, and famine stared the city in the face.

[1] M.S. Strozzi, Diario d' Anonimo, p. 517.
[2] Marchionne di Coppo Stefani, "Delizie degli Eruditi Toscani," x. 797.

The Three new Guilds made a further demand that a *staio*—bushel—of corn should be given free to every man who asked for help. They also proposed a division of public money. The whole of the "*Ciompi*" assembled in the Piazza Santa Maria Novella and prepared to urge these demands by force of arms.

Michele Lando again proved his grit. He set the great bell tolling, and, when the militia companies of the Guilds had assembled, he led them in person against his former associates, crying:—"Long live the Trade Guilds and the People!" The undisciplined mob gave way, and the wool-comber *Gonfaloniere* yielded up his *gonfalon*, a pledge that peace was assured. This was the end of the "*Ciompi*" Rising.

The predominance, nevertheless, of the democratic power was of short duration, for the year 1382 was marked by the strenuous exertions of the nobles and aristocratic merchants to reduce the ascendency of the *Popolo Minuto*. Reforms were introduced into the election of dignitaries:—the office of *Gonfaloniere di Giustizia* was again limited to members of the seven Greater Guilds, that of Prior was shared equally by the seven and by the fourteen Lesser Guilds. The Three new Guilds were suppressed, and the number of recognised Guilds was reduced to the original Twenty-one.[1]

In 1387 a concession was however made to the claims of the operative members of the community, whereby two new Priors were appointed to represent particularly the working population. Thus the eight Priors, who formed the new *Signoria*, stood by twos for each of the four quarters of the city; and this arrangement was confirmed by the Council of State in 1393.[2]

The subject of the Precedence of the Guilds, and their several degrees of honour on the Roll of the Guilds, is one which can never be satisfactorily explained. Some of the Guilds which appear low down in the scale were composed of men of the highest distinction, for instance, the great architects and sculptors of the

[1] A. von Reumont, "Tavole Cronologiche."
[2] L. Cantini, "Legislazione," vol. i. p. 29.

Renaissance belonged to the Lesser Guild of "Masters of Stone and Wood!" Again, why should the "Butchers" be thirteen degrees higher than the "Bakers"? Probably in old Florence herself this inconsequent arrangement could not have been made clear. After all it was not so much a comparative table of industries as a relative scale of operators which fixed each trade and its agents in a conventional position upon the tablets of Florentine Society.

Below the fourteen Lesser Guilds were, from time to time, groups of workpeople, who enrolled themselves in trade associations, which were never recognised as Guilds in the generally accepted meaning of the term. Under date 1285 there is a paragraph in a Codex: *Manoscritti varii*, referring to the *Arte de' Frenai*,—the "Guild of Bridle and Bit-makers,"—and the payment made to the Guild on behalf of some land between the Porta Balli and the Porta Via Nuova.

The Records[1] of 1309-1316 name many such associations under the general term *Arte*, Guild:—"*Bottariai*"—Coopers, "*Arcariai*" — Bow and Arrow-makers, "*Madiariai*" — Trough-makers, "*Cerchiariai*" — Basket-makers, "*Baldrigariai panni*" — Cloth-remnants and cuttings-dealers, "*Ritagliai*"—Retailers of Sundries, "*Ferravecchiai*"—Scrap-iron dealers, "*Pollaiuoli*"—Poulterers, and "*Materassai*"—Mattress-stuffers.

The Archives have a curious entry under date February 6th, 1321, in the shape of a list of Guilds which had paid their proportion of the *Gabella*, or war loan, levied the previous year. The loan in question amounted to the sum of 300,000 gold florins, —£150,000,—and was undertaken not only by the whole of the Merchant and Craft Guilds of the time, but also with the co-operation of the all-powerful *Parte Guelfa*.

The number of Guilds or Corporations scheduled rises to *forty-four*! They include "*Fornaciariai*,"—Ironfounders,—ninety-two *lire*, "*Dadaiuoli*,"—Dice-makers,—two and two-thirds gold florins, and "*Prestatori Ronzoni*,"—Horse-jobbers,—sixty-seven *lire*.

[1] Archivio del Stato di Firenze, 245.

In 1327, among the Corporations which are scheduled as contributories to the year's public taxes, the following additional

VARIOUS CRAFTS IN OPERATION—THE BUSTLE OF CITY LIFE.

"Guilds" are named:—"*Vaginariai*"—Scabbard-makers, "*Maestri d' Abace e Gramatici*"—Rope and Hemp-merchants, "*Cuociai*"—Cooks, and "*Fabbricanti dell' Utensili di Cucina*"—Makers of

cooking-utensils. "*Sarti*"—Tailors, and "*Cunatori*"—Cradle and chest-makers, are named in 1378 as separate associations, and so are "*Barbieri*"—Barbers and Hairdressers, "*Ricamatori*"—Embroiderers, and "*Tessitori di Drappi*"—Stuff-weavers. These five associations are also grouped together as a distinct *Arte* or Guild. The why or wherefore of this alliance it is impossible to state.

Again reference is made frequently to *Conciatelli*—House-tilers, "*Conciatori di Fornace*"—Glass-blowers, "*Rivenditori*"—Old-clothes Dealers, "*Incisori in Rame*"—Engravers in brass, "*Vernicatori*"—Varnishers, "*Velettai*"—Canvas-makers, "*Cereriai*"—Wax-moulders, "*Tintori*"—Dyers, and "*Cardatori*"—Wool-carders. These groups of workpeople, however, were generally subordinated to one or other of the Greater Guilds, and to the more important of the Lesser Guilds.

Throughout the fifteenth century the number and precedence of the Guilds remained unaltered. In 1415, the order was as follows:—

I. *Le Arti Maggiori*—the Greater Guilds (7):—
   1. *L' Arte dei Giudici e Notai*—Judges and Notaries.
   2. *L' Arte di Calimala*—Merchants of Foreign Cloth.
   3. *L' Arte della Lana*—Woollen-manufacturers.
   4. *L' Arte de' Cambiatori*—Bankers and Money-changers.
   5. *L' Arte della Seta*—Silk-manufacturers.
   6. *L' Arte de' Medici e Speziali*—Doctors and Apothecaries.
   7. *L' Arte de' Pellicciai e Vaiai*—Skinners and Furriers.

II. *Le Arti Minori*—the Lesser Guilds (14):—
   1. *L' Arte de' Beccai*—Cattle-dealers and Butchers.
   2. *L' Arte de' Fabbri*—Blacksmiths.
   3. *L' Arte de' Calzolai*—Shoemakers.
   4. *L' Arte de' Maestri di Pietre e di Legnami*—Master Stone-masons and Wood-carvers.
   5. *L' Arte de' Rigattieri e de' Linaiuoli*—Retail-Dealers and Linen Merchants.
   6. *L' Arte de' Vinattieri*—Wine-merchants.

7. *L' Arte degli Albergatori*—Inn-keepers.
8. *L' Arte de' Galigai*—Tanners.
9. *L' Arte degli Oliandoli*—Oil-merchants.
10. *L' Arte de' Coreggiai*—Saddlers.
11. *L' Arte de' Chiavaiuoli*—Locksmiths.
12. *L' Arte de' Corazzai*—Armourers.
13. *L' Arte de' Legnaiuoli*—Carpenters.
14. *L' Arte de' Fornai*—Bakers.

An attempt was made in 1426 by the aristocratic party in the State to reduce the number of the fourteen Lesser Guilds to seven. The leaders in this movement were the Albizzi,—ever opponents of the popular cause,—under the leadership of Niccolo da Uzzano; but they were thwarted in their endeavours by the chivalrous opposition of members of the rising Medici family, who consistently posed as the friends of the people.

Early in the fifteenth century,—in view of the increased importance of the operative classes and the improved conditions of labour and wages,—two new *Arti*, or Guilds, were enrolled, though not formally incorporated. One of these,—called *L'Arte de' Merciai*, "Guild of Haberdashers,"—was an association of small shop-keepers and traders; the other,—*L'Arte de' Lavori*,—comprised the inferior class of operatives and unskilled labourers.

The Guild system had by the year 1530 reached the zenith of its magnificence and power, but then new economic forces came into action, which led to the decadence of much that was characteristic of the Florentine industry and commerce. These forces had perhaps little effect upon the Greater Guilds, but in the Lesser Guilds and among their members they were productive of many reforms and rearrangements.

A final grouping of the Lesser Guilds was effected in 1534. By a *Provvisione* dated July 17 of that year, the "Fourteen Lesser Guilds" were divided into four Universities. Each University was ruled by one Consul, one Chancellor, two *Provveditori*, three Treasurers, three Syndics or Inspectors, and four *Donzelle*—

Sergeants or Porters—as the word came to mean. The Consuls were chosen from each associated Guild or Corporation, in turn, and served for six months.[1]

In the First University were placed :—"*Beccai*"—Butchers and Cattle-dealers, "*Oliandoli*"—Oil and General Provision Merchants, and "*Fornai*"—Millers and Bakers; with the common title of "*L'Universita di Por San Piero*"—"University of Saint Peter's Gate"—so called from the locality of greatest activity.

In the Second were:—"*Calzolai*"—Shoemakers, "*Galigai*"—Tanners, and "*Coreggiai*"—Saddlers; under the style of "*L'Universita de' Maestri di Cuoiame*"—"University of Master-workers in Leather."

The Third included:—"*Fabbri*"—Blacksmiths, "*Chiavaiuoli*"—Locksmiths, "*Maestri di Pietre e di Legnami*"—Master Builders, "*Corazzai e Spadai*"—Armourers and Sword-makers, and "*Legnaiuoli*"—Carpenters; and they collectively bore the designation of "*L'Universita de' Fabbricanti*"—"University of Artisans."

With this third University were incorporated the trade associations of "*Incessori in Rame*," Copper-plate workers, "*Ottanai*"—Copper-smiths, "*Calderai*"—Braziers, "*Ferraiuoli*"—Edge-tool makers, "*Ferravecchiai*"—Scrap-iron dealers, and "*Stagnaiuoli*"—Makers of pewter. In fact all workers in metal, wood, and stone were allied in one University. The privilege of matriculation into the "*Arte e Universita de' Fabbricanti*" was extended, soon after the incorporation of the Guild, to residents in the City and district of Pistoja and other districts. Members living more than three miles beyond the *Contado* of Florence proper were required to pay fourteen *piccioli*, every six months, for the privilege of membership, whilst city workmen paid five *piccioli*.[2]

The Fourth University united five dissimilar corporations:—"*Rigattieri*"—Retail cloth-dealers, "*Vinattieri*"—Wine-merchants, "*Albergatori*"—Inn-keepers, "*Linaiuoli*"—Workers in flax, and

[1] Benedetto Varchi, "Storia Fiorentina," 1721.

[2] L. Cantini, "Legislazione," iv. 247.

MODES OF TRANSIT, COUNTRY PURSUITS, ETC.

"*Sarti*"—Tailors; their title was "*L'Universita de' Linaiuoli*"—"University of Linen Drapers."

This system of amalgamation was necessary for various reasons. First and foremost, the shrinkage in Florentine industries through foreign competition; secondly, changing fashions and customs, and the invention of fresh trades; thirdly, absorption of the richer members of the Craft Guilds into the more aristocratic society of the nobles and merchants.

The fifteenth century closed upon a Florence so prosperous, beautiful and salubrious that she was without a rival in Europe.

The shutting of manufactories and shops, which was remarkable in the sixteenth century, did not however prove decadence in wealth and influence, but simply that fewer men found it needful to engage in humble callings. The ranks of the monied and leisured classes were being steadily fed by new made men; whilst at the other end of the social ladder there was a marked decrease in poverty and mendicancy. In fact by the middle of the sixteenth century—the limit of this volume—Florence presented the rare spectacle of a State whose citizens were either all wealthy, or, at least, comfortably off. Not till then did the spirit of leisured ease begin to enervate the mental and physical vigour of her enterprising people.

The old Florentine proverb, which ran as follows:—"*Chi vuol che il mento balli alle mani faccia i calli*"—"Who wants his mind active must make his hands hard," had proved its truth!

. . . . . .

Some idea must now be given of the general conditions of Guild-membership.

Every man and boy, turned sixteen years of age, was obliged to become a member of a Guild or Trade Corporation. Any one who failed in this respect was dubbed "*Scioperato*"—"Loafer," and had no voice in the city's affairs. He was a bye-word and a mocking to every passer-by, and was treated to more kicks than *denari*, and, not uncommonly, was taken up and lodged in a dungeon, or his feet placed in the stocks, as being a useless in-

cumbrance and a disgrace to the city. Moreover, his family lost caste in whatever circle it was, and had even to pay a penalty for possessing such a good-for-nothing fellow!

On the other hand, the strenuous life of good Florentines in the prosecution of their many industries is very strikingly exemplified in a will of the year 1395.[1] A certain Lapaccino del Toso de' Lapaccini, who died during that year, left an instruction that a penalty of one thousand gold florins should be paid by each and all of his sons who, between the ages of sixteen and thirty-five, should spend a whole year without working at some trade or undertaking some commercial enterprise.

To enter a Guild five conditions had to be fulfilled :—

1. To be a native born Florentine.
2. To have two sponsors for family and personal character.
3. Never to have been before magistrates for any misdemeanour.
4. To be possessed of a property qualification—either his own or accruing at the death of his father.
5. To pay a tax of silver to the State by way of caution-money.
6. To pay an Entrance-fee to the particular Guild.

The silver tax varied,—it was fixed from time to time by the *Signoria*,—and was looked upon as a poll-tax or capitation-fee. The payment of this tax conferred immediate political rights upon the payee. The Entrance-fee,—generally a fairly good round sum,—varied according to the circumstances of the individual or his family. Its payment entitled the payee to full membership in his Guild.

A considerable difference was made in the amount of each of these payments as Members of the Merchant Guilds, or as members of the Craft Guilds. The members of the former were of two classes :—(1) *Maestri*—Masters or full members—and (2) *Discipuli*—Probationers or apprentices. In Latin manuscripts, and early printed books of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, "*dis-*

[1] L'Osservatore Fiorentino, Vol. iv. p. 193. D. M. Manni, Osservazione e Giunte Istoriche sopra i, etc., Sigilli, Tom. xi. p. 106.

*cipulo*" is used in a general sense. The members of the latter,—the Craft Guilds,—were of three classes:—(1) *Maestri*—Masters, (2) *Lavoranti*—Workmen, and (3) *Garzoni*—Apprentices.

The *Tirocinio*—or Apprenticeship—was for five to seven years, but sons of Masters were entitled to easier and shorter terms—generally four or five years.

At the end of his time the apprentice was still bound to work for his master for three years with a small annual recompense. At the end of that period the workman was entitled to call himself *Capo lavoro*—Master-workman. The sons of Masters were also permitted to serve a workman's probation of two years only; they also paid reduced taxes and lower fees.

In his tenth year each individual paid his Master's Recognition fee, or *Buona Entrata*, and became a full-blown Master of his Craft.[1]

A few extracts from the records of Apprenticeships will be interesting as showing the variety of employments and the details of mutual arrangement between master and apprentice at certain dates:—

1272. A father, from Æma, binds his boy to a Tanner for eight years. The lad to receive "clothes and board as befits a merchant and artisan of that trade."

1274. A man binds his son for two years as *discipulo* to a Retail cloth-dealer to learn the trade—the father paying down three *lire*.

1291. A man "of the parish of San Giovanni di Chuota, in the country of Count Guido Novelli, gives his son, as *discipulo* for three years, to Messere Cambizzino, a Shoemaker, of Uberti in the parish of Santa Felicia in Piazza. The master to give yearly a tunic, a vest, hose, and a pair of good shoes."

1293. Another binds his nephew for one year to his master—an Innkeeper—the latter to give the apprentice "wine and food and bed all of good kind and worthy of the trade."

[1] Dr G. Alberti, "Le Corporanzione d'Arti e di Mestiere."

1295. A young man "from Castelnuovo is apprenticed as *discipulo* to a Locksmith for one year, the master being bound to pay him forty *soldi*."

1300. A man "binds his orphan brother for five and a half years to Ricchio Bonsignori and Venturi Ammanti, Merchants—dwelling in a house upon the new bridge of Rubaconte. The *discipulo* to receive food and clothing,—good and decent,—as well as shoes; and to be cared for, whether well or ill, up to anything less than a month."

1306. A certain man from San Savino in Monte Carelli engages himself as *discipulo* to a Baker, of the parish of S. Pancrazio, for seven years—to receive clothing and board and lodging," and so on.[1]

That women were not disqualified by their sex from enjoying the rights of membership in the Guilds is proved by many entries in the articles of matriculation and the records of association. For example in 1294, in the Council of *Capitudini*, Donna Santa, wife of Palmerio of the *popolo* of San Ambrogio, who wished to be admitted as a worker into the "*Arte e Universita Zonariorum*,"—"the Company of Belt and Girdle-makers,"—states that she has paid, to the Treasurer of the Guild, three pounds, by way of Entrance-fee. Thereupon, by the approval of the Council, she swears to observe all the statutes and regulations of the Guild; and Messere Lapo Benci, the Rector, admits her to full membership. A witness's signature is appended to the instrument of enrolment,—"*Corsus Guellilme,—Rector artis Coregiariorum*,"—Rector of the "Guild of Strap-makers."

In the earliest records of the Trades we find the style of "Consul" borne by the Heads of each Craft—the title also accorded to the rulers of the Commune. This led to considerable confusion, for example, in the negotiations entered into with the people of the Commune of Pogna, in 1184, for the protection of the latter, the "Consuls of Florence" attach their signatures above those of the "Consuls of the Trades."

[1] Davidssohn, "Forschungen zur Älteren Geschichte von Florenz."

AN APPRENTICE: A TYPICAL FLORENTINE YOUTH

"DAVID,"—VERROCCHIO

A document[1] of 1193 contains an account of the Convention between the Commune of Florence and the Lords of the Castle of Trebbio, in which the confusion of titles is overcome by the use of the designation "*Rettore*"—Rector, for the Heads of the Trades.

Again another change was effected in the style of the "*Rettore*" in 1204, when "*Priore*"—Prior—was adopted; but this was very shortly dropped, because it also clashed with the designation of the three Priors of the Three Great Guilds. "Consul" was again used as the title of the Heads of the Guilds, when that style ceased to be borne by the Head of the State.[2]

No citizen might serve the office of Consul unless he was in the active exercise of his calling, and resided at his shop or place of business. All who were elected were required to be natives of Florence, except in the Guilds of "Judges and Notaries" and "Masters of Stone and Wood"—both of which were open to foreigners.

Every citizen appointed to the supreme office of the Guild was compelled to serve his term or submit to the payment of a fine of one hundred gold florins.[3]

Divided counsels, as might have been expected, constantly broke the unanimity of the Council of Consuls of all the Guilds. Something of the sort occurred with respect to the peace negotiations instituted, in 1280, by the Cardinal Latino dei Frangipani acting as Papal Legate.[4]

These were attempts at a reconciliation of the adherents of the two great parties in the State,—the Guelphs and the Ghibellines,—for the repatriation of the latter. Among the commissioners were Lapo del Prato, Orlando Baldovini, and Cervo del Foro, representing respectively the Intermediate Guilds of Butchers, Blacksmiths, and Shoemakers. They, along with the Consuls of the Judges and Notaries, the Silk Merchants, and the Doctors and

[1] Archivio delle Riformagione, Bk. xxvi.

[2] L. Cantini, "Legislazione," vol. i.

[3] Statuta Populi et Communis Florentiae, collected 1415. Friburg, 1782, vol. ii. p. 159. Rub. i., ii., iii., iv.

[4] Marchionne di Coppo Stefani, "Delizie degli Eruditi Toscani," vol. ix. 96.

Apothecaries, promised, in the names of their Guilds, to do all in their power to carry out the conditions proposed, and vigorously to oppose all attempts to set the peace settlement at nought.

The names of the Consuls of Calimala, Wool Merchants, Bankers and Money-changers, Skinners and Furriers, and Retail Cloth Dealers were not appended to the document. Hence we may conclude that they were not favourable to the Cardinal's terms. Anyhow the Settlement came to nothing, and the *Parte Guelfa* waxed still stronger.

The constant and erratic changes which took place in the standing and powers of the Guilds and of their Consuls, are nowhere better set forth than in a Codex of the thirteenth century.[1] In the list of Consuls from October 1295 to May 1296 two were appointed to sit in the General Council of the Guilds by each of the Twelve Greater Guilds, except that of the "Judges and Notaries," whose representatives had the prescriptive right of presiding at the meetings without special election.

The same Codex goes on to state that the number of Consuls elected for the above, and other purposes, was variable and disproportionate, for example: "*Calimala*" had only three; "Bankers"—four to six; "Wool" and "Shoemakers"—five to six; "Silk," "Doctors," and "Butchers"—four; "Smiths"—three to five; "Retail-dealers"—two to seven, "Furriers"—one to six and "Masters of Stone and Wood"—three. Doubtless these variations were caused by the nature of the business which engaged the attention of the General Council, or by special trade circumstances.

From time to time disputes and jealousies arose about the election of Consuls of the various Guilds, and caused heart-burnings and even feuds among the members of the several Corporations. Many efforts were made by the Priors to put an end to these quarrels. In 1329 they summoned a general representative Council to consult as to the best measures to adopt in face of the universal dissatisfaction with the current state of affairs.

[1] Archivio delle Tratti Fiorentini, Codex LIX.

From each duly-constituted Guild they chose two members with the *Gonfaloniere* of each. The result of their deliberations was that no man should be elected to the office of Consul, in any Guild, who failed to receive at least fifty votes of fully qualified members. The candidates elected were authorised to hold office for four months.

The voters' list for each Guild in the election of Consuls was enclosed in a small box, the keys of which were held by the Consuls for the time being. All these boxes were packed into a large chest of which only the Captain of the People, the Priors of the Guilds, and the Standard-bearer of Justice had keys. Such precautions were numerous, and were necessary to preserve intact the good faith and just practice of the members, and the Constitution of each Guild.

Disputes between the Guilds,—whether in their corporate capacity or in relation to individual members,—which could not be arranged in the courts of the Consuls, nor terminated by the Consuls of all the Guilds in united session, were referred, first of all to the 'Tribunal of the Mercanzia,' and finally laid before the *Podesta*, the Captain of the People, and the Defender of the Guilds, as a Supreme Court of Appeal. The ruling of these three dignitaries was accepted as decisive.

Once every year, in January, each of the Guilds appointed a Syndic to assist the Consuls in carrying out their injunctions. They were required to swear before the Captain of the People, in the presence of the two Councils and the Heads of the Greater Guilds, to render true and laudable service to the State, and to cause the members of their Craft to observe just obedience to Magistrates. They were required to examine the credentials of all companies, leagues, conventions, undertakings, obligations, and contracts, which they found existing among the people. All such as were contrary to, or deviated from, the strict letter of their Constitutions were annulled and forbidden.

They were also required to enter, in the Registries of their Crafts and Districts, the names and dates of baptism of all men

from eighteen to seventy years of age, with their trades or occupations, and habitations; and to add notes as to health, character, ability and diligence.

The Companies of families, or traders, numbered usually many persons; for example, in the State Archives, there is a notice dated October 28, 1304, of a declaration of bankruptcy, before the Court of the *Podesta*, of the Ranieri Ardinghelli Society, or Company, with eighteen partners,—fourteen of the latter family and five of the former,—merchants of the "*Calimala.*" The total liabilities were one hundred and twenty-three thousand *lire*.[1]

The emigration of skilled artisans and artificers was strictly forbidden by several *Provvisioni* issued at various times. The classes of workmen mostly indicated were of the "*Calimala*" Guild,—finishers of foreign cloth, of the "Wool Guild,"—dyers and fullers, of the "Silk Guild,"—weavers of gold and silver cloth. With intense earnestness and constant watchfulness the merchants and manufacturers strove to retain to Florence the production of all merchandise, in the manipulation of which the Florentine workers excelled other workpeople. In nothing was the keen spirit of monopoly more conspicuously exhibited.[2]

Offences of every sort and kind, whether against the Guild Statutes, or against individual Guilds, were heavily punished, as were those committed against persons not members of the Guild in question. In the "Council of the Hundred" a petition was presented in 1292, by the Priors of the "*Calimala*," Merchants praying that felonies, or other misdemeanours, committed by members of Guilds, should be punishable only through the Courts of the Consuls of each Guild. The petitioners undertook:—(1) to be answerable for such persons on pain of fine for breach of promise and (2), to subject delinquents to expulsion from their Guilds, and to prohibition from engaging in the several industries connected therewith.

[1] Archivio del Stato di Firenze, 65 f., 146.
[2] L. Cantini, "Legislazione," viii. p. 225.

Among a number of prohibitions set forth by the *Signoria* and put in operation by the Consuls of the Guilds were the following:—

1. No animal suffering from disease shall be allowed to drink at the public fountains.

2. Swallows shall not be interfered with, and frogs shall not be carried through the city.

3. No one shall be allowed to spin tops in the streets, and boys shall be whipped for throwing stones at fish in the river.

The hours of work of course varied from time to time, and were different in the several industries. From dawn to dusk was, as elsewhere, the rule, with breaks for food and rest. There were not more than two hundred and seventy-five working days in the year, for Church Festivals and other holidays consumed the remainder.

Clocks were not common in old Florence and only well-to-do people carried watches, consequently the time of day was regulated by the striking of bells. Perhaps the earliest record of a public clock is dated March 15, 1352, on which day the big clock of the Palazzo Vecchio struck the hours for the first time.

The first bell used to mark the flight of the busy hours was that hung up in the Campanile of the ancient Church of Santa Maria Ughi, which was situated in the Piazza delle Cipolli, just behind the Palazzo Strozzi. Every afternoon at three o'clock sundry strokes told workmen to cease from their toil. This early hour was due to the fact that in winter at dusk, the city gates were closed alike to egress as to entry, for many labourers lived in the *Contado* outside the city walls.

There is a legend of an attractive flower and herb-seller called Berta, who left a sum of money to the Church of Santa Maria Maggiore, that at four o'clock a supplemental bell should be rung, winter and summer, to indicate the completion of the day's paid labour. This bell was called "*La Trecca*"—"the Fruiterer's bell," and, from its shape, "*La Cavolaia*," the "gentle cabbage!" The first Grand Duke, Cosimo I., transferred the functions of the workmen's bell to the big bell of the Duomo, and directed it to be rung at half-past three daily the year round.

The bell of the Bargello went by the name of "*La Montanara*," from the name of the town whence it was taken by the Florentines in 1302. This bell tolled every evening to warn loyal citizens to lay aside their arms and withdraw themselves indoors. To this custom was due another name, "*La Campana delle Armi.*" Cosimo I. ordered that any servant found idling in the streets, or hanging about for want of work, at the evening tolling of this bell, should have his right hand amputated! At all public executions "*La Montanara*" tolled during the progress of the condemned to the gallows.

On the succession of Alessandro de' Medici to the place of his fathers, on May 1, 1532, Florence became the capital of a Duchy. By his order "*La Campana*" was taken down and broken in pieces, "lest its sound should awaken echoes of lost freedom!" The last knell tolled on October 1st, 1532, and it marked the close of an eventful strenuous life. The liberties of a free people, and of a free parliament were buried in the grave of the Republic of Florence!

*Stemma de' "Priori de' Liberta,"* 1434.
(Red "Liberta" on a white field.)

THE BARGELLO (PALACE OF THE PODESTÀ)—STAIRS OF HONOUR

## CHAPTER III

# THE GUILD OF JUDGES AND NOTARIES

*L' ARTE DE' GIUDICI E NOTAI*

I. ORIGIN.—Judicial system built up upon the requirements of Trade. Florentine love of Equity. Bologna in 1262. College of Judges. Early mention of Consuls of the Guild.

II. CONSTITUTION.—Proconsul and his Court. Matriculation obligatory for a legal career. The two sections of the Guild and their precedence. Guild jealousies. Rules of membership and examinations.

III. TRIBUNALS.—The *Podesta* and the *Capitano del Popolo.* Their Courts. Courts of the six *Sestieri.* Or San Michele. The *Contado. Giudici alla Rota.* The *Mercanzia.* Court of Appeals. "*Il Statuto di* '96." Sessions of Courts. Sentences. Debtors. Capital Offences. Trivial Suits. *Stinche.* Sumptuary matters. Women litigants. Amusing cases. The "Stick"! Gambling.

IV. JUDGES.—High esteem. *Messeri.* Dress. Salaries. *Sportelli.* Veniality Sacchetti's skit. Boccaccio's strictures. Knighthood. The *Ringhiera.*

V. NOTARIES.—Special training. Each his own manual sign. Guarantees required. The *Notaio della Riformagione.* Chancellors of the State. Lucrative fees. Each Department of State, Guild, Business-house, etc., their own special Notary. Advisers and pleaders. Special commissions. Everybody happy to go to law with his neighbour! Disqualifications and tricks. Dress. Statistics of Legal Profession. Ser Lapo Mazzei. Demeanour of legal functionaries. College of Judges and Notaries, 1597.

IT seems, at first sight, to be somewhat of an anachronism to include a Guild of legal and professional persons among the Trade Corporations of the Republic of Florence.

Although the members of the Guild of Judges and Notaries were in no sense men of business, strictly so called, their functions were absolutely necessary to the prosecution of the industries and the commerce of the artisans and merchants around them. On the other hand, the judicial system of Florence was built up mainly upon the requirements of trade, the interests of which

were paramount in the political constitutions of the city and its territory.

Extraordinary characteristics of the Florentines of the Middle Ages were their love of equity and reverence for justice, and their administration by persons and councils without bias or partiality. Throughout the whole history of Florence nothing is more remarkable than the frequency and regularity with which the aid of individuals and powers wholly external to the purposes in view was evoked. The most notable example of this is offered in the selection of foreigners to fill the highest office in the State—that of *Podesta*. It was considered,—quite rightly,—that a stranger would be likely to bring to bear upon all questions submitted to his judgment a mind absolutely free from all leanings to one side or the other.

The application of this principle was looked for by the pioneers of the industrial and commercial activities of Florence, in the settlement of all matters relating to trade and traders. Whilst family ties and class distinctions were exacting and prohibitive in the allocation of judicial functions to men brought up and educated within the bounds of the Commune, no such limitations existed with respect to men trained in other centres of learning.

Bologna, the mother of universities, was at an early date the source to which the men of Florence looked for their legal advisers. Her fame as the teacher of jurisprudence was unrivalled, and her faculty of law attracted students from every city and country in Europe. In 1262 there were upwards of twenty thousand men engaged in the study of canon and civil law within her confines. Many a clever young Florentine found his way thither, and having made his name as a legal expert, he was welcomed home again as a valuable assistant to his father or his father's partners in business.

The prosperity of the city, and the prospect of honour and emolument at the hand of the rich citizens, also attracted men of other States, who had qualified in law. Upon all such

AN AUDIENCE WITH THE PODESTÀ

FIFTEENTH CENTURY

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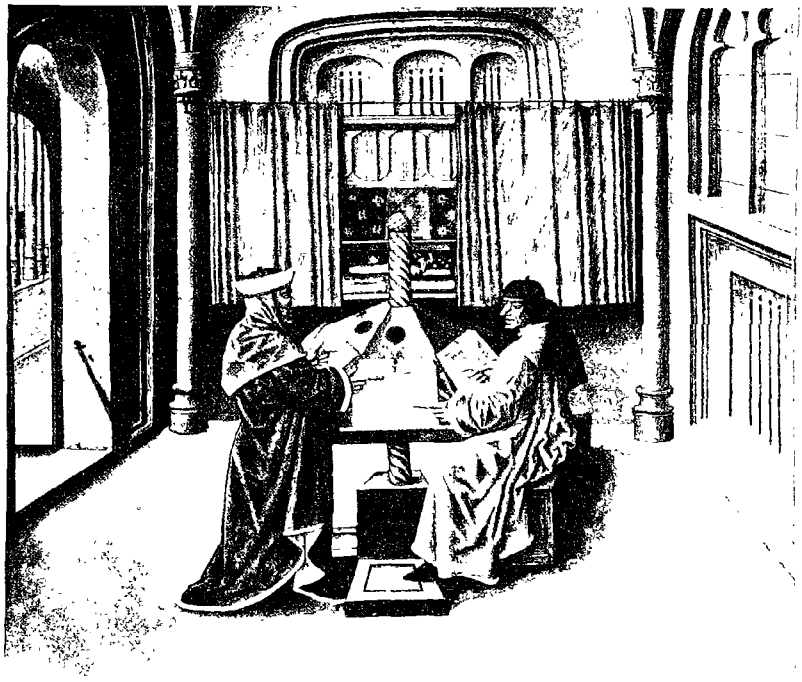


graduates of the University the degree of "*Doctor-juris*" was conferred.

The constant and increasingly numerous questions, disputes, and settlements, inseparable from all intercourse between man and man, trade and trade, created the necessity of a publicly recognised body of men learned in law and equity.

A College of Judges existed in Florence during the twelfth century, but the actual date of its establishment is conjectural. Anyhow rolls of membership and records of acts are extant of the year 1187.

The first mention of a Tribunal of Judges is in a document of the year 1197. This probably led to the formal incorporation of a Guild of Judges, at the same period that the early *Compagnie*, or Companies of the merchants and artisans, were developed into the more ambitious *Arti* or Guilds.[1]

A document[2] of the year 1193, preserved in the Archives of Florence, contains an account of a convention made between the Commune of Florence and the Lords of the Castle of Trebbio, in which are named the Seven *Rettori*—Rectors of the Guilds. This is especially interesting as the instrument in question was drawn up for signature by certain Judges and Notaries of the city.

In the Treaty of 1204 between Florence and Siena, the signatures of the Consuls of five Guilds are appended, namely: —Judges and Notaries, *Calimala*, Wool-merchants, Bankers and money-changers, and Silk-merchants. Again in 1229 the Treaty with Orvieto is similarly signed, and it is noteworthy that the Consuls of the "Guild of Judges and Notaries" come first in each case. Such records prove that the Guild had been in active and honourable existence for many years.

At a State Council, held on April 15th, 1279, summoned to discuss matters relating to the Court of Rome,—whereat all the Guilds were represented by their Consuls,—the signatures of *Dominus* Ugo Altoviti, *Dominus* Jacobus Gerardi, *Dominus* Alberti

[1] L. Cantini, "Legislazione," i. 105-107 and iii. 62.
[2] Archivio della Riformagione, Bk. xxvi.

Ristori, *Ser* Benzi Dandi: *Notarius*, *Dominus* Gerardus Maneti: *Notarius*, Ser Cioe fil. Jacobi Buere—"*Consules Judicum et Notariorum*," are appended first.

The precise meaning of the title "Consul" is clearly set forth in distinction to that of "Judge." The former's office was "*pro manutendum Justitiæ*,"—for the maintenance of Justice,—the latter's was "*ad causas cognoscendum et terminatum*,"—for the searching and determining of causes. This distinction is strikingly brought out in the use of the two terms in documents of 1197, 1225, 1227 and 1235.

These documents, and the Statutes of the Guild, were always written in Latin, and never exhibited in the vernacular. All such authorities and enactments, however, were required to be copied out in the ordinary language of the time: the erudition of the notaries employed being evidenced by the use, more or less, of the "*della Crusca*" or polished manner. The exemption of the "Guild of Judges and Notaries" from this custom was a mark of the superior learning of the members, who were habituated to the study and use of the classic tongue.

In the Archives, and other authorities, the infrequency of reference to the "Guild of Judges and Notaries" is quite remarkable. Whilst the different industries were being gradually formed into Corporations the legal faculty appeared to have no cohesive existence. This may have been due to the fact that judicial and notarial functions were originally called into play as complementary and subservient to the interests of the various commercial operations. Goro Dati, however, in speaking of the Guild, says:—"It has a Proconsul at the head of its Consuls; it wields great authority, and may be considered the parent stem of the whole Notarial profession throughout Christendom, inasmuch as the great masters of that profession have been leaders and members of this Guild. Bologna is the fountain of doctors of the Law,—Florence, of doctors of the Notariate."[1]

[1] "Storia di Firenze," ed. 1775, p. 133.

The magistracy of the Guild was composed of the Proconsul and eight Judges, who were styled Consuls as in the Merchant Guilds. The Proconsul was the co-opted head of the Consuls, and it was requisite that he should have exercised the legal profession, for at least twenty years, and that without reproach of any kind. This highly placed dignitary, at all public functions took precedence immediately after the *Podesta* and the Captain of the People. He was the first of all the Consuls of all the Guilds, and to him was accorded a supremacy in their jurisdiction. He was accorded a Palace for his residence, in the street, later on, called Via del Proconsolo.[1]

The Proconsul and Consuls could at any time summon a meeting of the whole of the members, both judicial and notarial. They could also associate with themselves, as assessors, any number of judges when occasion demanded. They sat in all civil and criminal causes affecting members of the Guild. Their advice was sought whenever new laws were proposed to the State by any section of the inhabitants.

With respect to the Guild itself, the Proconsul and Consuls presided at the matriculation and enrolment of new members. The examination incumbent upon candidates was conducted by the same high officials.

Membership in the Guild was sought by the sons of noble families and of the influential merchant citizens, quite as much on account of the social position it bestowed, as for its professional endowments.

Matriculation was obligatory upon all who sought legal appointments. No person however was eligible for matriculation who had resided ten or more years away from Florence ; or whose father, brothers, or uncles had failed to pay in full all dues required by the State. Capacity for legal functions, and ability in notarial exercises, were incumbent upon all candidates, who were subject to a rigorous public examination by the Consuls.

The association of the Judges and the Notaries in one Society

[1] Cantini, iii. 169.

was an early necessity of commercial convenience and legal jurisprudence. The delivery of judgments, and their registration, involved two distinct but inseparable functions.

Whilst in the internal economy of the Guild all members were equal in brotherhood, in all public business priority of position was accorded to the Judges. There was, at all times, no little jealousy on the part of the Notaries at their apparent inferiority of station. Sometimes the rivalry became serious, and in 1287 it led to a partial separation of the two branches of the Guild.

Each division, in that year, elected separate Consuls to manage its affairs apart. All Guild business which required the consent, or dissent, of both divisions,—Judges and Notaries,—had to be voted upon, first in separate Session ; and then, an adjournment was made to the Church of San Piero Scheraggio, where a final decision was arrived at by a union of votes.

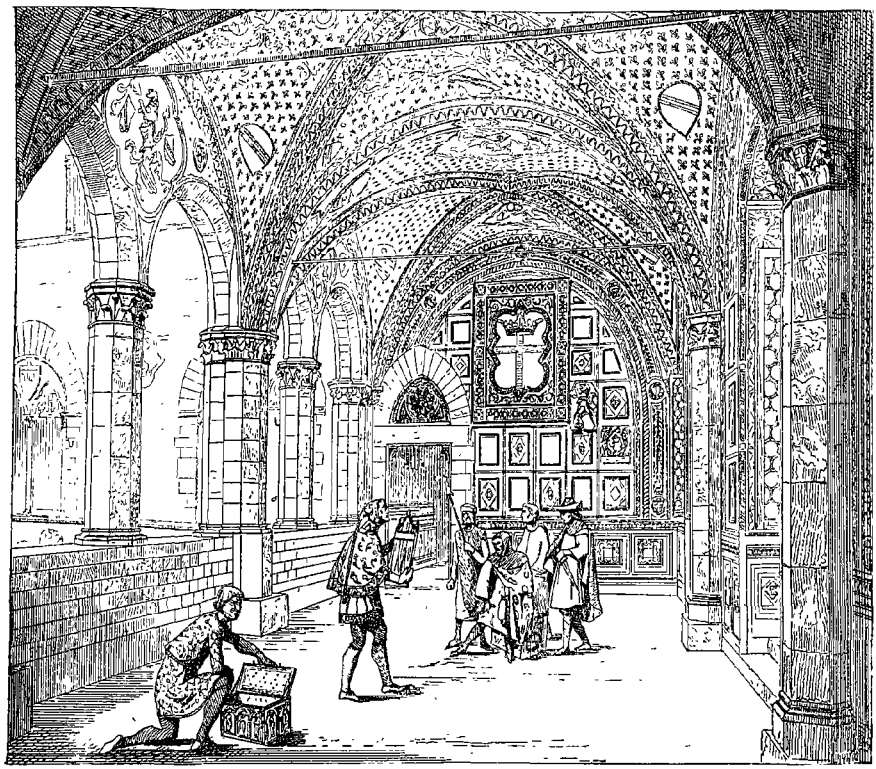
By the end of the century the disagreement was suppressed, and the labours and honours of the Guild were loyally borne by both sections together. Henceforth the high tone which characterised the bearing of Judges and Notaries raised the Guild in honour and reputation to the highest place in the hierarchy of Corporate Life.

The Residence of the Consuls of the "Guild of Judges and Notaries" was at the corner of the Via de' Pandolfini, a modest building which offered little rivalry with the fine palaces of the Consuls of the Merchant Guilds. Over its principal entrance was put up the *Stemma* or escutcheon of the Guild—a gold star in a blue field. These armorial bearings were varied in later times and four blue stars in a golden field were substituted.

. . . . . .

The *Podesta* was the Supreme Judge in all criminal causes, but he delegated his authority to the three Senior Judges of the Guild—not being Consuls ; and rarely, if ever, sat in Court, except in special cases, which involved the honour of the State. The first *Podesta*, — appointed in 1207, — was Gualfredotto

Grasselli, of Milan. He had for his Council four Judges and fourteen Notaries. The "*familiga*,"—household,—of the *Podesta* usually consisted of seven Judges—called "*Collaterali*," three



LOGGIA OF THE BARGELLO—PALACE OF THE PODESTA

Knights, eight Esquires, eighteen Notaries, ten Horsemen, two Trumpeters, twenty Javelin-men, and one page.

The *Capitano del Popolo* had three Judges, two Knights, four Notaries, eight Horsemen, and nine Javelin-men attached to his person. He took cognisance of civil causes—such as trade disputes, commercial frauds, and industrial questions generally.

His functions were commonly discharged by a Court of three Senior Judges. Uberto da Lucca was appointed first Captain of the People in 1251.

These two Chief Magistrates always subscribed the oath of allegiance to the Commune before the Proconsul and the Consuls of the "Guild of Judges and Notaries." The former was bound over to defend the Republic, and to lead her forces in time of war; whilst the latter was charged with the protection of the Guilds, and of the peace of the city.

In each *sestiere* of the city as originally divided under the rule of the good Countess Matilda, was a Tribunal presided over by the *Buonouomo*, whose title was early recognised as Consul. From the year 1242 he was assisted in the discharge of his duties by two Judges, two Notaries and two *Provveditori*, or Superintendents of the Court.

The two Judges took cognisance respectively of civil and criminal causes, under the styles of "*Giudice Civile dei Quatieri*"—Civil Judge of the Quarter—and "*Giudice dei Malafizi*"—Judge of Misdemeanants. Each Tribunal displayed a sign or banner with armorial bearings, which were also worn by the officials attached to each court in addition to the escutcheon of the Guild.

By the middle of the thirteenth century, however, all causes and trials were removed to the Central Tribunal established at Or San Michele. This was first held in the church or oratory, and then in the granary, but the inconvenience of crowding became so great, that buildings were erected in the *Orto* or garden attached to the Sanctuary. Over the entrance were put up the escutcheons of the Guild,—a great golden star upon a light blue field.

To the Judges,—who presided here in rota,—were assigned the investigation of claims and dues, the interpretations of rules of precedent and procedure, the meanings of enactments, and the determination of all matters affecting custom and antiquity which arose in any and all of the Guilds. Criminal suits also were heard in this Central Court of Justice and determined.

In the fourteenth century a return was made to the earlier system of Courts of the *Sestieri*,—a step made imperative by the increase of the population, and the inability of the Central Tribunal at Or San Michele to deal with the business which came before it.

Tribunals were established at Santa Maria Novella—for the *Sestiere* of San Pancrazio and Borgo SS. Apostoli; at Santa Croce—for the *Sestiere* of San Piero Maggiore, or Porta San Piero, and San Piero Scheraggio; at San Giovanni—for the *Sestiere* of Santa Maria Maggiore and Porta del Duomo; and at San Spirito—for the *Sestieri* in Oltrarno.

To these four Courts were assigned, in 1343, equal portions of the *Contado*, where population and building had increased in a wonderful manner. The old Central Tribunal was retained for special causes, and consequently the duties of Judges and Notaries were largely augmented.

Another addition to the facilities of suitors was made in connection with the extension of the municipal jurisdiction to the *Contado* in the creation of a movable Court of "*Doctores et Sapientes Juris*," or men skilled in legal technicalities—under the presidency of the Priors of the Greater Guilds, who attended by rota and attached their names to the decisions of the Court. This council of experts,—practically a Court of Assize, as we understand the term,—was served by six Judges appointed by the Proconsul and Consuls of the Guild. They were well paid, in consideration of the inconveniences and difficulties attending the exercise of their authority; but they were required to deposit caution money to the amount of two hundred *lire* each, as a guarantee of just and equitable conduct when beyond the city boundaries, and so, in a way, were a law unto themselves.

The "*Consiglio di Giustizia*," or "*Giudici alla Rota*,"—Council of Justice—was appointed in 1502. Five Judges—Doctors of Law—were elected for a term of three years. They sat twice a week in the lower and inner chamber of the Palace of the *Podesta*. This hall had a pavement of circular blocks of red and green

marble like a wheel—hence the alternative title of the Court, "Judges of the Wheel." Their decisions were laid before the Proconsul, to whom the delivery of sentence was assigned.

This arrangement, which was maintained until the end of the century, was very excellent and far more conducive to the despatch of legal business than the former haphazard systems. At the same time ecclesiastical suits were wholly removed from the purview of the Court, and ecclesiastical personages were no longer appointed assessors, as had been the custom.

The "*Giudici alla Rota*" was removed in the sixteenth century to the Piazza dei Castellani—renamed Piazza de' Giudici, and now the quarters of the National Library.

The most important legal Tribunal in Florence was "*La Corte della Mercanzia.*" Founded somewhere about the year 1296 it embraced the attributes of a Court of Justice and the functions of a Chamber of Commerce. It was composed of six Senior Judges, —members of the "Guild of Judges and Notaries,"—under the presidency of a foreign juris consult or doctor of laws,—generally a graduate of the University of Bologna. This President bore the style of *Ufficiale Forestiere*, a title which reveals, quite characteristically, the innate desire of the Florentines of old for the absolutely free expression of an unbiassed and impartial judgment in matters concerning the general well-being of the Commonwealth.

The President of the Court, by the way, as a matter of form, was required to be enrolled a member of the "Guild of Judges and Notaries." He had the power to summon before him all citizens who, by themselves, or by their partners, incurred liabilities abroad; and also all persons who were supposed to be in possession of information or evidence relative to any suit. In agreement with the six Judges he could requisition all merchants' and tradesmen's books, and could compel defaulters to make such restitution as the Court directed, at the demand of any foreign suitor.

The Code which this bench of judicial dignitaries were called

SUPREME COURT OF JUSTICE.

MIDDLE THIRTEENTH CENTURY

upon to administer went by the name of "*Il Statuto di '96.*" Its objects, which were threefold, were :—

1. To insure that Florentine merchants, and their merchandise, should go with all possible security and freedom throughout the whole world.
2. To secure that the credit of the State should be maintained under all circumstances and at all hazards.
3. To provide that foreigners should have no just cause of quarrel.

The jurisdiction of the Court was, at first, confined to the interests of the six Greater Guilds ; but, as the inferior crafts grew in influence, it was extended over the members of the fourteen Lesser Guilds, and later on, over all sorts and conditions of men.

The greatest difficulties with which the *Mercanzia* had to contend were in connection with international questions. These arose from the fact that every Florentine trader in a foreign land was regarded as a surety for his fellow-citizen at home. It was to this Tribunal that all questions affecting the interests of Florentine commerce beyond Tuscany were submitted for adjudication.[1]

It is interesting to note, in the records of Florentine history, how strikingly the highmindedness and judicial probity of her merchants and craftsmen were exhibited in the favourable view taken by the *Mercanzia* of appeals addressed to it by foreigners. The most elaborate precautions were taken that the subjects of other States should have no excuse for complaining of partial or unfair treatment.

The *Mercanzia* was also the final Court of Appeal in cross suits between members of the various Guilds.[2] One of the many and customary disputes which arose daily between traders in the Market and their customers came before the Tribunal of the Mercanzia on March 31, 1315. Two innkeepers sought to

[1] Giudo Benoli, "La Giurisdizione della Mercanzia di Firenze nel Secolo, xiv. Saggio Storico Giuridiceo," Firenze, 1901.

[2] Archivio del Stato di Firenze, "*Mercanzia*," 1030, f. 13.

restrain two fishmongers from selling eels, salted and fresh. The fish in question had come from Padua, and was offered for sale in the Mercato Nuovo, and the innkeepers declared it unfit for use although they had purchased it, and now they declined to pay for it.

Among other functions, almost too numerous to mention, the Court took charge of the goods and effects of deceased members of the Guilds, and appointed trustees to manage such estates for the benefit of the lawful heirs.[1]

In 1327 the seven Magistrates of the *Mercanzia* had been appointed collectors of the Assay, or Masters of the Mint, for the "preservation of the good fame of the city, which is spread abroad through the whole world, for the lawfulness and value of the good coin and the golden florins made therein." A later decree in 1394 gave the *Mercanzia* the right to proceed against forgers and depreciators of the coinage, as well as against makers of "corners" for the hardening of the money-market.

Powers were also exercised by the seven magistrates to re-open closed accounts, to inquire into misapplication of monies, to tax debtors' statements, and to sit as a Court of Bankruptcy. In the latter behalf the *Mercanzia* acted during the severe banking disasters which followed the course of the war between England and France in 1340.

In 1347, by a further extension of its powers, it embraced in its jurisdiction questions and offences touching maritime affairs.

Indeed, the "University of the Mercanzia," as it was fully styled, was to all intents and purposes the prototype of our modern Courts of Arbitration.

The Tribunal of the *Mercanzia* was held at the residence of the *Ufficiale Forestieri*, a massive edifice in the Piazza della Signoria between the Palazzo Vecchio and the Palazzo Uguccione. There also resided, during their tenure of office, the six assistant Judges. Within the Hall of Audience, immediately over the seats

[1] Lapo Mazzei, "Lettere di uno Notario a uno Mercante del Secolo, xiv.," vol. ii. 42, note 2.

of the Judges, were frescoes of the Seven Virtues, designed by Antonio Pollaiuolo. On the façade Taddeo Gaddi painted his celebrated fresco—"The Six Virtues and the Six Judges." Although this, alas, has long ago disappeared, the shields bearing the coats-of-arms of the Greater Guilds, cut in stone, still remain over the principal entrance. Above all runs the legend: "*Omnis sapientia a Domino Deo est.*"

The greatest period of the *Mercanzia* was from 1391 to 1470. In the latter year Lorenzo il Magnifico arrogated to himself much, if not all the functions of the *Ufficiale Forestiere*, and greatly reduced the authority of the Tribunal.

Lorenzo's successors, as Rulers of Florence, were, many of them, not too scrupulous in their administration of public affairs: law and order frequently yielded to circumstances and expediency. In 1532 the *Signoria* was abolished and Alessandro de' Medici proclaimed *Gonfaloniere di Giustizia* for life. Henceforward Florence became the victim of what she had striven for centuries to avoid—*il governo d'un solo.*

Certainly, at times, glimpses of freedom and good government are seen as the years roll on. For example, in 1568, Cosimo I., first Grand Duke of Tuscany, gave a new constitution to, and bestowed many privileges upon, the Tribunal of the *Mercanzia.*

With respect to the Sessions of the various Courts in old Florence little is known of the hours or the procedure. Business was, however, greatly interrupted by the frequency of public holidays and ecclesiastical festivals. No Judges sat on Sundays, and on Saints' Days, of which there were upwards of thirty in the year. At Christmas, Epiphany, Easter, Pentecost, Corpus Christi, feasts of Saint Mary, and of Saint John the Baptist, many days of vacation were observed.

In addition to the public courts the Councils of the various Guilds in council required the assistance of Judges, who not only acted as assessors, but were the actual proclaimers of the decisions arrived at.

The laws against debtors were very severe. Not only was it

permissible for creditors to subject unfortunate debtors to personal ill-treatment, but they were liable to imprisonment at the instance of the Magistracy, "with scant provision, crowded and packed together in a filthy place."

At a council of the Twelve Greater Guilds held December 7, 1304, Guilio, Vanno, and Chelo, silk-manufacturers, merchants of the "*Por Santa Maria*," were declared defaulters, and the Syndics were instructed to sell their goods. The same course was followed, in February 1305, when the Society or Company of Lamberteschi Lamberti, failed.[1]

A law of 1398[2] compelled debtors to act as executioners. On the other hand it was provided that whenever the great Bell sounded, summoning the citizens to general meeting, no one should be liable to arrest for debt.

Judicial sentences erred often enough on the side of severity. It was consequently a common practice for appeals to be addressed to higher courts for a redress of penalties. The reduction of a sentence in no way lowered the position or prestige of a Judge. If they were accounted rigorous they were always in accord with the directions of the Statutes, and with the Code of morals of the time. License was ever associated with harshness.

As indicative of the methods pursued against the perpetrator of a capital crime there is an interesting record[3] of the case of a man named "Lorenzo Pieri Chorus, of the *Popoli* of Santa Felicita, who, on February 18, 1318, was adjudged, by the Council of One Hundred, to pay three thousand *lire* for wounding to the death a certain person unnamed of the *Popoli* of SS. Apostoli, with whom he was at peace. The father of the criminal having paid fifty *lire*, according to the decision of the same Council in the November following,—and the said Lorenzo, who is now

[1] Archivio del Stato di Firenze, Provvisioni xii. f. 100, and f. 104.

[2] Ademollo, Lib. ii. 425.

[3] Archivio del Stato di Firenze, under date December 30, 1318, noted by Davidssohn, "Geschichte von Florenz," vol. ii.

banished and an outlaw, having concluded friendship and marriage with the family of the deceased, his petition for restitution of civic rights is granted, and he is directed to be brought into the city, and conducted to San Giovanni without having to submit to the ignominy of wearing a fool's cap or mock-mitre."

"In Florence," to quote the words of Francesco Guicciardini, the famous historian (1483-1540), it commonly happens that when a man has committed some violent offence no attempt is made to punish him with severity, but efforts are made to assist his escape on his engaging to disarm and not to renew his evil conduct." [1]

Capital punishment and physical torture were resorted to only in extreme cases, or in times of popular tumult. Fines and imprisonment were the punitive measures meted out by the Judges to delinquents. Suspension, too, from the prosecution of his craft was the ordinary punishment of an artizan found guilty of misdemeanour.

The Archives are full of references, of course, to the rulings of all the Courts. Generally the suits were of a trivial character; but, in those days, as now, when a man was determined not to be mulcted in costs, he did not hesitate to carry his case to the Court of Appeal. For an instance of this, a *tavernaio*,—a small tavern-keeper,—in 1279, appealed to the Superior Court against the sentence of twenty *soldi* imposed by the four Consuls of the "Guild of Butchers." The man appears to have lost his appeal because he had, upon the evidence of one of the Consuls, sold drink in contravention of the regulations of the trade.

The State Prison, called *Stinche*, was erected in 1307. The name was derived from the Castello di Stinche in the Val di Geve, which belonged to the Cavalcanti. A popular movement against the growing power of this ancient family led to the capture of the castle. Its garrison were made prisoners and consigned to the dungeons under the prison, which thus gained its appellation.

[1] F. Guicciardini, "Opere Inedite," vol. iii. § 177 (Counsels of Perfection).

It not unfrequently happened that prisoners were left to die miserably and alone in the *Stinche* and the other prisons of Florence. Condemned criminals were imprisoned, if sentenced for a life incarceration, or for a respite before execution, in the dungeons of the Bargello, where also was an *oubliette.* Human skulls and bones have frequently been discovered under this building.

The release of a prisoner was a somewhat rare occurrence; it was usually effected on a Sunday or Saint's-day, when, by a touching religious ceremony, the prisoner was conducted to the Church of San Giovanni, and offered at the altar, which he quitted a free man.

Women,—to judge by a great number of legal enactments,—gave the authorities much trouble. They were absolutely forbidden to enter a Court of Justice, and Judges were warned not to give ear to their complaints. A Statute of 1294 gives this quaintly ambiguous caution:—"Women are a sex to be looked upon as most dangerous in disturbing the course of justice!"

Many sumptuary laws were, during the fourteenth century, directed against the excess of feminine adornment, and these Judges were called upon to administer strictly. Many they very cunningly evaded by invoking the aid of Notaries, upon whom reposed the worry of investigation and the odium of correction.

A tale is told by Sacchetti[1] of Messere Amerigo Amerighi of Pesaro,—a Judge, during Sacchetti's priorate,—who was directed to execute certain orders for the regulation of the fashions of the time. He instructs a Notary well versed in such matters to prepare a statement. The Notary reported that one woman, whose headdress was too high, refused to lower it, saying, "Why, no, don't you see it is a wreath." Another, wearing many buttons on her dress, defended herself with the remark, "Yes, I can wear these, they are not buttons, you see they have no hanks." A third, accused of wearing ermine, replied, "This is not ermine, it is the fur of a suckling." When the unhappy Notary asked:

[1] F. Sacchetti, "Novelle," cxxxvii. vol. i. p. 327.

WOMEN LITIGANTS BEFORE THE PODESTÀ

LATE FOURTEENTH CENTURY

"What is this suckling?" she replied: "Oh, it is only an animal!"

"A good woman and a bad one equally require the stick!" was an old and familiar saying of the Florentines: somewhat harsh and ungallant perchance, but never more applicable than to would-be female litigants!

The Statutes with respect to gambling, card playing, etc., are frequent and minatory, and their application gave the Judges endless trouble and presented many inconsistencies. The "*Archivio della Grascia*" preserve many such acts, and also show how greatly worried judicial dignitaries were in Florence in the enforcement of such decrees. A friend of Messere Amerighi indeed scribbled upon the margin of one of the excellent Judge's sumptuary Summings-up:—

> "If there is a person you do hate,
> Send him to Florence as a magistrate!"[1]

. . . . . .

The ability, integrity, and urbanity of the Florentine Judges soon gained approval all over Europe. This recognition had a reflex influence upon the individuals, and encouraged them to live up to their high reputation. The esteem in which the office of Judge was held in Florence is evidenced by the honourable title of "*Messere*," which was generally accorded to the judicial members of the Guild.

Judges were accorded equal precedence with Knights and Doctors of Medicine in all ceremonies, whether public or private. They were always invited to marriage feasts as guests of the highest distinction. In common with their equals, Judges wore long red cloaks, lined with miniver, and an inner and tighter fitting garment of the same colour. Degrees in official rank were exhibited by variations in the length and fulness of their robes, and in the quality and quantity of fur adornments. The head covering,—a close fitting cap, with a falling curtain or sash,—was also red.

[1] See Guido Biagi, "The Private Life of the Renaissance Florentine," p. 46.

Some counsels of perfection, almost whimsically written, are found by any who have time to search the Archives of Florence for matters relating to the "Guild of Judges and Notaries" and its individual members.

One learned and sententious scribe says:—"Bear well in mind that when you pronounce a sentence you go on straightforwardly, loyally, and justly; and do not let yourself be swayed aside from this, either by bribes, love or fear, by relationship or friendship, or for the sake of a companion. For the person against whom you give your sentence will be your enemy, and he whom you would serve will hold you neither honest, nor loyal, nor straightforward, and will instead always distrust and despise you."

The payment of Judges depended as much upon the man as upon circumstances. Each was required to be possessed of a certain private income as an essential qualification for office. This income might accrue from inheritance, or from practice as advocate in the Supreme and Foreign Courts. The amounts paid by the State to Judges for judicial services were not so much in the way of salaries as commissions upon the business transacted. For example, in 1290 two "jurisprudents," to assist the Treasurer of the Commune, received each only one gold florin a month![1]

Civil causes of first instance were heard before the Judge of the Court of each *Sestiere*. He was required to have attained the degree of Doctor of Law at Bologna, or at some other legal University, and to be an enrolled citizen of Florence. His term of office was six months, and he might be re-elected, or not, as the Council of State decided. The salary was hardly commensurate with the dignity of the office—a paltry sum of twenty-five *lire*! In 1291 the Judge of a certain *Sestiere* received, however, as much as twenty-five *lire* a month, whilst another only obtained twenty-four, for four months.[2]

The Judges who sat as assessors or delegates of the Chief Magistrate were well remunerated. In 1292 the judicial assis-

[1] Provv. ii. 144, Oct. 11.

[2] Provv. iii. 17, 1291; 85, 1292; 100, 1292.

tants of the Captain of the People were paid forty-five *lire* each for presiding at the drawing of the "*Taglia*."[1]

Judges of Appeal, however, were regarded as superior dignitaries, and were paid on a still more liberal scale. In 1286 one such personage received five hundred *lire* for himself and his two Notaries.[2] In 1358 a Judge of Appeal received as much as fifteen hundred *lire* per annum.

Judges were forbidden to exercise their functions privately, as well as publicly, on all Festivals and Fasts. Their *sportelli*, or wickets, might indeed be open on the days of obligation, but only for the delivery of messages and for brief replies to inquiries.

The dignity of their position, and the high esteem with which they were regarded generally by people of all classes, did not, all the same, prevent the miscarriage of justice, nor the degradation of their office at times by both Judges and Notaries. The common experience of noble ideals failing to enforce themselves at all times, and under all circumstances, was confirmed, alas, often enough, in busy, turbulent Florence.

Boccaccio, Sacchetti, and other popular writers and critics of the various periods, adduce numbers of instances where right and justice were made to yield to veniality and fraud. Bribes were freely offered, and often enough as freely taken. One litigant having offered the Judge a fat ox to obtain a favourable verdict, his opponent promptly sent in a fine cow in calf: the wily magistrate accepted both, and dismissed the case! "I would rather see my son," said Sacchetti, "a sportsman than a Judge"[3]

Whilst travesties of justice were made the occasion of ridicule, they had their effect upon the public opinion. The strictures of Boccaccio upon unrighteous Judges are very severe. "They," he says, "pretend that they are ministers of justice, and of God, but they are indeed the executors of injustice and the friends of the devil."[4]

The mention of Knights in connection with a Republic of

[1] Villani, xi. 92. [2] Provv. pp. 1, 14, 1286.
[3] F. Sacchetti, "Novelle," 77, t. ii. pp. 17, 21.
[4] Boccaccio, "Giorni," iii. nov. 7, t. 11, p. 89.

Merchants seems to be an anachronism, nevertheless Knighthood was not only generally recognised, but greatly sought after by men of position.

The creation of Knights in Florence depended upon three circumstances:—The visit of a foreign monarch, the assumption of the Podestaship by an alien sovereign,—both Charlemagne and Charles of Anjou bestowed the accolade,—and the will of the people, either expressed by the rulers of the State in public meeting, or vehemently pronounced in tumultuous assembly. In the latter category were Michele Lando and sixty-four citizens, who were created Knights by the popular voice in the *Ciompi* Rising in 1378.

New Knights were invested publicly, and to their care were committed in the name of the Republic a standard, a lance, a sword, and a shield,—the latter bearing the arms of the State. Of the symbols of Knighthood Dante sings how:—

> " . . . . Galigaio show'd
> The gilded hilt and pommel.' [1]

Their ennoblement required also the attestation of the Superior Court of Judges, to whom they were required to present their credentials after preparation by Notaries.

The Investiture was held after 1323 at the *Ringhiera*, a raised platform erected along the front of the Palazzo Vecchio, whereon the Supreme Magistrates were solemnly admitted, Decrees of State publicly promulgated, and Military Commanders received their insignia of office. It was the Florentine *Agora* or *Forum*.

No one desired more earnestly the distinction of an Order of Chivalry than Judges and Notaries,—the former to qualify for the highest offices in the State and for ambassadorial appointments to foreign States, and the latter to attain, at a bound, the step whereby they might exchange their humble writing equipage for the golden-sheathed dagger of knighthood.

[1] "Paradiso," Canto xvi.

Turning now to the other section of the Guild,—"the body of honourable Notaries," as they were called, we must remember that, unlike their lordly brethren of the Judicial Bench, they were men who had been born, educated, and trained in Florence. As boys attending monastery schools, or later, the elementary schools of the *Studio*, or Academy, they obtained the rudiments of notarial law at the feet of one or other of the many teachers of legal studies who were to be found in every part of north and central Italy in the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries. These preceptors were for the most part graduates in law of Bologna, looking out for posts as judges in the civil and criminal courts.

REGISTERED MARK OR SIGNATURE OF THE NOTARY NICCOLO DA FERENTERINO, 1236.

All Notaries, before pleading in Court, were obliged to appear before the Proconsul and the eight Consuls of the "Guild of Judges and Notaries," and to produce a guarantee of two hundred *lire* that they would "exercise their profession faithfully, and lawfully, and would never be guilty of the least exaction or extortion." Each was required to register his special signature, or mark, on admission to plead.

One of the Statutes of the Guild decreed that no Notary should be qualified to plead or to practise within the judicial boundaries of the Republic who had not lived for the last ten consecutive years in Florence. A Notary was required also to be of a respectable family, whose members had duly paid all the taxes and rates for at least twenty years. Regularly admitted Notaries were styled in documents "*Sapientes juris.*" They were attached to every court and to all the principal offices of State.

One of the most important officers of the Republic was the *Notaio della Riformagione.* His duties were those of Secretary to the Priors, and his business was to keep a register of their decisions. He was always a foreigner, generally a Lombard, and his salary ranged from one hundred *lire* in 1358 to four hundred and fifty.[1] Three days before quitting office he had to hand to the *Gonfaloniere di Giustizia* a copy of all acts issuing from the Supreme Council of State. For serious dereliction of duty he was liable, not only to heavy fines, but even to imprisonment.

A special Notary was appointed annually to assist the State Treasurer to keep the public accounts, and to prepare the annual Exchequer balance-sheet. By way of auditors of this department of the Government, two senior Notaries or advocates, doctors of law, were named, whose duty it was to examine, check, and pass or refuse, all statements of receipts and disbursements of public money.

Two Notaries were attached to the person of the *Gonfaloniere di Giustizia.* One acted as personal secretary, and retired from office with his chief. The other was the permanent secretary of the office, and had charge of the law-books, registers of business, list of reforms carried out or proposed, and all other documents relating to the department. His salary was only one hundred *lire* a year. Another officer of this Department of State was the *Cancelliere,* who was also a Notary. He held the privy-purse of the *Gonfaloniere,* and conducted his correspondence.

These three offices, though quite subordinate, were greatly sought after by young men endued with literary tastes, or ambitious to rise in the employment of the State. Coluccio de' Salutati, Leonardo Bruni, Carlo Marsuppini, Poggio Bracciolini, Marcello Vergilio and Niccolo Machiavelli were among those who in turn held the Chancellorship.

Four Notaries, "duly matriculated and of good fame and intelligence," were appointed annually for service in the Supreme Council of State. Whilst holding these appointments they were

[1] M. de C. Stefani, "Delizie," xii. 351.

forbidden to undertake any other professional duties. They kept the State Records, and had at hand all documents and materials which would be likely to be asked for in the course of deliberations. They were paid so much for the copies they wrote, ranging from seven *lire* for complete lists of citizens chargeable with the "*Catasto*" or Income-tax, to seven *soldi* for drafts of the motions before the Council.[1]

Lucrative fees were often paid by the State to Notaries for copying Statutes and other documentary matter. In 1291 two Notaries received forty-two *lire* for copying, illuminating and binding two new Statutes. To a Notary, who compiled an alphabetical register of the names of exiles, from the time of the Podesta Pietro dei Stefaneschi to the year 1291, was granted a sum of forty gold florins. Six Notaries were bidden, in 1246, to copy out the Register of Citizens for the "*Estimo*,"—Valuation of Property,—and they were paid thirty *lire*.[2]

Each Guild had its own special Notaries, whose nominations and appointments were generally made at a joint meeting of the Consuls of the Guilds. Under date December 31, 1326,[3] the following Guilds were thus provided for six months :—Bakers, Armourers and Swordmakers, Oil, Cheese, and Provision Merchants, Woollen Merchants, Tanners, Doctors and Apothecaries Judges and Notaries, Butchers, Skinners and Furriers, Retail Cloth Dealers and Linen Merchants, Wine Merchants, Carpenters, Innkeepers, Locksmiths and Metal Workers, Silk Merchants and Blacksmiths.

These legal officials were engaged daily, either in the Superior Courts, or in the Consular Courts of the several Guilds. In the latter Tribunals they acted as confidential advisers to litigants, and also as pleaders in Court. They were allowed to take fees from the persons seeking their assistance, and they received, in addition, fixed biennial payments from the Guilds on whose behalf they acted.

[1] L. Cantini, "Legislazione," iii. p. 12.

[2] Provv. iii. 8 v°, Sept. 3, 1291. Provv. 20 v°, Sept. 3, 1291. Provv. vi. 146 v°, Dec. 3, 1246.

[3] "Archivio del Stato di Firenze," R.A. fol. 96.

This twofold avocation led gradually to the creation of a new order of legal functionaries—an intermediate degree, so to speak, in the membership of the Guild. Senior or more ambitious Notaries obtained general recognition as Leaders, Advocates of Appeal, and so forth, and were entrusted with the higher duties of the profession, and at times were admitted as Assessors in certain suits to the Judges on the bench. This is an interesting development in legal procedure, and was no doubt the parent of the British system of barristers and solicitors.

Much of the time of Notaries was taken up with drafting charters—commercial and political; drawing up business agreements, contracts, and adjudications; preparing balance-sheets and other auditorial matters; conducting foreign correspondence for merchants; and dealing, generally, with the thousand and one clerical details of the immense trade of Florence.

Every business house and bank had its own special Notary, and so had the richer nobles, and the more important private citizens. Besides this, Notaries were despatched, for longer or shorter periods, to the many foreign cities and districts in which Florentine merchants had branch houses and agencies. One, Lamberto Velluti,—a member of the wealthy silk-manufacturing family,—was employed as Notary on one of the ships of the Peruzzi Company. Of him it is recorded that, after he had gained sufficient capital by fees and charges, he set up in business on his own account as a shipper of merchandise.

All embassies to foreign Courts, and all special missions for signing treaties and other international engagements, required the services of Notaries. They were bound to give notice at the *Monte Comune*,—public Pawn Office,—of all instruments drawn up by them for the payment of taxes, and, within a month of their execution, to deposit copies at the Offices of State.

Notaries, too, were employed in drawing up wills,—copies of which they were required to file within thirty days after the testator's death. They were forbidden to draft instruments

benefiting themselves, or any member of their families, under a penalty of fifty *lire*—the instrument so drawn was also declared null and void.

Notaries were appointed from time to time to inquire into, and to report upon, disorders among the hired soldiery of the Republic. These mercenaries were originally members of military companies, which were first enrolled under *Condottieri*,—Foreign Captains,—in 1250, when the faction fights between the *Grandi* and the *Popolani* were at their height. Their duties, in the first instance, were defence of the *Contado*, but their services were retained, later on, for the safeguarding of the city also. Four hundred were required each night to patrol the following streets:—Porta Rossa, Calimala, Baccano, Por Santa Maria, and the Corso degli Adimari, and other streets and squares, where were situated most of the Residences and Offices of the Guilds, the principal Banks, and the great Mercantile Companies, together with the shops of the more considerable tradespeople.

If women troubled worthy Judges with their fashions and their witchery, out-of-elbows Notaries worried the fair sex, in their quest for citations-at-bar, for breaches of the sumptuary laws. The protocols concerning dress were written out by the gentlemen of the long robe, who, not content with their faultless penmanship, busied themselves in the application of the prohibitions.

The officials of the "*Grascia*" were quick-witted Notaries. It was their amusement and their profit to interrogate all the women they met. When they saw one wearing, for example, two rings ornamented with fine pearls, or a little cap or wreath embroidered and embellished with gold, they noted down her name. A summons was probably issued against her and her husband, and the latter, to avoid a public spectacle, paid the fine and the Notaries' costs to boot![1]

It may be truthfully said that every walk in life in old

[1] Archivio della Grascia.

Florence was associated with the busy ministrations of these universal clerks and pleaders. Indeed, so much had the functions of the Notaries entered into the private life of the citizens, that whilst on the one hand every one was only too happy to go to law with his neighbour; on the other, the curse of the law became a byeword. Those who had experienced the miseries of litigation were wont to greet their more fortunate neighbours with the trite saying:—"May sorrow, evil, and lawyers be far from thee!"

The position of the Notaries in Court was immediately under the seats of the Judges. They were accommodated with raised desks, over which they were accustomed to bend for conference with their clients.

Their dress was more sombre than that of the Judges. They originally wore black or dark grey cloaks without fur, but, at a later date, they obtained the right to add that decoration. Attached to the cincture of their long tunics they carried pouches or bags,—much after the fashion of the merchants' *Scarselle*,—containing writing materials, and these were the distinctive marks of their profession. They were usually worn quite plain and unadorned, in contrast to the elaborate emblazonments upon the money-bags of the nobles and merchants.

Strict regulations were enforced against Notaries contumacious or delinquent. For example, if any were ten days behind in payment of taxes, dues, and contributions of all kinds, he was disbarred, and not permitted to practise until he had fully discharged his indebtedness.

Antonio Miscomini in "*Il Giuoccho delle Scacchi*" has a woodcut of the Bishop's Pawn, as we call the dignitary on the King's right in the game of chess; and this pawn is thus described by William Caxton in his "*Playe of Chesse*" in 1481:—

"The third pawne, which is sette tofore the Alphyn on the right side, ought to be figured as a clerk, and this is reson that he should so be. For as moche as among y$^{e}$ common peple of

whom we speke in this book they plete the differences, contencions, and causes while the whiche behoveth the Alphyn to gyve sentence and juge as juges. This pawne holdeth in his right hand a pair of sheres or forcetis, and with the lifte hand a great knyf, and on his gyrdell a penner and an ynkhorn, and on his eere a penne to wryte wyth. . . . It appertayneth to them to cut the cloth

NOTARY—WOOL MERCHANT. FIFTEENTH CENTURY.

signefied by the forcetis, as the coupers, coryers, tanners, skynners, bouchers, and cordwanners being signefyed by the knyf . . . and certain other crafty men ben named drapers, or cloth workers, for so they werke wyth wolle . . . Notayres . . . work by skynnys and hydes as parchemyn, velume, pittrye, and cordewan and tayllours, cutters of cloth, wevars, fullars, dyers . . ."

This extract, from the old French moralist, translated by Caxton, is interesting as indicative of the intimate relations which existed between the Notaries and the craftsmen of all kinds.

The integrity of industrial methods was ever under the ken of legal personages. Besides this, Notaries were permitted to deal wholesale in textile and other commodities. In several documents they sign their names with the twofold qualification—for example, *Ser Notaio-Lanaiuolo*, Notary Woollen-merchant, or *Dominus Lanarius-Notarius*, Wool-stapler—Notary.

Whilst the senior Notaries assumed all the dignified and supercilious airs of their more highly-placed brethren of the Guild—the Judges—the younger were denied the title of *Messere*, until they had absolutely mounted the judicial bench, but were classed merely as Notaries whatever their attainments and influence might happen to be. In 1495 the Notaries were made a class apart, and were disqualified from entering any commercial house or accepting any trading agency. They were forbidden also to undertake retail business of every kind.

. . . . . .

With respect to the numbers of Judges and Notaries, who from time to time exercised their functions within the boundaries of the State, it is difficult to deal. The latter were, as might have been expected, always in a considerable majority. In the year 1358, Villani says, "there were nearly one hundred Judges and upwards of five hundred Notaries." This is a high average for a population which had been decimated by famine in 1346 and by pestilence in 1348. Boccaccio records that the latter scourge slew, between March and September, as many as 96,000 out of a total of 160,000 inhabitants![1]

No writer has given posterity a more vivid and unvarnished story of the legal profession in old Florence than has Ser Lapo Mazzei, the good Notary of Prato, the wise man of "rough soul and frozen heart." A man of ascetic spirit, with sound religious sympathies, and a well-versed moralist, his letters are full of interest.

At jousts and during public festivals, if any member of

[1] G. Villani, "Cronica," xi. p. 93.

the "Guild of Judges and Notaries" did anything whatever against ordinary decorum and convention, he at once became an object of satire, and no one hesitated to make fun of him. Breaches of correct manners often enough led to some funny fellow or other placing a thistle under the tail of the legal functionary's horse, and, as the poor beast tore back to his stable at a wild gallop, the air was rent with the derisive cries of the passers-by!

The Guild continued to thrive all through the "reigns" of the earlier Medici princes, although many of the prerogatives of the Judges were greatly curtailed and the peculations of the Notaries were covertly connived at.

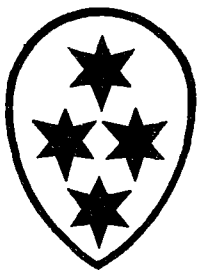
Almost the last record, in the Archives, of the "Guild of Judges and Notaries" was that of December 28, 1597, on which date a decree was signed by the Grand Duke Ferdinand I. which abolished the ancient title of the Guild and substituted that of "College of Judges and Notaries." Membership was made of three degrees:—1. Judges, 2. Advocates, 3. Notaries; thus recognizing the intermediate order framed in the last century.

Eight consuls were elected, two of the degree of Judge, two of that of Advocate, and four of that of Notary. The Council of the "College" was made to consist of eight members—four Judges and four Notaries. A Matriculation Board was also formed, composed of two Judges, two Advocates, and four Notaries. Each year, it was ordered that two Advocates should be appointed as Counsel for the poorer citizens in criminal cases, who should plead for their clients, without taking any fee or emolument, the Guild undertaking to pay them.

The great reputation of the Judges and Notaries, despite many and serious blots and blemishes, has been handed down to modern times. To-day, the legal profession is still the most important in Italy, and the most popular. The ambition, even of small tradesmen, well-to-do farmers, and skilled artizans is to see their sons graduates at law and advocates in the Courts.

Of the ornaments of the Profession, the aphorism of good old Francesco Guicciardini is as true now, as it was in his time:—"In Florence he who is a wise is also a good citizen, since were he not good he would not be wise." [1]

[1] "Opere Inedite," vol. iii. (Counsels of Perfection).



"*Stemma dell' Arte de' Giudici e Notai.*"
Four Gold Stars on a blue field, 1343; originally only *one* star.

A WEALTHY CITIZEN AND GROOM

FIFTEENTH CENTURY

A KNIGHT AND PAGE

FIFTEENTH CENTURY

[See page 61]

## CHAPTER IV

# THE "CALIMALA" GUILD

*L'ARTE E UNIVERSITA DE' MERCANTI DI CALIMALA*

I. ORIGIN.—Meaning of the name. "*Panni Franceschi.*" The dressing of foreign cloth. Merchants of the Calimala, 1190. Cavalcanti. The Chiefs of the Muggello. Early predominant influence of the Guild.

II. CONSTITUTION.—Statutes—Code, 1201-1209. Pious Uses. Usury. Legal Procedure. Trade Restrictions. Matriculation. Associated Trades. Games. Hours of Work. Disputes. "*Le bone usanze di Kalimala.*" Accounts. Official marking of cloth. Sharp dealers summarily dealt with. Tricks of the trade. Officers, and method of election. Consular Courts. Couriers. Inspectors. *Sbirri.* Agents. Dyers. Patchers. Cutters. Folders. Finishers. Bernardo Alamanno. *Scarlatto d'Oricello.* Pre-eminence of Florentine dyers, 1279. Spots and blemishes. Defaulters and fines.

III. DEVELOPMENT.—Superiority of Florentine methods. Mercantile Companies. Friction between the Guilds. Guido del' Antella and his "*Ricordanze.*" The "Calimala" in France. Famous Florentine Commercial Agents. A *torsello*—packing, freight, and invoice. Credit. Expansion of Trade in 1338. Tariffs. Dangers of commercial journeys. Fame of Florentine cloth. Leading "Calimala" families. Foreign Competition. The Record of five hundred years.

VARIOUS names and styles are given in documents and authorities for the Master Merchant-Guild of Florence:—"The Guild of Merchants," "The Guild of Merchants in Foreign Cloth," "The Guild of Calimala," "The Guild of Calimala Francesca," etc., etc.

The spelling of the distinctive name "*Calimala*" also varies:—"*Kallismale*," "*Calimara*," etc. etc. Its most probable derivation comes from the fact that the Residence and Offices of the Guild were situated in the Via di Calimala, a narrow street which led into the Mercato Vecchio,—the Old Market,—where also the chief business of the merchants of the Guild was transacted.

Over the doorway of the Residence was stuck up a shield bearing the arms of the Guild :—a golden eagle perching upon a white bale of wool in a red field ; and the same was blazoned upon the *Gonfalon.*

Machiavelli, writing about the enterprise of the merchants of the "*Calimala,*" says :—"The production of tissues of wool was so flourishing, that the work-people had only to dye and finish them in order to export them at once. The merchants who were engaged in this industry founded an "important Guild, called '*Calimala,*' from the name of the street."[1]

With respect to the term "*Francesca,*" or "*Franceschi,*" as applied to the Guild, it is noteworthy that Fernando Arrivabene, in speaking of Religious Orders, says :—"In 1182 the celebrated St Francis, founder of the great religious Order, was born at Assisi, in Umbria, being the son of Pietro Bernadones, a man of humble birth. At the sacred font he was given the name of Giovanni, but when quite young he was called "Francesco," because of the facility with which he spoke French—a language then necessary to the Italians in commerce, for which he was destined by his father."[2]

This may be taken to prove that before the year 1182 there was active commercial intercourse between Italy and France. Doubtless the words "*Francesca*" and "*Franceschi*" were used originally in Florence as applicable to France and French markets alone, but they were quite easily extended to the produce of other countries. Thus "*Panni Franceschi*" signified cloth manufactured in England, Flanders, and Spain, as well as in France.

From a remote period wool was the staple industry of the Florentines, which they manipulated with such admirable assiduity and skill, that very soon the output of their looms was in excess of the home consumption. Markets were sought beyond the confines of the growing town, and traders, moving about in com-

[1] "Le Istorie di Firenze," l. iv.

[2] F. Arrivabene, "Il Secolo di Dante," vol. i. chap. i. See also Dante, "Il Paradiso," xi. 88.

panies for mutual protection, undertook systematic journeys through the neighbouring States.

With England commercial relations were in existence in the reign of Henry II. At all events that monarch established a biennial Cloth Fair within the precincts of the Priory of Saint Bartholomew in the city of London; and he also encouraged the incorporation of a Guild of Weavers, taking as his pattern similar associations in Florence and in Flanders.

With rare acumen the Florentine traders bartered their stuffs for rich fleeces and fine woollen yarns, and, as they traded, the eyes of both parties were opened—the Florentines, to the superiority of the native raw material: the people of the countries, to the superior workmanship.

In addition to skill in weaving, Florentine workers excelled as cutters and folders; whilst as dyers they were unrivalled. The business of the Guild was exclusively the re-dressing and finishing of foreign-woven woollen cloth. Foreign cloth submitted to the methods of the Florentine merchants became a material which had no peer, and which when put upon the markets of Europe obtained the very highest quotations.

Whilst it is impossible to fix an actual date for the first formal incorporation of the "*Calimala Francesca Mercanti*," it may be safely asserted that the initial steps were taken in that direction at the end of the eleventh century. At that period, under the fostering rule of the Countess Matilda, the industrial progress of Florence was already remarkable.

Perhaps the earliest documental evidence of the existence of the "*Calimala*" as a body-corporate is in the year 1190, when the "Merchants of the Calimala" are named. Under the same date it is recorded that the Florentine family of Cavalcanti bore a leading part in the foreign cloth trade; and that they gave up their house in the Via di Calimala to serve as Offices for the purposes of the Merchants.[1] It may be interesting also to note that the very first names entered in the earliest extant Roll of

[1] Archivio di Firenze, No. xvii. 1422. "Spoglio Strozziano," v. i. p. 25.

Matriculations of the Guild of "*Calimala Francesca*" were those of the two sons of the donor of this property.[1]

From 1190, and onwards, notices of the "*Calimala*" and its operations are frequent enough in the Archives of Florence; for example, under date October 21, 1190—a document speaks of the Guild as in active operation.[2] It is in the form of a deed of gift of land and buildings for the benefit of the Guild, whereby Giambone di Ceffuli and Diede, his son, with the consent of their wives, make over irrevocably to Giovanni di Buoninsegna and Ugone d'Angiolotti, "Consuls of the Old Merchants of the Calimala," such and such property.

The earliest entry in the List of the Consuls is dated 1192, when the names of Giano Cavalcanti, Ranerio di Ugone della Bella, and Ugo d'Angiolotti are recorded as having served the office.

The importance of the "*Calimala*" Guild was duly recognised in the year 1199 in a document, which states that in the Superior Council of the Commune the "*Consules Mercatorum*,"—Consuls of the Merchants' Guild,—sat along with the three representative Priors of the Guilds and the ten *Buonuomini* under the presidency of the *Podesta*, Pagano de' Porcari.[3] At that date the number of the "*Calimala*" Consuls was six, their chief being Stoldo da Musetto. The business before the Council was the framing of a treaty of peace and amity with the robber chieftains of the Muggello, and other districts belonging to Lombardy, Venice, and Bologna, through which lay very important trade-routes.

Stoldo da Musetto and Raniero della Bella,—two of the Consuls of the "*Calimala*,"—were appointed to sign the treaty in which the Chiefs promise:—

1. To protect Florentine Merchants and their Merchandise throughout the feudal territory.
2. To consider the requirements of Merchants as their own.

[1] Codex Ricciardini "Register, or Roll of dell' Arte dei Mercanti di Calimala, 1235-1495," Lib. i. R. 1. xxvii.

[2] Archivio del Stato Fiorentino "Cartapecora Strozziana Uguccioni."

[3] L. Cantini, i. 150, ii. 65.

3. To supply trustworthy Guides for convoys, etc.

4. To compel all their followers to observe these conditions.

In 1202 Chiarito Pigli,—a Consul of the Merchants of the "*Calimala*,"—was invested with full powers by the State Council to reduce Semifonte, a turbulent little republic, which long

A CALIMALA MERCHANT IN HIS GARDEN. SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

withstood the growing power of Florence. One of her poets incited opposition by his effusion:—

"Florence stand back
That I too may be a city."

In the treaties with Siena and Capraia,—both in 1204,—with Prato in 1212, and with Bologna in 1216, the first signatures are those of the Consuls of the "*Calimala*." Indeed the influence of the Guild had already assumed a potential position in the counsels of the Commune.[1]

[1] S. Ammirato, "Dell' Istorie Fiorentine," vol. i. p. 76.

The official designation of the "*Calimala*," during the first twenty years of the thirteenth century, was :—"*L'Arte e Universita de' Mercanti di Calimala.*"

. . . . . .

The Statutes of the "*Calimala*" Guild are found in Latin in many manuscripts preserved in the Florentine Libraries. The earliest Codex bears the date 1301-1309; it is in the Magliabecchian Library, and is in the handwriting of Matteo Beliotti and of Giovanni Ser Lapi,—both Notaries of Florence,—and of their assistants.[1]

It opens with a dedication to the Deity which states that the Constitution of "the Craft and University of the Merchants of the *Kallismale* of Florence" is projected in reverence of St Mary, St John Baptist, SS. Peter, Paul, Philip, James and Miniato, and all the Saints; in honour of the Holy Roman Church and the Sovereign Pontiff; the Lord *Podesta*, the Lord *Capitano*, and the Commonwealth of Florence; and, finally, in all due respect for all worthy merchants and companies belonging to the "*Calimala.*"[2]

The First Part consists of thirty-two Sections, which treat, as the quaint heading says, "of all things pertaining to God and to the Soul." It speaks of pious observances, good works, integrity of conduct, obedience to magistrates, and of all else which goes to make a virtuous, industrious, and respectable citizen.

The pious profession of faith, with which the First Section deals, is noteworthy as indicating the intimate relation which existed, in the Middle Ages and early Renaissance, between the religion of daily life and its industrial and commercial activities. Every morning monks chanted Mass, in the ancient church of San Giovanni, on behalf of the members of the Guild and in furtherance of their enterprises.

Guildsmen were constrained to observe the annual church festivals, which numbered forty without reckoning the Sundays.

[1] Archivio del Stato di Firenze, Statuti dell' Arti, 1301-9.
[2] S. L. Peruzzi, "Storia del Commercio e dei Banchieri di Firenze."

CALIMALA MERCHANT
THIRTEENTH CENTURY

SERVING YOUTH
THIRTEENTH CENTURY

On the Eve of St John Baptist,—the Patron Saint of Florence,—every member of the Guild was required to visit the church, and to deposit a wax candle of the weight of nearly half a pound as an offering to the Patron Saint.

The "Merchants of the *Calimala*" bound themselves never to use blasphemous language. Usury was forbidden "because it is a sin specially displeasing to God."

Among the pious uses of the Guild were numerous annual contributions to the monasteries of money and gifts in kind for the relief of the poor and sick of the city. Several hospitals also were maintained at the cost of the "*Calimala*."

In matters of food and drink moderation and abstinence were advocated among all persons connected with the Guild. Forty pounds per annum was the very modest sum allocated for the table of the Consuls, who were boarded during their six months of office at the expense of the Guild at the Residence in the Via di Calimala.

The workmen employed by the "*Calimala*" in the repairs and decoration of the churches of San Giovanni and of San Miniato al Monte were subject to strict rules of conduct. They, and indeed all the members of the Guild, were admonished, under pain of heavy penalties,—including exclusion,—to maintain unblemished lives, and to treat women, children, and domestic servants with respect and kindness.

The Second Part of the Statutes contains forty-five Sections, which have to do with legal questions, pecuniary matters, disputes affecting members of the Guild, rules of membership and apprenticeship, and regulations affecting trading companies and associations of operatives.

The First Section deals with the powers of the Consuls, who are decreed to be supreme over all persons and causes within the Guild. Methods of procedure, employment of legal assistance, and obedience to the ruling of the Court of Consuls, are all fully explained.

The Statutes dealing with the customs and laws of debtor and

creditor are emphatic, and provision is made for winding up estates in bankruptcy. The sale of a bankrupt's effects could only be made at the instance of the Consuls in Council. Earnest money,—ranging from ten to fifty per cent.,—was due at the initial stage of all transactions, and payments are required to be made by instalment. All receipts required the seal of a cashier, before whom they were signed, and they were attested by the Syndic of the Treasurer. Defaulting merchants, or agents, were posted at the Guild Office in the Via di Calimala; but a time limit of ten days was allowed before resource to extreme measures.

All disputes, whether with respect to the interpretation of Statutes and Bye-laws of the Guild, or of the associated companies, or affecting the interests or customs of the Guild, were submitted to the Consuls in Court. A Special Commission of merchants was appointed by the Consuls, at their pleasure, to examine into all such matters.

Merchants were not allowed to sell any other kind of cloth except that which was named in the Statutes, nor to export fine wool and any of the ingredients necessary for the industry. Sales were confined to the interior of shops, and pieces of cloth for sale were not permitted to be exposed outside. The exchange of stuffs between the warehouses of merchants was also forbidden. Nobody was authorized to deal in foreign cloth, unless furnished with the formal permission of the Consuls. Persons seeking such authorization were required to make an affidavit, before the Guild Notary, of the respectability of their family connections, the integrity of their own character, and the probity of their pecuniary relations.

Membership and participation in the privileges of the Guild were only obtainable through Matriculation, as the formal and public recognition of the applicant's fitness. Accepted candidates made a money deposit by way of caution-money. They were required to have exercised, at least for one year previously, one or other of the callings in connection with the "*Calimala*," and to

have been in habitual attendance at the Offices of the Guild, and at the warehouses of members. Sponsors were required for good behaviour. The Matriculation-fee averaged four *lire*. Members of the Guild could introduce their sons without guarantees, and without the payment of fees, but they were held responsible for their good conduct until they had reached maturity.

It was competent for the Consuls, upon advice of the Notary, and with the consent of the General and Special Councils, to withdraw the privileges of membership, but a full statement of delinquency was required to be prepared, and to be posted in the "*Calimala*" Offices. The property of absconding merchants was confiscated by the Guild, and disposed of as determined by the Consuls.

Operative societies, or companies, were affiliated to the "*Calimala*" only with the view of avoiding confusion with similar organizations under the Wool Guild. Their privileges, and scope of operations, were strictly limited. No workmen, or group of workers, were permitted to work for both Guilds. The "*Calimala*" operatives were exclusively engaged in dealing with foreign-made woollen cloth. As a rule the "*Calimala*" employed sets of families rather than aggregates of individuals. The Statutes and Bye-laws of the "*Calimala*" are full of records of names and occupations where these limitations are obvious.

On the other hand "*Calimala*" merchants welcomed the sons of merchants of the other Guilds, and especially of the Guilds of "Judges and Notaries" and "Doctors and Apothecaries." The sole condition of the apprenticeship in such cases was abstention from the avocation of the parents. Sometimes premiums were paid for introduction into the leading mercantile houses, but generally a mutual arrangement was effected, which not unfrequently had a matrimonial alliance in view.

Apprentices were obliged to be the offspring of Florentine parents, but the actual place of birth was immaterial. They were forbidden to work for other masters than their own. When living under their master's roof,—as was the rule,—they were not

allowed to be about in the streets after the last stroke of the evening bell.

Admission to the Guild, whether as apprentice or full workman, required that the candidate should appear personally before the Consuls and a Special Council of twelve merchants, who gave their unanimous testimony that he was satisfactory and worthy.[1]

Against apprentices and work-people generally severe penalties were enforced for tale-bearing, idle gossip and stirring up quarrels. Prohibitive bye-laws were passed which made the use of indecent, blasphemous, injurious, and provocative language, within the neighbourhood of the Markets, Old and New, punishable by imprisonment.

All games of chance were forbidden after dark upon any premises belonging to the Guild, or its affiliated associations of work-people. Wagering at any time was strictly forbidden. The only amusements tolerated indoors were *Scacchi*,—chess, *Merella*,—back-gammon,—and *Tavole*,—draughts.

It was only permissible to work in foreign cloth between the matins bell and that of vespers. Operatives were forbidden to roam from workshop to workshop seeking work. Those who worked at home, or at factories, outside the city proper, were not allowed to visit the offices of the Guild, nor the establishment of their employers in the "*Calimala*" district; but were required to receive and deliver their pieces of cloth, and to make all complaints to the syndics and overseers of the Guild, in their respective neighbourhoods.

Certain Sections of the Second Part of the Statutes treat of the deaths of members, and the arrangement of their affairs. Whenever a full member, an associate, an apprentice, or the son of a member not yet matriculated, at least of the age of eighteen, died, the Consuls did not sit in Court that day. All workshops as well as the Guild Offices were closed until after the funeral, only *il sportello*,—the wicket,—being open just as when looms were idle on a Festival.

[1] Archivio di Calimala, Codex vi. 1, R. 87, Statuti 1309.

POPULAR PASTIMES—*PALLONA* AND *SCACCHI*

LATE FOURTEENTH CENTURY. (MUCH ENLARGED)

The Third Part of the Statutes has fifty-six Sections dealing with "*le buone usanze di Kalimala*,"—the customs, practices, and regulations of the "*Calimala*."

The First Section fixed the value of the *denario*,—the standard coin of the Market,—and enacts that any deviation in value can only be authorized by the Consuls in Council.

Several Sections treat of the methods of payment of accounts, the length of credits, etc. These were,—to use our modern phrase,—"bills" at three months, two months, eight days, or at sight, issued upon notice of the forwarding of cloth, whether for finishing through the agents of the "*Calimala*" merchants from foreign sources, or handed to foreign buyers after completion of the process of improvement in Florence.

It is distinctly stated that only cloth in whole pieces, imported from "beyond the mountains and from England," may be sold retail by merchants of the "*Calimala*" in Florence, and by a fixed tariff; but they were permitted to sell remnants of any kind of cloth to the Retail Dealers.

All pieces of foreign cloth which had been "finished" in Florence by the workmen of the "*Calimala*," after receiving the official stamp of the Guild, were required to be put upon the market before the expiry of eight days. The reason of this is made clear by the Statute, which warns merchants against holding back stocks so as to raise the prices.

At the time of the drafting of the Statutes,—1301-1309,—the price for dressed cloth of good quality was one silver florin per *canna*—inferior pieces were cheaper. The *canna*, a yard measure, was the official standard.

Sales were confined to the interiors of shops, and pieces and samples were not allowed to be exposed in doorways or windows. Very likely this was enacted in deference to representations of the Consuls of the Wool Guild, whose interests might have been prejudiced by rival sales of woollen-cloth. Garments made of foreign cloth, finished by the "*Calimala*," were prohibited as articles of merchandise in the markets of Florence.

Upon every piece or length of the finished cloth, of every kind and colour, was attached an official ticket or card, easily visible, bearing the fixed price, the name of the *villa* or factory, and the name of the *maestro* or maker.

An officer was enjoined to traverse all the streets, and to visit all the houses, wherein the industry was carried on, to see that every detail of the work was fully up to the standards, or models, which were deposited in the central hall of the "*Calimala*" Offices. All such matters were done with the utmost exactitude, and the smallest deviation,—even in the size, or the writing upon, the tickets,—was visited with fines and removal.

Sometimes a manufacturer was wayward, but he had to pay for his folly by double fines, and, if he continued negligent, he lost his "*Bollo*,"—the Guild guarantee,—and his name was removed from the Guild-Roll.

As early as 1292, the Consuls of the "*Calimala*" had received the ratifications of the Greater and the Special Councils of the Craft to their punishment of delinquents by fines and by striking off the Matriculation Registers all members, who transgressed the rules and customs of the Guild, together with their accomplices and the receivers of all illegal material.[1]

Many Statutes in this Third Part are directed against fraud and irregularity in dealing. The aim of the "*Calimala*" was to conduct the business of the Guild in a strictly honourable and almost religious manner. Every contract begins with an ascription to the Trinity, and supplicates the benevolent aid of Saint Mary and all the Saints.

The well-known profanity whereby a dishonest or grasping salesman passed his *canna* along the piece whilst each name of the Trinity, or names of the Saints reckoned so many *braccia*,—forearm lengths,—was constantly practised. Sales too by guess work on the part of the buyer, whereby a bid exceeding the actual value by Statute was accepted, was another scheme to defraud.

Dipping cloth in water and, when soaked, stretching it beyond

[1] Provv. i. 3, p. 112.

its standard length, and then selling it at the excess measurement, was a common trick in the baser shops. Sacchetti tells in one of his charming "*Novelle*" what happened to a certain Soccebonelli of Friuli, who went to buy some cloth. The merchant measured out four yards, but managed to steal some back again; to cover the fraud he said to Soccebonelli: "If you want to do well with this cloth, leave it to soak all night in water, and you will see how excellent it will become." Soccebonelli did as he was told, and then he took the cloth to the cutter, and asked him to measure it. "It seems to me," said the latter, "to be five *braccia*." Soccebonelli told how he had been cheated, but he gained little sympathy, indeed one man he met told him about a person "who bought a *braccio* of Florentine cloth, kept it in water all night, and by next morning it had shrunk so that there was none of it left!"[1]

It was believed that many pieces of cloth, which came from Milan, and other places, and which were sold before the bales were opened, were dyed there. Andrea del Castagno,—a naturalist-painter and cynical diarist, who lived 1390-1457,—writes as follows:—"I heard that a certain agent,—Giovanni del Volpe by name,—seeing that this sort of cloth sold well, thought of saving money for his firm by dyeing it in a cheaper and inferior way."

Against all these and other sorts of fraud the Consuls constantly issued denunciations and penalties, the first offence counting for three gold florins, and the sale being pronounced null and void. Repetitions of dishonesty, or questionable dealing, were visited with still heavier fines, and even incurred suspension and expulsion from the Guild.

The Fourth Part of the Statutes contains fifty-eight Sections, which deal exclusively with the election of the officers of the Guild and their functions.

At the head were four Consuls, and a Treasurer, who were elected every six months by the votes of the Master-merchants generally, and confirmed by the Masters of the various Companies incorporated into, or affiliated to, the "*Calimala*" Guild:—such as

[1] G. Biagi, "Private Life of Renaissance Florentines," p. 23.

Dyers, Pressers, Cutters, Dressers, etc. Candidates had to be "adherents of the *Parte Guelfa*, lovers of the Holy Roman Church, and of untarnished reputation, in the Guild and in the Commune."

The mode of election was as follows:—the names of eligible candidates were first inscribed upon paper and placed in an urn, whence, under the direction of three merchants chosen as scrutators for the purpose, the oldest merchant present drew five slips. The five candidates, thus selected, could not be partners in the same business house or company, nor associated with any of the retiring five officials.

Electors, who were fully matriculated and active members of the Guild, resident within the *Contado*, had, for each retail shop held by one individual, one vote; whilst the possession of a wholesale factory, gave the company two votes. The voting was by casting black and white beans. If any chosen candidate was "white beaned" the three scrutators caused another selection of names to be drawn from the urn;—and so on until the election was consummated. Failure on the part of merchants to attend, and to vote, was punishable by fines; whilst those who were finally elected were obliged to serve their terms of office, or forfeit twenty-five *lire*. Each Consul received a salary of about forty *lire*, and the Treasurer ten *lire*, for their terms of office.

The four Consuls were bound by strict rules. They were not allowed to go beyond the boundaries of the *Contado*, except for religious purposes, or on behalf of the interests of the Guild—or, when so nominated, as ambassadors of the Republic to foreign States.

The duties of the Consuls were:—(1) to grant matriculation to those whom they considered worthy; (2) to decide civil and criminal suits between members of the craft, and their workpeople; (3) to protect the factories, shops, and agencies of the members of the Guild, whether at home or abroad; (4) to assist merchants in the recovery of credits; (5) to disburse the charities, and superintend the pious works of the Guild; (6) to represent the Guild on all official and ceremonial occasions; and (7) gener-

COURT OF CONSULS, WITH NOTARIES AND LITIGANTS

FIFTEENTH CENTURY

ally to safeguard the interests of the Guild and of its individual members.

The Consuls were also called upon to nominate representatives of the Guild in all foreign countries, with which there were commercial relations. Lastly they had authority to appoint, when necessary, a Court of Arbitration to settle all trade disputes, whether within or without the obedience of the "*Calimala*." This court was composed of six influential merchants, to whom was entrusted the interpretation of the Statutes and Ordinances of the Guild.

Every month the Consuls of the "*Calimala*" met the Consuls or Heads of the other Guilds of the City, in consultation, upon general commercial matters preparatory to the preservation of measures and provisions to the Council of State. These meetings bore a political aspect, and were all powerful in the government of the Republic.

The Consuls were assisted in the exercise of their functions by two Councils. The first,—called "General,"—was composed of twelve members,—merchants belonging to separate houses or companies within the Guild. All matters of general interest were submitted, during three successive days, to this Council for approval or the reverse. The second Council,—styled "Special,"—had eighteen members, chosen from among master-merchants, who had knowledge of special departments in the operations of the Guild and the affiliated Crafts. To them were submitted by the General Council all matters which required expert advice; their session also extended over three days. Their report was handed to the General Council, who, after arriving at a final decision, placed the matter before the Consuls. To avoid packing the Councils no companies, or affiliated trades in connection with the "*Calimala*," were permitted to have more than two representatives. All votes were taken by means of beans.

The Treasurer, who was required to be at least thirty years of age, was called upon to deposit a sum of one hundred *lire*, by way of caution money upon taking office. To his charge were

committed the cash books and the keys of the Guild. He was not allowed, however, to make any payments on behalf of the Guild, without the approval of all four Consuls. To prevent undue influence, and to protect him from claims and bribes, no member of his family, or of his company, was eligible to succeed him until two whole years had passed after his term of office had expired.

In addition to these principal officers there were a number of officials who assisted them in the discharge of their duties :—

1. The Notary,—a member of the "Guild of Judges and Notaries"—was attached to the persons of the Consuls. He was always non-Florentine by birth and training, and was forbidden to be on social terms with the members of the Guild, and on no account to eat or drink with them! He acted as spokesman for the Consuls in Court and at meetings—a very sensible arrangement seeing that there was no educational or elocutionary qualification for the superior office! It was his duty to instruct the Consuls in the execution of their functions, to explain to them the bearings of the Statutes, Provisions, and Bye-laws, etc., upon all questions of procedure, and to see that every regulation was duly observed by the Guildsmen at large, and by the Consuls in particular. He was directed to render his report every month to a special panel of merchants—chosen by lot. In cases where matters required investigation and correction, the report with notes was submitted to a second panel consisting of twelve master-merchants. His office was for one year, at the termination of which his acts and general conduct were reviewed by three experienced examiners. They imposed upon the unfortunate fellow, fines, in proportion to the heinousness of his derelictions of duty ; and, so far as we can discover, Notaries never escaped scot-free, nor, it goes without saying, were they ever recompensed for faithfulness and impeccability!

2. The Treasurer, too, had an Assistant, or executive officer, whose title was *Sindaco*,—perhaps Cashier. His duty was to check the current expenditure, and to keep the daily cash account

at the Headquarters of the Guild. All payments passed through his hands after their delegation by the Treasurer, and he acknowledged receipts of all kinds. To his charge consequently was committed the common seal of the "*Calimala*," without the impression of which no acts were deemed official. At the end of each day he submitted his report to the Treasurer, and transferred to him all cash in hand.

3. In the month of January each year, three *Sindacatori* or General Inspectors, were chosen from those who had already served the offices of Consul or Treasurer. Their duty was: (1) to check the acts of officers of the Guild; (2) to expose irregularities and to publish the names of offenders; (3) to institute legal proceedings against such persons; (4) to endorse good government and praiseworthy services; and (5) generally to point out and prevent impositions of all kinds.

4. Once a year also twelve master-merchants, called *Statutari*, were empanelled for five days,—generally in December,—and housed and fed at the expense of the Guild. Their functions were to examine carefully the wording, and the sense of each Statute, with a view to any correction, or alteration, required in furtherance of new objects and interests connected with the Guild. They were called upon to read the charters of incorporation, and the regulations of affiliated companies of workpeople, and to listen to any complaints or requests made by them. Their labours were not ended until they had issued, in the vernacular, all additions or alterations, suggested or agreed to, and had posted them for public examination at the Offices of the Guild.

Minor offices were *Nunzii*—Heralds, *Corrieri*—Couriers, and *Chiavari*—Registrars. The first,—two in number,—made public proclamation of the acts of the Consuls, and published all matters necessary for the members of the Guild and their workpeople to know.

There were three *Corrieri*—two travelled between Florence and France, and one between Florence and Rome. Their duty was to fix, upon the spot, the amount of earnest money in all

transactions of the merchants, and to hand over the balance, or to receive the same, upon the completion of all contracts and orders. The *Chiavari* were Registrars of population, membership, deaths, wills, etc., as well as auditors of the cash-accounts of the affiliated operative companies. They kept the keys of all the minor offices, and acted as cashiers for deposits by workpeople and small dealers made in the Guild Treasury. Their number varied according to circumstances.

Besides these officials there were small Committees of merchants appointed from time to time, who scheduled the wage-tables of operatives employed by the "*Calimala.*" They superintended the numbering and labelling of foreign cloth before and after it had been finished in Florence. Once a year, in July, two merchants were deputed to fix the price of dyeing, to which all dyers were bound to adhere, unless, of course, they chose to take lower prices on their own account.

The testing of weights and measures belonged to the care of another sub-committee, together with the examination of cloth lengths for the prevention of short measure, deficient weight, and inferior quality.

The watching, cleaning, and lighting of the vicinity of the Residence of the Consuls was in the hands of a Watch Committee of three or four members, who employed twenty or more *sbirri* or watchmen for the purpose, each armed with a stout staff and a lantern.

Members of the Guild and their workpeople were subject to severe disciplinary measures, with respect to their behaviour in the streets, particularly in the Via di Calimala and in the Mercato Nuovo. The entertainment of friends and social intercourse were subject to restrictions. The Consuls had plenary powers for dealing with all unruly citizens. Fines and imprisonment in the *Stinche*—city prison—were impartially served out to friend and foe alike.

The Fifth Part of the Statutes treats, in twenty Sections, of the *Sensali*—Brokers or agents, the *Tintori*—Dyers, the *Racconciatori*

—Patchers, the *Tagliatori*—Cutters, the *Piegatori*—Folders, and the *Compitori*—Finishers employed by the merchants of the "*Calimala.*"

The duties of the *Sensali* were to inspect all imports of foreign cloth on arrival, and to distribute it to the various associations of workpeople. Within twenty-four hours of delivery in Florence at the Offices of the Guild, *Periti dell' Arte di Calimala,*—experts,—made a careful examination of every piece of foreign cloth, with respect to quality of wool, manner of manufacture, and length and weight. Satisfactory pieces were at once sent on to the work-shops, whilst those which failed to satisfy the requirements of the trade were set apart for further consideration.

Any citizen might be admitted to the position of *Sensale* who had a good character for piety in religion and uprightness in his business capacity. Such were required before being enrolled upon the books of the "*Calimala*" to give personal security in money, and bail in the persons of their friends.

They had to render, once a month, to the Consuls sitting at the Residence, a detailed report of their operations with respect to the origin and condition of all cloth received, and to the processes to which it had been subjected. Their report also was the medium of complaints made by the work-people, and of delinquencies on the part of those with whom the *Sensali* had dealings.

The first operation in the treatment of foreign cloth was not the actual dyeing, but the preparation of the pieces for that process. When first unrolled they were generally found to be covered with knots and blemishes which coarsened the surface. These required the very greatest care to eradicate and smooth over, and this process was carried through by women as well as men, who used very fine plyers and needles and hot irons. Sometimes even darning was necessary, but this had to be done with extreme delicacy, and with foreign wool of exactly the same quality as the piece.[1]

[1] *Note:* Three old "*Tiratoli,*"—Fulling-Mills,—belonging to members of the Guild were still standing in 1898:—in the Via de' Servi, del Castelluccio, and degli Alfani—each bearing the name of "*dell' Aquila*"—the Eagle=the arms, or trade mark, of the Guild.

The Dyers of the "*Calimala*" were required to weigh and measure all pieces of foreign cloth directly they received them from the *Sensali.*

No piece of cloth was handed over to the dyeing cauldrons until it had been inspected in detail by the foreman of that group of workers.

Most foreign cloth, by reason of its finer texture,—in which it greatly surpassed the native manufacture,—was also far more sympathetic in the absorption of colouring matter, and in the production of far more beautiful tints. After being dipped many times, and stirred by the introduction of smooth wooden poles, in the colour bath, the pieces were hung up to dry, stretched on frames. The opinion of expert dyers was asked at this stage, and attention was paid to fashion and fashion's behests. Every faulty piece was at once returned to the cauldron for a further soaking. Upon a successful result in the dyeing process, the pieces of cloth were again weighed and measured by the *Sensali.* Losses in weight and dimension were charged to the Dyers, who had the power of recovery by a fixed set-off price against shrinkage.

EXPERIMENTING WITH DYES.
SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

The introduction of dyes and dyeing materials, and the rules concerning their use, were immediately under the administration of the merchants of the "*Calimala.*" Vegetable dyes only were

employed, and they were sought in every accessible land. The time and abilities of the most prominent citizens were given ungrudgingly to the discovery of new colouring plants and to their export to Florence. The acquisition of a new dye was just as much a question of State policy as was that of obtaining mordants and other adjuncts of the dyeing industry. The war with Volterra, for example, was made solely for the possession of the famous alum pits of that district, the use of which material was essential.

The chief plants used for dyeing were *Guado* or woad—for blue, *Robbia* or madder—for red, and *Oricello* or white moss—for scarlet.

Woad grew in abundance all about Florence, but careful cultivation produced a wealth of growth, and ensured a richness of product, that made its rearing a lucrative employment along the countryside.

Madder, too, was common enough in Tuscany, but the finest kind was found in the neighbourhood of Rome, where it had been a speciality ever since the time of Pliny.[1] The country about Chiana, and the valley of the Tiber, produced, in the fifteenth century, madder to the value of many thousand florins, almost all of which was bought up by the "*Calimala*" merchants.[2] Very much madder was imported from the valley of the Rhone.

The introduction of White Moss was due to a Florentine "*Calimala*" merchant named Bernardo, or Nardo, Alamanno. His discovery of its property as a colouring medium was due to mere chance. He observed during a commercial exploration in the Levant, in 1261, that a little plant, when moistened with uric acid, gave out a crimson-violet liquid. Experimenting with this colouring matter he soon noted its value for distinction of hue and fastness of stain. Bernardo accordingly made up a goodly bale of the moss and took it back with him to Florence.

Once home he called in the assistance of some members of the "Guild of Doctors and Apothecaries," and presently the eyes

[1] Pliny, Lib. xix. c. 3. [2] Targioni-Tozzetti, "Viaggi in Toscana."

of the inspectors of the "*Calimala*" opened wide at the brilliancy of the new dye. Nothing so splendid had ever been seen in a Florentine dye-shop. The fortune of Bernardo was made, and he assumed for his family the cognomen of "*Rucellai*," which his descendants still retain, carrying on to-day in Florence their ancestral industry. One of his most famous descendants, Giovanni Rucellai, was a perfect type of the noble merchant who valued the dignity of his position. He not only knew the secret of making money, but he also understood how to spend it well. "I think," he wrote in his "*Zibaldone*,"—"Stray-thoughts,"—"that it has brought me more honour to have spent well than earned well."

The method of extracting the superb scarlet-purple dye was very simple. Bunches of *oricello* were cut after flowering, and hung up in the sun to dry. The dried moss was then reduced to very fine powder, in a mortar, and mixed in a wooden vessel with a sprinkling of sour wine. Whilst stirring Uric acid was added gradually, and the mixture was well shaken once a day. To this liquid soda-ash was added, in the proportion of twelve parts to one of the powder, and the whole was filtered through chalk or lime.

The utmost stringency was enforced upon dyers to ensure the perfection of the colours. Only the purest and most expensive qualities were allowed to be used in the treatment of the finest cloths. Woad was guarded with as much care as the white moss. No one was allowed to sell it outside the membership of the Guild, under penalty of a fine of five hundred pounds (£20). Each dye had its strict sale price and official quotation in the markets.

The privilege of selling colouring ingredients of all kinds for the purpose of dyeing woollen cloth was possessed exclusively by certain members of the Guild, and all other persons were forbidden to offer such for sale. There is a note in the Florentine Archives to the effect that in the year 1347 a Company of "*Calimala*" merchants sold, to two merchants of Valencia, forty-four thousand pounds weight of woad for a sum of eight hundred gold florins (£400).[1]

[1] S. L. Peruzzi, p. 95.

The export of *robbia*, beyond the limits of the State—especially what was called "*di Romandiola*,"—was strictly prohibited by a Rubric in the Statutes of 1415, a fine being imposed in fractions of one hundred *lire*.[1]

It was forbidden, moreover, to pass off one colour for another, and to imitate recognised tints, by a blending of various shades so as to deceive the dyer or the purchaser. Cochineal, Brazil-wood, and various other dyeing ingredients were used for other cloths than those classed as "the finest." Blending of colours was quite allowable, when special names were attached to cloth so dyed; but all such names were required to be written on large white labels, and fastened upon each length or roll. Madder might be used freely in dyeing cloths other than fine white or grey of foreign manufacture, which were classed as *Scarlattini*.

The favourite colour,—*Scarlatto d'oricello* as it was called,—in the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, was a rich purple red, the product of the *oricello* dye, with a small admixture of madder. This shade was prescribed for all robes of state and for ceremonial tapestries and hangings. It was also used for the *berretta*, or cap, worn by all who had the right of entry to the Superior Courts. This scarlet colour was most carefully guarded. Any dyer who ventured to produce "*Scarlatto di Colpo*,"—imitation scarlet,—was excluded from his trade, and all pieces of cloth so dyed were seized and burnt. Tuscan painters have preserved to us this rich colour in the backgrounds of their pictures and in the garments of their figures.

As early as 1279 the pre-eminence of the Florentine dyers was affirmed by a correspondence which was conducted between the Papal Court and the Consuls of the "*Calimala*" Guild. The latter maintained the exclusive right of the Florentine dyers to dye and to finish the cloth used for the red robes of the Cardinals, and for other ecclesiastical purposes where that description of cloth and colour was used.

The dyers of Florence rapidly became famous the world over

[1] Statuta Florentiae, Rub. clxxii., 1415.

Rosetti says: "The Venetians must confess that they have learnt their art from the Florentines."[1] Their skill and care are evidenced to-day also by the fineness of condition, and freshness of colour of the hangings, tapestries, banners, costumes, etc. etc.,—which are preserved to us in many of the public museums and private collections. They rival, if indeed they do not surpass, the best workmanship of the present day.

When dry, the cloth which was considered sufficiently and satisfactorily dyed was taken in hand by the Cutters, Patchers, and Piecers, who prepared the pieces for the final stage of its manipulation. These workpeople were often of inferior ability, and, as their work was comparatively easy and unimportant, they were very indifferently paid. Nevertheless their handiwork was rigorously inspected by the foremen of the Folders and Finishers lest they should make blunders in cutting the prescribed lengths of the pieces, and in joining pieces of cloth of dissimilar quality and shade of colour. Scrutiny was also exercised very keenly concerning remnants and cuttings, which might serve as marketable commodities for the *Rigattieri* or Retail Cloth-dealers and other hucksters of the markets. Patching was only resorted to in the second qualities of foreign cloth. The aim of the process was to hand on to the Folders and Finishers a perfectly even texture.

The Folders and Finishers were, along with the Dyers, the most important and most highly instructed of the labouring classes of Florence. They had first to detect and set right the blunders of the intermediate workers and their slipshod ways. Constant jealousies raged between the two sets of operatives, the former chaffing the latter for their fastidiousness, and the latter chiding the former for their carelessness.

The Folders were required to test once more the weights and measures of the pieces of cloth, and to note the various qualities with a view to their several destinations. In the case of transit the rolls and pieces had to be folded in a peculiar way, which

[1] G. Venturi Rosetti, "L'Arte del Tingere."

should do nothing to disturb the "nap" of the cloth, or cause friction.

The Finishers had to smooth the cloth and correct its surface, by the employment of heat either applied by weighted rollers, or by heated flat-irons. The methods which they used have never been exactly stated, but that they were laborious, and not a little technical, may be gathered from the fact that every yard of finished cloth was submitted to rigorous examination.

FINISHING CLOTH. SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

A special Committee of Experts, entitled, *Ufficiali delle Macchie e Magagne*, — Inspectors of Spots and Blemishes, —was employed by the "*Calimala*" Guild to go the round of the Cloth Finishers' workrooms to test the cloth in hand under every condition. Work, whether cutting, piecing, patching, finishing and folding, was submitted to the minutest examination. Inferior workmanship, presence of blemishes and roughness of surface were all heavily penalised. Fines were imposed, and, in case of non-payment, the whole guarantee or bail of the delinquent, or a portion of it, could be seized. The defaulters' names were posted at the "*Calimala*" Offices, and in serious cases they were deprived of the right to prosecute their trade within the boundaries of the city.

Such then were the Statutes of the "*Calimala*" Guild, and such their interpretation and uses which, promulgated in the

first decade of the fourteenth century, and many times revised and added to in the succeeding centuries, became the substance of the Constitutions of all the other Guilds.

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In documents preserved in the Florence Libraries, and among the archives of many noble families, very interesting notices are to be found, treating of the members, their duties, their charities, and of the general progress of the Guild. Among them are many directions dating from the middle of the twelfth century concerning the upkeep, decoration, etc., of the Baptistery of San Giovanni; and records of the purchase and sales of land in 1192, 1193, and 1216, on behalf of the Hospital of Sant' Eusebio. In 1228 and 1237 many *Provvisioni*, or agreements, were made with respect to the ancient Church of San Miniato al Monte, which was placed under the protection of the "*Calimala.*" In the latter year the ceremony of taking an oath by all members of the Guild was enjoined. This oath, which was registered before the Consuls, bound each member to observe for the year all the regulations and bye-laws, customs, and privileges, of the Guild.

The constitution of the first Florentine mercantile company was, in connection with, and under the auspices of the "*Calimala.*" The *Provvisione* creating it bears date 1234, and it was enrolled for the sale of foreign cloth after it had been redressed and finished by the workmen connected with the Guild. One of the earliest companies was that of the Scali, which failed in 1326, after being in existence for nearly one hundred years.

In a Codex of the fourteenth century the following list is given of mercantile companies, working in correspondence with the "*Calimala*" Guild[1]:—de' Canigiani, degli Spini, de' Migliori de' Guadagni, di Lapo Bounagrazia, di Buonaccorso Soldini, de' Marino Soldani, di Diotifici Filippi, di Lapo Marini, di Lapo Soldini, di Simone Giamini, and di Diotisalvi Artimisi. A parchment of the year 1300 contains twenty-one other names, including Cenchi, Bardi, Pazzi, Frescobaldi, Peruzzi, Scali, and Nerli.

[1] Archivio del Stato di Firenze, Statuti dell' Arti, 1301.

*UNO ANTICO MANGANO*—AN OLD ROLLING MILL FOR FINISHING FOREIGN CLOTH

It should be remembered that the "*Calimala*" merchants dealt with foreign-made cloth only. It was expressly prohibited for them to dress, finish, keep, or sell, cloth manufactured in Florence. This regulation was due not only to the risk of damage to the native industry in wool-weaving under the Guild of Woollen Merchants, but it was also a necessary precaution against difficulties with the operatives.

There was, as might have been expected, a constant danger of confusion and friction between the agents and the workpeople employed by the Guilds. Many *Provvisioni*, or regulations, were passed to minimise and to remove all clashings of interests Separate communities of Dyers, Piecers, Patchers, Cutters, Folders, and Finishers, were established in connection with the "*Calimala*" merchants, in order to prevent workpeople engaging themselves under the two Guilds. On no account would a "*Calimala*" merchant employ an operative who did not belong to a "*Calimala*" organisation.

There was also from time to time friction between the merchants and workpeople attached to the "*Por Santa Maria*"—"the Guild of Silk Manufacturers." This Guild had also dyers, carders, and other operatives, as well as agents and salesmen. In 1324 mutual arrangements were made whereby certain associations of operatives, and certain workshops and stalls for the sale of the merchandise of the two Guilds, were set apart so as to avoid the clashing of interests. The same year saw too the first official Register of "*Calimala*" merchants in foreign lands.

With respect to the foreign relations of the merchants of the "*Calimala*" there were equally precise and minute regulations as there were concerning the details of the home industry.

By the end of the thirteenth century there was not a country in Europe where Florentines were not the chief controllers of trade. The "*Calimala*" Consuls obtained the authorization of the Government of the Republic to establish Agencies in all the principal wool-producing and cloth-manufacturing centres.

One of the agents of the "*Calimala*" Guild, who travelled far and wide, was Guido di Filippo di Ghidone dell' Antella. He was born in Florence in 1254, and has left the "Ricordanze,"[1] or diary, of his journeys and experiences. In 1267 he went, he says, to Genoa on business connected with the Company of Lamberto dell' Antella, and dwelt there eighteen months. In 1270 the Company of Rinuccio Cittadini sent him to Venice, and there he remained two years. With his father he visited Ravenna in 1273 on business connected with a loan. His next employment was at home—five years in the office of Lamberto dell' Antella, and twelve years in the counting-house of the Scali Company. During the last period he was sent as representative of his house at various times to Pisa, to Naples, to St Jean d'Acre, into France, and to the Court of the Pope. Leaving the Scali, of which company he had been made a partner in 1290, he lived in France three years, working with the Franzesi. In 1296 with two partners, Neri Filippi and Lapo Ciederni, he rented a *tavola*,—banker's table,—in the Mercato Nuovo from the banking house of Baccherelli. Two years later he threw in his lot with Giovanni de' Cerchi and his Company, but quitted them in 1301 when the quarrel between the Cerchi (*Bianchi*) and the Donati (*Neri*) began.

In every part of France,—which now became a second Fatherland to the Florentines,—the "*Calimala*" merchants had agencies:—in l'Île de France—Paris, and St Denis; in Champagne—Provins, Lagny, and Troyes; in Berri—Bourges; in Provence—Marseilles, Toulon, Arles, Saint Gilles, and Avignon; in Languedoc—Nîmes, Montpellier, Narbonne, Béziers, Perpignan, Carcassonne, and Toulouse.

In all these places Florentine agents and traders abounded, receiving and executing orders, and, whilst they rendered obedience to the laws of the land wherein they resided, they laboured under the same regulations as these which ruled their countrymen at home. The agency at Nîmes was established in 1296, and that

[1] Archivio Storico Italiano, I. Series, vol. iv. p. 5.

in Paris in 1325,—the same year which saw Montpellier become a residential and commercial centre for Florentines.

The French agencies were placed under the direction of a resident Consul, or Consuls,—for later on there were two or three such magistrates,—chosen by the votes of the resident "*Calimala*" merchants and traders. They were received at the Court of the King, and treated with the honours of an ambassador from a foreign power. Their duties and powers were exactly similar to those of the Consuls in Florence. They had jurisdiction over posts, couriers, and communications of every kind. They confirmed dates, routes, and payments, for all commercial travellers, and received reports as to the transit of merchandise. They also controlled all transactions between merchants of the Guild and native traders at the country wool-sales and cloth-fairs, which were very numerous all over France, and especially in Champagne.

MERCHANTS BARGAINING OVER BALES OF CLOTH. SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

In these and other multitudinous duties the Consuls were assisted, as in Florence, by Councils and officials of various degrees. Appeals were allowed to the Court of the Consuls in Florence, and the ruling of these Magistrates was accepted as final.

Paris was, of course, the central seat of the "*Calimala*" Guild in France, and there the scions of many influential mercantile houses

were employed from time to time. Among the more famous were Brunetto Latini, Cino da Pistoja, Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio and the Giovanni Villani.

Pieces of cloth consigned to Florence were carefully measured and weighed before despatch. Each bore in two places the seal of the agency, making the consignment, and, in addition, a label indicating the length, the width, the price in gold florins, the name of the manufacturer, and the name of the town of origin.

From ten to twelve pieces made a *torsello* or bale, which was wrapped in felt, and covered with two thicknesses of canvas sacking. The bales were conveyed generally direct to one or other of the General Depots at Narbonne, Montpellier or Marseilles, and thence, after inspection by "Surveyors of cloth-in-transit," stationed at each centre, despatched to Florence.

The twofold trade of the "*Calimala*" merchants in the purchase of native cloth, with its transport to Florence for redressing, and the sale of finished pieces received from the workshops of the Guild, was of course not confined to France alone. Agencies and offices were opened in Italy, in Spain, in Portugal, in Flanders, in England and in Germany.

The following is a copy of an invoice of the contents of a *torsello*—forwarded from Avignon by Piero di Borgognone and Company to Alberti di Borgognone, their principal in Florence, by way of Nice, under date December 14th, 1348[1]:—

" Nel Torsello segnato I. si tra—
1 Melle (piece of cloth) violetto di Borsella da Gian di Lintotto.
1 Bianco di Borsella de' p : e di macchero.
1 Melle verdetto di Borsella Gilis tacchо.
1 Violetto di Borsella Gilis di Veduena.
1 Violetto di Bors : Gian di Businghen.
1 Melle Alcipresso di Bors : Gian fenpo.
11 Scarlattini di Loano Gualteri Vilignalla.
1 Verde fistichino di Loano franco Randolfo.

[1] G. F. Pagnini, vol. ii. p. 99.

1 Melle bruschino Domenico Pietro Vanselfelt.
1 Melle mandorlato d'Ordinaido d'Angela Chiaro.
1 Nera di Bernai rubino nattino.
1 Bigio di Guanto Gran locrano.

fu questo per invoglia, ebbevi feltro, e tela doppia (packed in felt and double corded).

Segnato II. Soretti e uno Cappucia di Cafaggino di Gherardo."

This bale consequently contained thirteen pieces of cloth and also a garment and hood for a special customer. Francesco Balducci says [1] that only ten pieces went to a bale.

The Guild of "*Calimala*" forbade its members to give credit beyond three months under severe penalties for non-observance. Later on the time was extended to six months for consignments of foreign cloth to or from Florence, and to eight for bales of wool from beyond the seas.

Under date 1338 Villani [2] records that:—"the '*Calimala*' merchants receive annually more than ten thousand pieces of cloth, from over the mountains and from France, to be improved in Florence. Their value exceeds three hundred thousand gold florins, all sold in Florence, without including such as was sent out of the city, and sold in the East, along the Mediterranean and in all the principal cities of Europe."

The demand for the finished cloths of Florence became enormous, and there was consequently a tendency to keep up the prices not alone of the commodity, but of the freights. This condition of things culminated in the middle of the fifteenth century, when the means of communication became more extended, and the business relations of the "*Calimala*" merchants increased prodigiously.

To retain their hold upon the markets of Europe, they absolutely forbade the emigration of skilled workpeople, and the export of materials, and objects pertaining to the Guilds.[3] Heavy

[1] "Manuale del Mercante Fiorentino," tom. 2, p. 45.
[2] G. Villani, Lib. xi. cap. 94.
[3] Villani, xi. 5.

rates were charged upon cloth manufactured in, and finished for, countries which erected tariffs against Florence; as much as five gold florins was the impost for pieces of thirty-four *braccia* in length.[1] "The objects of this policy, as Pagnini rightly says,[2] was to create reciprocity, to prevent competition, to check the output, and to limit the traffic."

The "*Calimala*" Consuls and Council in their corporate capacity, and also the individual companies of merchants, were accustomed to send Visiting Inspectors from time to time on tour to look after the interests of the Guild and of the Trade. Matters which concerned private interest and enterprise were no more thoroughly investigated than questions of international importance.

The dangers to which merchants and agents were exposed at the hands of hostile and oppressive rulers of foreign states, or controllers of foreign manufactures, were plainly indicated by the seizure, in 1271, by order of King Philippe le Bel,[3] of all Florentine traders in France. He and his rapacious counsellors extorted heavy ransoms, making no discrimination between honest and fraudulent merchants.[4]

The Visiting Inspectors had no light work to do, but they entered upon their adventurous undertakings bravely. They generally started on the journey in companies, and were joined by others desiring to visit France and other European states for business or for pleasure.

The sole means of locomotion was by horseback. Gaily attired, and accompanied by their wives and other lady friends, and many retainers, and much baggage, the cavalcades assumed imposing dimensions, and became occasions of much revelry and of many adventures. When time hung heavy, or when darkness set in, a common occupation was to count their beads and to recite *Pater-Nosters* in fulfilment of vows taken before they started

[1] Statutes 1309-1316, Bk. iv. 3.

[2] Pagnini, vol. ii. 88.

[3] *Note:* Dante calls Philippe le Bel "*Mal di Francia*," Evil Star of France.—"Purgatorio," canto vi.

[4] G. Villani, vii. c. 1 and 6.

at the altars of their Patron Saints. Every voyager had also before leaving his *casa*, or his *podere*, or his *villa*, taken the wise precaution of making his will, and of committing his soul, and all his earthly belongings too, to the protection of St Mary and St John the Baptist.

The fame of the Florentine cloth was vastly enhanced by the high reputation of the "*Calimala*" merchants. Whilst eagerly seizing every opportunity for self-enrichment and for the aggrandisement of their beloved city, and the honour of their Guild, they were, all the while, quite remarkable for self-restraint and nobleness of character.

Between the years 1401 and 1548 we find, in the public records, that the following families contributed most members to the Guild :—Altoviti, 108 ; Strozzi, 107 ; Marbegli, 75 ; Ghiudetti, 72 ; Acciaiuoli, 71 ; Capponi, 61 ; Nasi, 59 ; and Solderini, 55. The names also of the following appear many times :—Alberti, Albizzi, Adimari, Amidei, Buondelmonti, Cerchi, Frescobaldi, Guicciardini, Lamberti, Medici, Pazzi, Peruzzi, Ridolfi, Ricci, Spini, Tornabuoni, Vettori, and Villani. Still earlier families were Cavalcanti, Donati, Bardi, Corsini, Rinucci, Pucci, Ardinghetti, Rinuccini, Chermonisti, Bandinelli, Buonaccorsi, and Dell' Antella.

All Europe looked on amazed at the enterprise, the wealth, and the power of the city on the Arno, and for many a long day no merchants and no manufacturers but hers ruled the international commerce of the world.

The methods and the secrets of their craft had the "*Calimala*" merchants safely guarded, but there was springing up in England and in Flanders a spirit like unto their own. There was no reason why other men should not do what the Florentines had done, and many a student, and many a statesman, as well as many a trader, set their minds to work to find out the why and wherefore of the ascendancy of Florence.

England stepped first of all into the arena, and, under Henry VII., a law was passed by the British Parliament to prohibit the export of unshorn cloth. Other countries followed suit. This

was a blow to Florence from which she never recovered, for, together with the prohibition of export, there appeared upon the scene native workmen, who had learnt something of the methods of the Florentines.

Before she had got over the effects of adverse legislation and treatment on the part of her erstwhile customers the Grand Duke Cosimo I., with fine old Florentine protectionist instinct, issued, in 1561, a decree of the Government, which forbade the importation of serges and light woollen cloths from England and Flanders! This action was by way of "cutting off one's nose to vex one's face!" This was a final and a deadly blow, and the whole stately edifice of the "*Arte e Universita de' Mercanti di Calimala*" tottered to its fall!

In 1359 the State had bestowed upon the "*Calimala*" Guild a site for the erection of a Residence for the Consuls and their Courts, in lieu of their narrow quarters in the old Cavalcanti Palace. The doors of this Temple of Commerce were opened in prosperous times, but they were closed in days of waning power. Who closed them, or when they were shut,—never to open again,—no historian has recorded. After the Republic was abolished, in the year 1532, the grand old Guild drooped slowly but surely, but its death and burial are alike unnoted, and no *Scrivano* has left even one word to tell of its last moments.

The "*Calimala*" Guild had held a preponderating position—industrial, commercial, social, and political, in the history of Florence for five hundred years and more!

ARMS OF "THE GUILD OF CALIMALA" EAGLE AND BALE OF CLOTH

## CHAPTER V

# THE GUILD OF WOOL

### *L'ARTE E UNIVERSITA DELLA LANA*

I. ORIGIN.—Wool the oldest textile industry. A quaint old "Tract." An ancient Florentine document. The Countess Matilda. A fulling-mill of 1062. Early workers in wool. Actual origin of Guild uncertain. Destruction of documents by *Ciompi* in 1378. Home consumption. Foreign markets. Two sections of original craftsmen. Separation of "*Calimala*" merchants.

II. CONSTITUTION.—Similar to that of "*Calimala*" Guild. Particular legislation to avoid confusion. Code of 1301-1309. Duties of *Stimatori* and *Sensali*. Adulterations. Standard weights and measures. Payments in advance. Letters of credit. Many revisions of the Statutes.

III. THE UMILIATI.—Their influence, methods of work, and example. Borgo d'Ognissanti workshops and workpeople. Great encouragement of wool industry. A new bridge. "*Pittiglioso!*" The *Cascine*. An anachronism. The "Brethren" retire from business.

IV. DEVELOPMENT OF THE GUILD.—Many classes of workpeople. Processes. The Carding-comb. Dyers. Cost of dyeing. The Duke of Athens. Favourable regulations. Good wages. Fixity of tenure. Pawning. Noises. Games. Emigration. An old loom. Supply of wool. Inferiority of Tuscan products. *Lana di Garbo*. Trade with Great Britain. Prices of raw wool Freights. Tariffs. Wool sales. Transport. Leonardo da Vinci's ship-canal. Description of woven cloths. Allied mechanical trades. Foreign workpeople welcomed. Florence covered with cloth. Prosperity. Cloth sales. Residence of the Consuls. Factories in the *Contado*. Momentous questions. Protection. Strikes. Hardening of prices. Foreign competition. Taxable articles. "*Fare il Signore!*" Tapestry and Cosimo de' Medici. The Military Order of the Knights of St Stephen. A new Constitution. Silent looms.

THE manufacture of woollen cloth is doubtless one of the most ancient industries of the human race. In an old volume, entitled "Trattato della Pittura, Scultura, ed Architettura," written by Giovanni Paolo Lomazzo,—painter of Milan, —with the sententious legend out of Ecclesiastes: "In the hands of the skilful shall the work be approved," there is the following quaint reason for the existence of the wool industry[1]:—

[1] Published in English. Oxford, 1598.

"In so much as our bodies being borne naked by Nature were diversly annoyed by the intemperateness of the ayre, it most ingeniously invented the Art of Weaving and Tailery; not so much for defence and safegarde of our bodies from iniury of the wether, as for ornament and decencie; and to the selfe same end hath it also found out (in a word) all the other Mechanical Artes."

The historical records of every civilized nation give early and prominent position to the working of, and the trading in wool. The Persians, the Egyptians, the Greeks, and the Romans,—the great civilizing and commercial races of the world,—used and improved the manufacture of woollen cloth. Under the universal dominion of the latter power the extension of the woollen industry synchronised with that of military and civil jurisdiction,—the trade, then as now, followed the flag.

The first reliable notices of the woollen industry in Tuscany present it to us as already in a flourishing condition, and giving employment to the majority of the inhabitants of the towns and villages. From a document,[1] dated May 10, 846, it appears that the weaving of wool was carried on in Lucca, under terms of trade association, and with a code of regulations.

We may fairly presume that Florence was not far behind her neighbour in the matter of date. The capital of an enlightened succession of Marquises and Dukes of Tuscany, we may be sure that the principal industry of all time was not without encouragement and co-operation, within the limits of her influence and jurisdiction, during the ninth, tenth, and eleventh centuries.

Under the beneficent rule of the Countess Matilda the prosperity of Florence advanced greatly. The workmen at her looms and the merchants in her marts spread her fame far and wide. The Commune became a Republic of Industry and Commerce, and her wool merchants and manufacturers were enrolled among the earliest of the Consuls.

[1] Peruzzi, p. 64.

Among the many trades which were actively prosecuted in the eleventh and twelfth centuries the following are noted in the portions of the State Archives which are preserved :—

" 1062. *Gualchiera*—a fulling-mill."
" 1096. Petrus—tentore—wool dyer."
" 1136. Scartone—pettinario—woollen-comb maker."
" 1148. Petrus fil. Petri—pelliparius—cloth-presser."
" 1193. Guerius—tonditor—sheep-shearer."

The scenes of these early industries was well within the *Secondo Cerchio*,—Second Wall,—of 1074 : security of life and property not being assured in the *Contado* beyond. In the Prato,—which along with Monte Orlando,—was enclosed within the city's boundaries, in 1107, were located a great number of workers in wool. The dressing of wool was also carried on in Via Alfani, Via dei Servi, Via Ginori, Borgo Pinti, Via della Pergola, and in the Piazza delle Travi, in the twelfth century.

In a State paper of the year 1197 is a law concerning the cities and lands of Tuscany, wherein the people of Florence are described as :—" wool-workers from Olivero."[1]

The precise date of the first incorporation of the "Guild of Wool." in Florence, is quite uncertain. Much of the knowledge we can obtain of its inauguration is from presumption, for during the memorable riots of the *Ciompi* in 1378, most of the documents of the Guild were destroyed by fire. This fact, taken in connection with the poverty of the remnants of the State Records, leaves us very much in the dark with respect to the initial organization and early development of the Guild. Perhaps the earliest record preserved is a list of the names of the Consuls up to the year 1138.[2]

Almost certainly the "Wool Guild" was the first Corporate Society or Trade Corporation in Florence, and was in existence before her wool and cloth merchants began to travel through

[1] L. Cantini, "Saggi," vol. iii. p. 73.
[2] Pagnini, "Della Decima," vol. ii. p. 83.

Europe. The output of the Florentine looms was in excess of the demand on the spot, consequently enterprising manufacturers looked abroad for markets.

This development led to the division of the wool-workers of Florence, and the establishment of a separate Corporation of dealers and finishers of foreign-made cloth—the "*Calimala.*" In a very true sense the "*Arte della Lana*" was the mother of the "*Arte di Calimala,*" but as time went on, the greater profits obtainable by the latter drew into membership the more considerable of the citizens, and hence the "*Calimala*" merchants took the first place in wealth and influence, whilst native manufacturers had to be content with the second place.

Notices of the Guild are frequent during the first thirty years of the thirteenth century, and the Consuls signed their names to Treaties with other States along with the Consuls of the Guilds of "Judges and Notaries," "*Calimala,*" "Silk Merchants," and "Bankers."

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The organisation of the Wool Guild marched with that of the "*Calimala*" merchants. Before the promulgation of the Statutes,—drafted 1301-1309,—the "Guild of Wool" was ruled by Priors, later called Consuls, whose number in that year was eight. They had power to make regulations and laws for the direction and benefit of the Guild, and had full jurisdiction in all civil and criminal causes over all enrolled members. They were chosen by lot from among the most skilful masters of the craft.

Matriculation followed the rule observed by the "*Calimala*" Guild,—qualifications of birth, education, and parental income, were necessary. The relations between the matriculated members of the Guild and the operatives, engaged in all the various processes of the wool industry, were quite the same for the two Guilds.

About the year 1300 three separate sets of master-merchants were empanelled to assist the Consuls in the execution of their

WOMEN WORKERS IN WOOL

FIFTEENTH CENTURY

office. These were called *Consiglieri*,—Advisers or counsellors, *Regolatori*—Officers of byelaws and regulations, and *Provveditori degli Ordini*—Superintendents of enactments.[1]

The adoption of the Code of Statutes, enacted for general use by all the Guilds in 1301-1309, was agreed to by the members of the Wool Guild almost in its entirety.

At first sight it seems probable that difficulties and confusion would arise between the "*Calimala*" Guild and that of Wool. Certainly there were some inconveniences, at an early period, due to the similarity of the merchandise in which each was interested. However it was soon seen that the business of the former had exclusively to do with the finishing of foreign made woollen cloth, and had nothing in common with the treatment of raw wool and the manufacture of cloth.

Regulations and rules were passed by the Consuls and Councils of each of the two Guilds, which rendered it practically impossible for one to injure the other. No member of the Wool Guild was allowed to keep or sell foreign-woven cloth. The weaving of expensive cloth was restricted—perhaps with a view to avoid competition with the trade of the "*Calimala*" Guild in redressing fine foreign-made materials. On the other hand cloth made up of inferior cardings was condemned to be burnt—a wise precaution against any temptation to force shoddy pieces upon the market.[2]

The right of the "Guild of Wool," and of its Consuls and duly elected officers, to control the business and the workpeople of the Guild was affirmed by a special rubric. At the same time the members were bound not to interfere in any way with members of other Guilds. Persons not matriculated in the Wool Guild were forbidden to make and sell woollen pieces, and further were restrained from mixing dyes or doing other things connected with the wool industry.[3]

The *Stimatori* and *Sensali*,—the official measurers and brokers

[1] L. Cantini, "Saggi," p. 96. [2] Statutes of 1309-1316, Bk. iv. 45.
[3] Statuta P.et (C.) F. 1415, Rubs. xlv. and xlvii.

of the Guild,—acting under the express orders of the Consuls, made scrupulous examination of the pieces before they were placed upon the market. Each piece had to be of the exact standard length and weight—the latter varied considerably after the processes of fulling and dyeing.[1]

Falsifications, adulterations, and irregularities of all kinds were severely visited by fines, destruction of the cloth, and posting the names of all offending manufacturers and merchants at the Offices of the Guild. The mixture of linen thread with woollen was condemned, except its quality and description were plainly marked upon the woven cloth. This industry however was fairly prosperous, especially for exportation: cloth thus manufactured bore the name of *Moscolato*,—mixture,—and *Tintilano*,—grained.[2]

A piece of woollen cloth usually measured from thirty to thirty-two *ulne*,—the yard-measure of the workshops was a little longer than the *canna* of the "Calimala," the yard-measure of commerce. The *canna*, as used by the "Guild of Wool," measured one and a half *braccio*, or a forearm's length, each *braccio* being 22.97 inches, English.

The average weights of woollen yarn in the bundle were as follows:—*Garbo* serges, one pound,—for fine qualities, either white or coloured, one pound four ounces; for *San Martino*,—finest qualities only,—one pound five ounces; each weight being that shown by the scales of the *Battitori*,—Wool-beaters.

It was permissible to buy and sell pieces of cloth, *boldroni*,—whole fleeces of lambs' wool without the skin, woollen yarn, and all-woollen sundries, in packs or bundles; but, in each transaction, absolute honesty was enjoined, in the deduction from the purchase-money of the weight and value of the tare, whether sacks, exuding moisture, pieces of fat or skin, dust or any other extraneous matter.

*Sensali* of the Guild were warned to pay particular attention

[1] T. Truchi, "Difesa del Commercio dei Fiorentini," p. 17.
[2] Cantini, iv. p. 45.

to these matters, and to make careful entries in their sale and transfer books. Disputed tares were to be at once taken before the Consuls for their decision. Any person attempting to pass off rubbish of any kind as good sound wool was punished by a fine of one hundred *lire*. The use of unjust weights, and undue pressure of the hand upon the scale incurred a penalty of two hundred *lire*.

The office of *Sensale*,—agent,—was quite as important in connection with the Wool Guild, as it was with the "Guild of *Calimala*." Many of these "middle men" made huge profits, and became influential merchants; but, in the archives, under the year 1326, is a curious entry, which states that a certain wool-broker declared he had not earned more than fifty *lire* that year!

The Consuls of the Guild required that all payments for yarn, cloth, raw-wool, and the adjuncts of the industry should be made in advance, for sales effected within a distance of one hundred miles from the city; and further, they forbade discounts of every kind. Payments to customers, or agents, beyond that distance were managed by "Letters of Credit," under special notes of interest, agreed upon with the co-operation of the "Guild of Bankers and Money Changers."

The Statutes of the Guild were revised in 1317, 1331, 1333, 1338, 1362, 1415 and 1428; additions were made in 1319, 1333, 1337, 1361, 1427 and many times in the sixteenth century. In all of these proceedings the Wool Guild bears its full title of "*Arte e Universita della Lana*."[1]

. . . . . .

The arrival and settlement of the *Umiliati*,—the Humble Fathers of Saint Michael of Alexandria,—in Florence, in 1238, had an instantaneous and beneficent effect upon the woollen industry at large. Their fame had preceded them, and they were welcomed by manufacturer and by operative alike. The former saw the possibilities of greater gains through the application of

[1] G. Gonetta, "Bibliografia Statuaria delle Corporanzie d'Arte e mestieri d'Italia"

better technical knowledge; whilst the latter judged that higher wages would rule.

In 1237 the State granted the church and convent of San Donato a Torre, just outside the Prato Gate, for the use of the Fathers; and the benefaction was confirmed by Giovanni de' Mangiadori, the Bishop of Florence. After labouring here for five years, more roomy quarters were sought, where, under the direction of the "*Mercato*," or Merchant of the Monastery, the various processes of manufacture could be more conveniently carried on.[1]

At a Council of State held on May 21, 1250,—at which it is interesting to note that the Consuls of the Wool Guild took part along with the Consuls of the other four leading Guilds,—lands and buildings, in the district of Santa Lucia sul Prato, were allocated to the use of the *Umiliati* for the furtherance of their industry. In the same year the Brethren purchased for a sum of four hundred and ninety-seven florins (silver) a piece of land and two dwelling-houses from the Tornaquinci family for the purpose of still more enlarging their establishment.[2]

The responsibilities of the Monastery vastly increased, but were greatly lightened by the direct patronage and emulation of the "Guild of Wool." In 1256 the Brethren were again on the move; and this time, on their own initiative, they established themselves upon the banks of the Arno, just at the foot of the Second Wall of 1074. Here they erected a church,—which they dedicated to Saint Catherine of Alexandria,—monastery buildings and workshops. Upon them they carved their heraldic arms, or trademark,—a wool-pack crossed with ropes,—and they named their establishment in honour of Ognissanti—All Saints.

Quite near these new quarters was already a considerable population,—labourers at the river quay,—whilst not very far away were the public fishing-grounds, and a water-mill owned by the State. The *Umiliati* were accompanied by many families of workers to whom they had imparted their methods

[1] Cantini, "Saggi," vol. iii. p. 73. [2] Cantini, "Legislazioni," iii. p. 81.

of woollen manufacture. For them they built dwelling-houses and a corn-mill, along with warehouses and factories, where now-a-days runs the fashionable Lung' Arno. Pens for dipping fleeces and dyeworks were erected by the river-side. In the meadows, and under the old wall, and beneath the projecting eaves of the roofs of the monastic buildings, were great wooden frames whereon the pieces of woven cloth were stretched to dry. The district soon became the centre of an industrious and well-conducted community, and Borgo d'Ognissanti,—with the Via Gora running through it,—grew into an important and wealth-producing suburb of the city.

As the trade of the Monastery increased,—and by this increase the commerce of the Florentine wool merchants also grew enormously,—the necessity for a bridge across the Arno became obvious. In 1218 a wooden structure was thrown over the river by permission of the *Podesta*, Otto da Mandola, to which was given the name of "*Alla Carraia*," on account of the number of carts and waggons laden with wool, and pack-mules, which constantly crowded it, coming out of the country, or going down to Porto Pisano.

This bridge also served another useful purpose, for it provided the inhabitants of the three *Borghi* or Suburbs,—across the river collectively known as Oltrarno,—with a ready means of access to the new woollen factories. One of these *Borghi* was ignominiously called "*Pittiglioso*," because of the poverty and squalor of its denizens. These poor people were thus enabled to obtain work, and speedily an entire transformation of their district was effected Later on in the history of Florence Oltrarno became known by the name of Via de' Bardi, after one of the rich banking families who built their palace there.

Many provisions and laws were passed by the Government of the Republic, between 1250 and the end of the century, which extended the privileges and powers of the *Umiliati*.[1] In 1267, for example, the "Porto," so called,—or landing stage,—the islands

[1] L. Cantini, "Legislazioni," vol. i. p. 297.

in the Arno, and the whole riverside from the Ponte alla Carraia to the junction of the river Mugnone,—with all the adjoining fields and gardens,—in fact the beautiful Cascine of modern Florence—were allocated to the use of the Order for building new factories and workmen's houses.

The woollen cloth manufactured in the workshops of the Order was marked with their arms,—a bale of cloth tied with cords in the form of a cross,—with the letters O. SS. C. in the corners—"*Omnium Sanctorum Conventus*,"—the Monastery of All Saints.[1] The Monastery became the heart and soul of the trade of Florence, whilst the lives of the "Brethren,"—as they preferred to be called,—furnished models of self-control, business application, and religious zeal, each of which had an immense influence upon the sympathetic nature of the people.

Towards the end of the thirteenth century, however, a marked relaxation of zeal was seen in the conduct of the *Umiliati*, so far as their efforts were concerned in directing and encouraging the woollen industry. Whether their religious Rule became more exacting, or whether the anachronism of monks competing in the world's markets with merchants, or prudence in view of political controversies, or lukewarmness in the prosecution of their manufacturing enterprise, suggested the relaxation, no authority has recorded.

Gradually the work of the Monastery dwindled away, and the operatives began to ally themselves more closely with the "Guild of Wool." At last, in 1330 a resolution was arrived at by the Generals of the Order, which shut their factory doors, and for ever closed the labours of nearly one hundred years. The monks retained possession of the Monastery of Ognissanti till 1564, at which date Pope Pius V. suppressed their Order.

. . . . . .

Among the trade associations subordinated to the Guild of Wool Merchants were[2]:—

[1] L'Osservatore Fiorentino, iii. 169.

[2] G. Capponi, "Storia della Repubb. di Firenze," vol. ii. pp. 3-5.

| | |
|---|---|
| *Tosatori* and *Cimatori.* | Shearers. |
| *Lavatori.* | Washers. |
| *Scompatori.* | Sorters. |
| *Cardatori* and *Scardassieri.* | Carders. |
| *Filatori* and *Filatore.* | Spinners, — male and female. |
| *Tessitori.* | Weavers. |
| *Folloni.* | Fullers. |
| *Tintori.* | Dyers. |
| *Filatrice.* | Winders. |
| *Stamaiuoli.* | Master-spinners. |
| *Battilani.* | Carding-machine oilers. |
| *Lanini.* | Special workers. |
| *Pettinatori.* | Combers. |
| *Vergheggiatori* and *Battitori.* | Beaters. |
| *Pettinagnoli.* | Comb makers. |
| *Conciatori.* | Curriers. |

The methods, employed by the various sets of operatives in the manufacture of cloth, were to a great extent the same which obtain to-day in countries where the introduction of modern machinery has not been made.

After the fleeces had been cut off,—preferably in one whole piece,—from the sheep, they were washed, but not with hard water, for that was found to make the wool harsh to the touch. Ammonia, in one form or other, was usually mixed with the water. This had the further recommendation of rendering the dressed wool more susceptible of even dyeing. Scouring in hot soap-suds in hollow vats required the services of two men to a vat, for they kept on tossing, one to the other with strong poles, the bundles of wool, separating thus the dirt and dissolving the grease.

The next process was lifting the scoured and cleansed fleeces out of their bath and allowing them to drain, meanwhile rinsing them with pure Arno water to remove suds. Drying slowly was

found best in draughty warm air, but the aim was not to let the wool become too dry, for fear of cracking and splitting.

Combing the wool followed. Big brushes or rakes were used at first, their teeth being bent into stout leather backs, which offered a more yielding medium than wood. Later on, cylindrical combing machines of iron and leather were introduced.

Oiling was an important point, to avoid harshness and undue curling. The oil was applied to the combed-out wool by sprinklers with rose mouthpieces. This process was found to be useful in promoting adhesiveness when the spinning stage was reached.

Blending the wool was a special science apart, practised by the most experienced workpeople, but essential from an economic point of view, and also from the point of view of the production of novel materials.

Carding, the initial step to the processes of making yarn, was a very important matter, and required the skill of well-trained workmen. The carding-comb for weaving *rascia*,—white serge,—was ordinarily about sixteen inches wide, with wires of such a number as would allow one hundred and ten threads to be laid upon the loom. For sky-blue serges the comb was seventeen inches wide, with wires for one hundred threads; for pale and faded blue serges the comb was the same, but one hundred and five wires were laid upon the loom. There was no restriction in the size of comb or in the number of thread wires for other kinds of coloured cloth.

Spinning and winding followed closely on the heels of one another. They were usually done by women and girls; but all apprentices were expected to know both these processes experimentally, and to be skilled in them.

It was the duty of the *Stamaiuolo* to give out woollen yarn to the *Filatrice* in knots or bundles, and to register the name of each woman, and the number and quality of the knots, and at the same time to agree with her about the price for winding each particular job. The winders were forbidden to transfer their

DYEING AND DYERS

END OF FIFTEENTH CENTURY

work one to the other, and to make use of any yarn not delivered to them by the master spinners.[1]

The actual making of cloth required many processes, of course, between the delivery of the wound yarn and the output of the pieces of finished woollen cloth. Weavers, Fullers, and Dyers each in turn manipulated the lengths of cloth before they reached the presses of the Finishers and Folders.

The Dyers of Florence formed a considerable and numerous element in the population. They seem to have been divided into three classes :—1. Dyers of foreign cloth for the "Calimala Guild"; 2. Dyers of native cloth for the "Wool Guild"; and 3. Dyers of silk for the "Silk Guild." All were dependent upon the "*Calimala*" for the supply of dyes, mordants, and all other ingredients of their trade. Each Dyer paid the sum of three hundred and ten gold florins to the Treasurer of the Guild, by way of guarantee or bail that he purposed to execute his calling in good faith, and, in return, received an official permission to carry on the industry. Each Dye-house and all its contents, together with samples of dyed goods, were required to be prepared annually for a thorough inspection by the officials of the Guild.

Whilst the Dyers were not permitted to incorporate themselves into a separate *Arte* or Guild, they were allowed to associate themselves in families and groups, in the pursuit of any special operations of their craft. All such companies were subordinated to the "Wool Guild," with respect to their political and social status, the only exception being made in the case of certain foreign dyers employed by the "Silk Guild," who did not come under the authority of the "Guild of Wool."

Dyers were obliged to show diligence in their work, and render prompt and faithful service to their employers. They were bound to enter in a book, within twenty-four hours, all the cloth which they received for dyeing. They were not allowed to go about the city, or *Contado*, seeking work, but were to remain in their workshops, until they obtained pieces from the *Sensali*.

[1] L. Cantini, "Legislazione," i. p. 366.

The cost of dyeing woollen cloth per one hundred pieces in Florence in the fifteenth century may be estimated by the following List[1]:—*Sbiadato*—sky-blue, *Smeraldino*—emerald, and *Azzuro*—light blue, three florins; *Pelo di Leone*—tan colour, and *Verde chiaro*—bright green, four florins; *Bigio di mezzo*—middle grey, and *Cupo di bianco*—shaded white, five florins; *Rosa secca*—dead red, *Sanguigno di sbiadato*—pale carmine, and *Gherofanato*—pink, six florins; *Celestino*—sky-blue, *Violetto*—pale purple, and *Bruschino*—coffee-colour, eight florins; *Verde-Bruno*—dark green, *Berrettino di guado*—Monk's-hood red, and *Morello di grana*—ivy black, ten florins; *Monachino*—monkish grey, twelve florins; *Rosato*—deep rose, twenty-five florins; *Lucchesino*—Lucca scarlet, twenty-eight florins, and *Scarlatto*—vermilion, thirty-five florins.

These prices were fixed by the Consuls and Council of the "Wool Guild," with the expert advice of the officers appointed to examine into the subject. It was imperative that the colours used in dyeing should be fixed, not fugitive. Any cloth badly dyed was either remanipulated, cut up and sold to the hucksters, or burnt. Dyers could, if they wished, use inferior colours, but they were obliged to declare the fact, and to place tickets stating it, upon the dyed pieces.

Alum,—indispensable as a mordant for fixing the colours,—was brought from mines in the Maremma, where the *débris* of early excavations had been pulverised by the action of the air.

The Duke of Athens, on assuming the government of Florence, extended his favour to the Dyers—who by the way did much to support his authority,—by granting the petition they offered to him in 1342.[2] In this document, after paying the Duke some flattering compliments, the petitioners go on to say: "Grant us Consuls of our own, chosen out of our Corporation of Dyers and Washers and free us from the yoke of the 'Wool Guild,' that we may carry on our industry without let or hindrance in your Highness's

[1] Pagnini, vol. iv. 170.
[2] Archivio Giornale Toscana, vi. 210, Doc. 83.

service." Three Consuls were appointed, but they were not recognised by the "Guild of Wool."

No workman could be employed by any merchant who had not first proved his ability, and obtained a formal written testimony thereof. Employers were required to provide their workpeople with all the instruments of their trade. For mutual convenience workers engaged in the same process were employed in groups, and worked in the same rooms. The manufacture of woollen-cloth was forbidden in private dwellings.[1]

Each manufacturer was required to pay his work-people sufficient daily or weekly wages—the amount of which had to be submitted to the Consuls of the Guild for their approval. The normal prices paid to *Filatori* and *Lanini* were, for each bundle of serge yarn, one *soldo*, ten *denari* or *piccioli*. *Filatrice* received generally one *soldo*, five *piccioli*, for the same quantity. The average daily wage of an adult worker was one *soldo*, six *denari*, about one shilling and sixpence. In times of trade depression prices naturally declined, and a day's wage amounted to no more than thirty *piccioli*—perhaps about eightpence.

Every workman had security of tenancy in his home. A *Provvisione* prevented manufacturers expelling their hands,—either from their employment or their houses,—save for grave reasons, which had to be stated in the Council of the Consuls, and approved by vote. House-owners also were forbidden to raise the rents of dwellings except by express permission of the Consuls.

All citizens were strongly cautioned not to take in pledge, from woollen operatives, any instrument or implement used in their trade. Sales of wool, woollen-yarn, or woollen-cloth by workpeople were strictly prohibited. No money-changer, or lender of the market, was allowed to lend money upon whole pieces of woollen-cloth, remnants of cloth, woollen-yarn, or raw wool. Every such transaction, in spite of the prohibition, was visited with a fine of fifty *lire*.

[1] V. Follini, "Firenze Antica e Moderna Illustra," vol. vi. cxxi. p. 207.

Wool-sorting and beating were forbidden within the walls of the city, as was also the scutching of cotton and all other noisy employments, from the tolling of the three o'clock bell to the striking of the bell at Matins. Overtime,—as we call it,—was forbidden, no worker being permitted to carry on his trade even secretly after *Compline*.[1]

The care which the State extended to the well-being of the woollen operatives is evidenced in a number of *Provvisioni* regulating the hours of work and rest. It was strictly prohibited for any noise to be made in the streets during the night.

In all the workshops of the Guild games of chance were strictly forbidden, indeed the only indoor game allowed was chess, which as a quaint old chronicler has it,—"hath in it the element of patience and quietness."[2]

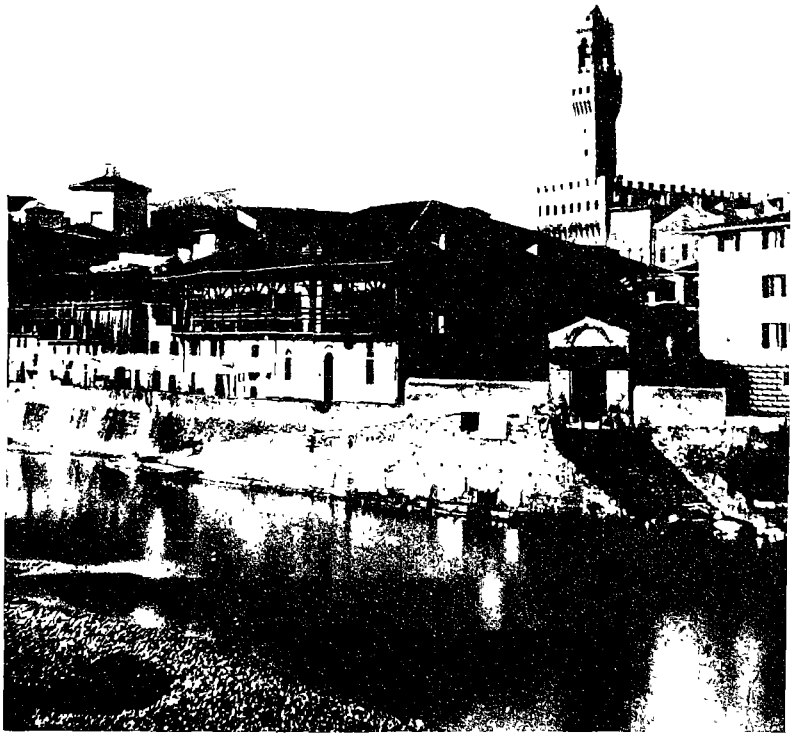
Certain *Provvisioni* dealt with the questions of the emigration of operatives and of the location of foreign agencies. No merchant, agent, workman, or apprentice, was permitted to leave Florence, and establish himself in any foreign land except by express permission of the Consuls of the Guild. Later on—in the fifteenth century—the emigration of workpeople was wholly forbidden. These measures were doubtless necessary for the safeguarding of the secrets of the trade, and for the protection of the Florentine monopoly of foreign markets. In the same way the export of raw native wool and woollen yarn, as well as of madder, woad and other dying materials was forbidden.

It is a thousand pities that all the old looms, implements, and accessories of the industry have disappeared. As late as 1858 an ancient *telaio*—woollen-cloth loom—was still in working order in an old house, of the time of Arnolfo di Cambio, in the thirteenth century, in the Piazza delle Travi on the Lung' Arno degli Alberti.

Neither Tuscany, nor the whole of Italy, could supply anything like the quantity, much less the quality, of wool needed to meet the requirements of the Florentine looms. The rearing

[1] Statuta, 1415, Rub. xlix.

[2] Statuta Populi Florentiae, Book iii. 191.



A CLOTH-FULLING MILL WITH A WATER-GATE.

FOURTEENTH AND FIFTEENTH CENTURIES.

*See Text, p.*

of sheep was not, in early times, a paying occupation in Tuscany. The breed was certainly hardy, but the scant eatage of the barren hill-sides,—where the flocks were pastured because the better land was under cultivation,—was not productive of the opulent fleeces of more generously nourished flocks. In the fifteenth century the number of sheep in Tuscany exceeded one million; but whereas some, in good condition, only gave three or four pounds' weight of coarse wool, a Spanish, English, or Flemish sheep rendered up a fleece which averaged eight and nine pounds of excellent wool.[1]

The determination and the thoroughness which the shepherds and their masters,—most of them wealthy members of the Wool Guild,—threw into the rearing of sheep produced good results. Tuscan raw wool,—which eventually took the place of the famed produce of Puglia, Taranto and Modena,—obtained profitable quotations in all markets for the manufacture of strong and serviceable cloth.

The woollen industry of Florence had active and enterprising rivals at Pisa, Genoa, Venice, Bologna, Ferrara, and in Lombardy and France. At the same time, in each of these manufacturing centres, there existed Statutes and Provisions, which absolutely forbade the importation of foreign wool, and the manipulation of foreign-made cloth. Florence, on the other hand, followed an entirely different policy, with results, as remarkable for their benefit to the home industry, as they were for their pre-eminence in all foreign markets.

The wealth, which poured into the coffers of her merchants, enabled them to purchase the pick of the wool offered at all foreign fairs. England, France, Spain, and Portugal, readily sold their rich fleeces to the agents of the "Guild of Wool." Prices ranged from sixteen *soldi* per hundred pounds' weight of raw Tuscan wool, to sixteen hundred *soldi* for the same weight of the best French, Narbonne, and Portuguese raw wool.

From the Algarves came the best of all wool—Tuscanized into

[1] L. Pignotti, "Storia della Toscana," p. 27.

"*Garbo.*" Hence "*Panne di Garbo*" was the finest cloth woven in Florence, and the street in which it was chiefly manufactured was called Via di Garbo. Spanish wool was also of very excellent quality. The merino sheep introduced into the country by the Romans centuries before, and crossed with the native breed, had established a high reputation for purity of colour and silkiness of texture. No wool was so useful as this pure white variety for fine manufactures: it also went under the name of "*Lana di Garbo.*"

Henry II. was the first English king who granted facilities to Florentine traders for the purchase of British-grown wool. As early as 1284 the quantity of raw wool bought by Florentine merchants from English monasteries was considerable. Several wool-trading companies were established in London, and elsewhere,—among them being that of Messer Tommaso Spigliati e di Lapo Ugho Spini.[1] Letters are in existence, written by one of their travellers,—Simone Gherardi,—who, in rendering an account of his commercial journey in 1285, speaks of the excellence of the wool offered for sale by the British monasteries. Other companies were Messeri di Bindo Isquarta, di Jacopo, Riccomanno, de' Mozzi, Peruzzi, and Pulchi, with representatives of the Bardi family.

By the year 1315 more than two hundred monasteries in England, France, Spain, Portugal, and Flanders, were supplying the Florentine Guild of Wool. The names of these look very funny in their Italian dress, for example:—

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Vichamo-in-costa-Rivalsi | for | Wykeham near Rivaux. |
| Boccheselle in Chenti | „ | Bexley in Kent. |
| Stalleo in Guarvicche | „ | Stoneleigh in Warwick. |
| Guizzopo presso Abliada | „ | Worksop near Nottingham. |
| Guesame in Chondisgualdo | „ | Eversham in Worcestershire. |
| Miense in Picardia | „ | Amiens in Picardy. |
| Provino in Campagna | „ | Provins. |
| Bosella in Brabante | „ | Brussels. |
| Inghiemino in Arnaldo | „ | Engheim in Hainault. |

[1] Pagnini, vol. ii, Appendix xvi. p. 324.

Melrose they called Merusotte, Galloway—Gonellasso, and Kelso—Chilosola, and so on.[1]

The best British wool came from the Cotswolds and from Chichester,—Tuscanised into Codignaldo and Scrisestri.

"The wool of Britain," wrote an old historian, "is often spun so fine that it is, in one sense, comparable to the spider's web." This excellence was the result of carefully following the plans of the old Roman settlers, who established immense sheep farms in various parts of the country and set up woollen manufactories at the old capital Winchester. Doubtless they were duly appreciative of the splendid breed of sheep which they found in the island and their rich yield of long silky fleeces.

The raw wool imported from England was of three qualities,—"*Buona*"—fine, "*Moiana*"—soft, and "*Locchi*"—still-born lamb's wool. The prices, per sack, of Scotch wool were,—for fine qualities, twenty marks, English,—for coarse, twelve marks, and for still-born, nine marks (English coinage).[2]

One hundred pounds weight English were equal to about one hundred and forty Florentine, and each English sack contained about fifty-two pounds. For ease of transport by mule-back the sacks were packed in two equal bales,—each weighing about two hundred and fifty pounds Florentine.

The exports of raw wool from England assumed vast proportions, and excited the jealousy and opposition of native producers and manufacturers. The annual consignments from Great Britain to Florence, in the fourteenth century,—and indeed earlier,—filled 2,800 sacks or bags, and were of the average value of £25,000 to £30,000.

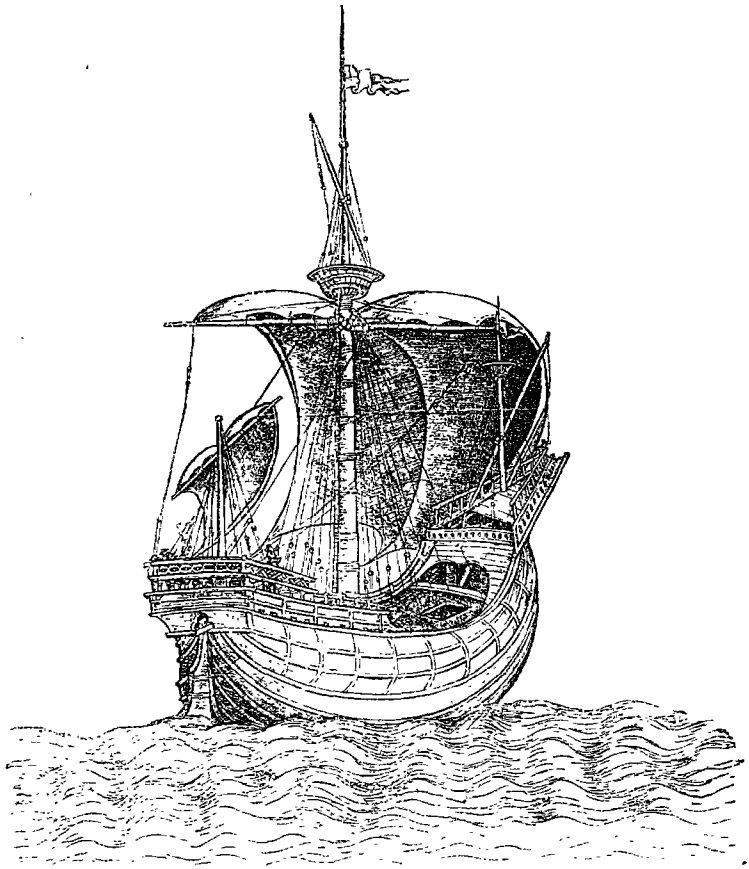
Vexatious Acts of Parliament were passed to limit the facilities of the Florentine traders. Edward III. invited dyers, fullers, and weavers from Flanders to settle in his dominions, and teach his people their methods; and, at the same time, he directed that

[1] The whole list is given by Balducci Pegolotti for the year 1315, from the MS. Riccardiana, "La Pratica della Mercatura," vol. ii.

[2] Peruzzi, p. 324.

exorbitant duties should be placed upon the exports of wool to Italy.

In 1455, under Henry VI., a law was made forbidding Italian



A "FUSTA DI MERCATO," A LIGHT MERCHANT VESSEL. FIFTEENTH CENTURY.

merchants to buy wool and woollen yarn and cloth except in London, Southampton, and Sandwich. A few years later this was made more stringent by the absolute refusal of Parliament to allow sales to Italian wool merchants.

Legislation under Edward IV. forbade aliens to export wool,

and restricted natives from consigning bales or bags, to all foreign ports except Calais. All these repressive measures led to the commissioning by Italian merchants of blocade-running ships, by which risky means valuable consignments were got through to Italy and elsewhere.

Such embargoes could not be tolerated, and so the Florentine shippers appointed Bindo da Staggio,—a resident in London and a *persona grata* at Court,—their ambassador, to plead for a relaxation of the prohibitive regulations. The outcome was favourable to the foreign traders, and by way of securing their advantage, two wool merchants—Francesco de' Strozzi and Gierozo de' Pigli,—both residents in London,—were appointed Consuls of the Florentine colony in England.[1]

In 1483 a Royal decree was issued regulating sales to Florentine merchants, and again restricting their trade. Under Henry VII. more enlightened counsels prevailed, and in 1486 a commercial treaty, between England and the Florentine Republic, was signed, by which English merchants undertook to carry every year sufficient wool to supply all the States of Italy; and Florentine traders promised to buy no wool unless carried in English ships. The Florentines obtained on their side corresponding privileges with respect to the import into England of redressed foreign cloth and dyed Florentine weavings.[2] In 1493 modifications of the treaty were made. Greater freedom was allowed in the purchase of raw wool for sole consumption in Florence, but her merchants were forbidden to re-sell their imports, except six hundred bales annually to the Venetians.

The reigns of Henry VIII. and Elizabeth were full of enactments for and against the Florentine woollen-cloth merchants. The former sovereign encouraged their enterprise, and had personal dealings with the Frescobaldi, Bardi, Corsi, Cavalcanti, and other leading houses. The policy of Elizabeth was however repressive, and under her the export of raw wool was once more

[1] Archivio di Firenze, Filza Strozziana, 294, etc., 135-136.
[2] L. Cantini, "Legislazione," i. p. 301.

absolutely and entirely forbidden. This prohibition cut both ways but the greater sufferers were the English sheep farmers, whose loss was estimated at ten million pounds sterling!

At the same time no such restrictions or prohibition affected the export of Spanish and Portuguese wool. From a document of the year 1326 we learn that prices ranged as follows :—[1]

A whole fleece of "*Garbo*,"—less the skin,—one hundred gold florins.

Undressed wool of "S. Matteo," and Majorca,—one *lira*, eleven *soldi* per pound.

Undressed wool of Minorca—one *lira*, eighteen *soldi* per pound.

Washed wool of Majorca—two *lire*, five *soldi* per pound.

Woollen yarn of "*Garbo*"—two *lire*, eight *soldi* per pound.

With England as the greatest wool-producing country in Europe, from the thirteenth to the fifteenth centuries, the commercial intercourse of the Florentines developed rapidly. At first the trade with the English grower was only through the medium of the French and Flemish markets, and was carried overland—from which circumstance English wool was called "*lana francigena*." After Florence had obtained possession of the ports of Livorno and Porto Pisano, the bales were shipped direct from London, or Southampton,—which was the chief wool-shipping depot. One of the favourite trade routes was from London to the coast of France by sea, then up the rivers Gironde and Dordogne, as far as Libourne, thence overland, by Montpellier to Aigues Mortes in Provence, whence by canal and sea to Porto Pisano, and by river boat up the Arno to Segna, and finally by road to Florence! Another was by Bruges in Flanders, through Germany to Basel, and over the passes of the Alps.

The expenses of the land transport were enormous, and added immensely to the value of the wool when it reached the hands of the craftsmen in Florence. The freight from London to Leghorn or Porto Pisano was two *soldi* per mule load, and the charge for porterage, trans-shipment, repacking, etc., on the way, added

[1] Archivio di Firenze, "*Tassa delle Gabelle*."

considerably to the cost. Warehouse dues also were paid upon consignments of wool stored in transit, even for brief periods: the charge at Porto Pisano, for example, was six *denari* per mule load.

In the fifteenth century a ship-canal to connect Florence with the sea was projected by merchants of the "*Calimala*" and "Wool" Guilds. Leonardo da Vinci actually made elaborate surveys and drafted plans for the enterprise. The scheme however fell through because the Republic had other costly projects in hand.

During the course of the thirteenth century Florentine manufacturers were engaged almost exclusively in weaving cloth of coarse quality made out of native wool. These went by various names:—*bigello*—coarse camlet or frieze, *frustagno*—fustian, *arabasio*—canvas-cloth, *pignolato*—rough hard cloth, *schiavina*—blanketing or slave-cloth, *villaneschi*—peasants' serge, *baracane*—coarse camlet, *moscolato*—moss-like mixture, and other rough and inferior descriptions.

"These stuffs," writes Villani, "were coarse, and of only low value, the which indeed they had not learned to dress with the skill afterwards acquired."[1]

One description of the native manufacture was certainly of finer texture. It was called "*Tintilano*,"—fine grained cloth,—made from the silky fleeces of young lambs, and was further distinguished as *locchi*,—still-born,—and *moiana*—soft and light. This woven material was greatly esteemed for the tight-fitting body hose and drawers worn by men, and is referred to by Boccaccio as thoroughly Florentine.[2]

Not only did the wool industry thrive under the auspices of the *Umiliati*, but also through the energy of the Consuls of the "Wool Guild," who welcomed artizans from Greece, and elsewhere, skilled in the making of carding-frames and weaving-looms, and the other machines and appliances required by the Craft.

The enterprise and the liberal wages, which marked the

[1] Villani, vol. xi. c. 94.

[2] Boccaccio, "Novelle" III, Giorno 7.

business policy of the Florentine manufacturers, attracted a great number of foreign workmen. The Government of the Republic accorded to all these the same exemptions and privileges which had been bestowed upon the *Umiliati*.[1]

This immigration made it absolutely necessary, for the sake of the public health, and to avoid inconvenience and overcrowding in the quarters already inhabited by the craftsmen, to allocate to the new-comers new areas. Hence we find that settlements of mechanics and makers of carding-combs were established in Oltrarno.

By the end of the thirteenth century Via Maggio, Via San Felice in Piazza, Fondaco San Spirito—in *Borgo San Jacopo*, and about San Martino and San Procolo—in the Vigna, and near *Porta Rossa*, had received a new population, which, added to the original woolworkers in that quarter, became, later on, a very powerful factor in the destinies, not merely of the Craft, but of the Republic at large. Many of the more skilful foreign artificers were located also in the *botteghe*—small shops of the Via de' Pellicciai and around the Residence of the Consuls of the "Guild of Doctors and Apothecaries."[2]

Thus, early in the fourteenth century, nearly the whole of Florence was given up to the woollen industry. Streets were named after the various avocations in subordination to the "Guild of Wool," for instance :—Via dei Cimatori,—Street of the Shearers,—Via delle Caldai,—Street of the Cauldrons,—and the Corso dei Tintori,—Road of the Dyers.

All round Or San Michele, and in every street and lane in the neighbourhood of the Residence, and away down the more important thoroughfares, right along to Borgo d'Ognissanti, and the monastery and manufactory of the *Umiliati*, almost every house and building had iron upright rods fitted to all the windows, supporting wooden cross-bars, upon which were hung out, to stretch and to dry, great hanks of spun-wool and long pieces of woven-cloth. Some of these rods and bars may still be seen in the

[1] Stat. Fio. Lib. iv. Rub. 38.

[2] Benedetto Dei, "Cronica," p. 22.

STREET SCENE, THE GAME OF CIVETTINO

FIFTEENTH CENTURY

NOTE (1) THE IRON RODS AND BRACKETS ON THE BUILDINGS, FOR HANGING WOOLLEN-CLOTH PIECES TO DRY AFTER DYEING. [*See Chapter XVI.*]

(2) THE STYLE OF HAIR-DRESSING. [*See Chapter XI.*]

window-frames of the Palazzo d'Alessandri in the Borgo degli Albizzi. Indeed, when the woollen industry was at the height of its prosperity, Florence appeared to be one vast drying and stretching ground. Cloth of all kinds and colours waved in great lengths in every quarter, and imparted an extraordinary aspect to the streets!

More than thirty thousand hands were engaged in the manufacture of woollen-cloth, all, or nearly all, of whom, were working in connection with the "Guild of Wool." Villani, speaking of the year 1308, says there were in Florence and its immediate *Contado*, two hundred workshops belonging to the Guild, wherein were manufactured from seventy to eighty thousand pieces of woollen cloth. The value of this output amounted to two hundred thousand gold florins. Thirty years later there were three hundred woollen-cloth manufactories, which produced upwards of one hundred thousand pieces of cloth.

At the levying of the *Catasto*,—income-tax,—in 1427 it was found that there were one hundred and eight *large* manufactories to be taxed; and in that of 1460 the number had risen to two hundred and twenty-three wholesale houses doing an enormous business. These figures do not include the *small* manufactories, the number of which was variable, but which were always quite as numerous if not more so than the leading houses.

In the latter year Benedetto Dei relates that Florentine woven cloth was sold largely in Rome, Naples, Sicily, Constantinople, Pera, Adrianople, and all over the East. At the same time woollen-yarn spun in Florence was not allowed to be sold to foreign customers.

Trade was flourishing in the declining years of Lorenzo de' Medici, inasmuch as fourteen thousand pieces of cloth, made out of Spanish wool called "*Garbo*," were woven in one year, and sold abroad for twenty-one gold florins the piece. In the same year five thousand pieces of cloth, made out of fine English wool called "*San Martino*," were woven, and realized sixty gold florins the piece.[1]

The Piazza della Signoria was the original site of the biennial

[1] Marco Foscari, "Discorsi Del. Ev. Tus." tom. xxiii.

cloth sales, but, in the fifteenth century, the fair had attained such large proportions, that it was removed to the Piazza di San Spirito, in Oltrarno, and the Via Maggio and the neighbouring streets. The Venetians were great purchasers of Florentine-made cloths, which they exported in considerable quantities to Syria, Candia, and Istria.

In the very centre of the city resided the Consuls,—within the precincts of Or San Michele; and their Residence,—the ancient Palazzo de' Comprobbisi,—communicated by an arched-covered stairway, built in the sixteenth century, with the Shrine and Granary across the street. From the massive and battlemented tower they could survey the operations of their workpeople in the immediate neighbourhood, and the waggons and strings of mules bearing in and out the materials of their craft across the bridges. It bore the name of "*Archivio de' Contratti*,"—"the Registry of Contracts,"—because within it were preserved the Registers of Commissions made on behalf of the Guild.

This tower still exists and bears the sculptured arms of the Guild, which were emblazoned also upon the *Gonfalon*, and cunningly united the devotional instincts of the Florentine people with the emblems of their city and of their craft. They were:—Upon a red field, a white "*Agnus Dei*," bearing a red-crossed white banneret, under four blue lilies, and a wool-comber's iron-rake.

The interior of the Residence was richly decorated. The Hall of Audience, which occupied the whole of the first floor, had a finely painted ceiling with plaster mouldings supported upon massive marble pillars, and the walls were covered with frescoes. A wide staircase communicated with an upper storey, which was lighted by large stained glass windows. Upon a slab of *pietra serena* were the sculptured arms of the Guild, with an inscription:—

MCCCVIII INITOE VII
DIE XI SEPTEMBRIS DO
MUS. ET CURIA ARTIS LANE
CIVITATIS FLORENTIE

RESIDENCE (R) OF THE CONSULS OF THE GUILD OF WOOL AND FACADE OF (L) OR SAN MICHELE

This date synchronises with the restoration of the Residence in the year 1308.

The Guild possessed not only palaces, houses, shops and farms, but also six great cloth stretching grounds at Orbetello, between the Via degli Alfani and the Via della Pergola, on the Lung' Arno dell' Aquila, along the Via de' Servi, the Via San Piero Gatolino, and the Via dell' Uccello ; and many Fulling-mills.[1]

The "Guild of Wool" owned and rented many factories in the *Contado*, among them the Fabbrica Castagnolo on the Pisa road, which was sold to the Della Stuffa family in 1220, a date remarkably early, and indicative of the pristine expansion of the woollen industry. Very many convents and family dwellings, within easy reach of the Residence of the Consuls, were the quarters of busy workers under the Guild auspices. The monastery of Santa Maria della Disciplina was, in 1340, in the occupation of the famous Capponi family, and sheltered quite a number of woollen spinners and weavers.[2]

Two questions constantly gave rise to fresh legislation—wages and foreign competition. The workpeople knew perfectly well what enormous profits the wool merchants and manufacturers made in their relations with outside markets. They understood without the least difficulty that on the one hand, their employers had command of the best supplies of the raw material, whilst on the other, the prices for Florentine cloth everywhere ruled the highest. This pre-eminent position, they also judged quite rightly, was due very largely to their own individual and collective skill in workmanship.

Joining forces, the operatives of the two Guilds—"*Calimala*" and "Wool"—placed the question of wages in the forefront of the reckonings of the merchants.

[1] *Note:* The following old *Tiratoli*,—Fulling-mills,—belonging to members of the "Guild of Wool," were still in existence at the end of the nineteenth century:—"*dell' Agnolo*" and "*del Cavallo*"—both near Porta Romana, "*della Pergolla*"—Via di Sant' Egidio, "*delle Convertite*"—Via Chiara, and "*degli Agricoli*"—Via degli Alfani, with dell' Uccello, and della Porticciuola d'Arno—both on the river bank.

[2] L. Cantini, "Legislazione," i. p. 303.

Another element also contributed to the urgency of the matter—the constant hardening of prices in the commodities of daily life. This response of the shopkeepers and dealers in breadstuffs to the constantly heightening quotations for wool and cloth made the pinch upon the working classes a double one. The only relief to be found was in asking for better pay, and, when masters were obdurate, coming out on strike.

Strikes were a constant phase of Florentine life, and often enough they developed into political feuds and revolutionary outbreaks. The culmination of the unrest was the *Ciompi* Rising in 1378. The *Ciompi* were, for the most part, work-people in the employment of the "Guild of Wool," and they generally obtained all they asked for.

Together with the granting of workers' demands, employers of labour found themselves faced by the constant tendency of prices to fall, through the competition of foreign woven cloth. The convergence of these two opposite forces led directly to decadence of the woollen industry of Florence, which had, all along, been supported upon a more or less insecure foundation.

Avidity of gain had led to the establishment of factories by Florentine adventurers in many parts of Europe, where, in addition to the piling up of huge stocks of raw wool, large quantities of woollen-cloth were manufactured. These establishments became actually technical schools, wherein the native workmen employed were instructed in the methods followed in Florence.

Not only so, but the natural mechanical instinct of British and Flemish operatives led to improvements in the making of looms and in the various implements required by the industry. Thus a class of artizans sprang up equal in ingenuity and adaptiveness to their Florentine prototypes. Whilst timber was, perhaps, less an important natural product than it was in Tuscany, iron and coal were greater assets in England and Flanders than in the Vale of Arno.

Florence, thus, in the sixteenth century, found herself matched by enterprising rivals, and her wool merchants and manufacturers

had to contend with superiority of foreign wool combined with equality of manipulative processes.

A remedy was sought in a Policy of Protection—which, whilst for the moment offering a solution of the difficulties that confronted the members of the Wool Guild, really led to disastrous consequences.

There is a long list in Cantini of articles and materials used in the woollen industry, which in the sixteenth century, were forbidden exit at the gates of the city except by special permission of the Consuls of the Guild. Among them are the following :— Wool-pickings and doffings, woollen-thread—white and coloured, cuttings of woollen-cloth, pressed wool in the form of feltings, woollen rags, iron nets for beating wool, carding-combs and teazels—both old and new, iron-looms, stays, shuttles, glossing-cards for serges, wine-lees—white and red—in casks, madder in bags, white moss or lichen, woad—fresh or dried, all crimson and red dyes—liquid or powder, brazil-wood, gall-nuts, indigo, rock-alum and alum-scum, vitriol, cloth-soap, presses or boards for bales, leaden marks and labels, etc. etc.

A marked decline in the prosperity of the woollen industry continued all through the sixteenth century. This was due in great measure to hostile legislation on the part of the Rulers and Governments of foreign countries. A law, for example, of Edward IV. was passed which ran as follows :—"No person, under the estate of Baron shall wear any manner of woollen-cloth manufactured out of the King's dominions, nor any furs of sable under a forfeit of £10." In the reign of Cosimo—the first Grand Duke—the number of business houses, in Florence, connected with the "Guild of Wool" was reduced to one hundred and sixty-six; and before the end of the century only eighty-eight remained to tell the tale of former prosperity.

The decadence of the woollen industry, no less than of the general commerce of Florence, was marked by idle habits which were induced by lengthened and unchequered prosperity. "*Fare il Signore*" meant, that if one wished to be considered somebody,

all that was necessary was to cease from active participation in trade, and to put on the airs of persons in a superior station! This was undoubtedly, all through the Renaissance period of history, a marked characteristic of the people of Florence; and it was the natural, though destructive, outcome of the conditions of life in a community wholly commercial, where everybody belonged to the middle class. No branch of trade felt this more than that of wool with its preponderance of operatives, and the withering pinch of decay fastened tightly upon the members of the "Guild of Woollen Merchants."

The Via degli Arazzieri—named after Arras in Flanders—recalls almost the last despairing effort to revive the prosperity of the "Guild of Wool." In 1543 the Grand Duke Cosimo I. wished to embellish his new palace with woven tapestries. He applied to the woollen manufacturers of the city to carry out his commission, but, alas, manipulative skill and commercial enterprise were dying, if not dead; and no one would undertake it. Cosimo then induced a number of tapestry workers from Flanders to settle in Florence. He established a weaving manufactory for the public benefit, in a house, later on, called "*Uffizio dell' Ipotece.*" Under the direction of Johannes Rotter,—better known by his Italian name of Giovanni Rosto,—the industry developed quickly. The Florentine painters Bronzino and Salviati designed cartoons for the weavers. The pieces, which were woven, bore Rotter's, or Rosto's, mark—a piece of meat roasting on a spit. Fifty years later Cosimo II. brought master weavers from Paris, and in a short time Florentine tapestries excelled all like productions. A splendid collection may be seen in Palazzo della Crocetta.

The final ruin of the woollen industry was due to the institution by Cosimo II. in 1561 of the "Military Order of the Knights of St Stephen." Many wealthy merchants and manufacturers,—wishing to secure, in perpetuity for their families, the honour and distinction of the military cross with its accompanying privileges,—founded commanderies, and, fearing to demean themselves, disdained to continue the exercise of their trade.

ARMS OF "THE GUILD OF WOOL"

LUCA DELLA ROBBIA

[See page 161

The same Prince accomplished in the same year a complete revolution in the Statutes and in the standing of the Guild. The old order of magistrates was abolished and four new Consuls were appointed, who held office for four months only. Their powers were limited to the cognisance of civil causes between members of the Guild, and with respect to sums in dispute exceeding thirty pounds.

A Council was created entitled, *Congregazione dei Conservatori dell' Arte della Lana;* composed of a Senator—not a member of the Guild,—a merchant, and two manufacturers, under the presidency of the *Provveditore dell' Arte*—Superintendent of the Guild—with the assistance of a legal dignitary styled *Giudice dell' Arte*—Judge of the Guild—as assessor. The functions of this Council dealt with Criminal Causes between members of the Guild.

It was all in vain that periodic efforts were made to rouse the moribund body. The spirit of enterprise had departed from the dying industry. The stones, which, one time, mischievous apprentices and quarrelsome artizans had hurled one at another, and they two at everybody else, were suffered to lie in the streets and corners of the Piazzas, until blades of green grass and verdant moss spread the mantle of idleness and sleep over them.

Busy fulling-mill and humming loom were left to rust and rot as they might. The beautiful blue lilies of the garden of the "*Agnus Dei*" were faded, and the sharp teeth of the woolcomber's rake had lost their brightness and their bite!

The exact date of the suppression of the "*Arte e Universita della Lana*" is not known, but in the reign of Ferdinand I. the Residence of the Consuls was closed and handed over to the Canons of Or San Michele.

## CHAPTER VI

# THE GUILD OF BANKERS AND MONEY-CHANGERS

### *L'ARTE DEL CAMBIO*

I. ORIGIN.—"Peter's Pence." *Campsores Papæ.* Rivalry of Tuscan cities. "*Mercatores Tuscie.*" First mission of Florentine Bankers to England. The Gold Florin of 1252. Agencies throughout Europe. Affluence of "Calimala" and Wool Guilds called into existence the Guild of Bankers, 1201 (*circa*).

II. CONSTITUTION.—Earliest Statutes of Guild, 1289-1299. Special officials. *Esecutore.* The use of the Rack! Strict rules for admission. Sureties. "Company of the Table." "*Cum vela, vel tapeto, vel sine.*" Books and book-keeping. "£ s. d." Financial terms. Dowries. "The Kynges Pawne."

III. BANKS AND BANKERS.—Professional piety. Banking families—Bardi, Peruzzi, Frescobaldi, etc. The Papal Schism. Francesco Balducci, an enterprising *Ministro.* Couriers. Salaries. Peep into a Florentine bank, "On change!" Jobbing. Vastness of financial business. "Letters of Credit." Brokerage. Loans. *Il Monte Comune.* Public taxes:—*Prestanza, Arbitrio. Decima, Catasto.* Rates of interest. Dante's strictures. Money-lending tricks. Boccaccio and Sacchetti's satires. Usury. Sermons of Bernardino da Feltre and Savonarola in 1336. Climax of Florentine prosperity. Foreign relations. Edward III. of England. King of Sicily. Colossal disasters. The Medici. "Counsels of Perfection."

ROME in the Middle Ages was the actual ruler of all material interests, as she was the teacher of all moral conduct. It was an axiom of the Papacy that:—"Wherever Christianity prevails everything, by right divine, belongs to the successor of Saint Peter." Her faithful sons never thought of disputing her claims, and consequently wealth flowed into her coffers in an ever increasing stream.

The offerings of pilgrims, the revenues of vacant benefices, the contributions of Peter's Pence, the fortunes of the Cardinals, the tributes of dependent States, the plunder of Jews and heretics, and what not, called for skilful and experienced administration.

Throughout the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries, Florentine merchants competed with those of Siena, Lucca, and

other cities for the control of the Papal treasure. The term "*Campsores Papæ*" was first appropriated by the Sienese, although they belonged to the Ghibelline party.

The victory of Montaperti,—which made the Ghibellines masters of Tuscany, with the exception of Lucca,—led however to their humiliation in another direction. In 1260 Pope Alexander IV. excommunicated the Sienese, and decreed that no debts should be paid them until they had made peace with the Church. This excommunication became effective after the Sienese had ravaged Radicofani—a fief of the Papal See.[1]

The ingrained dislike of the Curia, however, to changes of any kind prevailed to secure to the Sienese bankers their privileges with respect to the Holy See. As late as 1263 Sienese were still acting as Papal agents in England Flanders, and elsewhere.[2]

Florence stoutly resisted the continuance of the Pope's favours to her rival, and advanced her superior claims as the upholder of the Guelphs—or Pope's party. Besides this the handling of the vast Papal treasures was exactly suited to the keen commercial instincts of her citizens ; and Florence too stood like a toll-house upon the high-road to Rome.

Commercial relations had existed between Florence and the States of Europe from very early times. Agents of the "*Mercatores Tuscie*,"—as they were called in King John's reign,—visited the great fairs held in Champagne and other French centres of trade at the end of the eleventh century, bartering their woollen stuffs against raw wool, and carrying on financial negotiations.[3]

The first record of a mission of Florentine bankers to England was in 1199, when Otto degli Gherardini settled and acquired property and place. When the Pope laid the kingdom under an interdict as many as sixty-nine different Italian Banking-houses were represented collecting Peter's Pence and otherwise exploiting the wealth of the country.

[1] F. Patetta, "Bollettino Senese di Storia Patria," vol. iv. p. 331.
[2] Calendar of Papal Registers relating to Great Britain, etc., W. H. Bliss.
[3] Einstein, "Italian Renaissance in England," p. 230.

The issue in 1252 of the gold florin by the Commune of Florence proved to be a decisive step in the race for financial pre-eminence among the cities. Up to that date every State, and every banker, had dealt largely, if not exclusively, in debased silver money, not only in Italy but throughout Europe. The Florentines discovered that honesty was the best policy, and the world accepted them and their convenient new coin as the standards of commerce.[1]

Everywhere Florentine merchants pursued an enterprising line of conduct, whilst the Sienese and others haggled on still upon the old lines. Then too the constant struggles between the cities of the Tuscan league produced a revulsion of feeling until—as the star of Florence rose higher and higher—the party of peace-at-any-price gained the ascendancy, and the Sienese and Lucchese gradually retired from the contest. The Bankers of Florence thus made good their exclusive claim to the style and place of *Campsores Papæ*.

In this capacity, and also in their relations with foreign courts, it is not too much to say that Florence inaugurated the modern system of Banking, and her merchant Bankers are regarded as the fathers of the financial methods of to-day.

Many names were given at different times to the Banker-merchants:—*Cambiatori*—Bankers, *Banchieri*—Changers, *Tavolieri*—Petty-cash dealers, *Prestatori*—Lenders, *Feneratori*—Spot-discounters, *Usurai*—Usurers, and,—in an evil sense,—*Cani Lombardi*—Lombard bloodhounds![2]

. . . . . .

The origin of the "Guild of Bankers and Money-Changers" may be sought in the affluence of the three great manufacturing Guilds—"*Calimala*," "Wool" and "Silk." These wealthy merchants had need of some safe depository for their capital, and, in accordance with that unfailing characteristic of the Florentines,—which ever sought unbiassed assistance outside their own particular

[1] Langton Douglas, "History of Siena," p. 34, etc.
[2] Pagnini, vol. ii. p. 132.

interests,—they discovered what they wanted in the incorporation of the fourth Great Guild. Dante sums this up :—

"Commerce and Exchange combined made Florence great." [1]

Her citizens early discovered, however, that farming money was a far more remunerative pursuit than manufacturing articles of commerce ; and, quite early in the thirteenth century, Florence became the banking centre of Europe. The surplus capital, which her Bankers were able to hold unemployed in their hands, was the guarantee and the security of her merchants.

One of the earliest records of the Banking business of Florence is of the year 1194, when the Marchese Aldobrandino d'Este was obliged to have recourse to Florentine capitalists for money to support the party and policy of Pope Innocent III. In return for the advance which he then received he pledged all his available property.

Perhaps the first mention of the Bankers, as forming an *Arte* or Guild, is in a document of 1201, which describes a concession of land, made by the Commune of Florence, to a certain Gonnella di Guidaccio, wherein the Consuls of the "Guild of Bankers" are named.

The signatures of the Consuls of the Guild of Bankers, together with those of the other Guilds of Florence, in 1204 to the treaty with Siena, also indicate that the corporation was in existence and in full working order before the end of the twelfth century.

Between 1220 and 1230 agencies of Florentine Bankers were established in many parts of Europe, and were forwarding remittances to Rome direct, or through the parent houses in Florence. In this business they were joined by Sienese merchant-bankers, and they were especially associated together in 1233, when Pope Gregory IX. issued a "Rule" authorising them to collect the Papal revenues in France, England, Spain, and Flanders.[2]

In founding exchange offices in connection with their agencies in foreign lands for the purchase of raw materials and the sale of

[1] "Paradiso," Canto xvi. 6. [2] Muratori, "Antichite Italiane," tom. i. p. 118.

manufactured articles, the Florentine Merchant-Bankers, by the middle of the thirteenth century, had possessed themselves of the key of the wealth of all nations.

The general commercial activities of the Florentine bankers, no doubt, led to some confusion from the fact that they were carried on in friendly rivalry with the enterprises of the merchants of the "*Calimala*" and of the Guilds of "Wool" and "Silk." Probably there was a system of Freemasonry at work between them, whereby each and all of them were at once dealers in wool and cloth, and operators in money and financial securities.

. . . . . .

The earliest Statutes of the Guild preserved in the Archives of Florence are of the year 1299. They are in thirty-four paragraphs. An earlier code, which was compiled in 1280, but no longer exists, appears to have been the foundation for all subsequent Statutes.[1]

The commission of Merchants and Judges which was empanelled at the end of the thirteenth century for the purpose of reviewing the Statutes and Bye-laws of all the Guilds and Crafts, and which compiled the Code already described, as adopted in 1301-1309 by the "*Calimala*" Guild, drafted, in 1307, special rubrics and regulations for the "Guild of Bankers and Money-Changers."

This Code was amended and enlarged to seventy-three rubrics in 1334. Two copies of the latter have been preserved, written in a peculiarly beautiful hand; one is in perfect condition, but the other has suffered greatly by the handling of thousands of inquirers, who in early days had occasion to consult its rulings.

The officers of the Guild were the same in number and name as those of the other Guilds, except that a special official was appointed whose title was *Esecutore*—Executor, perhaps Prosecutor. It was his duty to proceed against debtors, as well as to administer properties in the names of heirs during their minority, and to order generally the affairs of deceased merchants. As regards the first part of his duties the *Esecutore* had authority to

[1] Pagnini, vol. ii. p. 132, etc.

BANKERS IN CONFERENCE

LATE FOURTEENTH CENTURY

summon the wife and the brothers, if any such exercised a similar profession or trade, and ultimately to detain them in custody until the debts were completely paid.

Rubric 56 is a very curious one, and proves the jealousy which existed at the period between the Ghibelline nobles and the merchants of the Guelphs. It enacts that, "should any noble of the city or *Contado* of Florence presume to enter unasked the Residences or the Offices of the Guild he would thereby incur a fine of ten *lire*, and would not be set free until he had paid in full."

Another Rubric—No. 70—is also quaintly punitive. The Consuls were permitted to have a rack and other corrective instruments at the Residence, to which recourse was had by the Judges attached to the Guild, in their examination, by word of mouth, of delinquents charged with concealing the truth about monetary negotiations. This process was grimly stated as "enabling the Judge to give a just judgment!"

The Judge, or Syndic, himself comes in for sharp treatment under Rubric No. 71. He was fined one hundred pounds for every malversation of justice which might be brought home to him after an inquiry by a panel of disinterested Judges!

Strict rules were laid down in the Statutes concerning admission to the Guild. Candidates were required, before engaging in the profession of Banking, to enter their names upon the Matriculation Roll. They had to undergo a rigorous examination before the Consuls, which passed in purview each of the necessary personal qualifications. Approval by this Board led to the payment of the Admission Fee, which ranged rather high in amount in proportion to the capital at stake.

The father, grandfather, and even the great-grandfather incurred the same liability for a descendant, who engaged in trade, as though they actually stood surety for him. To escape responsibility they were obliged to make a formal disclaimer of liability. Individual freedom was obtained after a public process before the Council of the Consuls of all the Guilds.[1]

[1] Statuta Populi Florentiae, tom. ii. 10.

Bankers and Money-changers belonging to the Guild alone were recognised by the State, and they were assigned positions in one or other of the markets,—generally in the Mercato Nuovo and along the Via de' Tavolini. This privilege gave the right to a table and a chair, which were placed conveniently for the transaction of business. The table bore a cover of green cloth, and upon it were placed the Day Book and a layer of clean parchment, for entries of the day's business. On one side was the "Bank," which consisted of a pouch or bag of gold, and a wooden, or metal, bowl, full of small coins for change. The pouch was usually a very decorative ornament, of cunningly stamped or painted leather, embroidered in silk,—perchance by some *innamorata*, —and generally bearing the banker's arms or monogram. This custom of the money-changer's table gave a special designation to the registered Bankers of the Markets :—"The Company of the Table."

There were, of course, many uncovenanted money-dealers—for every Florentine who had a spare gold florin was ever ready to lend it to his neighbour at a rate of interest agreed between the two. The operations of these men were more or less shady, but were in a sort of way useful if not indispensable, in view of the speculative proclivities of the citizens, and in regard to the constantly congested state of business. They were allowed to place tables in the Markets, but without cloths and no chairs. Old documents discriminate the two classes as: *Cum vela*, *vel tapeto*, *vel sine*—"with and without table-cloths!"

In the "*Giuoccho delle Scacchi*," published in 1493, by Antonio Miscomini, with the moralisation of Jacopo de' Cessolis, and several woodcuts, the Florentine Banker-Money-changer is represented as the King's Pawn.

"The fourth pawne is sette before the Kynge and is formed in the forme of a man holding in his right hand a balance, and the weyght in the lifte hand and to fore hym a table. And at his gurdell a purse full of monoye redy for to gyve the marchans of cloth, lynen, and wollen, and of all other marchandises. And

by the table that is to fore hym is signefied ye changeurs and they that lene monoy and they that bye and selle by the weyght being signefied by the balance and weyght and the customers, totters, and resseyvours of rentes and money being signefied by the purse."

The books of all the Money-lenders were required to be open to the inspection of the agents of the Guild, who paid periodical

MERCHANT-BANKER-MONEY-CHANGER. FIFTEENTH CENTURY.

and surprise visits to every lender's table. Want of neatness in entry and illegibility were quite as severely censured as were inaccuracies and falsifications.

Money-changers were not allowed to transact business promiscuously, but only at their tables, or within their own dwellings—the latter privilege was a later concession, and led to the constitution of Banks—as we now understand the term.[1]

No strangers and no ecclesiastics were permitted to become

[1] Pagnini, vol. ii. p. 135.

members of the Guild, and such persons were forbidden to conduct public money transactions in the Markets.

The Statutes of the Guild ordered, moreover, that the daily entries in the "Table" Ledgers should, invariably, be made in clear cursive characters, the figures Roman, not Arabic, and no capital letters, paragraphs, or points of punctuation.

Up to the time of the Medicean ascendancy Florentine accounts were kept by single entry, although the double system of the Venetians was recognised as superior. To safeguard, and to check the simpler plan, duplicate books were endorsed, and deposited in strong boxes; these were called *Libri dell' Asse*, check-board books, or *Libri rossi, bianchi, neri*, etc., according to the colour of the cover. Each volume contained, on the first page, an invocation of the Deity, and a dedication of the owner and scribe to the protection of Heaven. Of these books, which were made of ordinary Florentine-made cotton paper, and bound in leather, nearly all traces have disappeared. The Alberti certainly still possess many of the ancient banking books of their ancestors, and there are besides, in the *Biblioteca Riccardiana*, several volumes and sheets belonging to the Peruzzi Company of the years 1292-1343, in which latter year that Bank suspended payment.

From these Day-books copies were made at stated times into the *Libri Maestri*,—Master Journals—which were formidable volumes with parchment leaves and heavy wooden or leathern cases, clamped and locked with metal fittings. These volumes were preserved at the offices of the Guild for consultation and correction, and many of them are still in existence.

The Florentine bankers and merchants made their cash-reckonings in *lire*, *soldi*, and *denari*—the origin of our £. s. d. Twenty *soldi* went to the pound and twelve *denari* to the *soldi*. The spot values of these coins were constantly varying, hence the standard coin for all important transactions was the florin in gold, first struck in 1252.

It may be noted in passing, that many terms still currently used in monetary transactions originated with the "Guild of

Bankers and Money-Changers" of Florence:—*cassa*—cash, *banco*—bank, *bancarotta*—bankruptcy, *giornale*—journal, *debito* and *debitore*—debt, debtor, and "Dr," *credito* and *creditore*—credit, creditor, and "Cr."—whilst *detto* is our "ditto" and "do."

Every year the Consuls called into conference the financial officials of all the Guilds and the Priors of the Monastic Orders to strike a balance in accounts in dispute, and to lay down regulations to rule money values and loan interest for the current year. Each year also the Consuls held a consultation with a number of their predecessors in office for the purpose of passing in review the names, characters, and methods of all the Money-changers and Money-lenders carrying on business in the city. Any dealer in money who had become in any way notorious, or unjust, in his terms, was crossed off the Register, and his name was posted as a delinquent at the Offices of the Guild.

The Residence of the Consuls, and the headquarters of the "Guild of Bankers and Money-Changers" were established, at an early date, in the Mercato Nuovo, near the Porta Santa Maria. This building was destroyed by fire in 1304, but in its place was erected an edifice which quite outdid all the other Consular Residences in dignity and splendour—as indeed was befitting the wealth and influence of the members of the Guild. The interior was adorned with polychromatic ceilings, and the walls overhung with rich hangings in embossed and gilt leather. Many fine oil paintings, and noble statues in marble, found places, along with splendid cabinets,—the work of excellent carvers and inlayers,—and beautiful coloured windows.

Over this edifice was a bell, placed there by the benevolent solicitude of a wealthy Money-changer, by name Giovanni della Gheradesca. Rung twice a day, it heralded the opening of financial business, and proclaimed the closing of the money market. In 1516, when Cosimo I. put up the clock in the market, the "Bankers-bell" was moved to the top of the *Casa del Saggio*—the Public Assay Office for gold and silver—and still went on ringing in and ringing out the cashiers of the Guild.

The arms of the Guild were set up on the façade of the Residence, and were of course emblazoned on the Gonfalon intrusted to the Guild Standard-bearer in 1266. They were quite significant of the purposes of the Guild—a red field strewn with gold florins.

An excellent system of dowries for young citizens of both sexes was established in 1343. Parents and friends loaned sums during a period of fifteen years,—more or less,—to the State; and received guarantees of repayment within certain time limits. The interest at first was at the rate of 18 per cent., and it naturally attracted many depositors. The administration of this fund was committed to the Consuls and Council of the "Guild of Bankers and Money-changers." Special officers were elected by the Guild, who also had the superintendence of matters of bail and security, and a base neglect of duty, or unfaithfulness of stewardship, were rigorously punished by fine and imprisonment.

. . . . . .

Bankers professionally were remarkable for their piety! Not only did each head of a house open the day's duties with prayers in his family circle, but the avocations of the bank were inaugurated by a reunion of all the staff for religious exercises. No class of citizens was more regular in attendance at Mass and other Church duties, than the Bankers and Money-changers. Their calling too made demands upon their charity, and, in proportion as they throve, they bestowed alms. The old-world sentiment, that those who deal in the most mundane matters must put away most deposits of heavenly treasure, was an ever-present consideration.

The dates at which the great banking families of Florence first made their marks were pretty much as follows:—Acciaiuoli—1252, Alberti—1244, Bardi—1215, Buonaparte—1260, Frescobaldi—1252, Pegolotti—1317, Peruzzi—1260, Sassetti—1260, Scali—1235, Villani—1298. Unhappily the diaries, business books and parchments of nearly all the families have perished, and almost all we know is gathered out of the private records of

MONEY-CHANGERS: A DISPUTE BEFORE THE PODESTÀ

LATE FOURTEENTH CENTURY

the Cavalcanti, dell' Antella, dei Salimbeni, della Sega, and Valori families.

As early as 1228 there were Banks in Florence bearing the names of Benevieni, Lamberti, Alamanni, and Ugolini, who were already doing business with France, England and Flanders. In 1264 the houses of Simonetti, Bacarelli, Ardinghi, and Spinelli had agents in London, whose chief business was the collection of Peter's Pence. Branch banks were opened by Giovanni Vanno and his company at Dover and Canterbury in 1302, as well as in London.

The Peruzzi had sixteen such agencies :—Pisa and Genoa—1302, Paris—1303, Avignon and Chiarenza, in the Morea—1305, Tunis and Venice—1306, Naples and Rhodes—1310, London and Bruges—1312, Castel di Castro (Caligari)—1332, Barletta on the Adriatic, and Palermo—1335, and Majorca—1336. The number of their agents, in the middle of the fourteenth century, was one hundred and thirty.

The Papal Schism—1305-1377—gave the Florentine Bankers rare opportunities for reaping golden harvests. The contributions of the faithful were unavoidably diverted into two rival channels. Much money was either entirely lost or misapplied, and the confusion added immensely to the business and the commission of the *Campsores Papæ*. The houses of Mozzi, Bardi, Acciaiuoli, Scali, Spini, and Alberti rose to eminence during this period.

Two books are extant which show that in 1348 the company of Jacopo and Caroccio degli Alberti was employed in collecting Peter's Pence and other ecclesiastical dues, in the name of the Avignon Pope, and had agencies at Paris, Bruges, Venice, Siena, Perugia, Brussels, Naples, and Rome.

Other Florentine Bankers, whose names were well known in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, were Strozzi, Medici, Capponi, Salviati, da Uzzano, Albizzi, Badesi, Bartolini, Corsini, Dini, Ricci, and Covoni.

Perhaps the most famous of them all were the Bardi, who made their mark as enterprising merchants along with the Caval-

canti, Rossi, and Mozzi as early as 1215. They were concerned in the feud between Cosimo de' Medici and Luca Pitti in 1434, and, along with the Castellani, Ardinghelli, Rondinelli, Brancacci, Guardagni, Baldovinetti and others, were exiled for a long term of years. This severe treatment however obtained the substitution of the title "*Priori di Liberta*"—for that of "*Priori delle Arti*" for the Heads of the Guilds, so that the people "might," as Machiavelli says, "at least preserve the name of the thing they had lost."[1]

On May 29, 1311, the Bardi Company, which numbered nine partners, appointed legal representatives in France, England, and Ireland, Tuscany, Lombardy, and Germany. In August of the same year another such official was appointed for Cyprus and Rhodes.[2]

The power of the Bardi Company grew enormously, as did their generosity. They certainly held tight to their monopolies, which were many in number and various in character; but, at the same time, they opened branch offices everywhere, and gave employment to very many small houses and to individuals. Builders, dealers, merchants, tradespeople, and others, shared with them in the success of their business relations. To be connected with such a house as that of the Bardi meant, not only the enjoyment of much social and personal comfort and emolument, but the respect and confidence of everybody with whom contact was shared.[3]

Villani calls the Bardi, the Peruzzi, the Acciaiuoli, the Buonaccorsi, and the Scali:—"The Pillars of Commerce and of Christianity."

An enterprising *Ministro*, or agent, of the Bardi Company, in 1315, in Flanders,—Francesco Balducci,—procured from the Duke of Brabant certain privileges for Florentine merchants:—(1) a reduction of the duty on silk per ship load, and (2) a maximum tax of two *denari* per one hundred and twenty pounds weight of wool. In 1324 he went for his Company to Cyprus, where an oppressive tariff was laid upon all Florentine merchandise. He

[1] Machiavelli, "Le Istorie di Firenze," p. 272.
[2] Archivio del Stato di Firenze.
[3] F. Truchi, "Difesa del Commercio dei Fiorentini."

gained terms as favourable as those in Flanders, for in 1326 a concession was granted to his house for five years, whilst in 1327 Florentine goods were granted free import for ever.

Such agents were not men of inferior position or attainment. The heads of the large Banking-houses were too keenly alive to the possibilities of business to appoint any representatives but those who possessed the very highest qualifications. Among them we come across scions of the great houses of Donati, Guicciardini, Villani, Strozzi, Soderini, Machiavelli, Pazzi, and Portinari and many others. In after years seven of these agents served in their time the office of *Gonfaloniere di Giustizia*, and as many as twenty-seven the high dignity of Prior.

All of the agents or couriers not only were matriculated members of the Guild, but their names were registered upon the Foreign Agents' Roll. In addition to fixed liberal salaries they received ample funds for the expenses of their journeys, and letters of recommendation and of credit. Each one had a medal, or token, bearing the heraldic cognisance of his house, as a further pledge of official responsibility.[1]

Some idea of the salaries annually paid to agents, couriers, and clerks of the great Banking-houses may be gathered by consulting the books of the Peruzzi Company for the years 1335-1338.[2] The amounts range from ten *lire*, three *soldi*—paid to a *discipulo*, or apprentice,—Giusto di Beno Battelli by name,—to three hundred and twenty-two *lire* paid to Bartolo Uguccioni—an agent.

No more interesting and exciting scene could be witnessed in old Florence than the daily transactions of the Bankers and Money-Changers.

Let the reader transport himself in imagination to one of the numerous Banks of Florence during the epoch of her prosperity. In the hall he will see great parchment ledgers, wide open upon solid wood desks, awaiting the entries of the day's business as it

[1] Pagnini, Vol. ii. 135; Cantini, Vol. iii. 165; Peruzzi, pp. 261-266.
[2] Peruzzi, p. 260.

ebbs and flows. All about are the agents and travellers of the house, either just returned from, or starting off to, Armenia, China, and the East, and London, Paris, Antwerp and other Western capitals.

The home-comers are seated busily revising their cash-statements of business done, and consulting their order books, preparatory to their inspection by the cashiers at the counter. Some are walking up and down and exchanging greetings and information with the couriers about to start upon outward journeys. All is bustle and excitement,—men are bragging about their travels, and showing off the cranks and foibles they have picked up by the way,—whilst others are boasting of what they are about to achieve and are swaggering up and down !

The heads of the house are either closeted in their private office, discussing high finance, or maybe are haughtily wending their way in full official attire to participate in some important affair of state in the Council at the Palazzo Vecchio.

If the Bank has attached to it a *Loggia* or *Borsa*,—a vestibule or clearing-office,—the scene is still more animated. In addition to the ordinary staff, customers of all sorts and kinds are popping in and out, and voices are discussing in shrill tones the state of the money-market, and the rise and fall of stock, etc. etc.

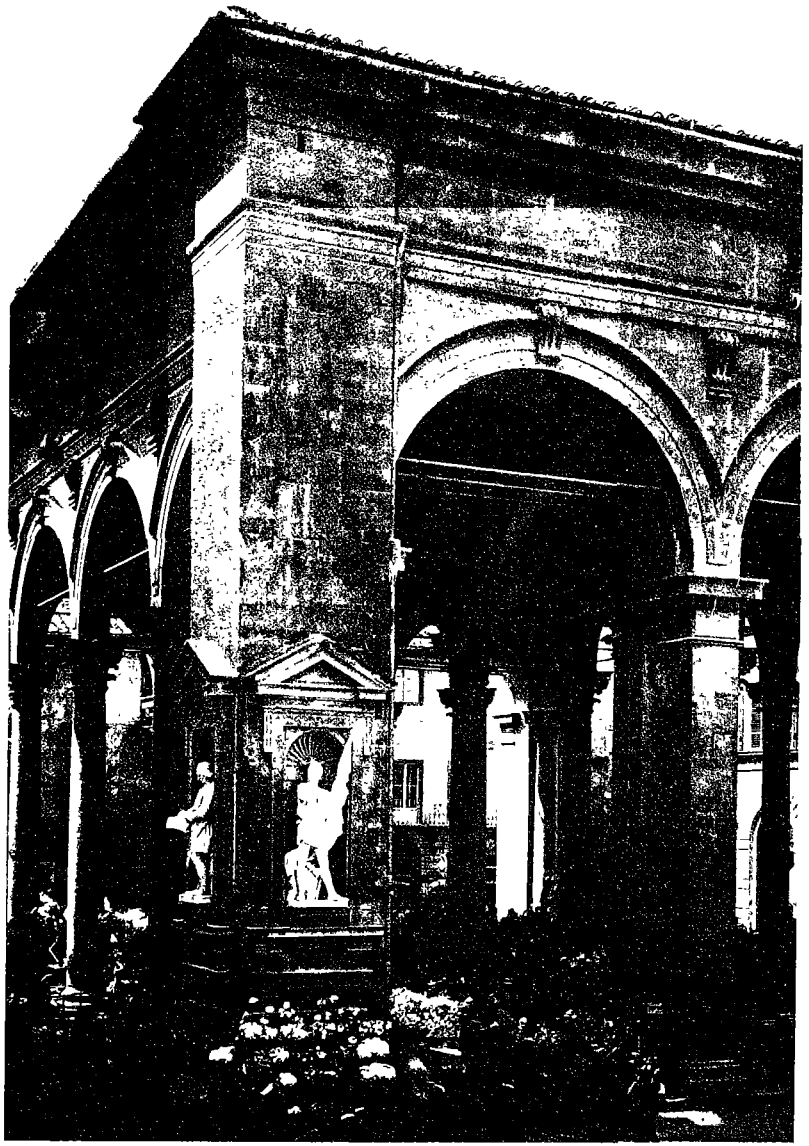
Under the *Loggia*,—portico,—of the Mercato Nuovo, especially, bankers and merchants and their clients foregather. Speculators, and plungers—"Bulls and Bears"—are there as they are in our day in the purlieus of the Stock Exchange.

"The shares of the *Monte* (Pawn Office) are at thirty. Can we do business?" cries one. "Say, this time next year, I'll sell or I'll buy as you like."

"What's your price?" is the reply. "What premium do you propose?"[1]

Stock changed hands constantly, and accordingly a tax was imposed, of two silver florins, upon every transfer, which vindicated the love of levying money for State purposes in every imaginable

[1] Marchionne di Coppo Stefani, "Delizie degli Eruditi Toscani," Lib. viii. p. 97.



BANKERS' LOGGIA—MERCATO NUOVO

*[See Chapter XV]*

direction, and also established the regularity of the contract. "Jobbing,"—as we call it,—was in full swing in the Mercato Nuovo all through the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. In the year 1371 a tax of two per cent. was established and imposed upon every completed bargain.[1]

The Palaces of the great banker families made quite a distinctive feature in the street architecture of old Florence. Sometimes the whole of a street was occupied by members of a single family, for example :—Via de' Peruzzi, Via de' Tornabuoni, Borgo degli Albizzi, Borgo de' Greci, Via de' Bardi and Via de' Cerchi.

The Peruzzi Bank, at the beginning of the fourteenth century, consisted of three brothers, who lived with their wives and children in the Via de' Peruzzi. The combined families numbered thirty-one persons, who were served by upwards of twenty domestics of all grades. The annual expenditure of these united establishments reached the considerable figure of three thousand gold florins, equivalent to £1500.

Very much of the expansion of the banking business of Florence was directly due to the wanderings about of Guelphic exiles, who became, for the moment, agents of their houses in foreign lands.

Charles of Anjou, before he set out from France on his way to Italy, not only received many loans from Florentine bankers and merchants, but surrounded himself with Florentine judges, notaries, doctors, apothecaries, armourers, saddlers, and the rest. Four hundred exiled Guelphs formed his Body-Guard, chiefly Florentine Bankers. Through his influence the greater part of the trade of Naples passed into the hands of Florentine merchants. Exclusive shipments of wine, corn, and oil, from Manfredonia and Ravenna, were made by the same enterprising traders under Charles's patronage.

In 1338 the number of Banking Houses in Florence was eighty. Thirty years later, owing to the privileges and encourage-

[1] Marchionne di Coppo Stefani, Lib. ix. Rub. 727.

ments conferred by the peace with Pisa, the business of Banking increased greatly, and by the end of the century, there were fully one hundred and twenty Companies in active operation.[1]

Towards the end of the fourteenth century Florentine Commerce had made such an immense advance that a whole body of Statutes and Regulations, dealing with the financial matters, came into existence. Among them was a series of enactments enabling all mercantile affairs to be conducted with greater speed by the avoidance of legal details, and releasing merchants' credits from mortgage and sequestration. At the same time attempts were made to effect a codification of the laws of perjury, fraud, and bankruptcy.

The vastness of the Banking business, which Florentines were doing in the fifteenth century, drew a remarkable admission from the unwilling lips of the ruler of a rival Republic—Venice. Doge Tommaso Mocenigo declared that:—"Florence is drawing out of Venice 392,000 gold ducats a year!"

Troubles came in their turn, and by 1422 there only remained seventy-two firms engaged in Banking and Money-changing, and these were for the most part small houses. Further shrinkage was experienced, until, in 1474, not more than thirty-two Banks were able to keep open their doors. This low-water mark was the commencement of the decadence of Florentine commercial prosperity.

The extreme complication and variety of monetary values, which existed in the Middle Ages and early Renaissance, in every city and town of Europe, made the existence of an association of exchange agents an absolute necessity.

The foreign coinage which found its way to Florence was remarkable for variety and fluctuation in value. The standard piece of Naples was the Carlin, of Venice—the Mark or Ducat, of London—the Pound sterling, of Paris—the Livre Tournois, and of Rhodes and Tunis—the Besan. All these were current in Florence.

[1] Villani, xi. 94.

If Jews, and Greeks on the one part, and Venetians and Genoese on the other, were the great original factors in the monetary expansion of the Middle Ages, Florence was undoubtedly the centre of all banking interests in the Renaissance.

To Florentine initiative is wholly due the admirable facility of exchanging cash values against paper. This system revolutionised and vitalised the entire conduct of commerce, not only in Florence herself, but throughout the known world.

"*Lettere di Cambio*,"—Letters of change, or of credit,—became an indispensable means of transacting the international business of bankers and moneylenders. The transmission of bullion became more and more risky, and its bulk increased the difficulty of transit. The depreciation of coinage in habitual use was also a serious objection to dealing in cash directly. These admirable and convenient money drafts provided a ready and secure means of dealing in credits. They were first used in Florence in 1260, but possibly, they had their origin in Venice, during the middle of the twelfth century, where they were confined to certain business houses dealing together.

The system of "Letters of Credit" made the transmission of money, even to such distant places as Jaffa, and Tana on the Sea of Azof, a matter of comparative ease. For example, when a Florentine citizen wished to transmit, say, a couple of hundred pounds to Antwerp, he had but to saunter into the office of some "*Calimala*," "Wool" or "Silk" Merchant, who, in a few words addressed by courier to his agent there, caused the payment to be made.

The use of "Letters of Credit" made it possible for vast operations to be carried through, like those of the Bardi and Peruzzi, up to the year 1340, for well-nigh a million and a half gold florins, equal to £750,000,—to be placed at the disposal of King Edward III.

A table of time-limits between Florence and the principal cities of Europe and the East,—copies of which were displayed at all the Banks,—shows the days required for consignments

of specie and goods to reach their destinations, as follows:—Bologna—3, Pisa—5, Genoa and Rome—15, Venice and Naples—20, Milan—30, Sicily, Provence, and Tunis—45, Flanders—70, England and Constantinople—75, and Cyprus—90.

The days occupied by the couriers of the Florentine Mercantile and Banking houses, in travelling were as follows:—Rome and Genoa, each five to six days; Milan, Venice and Naples, ten to twelve; Paris, Bruges and Barcelona, twenty to twenty-five; London, Sicily and Constantinople—twenty-five to thirty.

The brokerage sanctioned by the Guild varied according to the standard value of the money employed, whether gold or silver; the average amount was from ten to fifteen per cent. Probably one of the principal causes which contributed to make Florence so prosperous was the system of loans at interest.[1]

In Florence it was rather a sound system of finance than a sordid love of money that influenced her commercial policy. Very early her merchants discovered that capital, borrowed at a high rate of interest, was not the readiest way to advance their operations. Speculators doubtless there were, and even "plungers,"—to use a modern term,—who craved money for its own sake, but these men were regarded with little esteem, and their methods were not generally attractive.

At first the ecclesiastical powers opposed the lending of money at interest, and the making of profit upon a temporary loan was deemed usurious. Even to the end of the fourteenth century, "it was considered usurious for any one to make a loan, which was not drawn upon an official form, and where, in the instrument itself, it was not stated that the loan was made gratuitously."[2]

Public loans were raised in the following way:—The State named certain citizens,—members of the chief Banking Companies,—with full power to find the money required, assigning to them, by way of security, taxes placed upon certain commodities entering the gates of the city—such as salt and

[1] Peruzzi, p. 81.

[2] Lapo Mazzei, "Lettere," vol. i. 246.

PAYING TAXES -RIGHT, FOR CIVIL EXPENSES- LEFT, FOR MILITARY ENTERPRISES

*FIFTEENTH CENTURY*

wine; or commissions upon the rents of the shops on the Ponte Vecchio. The Companies accepted the contract, and furnished the necessary sum wholly or in part, raising the remainder among the citizens, upon certain conditions, and at a reasonable interest. Another method was adopted when it was desired to force the citizens to take up the loan,—the amount of the sum required was publicly proclaimed, and part assigned to every street in accordance with the wealth and number of the inhabitants. After the portion to be paid by each had been fixed, it was then delivered to the State Treasurer, who repaid it to the creditors when the loan expired, from the proceeds of the customs. To facilitate this the contributors were also granted a quantity of salt at 6 *lire* the bushel, and were allowed to sell it at the ordinary fixed rate, which was higher.

The loaning of money to the State for a fixed time at a certain rate of interest, led to the creation, in 1222, of a new Government Office, which came to be known popularly under the name of "*Il Monte*"—"The Money-pile!" Instead of calling on the Banks for a loan, as had been usual before, the Government divided the money required for the public exchequer into portions according to the assessment of each citizen, and each was expected to contribute his full share. The rate of interest placed to the credit of each contributor in the "*Monte*" Books varied from three to twenty-five per cent. This Book was known as "*Il Libro de' Settamilioni*,"—"The Book of Seven Millions,"—from the amount of the original loan.

In 1307 the credit of the Republic was staked to the Bankers, the "Calimala," and the *Parte Guelfa* to the amount of seven million gold florins. In the war with Arezzo, the "Guild of Bankers and Money-changers" gave the State credit for eight million gold florins, which amount was repaid by a *Provvisione*, or Order in Council, of the year 1307.[1]

The Republic was a community of Merchant-Bankers whose aim was the scientific exploiting of money. Their ingenuity and

[1] Provv. xiii. 132 v°.

resourcefulness were the consequences of their systematic training in the adaptability of capital. When one expedient appeared to have gained the end in view, these wideawake capitalists were never at a loss for another.

Up to the middle of the fourteenth century the State Revenues had been raised without difficulty by customs and duties on contracts called "*Gabelle*." Among *Provvisioni* of the year 1290 is one which shows how the "*Gabella*" was raised, and how the different Guilds not only contributed, in their corporate capacity, but how individual members were appointed to undertake the collection. Millers and Bakers, Masters of Stone and Wood, Tailors, and Barbers, of the *Contado* were specially taxed; each man paying forty *soldi* a month, and the tax ranging over two months.[1] In 1336, however, the expenses incurred in the many warlike expeditions were far and away too heavy to be met by ordinary taxation. A national debt,—as we should say,—was created by forced loans, and was called "*Prestanza*" from *præstigium*—tribute.

The allocation of the amount required was quite arbitrary, but contingent upon seven separate assessments of the property of which each individual was possessed. An average was struck, which was the sum accorded to each citizen of sufficient means. Failure to pay this impost within seven days led to the delinquent's name being entered in a book which was called "*il Specchio*,"—"the Looking-glass,"—and he was subjected to fines and disqualifications.

Several registers for the "*Prestanza*" are preserved in the Archives of Florence. One,—a paper book, in good condition, has the following entry:—

"In the name of God, Amen. Hereinafter is inscribed all the money which I, Tano di Lapo della Bruna, have received for Gherardo Lanfredini, *Camarlingo* of the Commune of Florence, towards the impost of Fifty thousand gold florins, levied by the Commune, which has been collected by the four companies

[1] Provv. ii. 117 v°.

Peruzzi, Bardi, Scali, and Acciaiuoli. The said money is to be paid as a loan to the said Commune, to pay to our Lord the Duke of Calabria 33,000 gold florins,—a third of which was assigned to the Bardi on the feast of S. Piero Scheraggio, the 25th of March 1325."

The "*Gabella*" of the year 1339 produced a great sum of money, from very many sources. Some of the items were :—

| | |
|---|---|
| The *Porte*, or Gate, dues . . about Flo. | 90,200 |
| The tax on Wine . . . . | 50,300 |
| The rate levied on the people of the *Contado* at 10 *soldi* per *lira* . . . . | 30,200 |
| The tax on Salt at 49 *soldi* a bushel for a citizen, and 20 *soldi* for a peasant . . . | 14,450 |
| Tax for cattle killed in the Market . . | 15,000 |
| Rate levied on the goods of Rebels and Exiles . | 7,000 |
| Tax on Corn ground into flour . . . | 4,250 |
| A poll-tax upon members of the Guilds . . | 3,000 |
| House-tax in Florence and Hut-tax in the *Contado* | 1,000 |

and many other items, amounting to a total sum of 343,300 gold florins.

The public debt in 1344 amounted to thirty thousand gold florins, which the State could not pay. To clear the amount a "*Monte*,"—or Public Bank,—was opened that persons, who were patriotically disposed, might contribute their quota. Each depositor received in exchange, credit or a promise to pay, which became a negotiable asset capable of being transferred from one to another, very much after the manner of our present cheque system.

The "*Prestanza*" having done its work, there was not the least difficulty about the further manipulation of the revenues of the State with respect to the absorption of private resources. In 1345 a "*Monte Comune*" was raised to meet the rapacity of the Duke of Athens and his party. By it all loans made to the Republic were merged into one consolidated fund or debt,

which was made to bear interest at five per cent., and secured upon the State revenues. This was actually the creation of Government Stock for each person interested in the loans was entitled to buy, sell, pledge, or exchange his share as he willed. The market prices in the Mercato Nuovo fluctuated with the rise or fall of the credit of the State. The Florentine "*Monte Comune*" was the first National Debt, as such, ever called into existence.

The "*Arbitrio*"—an individual valuation, and the "*Decima*" —a general percentage of property, were other means employed by the State, acting upon the advice of the Consuls of the "Guild of Bankers and Money-changers," for raising loans easily and quickly. The former was a tax upon the conjectured earnings of the citizens. It was very unpopular, and failed to realise the purpose of its inception. Cosimo I. finally abolished it after an existence of sixty years. The latter,—the "*Decima*,"—was an impost of ten florins upon every hundred gold florins of the net income of each individual. Hence it was the rate of a tenth part of the income, and thus gained its name. The assessments were subject to a triennial revision. Fraudulent returns led to confiscation of unscheduled properties.

The "*Catasto*,"—Income Tax,—called so from the book in which the names of all taxpayers with descriptions and values of properties, were entered,—was devised by Filippo Ghiacceteo, but actually introduced by Giovanni de' Medici in 1427. The name was derived from *accatastare*,—to accumulate. It was the most elaborate and exhaustive register of persons, and properties, which had ever been undertaken by any civilised State, and is a monument to the financial capacities of the people of Florence. Each person's exact monetary position was stated from every point of view, and the sum total arrived at was charged half a florin to every hundred gold florins. The "*Catasto*" worked very smoothly, and did much to increase the popularity of the Medici. Between 1427 and 1453 the loans raised amounted to the enormous sum of 6,374,000 gold florins, contributed by seventy-six Banks;

whilst four successive wars, which the Republic had waged, cost more than 11,500,000 gold florins![1]

The system of raising money by "*Gabella*" for ordinary expenditure and by "*Catasto*" for extraordinary outlays remained in force until 1494.

Banking for the Republic, whilst attended with risks and

PAYING TAXES. FIFTEENTH CENTURY.

dependent upon the will of fickle Fortune in the shape of frequent and erratic changes of Government, was the aim and ambition of all the financial houses of Florence. Competition to secure loans and other business was as keen as keen could be. Many a wealthy and noble house became eminent upon the successful negotiation of a State loan. The Medici owed their rise and their prosperity to the skilful way in which members of the

[1] C. Landino, "Dante Alighieri Fiorentino," Lib. xi. c. 91; and Lib. ix. c. 264.

family, in successive generations, manipulated public accounts. Whilst posing as the friends of the people, they were enabled, without compunction, to help themselves pretty liberally to the contents of the public purse!

Lorenzo "il Magnifico" was the first Medici to give up entirely all connection with commercial and banking interests, whilst his tenure of office marks the termination of the financial liberty of Florence—apparently a paradox, but nevertheless a fact!

The wealth amassed by the merchant banking families may be judged from the example of the Medici—whose pre-eminence in the political and social life of the State was an important factor. Giovanni de' Medici left 179,221 gold florins, Cosimo I. 235,137, and Piero 237,982; whilst each leading member of the family bestowed enormous benefactions upon the city and its inhabitants—Cosimo alone, it is said, gave away more than 500,000 gold florins![1]

The rates of interest paid upon borrowed capital varied considerably not only in general use but in relation to particular classes of the population. Going back to the days of Justinian, when fixed rules and rates were first codified, it is not a little interesting to learn that persons of rank and influence paid usually four per cent on loans, whilst merchants were charged eight, and unfortunate dealers in grain and other breadstuffs were mulcted in eleven per cent.![2]

It was sought to strike a balance, and an attempt was made to charge generally from six to seven per cent. For a time this succeeded until the Duke of Athens, in revenge for the lukewarmness to his cause on the part of merchants and bankers, declared, in 1345, that the original figures of Justinian should be restored.

The irregular quotations in the value of the gold florin caused a similar sliding scale in the rates of interest. With respect to State Loans the interest varied considerably with times and circumstances. In 1345 the creditors of the "*Monte Comune*"

[1] J. Burckhardt, "Die Cultur des Renaissance in Italien," vol. i. 141.
[2] Peruzzi, p. 205.

received five per cent., whilst between 1349 and 1380, the rate paid was between twelve and twenty per cent.![1]

On the other hand the rate for extraordinary business transactions was moderate. The Bardi Company charged the King of Sicily only two per cent., and in Seville their price was but five per cent. The Peruzzi Company made similar charges.

The wide extent and importance of the Banking-trading interests of the Bardi and Peruzzi Companies is evidenced by the interesting fact that, the King of Armenia excused merchandise cleared to or from Florence, in the names of either of the houses, at one half the usual dues. The King's official permit had his gold seal attached by a broad green silk ribbon.

Money-changers and Money-lenders appear to have been frequently at variance in their operations. To the former were due almost all the Statutes passed after 1394, affecting the status and privileges of the latter. These became so oppressive that all interest was looked upon as theoretically usurious, though practically as much as fifteen per cent, was permissible.[2]

Dante is very severe, in his "*Inferno*," upon the crime of unjust usury, as prostituting the fair rôle of Nature and Nature's laws:—

> . . . "Your Art is,
> As it were, grandchild of God, and it behoves
> Mankind to gain an honest livelihood;
> But, since the usurer takes another part,
> Disdaining Nature and her just behests,
> Placing elsewhere his fickle hope. . . ."[3]

He speaks too of

> . . . "that seventh circle, where the mournful tribe were seated." . . .[4]

and he finds his examples, not in the persons of persecuted Jews, but in those of well-known Merchant-bankers, the Gianfigliazzi, the Ubbriacchi, and, worst of all, Giovanni Bujamonti.

In his eighth circle he places sellers of justice, evil councillors, corrupt barterers, and public deceivers of all kinds, and says:—

[1] M. Villani, lib. iii. c., cvi.
[2] Statuti, 1415, lib. ii. 19.
[3] "Inferno," Canto xi. 105.
[4] "Inferno," Canto xviii.

. . . "All men are there,
Except Bontaro, barterers of 'no' rights as ply,
For filthy lucre's sake, an 'aye' becomes."

Money lending became a precise science, a fine art, a fraud, and a burlesque in turn. Men's wits were sharpened to gain money,—honestly if it might be,—by the practice of every conceivable artifice. The dignitaries of the Church were as keen as the laity to borrow, and to lend, with the sole view of their own ultimate benefit. If a Money-lender died, who had been known as a sharp fellow, sepulture was denied his remains, until a recompense had been paid to the bishop! Men were adjured to make honourable terms with heaven, before they came to their deaths, by handing over considerable sums, or property, to the safeguarding of those who held the Celestial keys!

An appearance of respectability, and even sanctity, in Money-dealing was not unattainable. The nomenclature of the period presented reprehensible and doubtful transactions under pleasing euphemisms, such as:—*dono di tempo*—quick returns, *merito*——slight recompense, *interesso*—smart gain, *cambio*—tit-for-tat, *civanza*—unexpected profit, *baroccolo*—sly advantage, *ritrangola*—trifling advance on quotation, and so on.[1]

Sacchetti tells the story of one Sandro Tornabello, who had an extortionate love of money. Meeting an old creditor, who threatened to arrest him for the non-payment of an account, which had actually been settled by his father and of which no record had been kept, he paid a visit to his Notary, who advised him to let the man proceed against him in the ordinary course. When the legal official appeared to take him into custody, he proposed that he should pay him one-half the claim of three hundred gold florins, and obtain in exchange the quashing of the suit in the *Podesta's* Court![2]

Boccaccio levelled many a cutting shaft of sarcasm at the monetary insincerities of his day:—*Que e poca civanza e men guadagna*, "He who steals a trifling benefit, thereby acquires an

[1] Sacchetti, "Novelle," xxxii. vol. i. p. 136.
[2] Sacchetti, "Novelle," lii.

ample gain!"[1] And he sums up his indignation in the expression—"*Grossa usura!*"[2]

"That man," wrote Machiavelli, "will never be regarded as good who for the purpose of always making a profit from an occupation which he carries on proves himself rapacious, fraudulent and violent."[3]

Constant efforts were made to restrain usurious interest. Unhappily they were usually rendered nugatory by the action of the Government, which aimed at extorting the highest possible rates from citizens who dealt directly with its officials. In 1420 usury, or,—as we should now call it,—interest upon money, was so high and so arbitrary, that the State took steps to issue fixed rates and prices. One decree ordained that no more than five *denari* might be charged per *lire* per month.

A banker's ledger of the year 1427 is still preserved. It belonged to the company of Guiliano di Nannino dei Bardi and Piero di Francesco Piccioli, and reveals the fact that the interest upon a capital of 2928 *lire* amounted to 878 *lire* a year—a rate of nearly thirty per cent.! A goldsmith, Oderigo da Credi by name, borrowed twenty *lire* for six months, and paid four *lire* interest thereupon, and in addition deposited his rich green doublet, lined with velvet, as a guarantee for the repayment of the amount!

The exactions of Money-lenders,—whether licensed by the Guild, or uncovenanted operators in the Market, became at the end of the fifteenth century so excessive that not only was the State forced to issue repressive *Provvisioni*, but the forces of the pulpit were arrayed in violent opposition.

Between 1430 and 1436,—when the city gates were once more opened to the Jews,—the "Guild of Bankers and Money-changers" forbade all Money-lenders under its authority to ask more than four *denari* for a *lira* per month—a rate of twenty per cent.

The extravagant way of managing the finances of the

[1] Boccaccio, "Decamerone" *Giorno* i. *Novella* i. vol. iv., p. 42.
[2] *Giorno* viii. *Nov.* x. vol. iii. p. 308.
[3] Machiavelli, "Il Principe," chap. xi.

Republic gave the preaching friars,—the Augustinians and Dominicans in particular,—much matter for vehement invective. They attacked the "*Monte Comune*," where the subscribers paid ten per cent. upon the valuation of their annual incomes. The mode in which this tax was levied pressed hardly upon the labouring and poorer classes. They, in their difficulty, turned for assistance to the Jews, who had become numerous in the city, and whose operations had escaped the notice of the authorities.

The hardships which their exactions brought upon families in humble circumstances inflamed the zeal of a famous preacher at the end of the fifteenth century. Preaching in the church of Santa Croce, in the year 1488, Bernardino da Feltre raised his voice on behalf of the unfortunate citizens, and violently denounced the rapacity of the Jew money-lenders. He proposed the institution of a Pawn-shop, where the distressed and impoverished might receive just dealing. This proposition was carried out, but not until 1495, after Matteo Strozzi had led a raid against the Jews who were banished the city.

Savonarola entered heart and soul into the contest between might and right. He espoused the people's cause and advocated the overthrow of the selfish and opulent oligarchism which threatened the liberties of Florence. His preaching had an immense effect, and led to the creation of two parties in the city—"*Arrabbiati*," the party of reaction, and "*Piagnoni*," the friends of reform. Through the influence of the *Frate*, the "*Tribunale della Mercanzia*," which had become inoperative, was revived. He attained a position of unparalleled power, and ultimately inflicted great disasters upon the richer citizens, which entirely changed the conditions of Florentine business and society.

The fame of the Florentine Bankers for brilliancy in financial operations, backed up by their reputation for honourable conduct, and equitable administrative ability, spread far and wide. Many States and Cities all over Europe called in members of the Guild to regulate public business and direct the issue of coinage. From

A MUSICAL PARTY

LATE FOURTEENTH CENTURY. (MUCH ENLARGED)

the end of the twelfth century the management of the revenues and mints of London, Naples, Halle, Aquiela, and many other places, was in the hands of Florentines.

Among the earliest recorded loans to foreign States made by the "Guild of Bankers and Money-changers" were, Faenza—1257, Arezzo—1278, and Citta di Castello—1290.

Before the end of the reign of Henry III. Florentine bankers had obtained a firm footing in England. They issued "Letters of Credit" to ambassadors, and bills of exchange were monopolies in their hands. Money was scarce, and it was raised only with difficulty, consequently not only Henry III. but the three first Edwards had recourse to Florence.[1]

Edward I. incurred heavy expenses in Palestine, but he got help from Florence. Interest in such negotiations was rarely promised, for it spelt usury, and usurers were treated as heretics; and so the king paid £10,000 to the Frescobaldi, by way of compensation. He also appointed their London agent to correct the mistakes made by London banks, and named him "Director of the Currency" of the Kingdom. The same house and many others furnished the Queen also, and several of the nobles of the Court, with advances of money, receiving, by way of security for payment, imposts upon wool, hides, and other native produce.

The Salimbeni and Peruzzi Companies had similar dealings with Edward II., and also with the Dukes of Burgundy.

The climax of Florentine prosperity was reached in 1336, when her population amounted to 180,000 inhabitants, and fifteen hundred nobles were inscribed upon the Rolls of the Greater Guilds! The value of the currency was 400,000 gold florins—£200,000, and the State revenue amounted annually, to 300,000 gold florins—£150,000, whilst the ordinary expenditure was only 40,000 gold florins—£20,000.

At this epoch in her history Edward III. was at war with France. Having need of supplies he applied to the "Guild of Bankers and Money-changers" of Florence through the banking-

[1] "Archivio Fiorentino," xxviii. 214, etc.

agents resident in London. The Bardi, Peruzzi, Frescobaldi, and Scali took the lead in supplying the monarch's needs, and in exchange received the farming of the customs of the kingdom, the superintendence of all royal revenues, and the monopoly of exporting wool.

The expansion of the financial business of Florence produced, as might be expected, anomalies and vicissitudes. The speculative operations of the Scali company for example, led in 1326 to stoppage of payment. Their failure was to the amount of 400,000 gold florins, and, although the most considerable, was by no means the only disaster on the Florentine money-market. Moreover it involved misery and litigation far and wide. Among the creditors were the Holy See itself, and the two Queens of Naples—Sancia and Joan. The Spanish Cardinal Pietro di Santa Sabina appealed to the Avignon Pope Clement, and they together importuned the Government of Florence to compel the Company to pay the claim ; but their debt to the Papal chair was upwards of seven thousand gold florins, and the only result was the issue of an Interdict, not only against the Bankers in particular, but against the entire City, which was not removed until 1347.

In 1339, like "a bolt shot out of the blue," an English Royal decree was promulged, suspending the payment of monies due to creditors of the Crown. This involved the companies of Bardi and Peruzzi alone in a loss of 1,355,000 gold florins—nearly £700,000—a colossal sum, which Villani quaintly says was "worth as much as the kingdom itself." [1]

This was a disaster of the first order, and the whole banking interest of Florence reeled under the blow. "All Christendom," says the old chronicler, "came to suspect and distrust every merchant and every Bank." The catastrophe led to the undoing of other Banks. The failures, between 1340 and 1345, of the Acciaiuoli, Buonaccorsi, Corsini, Cocchi, Antellesi, da Uzzano, and other influential Companies, provided a succession of crises which had far-reaching results.

[1] Villani, "Cronica," xii. chap. 55.

The smitten houses liquidated in full. Their credits, their lands, their houses, and all their available possessions, were sold, but at an enormous sacrifice—quite thirty per cent. of loss. The Bardi succeeded in paying their creditors seventy per cent., but the Peruzzi did not do so well—only totalling fifteen to twenty per cent.

Giovanni Villani,—whose writings are so frequently quoted in this volume,—was a Banker by profession. He served the office of Director of the Mint whilst a member of the *Signoria*. He failed along with the Acciaiuoli, Buonaccorsi, Corsini and Cocchi, and was involved with many other bankers and banking companies, in the great smash of the Bardi and Peruzzi. Being completely ruined he was, according to the law, imprisoned for life. He was one of the victims of the terrible plague which ravaged Florence in the year 1350!

From another source the members of the "Guild of Bankers and Money-changers" were also heavily hit. The King of Sicily,—imitating his brother of England,—refused to honour his engagements, which included debts to the unfortunate Bardi and Peruzzi of over 200,000 gold florins—£100,000.

Troubles came in legions, and one more blow was struck at the stability of Florentine finance when the King of France, continuing the traditions of his house, persecuted and deprived all the Florentine merchants and Bankers in his realm!

These financial crashes and political defeats were followed by a calamitous plague,—"The Black Death"—which slew one-third of the population of the city and its suburbs. The Rising of the "*Ciompi*" too, in 1378, led to the destruction by fire and pillage of the palaces and offices of many of the leading bankers. In fact the fourteenth century closed over a broken and bereaved Florence, and men wondered whether recovery were possible, and whether, Phœnix like, she would ever rise again.

The Archives of Florence contain a contract drawn up on May 13, 1446, between Cosimo de' Medici and Giovanni Benci on the one side, and Gierozo de Pegli on the other, for the purpose of

carrying on a banking business, with purchases of wool and cloth in London. It shows how that new men and new methods had come to the front. The senior partners are to find the capital—£2500—and Gierozo is to go to London to establish and manage the branch-house. His salary is a paltry pittance—£33—a year, and he is only to receive one-fifth of the net profits!

Strict directions were given for Gierozo's guidance, with limitations of his buying powers, whilst rules for the consignment of bullion were carefully laid down. He had to promise not to gamble or play dice. Winnings of any kind over ten gold florins in value, were to be placed to the credit of the Company, and the same figure limited his acceptance of gifts! Balance-sheets were to be regularly submitted to the parent house. Rulings of the *Corte della Mercanzia* were to be observed by all parties concerned in any trade dispute.[1]

Another Medici branch house was established in London in 1465,—the partners being Piero de' Medici and Tommaso Portinari, and their agents Gherardo Canigiani and Giovanni de' Bardi,—with a capital of £2000. One-tenth part of all profits were dedicated to charity and church building in Florence.

Henry VIII., Cardinal Wolsey, and Thomas Cromwell, greatly encouraged Italian enterprise, and protected the Florentine Bankers and merchants whenever the populace assaulted them, which, by the way, was no very uncommon occurrence. "Very great vengeance was taken on them, and his Majesty showed great good-will to the strangers."[2]

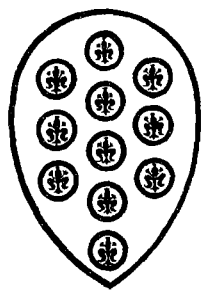
We cannot do better than close this chapter with some wise remarks of a noted Florentine.

Francesco Guicciardini in his "*Counsels of Perfection*" gives excellent warning and advice with respect to money transactions. He says:—"Draw not where you have no assets, nor discount prospective gains, for often enough they cannot be realised. We see the common cause of the bankruptcy of great merchants to be

[1] Archivio di Firenze,—Carteggio Mediceo avanti il Principato, Filza 94.
[2] "Calendar of State Papers, Venetian," vol. ii. 385.

this, that anticipating large future returns, they draw bills of exchange bearing high interest, which have to be met at a fixed date." Again he says:—"Spend not on the strength of future gains, for often these either fail altogether, or else fall short of expectations." [1]

[1] "Opere Inedite," vol. iii. p. 79.



"*Stemma dell' Arte del Cambo*"
Gold Florins upon a red field

## CHAPTER VII

# THE GUILD OF SILK

### *L'ARTE DELLA SETA, OR "POR SANTA MARIA"*

I. ORIGIN.—Early History of Silk industry. Introduced into Tuscany, 1200 *circa*. The Father of the Silk industry of Florence. The Pavement of the Baptistery. Guild incorporated end of twelfth century. A costly material. Early "*Libro di Matricola*." Alternative title. A splendid Residence.

II. CONSTITUTION. — Customs lead to Regulations. Codification. "*Il Statuto Vecchio*." *Congregazione dè Deputati*. Officers. "*Memorie antiche e moderne*." Guild Registers. Matriculation. "*Setaiuoli grossi*" and "*Setaiuoli minuti*." Agents. Relations with other Guilds. An entirely new Code, 1557.

III. DEVELOPMENT.—Trade Associations. Affiliated industries. "*Rottura della Seta*." Silk-workers from Lucca. Lombard dyers. Importance of the Mulberry. Sir Richard Dallington's testimony. Processes. Balducci Pegolotti's instructions. Silk velvet and the Velluti family. Lapo Mazzei and the "Treatise upon the Craft of Silk." Directions about dyeing. Prices of raw silk. Weights. Sizes. Sale-prices for Silk-pieces. Workers in Gold and Silver. "*L'Arte degli Orefici*." Goldsmiths' apprentices. Rich attire of Florentines. Beautiful lace. "*Opera dè Monache*." Embroideries. Gold-filagree. Veil-makers. Painted silk. Immense trade and wealth. Royal Patronage. "Field of the Cloth of Gold." The Guicciardini family. Song of the Silk Girls.

THE Silk industry was brought from India to Europe in the reign of Justinian. It is said that two monks, just home from the East, presented to the Emperor, at Constantinople, in the year 550, some silk-worm eggs and cocoons, which they had brought, concealed in a bamboo; and, at the same time, exhibited the methods of hatching and unwinding used in China.[1] These worms were the forebears of all those varieties, which for wellnigh one thousand years kept Europe supplied with raw silk.[2]

The Emperor immediately recognised the importance of these natural curiosities, and their potentialities in the arena of commerce, and took the monks under his special protection. Turkey thus

[1] Muratori, "Antichite Italiane," Dissert. 25, vol. i. p. 379.

[2] Francesco Mengotti, "Il Colbertismo."

became the mother of silk-worm cultivation and of silk-manufacture in Europe.

The first extension of the area of the silk industry was to Greece, in the eighth century, almost at the time of its introduction into Spain by the Moors. Greek emigrants, colonising the shores and islands of the Mediterranean, still further increased the commerce in silk.

The date of the introduction into Italy of silk-worms and cocoons, if somewhat late in time, was effective in result. In 1148 King Roger of Sicily led an expedition against Thebes, Athens, and Corinth; and, having subdued them, and the surrounding country, he took back to Palermo, among the spoils of the conqueror, a number of Greek artizans skilled in the manufacture of silk-brocade and gold-work. These people settled down wherever the King placed them, and immediately set about their various callings.

Within fifty years of the establishment of the Silk industry in Palermo a number of silk-workers had emigrated to the mainland of Italy; and, of these, a considerable party found their way by sea to Leghorn and Pisa, and thence to Lucca, Milan, and Venice, —in each of which cities silk-manufacture was actively going on late in the twelfth century.

How exactly silk-worms, and the making of silken goods, first reached Florence are matters of uncertainty. Probably the suitability of the Vale of Arno for the cultivation of the mulberry was known to the inhabitants of Lucca, and by them imparted to the new settlers.

The earliest silk-worker, however, in Florence, whose name has been recorded, was a Neapolitan,—called after the name of his birthplace Napoleone,—who, in the Archives dealing with the year 1200, is described as "a merchant in silk-cloth." Anyhow before the end of the twelfth century, not only the precious *verme* —silk-worm, but the indispensable *erba di vermini*,—silk-worm food,—the mulberry-leaf, were introduced into the *Contado* of Florence.

Of course the manufacturing of silken textures was chiefly dependent, for many a long day, upon the import of raw silk. However this may have been there are ample records of the flourishing state of the new industry in the first decade of the thirteenth century.[1]

The brocades first woven by the immigrant silk-workers, from Lucca and Naples, were after classical patterns, learnt in Greece, and handed down, but varied by the influences of Sicilian environment.

Almost, if not quite, the earliest specimens of silk-brocade made in Florence are especially interesting in that they reproduce the designs of the magnificent tessellated pavement of San Giovanni Battista, which was completed in 1204.

The silk trade, it may be frankly admitted, did not thrive, in early days, as prosperously as did that of wool. There were differences between the two. First of all the cultivation of the silk-worm was attended with greater risks than the rearing of sheep, and the value of raw silk in foreign markets was far in excess of that of wool.

The manufacture of tissues of silk, and of gold and silver, represented a far higher value of material, and required more costly manipulation, than did woollen cloth. The capital involved, even on a small scale, was also greater. On the other hand the sale price of silken goods did not bear so high a ratio to the cost of production as was the case in woollen manufactures.

The profit upon spun silk was considerably less than that on spun wool. For example :—a pound weight of raw Spanish wool, which cost about two and a half *lire*, could be manufactured into fine cloth worth forty *lire* ; whilst a pound of raw silk, before dressing, fetched not less than thirty *lire*, and the simple silken tissue, woven therefrom, realised no more than one hundred and twenty *lire*.[2] The admixture of gold and silver thread, or cord, of course, increased greatly the cost of production, whilst the prices realised did not bear a proportionate value.

[1] " L'Osservatore Fiorentino," vol. iv. p. 103.

[2] Pagnini, vols. ii. and iii.

The silk industry therefore grew slowly but surely, and by the beginning of the thirteenth century a goodly number of looms were at work, and manufacturers began to organise themselves into Companies and Corporations.[1]

The Origin of the "Guild of Silk" is coeval with that of the "Guild of Wool" and of the "*Calimala* Guild." The Consuls of the three Guilds signed the treaty of Peace with Siena in 1204. Again in 1224, and 1229, the signatures of the Consuls of the "Silk Guild" are appended to the Treaties with Volterra and Orvieto, along with those of the other Consuls. The Guild was so far incorporated in 1224 that a moral Code was issued for the government of its members.[2]

A Codex is preserved among the Archives of the City, for the year 1225, belonging to the "*Por Santa Maria*."[3] It is entitled "*Libro di Matriculo*," and is the earliest Matriculation-Roll existing. It records that Claro, son of Guido Arlotti, d' Oltrarno; Simbaldo, son of Bartolo Caccialupi, son of Caccia, della Porta Santa Maria; Cardinale, son of Marcoaldo, di Santa Cecilia; Dono Spinelli; Arrigo di Renucciai of the "*Pressa di Calimala*," were matriculated in that year. The Roll goes on to 1233, and contains three hundred and sixty other names; it is further referred to, under date 1308, when the Statutes for all the Guilds were subjected to thorough revision.[4]

The full title of the Guild was originally:—"*Ars et Universitas della Seta Civitatis Florentinæ*," and this appears,—along with the arms of the Guild,—still on the tower of the Residence, which abuts upon the Via Capaccio. These heraldic bearings consist of two closed and barred doors—borrowed doubtless from the Porta Santa Maria, one of the Gates of the City in the first wall of old Florence. *Amorini* and wreaths were late decorative additions.

The alternative style of the Guild:—"*L'Arte della Porta Santa Maria*"—"the Guild of Saint Mary's Gate,"—which has crept

[1] Ammirato, Lib. i. p. 67.
[2] Cantini, "Legislazioni," i. 176.
[3] "Archivio dell' Arte della Seta," Letter G.
[4] Pagnini, vol. ii. 108.

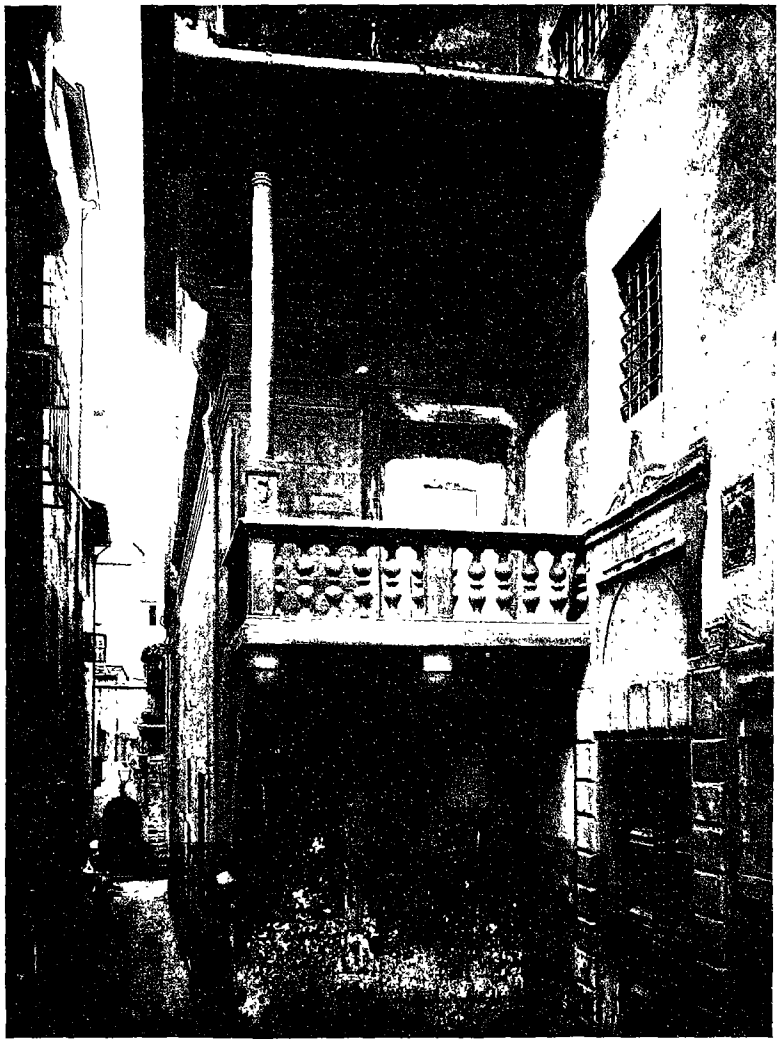
into all the manuscripts and documents, was due to the fact that the Residence of the Consuls was next door to the church of Santa Maria sopra la Porta. This building was known as the Palazzo de' Lamberti, and it was assigned to the use of the Silk Guild by the State. Within it also were the headquarters of the *Parte Guelfa*, which powerful political association extended special patronage to the "Guild of Silk." This Residence was, perhaps, the most splendid of all the Guild Palaces of Florence. Established in the old church of San Biagio,—formerly Santa Maria della Porta,—the artists employed by the Guild covered the exterior of the building with fine stucco, which they then lavishly decorated in fresco and, as they then called it, *sgraffiti*—finely scratched designs. The Audience Hall contained superb oriental alabaster columns, gorgeous mosaics, beautifully tooled gilt bronze work, rich silken hangings and embroideries, and brilliantly stained-glass windows.

Goro Dati speaks of the brave show the Consuls of the Guild made at the annual Feast of San Giovanni:—"All along the Via Porta Santa Maria were displayed, over the shops and offices of the silk merchants, magnificent brocades of silk and gold, bearing the emblazoned arms of ten kingdoms, whose sovereigns and courtiers were decked with the produce of the Florentine silk-looms."

. . . . . .

As was the case with the other Guilds very many bye-laws and regulations had, from time to time, been adopted by silk-manufacturers and merchants. These were of a somewhat contradictory character, for, whilst the development of the silk industry had been comparatively slow, many new ideas and methods had been introduced into Florence. At the general revision of the laws of the Guilds in 1301-1309,—when the General Code for all of them was drafted,—the technicalities of the commerce in silk were examined, and a council of experts was empanelled to adopt a full Constitution for the "*Por Santa Maria.*"

Their work had so far progressed by 1328, that a serious step was taken towards the codification of the Statutes of the Guild. The original number of four Consuls was restored, and was more-



RESIDENCE OF THE CONSULS OF THE GUILD OF SILK (RIGHT) VIA CAPACCIO

over retained until the ancient merchant oligarchy made way for the princely rule of the Medici family.[1] At the same date three *Consiglieri*,—Councillors,—were added to the Court, or Tribunal, of the Consuls, whose powers were little inferior to those reposed in the Chief Magistrates. One of the Councillors was a notary, and the two others were chosen from among leading manufacturers not hitherto officially connected with the Guild.

In 1335 a complete Code of Statutes was put out. These were written in Latin, upon parchment, in the form of a book, which was afterwards referred to as "*Il Statuto Vecchio*"—"The Old Code."

The rules of procedure for the election of officers were the same as in the case of officials of the "*Calimala*" Guild; whilst their duties and functions were also similar. All superior offices were required to be filled exclusively by persons of Florentine parentage and birth, who were generally recognised as chief among silk-manufacturers and merchants.

The Tribunal of the Guild was composed of the four Consuls, together with two *Conservatori*—"Guardians"—who superintended severally the civil and criminal affairs of the Guild. The business of this Court was twofold:—1. The direction of all that appertained to the commerce in silk; and, 2. The administration of justice to every person connected with the Guild.

Among higher officials was the *Congregazione de' Deputati*,—Council of Deputies,—which undertook all questions and matters relating to the practical development of the silk industry, and the interests of the various groups of workpeople employed. The Deputies,—the number of whom varied from time to time,—were representatives of the subordinate trade associations in connection with the Guild.

The *Provveditori*,—two in number,—were the Administrators of the goods and chattels of the Guild; the *Cancelliere*,—the Chancellor, or Keeper,—had care of the registers, documents, and charters of the Guild; the *Cassiere* or *Camerlingo*,—Treasurer of the petty-cash,—whose duty it was to receive and book the sub-

[1] Cantini, "Legislazione," i. 176.

scriptions and donations of members of the Guild; and the *Computisti*,—Accountants,—who directed the official correspondence of the Guild, were important officers of the Tribunal.

Two Inspectors were annually appointed by the Consular Tribunal to visit regularly and rigorously the manufactories, workshops, and dwelling-houses, of persons connected with the Guild. They took note of the time, weight, and value, of all deliveries of raw silk, and of the manufactured article in its various stages—as they passed from masters to workpeople. Not only so, but they were instructed to have an eye to the moral conduct, manipulative ability, and arduous application, of each operative, and to report such to the Consuls.[1]

The annual report of the Inspectors also included returns of description and condition of machinery employed, and notes upon all new inventions and novel methods. Under them were two Assistant Inspectors, whose attention was mainly directed to tests of quality, and to the correctness of weights and measures. They were instructed to examine carefully every bale of unspun silk, every reel of silk-thread, and every piece of silk texture, with respect to length, breadth, weight, colour, etc.

The Tribunal possessed many valuable Archives. One of these contains a "*Memorie antiche e moderne*,"—Ancient and Modern Review,—which fills several books.[2] Two Registers of Matriculation of the years 1247 and 1289, written upon parchment,—Similar registers of 1368, and of 1397-1480, on paper,—Voters' lists, 1374-1418,—a Register of payments to the Palazzo di San Michele in Orto for the years 1345 and 1346,—Books of Matriculation of the years 1328-1520,—a List of Consuls, 1435-1500,—and many volumes and tracts dealing with wills, codicils, donations, etc. etc., appertaining to members of the Guild,—legal processes,—and endless details, concerning the work and the workers of the Guild, with inventories of goods, etc. etc. Most of these are preserved in one or other of the great Libraries of Florence.

Matriculation into the "*Por Santa Maria*" followed, generally,

[1] Statuti dell' Arte della Seta, Rub. 34.

[2] Pagnini, vol. ii. 132.

the lines of admission to the "*Calimala*" and Wool Guilds, so far, at all events, as personal qualifications, and entrance fees, were concerned. Nevertheless the act of Matriculation did not necessarily give admission to the general benefits of the Guild. Candidates were usually enrolled members of some special branch in the operations of, and under the control of, the Guild. Hence a man was asked to state the exact trade he wished to follow, and also to give an exhibition, before the Consuls, of his skill in that calling before he was granted the freedom of Membership.[1]

The members of the Guild were divided into two classes—*Setaiuoli Grossi*—master silk merchants and *Setaiuoli Minuti*—silk-makers. The first were required to be possessed of a capital of at least twelve thousand gold florins. They were privileged to manufacture silk-tissues at their pleasure, and to sell wholesale, both in Florence and abroad. All merchandise disposed of, by them, required the official stamp of the Guild. They were forbidden to sell retail, and in any way to undersell the retail silk dealers. The *Setaiuoli Grossi* formed the aristocratic section of the Guild, and many of them were among the wealthiest and most influential of the citizens.

The *Setaiuoli Minuti*, who were also called "master silk workers," were those who sold in retail quantities everything appertaining to the silk industry, and most of them were also practical silk spinners and weavers. They required also the qualification of capital, but the amount was unfixed, although considerably less than in the case of the *Setaiuoli Grossi*. Many indeed were permitted to enter the Guild with no money qualification at all, skill in manufacturing ability and smartness in business aptitude being regarded as equivalents. The *Setaiuoli Minuti* were not permitted to spin or weave silk without the license of the Consuls, although they were allowed to own machinery and implements of their craft without taxation. Their shops and warehouses also required license, and their manufactures the official stamp of the Guild.

[1] Pagnini, vol. ii. p. 114.

The other Guilds largely employed the services of *Sensali* or agents, but the "*Por Santa Maria*" was far too wide awake to the interests of masters and workpeople to tolerate unnecessary interposition of middlemen. Consequently, in 1376, a *Provvisione* was passed, prohibiting anybody to act as a broker or dealer, who had not taken an oath before the Consuls, or the Notary of the Guild, that he would do nothing contrary to the spirit and the letter of the Statutes. Moreover such an one was bound over by the payment of certain money, and by the production of two good sureties. The matter was further dealt with in Rubric 18 of the Statutes, which expressly states that it was not permitted for any person connected with the Guild to have dealings with *Sensali*, whose names were posted as defaulters upon the notice-board of the Tribunal of the *Mercanzia*.

With respect to the system of payments of accounts, the Silk Guild only allowed eight months' credit, except among members; but in 1429 the limit was advanced to one year for amounts exceeding twenty-five pounds.[1]

Merchants of the "*Calimala*" and "*Por Santa Maria*" were forbidden to exchange shops or offices, and to share such. No silk merchant was permitted to deal in foreign cloth within the boundaries of the State, nor beyond the seas, unless by special leave of the Consuls of the "*Calimala*."

The Statutes of the "Guild of Silk" were revised in 1386, and again in 1415, when many alterations and additions were made in accordance with the progress and prosperity of the Guild. In 1557 an entirely new Code was promulgated under the rule of the Medici.

. . . . . .

A very large number of crafts were subordinated or affiliated to the "Guild of Silk." Pagnini gives the following list[2]:—

[1] Statuti del Popolo e Comune Fiorentino, 1415, Rub. xxxvii. and xxxix.
[2] Pagnini, vol. ii. p. 63.

I. *Setaiuoli Grossi*

| | |
|---|---|
| *Orefici e Banchieri* | Gold and Silver-workers and Store-keepers. |
| *Ritagliatori e Fondachi* | Retail-dealers and Drapers. |
| *Battilori e Tiratori* | Gold-beaters and Wire-pullers. |
| *Velettai e Linaiuoli* | Silk-gauze makers and Linen-makers. |

II. *Setaiuoli Minuti*

| | |
|---|---|
| *Accavigliatori* | Bobbin-winders. |
| *Banderai* | Makers of Church Vestments. |
| *Giubbonai e Farsettai* | Vest and Doublet-makers. |
| *Maestri di trarre Seta* | Overseers of Export Goods. |
| *Materassai* | Mattress-makers. |
| *Merciai* | Dealers in Raw-silk. |
| *Orditori* | Weavers. |
| *Pettinagnoli* | Silk Comb-makers. |
| *Pettinatori di Staccio* | Carders of coarse Silk. |
| *Ricamatori e Stampatori* | Embroiderers and Printers. |
| *Tintori di Seta e di Raso* | Dyers of Silk and Satin. |
| *Tessitori di Drappi d' Oro* | Weavers of Cloth of Gold. |

In addition to these were *Calzaiuoli*—Hosiers, and *Sarti*—Tailors, working specially in silk, and in gold and silver thread and cord, under strict trade regulations, and with the license of the Consuls of the Guild.

The fees on admission to any of the above subordinate trades were nominally only three *lire*[1] a head, but they were increased for certain associations as follows :—The Master Silk Merchants, Retail Dealers and Drapers, Gold and silver workers, and Store-Bankers,—holders of valuable metal used in the manufacture of gold and silver tissue, etc.,—paid fourteen gold florins ; whilst the allied trades of Hosiers, Armourers, Scales-makers, Banner-workers and Embroiderers, and Gold and Silver Vest-makers,—belonging to the "*Por Santa Maria*,"—Silk-dyers, and

[1] Cantini, "Legislazioni," vol. vii. p. 217.

the "*Setaiuoli Minuti*," generally paid eight gold florins. This privilege of recognition was accompanied by actual emolument as working members or associates of the Guild.

The following classes of workpeople were also attached to the Guild :—

| | |
|---|---|
| *Acquajuoli* | Sprayers of Cocoons. |
| *Armaiuoli* | Armourers. |
| *Bandieri* | Banner-makers. |
| *Bilanciai* | Scales-makers. |
| *Calderai* | Steamers of Cocoons. |
| *Conduttori de' Bozzoli* | Sorters of Cocoons. |
| *Dipintori* | Painters on Silk. |
| *Disegnatori* | Designers. |
| *Distenditori* | Stretchers of cloth of gold and silver. |
| *Doratori* | Gilders. |
| *Filatori e Filatore* | Spinners—male and female. |
| *Forbiciai* | Gold and Silver thread-cutters. |
| *Incannatori* | Reelers. |
| *Lavatori dell' Opere* | Cleaners of gold and silver work. |
| *Manganatori* | Wringers. |
| *Piegatori* | Folders and platters. |
| *Rimettitori* | Rovers. |
| *Saponai* | Washers. |
| *Stenditori* | Dyers of special textures. |
| *Tiratori Minuti* | Wire-pullers. |
| *Torcitori* | Throwsters or twisters. |
| *Trattori* | Winders. |

Many of these groups of operatives worked together under self-imposed regulations, but care was taken that no person laboured in more than one category. Over each set of similarly employed workpeople were officials styled "*Maestri di far Macchie*"—Inspectors of Flaws and Blemishes. These men were master-craftsmen in their special branch of the industry, and acted as overlookers in the finishing of work.

A "RELIGIOUS" TEACHING A WOMAN SILK-WEAVER

FIFTEENTH CENTURY

(A LESSON FROM THE SPIDER!)

Most of these workpeople lived and worked in the vicinity of the little street,—the Vicolo della Seta,—which ran along the side of the Church of Santa Maria next the Palazzo Lamberti, and wherein, in later years, the rich family of the Acciaiuoli erected a splendid palace. In this crowded quarter of the city was the meeting-place of all persons interested in the silk industry, and outsiders were wont at times to be treated with scant courtesy if they ventured to traverse its limits.

The Via della Colonna had a massive stone column upholding the roof over a great drying terrace, where silk stuff was dyed and stretched. Around this building were many warehouses belonging to the Guild, and dwellings inhabited by workpeople.

It was not within the power of any of the *Sctaiuoli Minuti* to fix the scale of wages, but they were obliged to apply to the *Setaiuoli Grossi* for the terms sanctioned by the Consuls. Once every year, in June, the Consuls issued a "*Rottura della Seta*," a Current Price-list, which ruled buyers and sellers alike, and by this means inflated wages and speculative quotations were prevented.[1]

By Rubric 84 of the Statutes no one was allowed to prosecute any industry in connection with the manufacture of silk, without the written and endorsed license of the Consuls of the Guild.

Among protective regulations, which dealt with the liberty of the subject, Rubric 62 enacted that no silk-worker, or worker in gold and silver, should be ejected from his house, or his shop, until after a special sentence of the Consuls in Council.

Pawnbrokers, under Rubric 21, were forbidden to accept raw silk and silken textures, and implements and objects required and used in the trade.

No Guild worker, male or female, was permitted to leave the city, or go beyond the *Contado*, unless armed with a written permit, which was only granted upon certain strict conditions of purpose and period: Rubric 84 indicates what penalties were incurred by disobedience.

Many Rubrics deal with the treatment of silk worms, eggs, and

[1] L. Cantini, i. 178.

cocoons. For example, cocoons were not to be touched between the sounding of the evening bell and that of matins.

In 1315 an important accession to the strength and efficiency of the Guild workers was effected by the arrival in Florence of a number of silk and gold craftsmen from Lucca, after its sack by Uguccione della Fagiola. The emigration was due to the severe repressive laws which were imposed by the victorious Florentines. There was doubtless a reason for this policy—the shattering of the local industry, and the aggrandisement of the Florentine Guild! The emigrants were treated, at first, with suspicion by their rivals, and were not allowed to settle in the silk quarter of the city.

The *Setaiuoli Grossi*, however, knew what they were about; and, whilst Rubric 84 of the Statutes contained a rider, which forbade Florentine workers holding communications, and carrying on transactions, with the new-comers, the Consuls gave instructions for them to be quartered in the Prato district, and provided dwelling-houses and workshops for them.

This set of immigrants was not the only one that helped to swell the population, and to develop the silk industry of Florence. Quite early in the thirteenth century a number of Dyers found their way out of Lombardy, and took up their residence just beyond the Porta San Gallo in a tenement belonging to the monastery of the Augustinian monks.[1]

Naturally a rivalry was set up between this party and the Dyers already working under the Guilds of "*Calimala*" and "Wool," and the workpeople attached to the manufacturers of the *Umiliati*, in the Borgo d'Ognissanti. They received however overtures from the "Guild of Silk"; and attached themselves to that corporation, on the understanding that they manipulated solely silk and silken goods.

This Lombardian Company became very prosperous under their new auspices, and were known, far and wide, for their hospitality and benevolence. They established shelters for Dyers,

[1] F. L. Migliore, "Firenze citta nobilissima," p. 364.

who had passed fifty years of age, to which they gave the name of *Gerolocomio*—perhaps "Home for the distressed and aged." Here pensioners dwelt with their families, upon whose earnings they were dependent.

Later on again another Company of Dyers found their way to Florence. They were also from Lucca, and were tempted doubtless by the high wages of the workpeople employed by the "Guild of Silk." Under their banner,—Christ upon the Cross, clothed from head to foot in a long silken vestment,—they settled in houses belonging to Ser Girolamo Baldesi, near the Hospital of Santa Maria Nuova.

The policy of admitting skilled workmen from outside was as excellent as it was far sighted. Every trade is bound to profit immensely by the infusion of new blood, and this proved conspicuously to be the case of the "Guild of Silk" and its workpeople.

The importance of the mulberry in connection with the manufacture of silk cannot, of course, be overestimated. For nearly two centuries, however, the Florentine silk merchants made little or no attempt to cultivate the tree in the neighbourhood of Florence. They were content to collect the eggs and cocoons of the silkworm, by means of their agents in the East, and elsewhere, who transported them, together with immense consignments of mulberry leaves.

The success, or failure, of the silk trade depended absolutely upon the supply of the raw material, and consequently, as the industry became more and more prosperous, it behoved manufacturers to find increased sources of production. Hence, at the end of the fourteenth century, and early in the fifteenth, many *Provvisioni* were passed by the Consuls and Council of the "Guild of Silk," which were approved by the State Council, for increasing the cultivation of the Mulberry. These are apparently the first intimations of its introduction into Tuscany. In 1440 it was enacted that on every *podere*,—or farm,—there should be planted, at least, five mulberry trees annually, until the number in vigorous growth reached fifty.

The trees throve wonderfully, and manufacturers reflected upon their want of prescience in the past. Two classes of agriculturists were especially interested in the propagation of the silk-worm food, and they were enrolled under two designations, by the Consuls of Guild, namely:—*Padroni de' Terreni*, owners of suitable land for the growth of mulberry-trees,—and *Maestri di Mori e di Foglie*,—"Mulberry growers and Purveyors of mulberry-leaves." The Guild acquired the land of the former, by direct purchase, or by lease, and employed the latter to carry on the cultivation, under rules and bye-laws specially drawn up.

The success of the new enterprise was manifest immediately. The climate admirably suited the tree, and, in richness and luxuriance, the yield equalled that of other lands; whilst the silk worms benefited immeasurably by their fresh and luscious pasturage. Probably the scientific methods of these sapient cultivators had much to do with this favourable result. Moreover other silk manufacturing cities in Italy began to send their merchants and dealers to Florence for the purpose of buying silk worms, cocoons, and mulberry leaves. The "Guild of Silk" met this commerce in a spirit of protection, and in 1442 a *Provvisione* was passed forbidding the export of everything connected with the manufacture,—worms, cocoons, raw-silk, and mulberry-leaves being distinctly named.

Sir Richard Dallington, an intelligent English traveller in Italy in the middle of the sixteenth century, writes thus about the cultivation of silk worms and mulberry trees, and the prospects of the Silk industry generally[1]:—"I will speak of the Mulberry, for that the mention thereof draweth consequently therewith all the discourse of the Silke-worme, which being another of the greatest commodities of Tuscany. In the months of May and June this worme laboureth . . . when they are laid in the Sunne, and so hatched, but for want of heate, and to have of them betimes, the wormes will hatch them in their bosoms. So soon as they be wormes they have of mulberie leaues given them,

[1] "Survey of the Great Duke's Estate of Tuscany," 1596.

whereof they only feed, to which purpose are daily great store of trees planted : the leaues is sold at foure *quattrini* the pound. . . . The rest of the year they be only kept in some warme and close places, where they may be neither endangered by cold nor thunder, for either destroyeth them. When she hath wrought herselfe into a bottome, they put it into warme water to finde the end thereof, but if they would preserve the worme for seed, then they finde the end without putting the bottome into water (for this killeth the worme). . . . And whereas heretofore the Silke workers of Florence, besides their owne, were usually wont to buy from Naples, Lombardie, and Greece, so much silk as yearly amounted to three hundred thousand duckets, it is now thought that shortly they shall have enough of their owne. . . . It is thought there are yearly made of Florence *Rashes* to the worth of two million of duckets, and of Silkes and Cloathes of gold and silver, to the value of three millions. . . ."

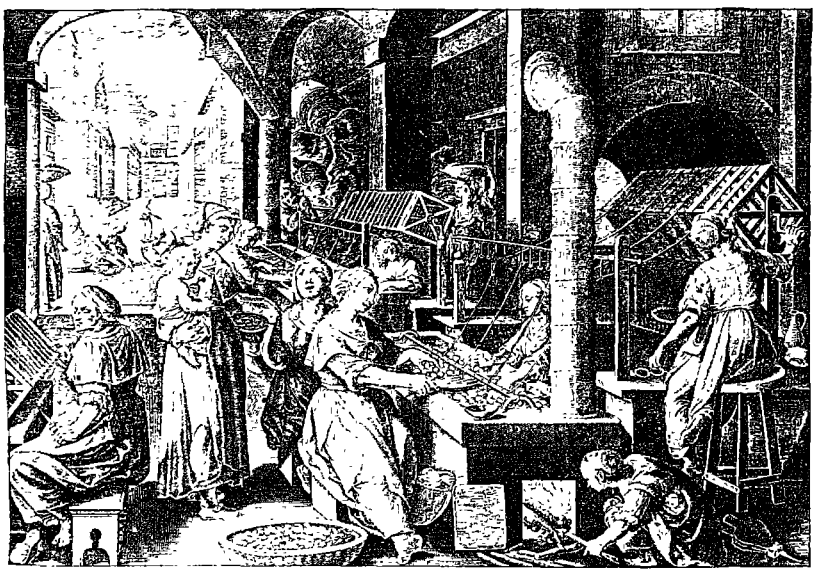
In spite of the increase of mulberry plantations and of silk-worms in Tuscany it was necessary for the Florentine manufacturers to import both leaves and worms largely from abroad, and especially from the Valley of the Rhone.

At various times, especially during epidemics, much suspicion was directed to the possibility of the introduction of fever, and other ailments, by means of the raw silk and cocoons imported from the East. It was commonly said too, in later days, that the cultivation of the mulberry was pernicious :—"for in the most places where it hath been planted plague and sickness hath broken out!"

Perhaps of all the processes the most important were those which dealt with the earliest stages of the manufacture—the treatment of the cocoon. No cocoons containing dead worms, or double cocoons, or any which had suffered injury, or discolouration in transit, were allowed to pass the tables of the *Conduttori*, who were the first to deal with cocoons in the rough.

Steaming in hot water—by the *Calderai*, was the next step.

This process was needful to kill the worm swiftly, so that no discharge of foul matter might exude, and injure the "gum," or lining of the cocoon. The cocoons were placed in hot water for a few minutes, and a little alkali was added. The temperature was kept quite equable,—about 80° Fahrenheit,—until the silk-case softened of itself, and the stray strands of silk floated. To assist this natural unwinding, girls were employed, who kept



SPINNING SILK FROM COCOONS. SIXTEENTH CENTURY

the cocoons in gentle movement in their bath, by means of small brushes made of tree twigs.

Reeling, from the steamed and softened cocoons, was the gathering into one thread, so to speak, of strands from many submerged cocoons. This formed the raw silk of commerce. Great care had to be exercised by the *Filatori* and *Filatore*,—male and female spinners or reelers,—to avoid thick pieces or lumps being drawn through the eyelet of the reeling machine.

The *Torcitori*,—silk-throwers or twisters,—wound together

several strands of raw silk in hanks. The raw silk singly treated was far too delicate for manipulation. The weft-thread was composed of two or three strands of raw silk not "thrown," and this gave the material its silky appearance and feel.

No doubt the introduction of raw silk to Florence was due, in the first instance, to the agents of the Merchants and Bankers, who, traversing lands and seas, failed not to pick up novelties of all kinds, and especially such objects as appeared likely to be profitable commercial assets. Thus samples of unwound cocoons, and thrown-silk, found their way into their consignments of foreign produce.

The finest quality of raw silk was imported from Spain, which, in the fourteenth century, was valued at from two *lire*, ten *soldi*, to eleven *soldi* per pound: that of Catanzano being the least highly esteemed, out of nineteen or twenty other varieties.

Balducci Pegolotti, in his "*Manuale del Mercante Fiorentino o Divisamenti*," gives precepts for preserving the silk in transit. He speaks of "raw silk which comes in bales, and is of many kinds and qualities, but of whatever kind it is, it must be smooth to the touch, and according to the quality, the thread must be fine, round, and free from fluff, dross, and knots. . . ."

"It is also necessary to see that it is not rubbed, which means that on the road, when it is brought by beasts of burden, or in waggons, the bales do not come into contact with the hedges, the waggon, or the ground, so that the canvas or outer covering is torn, and the silk is exposed. . . ."

"To preserve silk well it must be packed tighter than any other merchandise, and kept in a place neither too damp nor too dry, covered with good matting. If it is so kept it will never be spoilt."

The travellers' bales also contained consignments of silken stuffs and velvets and gold and silver brocades produced by the silk looms of India, Persia and China.[1] Hence Florence became

[1] Pagnini, vol. ii. 115.

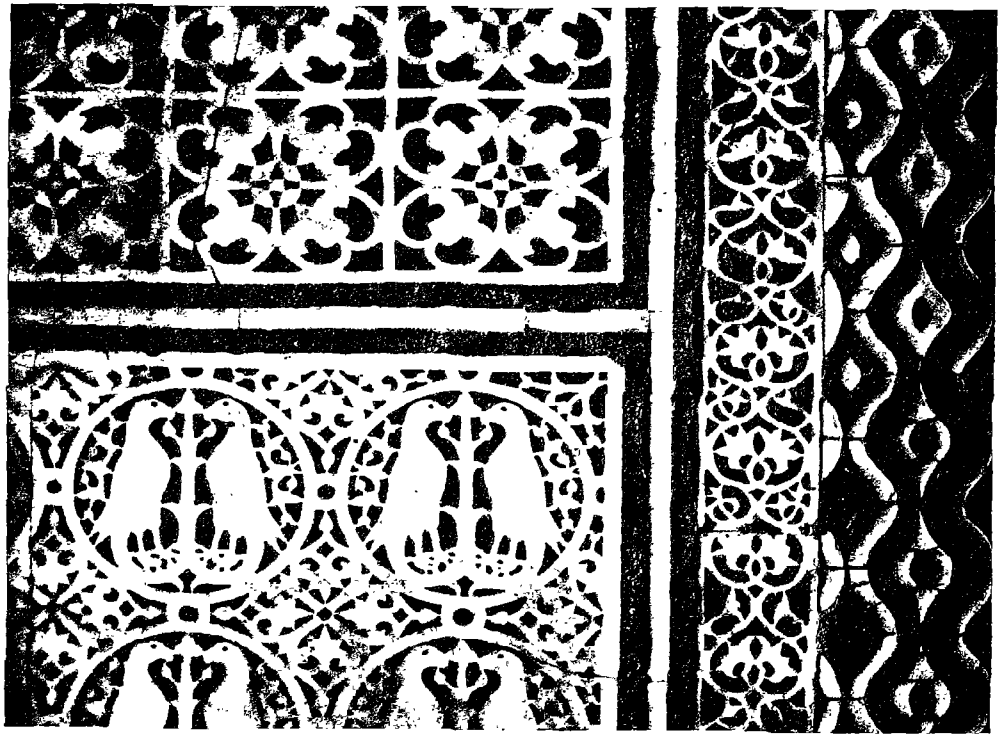
the emporium of the precious tissues of Bagdad, Damascus, Teheran, and other manufactures of the Far East.

One other element contributed to the fame of Florence as a Silk-mart. Many a courier and agent brought home with him natives of the countries through which he travelled. These people carried with them, to the service of their new masters, secrets and methods known only in the East, and, by the terms of their purchase, they were held in a state of quasi-slavery, and gave their time and abilities to the prosecution of their craft for the benefit of their masters.

Thus, in a comparatively short time, beauty of design, richness of colouring, and fineness of workmanship raised the value of Florentine silk immeasurably. Just as in the case of foreign cloth, redressed by Florentine workpeople, the output of the silk looms of Florence commanded far and away better prices, in the European markets, than did the like produce of any other city or country.[1] Her craftsmen excelled those of Lucca, Milan, Naples, Pisa, Genoa, Bologna, and Ferrara, as well as those of Bergamo, Bassano, Vicenza, Verona, Padua, and other centres of the silk industry in Lombardy.[2]

The two most important branches of the silk manufacture,—pure and simple,—were plain silk and silk-velvet or plush. The invention of velvet was due to the enterprise of the Velluti family,—hence the name,—who were already doing a thriving business in the thirteenth century. Inconvenienced by want of room, in their original workshops, off the Vicolo della Seta, they removed, along with other families and workmen engaged in the same kind of silk manufacture; and, somewhere about 1285, crossed the river, and established themselves in more spacious quarters in Oltrarno. The Velluti erected large warehouses and factories, in a new street, to which they gave the name of Via de' Velluti. This street soon became an important thoroughfare, and, because many other rising families built fine

[1] Statuti dell' Arte della Seta, Rub. xviii., xxv., xxxiv., xliii., lxii.
[2] Pagnini, vol. ii. 115.



DETAIL OF BLACK AND WHITE MARBLE PAVEMENT IN THE BAPTISTERY

1200 A.D.

(EARLY PATTERNS FOR SILK BROCADE)

[*See page 206*]

edifices along it, it was re-named Via Maggiore—the Via Maggio of to-day.

There exists a Chronicle,—the original manuscript of which is in the possession of the present Duca di San Clemente, Simone Velluti Zate,—which deals with the history of his house and its success in trade; it was begun in 1300 by Donato di Lamberto dei Velluti. A good many leaves are wanting in the first part, and there is the following suggestive note by Paolo Velluti, who continued the Chronicle:—"Whatever is obliterated in these pages, I have done it to wipe out the memory of the enmities and vendettas of the men of our house."[1]

A light kind of silk-tissue was much made called *Drappi delle Ermisini*,—Sarcenet,—which admitted of the admixture of inferior and watered down materials, a sort of "shoddy silk." This manufacture was discouraged, and under certain conditions, forbidden, as detracting from the reputation of the Florentine silk manufacturers. Silk-tissue, which was sold everywhere by weight, was woven in pieces measuring ordinarily twenty *ulne*—fore-arm's lengths.[2]

Lapo Mazzei, the Notary, makes some sententious remarks in his "Letters" upon the morals and aims of the Florentine methods. He rather optimistically avers that they had in their minds more noble things than mere money gains, and he cites a "Treatise upon the Arte della Seta," written by an anonymous member of the Guild. The manuscript is preserved in the Laurentian Library at Florence; the author inculcates not only admirable rules and recommendations for the successful carrying on of the industry, but also the more excellent way of transacting worldly business, by way of making accommodations with heaven!

The work is entitled: "A Manual of Theoretical and Practical Instruction for the use of Silk-manufacturers."[3] Its value is enhanced by many miniatures,—exquisitely drawn and

[1] Donato Velluti, "Cronica," 1300-1370. [2] Cantini, vol. vii. 176.
[3] Girolamo Gargiolli, "Trattato del Secolo XV."

coloured,—of workpeople of both sexes, wearing the work-a-day dress of the period, and engaged in their several occupations.

This "Manual" is based upon manuscripts and codices in the Biblioteca Ricciardiana,—bearing dates in and about 1453,—the Biblioteca Magliabecchiana, and in the Biblioteca Laurenziana of the approximate date of 1517. The anonymous author makes use of the public records of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and quotes freely from Goro Dati and Dino Compagni. He enters fully into all the details concerning raw-silk, its import, and its manipulation, together with descriptions of the machinery used, and the method of dyeing, with current values and sale-prices, etc. etc.

At the beginning,—after the customary invocation and dedication,—are instructions for the treatment of *pelo*—raw-silk and cuttings, *orsoio*—sewing-silk, and *trama*—silk-thread for weaving the woof. The preparatory stages before dyeing were: sorting, steaming, boiling, and reeling. Recipes are given for dyeing green, brown-green, blue, vermilion, tawny, fustic-yellow, grey, and black. The methods of dyeing crimson and black, for example, are as follows:—*Crimson*:—"In dyeing crimson the silk must be left for a day, or better for a day and a night, in a solution of alum. In the morning wash out the alum in a trough of clear water, and fold the stuff in clean linen cloths. Have a cauldron of hot water ready, with a moderate amount of lye in it, add half the crimson dye, which has been well ground and sieved, and bring the mixture to a boil. It is very important that there be not too much lye,—for the inexperienced dyer is often too liberal in its use, fearing that the solution in the cauldron is not thick enough,—or the result will be a yellowish colour, and the process will have been useless."

"Dip the alumed silk warily in the cauldron, then take it out, and place it in the alum bath again, for an hour or two. Again remove it, and dip in the cauldron again, then take it out, wash it well, and rinse it several times. This part of the process should be done in Arno water, or better still in water of the

Mugnone, which is harder; and the harder the water the greater its cleansing power."

"The remaining part of the crimson dye is added from time to time, during the progress of the various dippings. So far as the dyeing process has gone, it has merely fixed the first strain of colour. The dyer must now consider whether he has used coarse or fine crimson, and also the quantity of each. If he has had the fine crimson he must dip the substance in tepid alum-solution, then shake it five or six times in clean linen cloths, and dip, and leave it in the cauldron until the liquid is quite cold."

"The next part of the process consists in shaking out a piece to see if it is to the dyer's liking; if it is, nothing further need be done: if it is not red enough, make the alum a little hotter again, and put it in as before, and continue repeating this until it is quite satisfactory."

"Remember that the more leisurely the process, and the colder, the better, clearer, more unblemished the stuff will be. Fine crimson stands wringing better than the coarse, and has more colour, pound for pound,—for one pound of fine is equal to two pounds of the coarse,—besides the fine is redder, and takes the alum better. The coarse crimson dyes very slightly, so that if the alum-solution is too hot all will be spoiled."

"Remember that it is never a waste of time to stand and watch patiently the steeping in the cauldron, for loss may otherwise be incurred in the selling value of the material. If very deep red is required add a little Roman vitriol to the alum; but this forced colouring is bad, and does not last, but fades easily."

*Black*:—"The stuff must be steeped in gall a whole day, or a day and a night. The gall must boil for one hour in the cauldron, taking care that the latter is well filled, and boiling when the silk is put in. When it has boiled for an hour or more, take it out, wring it, and put it to cool—repeat this three times. If it is *pelo* or *orsoio* do not boil it in the cauldron,—for it has to endure hard wear, and boiling it in the

black dye weakens it,—but pour the boiling solution over it. Take it out and put it to cool as many times as necessary, until the sample shows that it is finished. When this has been done three times, put the material in the cauldron, so that it is completely covered, and let it stand all night—then take it out and wash it. Place a pan ready with washing-soap dissolved in it, put the stuff in, and soap it well,—for this soaping makes it lustrous, bright, and soft,—as otherwise it would be dark and harsh, and would split."

"Many kinds of silk require great care in dyeing them black, such as the silk of Bruges, and others of weak fibre, which, if boiled in black dye, become so fragile that nothing can be done with them—this is not the case with Spanish and other stout qualities."

The author goes on to give several tables of figures which are interesting, as illustrations of the actual conditions under which the silk industry throve so greatly in Florence.[1] The first table is:—"Of Descriptions and Prices of Raw Silks":—there are twenty varieties, including *Seta Spagnola*—quoted at Fl. 2, 10 *piccioli* per pound weight, *Seta Strana*—foreign—Fl. 2, 4 *piccioli*, *Seta d' Almeria*—Fl. 2, 5 *piccioli*, *Seta da Messina*—Fl. 1, 10 *piccioli*, *Seta da Modigliana*—Fl. 2, 13 *piccioli*, *Seta d' Abruzzi*—Fl. 2, 5 *piccioli* and *Seta Crespolina*—11 *piccioli*.

The second table deals with the "Winding of Silk." All masters who employ silk-winders are required to pay the following prices per pound:—For all double skeins, five *piccioli* per pound,—for raw silk, six *piccioli*,—for the woof used in weaving, seven *piccioli*,—for single white skeins, eight *piccioli*,—for white sewing silk, six *piccioli*,—for the woof for *Taffetta*, nine *piccioli*,—for raw knotty silk, seven *piccioli*,—for fine *Raso*,—lustrous silk or satin,—ten *piccioli*. The prices, in ready money, for twisting and spinning silk were, for white sewing-thread—six *piccioli*, for single skeins—four *piccioli*, for spinning-silk-thread—eight *piccioli* per pound. When booked and paid for after the work was completed, these prices were increased fifty per cent.

[1] Pagnini, vol. iii. p. 117.

Another table gives the scale of payment for weaving per *braccio*—*Broccato d'Oro*,—gold brocade,—from eighteen to six silver florins, according to the weight per ounce of gold; *Velluto* and *Damaschino*—silk woven with floral and other patterns, like silk from Damascus—one florin each; *Raso*—sixteen *piccioli*; *Taffetta*—five *piccioli*; *Ciambellotto*,—silk-camlet, roughish surface like modern Como rugs,—twelve *piccioli*; *Saia*—silk-serge,—mixed with wool—a favourite and strong material for the body-hose and doublets worn by men—one florin eighteen *piccioli*.

The weight of silk warp, per *braccio*, varied considerably:—*Tebano Raso*,—thin satin,—and *Ciambellotto* weighed each twelve *danari*; *Velluto*—fourteen *danari*; and *Damaschino*—twenty-four *danari*. The woof also varied in weight per *braccio*:—*Velluto*, *Damaschino* and *Taffetta*—each one ounce, six *danari*; *Zetano-Raso*,—raised satin,—one ounce, eighteen *danari*; *Ciambellotto*—two ounces; and *Seta di Capitone*—stout silk serge, three ounces.

Woven tissues of silk were of different weights, per *braccio*:—*Damaschino* and *Raso*—*Colorato Scempio*—single-coloured satin, each two ounces six *danario*; *detto doppi*—ditto double, two ounces sixteen *danari*; *Taffetta colorata*—coloured taffettas, one ounce sixteen *danari*; *Velluto colorato*—coloured velvet, three ounces; *detto nero*—ditto black, three ounces twelve *danari*; *Ciambellotto*—three ounces; and *Saia*—four ounces.

The sizes too of the silk pieces were dissimilar in breadth: *Velluto piano*—plain velvet, and *Raso*—satin—each measured one *braccio*; *Damaschino*—one and a quarter *braccio*; *Brocatella*—a light brocade,—*Taffetta*, and *Saia*, each one *braccio* seven-eighths.

Another table deals with the "Prices paid for dyeing silk per pound weight":—*Cremisi*, crimson, two *dips*—*Verde Bruno*, olive-green,—*Alessandrino*, pale blue, each two silver florins; *Pagonazzo-Cermisi*, *di Grana*, and *di Verzino*—violet crimson, violet ivy-red, and violet Brazil-red—one florin fifteen *piccioli*; *Zafferano*—saffron, *Vermiglio*,—vermilion, and *Azzuro*—light-blue, each one florin five *piccioli*; *Verde*—green, and *Cermisi*—crimson—a single dip, each one florin; *Bigio*—grey, *Tane*—tan-colour, *Giallo di*

*Scotano*—fustic-yellow, each twelve *piccioli; Nero*—black, cost fifteen *piccioli.*

The sale-prices of silk materials, per *braccio*, in the Retail shops of the Por Santa Maria ranged as follows:—

*Brocades:*—Deep crimson—Flo. 2, 6, 8; Violet-crimson—Flo. 2, 5, 0; Parti-coloured—Flo. 1, 13, 4; Black—Flo. 1, 18, 0.

*Satins:*—Deep crimson—Flo. 2, 3, 0; Violet-crimson—Flo. 2; Parti-coloured—Flo. 1, 6, 8; Black—Flo. 1, 5, 0.

*Damasks:*—Deep crimson—Flo. 2; Violet-Crimson, Flo. 1, 17, 6; Parti-coloured—Flo. 1, 2, 0; Black—Flo. 1.

By weight—per pound—the prices were as follows:—

*Satins:*—Deep crimson—Flo. 6; Violet-Crimson—Flo. 5, 5; Parti-coloured—Flo. 4, 15; Black—Flo. 3, 17, 6.

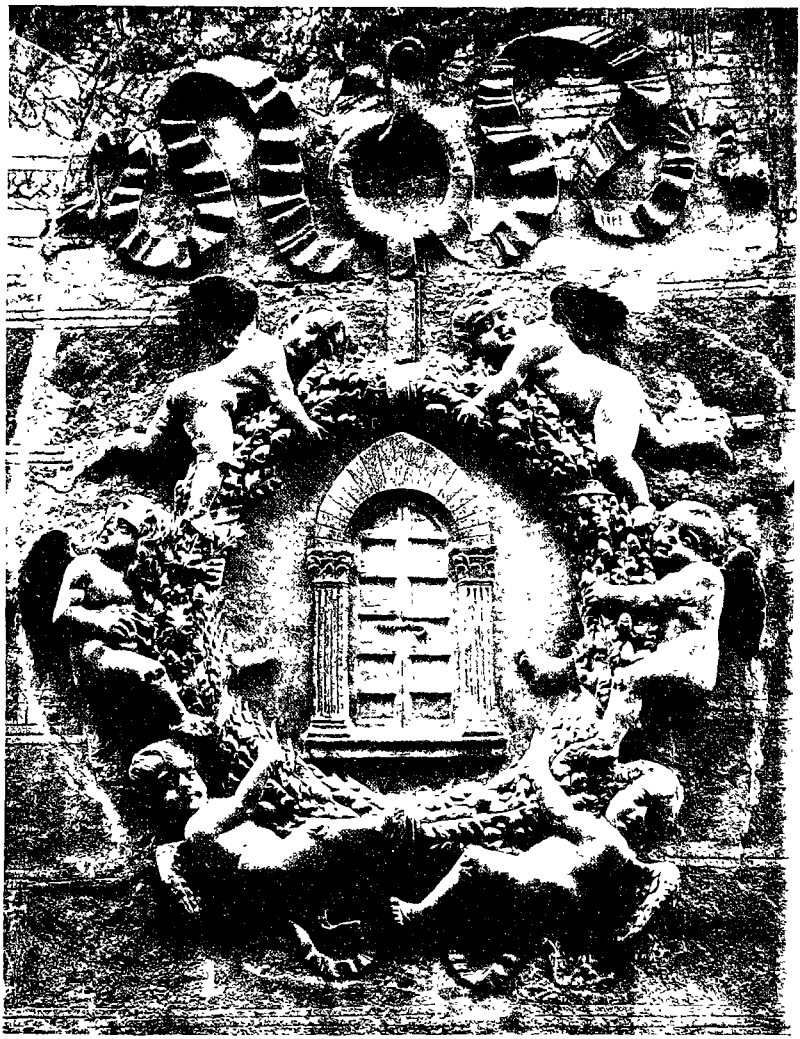
*Taffettas:*—Deep-crimson—Flo. 7, 10; Violet-Crimson—Flo. 6, 10; Parti-Coloured—Flo. 3, 17; Black—Flo. 3, 15; and Dull red—Flo. 4, 10.

Other qualities and descriptions of silk-tissue are also quoted in the "Manual," but the foregoing will suffice to show the values which obtained generally in the sixteenth century.

During the fourteenth century the full style of the Guild was: "*L' Arte della Seta e di Drappi d'Oro, e degli Orafi*"—"The Guild, of Silk and Cloth of Gold Manufacturers and Goldsmiths."

The addition of "Goldsmiths" to the title of the Guild points to the importance of that group of artists and artificers. The working in precious metals established a new profession for artistically disposed Florentines: a profession which ranked on an equality—if it did not indeed surpass them—with the Company of Painters attached to the "Guild of Doctors and Apothecaries," and the Society of Sculptors and Architects affiliated with the lesser "Guild of Masters in Stone and Wood."

So much the vogue did gold and silver work become that a special Guild sprang into existence, early in the fourteenth century, which bore the title of "*L'Arte degli Orefici*"—"Guild of Workers in Gold and Silver." Every boy who displayed art talent was apprenticed to a goldsmith, and thus almost every



ARMS OF GUILD OF SILK

DONATELLO

one of the famous painters, sculptors, potters, and decorative workers of all kinds, were enrolled members of "The Guild of Goldsmiths." In the middle of the century there were actually as many as forty-four goldsmiths' shops upon the Ponte Vecchio,—a position assigned to them by the Council of State,—the united rentals of which amounted annually to upwards of eight hundred gold florins.[1]

In 1322 three Examiners were appointed by the "*Por Santa Maria*" to look into the Statutes and Regulations of the subordinate "Guild of Goldsmiths." The result of their inquiries was seen in the admission of the Master-craftsmen to full membership in the Greater Guild on the same terms as the existent members. All disputes between Masters and Apprentices were to be decided by the Consuls of the Silk Guild.[2]

Goldsmiths were authorised to work in all metals, but every article made had to be submitted for approval to appointed Inspectors, and each thing passed required the stamp of the maker's name and his trade mark. For gold work the metal employed had to be of equal value to that used for the gold florin, but gold, worked into wreaths and personal ornaments, required the admixture of sulphur. No goldsmith was allowed to exercise his craft outside his own dwelling-house or workshop.

The Consuls of the Silk Guild had the right to visit and inspect workers, work done, and materials in preparation, whenever they were so minded.

Severe measures were, from time to time, taken to prevent the use of imitation, or base, gold and silver thread. For church vestments, especially, care was taken that the gold and silver were of the best quality, from Cyprus, Olivio, and Colonia. Ecclesiastics and the Generals of the Monasteries were forbidden to make use of any but the best metal for the decoration of altars, sacred Images, etc. etc.; and they were also forbidden to dispose of such objects to Second-hand Dealers and Pawnshops.

[1] Vasari, vol. ii. 14.

[2] Archivio del Stato Fiorentino, Strozzi Uguccioni,—quoted by Davidssohn, vol. iii. 1273, p. 212.

Early in the fifteenth century the weaving of spun "cloth of gold" as it was called was introduced by members of the Guild who had travelled in the East, and had learned something of the manufacture of this magnificent texture.[1]

According to Gino Capponi, the introduction of gold and silver-tissue spinning and weaving took place in 1422. He also asserts that the best gold-thread came from Sicily and Cyprus.[2]

Along with its manufacture by the Florentine silk-looms came a marked enrichment of the attire of private citizens and of the State-robes of public dignitaries.

As early as the year 1296 two rich pieces of cloth of gold were manufactured in honour of Cardinal Pietro di Piperno, which were valued at thirty-nine gold florins. The robe of Filippa di Giotti Peruzzi,—on her marriage to Carlo degli Adimari,—of fine silk velvet embroidered in gold, cost two hundred and sixty-nine gold florins, whilst her going away dress cost twenty gold florins more, but it comprised a rick silk *gonnella*—a petticoat or shirt, and a *guarnacca*—a full embroidered morning-gown.

Notwithstanding this great prosperity of the trade, the "Guild of Workers in Gold and Silver" had but a very ephemeral existence. At the revision of the Statutes of the Silk Guild in 1335 it was suppressed, and its members were drafted, with full and equal rights and privileges, into the greater corporation.[3]

"The Guild of Goldsmiths,"—"*Arte degli Orafi*,"—in contra-distinction to the "Guild of Workers in Gold and Silver,"—"*Arte degli Orefici*,"—continued its operations, and became, in the sixteenth century, one of the most important and wealthy corporations in Florence.

Among famous goldsmiths were, Andrea Arditi, Bernardo Cenni, Lorenzo Ghiberti, Tommaso degli Ghirlandaji, L. Nero, Antonio di Sandro, Antonio Salvi, Paolo Uccello, Benvenuto Cellini, and Filippo Brunelleschi. The latter was enrolled in the

[1] Burckhardt, "Der Cultur des Renaissance in Italien," i. 77.
[2] Ammirato, Lib. xviii. p. 998. [3] G. Gonetta, "Bibliografia Statutaria."

"*Arte degli Orafi*," under the great "Silk Guild" in 1398, and he was made a freeman of the latter in 1414.

These dates point to the fact that the "Silk Guild" extended its patronage and protection over goldsmiths in general, and not merely over workers in gold and silver-tissue. The creations however of the former hardly belong to the history of the "*Por*

INTERIOR OF A GOLDSMITH'S WORKSHOP. SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

*Santa Maria*," but form a subject apart from the industry of silk and precious-metal weaving.

There is no doubt that in Florence the goldsmith's art stood very high in the times with which we are dealing. The goldsmiths were artists, and therefore most of the workers in chiselled gold and silver, and engravers of gold and precious stones attained a high reputation, and it may be truly said, the work of the Florentine goldsmiths far surpassed, in exquisiteness and originality of design, that of any other city.

The combination of silk with gold and silver led to the

introduction of a new and beautiful art—the making of laces. This specially found votaries in the Convents, where the nuns instructed their lay sisters in the elegant manipulations of bobbin and stiletto. Savonarola rebuked the Religious for "devoting their time to the vain fabrication of gold laces with which to adorn persons and houses." This exquisite work,—of which every important collection of vestures possesses an example,—is still called "*opera de' monache*"—"nun's work."

Henry VIII. of England and his queens were very partial to Florentine lace. He granted to two Florentine merchants the privilege of importing for three years "all manner of frynges and parsements, wrought in gold and silver and otherwise."

The embroiderers and embroideries of Florence were more famous than any others. Philip, Duke of Burgundy, was a great patron and collector of cloths of gold sewn over with pearls, corals, and other valuable materials. Antonio Pollaiuolo, and many other painters and goldsmiths, designed small cartoons to be worked in silk-tissue and ornaments. One, Paolo,—a Venetian artist settled in Florence,—occupied quite twenty-six years in embroidering altar hangings representing the life of Saint John the Baptist for the Baptistery, which had all the appearance of brush work.

Women specially excelled in this artistic craft, and their energies were turned towards making ecclesiastical vestments in which the richest textures were covered with gold filagree-work and gems. Pope Paul III. gave many commissions to the Florentine embroiderers.

Another very beautiful art was the painting and gemming of fine muslins and laces. The Florentine *Velettai*—veil-makers—were celebrated, not only for their taste, but also for their skill in weaving mixtures of silk, wool, and cotton with the finest strands of metal.

Doubtless ideas were gathered, and patterns drawn, from Eastern fabrics imported from the Orient. For a lengthened period such influences were apparent in the work turned out, but in the fifteenth century—if not earlier—a marked emancipation

from restraint and convention is noticeable in the output of the Florentine workshops and studios.

Painting on silk and satin was greatly admired in old Florence. This form of decorative art developed in two directions: first, blending of colours, purely in the style of a pigment-master, and, secondly, mosaic painting, in which the colours were not mixed together but laid side by side in patches. This added much to richness of effect, because strips and borders of the material were left showing. In all the Sacristies of Florence, and many more in Europe, there are preserved exquisite examples of this method. No doubt the development of this art was due to the fashion of painting the gonfalons of the Guilds and Companies, and the shields and bucklers of cavaliers. The baldachinos of churches, and the frontals of altars were generally treated in this manner with adornments of gold and silver lace.

Codices written in 1487 by Balducci Pegolotti, and by Giovanni da Uzzano, descriptive of the *Catasto* of 1427, preserve many very interesting details concerning the silk trade. Several minute instructions are given concerning the methods of manufacture, and lists are added with respect to quality, weight, and value of different sorts of raw silk.[1]

The "*Por Santa Maria*" contributed greatly to the wealth and magnificence of Florence during the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. "In 1472," says Benedetto Dei,[2] "the number of workshops belonging to the Guild was eighty-four, wherein the industry of weaving cloth of gold, silver brocade, and silk tissue of every colour and texture, was carried on." Upwards of sixteen thousand operatives and superior workmen were employed in the manufacture of silk, and its adjuncts, within the city and *Contado*.

Silk stuffs were despatched to Lyons, Geneva, Antwerp, Naples, Rome, Sicily, Provence, Roumania, Spain, Levant, Morocco, Barbary, and elsewhere. No consignments of such goods were made, strange to say, to England and Germany for general

[1] No. xvii., 1427, Biblioteca-Laurenziana.

[2] "Cronica," pp. 22-44.

sale. Royal patronage however was not wanting, for Henry VII. of England,—ever a patron of foreigners of ability and research,—appointed, in 1516, Leonardo Frescobaldo and Antonio Cavallari, Purveyors of gold and silver cloth to the Court, with salaries of £20 each. The last-named Florentine was also employed to gild the tomb of Henry VIII. at Windsor.

There is extant a letter of Henry VII. addressed to the *Signoria*,[1] recommending Antonio Corsi,—a Florentine agent, high in the favour of the king,—whom he was sending to Florence, "to purchase gold cloth and silks, sufficient to load three mules."

The household book of Henry VIII. contains records of payments to the Florentine banker-merchants Frescobaldi, Bardi, Corsi, Cavalcanti, and others for pieces of cloth of gold.[1] These were required, doubtless, to furnish the magnificent uniforms and decorations of the famous "Field of the Cloth of Gold," as well as for use by the King and the Court in England.

Ser Antonio Guidotti,—the negotiator of loans for the King, who was knighted for his successful financial measures,—was a great promoter of the silk industry. In a letter to Thomas Cromwell, written in 1536, he offered to bring over to England a party of silk-weavers from Messina. He was a Florentine, and employed many craftsmen from his native place.

During the fifteenth century Duke Filippo Maria Visconti of Milan was a patron of the Florentine silk industry. He invited silk workers to settle in that city, for the purpose of instructing the native Milanese in the details of manufacture, and in spite of prohibitions, some accepted the Duke's liberal terms :—"a generous monthly stipend, full political rights, and ten years' exemption from taxes, both for themselves, and for any agents who might co-operate with them."

The founders of the celebrated French manufactories of silk and velvet at Lyons, Montpellier, Avignon and other centres, were undoubtedly Florentines. Traditions and traces of their works

[1] Archivio Fiorentino, "Atti Pubblichi," 1498. [2] Brit. Museum MSS., 2481.

and methods still linger among the operatives there. The same may be said of England.

A notable family held a prominent place in the Silk Guild, that of the Guicciardini. The historian, man of affairs and courtier, Francesco Guicciardini, who flourished in the middle of the sixteenth century,—from whose literary works many quotations are made in this volume,—had a share in a silk manufactory, along with Jacopo and Lorenzo di Bernardo Segni and their Company. His "*Ricordi Politici e Civili de Firenze*" was written during the siege of Florence by the Emperor and the Pope in 1529-30.

Sir Richard Dallington, in his "Survey of the Great Duke's Estate," makes lengthy references to the Silk Industry, and to the cultivation of worms and mulberries. The late date,—1596,—of this characteristic record, suggests, too, the fact that the same Grand Duke, and his two immediate predecessors, by their uncalled for and unwise interference in the Silk-industry,—as well as in the other trades of Florence,—practically led to the ruin of the commercial life of the splendid old city and her princely merchants.

Signs of decadence in the trade made their appearance in the middle of the sixteenth century. Foreign competition, with a more general spread of the industry, and the improvement of communications, may be set down as reasons; but, doubtless, the principal contributory causes were the amazing prosperity of the City, and the self-indulgence of her citizens.

Workgirls and their companions began to sing:—

| | |
|---|---|
| "*Lunedi,—lunediai;* | "Monday,—Mondayish. |
| *Martedi,—non lavorai;* | Tuesday,—nobody works. |
| *Mercoledi,—persi la rocca;* | Wednesday,—take up the distaff. |
| *Giovedi,—la retrovai;* | Thursday,—lay it down again. |
| *Venerdi,—la 'uconocchiai;* | Friday,—willy-nilly. |
| *Sabato,—mi lavai la testa;* | Saturday,—let us wash our heads. |
| *E Domenica,—l'era festa!*" | Sunday,—well, that's the festa!"[1] |

[1] Girolamo Gargiolli, "L'Arte della Seta in Firenze e Dialoghi," p. 229.

## CHAPTER VIII

# THE GUILD OF DOCTORS AND APOTHECARIES

*L'ARTE DE' MEDICI E DEGLI SPEZIALI*

I. ORIGIN.—Elemental knowledge of Medicine and Surgery in the Middle Ages. Salerno. Occult sciences. Earliest Florentine Physician, 934. Guild in existence, 1197. College of Doctors, 1218. Taddeo d' Alderotti—"*l'Ippocratisto.*"

II. CONSTITUTION.—Strict examination of candidates for membership. Matteo Palmieri. Two divisions of the Guild. Code of 1313. Apprentices. Midwives.

III. DOCTORS.—Their assumptions of superiority. Dress. Manners. Etiquette. Petrarch's squib. Strange remedies. "The sea (or river) washes away all human ills!" Cabbages. "*Pratica di Niccolo da Firenze.*" Recipes. Guglielmo di Saliceto. Anatomy. Professional fees. Quacks. Mercato Vecchio.

IV. APOTHECARIES.—Social inferiority. Caution-money. Licenses. Sales of drugs safeguarded. Famous Pharmacies. Greek scholars welcomed by Cosimo de' Medici. *Albarelli.* Funerals. Records of *Prioriste* and *Zibaldoni.* Perfumes. *Buccheri.* Haberdashery. "*L'Arte de' Merciai, Velettai, Profumieri e Cartolai.*" Many affiliated trades. Agents and salesmen. Professional Banks.

V. PATRONAGE OF THE GUILD.—Literature. Famous men of letters. Dante. Printing. Woodcuts. *Scrivani. Librai.* Painting. Celebrated painters. Cimabue. "*L'Arte di Pittori.*" Florentine Lodge of Guild of St Luke. *Trattato della Pittura.* Stained-glass windows. Geographical research. Toscanelli and Vespucci. "A Great Guild!"

IN the Middle Ages the science of Medicine was in a deplorable condition, and the knowledge of Chemistry was quite elementary. Surgery was hardly practised at all, and, as it was deemed impious to dissect the dead human body, anatomy was practically unknown.[1]

Herbalists and dealers in simples were held in higher esteem than medicine-makers, apothecaries, and distillers. As a science the cult of medicine did not go beyond the use of the horoscope,

[1] Targioni-Tozzetti, "Prodromio," p. 83.

the examination of urine, and a few carefully guarded secrets, of which the Jews were the chief depositories.[1]

The use of the knife had practically died out. Cautery and the setting of bones represented the whole of experimental surgery. The extraction of teeth, phlebotomy, and all such minor operations, were complacently submitted to the skill of the ubiquitous barber, or dubiously committed to the tender mercies of the casual empiric.

The influence of the occult sciences upon human destiny and human suffering ever excited the imagination of the curious. The alchemist's robe, the astrologer's wand, and the doctor's spectacles, betokened the possession of mystic powers, which were the admiration of the credulous. Wealth seemed to be linked to fame in the exploitation of medicine and its sister sciences, and that was quite a sufficient recommendation in the eyes of shrewd business men.

The lamp of science had doubtless been kept alight in the Monasteries, but its glow did not illuminate the outside darkness. Consequently, when the founding of Universities became a feature of the times, much that was known only in secret chambers and cells, began to be revealed to the growing intelligence of mankind in general.

Bologna, Ravenna, Padua, and Salerno, and other centres of light and leading, opened their doors to an expectant world. Among the earliest faculties sought there were the sciences of Practical Medicine and Experimental Surgery. Thither went many a Florentine lad, the bearer of his parents' hopes. In due time these pioneer-adventurers returned home again to preach and to practise what they had heard and seen in school and hospital.

The earliest mention of physicians, in the Florentine Archives,[2] bears the date of 934; when it is noted that one "Amalpertius," a deacon of the Church, was also a *medico*, and was styled *Domino Messere*." In 1070 "Britulus" is named, "who was a

[1] "L' Osservatore Fiorentino," vol. vi. p. 147.
[2] Archivio del Archevescovo Fiorentino.

well-known doctor." Piero, Abbot of the Badia, speaks, in 1090, of "Giovanni, our most estimable doctor and friend."

The names of many doctors and physicians are recorded in subsequent years. Their incorporation in a Guild was accomplished early in the twelfth century. This was probably due to the same considerations which led to the incorporation of the Merchant Guilds—the benefit of mutual and united action.

That a Guild of Doctors was already an active body in 1197 is proved by the fact that in that year the signatures of the Consuls are appended, along with those of the Consuls of other Guilds, to the anti-imperial League of Tuscan cities,—at the head of which was Florence,—and they signed as representing "The Guild of Doctors and Apothecaries." This fact also proves the association in one community of two classes of men, quite distinct in social importance, but each depending upon the other for existence and opportunity.

Somewhere about the year 1218 we first come across the existence of a College of Doctors and Apothecaries, established very much upon the lines of the old Roman and Imperial *Collegia*. Its members included not only doctors, apothecaries, physicians, and chemists, but also surgeons and midwives—the two latter classes were, however, quite insignificant and subordinate.

The founder of the Florentine School of Medicine was Taddeo d'Alderotti. He was born in Florence in 1223, and was sent by his father,—a Corn-chandler,—to study at Bologna. He first of all gave his attention to Greek literature and philosophy, of which faculty he became in due time the professor. His translations of Aristotle's "*Ethics*," and his commentaries of Galen and others, gained him much fame. Dante speaks of "Taddeo's lore." [1] Hippocrates, and his history of human disease, greatly attracted him, and he gained the name of "*l' Ippocratisto*"—"The Hippocratean," as recorded in Dante's "*Convito*."

The date of Taddeo's establishment as a professor of medicine

[1] "Paradiso," Canto xii.

in Florence is uncertain; but two circumstances seem to point to the year 1278, for there are records, which give the name of one of his earliest Florentine pupils,—Dino del Garbo, who afterwards became a preacher of the Order of Cistercians,—and also state that he united the teaching of medicine with the calling of a Corn-chandler, in the public granary at Or San Michele, in that year.

Dino del Garbo's son, Tommaso, was also a pupil of Taddeo, and both are referred to at length by Villani.[1]

Taddeo's fame was great. Among his patients was Pope Honorius IV., a sufferer from gout, which quite incapacitated him from saying Mass. His Holiness having been restored to health, thankfully bestowed six thousand ducats (= £3,000) upon the great doctor. Taddeo's reputation, and his fees also, rose immensely. From a wealthy merchant he demanded as much as fifty to one hundred gold florins for a brief consultation![2]

Other famous professors of the medical and surgical faculties in Florence were Giambattista Torregiano and Michele Vieri—both pupils of Taddeo d' Alderotti.

What the exact relations of the Guild with the College or School were, no records appear to state; but that the latter was subordinate to the former is certain.

. . . . . .

A Statute of the Guild lays down that:—"no doctor may be admitted a member of the College, nor be allowed to practise, unless he has first been publicly examined by the Consuls of the Guild."[3] This was doubtless, more or less, a perfunctory exercise, for the candidate had already obtained his degree and qualification at his university. It had reference, probably, to social standing, and, not a little, to the good conceit the applicant had of himself!

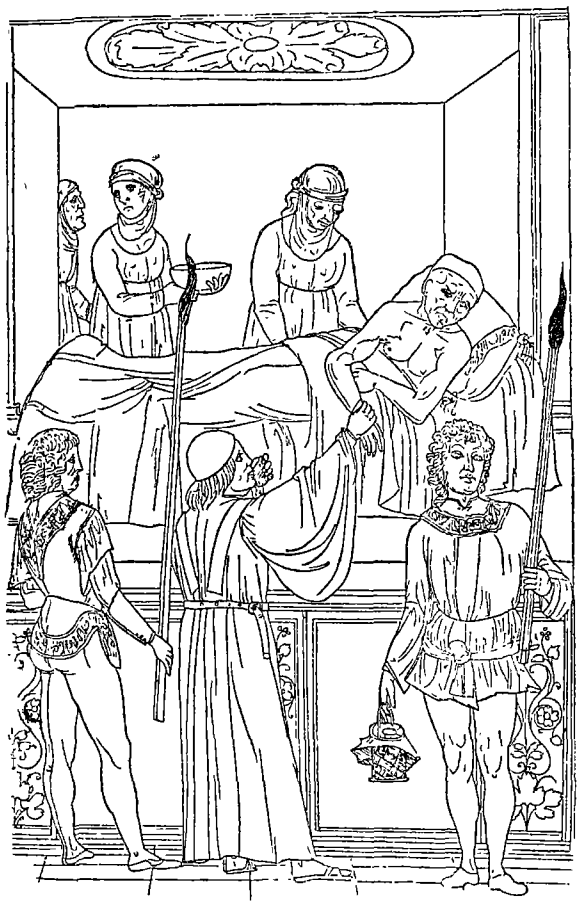
Another Statute names the Apothecary members of the Guild, but imposes no examination, as in the case of the Doctors.

[1] F. Villani, "Vita di Taddeo d'Alderotti."

[2] L' Osservatore Fiorentino, vol. i. 134, p. 301.

[3] Statuti, Lib. iv. Act ii. Stat. 53.

The activities and importance of the Guild grew proportionately. In 1282, at the second election of Priors, one of the number chosen was a member of the "Guild of Doctors and



DOCTOR VISITING A FEVER PATIENT. 1500.

Apothecaries." A few years later, in 1296, the Matriculation Roll of the Guild was adorned with its most celebrated name in the annals of Florence,—the immortal writer of the "*Divina Commedia*"—Dante Alighieri.

A very distinguished member of the Guild, who matriculated in 1333, was Matteo Palmieri. He was also a writer of poetry, his "*Citta di Vita*" is very reminiscent of the work of Dante. He realised the highest ambition of all Florentines by being appointed ambassador; his mission was to the Court of the King of Naples. "The ambassador," says a quaint old historian —Giovanni Battista Gello, who was a tailor by trade but a free student in the university also,—" behaved himself very wisely, and the king did aske what manner of man he was in his own countrey, and it was told him that he was an Apothecary. 'If the apothecaries,' quoth the king, 'be so wise and learned in Florence, what be their physicians?'"[1]

A Code of Statutes was issued by authority in 1313. Its provisions corresponded in general terms with those of the "Calimala" Statutes of 1301-9, and additions were made in 1316, and again in 1349. Complete revisions of Statutes, Regulations, Bye-laws, and of the whole Constitution of the Guild, were effected in 1415 and 1468, and further additions were made in 1558 and 1571.

In the recension of 1415, it was enacted that no one under the age of fifteen years should be apprenticed to a doctor of medicine, surgeon, barber, midwife, or any one else who had care of the sick. All such persons were required to establish their reputation for honesty, morality, and mental and physical fitness before being matriculated.[2]

Doctors were permitted to enter into partnership with apothecaries, on mutual terms: the former sending patients to the latter with their prescriptions, and the latter recommending patients to the former.[3]

Under all these laws the number of Consuls was always four. They had unlimited jurisdiction over all physicians and apothecaries, as well as over all surgeons, midwives, herbalists, distillers,

[1] "Pensoso d'Altrui," 1537.
[2] "Statuta Populi et Communis Florentiae," 1415, *collecata* 1775, Freiburg, Rub. lii.
[3] Rub. liv.

and all persons connected, directly or indirectly, with the faculties of medicine and surgery.

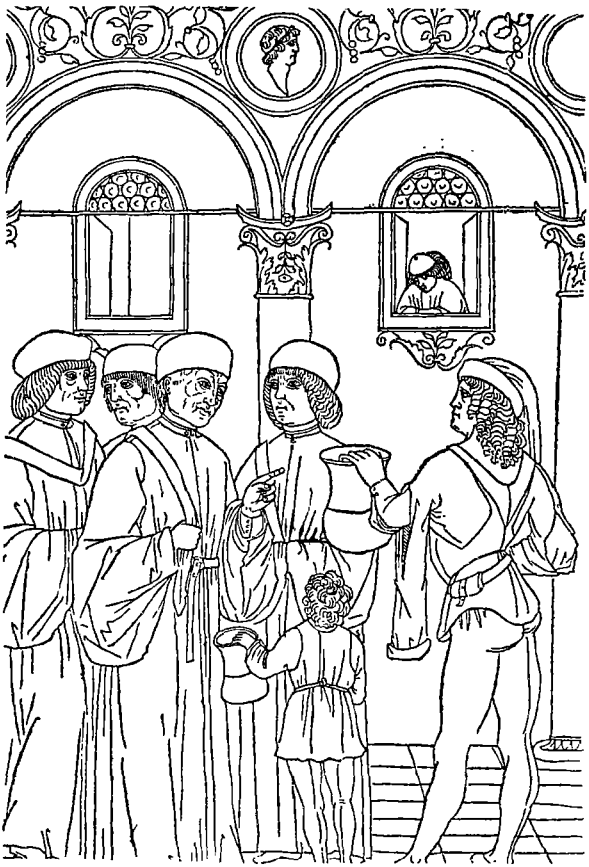
In Jacopo di Cessolis' moralisation upon the "Playe of Chesse,"—published by Antonio Miscomini, and already referred to,—the personality of a Doctor-apothecary is exhibited by the Queen's Pawn as follows:[1] "The pawne that is sette to fore the Quene signefyeth the Physicyen Spiceo and Apotyquaire and is formed in the figure of a man and he is sette in a chayer on a maystre and holdeth in his right hand a book and an ample or a boxe wyth oynementis in his left hand and at his gurdelle his instruments of yron and of sylver for to make incysions and to serche woundes and hurtes and to culte apostumes, and by these thinges ben knowen the cyrugyens. By the book ben understanden the phisicyens and all gramaryens, logicyens, maistres of lawe, of geometrye arismetuyque musique and of astronomye and by the ampole being signefied the makers of pigmentaries spicers and apothequayres and they that make confections and confytes and medecynes made wyth precyous spyces and by the ferrement and instrumentis that hangeing on the gurdell ben signefied the cyrurgens and the maistres."

The Residence of the Consuls of the Guild was one of the finest in the city. It was formerly the Palazzo de' Lamberti, at the corner of the Via di Sant' Andrea, massive and imposing in appearance. The Hall of Audience was specially handsome, it was adorned with fine marble sculptures, and a finely painted ceiling. Each of the allied or subordinated Guilds, or divisions, contributed some characteristic adornment:—painters, miniaturists, porcelain-makers, haberdashers and silk agents, perfumers, etc. etc. The ceiling is now preserved among the treasures of the Museo di San Marco. On the façade of the Residence was displayed the escutcheon of the Guild—the Madonna and Child supported by two pots of growing Annunciation lilies. The same device was repeated in white upon a red field in the Guild gonfalon.

. . . . . .

[1] "Guiocchо delle Scacchi," 1493.

Doctors, physicians, and surgeons, numbered no more than sixty during the first half of the thirteenth century, out of a total population of nearly one hundred thousand; but their im-



DOCTORS IN CONSULTATION.—1500

portance, not to say arrogance, increased in an inverse ratio. Their functions were very much more theoretical than practical, and, for the most part, they were content to wear the habiliments peculiar to their profession, and to pose as men of science, rather than actually to practise the faculty to which they belonged.

Doctors, who had graduated at a university, never appeared in public except with full and long robes, ornamented with scarlet and vair-skin, after the fashion of knights, and a fur hood depended from their shoulders, after the manner of Capuchin monks. A velvet cap or hat, and gloves completed their professional costume. Generally they were accompanied by a groom leading a horse, which they usually made a show of mounting in the Mercato Vecchio.

In common with doctors of laws, and men of upwards of seventy years of age, doctors of medicine were exempt from serving with the military companies of their *sestieri*.

It was a custom, common enough in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, for doctors of medicine to fix their professional residence and consulting-room at an apothecary's: a mutual agreement was come to, whereby the doctor prescribed only drugs sold by his own apothecary. In later times, when the dignity of the profession had suffered somewhat at the hands of commercial agents, doctors set up as independent retailers of drugs; but such "double dealing" does not appear to have been very profitable either to them, or to their patients.

The diagnosis of physical ailments, no less than the casting of psychical horoscopes, had little to do with the actual treatment of sickness. The Doctor seated upon his horse, or ensconced in his easy-chair, spectacles on nose, pompously prescribed the remedy, writing it out in almost illegible characters, which became a fruitful source of maladministration of drugs.

Professional etiquette required, first of all, the feeling of the pulse, and the exhibition of the tongue, and these amenities were enjoyed as readily in the open market as in the consultation-room. The next stage was the elaborate swathing of an afflicted member in linen cloths, dipped in water, and the commission of the patient to the tender mercies of the Apothecary.

That profane babbler, Nello the barber, so amusingly described in "Romola" running his rigs at the Doctors and Apothecaries, asks:—"What sort of inspiration do you expect to get from the

scent of nauseous vegetable decoctions?—to say nothing of the fact that you no sooner pass the threshold, than you see a doctor of physic, like a gigantic spider, disguised in fur and scarlet, waiting for his prey, or even see him blocking up the doorway, seated on a bony hack inspecting saliva."[1]

Petrarch had a jovial appreciation of the doctors of his day:—"When I see a doctor coming I know all that he is going to say to me," he laughingly exclaimed,—"Eat a pair of young pullets, drink much warm water, and use the remedy that the storks teach us!"[2]

A very favourite process for any malady of the head,—whether simple headache, or more serious ailments,—was to shave off all the hair, and then to hold the bare pate to the scorching heat of a blazing fire! An excellent embrocation, for any part of the body, was considered to be soap made of myrrh, boiled in water impregnated with crushed ivy flowers, and mixed with the yoke of egg.

For stiff neck, or stiffness of the bones and limbs, a wash was used compounded of wine and tincture of assafœtida, which was rubbed in with force until the skin began to bleed, or the bone of the skull was laid bare!

The favourite poultice was made of honey and assafœtida with betony powder, and other ingredients, and applied hot. Warm drinks,—sweet and nauseous,—were commonly imbibed, and men in armour were plied with steaming potions to keep off the cold shock of the steel they wore.

Persons suffering from fever were advised to plunge into cold water! Profuse bleeding was stopped by cautery—binding the source round with stout cord, and setting it on fire with a candle![3]

Obstructions in the ear were treated with hot poultices for thirty days, if relief was not obtained, smart raps were administered to the unoffending ear! "This practice,"—as it was quaintly

[1] George Eliot, "Romola," chapters iii.-xvi., etc.

[2] J. F. A. de Sade, "Mémoires pour la Vie de Pétrarque," vol. iii. 768.

[3] G. Boccaccio, "Decamerone," *Giorn.* iv., *Nov.* 10, vol. ii. p. 260.

said,[1]—"is founded upon the fact that when a dagger gets jammed in its sheath, the final resource for its release is a sharp blow."[2]

Water-treatment, accompanied by applications of syrups and purgatives, was a favourite remedy for all stomachic ailments, and for skin diseases. For the richer citizens, a course of baths at Siena was prescribed. This was a fine satire; for nothing did the ordinary Florentine love more than to score off his worsted foe of old, by pacing with lordly step up and down those crooked streets, and such advice was acted upon with alacrity!

For the poorer classes, who could not afford the Sienese *villegiatura*, there was the bath in the *loggia* of the Ponte Vecchio, fed by the water of the Arno, the medicinal virtues of which were always loudly extolled by the medical and pharmaceutical faculties. It was specific, they averred, in all poor men's ailments, and of it was said, in old Florence, as of the ocean deep:—"The sea washes away all human ills."[3]

The humble cabbage was greatly extolled,—as were, in turn, all the vegetable treasures of the garden and the field,—as a panacea for all the aches and pains of poor humanity. It was eaten raw, or cooked, and even the water in which it was prepared, was deemed a health-giving beverage.[4]

The following is a satirical rhyme, which an old chronicler puts into the mouth of many a despairing patient of the old Florentine *medicos*:—

> "There's never a herb nor a root,
> Nor any remedy to boot
> Which can stave death off by a foot!"[5]

One of the most celebrated doctor-surgeons of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries was Messer Niccolo di Francesco Falucci, who was styled "*Medicus doctissimus*." He wrote many tractates —the most highly esteemed being, "*Pratica di Niccolo da Firenze*"—for such was his common name. Among medicines

[1] F. Sacchetti, "*Nov.*" 37, vol. i. p. 159.
[2] Sacchetti, "*Nov.*" 168, t. iii. p. 41.
[3] L'Osservatore Fiorentino, Lib. vi. p. 35.
[4] C. Sprengel, "Hist. of Medicine," vol. i. 138.
[5] G. A. L. Cibrario, vol. i. p. 371.

which he introduced was that of "*Giuleppo di Niccolo*," a famous medicament in those days. Niccolo died in 1412.

What has become of all the countless scrips and scraps whereon the famous doctors of old time scored their recipes—who can say? No more than five books of prescriptions remain to us, and the oldest of them bears the date 1498. These were doubtless printed from the original manuscripts, and of them a copy is preserved in the Sacristy of the Cathedral of Florence.[1]

It is stated that during his last illness Messer Piero Guicciardini made use of certain pills to be taken at dinner and supper time, which were made for him by Meo da Siena. The following is the prescription:[2]—

| | *Dramme.* |
|---|---|
| Magnetised storax | ½ |
| Colocynth | 4½ |
| Rhubarb | 4½ |
| Powder of fine wax | 1¼ |
| Tree-mallow | 1 |
| Fine turpeth | 1 |
| Rectified scammony | 4 |
| Clove and lavender | ½ |
| Hepatic aloes | 6 |

All steeped in white wine and made into pills.

The multiplicity of compounds very likely did little to preserve the old man's life—possibly it was shortened! Lorenzo de' Medici's end, in 1492, was certainly hastened by his medical treatment. The famous Milanese specialist,—Messere Lazaro da Ficino,—was called into consultation by the "Magnifico's" resident physician,—Messere Piero Leoni da Spoleto,—but the case was hopeless. As though to mark the high human value of the patient's life they lavishly prescribed a potion of crushed pearls and rubies!

One of the earliest Florentine surgeons who made a name, was Guglielmo di Saliceto da Piacenza. He was the author of

[1] Haller, "Biblioteca Medica," vol. i. p. 481. [2] MS. Diario di Monaldi, p. 98.

a Treatise on Surgery, which appeared in the second half of the thirteenth century.

Some progress was made in the science of surgery by the foundation in Naples, in 1249, by Frederic II. of a Chair of

SURGEONS OPERATING.—1500

Anatomy, but the Emperor's laudable example was not followed anywhere else. Not until well on in the fifteenth century was any serious attempt made to take up the study of surgery, and then traces are discernible of an attempt to tackle the science at Ferrara.[1]

[1] Cibrario, vol. i. p. 444.

No very celebrated Florentine surgeon made his mark before the sixteenth century. The greatest master was probably Antonio Benevieni a member of an erudite family.

The disesteem with which practitioners were regarded in the fifteenth century, at all events, is quaintly told by the author of "Romola":—"Is it the Florentine fashion," asks Maestro Tacco of Nello the barber, "to put the masters of the science of medicine on a level with men who do carpentry on broken limbs, and sew up wounds like tailors, and carve away excrescences as a butcher trims meat? A manual art such as any artificer might learn, and which has been practised by simple barbers like you—on a level with the noble science of Hippocrates, Galen, and Avicenna. . . !"[1]

Villani, in his record of the Population of Florence in 1300, says the Doctors and Surgeons numbered sixty whose names were entered upon the Matriculation Roll of the Guild.

The fees paid to doctors and surgeons were undetermined by the College Rules and by the Guild Statutes. They varied considerably in amount, and were, perhaps, in direct ratio with individual purses and reputations.

The State paid its medical assistants, for professional work in connection with its officials, and with criminals, at a niggard rate. For example, in 1292, Ser Guido di Jacopo and Ser Orlando di Giovanni were called in to treat the feet of five men injured in the pillory. Their recompense was a beggarly sum of fifty soldi each! On the other hand, established practitioners received from two to five gold florins for each ordinary consultation, whilst they, and less well known physicians, were content also to take payment in kind,—merchandise, wine, and market produce.

The high fees paid to Taddeo d'Alderotti were not exceptional, for, in 1336, Bonifacio Peruzzi summoned the celebrated doctor Messere Alberto da Bologna, to cure him of a bad throat, and paid him sixty gold florins.[2]

[1] George Eliot, "Romola," chap. xvi.

[2] Peruzzi MSS., iii. 33.

Notwithstanding the laws and limitations circumscribing the avocations of Doctors and Apothecaries alike, very many travelling charlatans wended their way daily through the streets of Florence. They came in mostly from Padua and the surrounding cities, bent on picking up some of the superabundant wealth of the rich Republic. Well-mounted on hardy ponies, with capacious saddle-bags, they rode into the Markets as though ordinary merchants. Well concealed too were their stores of secret medicines, against the vigilance of the guardians of the gates. Wide berth they gave to the shops of the Apothecaries, and sidled off when Florentine medical dignitaries approached. But here and there fat capons and plump pigeons found their way into hands, which as readily reaped a harvest of small coins from the unwary, for worthless salves, and pills, and powders.

Of one such George Eliot wrote: "Let any Signore," says the *Medico*, "apply his nostrils to this box, and he will find an honest odour of medicaments—not indeed of pounded gems or rare vegetables from the East, or stones found in the bodies of birds . . . and here is a paste, which is ever of savoury odour, and is infallible against melancholia, being concocted under the conjunction of Jupiter and Venus, and I have seen it allay spasms."[1] Nevertheless, under certain conditions of man and nostrum, quacks were recognised as members of the affiliated and subordinate "*Arte de' Ciurmadori*"—"Association of Registered Empirical Practitioners of Medicine."

The Mercato Vecchio was the favourite meeting-place of quack doctors. Their raucous voices in advocacy of one or other of their nostrums mingled a daily note of discordance to the terrible clatter of that busy mart; but none gathered together so many open-mouthed hearers and cash-in-hand customers.

A real Florentine doctor, on the other hand, held his head high; he was accorded the style of "*Messere*," and sometimes that of "*Algebrista*,"—algebraist,—because one of his prerogatives was the solution of abstruse problems connected with the ancient science

[1] George Eliot, "Romola," chap. xvi.

SURGEON AND DOCTOR AND PATIENTS

MIDDLE FOURTEENTH CENTURY

of astrology. He was always a superior sort of person, and never condescended to social intimacy with his inferior fellow-guildsmen —the Apothecaries.

The reason of the union, in one Corporation, of a professional class and a commercial,—in the person of Apothecaries,—may be seen in the dependence of the one upon the other. It was ever so in old Florence, the aristocratic temperament of her people ever gave hostages to their democratic proclivities.

. . . . . .

If Apothecaries were regarded by their more magnificent fellow-Guildsmen much in the light of poor relations or inferiors, their importance in the commercial and social economy of Florence was undoubted. They were not looked upon as men of science, and in early times, at all events, they were not obliged to undergo any educational test, beyond that of being able to decipher the infamous handwriting of the *Messeri Medici*—"Gentlemen Doctors." They were regarded in the light of assistants to the medical faculty, and convenient agents for the sale of various small commodities.

In the early days of the Commune, Apothecaries merely bought and sold medicinal herbs, which grew within easy reach of Florence, and which were daily brought to market by the country people. Later on apothecaries were obliged to take out a license before opening houses or stores for custom, and each applicant undertook "to keep his shop open daily, except on feast days, and to sell only genuine articles."[1] Each was required to lodge with the Treasurer of the Guild a sum of money,—which varied in amount according to circumstances,—by way of guarantee and which was recoverable at death by the relatives.

The brilliant commercial enterprise of the "*Calimala*" and Wool Guilds opened out vast new fields for research, and for the acquirement of precious pharmaceutical treasures. The "Guild of Doctors and Apothecaries" became a living power in the Republic, and its members entered enthusiastically into the race for com-

[1] Statutes, Lib. iv. chap. ii. Rub. 55.

mercial supremacy. In all the travelling companies of the period Apothecaries were found who carried home in triumph their spoils. Fine cloth finished by skilful Florentine operatives, and other European commodities, were accepted, in the East, in exchange for drugs and spices.

The sale of medicines and their ingredients was strictly limited by the authority of the Guild to the shops of duly qualified Apothecaries; and no citizen was permitted to sell, or expose any foreign drugs or spices, who was not at the same time a member of the Guild.

The sale of drugs and spices was safely guarded so as to protect the public from danger to life and from fraud. Annually the Consuls of the Guild appointed a *Sindaco*, or Inspector, to visit all the shops of the Apothecaries, and the stores of such Doctors as were accustomed to keep medicines and other articles for the use of their patients.[1] They had the power to confiscate and destroy all properties, which did not bear the official stamp of the Guild, or which,—even bearing that seal,—in any way contravened the bye-laws. At the same time the names of those who were guilty in such matters were posted at the Offices of the Guild, and were forbidden, for a time determined by the Consuls, to practise their faculty, or to traffic in their commodities.

One of the best known Apothecaries' shops was the *Farmacia del Moro*—"The Moor's-Head Pharmacy." It stood at the corner of the Borgo di San Lorenzo, and was founded early in the sixteenth century. Here Antonio Francesco Grazziani,—whose nickname was "*il Lasco*,"—"Idle-dog"!—carried on the business of a chemist. He was nevertheless a poet and a novelist. His family came from Staggia to Florence in the fourteenth century, and he was registered upon the Matriculation Rolls of the Apothecaries. He is famous as the founder of the "*Accademia della Crusca*"—the polite speech of Tuscany.

Cosimo de' Medici—"Father of his Country"—greatly encouraged medical research and surgical manipulation. On

[1] Statuta Populi et Communis Florentiae, 1415, Rub. lv.

the fall of Constantinople, in 1453, he welcomed a numerous band of Greek scholars. One of the earliest evidences of their influence was the translation into Italian of an ancient manuscript, dealing with the science of Surgery. This was followed by excerpts from other manuscripts of ancient naturalist writers.[1]

Cosimo employed the new teachers also to prepare a new Florentine Pharmacopœia, comprising the formulas in local use, and others, gathered from various Schools of Medicine in Europe, or extracted from the stores of ancient lore. To assist his medical staff, he founded a Laboratory of botanical science, in which he applied himself energetically to the study of herbs.[2]

This was the first Florentine Laboratory, or School of Critical Research, in which Apothecaries were able to learn to amend the simple and unscientific methods which they had hitherto followed in the compounding of medicines.

Another famous Laboratory, or Pharmacy, was established under the sign of "The Lily," late in the fifteenth century.[3] There the Rosselli family,—Romolo, Stefano, and Francesco,—carried on the business of Apothecaries, and also wrote several learned treatises upon medical and surgical subjects; and, in the person of Cosimo, gave proof of artistic proclivities as well. A Dominican Father, Agostino del Riccio, who wrote a "Treatise on Agriculture," names the Apothecary Stefano Rosselli with particular honour, and says:—"the city of Florence owes a debt of gratitude to this noble man, because he has cured many citizens by the secret remedies which he compounded in his shop."

In the cloister of the monastic church of Santa Maria Novella a *Spezieria*, or Drug Store, was opened for the manufacture of medicines, the rendering of medicinal oils, unguents and perfumes, under the direction of a council of incorporated Apothecaries. The *Farmacia della Pecora*, in the Mercato Nuovo, was another important establishment for the dispensing of medicines under the control of "The Guild of Doctors and Apothecaries."

[1] In the Laurentian Library. Collated by Dr Cerchi.

[2] L'Osservatore Fiorentino, vol. vi. p. 147.

[3] MS. of Giovanni Battista Teobaldi, Magliabechian Library, Codex 192.

The "*Pinadoro*" was a well-known Apothecary's shop, and was the training school for many a famous Florentine—Perino del Naga among the number. Each of the Monasteries had its *Spezieria*, or Dispensary as we say, where medicaments, condiments and many necessary comforts were distributed gratis, or at a very low figure, to sick and needy applicants. The members of the religious orders were past-masters in the subtle arts of pharmacy, and undoubtedly made use of their powers to advance the cause of Religion.

With respect to the number of Apothecaries, whose names were enrolled upon the Matriculation Registers of the Guild, G. Villani records that, in 1300, they were wellnigh one hundred. Benedetto Dei gives the number of registered Apothecaries in 1479 as sixty-six—the shrinkage being due, doubtless, to trade competition, whereby the smaller and less enterprising men suffered extinction.

The *botteghe* of the Apothecaries were not the least ornamental and attractive of the many shops of Old Florence. Their internal arrangement followed on strictly conventional lines. Two rooms at least were required, the one giving upon the street or market was the shop in particular, whilst the room behind served for the mixing and preparation of the multitudinous variety of objects offered for sale, and for the accommodation of apprentices and assistants.

Across the centre of the shop ran a counter with drawers and cupboards, and upon it, together with *letti*—pots of ointment, *tazzine*—tasting cups, and *fiole*—cruets, were displayed small and interesting articles, such as scents, gloves, satchets, buckles, and nicknacks of all kinds from beyond the seas. Upon a firm pedestal stood the big mortar made of metal or earthenware, with strong outside ribs like buttresses of masonry to bear the heavy pounding of condiments. On a side-table were sets of *Vasi di puerperali*—accouchement services, and *canestralle*—dessert dishes.

Behind, along the walls, were ranged shelves of wood, holding in due order earthenware *albarelli* and *boccali*—dry drug jars

and jugs for liquids. These *albarelli* held artists' pigments, sweetmeats, candied apples, quince, and plum jams, with dates, manna, and spices from Syria and Africa, perfumes, soap, and endless luxuries and foibles of the day. They and the *boccali*

THE "BOTTEGA" OF AN APOTHECARY. FOURTEENTH CENTURY

were always beautifully shaped and decorated, and bore the names of their contents. A lower shelf contained round and oval boxes of wood or metal, generally decorated with painting and adorned with work in *gesso*, and boiled leather, for bandages, sponges, brushes, etc. etc. The lower shelf was reserved for

glass flasks bound in plaited rush and wicker-work, for infusions and decoctions, and closed with cotton wool or straw stoppers.

All these articles bore the owner's initials, arms, or name, with the name of the drug, etc., painted upon a ribbon decoration. In handy little heaps were small flasks, bottles for medicines, and little boxes for pills, etc., all bearing evidence of artistic taste. The walls of the shops were adorned with painted tiles of majolica, carved and painted wood, with tapestry or leather hangings. Convenient benches for customers were placed by the counter upon the clean plaited straw matting. Generally little metal flags were hung outside the door, like Inn signs, bearing the proprietors' names and special notices, whilst *albarelli* further proclaimed their calling.

A branch of the Apothecaries' business,—and by no means an insignificant one, in view of the large population of Florence and its *Contado*, and in relation to the many visitations of fire, flood, famine, and pestilence,—was that of undertaker. The funerals, at all events of the wealthier citizens,—whether noble or merchant,—were conducted by the Apothecaries. They supplied every requisite,—coffins, biers, bearers, palls, torches for use in the street, candles for the ecclesiastical functions, trappings, ornaments of all kinds, baked meats, burial drinks, and all accessories. Oddly enough the most popular refreshments at funerals were just those which still are offered at country burials in Great Britain,—*confetti*—sugared sponge-cakes, and *alchermes*—a spiced liquor flavoured with cinnamon and cloves.

In each *bottega* was exhibited a tariff or price-list with quotations of mortuary expenses. These were arranged in classes to suit every pocket, and the friends of the deceased were, as now, "waited upon at their residences" for the registration of arrangements.

Undertaker-apothecaries did not bear the best of names for honesty and moderation of charges, and when one of the fraternity hung up a "Melon," by way of a shop sign, it was hailed with derisive laughter as an apt token of the unblushing tricks of the trade!

Public records and the *Prioristi* and *Zibaldoni*—private note-books for jotting down at the moment interesting items of news, and carried and used by Florentines of every class, age, and sex,—contain numberless paragraphs relating to burial ceremonies. None of the latter were more scrupulously written up than those of the Alberti, Cavalcanti, Peruzzi, Rucellai, and Valori families.

For example, among other items in the account [1] of the burial of Monna Piera de' Valori Curonni, in 1365, are biscuits and sweetmeats, a cloth baldaccino, poles for bearing the coffin, wax-candles for the night watch, sweet herbs for perfuming the chamber, torches for the street procession, etc. etc. The amount paid to Giovanni di Bertoldo, the Apothecary, for all these reached fifty-three gold florins. An additional account for tapers, candles, and torches, used at the interment,—also supplied by the same undertaker,—came to eleven gold florins. The fees paid to the good lady's two doctors,—Messeri Niccolo da Mantova, and Piero de' Pulchi,—for "medical attendance and for testifying the death," amounted to seventy gold florins.

The expense of the funeral of Niccolaio di Jacopo degli Alberti, who died on August 1377, was enormous. "He was buried," says the old chronicler, "at Santa Croce, with the greatest honours in tallow and wax." The sum total came out at three thousand gold florins—nearly £1500!

In fact the serious expenses attaching to funeral ceremonies led to repressive legislation by the State, and the "Guild of Doctors and Apothecaries" was called upon to investigate the matter. Many regulations were adopted throughout the fifteenth century, and at length some new Statutes were enacted in 1536, which dealt with torches, candles, and various other objects modelled in wax. These confirmed to the Guild the exclusive right to make, keep, and sell all such things, and further limited the trade in illuminations and fireworks,—which at the period had become indispensable adjuncts at all funerals,—to members of the Guild.

[1] Valori MS., p. 23.

Quite the most fashionable and lucrative department in the Apothecaries' shops was that of Perfumery and Haberdashery. Indeed the Perfumer's sanctum,—with its delicious odours and rich stores of attractive trifles,—was a dangerous rival to the gossipy saloon of the versatile barber.

When a man required a pick-me-up it was, in the ordinary course of events, for him to drop into his chemist's. There, in addition to the usual town's topics, he was able to discuss interesting items from foreign parts, handle samples of scents and silks from the East, taste curious sherbets and essences, and chat to his heart's content with the gay frequenters of the emporium. High-born gentlemen and well-to-do *contadine* thronged these busy marts, and lent their graces and their foibles to the animation of the scene. Flirtations and assignations were the order of the day, behind shady jalousies and amid cushioned divans; whilst the discreet and spectacled master busied himself, not with their tittle-tattle, but with their petty cash.

The general use of perfumes was a characteristic of the prosperity of Florence, and of the luxury of her citizens. Almost every one became a connoisseur of delicate and pungent odours. The fashion was introduced from Spain, whence came the recipes, which bore the names of the "*Infanta Isabella*" and the "*Donna Fiorenza del Ullhoa*," and which became the rage.

Count Lorenzo Magalotti tells us that a pair of small silk sachets, filled with these delights, sold easily in Florence for four hundred gold florins. The Count also wrote a sonnet entitled :—"To the orange flower,"[1] wherein he recites with rapture the fascinating ingredients of his own best-loved perfume — orange blossom, honeysuckles, roses, jessamines, lilies of the valley, elder-flowers, sweet mint, thyme and geranium blossoms. He gives a recipe for the manufacture of a delicious fragrance :—"Take," he says, "the empty skin of an orange, with a little powdered benzoin, two pounded cloves, and a small stick of cinnamon; cover them with finest rose water, and set to boil upon a brazier."

[1] "Diterambo sul Fiore d' Arancio."

Then he gossips with a genial friend,—perhaps a worthy Apothecary,—showing that in the matter of perfumes one must be sparing, or generous, according to circumstances, and in proportion to the appreciation of the company. Liberality at all times was to be required in polite society. Ornaments, dress, kerchiefs, utensils, beds, hangings, rooms, and even food and beverages, all came under the category of objects worthy of being

FLORENTINE GENTLEMAN PURCHASING SCENT AT AN APOTHECARY'S. LATE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

perfumed with musk, amber, and the extracts of sweet-smelling flowers, herbs, and earths.

No forms of scent or perfume were anything like so popular with the smart folks of old Florence as the *Buccheri*, and none found Apothecaries more keen in their supply. By the term was meant odoriferous earths or paste, and also small ornamental unglazed vessels made of sweet-smelling clay. The finest *Buccheri* were distinguished by a brilliant black colour, and came from Portugal. When baked into pottery the colour was rich brown and red, and

the little vessels were polished by the hand and ornamented with rich gilding. The odour of the *Bucchero,* when dipped in water, was delightfully refreshing, and resembled the aroma which rises from the parched ground, on a hot summer day, after a copious shower.

Fashionable belles of the period were accustomed to wear on their uncovered breasts miniature *Buccheri* as lockets. They were

FLORENTINE LADY AT HER TOILET. LATE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

pierced with tiny holes, whence issued the most delicate of flowery fragrances. Ever and anon they would press these little vases to their lips to gather the delightful tingling sensation which the impact produced. In every Apothecary's shop these attractive toys were sold, as well as the *Cunziere*—perfume jars filled with fragments of *bucchero* earth and other odoriferants,—which were to be found in the luxurious apartments of wealthy citizens.

The rage for this delectable compound became enormous. It was made into pastilles for eating, and was added, as an

acceptable flavour, to the most delicate viands :—*saporetti*—subtle sauces, *pani levati*—dessert-wafers, *cappone di galera*,—egg-flip and whipped cream,—the forebears of our meringues.

Magalotti also descants[1] upon the charms of *Buccheri*, and says sententiously :—"What a delight it would be to put to boil in a *Bucchero della Maga*, with Cordova water, four or five pieces of *Bucchero di Guadalaxara!* Such a confection would keep its perfume for a year, if wrapped in amber-scented leather, with a *denaro* worth of *lacrima di Quinquina*, and would be meat and drink combined!"

Under the general term *Merciai*,—Haberdashers,—which by the way was added to the title of the Guild in the year 1282, and which, henceforth, was known as "*L'Arte de' Medici e degli Speziali e de' Merciai*," "The Guild of Doctors, Apothecaries, and Haberdashers,"—were included many small fancy dealers.

*Merciai* strictly meant traders who purchased raw silk in the Levant and Persia and shipped it to Florence. They were also keen in picking up endless articles which promised remunerative sales at home. They ministered greatly to the splendour of marriage feasts, which in the fifteenth century were celebrated without fear of sumptuary prohibition. The weddings of Baccio Adimari and Lisa Ricasoli in 1420, of Bernardo Rucellai and Nannina de' Medici in 1460, and of Lorenzo de' Medici and Clarice Orsini in 1469 were remarkable for the richness and variety of the beautiful presents of Eastern origin—embroidered cushions, belts, purses, veils and fringes of fine silk, inlaid thimbles and needle-cases, ivory combs, feathered fans, and whatnots. The wedding trousseau of Giovanna de' Medici, in 1466, excelled all others in the cunning beauties of its unnamed trifles of rare and goodly workmanship, sought out of the endless stores of the Apothecaries.

Certain Provisions were passed during the first half of the sixteenth century in connection with the "Guild of Doctors and Apothecaries," which prescribed rules and regulations for the

[1] Magalotti, "Lettere Scientifiche," No. 18, 19.

conduct and procedure of all and sundry traders connected with the Guild.

"*L'Arte de' Merciai, Velettai, Profumieri e Cartai*"—"The Guild of Mercers, Veil-makers, Perfumers, and Stationers," was duly enrolled and placed under the direction of the Greater Guild.[1] All such merchandise had to be packed in boxes, cases, barrels, casks, or bales, bearing the mark of the exporting house, with the name of the agent attached, who was also directed to stamp each consignment with the official seal of the "Guild of Doctors and Apothecaries."

The following is a list of some of the Crafts which were subordinated to the "Guild of Doctors and Apothecaries":—

| | |
|---|---|
| *Barbieri* | Hairdressers and Barbers. |
| *Battilori* | Gold-beaters. |
| *Berrettai* | Beret or cap-makers. |
| *Bicchierai e Fiasci* | Glass-blowers and Bottle-makers. |
| *Boccalieri e Scudalieri* | Jug and dish-makers. |
| *Borsai* | Purse-makers. |
| *Brachierai* | Truss and Suspender-makers. |
| *Cappellai di paglia e feltro* | Straw and Felt Hat-makers. |
| *Cartolai* | Paper-makers. |
| *Cartai* | Stationers. |
| *Ceraiuoli e Fabbricanti dell' Imagine di Cera* | Wax chandlers and makers of waxen figures. |
| *Ciurmadori* | Quack-doctors. |
| *Coltellinai* | Cutlers. |
| *Guainai* | Sheath and case-makers. |
| *Imbiancatori* | Makers of Bleaching media. |
| *Lanciai e Funaiuoli* | Well-rope and gearing-makers. |
| *Lanternai* | Lantern-makers. |
| *Lintai* | Makers of small linen articles. |
| *Librai* | Booksellers. |
| *Mascherai* | Mask-makers. |

[1] Cantini, iii. p. 343.

| | |
|---|---|
| *Merciai* | Dealers in raw-silk and sundries. |
| *Minugiai* | Makers of catgut for musical instruments. |
| *Orpellai* | Makers of gilded leather articles. |
| *Pallai* | Tennis-bat and ball makers. |
| *Pettinagnoli* | Comb-makers. |
| *Pettini stracci* | Makers of silk carding-combs. |
| *Profumieri* | Perfumers. |
| *Sellai* | Saddlers' fancy articles dealers. |
| *Spadai* | Ornamental sword-makers. |
| *Stagnai e Acconciastagni* | Pewterers and platers. |
| *Stovigliai* | Potters. |
| *Stacciai e Vagliai* | Sieve-makers. |
| *Velettai* | Veil-makers. |
| *Vendi di Spago, Canapo, e Fune* | String, Rope and Cord-makers. |

etc. etc. etc.

All through the fifteenth century as the fame of Florence was wafted further and further afield, her Merchants and her Apothecaries entered more and more into friendly rivalry in exploiting the treasures of distant lands. The "Guild of Doctors and Apothecaries" despatched travellers and agents into every known land, who quickly sent back valuable consignments of goods. Everything of an aromatic nature, or pleasing to the eye, no less than every ingredient useful in the *Pharmacopœia*, became articles of barter and of traffic.

Each vessel, from the East, which entered the harbour of Leghorn, or which sailed up to the quays of Pisa, brought immense stores of precious oriental merchandise. These were unladen and promptly packed on mule backs or placed in shallow river-boats, and despatched direct to the shops of the Apothecaries.

The number of *Sensali*—agents—and *Mezzani*—Middlemen—was very large. They were either engaged in foreign travel, or

at depots in Italy and abroad, or in Florence itself. As early as the middle of the thirteenth century such assistants of the Guild were fully recognised and generally employed. Regulations were put into force, from time to time, which not only limited both the numbers and the activities of persons acting as agents and salesmen, but also required that all who should engage themselves in such occupations should obtain the sanction of the Consuls of the Guild.

The co-operative feature, which marked all trade undertakings in Florence, did not fail to assert itself with respect to agents and salesmen. Consequently it is not a matter of surprise to find that, by the middle of the fourteenth century, a subordinate corporation had come into existence:—"*L'Arte de' Sensali e di Mezzani*" —"The Guild of Agents and Middlemen." This association was without separate political attributes, and was entirely under the auspices of the "Guild of Doctors and Apothecaries." Each member received, upon Matriculation or admission, a metal token, which he was obliged to wear during the exercise of his calling. The same badge he was also permitted to exhibit over the door of his house or office.

Agents and Salesmen were not allowed to effect sales of any kind except by the authority of the Greater Guild; transgression of this rule led to fines, for each offence, of one *soldo*, and repeated infractions to expulsion.

So greatly did the commerce of Florence increase during the fifteenth century that the principal Apothecaries, in addition to their staffs of travellers, established Banking Agencies in all the principal centres of population, and especially in those countries which were most productive of the manifold commodities of their trade.

These "Professional Banks"—if we may call them such for want of a better name—became important business-houses, and were largely concerned in granting loans of money to members of the Guild in furtherance of exploring expeditions. They also assumed the character of general money-lending offices, and, being well managed, were very prosperous undertakings.

ARMS OF GUILD OF DOCTORS AND APOTHECARIES

LUCA DELLA ROBBIA

. . . . . .

With something of the catholicity of a beneficent *Alma Mater* the "Guild of Doctors and Apothecaries" extended its sheltering patronage to numbers of objects and interests not, at first sight, necessarily associated with medicine, surgery, and drugs.

Literature, Painting and Geographical Discovery alike benefited from the fostering care of the Guild. If a man had a book, a pigment, or an adventure, he had nothing to do but to drop in at one of the considerable pharmacies of old Florence. There he could rub shoulders with others of his kind, and chat affably with the dignified and bespectacled medicos; and, after cajoling the patient but wide awake apothecary, he rarely departed without having got what he asked.

Dante, Cimabue, and Toscanelli may be rightly called the fathers of these glorious families of writers, artists and explorers, which have shed such undying lustre upon their *Alma Mater*, and have illuminated all lands and all periods by the effulgence of their genius.

The Men of Letters of the Renaissance, whose sun rose and shone in Florence, form a paradise of celebrities which have placed the Fair City upon the premier throne of the Valhalla of Learning.

> "Boccaccio's Garden and its faierie
> The love of joyaunce and the galantrie,"

Her sons wielded the pen with the same splendid spirit of enterprise and success as did their brethren of the loom. Her writers, her merchants, and her bankers, together built up her fortune and her glory.

Dante Alighieri, (1265-1321), was the son of a notary belonging to the *sestiere* of Por San Piero. He was sent to study law at Bologna, and philosophy at Padua; but having no taste for either faculty he matriculated in 1296 in the "Guild of Doctors and Apothecaries." His choice may have been dictated by his fondness for literature, because books were among the wares sold exclusively in the pharmacies.

He entered public life soon after his marriage in 1295, and took an active part in the debates of the magistrates. In 1300 he was elected Prior, and was instrumental in causing the exile of the *Neri* and *Bianchi*. This led to his own exile upon a trumped up charge of "barratry,"—the pecuniary misuse of office, —extortion, and illicit gains.

If Petrarch, (1304-1374), and Boccaccio, (1313-1375), were never matriculated into the Guild, their sympathies were with its beneficent characteristics. Their writings were nowhere more accessible, and their clever sayings more constantly repeated, than in the Apothecaries' shops of their beloved Florence.

Matteo Palmieri, (1364-1427), Apothecary and Poet; Leo Battista Alberti, (1404-1475), Physician, Astronomer, Architect, and Writer; Marsilio Ficino, (1433-1499), Surgeon, Philosopher, Writer; Antonio Benevieni, (1453-1542), Physician and Man of Letters; were among those who were matriculated in the "Guild of Doctors and Apothecaries." But who shall write out the names of all that mighty Florentine Phalanx of literary men, who have brilliantly adorned, not alone their Guild, and their city, and their time, but the great world at large for eternity!

No effort appears to have been made to establish a corporation for the enrolment exclusively of men of letters in the case of painters.

Printing, and making, and selling of books and other literary matter, no less than wood and copper block-engraving were recognised as appertaining to the professional "Guild of Doctors and Apothecaries."

Bernardo Cennini,—Ghiberti's partner in designing and casting the famous Baptistery Gates,—was the first Florentine printer from type. His earliest book,—"A Commentary of Virgil,"—was published in 1471.

To Aldus Manutius, (1450-1516), is due the type called "*Italic*." It was modelled upon the handwriting of Petrarch. The cutting of it was done by Francesco da Bologna,—Francesco Raibolini,—the painter-goldsmith, who signed himself, indiffer-

ently, "*aurifex*" and "*pictor*." He was a member of the Florentine "Guild of Doctors and Apothecaries."

In 1472 Piero da Moguntia—another German—issued at Florence the "*Filocopo*" of Giovanni Boccaccio. Five years later Nicholaus of Breslau printed the "*Monte Sancto di Dio*" of Bettini; and in 1481,—under his assumed name of Niccolo di Lorenzo di Firenze,—an edition of Dante's works. This was quite the finest example of Florentine printing which had yet appeared. The first notice of wood-engraving in Florence appears in an entry for the *Catasto*,—Income-tax,—of 1430, which relates that an artificer, unnamed, returns as rateable property, "many wood-blocks for the printing of playing-cards and images of saints useful to him in his profession." However no print is extant of an earlier date than 1490, which date appears upon a bird's-eye view of Florence now in Berlin.

Jacopone da Todi's "*Laudi*,"—printed by Francesco Buonaccorso,—and similar Books of Devotion, appeared in 1490 with wood-block illustrations. In the same year Buonaccorso,—who was related to Savonarola through his mother,—published the eloquent Frate's tract, "*Libro della Vita viduata*." Savonarola himself flooded Florence with illustrated tracts and sermons. These were done in two or three special workshops, where they were designed and executed, and publishers applied to the Masters when they required cuts for their publications. Luigi Pulci's "*Morgante Maggiore*," which contains more than two hundred woodcuts, was published in 1500. Many old Florentine woodcuts between 1516 and 1546 are signed Giovanni Benvenuto, a leading publisher and member of the "Guild of Doctors and Apothecaries."

The earliest Florentine copper-plate engraving was probably a "Paschal Table for finding Easter from the year 1461," of which there is a copy in the British Museum. The first illustrated books published in Florence and containing copper-plate engravings were the *Monte Sacro di Dio* and Dante's Works. For the latter, which goes under the name of Landino, Botticelli

was responsible, and expressions of his skill, as an engraver, may be seen at the Berlin Museum. Filippo Lippi, who filled the office of Consul of the Painters' Guild more than once, did fifteen plates of the "Life of the Madonna," published in 1482.

Apparently the mechanical difficulties of printing letterpress and plates, on one and the same page, were too great even for ingenious Florentine workmen-artists, for, between 1472 and 1490, fewer than two hundred illustrated books were published in Florence. Another reason for this moderate output may probably be noted in the general preference for illuminated manuscripts, in the execution of which no *Scrivani* excelled those of Florence for exquisite and correct penmanship. The art of writing and illuminating manuscripts required two classes of artists: 1. *Miniatori-caligrafi*—Writers and Capital-letter designers, and 2. *Miniatori-pittori*—Illuminators. At the early date of 1150 Florentine *scrivani* had made their names famous for fine clear and correct pen work. The beginning of the fourteenth century saw the pen laid aside for the brush.

The last of the Master-Copyists was Vespasiano da Bisticci (1421-1498). He was matriculated into the "Guild of Doctors and Apothecaries," and published a book entitled—"The Lives of Illustrious Men." He is known to posterity as the first of modern booksellers, and his shop near the Mercato Nuovo was the earliest emporium for the exclusive supply of printed books.

A vast number of craftsmen were engaged in the Book-industry:—Typefounders, press-makers, paper and parchment dressers, compositors, printers, illustrators, engravers, binders, cloth-shearers, vellum-stretchers, boss-carvers, etc. All these artificers were under strict rules of workmanship, and their work was further subject to severe censorship before publication by officials connected with the Great Guild. There does not appear to have been separate organisations for these workers, but probably they were matriculated in the subordinate Association of *Librai*—Book-makers and Book-sellers.

In the Early Renaissance the great Comacine Guild em-

braced workers in all the decorative arts—architects, builders, mosaic-workers, workers in gold and bronze, carvers in wood and stone, painters, etc. etc. The *Magistri pittori*—Master-painters—formed the fourth branch of that famous Guild, until the beginning of the fourteenth century, when painter communities were founded outside the parent organisation.

Every state and every town, where the Comacine Masters worked, had its Lodge of Painters. One spirit moved the brethren in friendly rivalry, and produced individual styles to each of which the name of "School" was given. Thus Cimabue, Giotto, Lorenzetti, Memmi, Gaddi, Aretino and others worked together, and apart, quite characteristically.

Every wall space, not allocated to the sculptor or the mosaic-master, was smoothed and stuccoed to receive the pigments of the painter. Scratch where you will—at Fiesole, in San Miniato or in Santa Croce—plaster peels off and reveals a Comacine Master of painting. The Cappella degli Spagnuoli, at Santa Maria Novella, is an undefaced treasure-house of Comacine frescoes.

Somewhere about 1297 the Florentine painters, "being beholden for their supplies of pigments to the Apothecaries and their agents in foreign lands," placed themselves under the banner of the "Guild of Doctors and Apothecaries," but with no distinct organisation.

The first incorporation of the Painters appears to date from 1303, and was the natural reflexive action of the commercial economies of the period. Certain rules and regulations were compiled, but the first serious enactment of Statutes was accomplished in November 1339, when *L'Arte de' Pittori*—the "Guild of Painters," became a duly constituted corporation. At the same time it was ruled that the new confraternity should be dependent upon the Greater "Guild of Doctors and Apothecaries," and should possess no peculiar political or social pre-eminence.[1]

[1] D. Giovanni Gaye, "Carteggio inedite d'Artisti," (xiv., xv., xvi., Secoli), vol. ii. p. 39.

In 1349 a further development of the Guild of Painters took place and its members enrolled themselves as the "*Compagnia e Fraternita di San Luca*" under the special protection of the Virgin Mary, Saint John Baptist, Saint Zenobbio and Saint Reparata. The rallying-point of the members was transferred to the disused church of San Matteo, and they added their alternative title,—"*La Confraternita de' Pittori*,"—and acknowledged their dependence upon the great Guild of Doctors and Apothecaries. The Confraternity reckoned its members not only from makers of pictures, frescoes, and designs, but enrolled also decorators of stone, wood, metal, glass, stucco, leather, etc. etc.

The Statutes of the Guild,[1] which were duly registered before a Notary on August 18th, 1354, named as the Governing Body—four Consuls, four Councillors, two Treasurers, and two Secretaries. These officers were generally men of the highest artistic attainments, for example, Luca Della Robbia,—although not a pigment master in the ordinary sense of the term,—served the office of Consul several times; he was moreover elected thirty times a member of Council, three times Sindic and twice Treasurer.

The marticulation-fee was only five *lire*, and other payments of members were upon the same modest scale. One Statute provided:—"that those who inscribed themselves on the Roll of membership,—whether men or women,—should be contrite, and should confess their sins; and that, whilst members of the Guild, they should go to confession and to the Communion at least once a year."

All members were required to recite daily five *Paternosters* and five *Aves;* but should memory fail, the omission had to be made up the following day. Complaints were rife in 1406 that members of the Guild were remiss in their religious duties and in obedience to officers. Penalties were inflicted of temporary durance in the Guild House, with money fines — ranging from twelve *denari*—for each dereliction of duty.

Cennino Cennini, in his quaint "*Trattato della Pittura*," put

[1] Archivio di Stato Fiorentino.

forth in 1437,—when its author was in his eightieth year,—makes the following pathetic appeal to all art students:—"O ye of the gentle spirit who are lovers of the Art, and devoted to its pursuit, adorn yourselves with the garments of love, of modesty, of obedience, and of penance."

St Luke's Day was a famous festival in Florence, when all the finest pictures not actually *in situ* were gathered together from the studios and exhibited in the cloisters of La Nunziata. In this observance we note the origin of the Accademia di San Luca, renamed, in 1562, by Cosimo I., "Accademia delle Belle Arti," wherein he united the three Fine Arts—Sculpture, Painting and Architecture,—under the splendid motto: "*Levare di terra al cielo nostro intelleto*,"—"Heaven and earth are united by our genius!"

Genius indeed! What pen could name all the great lights of that firmament, much less do justice to the magnificent pageant of the Painters of Florence! If Benvenuto Cellini wrote:—"Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael Santi and Michel Angelo Buonarroti are the Book of the World," who shall add laurels to their crowns, or who shall tell the glories of their brethren?

Under the patronage of the "Guild of Doctors and Apothecaries," many eminent artists turned their attention to stained-glass. Ghiberti, Ghirlandajo, Perugino, Lorenzo di Credi, Pierino del Vaga, Vivarini were only a few of those who designed subjects and also undertook the process of staining.

They ground their pigments very fine, mixed them with water containing gum or some other adhesive medium, sketched in lightly dark touches and shadows, and then burnt the glass. When cool, colours were dabbled and stippled over the surface, and left to dry: a soft brush was passed over the picture, high lights were scratched out, and the sheet was re-burnt.[1]

The vitreous glories of the Duomo, Santa Croce, Santa Maria Novella, San Spirito, La Nunziata, Or San Michele, and many another shrine of Religion and of Art, owe their creation to these renowned masters. Working with them were Moise—in 1350, Domenico di

[1] N. H. J. Westlake, "History of Design in Painted Glass."

Gambassi—in 1431, Guaspare di Giovanni, a priest of Volterra, —in 1440, and Alessandro Fiorentino—in 1491. Guaspare's contract directed that his work at Siena "must be as good as that at Florence in Santa Maria del Fiore."[1]

Other Master window-painters were Fra Giovanni d'Ulma and Giovanni da Udine, who did the stained glass at the Certosa di Val d'Ema.

Turning lastly to Discoverers and Explorers of lands and seas, who were all under the *Ægis* of the Guild, we encounter two great Florentines—Paolo Toscanelli and Amerigo Vespucci—among a host of worthy compatriots in adventure.

Paolo Toscanelli, the son of a physician, was born in 1397. After reading the classics in the "Studio Fiorentino,"—where Boccaccio used to expound Dante,—he graduated at the University of Padua. On his return to Florence, in 1425, he became a member, without fees,—*beneficio patris*,—in the "Guild of Doctors and Apothecaries." He took up the study of Natural Science, especially devoting himself to Astrology—"the crazy daughter of a wise mother, Astronomy." Under his philosophy was revived the Miletan theory as to the spherical form of the earth. His opinions, together with the ever increasing needs of Florentine Commerce in the direction of new dyes, new drugs and new spices, prompted the idea of reaching Prete Janni—the fabled herbarium of the West.

The route traced on his map by Toscanelli enabled Christopher Columbus to place his foot upon the New World. The many letters which passed between Toscanelli, the King of Portugal, Columbus, and many other worthies have a romantic, as well as a scientific, interest. Alas, he never lived to see the crowning of his life's work, but died in 1482, just ten years before the discovery of Columbus. He was buried in the Church of San Spirito. The disc, on a marble slab, placed by Toscanelli, in 1450, in the North Transept of the Duomo, and a "Treatise upon the Movements of the Comets," are all the relics we have of

[1] C. F. L. F. Rumohr, "Italienische Forschungen," V. ii. p. 381.

the great Florentine *fisico*, who inspired the intrepid Genoese mariner.

The mantle of Toscanelli fell upon the shoulders of Amerigo Vespucci, who was born in Florence in 1451. He was the son of a Notary, but embraced mercantile life in one of the Medici Companies of Adventurers, and became the Cadiz agent of that house in 1492. He was thrown into the company of Christopher Columbus, and contracted for the provisioning of two of his expeditions. He was spoken of by the famous explorer as: "*imo hombre muy de bien*," "a very tidy sort of fellow!"

In 1497 King Ferdinand of Portugal entrusted him with the command of an exploring expedition, and he went to Florence for information and assistance. Whilst in his native city he was enrolled a full member of the "Guild of Doctors and Apothecaries." He afterwards sailed away to the New World, taking with him Hojeda, Pinzon, and Cabral, all famous Portuguese explorers; and had the satisfaction of discovering the coast of the Northern Continent—to which he gave his own name, *Amerigo*—"America." The news of his success excited immense excitement and enthusiasm in Florence. For three days and three nights the whole city was decorated with wreaths and banners, and illuminated with torches and lamps. Vespucci died at Seville in 1512. His portrait, painted by Ghirlandajo, has been discovered in a fresco at the Church of Ognissanti in Florence.

From the very nature of their enterprises explorers and navigators were so situated that they could not form a co-operative Society of their own. Membership in the Great Guild, which patronised and subsidised their efforts, was sufficient for their purpose.

. . . . . .

And Great Guild it truly was, for though the "Guild of Doctors and Apothecaries" held no higher place in the Guild Hierarchy of Florence than that of sixth, it yielded to none in the loftiness of its aims, and in the splendour of its achievements.

## CHAPTER IX

# THE GUILD OF FURRIERS AND SKINNERS

### *L'ARTE DE' VAIAI E PELLICCIAI*

I. ORIGIN.—The wearing of skins and furs. Carlovingian kings. Early craftsmen. Guild added to Seven Greater Guilds, 1197. Few early notices. A. Pucci's "*Centiloquio*."

II. CONSTITUTION.—Avoidance of confusion with Tanners and other leather workers. First Consuls, 1270. Guild Books. Various divisions of Guild-members. Officers. Low fees for matriculation. The "*Tasso di Torcetti*." "Squeezers" or "Pepperboxers!" Street regulations with respect to trade processes. Sumptuary laws affecting furs.

III. DEVELOPMENT.—Kinds of skins and furs. Meaning of double title of Guild. Values. Processes. Treaties. Exports. An early restrictive law. Wearing vair and other furs marked the prosperity of Florence. The "fool in vair!" Curative properties of fur. Cinderella.

IV. A Dissertation upon the Dress of the Florentines during the Era of the Renaissance.

THE wearing of skins and fur was doubtless the earliest sartorial fashion indulged in by the unclothed races of mankind. Quite without contradiction we associate such coverings with savage and semi-civilised life. What more natural, or what more easy, when winter storms beat cold, or old age and sickness thinned the blood, than to up and slay a beast, and with his *pelt* to protect the human frame?

Textile garments are the garb of civilisation and of peace. So when, in the early Middle Ages, wild war-lords from the north overran the fair plains of Italy, no man wondered to behold their brawny limbs arrayed in the furs of the animals they had slain upon their way. Of Ausprando, King of the Lombards, in 772, it is recorded that he came clothed in fine skins and rare furs.[1]

[1] Paolo Diacono, Lib. vi. cap. 35.

The Carlovingian kings followed the same mode, and Charlemagne was wont to wear thick otter-skins in winter, and, when in summer time he went a-hunting, he sported serviceable sheep skins. During his progresses through Italy he wore, generally, a large robe lined with vair and fox-skin. His officers and courtiers were arrayed in like fashion, and doubtless their appearance struck the quick-witted Florentines, and gave them ideas which they were not slow in carrying out.[1]

The early inhabitants of Tuscany—their erstwhile industries dispersed—were fain to clothe themselves, for peace and war alike, in what came handiest, and offered least temptation to their robber enemies. Consequently at the period of the inception of the Guilds many sartorial relics of a troubled past remained and skins and furs were all the vogue.

The first notices of Furriers and Skinners in the Archives of Florence are the following :—

"*1050—Sethinus—pellicarius.*"
"*1075—Vivulo, filius Stefani,—pellicarii.*"[2]

Under date 1054 there is the following entry :—*Crosna* (?), *cum Capello de Vulpe*, and in 1077, "*Vesta una de Vulpe*,"—perhaps mantles or cloaks of fox-skin,—and in the former year the value of the fur garments is set down at five hundred *lire*. In 1197 there is the record of a worthy Rector of Santa Maria Novella who wished to pawn, "*pelles suas lupi cerverii*"—his robes of red-deer skin !

The earliest distinct mention of the "Guild of Furriers and Skinners" was in 1197, when, together with the Guilds of "Judges and Notaries" and "Doctors and Apothecaries," its first incorporation took place. Already the four principal Guilds :—"*Calimala*," "Wool," "Bankers" and "Silk" were in existence, and were exercising potential influence in the Commune.

Why the "*Arte de' Vaiai e Pellicciai*" was chosen over and above the "Guild of Linen" or that of "Masters of Stone

[1] San Gallo, *Monochus*, "Carolus Magnus," Lib. ii. cap. 27.
[2] Davidssohn, "Geschichte von Florenz," p. 785.

and Wood," or that of "the Butchers," for example, to fill the seventh place in the Guild Hierarchy it is quite impossible to say. Probably its craftsmen were of a more ancient lineage, or represented a higher social grade in public estimation, or again they may have formed the most considerable industrial class outside the charmed circle of the three leading commercial corporations.

Anyhow, in 1266, the full style of the Guild was bestowed, together with the banner of armorial bearings,—the *Agnus Dei*, holding a white red-crossed flag, in the corner of a blue field,—and to its Consuls and other Officers like precedence was accorded as to the officials of the other Greater Guilds. After this date, of course, notices of the Guild are abundant both with respect to its standing and its activities in the industrial life of the city and *Contado*.

At a conference of Consuls of the Guilds, held in April 1280, there were present Salvi Aldobrandini Feo Bonci, Baldo Calderusci, and Cambio Rusticucci, Consuls of the "Guild of Skinners."[1] Among those who attended and spoke at a similar conference, in December 1293, was Caruccio della Verra, of the "Guild of Furriers." He was one of the most distinguished citizens, but about him very little is known, though he travelled far and wide. In May 1296 the Consuls of the Guild took an active part in the discussions affecting the Hospital of San Gallo, and, with the Consuls of the Guilds of "Bankers and Exchangers" and "Doctors and Apothecaries," were appointed guardians and visitors.

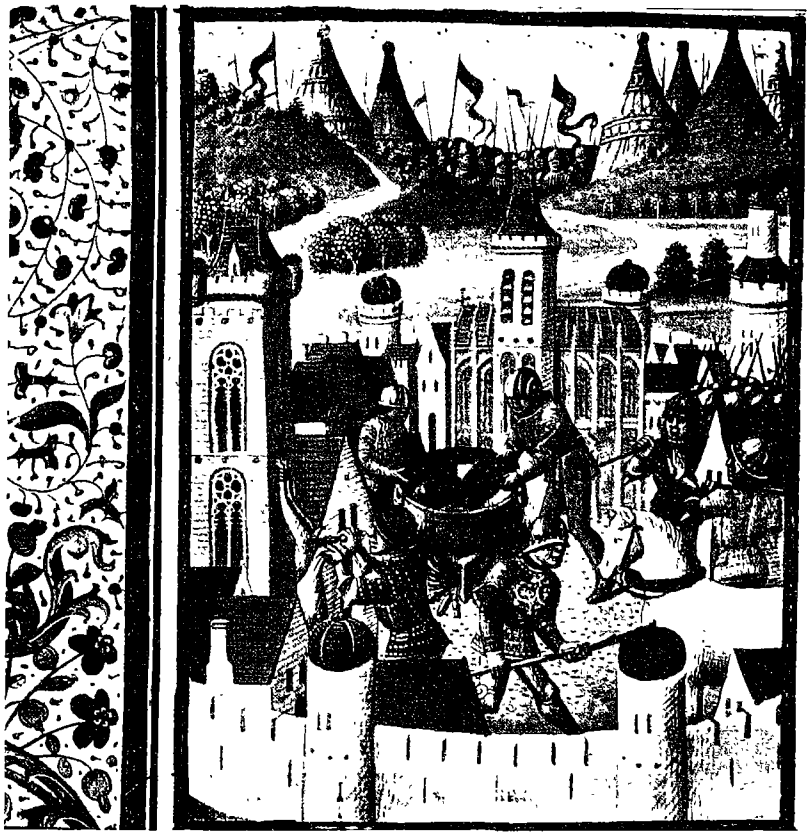
Antonio Pucci sings thus of the Guild in his "Songs of the *Mercato Vecchio*":—

> "Florence of commerce wide the home
> Counts one and twenty trades in all
> Of equal rank, and the seventh
> We 'Furriers and Skinners' call."[2]

The Residence of the Consuls was in the Via de' Lambert-

[1] "Le Consulte," i. 27.

[2] A. Pucci, "Centiloquio."



SKINNERS IN CAMP

LATE FOURTEENTH CENTURY

eschi Gherardini, at the corner of the Chiasso de' Baronelli, and, as was the custom with all the Guilds, the escutcheon of the Guild was carved up over the entrance.

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Originally only two Consuls were elected to preside over the affairs of the Guild, but, between 1270 and 1280, the number was increased to three, and later on,—after the revision of Statutes, 1301-1309,—to four. They held office for four months, their names having been drawn, as was the general practice, from an urn containing slips of paper.

As in the constitution of the other Guilds, the Consuls took cognisance of all civil and criminal causes between members of the Guild, they granted Matriculation to candidates, and superintended the subscriptions of members and other corporate property.

The *Consigliere*,—Chancellor,—was entitled to certain fees :—for each person matriculated—ten *soldi*, for written agreements between master and apprentice—ten *soldi*, for each license to keep untanned skins or hides—ten *soldi*, for each dissolution of matriculation and renunciation of membership—ten *soldi*, for the valuation of stock in any retail shop—ten *soldi*, for each written agreement between slaughterer-skinners and leather-tanners—ten *soldi*,—and various other smaller fees. The Chancellor's office was a yearly one, and an occupant was ineligible for re-election.[1]

The *Provveditore*,—Director,—was required to keep fully entered up the following Guild Books :—A Journal of debtors and creditors,—together with the Salaries and expenses of the Consuls and other officials ; a Matriculation Register, with the payments and obligations of the persons matriculated in the city ; a similar Register for the *Contado* ; a Note-book containing the registered trademarks of all tanners and dealers in leather, etc. etc. He also received fees, smaller in amount, for the same purposes as the Chancellor.[2]

[1] L. Cantini, xi. p. 24.

[2] L. Cantini, xi. 28.

The *Cameriere*,—Chamberlain,—had to do with the finances of the Guild. He kept accounts with respect to the rents of slaughter and skinning-houses, tanyards and pits, leather-dressers' workshops, and the shops and stalls of all persons connected with the trade. To him it also appertained to administer the charitable contributions of the Guild, and to relieve distressed craftsmen and their families. The last two officers were elected for a year, but were eligible for re-election.

The *Stimatori*,—Inspectors,—and the *Tassatori*,—Taxing masters,—of whom there were two respectively, elected bi-annually, were enjoined to keep the two divisions of the Guild members as distinct and separate as possible—so far at least as concerned all the details of the various occupations.

In one group were the *Vaiai*—Miniver-dressers, the *Pelliciai*—Furriers in general, the *Conciatori di pelli col pelo*—Cutters of skins with the hair on, and the *Incettiatori di bossette*—Dressers of Lamb-skins.

In the other group were the *Cuoiai*—Leather-dressers in general, the *Conciatori di cuoio grosso*—Cutters of heavy leathers, the *Conciatori di sottili*—Cutters of fine leathers, and the *Orpellai*—Leather-embossers and gilders.

A third division was added in later times, made up of the *Calzolai*—Shoemakers, the *Pianellai*—Slipper-makers, the *Collettai*—Collar and Belt-makers, *Coloristi di pelli*—Leather-stainers, and various minor but artistic crafts, among them, perhaps, the *Pelacani*—Dog-clippers!

There was also a fourth class containing the *Sellai*—Saddlers, *Brigliai*—Bridle and reins-makers, and the *Cintiai*—Makers of sword-belts and bandoliers.

Some of these workmen however appear to have been attached also to the Lesser Guild of *Galigai*—Tanners—and probably the crossing of the interests of the two Guilds led to some confusion. The trade of tanning, however, was a distinct industry, and no member of the "Guild of Furriers and Skinners" was permitted to engage therein. In the same way the

Shoemakers, employed by the Guild, were workers in fancy goods only, which required the addition of fur to complete them.

The Matriculation fee was very low—namely four *soldi* to each Consul, and two to the Chancellor; but the guarantee required, as to a candidate's qualification for enrolment, was fixed at ten to twenty gold florins. An Annual Poll-tax was levied by the State upon every matriculated member of the Guild, and this by the way gained very suggestive nicknames: "*Tassa del Pepe*"—"Pepper-boxes," or "*Tassa de' Torcetti*"—"Squeezers"!

It was not allowed to mix native products with skins and furs from "beyond the mountains," or the boundaries of the State; nor to treat with sulphur, dye, or oil, any skin or fur. Skins snipped, or those stretched out by means of size or lime, or by any other media, were not to be bought or sold.

All breaches of these and similar regulations were visited with fines and forfeiture, and the wrongdoers were liable to dismissal from the Guild.[1]

Furriers and Skinners were forbidden to buy or sell wholesale from or to the *Popolo Minuto*, or to any unemployed person, knives and implements of all kinds used in the craft; but such persons might purchase small quantities of cat and rabbit skins and stoat's fur for the linings of garments.

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The premier designation of the Guild "*Vaiai*" comes from the word *Vaio*—speckled—as applied to the darkest grey fur or coat of the stoat and squirrel.[2] *Vaiaio* was a furrier who dressed such skins. These small animals abounded in the forests, which surrounded old Florence, and afforded sportsmen and craftsmen alike, attractive and lucrative occupation. The colour of the back was darker much than that of the belly, which was, in young creatures, of dazzling whiteness—and valued much on that account. This variety of colour gave rise to the use of

[1] Statuta Populi et Communis Florentiae, 1415, vol. ii. Rub. lvi.
Domenico M. Manni, "Osservazione e Guinte Istoriche," vol. xxv.

three words for the fur—the back-fur, and the whole coat of older animals, was called "Miniver," the rarer white or belly piece was named "Ermine," as being like the real Ermine, and "*Rosetello*" was the name given to the brown and yellow fur of spring growth.

The second part of the title of the Guild "*Pellicciai*" indicates the union of the two industries—the dressing of furs and the treatment of skins; although, for the matter of that, *Pellicciaio* meant "Furrier" also. The Latin name, as written by the Notaries of old, was *Pelliparius*, which indicated a dresser of skin after the process of tanning had been completed.

The skins offered for sale in Florence, with the view of the purchase and treatment by the operatives employed by the "Guild of Furriers and Skinners," were usually those of wolves, lambs, polecats, foxes, deer, lynxes and rabbits, together with the furs of miniver, marten, sable and ermine.

Ermine and sable were rare commodities, it is true, and commanded high prices—indeed they were almost unknown till late in the fifteenth century. They were used, as was marten fur, for borders, trimmings, and decorations, and were never employed as whole garments. Very wealthy men and ostentatious, indeed, had their state robes lined with these costly furs, and later in the history of the furrier industry, the same dignified personages added skins and furs and tails of rare Eastern animals to the splendour of their habiliments.[1]

Only indirectly, and quite in a subsidiary sort of way, did the Guild deal with heavy skins such as those of horses, cattle, mules, asses, goats, and sheep. These formed the staple of the industry of tanning, and provided materials for manipulation by members of the minor Guilds of "Saddlers," "Shoemakers," and "Buckle-makers," etc.

Pagnini has preserved records of the varieties and values of skins and furs which ruled in the middle of the fourteenth century:[2]—

[1] Pagnini, ii. 141.

[2] Pagnini, iv. p. 132.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Vai*—Stoat Bellies, | dressed | per hundred— | 3 | florins. |
| Do. Backs | do. | do. | 5 | do. |
| *Scheruoli*—Squirrel, | undressed | do. | 2 | do. |
| Do. | dressed | do. | 2½ | do. |
| *Lattizi*—Sucklings, | undressed | do. | 4 to 6 | do. |
| Do. | dressed | do. | 5 to 7 | do. |
| *Faine*—Polecats, | undressed | do. | 22 | do. |
| Do. | dressed | do. | 30 | do. |
| *Martore*—Martens, | undressed | do. | 36 | do. |
| Do. | dressed | do. | 40 | do. |
| etc. | etc. | etc. | etc. | |

In thus reckoning by hundreds, a curious, and perhaps characteristic, custom prevailed, namely that of counting upon a start of from four to ten—probably each word of the established divine or saintly invocation reckoning at the outset of the enumeration for one skin or fur!

In the *Gabella* of 1402 the following rates were charged upon skins and furs offered for sale in the city—per hundred, dressed:—*Vaio* and *Faina*—two pounds, *Lattizi*, *Ermellino*, and *Martora*—three pounds. *Vair* being so largely used was naturally a prominent object for taxation, not only in the annual special *Gabelle*,—raised for extraordinary State purposes,—but also at the gates of the city in the ordinary way of customs on imports.

In a MS., entitled: "A Summary of Commerical Dues of the City of Florence,"[1] written with the pen subsequent to the year 1411 under the heading "Guild of Furriers and Skinners," there are following entries:—

Vair Skins—belly and back—dressed per 100, 2 pounds 4 *denari*.
Vair Skins—belly and back—undressed per 100, 1 pound 16 soldi 4 *denari*.
Vair Skins—bellies only—dressed per 100, 1 pound 2 *denari*.
Do. backs only do. 1 do. 4 do.
Linings of cut Vair—bellies per 160, 18 soldi.
Do. with the hair worn off, per 160, 8 soldi.

[1] D. M. Manni, "Sigilli," etc.

Raw fur was made ready for use by softening the pelts, skins, or hides, with sweet olive oil, and then trampling upon them in tubs filled with fine hardwood sawdust at bloodheat. The pelt was removed and drawn over sharp knives to remove portions of flesh or other adhesive substances. The thickest hide was in this way rendered as soft and pliable as the thinnest kid used for gloves.

The Furrier then sorted the skins treated, with respect to colour and texture of hair, and cut them to the model required. The pelt was next nailed down to a board damp and stretched by pins. The last process was trimming and softening the edges.

The greater number of the workshops and sale emporiums of the Guild were situated along the fine Via de' Pellicciai. No more attractive thoroughfare could be found in old Florence, and in none other did so many men and women of fashion congregate daily to admire and covet the splendid furs exhibited by the merchants of the Guild. Here the Lamberti, the Toschi, the Cipriani, the Pilli and others vied with one another in the variety of their stocks and in the perfection of their methods and styles of dressing.

The commerce in skins became greatly extended and very important. Treaties were entered into with Ferrara and Mantua with respect to export and import. In 1307 a convention was signed between the Commune of Florence and the Counts of Mugnone concerning the making and keeping of a certain trade route between Florence and Bologna. The expenses of the enterprise were laid upon the values and weights of goods transported there along. Among the taxes was that of one pound upon each load of fox or cat skins.

The value of the mixed furs exported by the "Guild of Furriers and Skinners" was very great, and the transport convoys were constantly in danger of attack and robbery. Among reprisals addressed by the Priors of Florence in this behalf was one delivered to the Council of State of Siena in 1329, seeking

restitution for two bales of coverlets of miniver, consigned by Florentine merchants from Grosseto to Siena, or compensation in money upon the finding of the joint Court of Arbitration.

Cibrario has many entries of the exports and values of furs dressed by the "Guild of Furriers and Skinners" in Florence. For example, under the date 1367, eighty-seven marten skins, for the lining of a cloak for Amadeo VI. of Savoy, to be delivered in Rome—twenty-seven gold florins.

Everybody wore furs, more or less valuable, and even the austere rules of clothing observed in the religious houses were relaxed, until luxury and ostentation in clerical dress became a scandal. A council held in London in 1127 passed a decree forbidding Abbesses and other holy nuns from wearing skins of any kind except those of lambs, cats, and rabbits.[1]

Again in 1225 Cardinal Sant' Angelo regulated the habits of monks, so that none were allowed new fur garments oftener than every third year, and these were not to be lined with the skins of fox, or leopard, or firstlings of sheep. Two sorts of capes were allowed—one, of white fur, for the summer, and one of darker shades of grey, in winter: the latter only were of a large size to reach to the ground.

In the thirteenth century every one wore a *pelliccia*,—short cloak,—lined with vair, ermine, or other fur. Many better-to-do citizens also possessed long cloaks lined with vair, and bordered with finer furs. Caps of *latizzi*,—young vair-skin,—and of vair mixed with other furs, were in general use.

The fur-lined tunics of soldiers,—especially cavalry,—gave fashions to civilians, who, of both sexes, understood well enough the comfort and grace of tight-fitting but yielding clothing. The vogue for the wearing of fur increased along with that of silken ornaments, and marked the prosperity of Florence, and the sumptuousness of her merchants and people.

The great use made of vair or miniver by the superior clergy is evidenced in a register of the expenses of the Papal Court at

[1] Balducci Pegolotti, vol. iii. p. 263.

Avignon in January 1327. Therein is an entry, which states that Francesco, merchant of Florence, and Giovanni Anastasio, furrier, of Spoleto, supplied sixty-nine heavy cloaks and hoods, made of miniver, for winter wear by persons attached to the Court of the Pope. The sum paid by Ugone de' Cardaltiacci, the Papal Treasurer, was 763 gold florins. Another entry records the supply,

DIRECTOR OF TOURNAMENT DISTRIBUTING CANDIDATES' BADGES BEFORE A GIOSTRE.
(*Note the Capes of Vair*)

on June 12th, 1327, by the same Francesco,—"merchant and furrier,"—of one hundred and seventy-eight summer vestures, edged with miniver for summer use at the Papal Court, at a total cost of 110 gold florins.[1]

Vair or miniver was the fur most commonly in use, but certain restrictions confined it to the State robes of dignitaries, and to the official dress of Judges, Doctors and Knights. The

[1] Archivio del Vaticano, folio 45.

former were called "*abiti di riguardo*," and were also adopted by ecclesiastics,—a use which has remained to our own day in the capes of canons and other dignified clergy.

Boccaccio, ever observant of customs and fashions, says: "Esteemed are the garments lined with vair whereon falls oft-times the sword of knighthood."[1] By way of contrast, and to show the fondness of Florentines for ridicule, and their hatred of assumption of dignity by citizens, that inimitable critic, Antonio Pucci, tells how in his day: "they clothed the fool in vair."[2] This has reference to Villani's story of Giudetto della Torre, who sent a buffoon to yell at the cowardly Matteo Vincenti of Milan. The fool brought back an answer which so pleased Giudetto that he bestowed upon his witty messenger the furred robe of a baron, and gave him a good palfrey to boot![3]

In a very quaint brochure written by one Charrier, and published in Paris in 1634, many curious customs and superstitions connected with the wearing of fur in the sixteenth century are recorded. He says: "Bachelors (Knights?), Doctors of Law, Emperors and Doctors of Medicine are vested in the furs which represent the mysteries of Theology, the maxims of politics, and the secrets of medical science!" "For the use of furs cures headache and stomach-ache; rheumatism, which defeats the most powerful remedies, is removed by the skins of cats, of lambs, and of hares."

Charrier goes on to assert with pride that: "of all the ornaments which luxury has invented there are none so glorious, so august, and so precious as fur." "The privileges and honours of Furriers and Skinners," he adds, "surpass quite rightly those of all other Crafts!"

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The story of "Cinderella and the Glass Slipper," by the way, has a connection with the use of this fur. It is of French origin, but quite early the equivalent for "glass" was translated and

[1] Boccaccio, "Labirinto del Amore." [2] A. Pucci, Canto XL., iii. 40.
[3] Villani, vol. viii. cap. 61.

copied erroneously—the original *pantoufle de vair* became *pantoufle de verre.* The princess cast her miniver shoe—not a glass slipper!

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### *DRESS OF THE FLORENTINES DURING THE RENAISSANCE.*

The question of dress was always more or less important in the ethics of Florence, and, inasmuch as the chief industries, and the bulk of the commerce of the city and *Contado*, were intimately concerned with such things as clothes are made of, it is a subject which cannot be overlooked in any true appreciation of the life and work of the Guilds.

Florentines in the twelfth century preserved many of the customs of their Roman forebears.[1] They continued to wear the woollen shirt, or vest, with the big round cloak, or toga, made of their native wool. These garments were plain and undyed for the use of the lower classes, and coloured and ornamented for better-to-do folks.

In his "*Paradiso*" Dante speaks of primitive Florence thus:—

> "Florence, within her ancient limit-mark,
> Which calls her still to matin-prayers and noon,
> Was chaste and sober, and abode in peace.
> . . . . . .
> The sons I saw
> Of Nerli and of Vecchio, well content
> With unrobed jerkins, and their good dames handling
> The spindle and the flax; O happy they!"[2]

Ricordano Malespini records that, up to the year 1260, Florentines did not disdain coarse stuffs, and many were satisfied to clothe themselves in skins, and to wear fur caps and low leather shoes. The men had a close tight-fitting garment of woven goats' hair dyed scarlet. All wore girdles, generally of fine leather, to which the better dressed added buckles. The

[1] Livy, xiii. 52; Virgil, Æneid, I. v. 286.

[2] "Paradiso," Canto xv.

women were wont to cover their heads with cloth, or linen, mantles and veils.

The habits of the Religious Orders were adapted from the dress of the peasantry, which consisted of a tunic or shirt of rough frieze, reaching well below the knees, with a woollen girdle. The legs were bare, but in winter and wet weather leather buskins were worn by all classes and orders.[1]

The manners, and life generally, of the people of Florence, towards the end of the thirteenth century,[2] were marked by gravity, sobriety, and frugality. Their homely fare cost them little, they cared not for rich eating. Each household lived very much by itself, and few and far between were public entertainments. Nevertheless they were a cheerful race, and, whilst above all things seriously in earnest about business affairs, they were fond of mirth, and song, and the dance, in their proper seasons. Certainly some of their ways were somewhat rough and rude, but in their intercourse with strangers they were given to marked consideration and courtesy. In speech they were not fluent, but chatting gave them more pleasure than a polished oration or a witty dialogue.

Both men and women were coarsely clad, mostly in leather jerkins and skirts, with dressed skins for extra covering. The better to do affected valuable furs, but these were worn without ostentation. Small tight-fitting leather caps, or woven woollen *berrette*, were sported by both sexes upon their heads. All wore plain hose, and when not bare of foot, they had heavy boots and shoes of leather. The richer married women donned tight petticoats, of coarse red "*Ipro*" or "*Camo*,"—*Camoiardo*—cloth, gathered at the waist with a leathern belt and metal buckle. Some also put on, in winter time, fur-lined mantles, with hoods attached,—called *tasselli*,—to cover the head. The poorer women wore gowns of rough green *Cambiagio* stuff made in the same way as the garments of their more wealthy sisters.

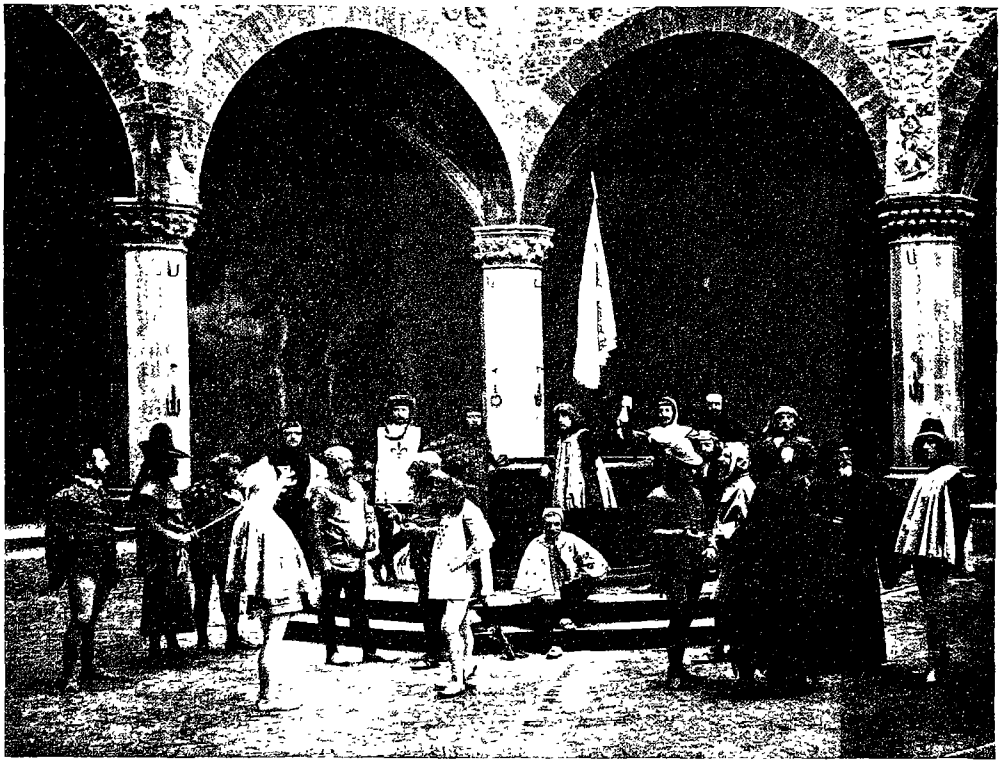
[1] Ricordano Malespini, "L'Istoria Antica di Firenze," cap. xi.
[2] Villani, Lib. vi.

The younger women exercised great continence, and rarely accepted marriage until they were well over twenty years of age. A hundred *lire* was considered an ample dowry for a bride, whilst two or three hundred were regarded as a splendid fortune by the fortunate bridegroom.

Among prohibitions,—sumptuary and otherwise,—enacted from time to time for observance by members of the Guilds, was an Order of the Priors in 1296 with respect to the emblazonment of arms. It runs thus :—"Let no one venture to establish a private club, society, or company with unauthorised arms. Let no one bear painted arms, except according to the Statutes of his Guild, or the Order of the Commune. Every Master of a Trade with his sons, brothers, and nephews, are permitted to wear, and to use, the painted arms and signs of his Craft. Let no one presume to bear painted arms not in use by his house. On payment of the prescribed fee of two hundred *lire* any man may assume the arms of King Charles, in addition to those of his house. No *popolano*,—tradesman,—may use the arms of a *magnifico*,—merchant or magistrate,—or have such in his house unless he is a *famulus*, or a member of his household. Nevertheless painters may colour arms, and tailors may sew them on garments, as also may armourers and shield-workers engrave them in metal and leather. All such badges are permitted to be exposed for sale by the *Rigattieri*,—Retail dealers,—in their shops."

With the advance of artistic craftsmanship there appeared a more correct taste in the matter of personal attire and adornment. Excellence of material, and its adaptability to the human figure, introduced not only simplicity in arrangement but correctness of cut and shape. Exuberance of colour gave way to artistic contrast, unity of effect, and sobriety in enrichment.

Woollen fabrics were considered correct wear for ordinary days, whilst silken stuffs became the garments of joy and festivity. Everyday costumes were usually unadorned, but not inartistic, for the quality of the cloth, and even the make up of the raiment, were matters of moment.



COSTUMES: TWELFTH TO SIXTEENTH CENTURIES.—THE COURTYARD OF THE BARGELLO

Older people wore the stately neck to ankle *lucco* of scarlet silk, on occasions of ceremony; but in ordinary times, of black silk, or finest black serge. Round the neck was wrapped the white silk, or woollen, *becchetto*, whilst the hoary head was covered with the large *berretta* and its hanging curtain of red.

Young men of eighteen years or so wore surcoats of black serge, or *rascia*,—rough cloth,—sometimes lined with *taffetta*, which reached to their heels. In winter the lining of the surcoats of such as were scions of rich families, were of fur, or wadded rich silk brocade. *Ermisino*, a light Eastern silk, was worn by rising Doctors of Law. The pantaloons of wool or silk, according to season, and the wearer's circumstances, were tight fitting, and slashed at the knee and hip. The colours were matters of taste. "*La berretta alla civico*"—was worn upon the head, made of black serge, or *rascia*, and lined with silk—the curtain was often green. Another form of headdress was the *cappuccio*,—a hood used by older people, and also universally in winter time,—made of cloth also, but trimmed with fur. Men upon a journey wore a *gabbano*—a felt cloak. Clothes were changed most scrupulously every Sunday: clean things being worn first to Mass!

The dress of the peasantry was scanty but suitable. Luca Della Robbia, in his twelve "Rondels" of the Seasons, has shown us the Tuscan countryman at work in the different duties of his calling.[1] A plain shirt of wool or linen, or of a mixture, tied at the waist, covered the body, leaving the head and legs bare. Stockings of wool were added in winter, and shoes of leather were put on for digging and felling timber. When going to town, or to Mass, they wore long buttoned-up gowns, or tunics, without sleeves, the shirt sleeves coming through, and a belt of leather was added, or not, as it pleased the wearer. Peasant women, in the fields, were clad in dingy clothing made of rough woollen cloth, or coarse linen canvas; but, when going into market or to Mass, they

[1] At V. and A. Museum, South Kensington.

superimposed a skirt of black or green, and covered their heads with white linen kerchiefs, or woollen shawls.

Operatives of the city were attired in the garments best suited to their various industries. These were never rags, but were made specially for their purpose, and sometimes donned over the home dress. Men and women alike were proud to be seen in the garb of the Guild to which they belonged. Wool, linen, canvas, and leather, were the materials used. The superior workmen were careful also to sport the crest or arms of their Guild upon their tunics: the wearing of such decorations however upon the head covering was forbidden, as offering a party or a trade badge, and inciting to disorder.

Merchants, Judges, Notaries, Doctors, and Apothecaries, all wore garments of distinctive and appropriate shape, colour, and richness, and such costumes were compulsory, both in their public occupations and in their private life.

Magistrates, in the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries, were known by their long grey or yellow surtouts, and scarlet *berrette* with red curtains. Adornments of gold and silver, silk and velvet, fur and leather, came later. The *Podesta*, *Gonfalonieri di Giustizia*, Captains of the People, Priors or Consuls, and other Dignitaries were habited in scarlet and gold, with fur linings and trimmings to their cloaks. They usually wore red *cappucci* or *berrette* with deep curtains, all turned up with miniver and laced with gold. Their stockings were scarlet, and their boots light tan or black leather embroidered in gold. The Consuls' headgear resembled cardinals' hats, and they wore uncut diamonds and sapphires. Pearls were reserved for the use of the *Podesta* and *Gonfaloniere di Giustizia*, whose State robes were spangled with golden stars.

An excessive taste for wearing finery sprang up during the fourteenth century, somewhere about the year 1330, and the attention of sober-minded men was directed to its vagaries. Eight citizens were appointed to make the round of the city, and report upon the interior economy of private houses. The wearing

of certain kinds of dress, regarded as superfluous, was forbidden. The only persons who appear to have escaped condemnation were the wives of Knights and Doctors—both of law and of medicine.

A check was put upon the extravagance of State ceremonial, and upon the expenses of marriage feasts. It was ordered that bridesmaids and other guests should be simply clad, and that the outfit of the bride should be upon a modest scale.

Sumptuary laws, which were passed from time to time, dealt largely with all forms of sartorial extravagance. The *Catasto* of 1427 was especially severe against pride and ostentation of vesture. One rubric was as follows: "No female—woman or girl—of whatever rank or condition, married or unmarried, shall dare or presume, in the city of Florence or in the *Contado*, to wear any sleeve, bodice, mantle, robe, or other garment, lined with the fur of any animal, whether domestic or wild, coarse or fine, by whatever name it may be known. . . ."

Another rubric enacted that no person of whatever rank or condition, nor any tailor, dressmaker, vair merchant or furrier, shall dare, or presume, to cut out, make, line, or cause to be cut out, made, or lined, any of the following garments: *cioppe*—long tunics, and *cottadite villani*—blouses (?) whereof fur is a principal part.

The wearing of gold embroidery and jewellery was strictly regulated, the women were, nevertheless, "allowed to wear, upon the collars of their garments,—to a depth of the third of a *braccio*,—gold, silver, and gilt embroidery."[1]

Damasks, figured silks, and brocades were forbidden for ordinary wear, and the colours and decorations of such robes as were permissible, were regulated by simplicity. The following were some of these enactments:—"No one shall presume to wear more than one pound of silver in garlands, or buttons, or anything else, upon the head or person . . . over and above this they may wear a silver belt, weighing, with the

[1] L'Osservatore Fiorentino, vol. vi. p. 86.

clasp, fifteen ounces, and no more . . . the said silver may be gilt."

No woman is permitted to have more than two silk dresses at the same time. Sleeves and linings are not to be of silk or fur, but of wool, linen, or cotton.

"They shall not dare to wear any *intaglio*,—open lace-work,—of more than a *braccio* in width . . . nor any fringe of gold, silver, or silk, on the dress, except upon the bodice. . . . The hem of the garments may be enriched, but no skirt may be more than ten *braccia* round." Very many other details follow, prescribing, with singular precision, every portion of the clothing—male and female.

In the matter of jewellery—ostentation was to be avoided. "Women shall not presume to wear . . . more than two rings, and the rings shall not have more than one pearl and one other precious stone."

With respect to the wedding *Cassoni*, or coffers, strict injunctions were given, for example:—"No one shall dare to send in the caskets of women or girls, when promised or betrothed, jewelled necklaces, nor to give them garlands or brooches of pearl, precious stone, gold, and silver."

Some of the sumptuary measures passed and put into execution, have already been referred to in earlier chapters, and also the manner in which they were met and avoided by the people. The pressure became so excessive and irritating that a recoil was the only possible outcome.

Gradually the prosecution of these sartorial reforms was slackened, and, in the fifteenth century, they ceased to have any force, not only on account of the difficulty of maintaining them, but because of the vastly increased import and manufacture of costly objects and fabrics.

In the frescoes at Santa Maria Novella we see the new fashions just come in, and the mural pictures in other city churches, and in the palaces, carry on the sartorial story. Strangely enough men set the fashion in those days, but

the vagaries, or the reverse, of male attire were quickly adopted by the fair sex. Cavaliers wore close-fitting tunics, with the points of their wristbands lined with vair, reaching to the ground. Smart women took the cue, and reformed their modes in accord.

The fashion came in of wearing parti-coloured hose, crossed in three or four colours. Shoes had very long points, and the wearers' legs were so enwrapped with ribbons and laces, that they could hardly sit down. Young men went about in silken or woollen tights, and wore silk or velvet mantles, depending from their shoulders. Their hair hung down their backs, and long feathers were stuck into their jaunty red caps. The fair sex improved upon these styles, and their skirts were skin-tight —cumbering their feet.

Sacchetti says "some women had their dresses cut so low that the armpits could be seen; they then gave a jump, and made the collars come up to their ears!"

The trousseau and the marriage feast of Giovanna de' Medici were remarkable for the splendour of the robes and decorations.[1] Four chief merchant princes of the city, Messeri, Manno Temperani, Carlo Pandolfini, Giovannazzo Pitti, and Tommaso Soderini were the bride's supporters, each clad in festal attire of crimson, silk and scarlet cloth, lined with miniver. The bride herself was gowned in cloth of gold with an ermine mantle, whilst her dinner dress was of white *zetana*,—very thick satin,—powdered with pearls, and trimmed with sable and ermine.

Rich furs were worn by all the guests. The fifty gentlewomen and fifty gentle-youths, who formed the bodyguard of the fair Giovanna, vied with one another in the decoration of their tight-fitting jackets edged with sable, and their capacious sleeves, with pointed wristbands lined with miniver and ermine, reached to the floor; and their shoes were embroidered with gold, and bordered with sable.

Giovanna de' Medici's marriage *Cassone* contained a necklace

[1] Guido Biagi, "Private Life of the Renaissance Florentines."

of diamonds, rubies, and pearls,—valued at 100,000 gold florins, a hood embroidered with pearls, a fringed Milanese hat, eight pairs of silk stockings, four pairs of gloves, a cape of silver and pearls, a fine lawn shift, many robes with trains of brocade, and velvet edged with fur, and many more fine things.

In the latter years of the Republic personal adornment and extravagance in dress reached a phenomenal height. Doctor Biagi says:— "In 1467 Benedetto Salutati, for the State Tournament, put upon the harness, headgear, and the trappings of two horses, one hundred and seventy pounds of pure silver, which he caused to be worked by the hands of Antonio Pollaiuolo; and, around the robes of the heralds, he strung thirty pounds of pearls,—the greater part of which were of great value!"

Many amusing stories are told by the topical writers of the Renaissance concerning the fashions, and their constant changes. "Poor Messere Valore di Buondelmonte, an old man cut on the ancient pattern, was forced by his relations to change his cloak and hood. Everybody marvelled, and stopped him in the streets, asking:—Oh what is this, Messer Valore, I do not know you? What is the matter with you? Have you the mumps?" When ruffs came in, "Salvestro Brunelleschi, while eating some peas with a spoon, instead of putting them into his mouth, slipped them inside his ruff and scalded himself!"[1]

Under the Medici no limits were set to the liberty of the person, so far as clothing and ornaments were concerned. Only one law was passed,—and that under the Grand Duke Ferdinand II.,—prohibiting in detail dress, furniture, and other household and private matters, but it was rescinded after a nine months' probation.

We must always remember, in reviewing the dress and fashions of the Renaissance, that the physical culture of the

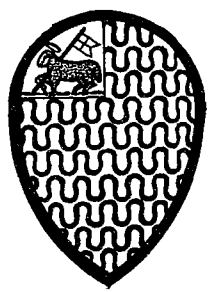
[1] "Private Life of the Renaissance Florentines."

COSTUMES—MARRIAGE OF BOCCACCIO ADIMARI AND LISA RICASOLI, 1420

THE FRONT OF A CASSONE—MARRIAGE COFFER

NOTE:—THE BAPTISTERY AND THE STREET-AWNING

Florentines, acting upon their naturally fine forms, produced grace of deportment and elegance of bearing in every class of life. "Fine feathers make fine birds" elsewhere, but in Florence it was rather the fine figures that set off the fine clothes!



*"Stemma dell' Arte de' Vaiai e Pellicciai"*
White *Agnus Dei* on blue field on first quarter of field of Vair

## CHAPTER X

# THE GUILDS OF BUTCHERS, BLACKSMITHS, AND SHOEMAKERS

*LE ARTI DE' BECCAI, DE' FABBRI, E DE' CALZOLAI*

I. BUTCHERS.—War-lords, graziers and slaughterers. Scant pasturage of Tuscany. Custom dues and evasions. Clever salesmen. Mercato Vecchio. Ponte Vecchio. Heads must be attached to carcases. Florentine delicate palettes. Fishmongers and fish. Fines and litigation. "Cheats!" and "Wooden-shoes!"

II. SMITHS.—Tuscany rich in minerals. St Eloy. Scions of nobility. Primitive forges and smelting yards. "Old iron and brass to sell!" Renaissance wrought iron-work. A money-grabber. Renowned workers in metals. The Acciaiuoli family.

III. SHOEMAKERS.—"Nothing like leather!" Many associated trades. Dependent upon the Guild of Tanners. Shoemakers warned not to harbour wandering fellows. Lining of armour. Buskins worn by all classes. Flirtations.

## I. L'ARTE DE' BECCAI

IN every list of the Florentine Guilds the "*Arte de' Beccai*" heads the Second Division, or Lesser Guilds, and occupies the first place among the Five Intermediate Guilds.

The term *Beccai* was originally applied to the highest families in Italy. The war-lords, who set out from Germany in the Middle Ages, possessed themselves of the fat of the lands they traversed—seizing cattle and stock of all kinds, and robbing castles and villages with impunity. The use of the word in this sense by Dante, it is said, greatly offended Francis I.

Something of the same feeling seems to have been shared by the Renaissance Florentines, who strove to differentiate between *Beccai*—graziers—and *Macellai*—slaughterers. Anyhow the Guild was, at its first inception in the thirteenth century, composed of

wholesale dealers: the corporation of retail butchers being a later arrangement.

The earliest mention of a "butcher" in the Archives of Florence is of one "*Martinus—beccadore*" in 1110, but whether he was a member of such a Guild as that in Paris, to which King Philip, in 1162, granted a charter, nobody can say.[1]

It is true that in every country in Europe in the Middle Ages "butchers" played a leading rôle, not alone in the arena of commercial enterprise but in that too of political activity. This pre-eminence was in part due to hereditary antecedents and traits, and in part to effective physical culture. Bodily strength and force of character were ever potential attributes of success in life generally, and these were marks of the *Beccai* of Florence in particular.

There can be no doubt that two motives largely influenced the incorporation of the *Beccai*. First, the breeders and graziers of cattle and sheep needed to protect themselves, their lands, and their stock, from the attacks of robber captains and cattle raiders: and secondly, they wished to control the supply of meat, and to keep the retail-butchers and slaughterers out of the wholesale market.

The latter precaution was soon seen to be unwise, for, with the rapid growth of the population, retail-butchers became a necessity, and amicable terms between the two sections of meat-merchants proved to be the best policy.

The first distinct mention of the "*Arte de' Beccai*" was in 1236, when the *Buonuomini*, who took in hand the reformation and classification of the trades of Florence, placed it eighth in the order of the Guilds, and named it first among the Fourteen Lesser Guilds. This priority of position was due to the influential character of the first members of the Corporation. They were not only simple country breeders and peasant traders, but many among them were prosperous city manufacturers and merchants. These rich men found, in the possession of *poderi*, farm lands

[1] Davidssohn, "Geschichte von Florenz."

and stock, safe and profitable investments for their capital. This economical condition affords an interesting parallel to the much earlier absorption of the landed *Grandi* by the city *Popolani*—a reflexive movement of high political importance.

The "Guild of Butchers" retained its premier rank at the revision and enlargement of the Guilds in 1266, by which date probably, the two sections,—*Beccai* and *Macellai*,—had discovered the advantages of co-operation and mutual respect.

In the list of Guilds, revised in 1280 and 1282, a further distinction was awarded the "Guild of Butchers." It was placed first of the "Five Intermediate Guilds," which were for many years classed among the "Twelve Greater Guilds."

This arrangement proved the importance and influence of the butchering confraternity in the Commonwealth, and it also led to the addition of a powerful company to the trained bands of the city. No Guild company carried its gonfalon with a higher hand, or was capable of giving a better account of itself in times of stress, than the slaughterers who were born fighting men.

By the end of the thirteenth century the position and character of the Guild were fully recognised. No Confraternity possessed a finer or more sumptuously furnished Residence than that which housed its Consuls by the side of Or San Michele, and no banner flaunted more proudly than that of the black goat upon its yellow field—the armorial bearings of the Guild.

The Beccai were, from the first, faced by a great natural difficulty which needed brains and means to overcome. The Vale of Arno was a fruitful garden and land could hardly be spared for grass. The uplands and the Tuscan hills afforded only poor pasture, quite sufficient perhaps for the growth of wool, but unsuitable for fattening purposes. Consequently flocks and herds had to be driven to distant localities where richer eatage could be found.

Journeys to and fro, in and out of Tuscany, called for heavy outlay in shepherding, and involved duties at the frontiers of foreign States. The risks of travel and the losses by the way

ARMS OF THE GUILD OF BUTCHERS

were great, and everything conspired to harden the selling price of live stock and dead meat. At the same time an embargo was placed upon, and maintained against, the export of live stock beyond the *Contado*. The first restriction of this character of which there is a record was in 1285.[1]

With such a considerable importation of live stock and of dead meat it is conceivable that many tales were rife, in the Markets, of clever ruses adopted to escape payment of the Gate dues. It was not an uncommon practice to place *two* carcases upon the back of a mule or donkey, and to cover them well with green stuff, so that only *one* was exposed and paid for! The risk however of discovery was serious, for on detection, by an over conscientious official, the beast of burden, as well as his load, was confiscated: whilst, it was within common knowledge that, the distrained carcases were shared by the staff of the *Dogana*! A *Provvisione* was passed in the thirteenth century which directed the arrest of the dishonest dealer, but he usually squared the authorities by paying a fine!

The Gate customs against commodities of all kinds affected largely the interest of the stock-dealers and of the retail-butchers. Towards the end of the thirteenth century, whilst the selling price of a fat ox ranged from twelve to sixteen *lire*, the tax upon the animal amounted to ten per cent. In 1319 the *Gabella*, or tax on live-stock at the gates, levied upon the breeders and butchers, realised the high total of 1.185 gold florins,—nearly £600.[2]

Indeed it was, as a rule, more remunerative to kill the beasts outside the city, and to carry through, separately, the carcases and the hides or fleeces.

This question of customs was, ever and again, cropping up; and the need of organised efforts to counteract illiberal legislation rendered the services of the Consuls of the Guild of the utmost importance, not only to the members of the Guild, but to the whole community of the city.

[1] "Le Consulte," i. 118, July 20, 1285.
[2] Cibrario (1253—1278), 16. 5; 16. 9, 10. Provv. xvi. 116 V°.

Florence early became a profitable centre of the meat trade of Tuscany, which assumed very considerable proportions in the early years of the fourteenth century. The annual average of fat stock which entered the city was as follows:—Four thousand bulls and cows, sixty thousand sheep and lambs, twenty thousand goats and bucks.[1]

A decree of Duke Charles of Calabria, issued on May 16th, 1327, ordered the "merchants of the Guild of Butchers" to drive more oxen and cows out of Apulia for the provisioning of the city.

Raisers of stock were obliged to go themselves to market and to drive only their own beasts. Agents or brokers were not allowed to come between them and the retail butchers. This injunction held for a good hundred years or more—1346-1477.[2]

The driving of cattle,—whether to the shambles or not,—was subject to strict regulations, and each animal was taxed,—the bigger cattle at eight to twelve, and small animals at four *denari* per head. Each beast had a label or ticket attached to his horn or throat with the owner's name written upon it.[3] Foreign cattle driven by strangers, and sold in the Market, or at the Gates, had to be killed and the meat exposed the same evening. On no condition were wholesale butchers allowed to sell to hawkers until the amount of fresh meat usually required, day by day, by the citizens had been provided and disposed of to the ordinary retail dealers.

Clever salesmen were in the habit of underselling, by four *denari* in the pound, the daily market official prices; and this evasion of the regulations was not only condoned but encouraged by the authorities. What the intention of this irregularity was it is difficult to understand, only it might have been due to a paternal wish that all citizens,—even the very poorest,—might enjoy, at least during public festivals,—a better diet than was possible in ordinary days.[4]

The Mercato Vecchio was for a long period the principal centre

[1] Villani, xi. 93.
[2] Statuti de' Beccai, Cod. i., Rub. 10.
[3] Statuta, 1415, Rub. cclxxiii.
[4] Provv. 1465; Reg. 157, 216.

of the Butchers. Around its four sides open stalls were placed, whereon meat for retail sale was exposed. It was strongly forbidden to keep meat for sale inside a house or store within the city, and not until well on in the fourteenth century were covered shops allowed.[1]

The new Ponte Vecchio, built by the State in 1345, at a cost of sixty thousand gold florins, had a double row of shops. Forty-four of these were claimed by, and granted to, the "Guild of Butchers," and remained in the occupation of members until 1490, when the Goldsmiths obtained them from Cosimo I.

Retail-butchers of the Market were not suffered to enter into partnership with cattle-dealers. They could not keep more than one assistant. They were required to live within five hundred yards of the Piazza Santa Croce,—in the vicinity of which were the shambles.[2] Every butcher before he was licensed, either to kill, or expose meat, was compelled to be enrolled or matriculated in the "Guild of Butchers."

During the Patronal Festival of San Giovanni in June there was always a great increase in the supply of butcher's meat, and this called into work many extra hands. At all such festivals the prices to be charged by the *Macellai* were fixed by the Consuls of the Guild, and a tariff was ordered to be exposed at every stall. The licence also of the Guild was required by all temporary assistants, and the amount of their wages was arranged by the Consuls.[3]

The *Macellai* could only buy fat cattle at the weekly public sales, and they were, by a *Provvisione* of 1415, obliged to slaughter the animals within eight days of purchase. The slaughtering and dressing of meat were subject to strict regulations, and only in certain localities, outside the city, and at fixed hours, was it permissible to carry out these processes. The tax demanded by the State for the slaughtering of beasts was the same as that fixed for killing bears and wild boars, but it varied in amount considerably from time to time.

[1] Sacchetti, "Nov:" 160, p. 372. [2] Provv. 1504, Reg. 20.
[3] Provv. 1413, Reg. 164, 202.

The sale of pigs was wholly prohibited in the Old and New Markets, and in front of the Podesta's Palace. Fat pigs were not allowed to be kept in any dwelling-house in Borgo d'Ognissanti, or any locality bordering upon the river.[1]

Butchers were forbidden to carry beef bellies, bullock and rams' heads, and the skins of recently killed animals through the Mercato Vecchio.[2]

Butchers, Slaughterers, and Innkeepers, selling recently killed meat and cooked joints, were required to appear before the authorities of the Market in the month of January each year. They had to deposit a security of fifty *lire*, and to swear that they would exercise their calling honestly and loyally.

Tripe-sellers,—whether men or women,—sausage-makers, and cooks of "snacks" at the smaller inns, were also ordered to appear in the month of January each year before the Notary of the Captains of Or San Michele to swear obedience to the Statutes.[3]

In some way, as showing an early refinement in the gustatory tastes of the people, their fondness for delicate meat became more and more marked as the era of the Renaissance advanced. Beef and mutton for example, although excellent in quality and cheaper, were held in less estimation than were veal and lamb. This preference has been remarked by many writers both serious and hypercritical. It held out a temptation to the butcher confraternity to substitute coarser joints for the finer "tit-bits," to which very many of them yielded; but such tradesmen gave a bad name to the trade, and added force to the popular opinion concerning unfair dealing.

To prevent fraud and substitutions it was required by the Consuls of the Guild that the carcases of lambs and calves should always be exposed for sale at the butchers' stalls with the heads attached.[4]

Associated with the butchers were the *Pescivendoli*—Fishmongers—who were regularly organised and under strict byelaws.

[1] Rub. cclix., 1415.
[2] Rub. cclx., 1415.
[3] Rub. ccxvii., 1415.
[4] L'Osservatore Fiorentino, iv. 9-11.

Fresh fish could only be sold in the loggia by the Ponte Vecchio, and at certain butchers' shops, which were specially licensed by the Market authorities. These were furnished with tanks wherein the fish had to be deposited, because wholesale display upon the stalls was absolutely forbidden. To poison fish in the river, or marshes, was a criminal offence, and was dealt with severely.[1]

*Tinche*—tench—from the lake in the Val Chiana, was sold as follows:—Big fish,—weighing one pound or more,—two *soldi* per pound; small fish,—under a pound,—one *soldo* eight *denari*. Tench from Pado, and out of Lombardy, followed the same quotations. Tench from Brentina, Gusciana, and other places,—not being so highly esteemed,—was charged lower rates. Eels from Val Chiana, and other localities, varied in price from three *soldi* to one *soldo*, four *denari*. Lampreys, sardines, and other small fry, were sold in the gross. Upon all fish, dues were levied, at the Gates and Quays, at so much per cent. upon the wholesale market price.

Innkeepers, Butchers, and Fishmongers, were not allowed to enter into partnership with people living in the country for the supply of fish, but they had to go to the Markets, or shops, like other people.[2] Cooks were restrained from purchasing fresh fish and then selling it again uncooked. They were also forbidden, as were all citizens, to keep fish in aquaria, water-baskets, or other enclosures, for indefinite periods.[3]

By injunction of the Captains of Or San Michele and other Market Magistrates, fresh meat, fresh and salt fish, and all comestibles which were perishable, were not allowed to be exposed for sale more than for one day.[4]

The Councils of the Podesta and of the Captain of the People, and later on the State Council of the Signoria, were almost daily besieged by persons who had complaints to make of the bad quality of the meat and fish offered for sale in the Market, and of the fraudulent practices of the butchers. Under date May 10,

[1] Rub. cxxii., 1415.
[2] Rub. cxxvii., 1415.
[3] Rub. cxxviii., cxxxi., 1415.
[4] Rub. ccxx., ccxxi., 1415.

1281, a case was dealt with wherein Brunetto Latini—Dante's Master—proposed that the "*Quattordici*"—The Fourteen—should appoint expert Inspectors, who should, without being known, make purchases of meat and fish indiscriminately, and thus detect any possible fraud or irregularity on the part of the retail-dealers.[1]

Heavy fines were imposed upon all unskilful and untidy workmen, and especially for carelessness in the disposal of offal, fish-bones, etc. The bundling of hides and fleeces, and their prompt removal from the shambles were insisted upon. No class of tradesmen revelled so thoroughly and constantly in legal processes as did the *Beccai*, the *Macellai* and the *Pescivendoli*: and somehow or other they generally gained the day!

At the enactment of the General Code of Statutes for all the Guilds in 1301-1309, and again in 1346, and 1415, the "Guild of Butchers" retained its position in the hierarchy of the Guilds. Under the Medici the importance of the Guild was constantly affirmed and duly acknowledged: for example, in the Parliament held on August 18th, 1343, in the Church of Santa Maria del Fiore, Francesco di Giovanni, a member of the "Guild of Butchers," was nominated, as representing the *Popolo Minuto*; together with Filippo de' Bardi, and Tegghia de' Bonacotti,—representatives respectively of the *Grandi* and the *Popolo Grasso*,—to consult for the public security. At this conference, by the way, the final step was taken by the Signoria to expel the Duke of Athens.

Under the Medici the Guild throve amazingly. The prosperity of all the citizens led to the increased enjoyment of all pleasures —those of the table always being foremost. During the celebration of *Giostre*, and other festivals, hospitality was general and profuse: everybody feasted himself and his neighbour, greatly to the profit pecuniarily of the *Beccai*.

On the enrolment of the Fourteen Lesser Guilds in four Universities in 1534, the *Arte de' Beccai* was placed first in

[1] "Le Consulte," t. i. 9 and 13, pp. 15, 16.

order in the premier University, along with the *Oliandoli*, and *Fornai*—the other two food-supplying Guilds of the city. The style "*Universita di Por San Piero*,"—"The University of Saint Peter's Gate,"—was given to this Union, a title derived from the proximity of the activities of the Guilds to the Gate of that name.

By the members of the Greater Guilds at large the *Arte de' Beccai* was looked upon with disdain. No citizens were considered of less estimation than the indispensable breeders and slaughterers of cattle. In fact the proud manufacturers of the "Guild of Wool" ridiculed the Butchers on the score of dishonesty and dubbed them *ladroncelli*—Cheats!

On their part, the Butchers were wont to return the compliment: "You, *Ciompi* care only for the wool of which you fleece your customers, whilst we, honest men, sell good sound meat to feed you, and fit you for your work!"[1]

Anyhow the Butchers of Florence did not bear a good reputation for straight dealing, but in this opinion they had for comrades the *Vinattieri*—wine-merchants and the *Albergatori*—Innkeepers!

The Florentines of old time were for the most part abstemious in their consumption of animal food. Sir Richard Dallington, writing at the close of the sixteenth century, says: "The working people average not more than a stone weight of fresh meat per man per annum."[2] This is probably under the actual mark considerably, for other travellers noted with astonishment and admiration the good eating and drinking of all classes of the community.

Indeed it is not untrue to say that much of the thew and sinew of the citizens,—whether rich or poor,—was, in a great measure, due to generous and nourishing diet. This opinion is confirmed when it is remembered that flesh-eating peoples have ever been the rulers of cities and of empires—Romans, Florentines, and Britons to wit!

[1] Sacchetti, "Novelle," 160, t. ii. p. 377.

[2] "Survey," p. 35.

## II. L'Arte de' Fabbri

The fact that Tuscany is particularly rich in minerals, and especially so in lead, tin, copper, lignite, and iron-oxides, must be borne in mind when attention is directed to her workers in metals. The Etruscans were among the forbears of the Florentines, and their skill in the manipulation of iron and gold, in particular, has placed them in the foremost ranks of smithery. Doubtless they learned their art from Greek colonists, and in turn they became teachers of the Romans.

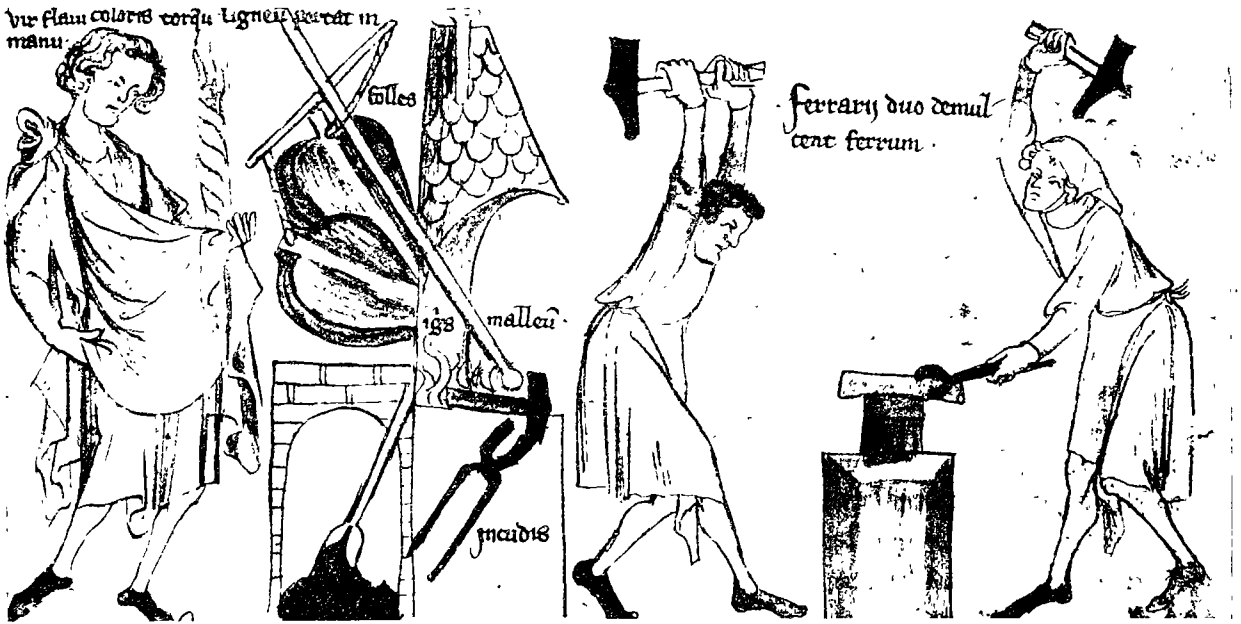
The island of Elba was an important source of mineral wealth away back in ancient days, and the prosperity of the city of Popolonia was in a great measure due to the mechanical arts of her citizens. At Monte Amiata was mercury, and other deposits included boracic crystals, siena earths, and salt.

Whilst marble in endless variety and richness abounded all over the country,—epecially at Carrara and Massa,—there do not appear to have been any coal deposits in Tuscary.

The earliest form of an iron forge was merely an excavation in the windward side of a hill or crest. The date of cast iron is uncertain, but it was produced in the fourteenth century. The discovery of the process was due to the adoption of larger furnaces and higher pressure bellows.

Steel was evolved in the middle of the sixteenth century. It was noted by Biringuccio in 1540, and described by Agricola in "*De Re Metallica*," 1561—that a bar of wrought iron, kept immersed long in molten cast iron, became acierated by taking up the carbon of the cast iron.

St Eligius was regarded as the Patron of Blacksmiths. He worked as a journeyman in a smithy, but, coming under the notice of King Dagobert, was made Court-treasurer and Mint-master. In 640 he was advanced to the Bishopric of Noyon. Among his good works was the founding at Soligniac, near Limoges, of a monastery of smiths, in connection with which he further established a school for artificers in metal.




BLACKSMITHS AND THEIR TOOLS

EARLY FOURTEENTH CENTURY

Many extraordinary stories are told of the saintly Blacksmith and his spiritual powers. On one occasion, at all events, he is reported to have worked an astonishing miracle. A horse brought to his smithy to be shod became possessed of the devil, who caused him to plunge and kick so violently that no one could shoe him. St Eligius determined to accomplish the job, and at once chopped off one of the horse's legs, and having without difficulty nailed a shoe to the hoof, he immediately restored the separated member, and thus defeated the Evil One!

After the death of the Countess Matilda the industries of Florence and of all Tuscany prospered exceedingly. Her artizans no less than her merchants displayed admirable enterprise and resourcefulness. Many of the scions of ancient noble houses, who had happened on evil days under the competition of the *Popolani* and the *Popolo Minuto*, threw in their lot with the citizens. The crafts which most attracted them were such as appealed to their warlike instincts, and they enrolled themselves as apprentices in the trade associations which dealt in metal, and stone, and wood.

Quite the most popular handicraft was that of smithing, as one may easily understand by noting the great number of noble names which figured early on the Matriculation Rolls of the "Blacksmiths," the "Locksmiths," "the Armourers," and the "Masters of Stone and Wood." These young fellows brought to their adopted work the thew and sinew begotten of an active life in the open air.

The Archives of Florence contain the following records in the eleventh and twelfth centuries :—

"1038, *Olivus, faber*—Blacksmith."
"1141, *Bernerius, fil. Barlittario*—Bellfounder."
"1146, *Uguccione, Calderarius*—Coppersmith."

In the year 1038 as many as six Blacksmiths are named, in 1065 two more, and in 1080 six others, all exercising their craft within the bounds of the *Contado*. In 1174 a piece of land in

Oltrarno, near the Ponte Vecchio, was sold for the purpose of a Bell-foundry.

The *Arte de' Fabbri* came tenth in the List of the Guilds in 1236, and it retained that position in the Revisions of 1266, 1280-2, and 1301-9. In 1415, however, the "Guild of Blacksmiths" ranked ninth, displacing the "Guild of Shoemakers."

. . . . . .

Little or no trace remains of the early Statutes of the Guild. What has been preserved,—as was the case with the other Lesser Guilds,—is written in a mixed jargon of low Latin and abbreviated vernacular—very difficult to decipher. A document of the year 1274 states that the Smiths had then twelve Rectors, who, according to the regulations of the Guild received salaries ranging from eighteen to six *denari* for their terms of office.[1] This number being found too large, only six Rectors were elected in the following year. The number of Consuls varied from three to five in later times. The larger number indicated prosperous times and *vice versâ*.

At a council of Consuls and *Capitudini* of Guilds, held in 1286, a petition was presented to the Priors of the Guilds, on behalf of the Rectors of the "Guilds of Blacksmiths" and "Locksmiths," praying first that no one should be permitted, within the confines of the city and *Contado*, to set up a Smith's-forge, a Smelting-furnace, or a Puddling-yard, for the manufacture of metal wire, thin plates, and objects in metal, except members of the two Guilds, under pain of a fine of one thousand *lire*.

The Second Article in the Petition prayed that no one, except members of the said Guilds, should be allowed to run metal wire in sheets, or do metal-work of any kind, within the same limits, save under a fine of one hundred *lire*. The Third Article required that all such manufactures should be confiscated and destroyed, whether found in the smithies and shops, or loaded

[1] Archivio del Stato Fiorentino, Sept. 14, 1274.

upon draught animals for sale beyond the boundaries of the Commune.

The style "*Fabbri*" covered a number of workers in metals,

METHOD OF FUSING METALS. SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

METHOD OF BEATING-OUT METAL PLATES. SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

for example, the following all came under the category of Blacksmiths: *Calderai*—Copper-smiths, *Ferraiuoli*—Edged-tool makers, *Ferravecchi*—Scrap-iron dealers, *Fornaciai*—Furnace-men, *Manescalchi*—Farriers, *Ottonai*—Workers in brass and *Stagnaiuoli*—Pewter-smiths.

*Fornaciai* and *Calderai* were subject to strict rules with respect to the situation, build, and contents, of their fires and cauldrons. Inspectors, from time to time, visited all foundries and iron workshops to see that the quality of the metals, and the values of the mixtures, were exactly maintained. Fines were imposed for inferior materials and bad workmanship, and the confiscation of the blend, whether in fire or bath, was effected.[1]

*Manescalchi* were forbidden to charge ordinary citizens more than three to four *soldi* for a shoe for a horse, a mule, or a pony. The price of a shoe for a young mule, or an ass, was two *soldi* six *denari*. Very big shoes were charged as much as six *soldi*. The removal of a shoe or the part, cost a third of each of these amounts. Smithies for shoeing purposes were required to be open from dawn to dusk every day, except Sundays and Festivals, when it was forbidden to do any farriers' work.[2]

*Ferravecchi* were restrained in the prosecution of their calling. On no account were they suffered to go through the streets crying out: "*Ferro vecchio, vel rame vecchio a vendere!*" "Old iron and brass to sell!" Offenders were visited with fines of fifty *lire*, and they were required to furnish a surety for good behaviour to the tune of fifty silver florins. Smiths worked only for ready money, and allowed no credit.[3]

An idea of the financial position of the Guild may be obtained from the fact that in the general taxation of the Guilds, which took place in 1321, the *Arte de' Fabbri* was mulcted in a sum of four hundred *lire*, a comparatively insignificant amount, whilst the *Fornaciai* were charged a separate assessment of ninety-two *lire*.

The Statutes of the Guild were revised and enlarged in 1344, 1415, 1472, 1525, and 1541. The last date records a proposal of union between the *Fabbri* of Florence and Pisa.

When Cosimo, the first Grand Duke, established four Universities to include the Fourteen Lesser Guilds, the third was styled "*Universita de' Fabbricanti*"—"The University of Iron-

[1] Cantini, vi. p. 357. [2] Rub. xcviii., 1415. [3] Rub. xcvii., 1415.

workers." It included 1. *Fabbri*—Smiths, 2. *Chiavaiuoli*—Locksmiths, 3. *Maestri di Pietra e di Legname*—Masters of Stone and Wood, 4. *Corazzai e Spadai*—Cuirass and Sword-makers, or Armourers, and 5. *Legnaiuoli*—Carpenters.

The Residence of the Consuls of the Guild was behind the *Zecca*—Mint, just out of the Via de' Lamberteschi. On its front were some finely moulded and hammered iron torch-sconces and banner-holders. In the latter were placed the *Gonfalon* of the Guild, charged with the armorial bearings, assigned to the Blacksmiths by Count Guido Novelli in 1266,—a pair of furnace tongs upon a white field.

. . . . . .

The wrought-iron work of the Italian Renaissance was essentially *sui generis*. Gothic models were not known, and the influence of Byzantine artificers, and of the masters of antiquity, was of the faintest. Apparently the ordinary manner of working was to beat out a thin flat surface of metal, and punch holes through it, or stamp designs upon it. No finer example of this flat-work exists than the Screen at Santa Maria Novella which is dated 1366.[1]

At the beginning of the fourteenth century the casting of metals had become a staple industry in Florence. Among early workers,—artists and artificers combined,—were Cione, Ugolino, Giglio, Piero, Leonardo, and Nofai. The Duke of Athens, fearing personal violence, introduced, in 1343, a novel window protection —iron gratings or bars, and caused the "Guild of Blacksmiths" to erect such defences at his Palace. The fashion grew, and window-gratings were among the finest examples of the Blacksmith's skill. This vogue was further developed in 1506 and the following years, by Michael Angelo, who introduced what was called "kneeling-gratings," that is to say bowed protections to windows.

The "Masters of Stone and Wood" impressed their style of workmanship upon their "iron" brethren, and many wrought

[1] Meyer, "Handbook of the Art of Smithery," 1876, p. 63.

iron lanterns, and numberless other objects, are manipulated as though the material were stone or wood. This manner was exhibited in its ultimate perfection by a famous member of the Guild, Niccolo Grosso—1455-1509. Vasari calls him "*Il Caparra*"—"Money Grabber" from his habit of demanding payment for his work in advance! His speciality was *fanali*,—flare-baskets or lanterns,—such as still exist on the walls of the Strozzi, Guardagni, Pazzi, Borgherino, Riccardi and Quaratesi Palaces.

The Grille-work of Florence has no superior outside Tuscany. Fineness of the iron wire and bars, perfection of hammering, beauty of scrolls and curves, naturalness of floral ornament, high finish of bosses and masks, neatness of joints and knobs, and grace of moulded volutes—with their curling tendrils—are the chief features of Florentine workmanship.

The exquisite grilles, in the Campo Santo, at Santa Croce, which were put up in 1371, are of punched iron-work, with chiselled caps, bases, and mouldings, and are finished by patient file and pincer-work. It is interesting to notice again the influence of the "Masters of Stone and Wood" in iron joinery and iron carving, which are like fine wood-work rather than smithery.

In contradistinction to the florid work of Flemish and German craftsmen, Florentine smiths preserved all the while a reticence, and a dignity, quite in accord with their natural temperament.

The fifteenth century saw the art of working in metals brought to its highest pitch. The great sculptors were wont to employ the services of smiths in forging and casting their splendid works in bronze. Quite an army of intelligent artificers were busy at metal doors and gates for the Baptistery and the Duomo—the precious creations for all time of the Pisani, L. Ghiberti, and Luca Della Robbia.

Other skilled members of the Guild assisted Donatello, Verrocchio, Giovanni da Bologna, and Benvenuto Cellini, to produce the *chefs d'œuvre* which bear their names. Men of the forge and of the bellows, men of the anvil and the hammer, men

of the soldering-iron and smoothing-file, all worked as Florentines always worked, diligently and with intelligence.

Combinations of wrought-iron work, with brass and bronze, were Tuscan in origin. Endless objects come under this category:— Sockets, Shields of Guild Arms, Tavern-signs, Font-covers, Reading-desks, Candelabra, Knockers for doors, Gargoyles, Weather-vanes, Architectural ornaments, and articles for domestic use, together with workmen's tools—which were never wholly free from decorative attributes.

The iron fixtures—brackets and rings—attached to the walls of Palaces and elsewhere, were designed to hold torches. They were provided with iron rings for athletic torch-bearers to cling to as they fixed their flaming trophies in the sockets. They were also used to support banner-poles at festivals. They evidence art adaptability to common objects.

Fan-lights, balcony rails, fire-backs and dogs, frame-work of all kinds, and many other objects, which required strength, as well as elegance, formed another category. Once more the smiths went to the "Masters of Stone and Wood," and sought their models and patterns in floors, wall panels, and ceiling groinings, in *intarsiatura* or mosaic.

Among curiosities of the Blacksmith's Craft were the iron tongs used for stamping the Festival cakes of the Guilds, consumed upon St John Baptist's Day and upon the anniversaries of the Guilds. The impressions produced were effigies of Saints or Guild emblems: for example, the Blacksmith's cakes showed a hammer embossed in the centre, the Butchers had a cow, or a ram, and so on.

In their work Smiths wore thick and heavy leather aprons, which they could tie tightly round their legs, by strands of leather cut from the same piece. The whole outfit of a blacksmith, in the way of tools, cost about a gold florin, or about twelve shillings of our money.

The sixteenth century presents the Smiths of Florence revelling in the excellences and refinements of their Craft. Each workman was an artist, able to work from any design submitted to him, or to

create original and beautiful objects on the spur of the moment. Two especial lines of superior manipulation in metal were portrait medallions, and historical plaques and bronzes. Those whose fame among workers in metal is most widely diffused were :— Niccolo Fiorentino, Giamgallo Poggini, Bertoldo, Petrellino, Niccolo Domenico, Antonio del Pollaiuolo, Andrea Guazzoloti of Prato, Domenico Poggini, Antonio Averlino, Michelozzo Michelozzi, and, last but not least, Donatello, whose dates range from 1460 to 1557.

Nothing can exceed, in any school or nation, the delicacy, naturalness, brilliancy of composition, and high finish of the works of these "Masters of metal." Examples of their skill may be seen in every Archæological and Art Museum, but none is so rich as the Bargello in Florence.

Many names of scions of famous noble families were enrolled upon the annals of the "Guild of Blacksmiths." To mention one among the many, the Acciaiuoli, manufacturers of steel,—as their name implies,—who came from Brescia in the year 1160, and rose to high estate. After the banking disasters in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries Niccolo raised once more the honour of his house, whilst he ruled the kingdom of Naples. He married the widowed Empress of Constantinople, built the Certosa near the Porta Romana, and founded a School of Liberal Arts for studious apprentices.

## III. L'Arte de' Calozlai

In every land foot-wear, both useful and ornamental, plays an important rôle. Protection during working hours, and decoration in times of leisure, are alike necessary and attractive.

As to who first wore coverings on the feet nobody knows, and probably nobody cares ; but no age, and no nation, has ever been without them. Every conceivable material,—natural and manufactured,—has been laid under contribution, and man's skill has been called forth throughout all time in adaptive measures.

A STUDY IN BOOTS AND SHOES. THE BARGELLO

[THE FIGURE BELOW THE STEP REPRESENTS CIMABUE]

Leather has always been the ideal material for boots and shoes of all kinds: strong, impervious, yielding to pressure, and cleanly, it has outrun all other competitors. The making of foot-wear has also enriched countless artists of the last, whilst the vagaries of Dame Fashion have called forth artistic workmanship, and added to the joys and sorrows of human life.

Early in the Middle Ages Tuscan leather was famous, and before the Renaissance, Florentine shoemakers had made themselves a name, and had acquired riches. A document exists in the Archives of the City, which records that, in the year 1139, one "*Johannes filius Petri qui vocatur Calzolarius*, bestowed a benefaction upon the *Spedale de' Calzolai*, in the Val di Pesa, near Florence."

Very little can be gathered from the Archives of the City of the inception and progress of the Shoemakers' Guild. The earlier codes of Statutes have perished and the later records are either very fragmentary, or written in an abbreviated and illegible manner, and in a tongue not understood of ordinary readers and students,—partly Latin, partly vernacular.

At first sight the "Guild of Tanners" should have occupied the place in the Hierarchy of the Guilds which is filled by the Shoemakers, both on account of the more general character of its interests, and of the social importance of its members.

The earliest notices in the Archives of persons working in the trade of shoemaking are as follows:—

"*1087. Rusticus—Calzolarius*—Shoemaker."

"*1113. Johannes—Zocolarius*—Wooden-clog maker."

In the first List of the Guilds—that of 1236, the "*Arte de' Calzolai*" is placed ninth in order. This position was maintained at the revision of the Statues of all the Guilds in 1266, 1282, and 1301-1309, but in 1415 the "Guild of Blacksmiths" was raised over the head of the Shoemakers, then relegated to the tenth step in the Guild ladder. This was the final position of the Guild.

When Cosimo de' Medici, in 1534, grouped the Fourteen Lesser Guilds in four "Universities," the Second was styled

"*Universita de' Maestri di Cuoiame*," and included the three Guilds of Shoemakers, Tanners and Saddlers in due order.

The number of Consuls varied between three and six. This was a common feature in relation to the Chief Officers of the Guilds generally, and probably was due to the nature of the business which from time to time engaged the attention of the Consuls in General Council. Their Residence was in the Chiasso de' Baronelli, nearly next door to that of the Consuls of the "Guild of Skinners and Furriers." The Arms of the Guild were displayed there, as well as on the *Gonfalon*, and consisted of alternate stripes of red and white.

SHOEMAKER'S SHOP. FIFTEENTH CENTURY.

The Matriculation-fee was very low, almost the lowest of any such payments made for Guild-membership. Under the year 1290 the Archives of Florence record that one "Ricchus Borredicti, a shoemaker of the *Popoli di San Giorgio*, Syndic of the Guild, received forty *soldi* a head for the entrance of new members.

There appear to have been several divisions of craftsmen under the Guild rules:—1. *Calzolai*—Shoemakers, 2. *Zoccalai*—Wooden shoe-makers, 3. *Zoccholi*—Sandal-makers, and 4. *Ciabattini*—Cobblers, an inferior class. The first three had shops and stores in or near the Mercato Vecchio, whilst the last were allowed working room, either in the open market, or in some of the basements of the houses.[1] In the time of G. Villani the number of craftsmen

[1] Provv. x. 7.

was considerable: he has placed on record that, in 1299, there were as many as three hundred shoemakers' shops and cobblers stalls in Florence.

The Statutes of 1415 contain the following rubrics:—"Shoemakers, slipper-makers, and any other persons selling fine skins or cuttings or any kind of leather, are warned not to offer common dressed goatskins for Spanish morocco, and not to pass off inferior leathers for better qualities. Eighty *soldi* were exacted, by way of fine, in each case of substitution."[1]

"Shoemakers are forbidden to open their shops, and to keep their assistants at work, on Sundays and Festivals. The Consuls of the Guild are required to make all Masters of the craft swear to observe this regulation, subject to a penalty of one hundred *lire* for each offence.[2] To avoid unfair rivalry and trade disputes with the "Guild of Tanners," Shoemakers, and all members of their Guild, are strictly ordered not to dress, or cause to be dressed, upon their premises horse skins and cattle hides."[3]

"Sandal and clog-makers seem to have been rather a vagabond set of fellows, for, in one of the Rubrics, there is an amusing caution to Shoemakers and other respectable members of the Guild not to harbour any such wandering personages. No chests, coffers, boxes, and trunks, were to be left unlocked and open least any poor fellow should hide therein. The object no doubt was to prevent Masters profiting by the illicit work of unrecognised workmen. Perhaps, even with all the elaborate rules and regulations which favoured honourable trading, inferior operatives were subject to "sweating."[4]

"Leather shoes are not to be sold if made of horse and goat skin mixed, and advertised as of horse only. Thigh pieces of armour may be lined with goat-skin, and kid is permissible as a decorative addition to shoes and footwear generally."[5]

The importance of the Guild was recognised in 1282 by Cardinal Latino, who called into consultation about the peace

[1] Rub. lxxiii., 1415. [2] Rub. lxxx., 1415. [3] Rub. lxxxi., 1415.
[4] Rub. lxxxii., 1415. [5] Rub. lxxxiii., 1415.

between the Ghibellines and Guelphs, its *Capitudini* or Consuls, along with the heads of the *Twelve* Greater Guilds.

In December 1292, the Heads or Consuls of the *Arte de' Calzolai* took part in the deliberations of the Consuls of the *Seven* Greater Guilds, and again in December 1293 with the Consuls of the *Twelve* Greater Guilds.[1]

That the dignity of the Guild and its Consuls was on a par with that of the other Trade Corporations, is proved by the appointment in 1301, of Benedetto da Carlona, a Sandal-maker, as one of the Priors of the *Sestiere* of San Spirito.

On the other hand the financial position of the Guild was inferior, and in 1321, when a *pro rata* tax was levied upon the Guilds, the sum required from the "Shoemakers" was only one hundred *lire*, as against two thousand gold florins contributed by the "Guild of Wool," and fifty gold florins by the "Guild of Carpenters."

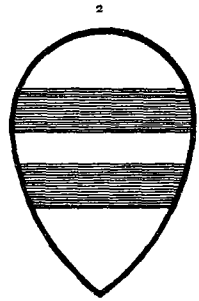
The *Zibaldoni*, and other private records, are singularly deficient in notices of the "Guild of Shoemakers." It is however narrated that one of its members made his name famous at the siege of Capraia in 1249, when the Guelphs were besieged by the Emperor Frederic II. Going to the gates of the town Giovanni del Tosco, who had been one of the ancients and was a man of wealth and influence, shouted that the place could only hold out for one day. This disheartened the besieged so greatly that they surrendered at discretion. Two years after del Tosco paid for his treachery. He entered Florence among other returning exiles, but being recognised he was stoned to death by the people, and his body was cast into the moat!

The kinds of footwear most in vogue would appear to have been high boots or leggings,—used by the market people and working men generally, *Galosce*,—a kind of pattern,—made of stout leather with wooden soles,—Charlemagne is said to have worn such shoes when he visited Florence,—and *Borsacchini*-buskins, so-called from the particular kind of leather used—soft,

[1] "Le Consulte," ii. 228, 396.

thin, and pliable, and worn generally by Judges and the Clergy. Military boots and strong riding gauntlets were also in the province of the Shoemakers.

It does not appear that the Guild undertook other objects, useful or ornamental, in leather, but confined the attentions of its members to the supply of all kinds of stout and elegant "understandings."




1. "*Stemma dell' Arte de' Fabbri.*"
Black tongs in a white field, a gold florin in corner

2. "*Stemma dell' Arte de' Calzolai.*"
Two red stripes upon a white field

## CHAPTER XI

# THE GUILDS OF MASTERS OF STONE AND WOOD, AND OF RETAIL CLOTH-DEALERS AND LINEN MANUFACTURERS.

*LE ARTI DE' MAESTRI DI PIETRA E DI LEGNAME, E DE' RIGATTIERI*

### I. MASTERS OF STONE AND WOOD

I. ORIGIN.—The great Comacine Guild. Freemasons. Ambulatory lodges. *Grandi* and artisans. Early workers in stone and wood. The Florentine Lodge. *Scholæ*, *Laborerum*, and *Opera Fabbrica.* Guild Style first used.

II. CONSTITUTION.—Architects, Scaffold-builders, Masons, Bricklayers. Bricks and Kilns. Workers in Wood. Wages. Good Native Stone. Fine Native Timber.

III. DEVELOPMENT.—The Duomo. Francesco Talenti. Arnolfo di Cambio. Giotto. Orcagna. Brunellesco. "An Idle Fellow!" Disputes. "Rustic" Style. True Version of Columbus and the Egg. Immense Building Operations. Street Laying. *Ceraiuoli.* Gem-engraving. Fine Ceilings. Leon Battista Alberti. Lorenzo Ghiberti. Luca Della Robbia. Donatello. Florentine influence in Europe. Leonardo da Vinci. Michael Angelo Buonarroti. Torrigiano. "Those beasts the English!" Siege of Florence. A note on Pottery.

### II. RETAIL CLOTH-DEALERS AND LINEN MANUFACTURERS

(Two Branches of Guild—*Rigattieri* and *Linaiuoli.*)

I. RIGATTIERI.—Early Tailors, Linen-makers, and Hawkers. An Association of retail tradesmen. A "Sandwich" Guild. Codex Membranaceo Consuls unable to sign their names! What might, and might not, be sold in shops of the Guild. Fraudulent tradesmen. Fines. Taxes. Prices, etc.

II. LINAIUOLI.—Early use of Linen. Monasteries. Methods of Cultivation of Flax. Processes. Regulations. Fees. *Veditori delle Coltrici.* Surveyors. Valuers. Agents. Official stamps. Localities of manufacture. Sales. Church vestments. Women-workers. *Scolpi*—Lace. Prosperous Guildsmen. *Universita de' Linaiuoli.*

## I. L'ARTE DE' MAESTRI DI PIETRA E DI LEGNAME

IN any book dealing with the subject of Guilds it is quite impossible to overlook that great organisation of the Early Middle Ages—"The Guild of Comacine Masters." The origin

of this Confraternity is lost in antiquity: probably it was a survival of ancient Jewish and Egyptian times.[1] Fugitive craftsmen from all parts of Italy, driven from their homes and craft by the invading barbarians, sought refuge upon the little islet of Comacina in the lake of Como, and the Lombard chieftains extended to them protection and patronage. The settlement became known as the *Casari* or *Casarii*—house-builders. Muratori first discovered traces of its existence in an edict of November 22, 643, signed by King Rotharis the Lombard, which makes mention of "*Magistri Comacini*" as being designers and superintendents of buildings and builders, and whom we may class together under the term architects.

These Master-builders, evidences of whose creative skill are scattered all over Italy, had in 590 formed themselves, for mutual protection and advancement, into a vast University but with no Central College or Residence. According to their motto, their "Temple was made without hands."

"The old Records," writes a quaint and sententious writer,[2] "of Masons afford large hints of their Lodges from the beginning of the world in polite nations. . . . Masons were ever the favourites of the Eminent, and became necessary for their grand undertakings in any sort of materials, not only in stone, brick, timber, plaister, but even in cloth or skins, or whatever was used for tents, and for all sorts of Architecture. . . . Painters also and Statuaries were always reckoned good Masons as much as Builders, Stonecutters, Bricklayers, Carpenters, Joiners, Upholsterers, or Tentmakers."

Two early patrons of the Comacine builders were Queen Theodolinda, who in 737 instructed them to draw plans for, and proceed with, the erection of the Cathedral of Monza, and Saint Calixtus, to whom the Cathedral of Friuli is due.

Lodges of this Order were ambulatory. Wherever fine buildings were required,—and all that were erected between the years 800

[1] Leader Scott, "The Cathedral Builders," p. 10.
[2] Desagulier, "Constitutions of the Free Masons."

and 1000 A.D. were the handiwork of the Comacine Masters,—there were established: 1. *Scholæ*—Schools for novices; 2. a *Laborerum*—Shop for workmen; and 3. an *Opera fabbrica*—Office for architects.[1]

The operatives employed by the Guild were of two classes—*murarii*—builders, and *operarii*—labourers.

The Senior Master-builder was styled *Capo Maestro*, and he had for assistants two or more *Soprastanti*, who were charged with the drafting of specifications, etc., and with the monetary affairs of the members respectively. Thus all the machinery required for a regularly constituted guild of craftsmen was ready to hand, and at an early date the Comacine Masters were recognised as members of a worldwide Order of Freemasons.[2]

Members of these Lodges, of every degree, were treated as belonging to a privileged class, and were excused local military service: they enjoyed too, liberty of travel and freedom of employment.

The term "Freemason," as applied to Master-builders, appears first in manuscripts of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, wherein "*Sculptores lapidum liberorum*" and "*Latonii vocati fremacconi*," are used indiscriminatingly for workers in freestone. Master workers in stone and wood, originally, came under the designation of Freemasons, and were regarded as a class apart from ordinary stone masons and working carpenters.

Matriculation made all the difference in the world between master and man. Hence in Florence the Intermediate "Guild of Masters in Stone and Wood" was named with absolute fitness to fact and custom.

The actual work of a "*Maestro di Pietra*" was in virgin stone,—freestone,—not in marble. There was a clear distinction between a worker in "*lapis liber*," and a worker in "*saxum vivum*"—the former was a simple stone-mason, the latter a skilled sculptor, or "*Maestro.*"

[1] Ossia Libri Muratori, "Gli Instituzioni, Riti e Ceremonie dell' Ordine de' Francs Maçons."

[2] C. Guasti "Santa Maria del Fiore."

With respect to workers in wood, "*Maestro di Legname*" was one who could construct scaffolds and build roofs, whilst "*Maestro d' Intaglio*," was a carver or inlayer of wood. This division into four classes of craftsmen was complemented by a fifth, entitled "*Maestri del Disegno*"—"Masters of Design," or "Architects."

Every ambulatory "Lodge" or stationary "Temple" of the Guild or Order was manned by representatives of each of these sorts of workmen, and the longer the works lasted so much more permanent did the terms and conditions become which controlled and directed building operations. One such permanent centre was established in the thirteenth century in Florence, where stupendous undertakings were in hand.

Probably the Craft of stone-cutting and wood-working was the earliest trade corporation in Florence in the Middle Ages. Under Charlemagne, who repeatedly visited Florence, the industry developed steadily, and, in the reign of Lothair it became prosperous throughout Tuscany.[1]

During the period, when was gradually built up the *Primo Popolo*, or middle class—wherein were united nobles and merchants,—another alliance was cemented, that of outcast sons of ruined *Grandi* and working artisans. Descended from a race of robber captains, many a lad had to put his family pride in his pocket and to throw in his lot with honest craftsmen rather than beg his bread. Trained to follow in the ranks of the *Condottieri*,—leaders of mercenary troops,—implements of toil came as handy as instruments of warfare.

The two callings which appealed most to these men were those of stone-mason and wood-worker; and this is evident on glancing over the Matriculation Registers of the Guild, wherein names of ancient noble families appear over and over again.

It is almost impossible to give the exact date when the Florentine Lodge of Freemasons, or Master Builders of the great Comacine Guild, was merged in the "*Arte de' Maestri di Pietra*

[1] Muratori, "Antichite Italiane," Dis. 75, tom. vi. Col. 455.

*e di Legname.*" The use of the word "Lodge" comes from the custom of holding meetings of brethren in the "Loggie" or porticoes of houses. The first mention in the Archives of Florence of Master-builders,—masons or wood-workers,—is under the year 1038, when "*Johannis qui tornario vocatus est*"—a wood-turner—is named. In 1094 appears the first record of a stone-mason as follows:—"*Baldus (?) curtis de Marmorio.*" Doubtless they had many fellow-craftsmen. All through the eleventh and twelfth centuries the *Scholæ*, the *Laborerum*, and the *Opera Fabbrica*, were administered under constantly improving auspices and equipment.

The *Scholæ*, whilst giving primary attention to the great elements of construction, gradually placed their pupils in possession of the technicalities of architecture, sculpture, and even painting. Sons and nephews of Masters were entitled to enrolment without any novitiate as by hereditary right, but outsiders were subjected to a severe preparatory course. Certain Masters were appointed to teach pupils and apprentices privately in their own studios as well as in the public work of the *Scholæ*. These teachers were chosen from among the most distinguished of those who had passed through the *Laborerum*.

The *Laborerum*, or shop for workmen, afforded opportunities for employment to every matriculated and approved member who was not yet advanced to the dignity of Master. Such men were called "*fratres*" in the old manuscripts, and were, so to speak, the graduates of the University. A successful course in the *Laborerum* opened out the way to commissions and renown. Here it was that genius had full play, and brotherly rivalry led to glorious results.

The *Opera Fabbrica*, Office of Works, was the headquarters of the Master-builders. There all plans, specifications, estimates, etc. etc., were prepared and exhibited. Contracts were signed between patron and builder. Earnest money was paid over. Registration of workpeople and their allocation to the various operations were undertaken. Communications between the *Opera*

MASTERS OF STONE AND WOOD GIVING EVIDENCE OF SKILL IN THEIR CRAFTS BEFORE THE CONSUL OF THE GUILD

FOURTEENTH CENTURY

and the *Laborerum* were carried on by a *Provveditore* specially appointed, and contracts were signed in presence of a Notary.

In the early years of the thirteenth century separate associations appear, from time to time, in the public records, for example:—"*Maestri dell'Ascia*"—"Master Wood-cutters," "*Maestri di Muratori*"—"Master-bricklayers," and "*Maestri d'Architetti*"—"Architects."

In the classification of the Guilds in 1236 and 1266, "*Muratori e Scarpellini*"—"Bricklayers and Stone-masons," come tenth on the list, and this was the earliest designation of the Guild of Master-builders in Florence.

The style "*Maestri di Pietra e di Legname*" was first used in 1282, but the origin of it must be sought in the year 1260. Jacopino Rangoni da Modena was then Podesta of Florence, and he undertook energetic measures in preparation for the war with Siena.

Twelve Captains of War were chosen—two for each *sestiere*, or quarter of the city—to raise companies of cavalry and infantry. Of these companies two were made up of men accustomed to the use of picks, axes, saws, planes, and other similar tools; and to them was assigned the name of "*Maestri di Pietra e di Legname.*" They formed the van of the city companies—the place of conflict and honour.

At the revision of the Statutes and Bye-laws, of all the Guilds, in 1282, and 1301-1309, these companies retained their military organisation, and united to it the system of industrial incorporation. They thus became a powerful and enterprising order in the Hierarchy of the Guilds.

A further honour was bestowed upon the Guild in 1293 by Giano della Bella. Just before vacating the office of Prior, he carried through the State Council a *Provvisione* augmenting the personal guard of the Chief Magistrate to the number of one thousand. He called upon the Consuls of the "Guild of Stone-masons and Wood-workers" "to provide the first, or leading, company of two hundred men, fifty of whom were to be armed

with heavy picks." Of course all these military levies were made up of operative stone-masons and wood-workers—not of Master-builders. Of the latter, Villani records, there were, at the beginning of the year 1299, not less than one hundred and forty-six holding the license of the Guild, and directing the labours of upwards of two thousand working stone-masons and wood-workers. Certain of them, moreover, were put over the foreign workmen who thronged the city and besieged the officials of the Guild for work.

Renaissance Masters,—whether designers or architects, scaffold or roof projectors, stone-masons or bricklayers, sculptors or carvers, —were the lineal descendants of time-old hewers of wood and cutters of stone. Hence a natural and hereditary trait became apparent in the plays and pastimes of their children. Quite little mites set about the building of palaces and churches in miniature, with all the zest of their parents and big brothers. Every *Chiasso* and *Cortile* became, for the nonce, a brickfield and a masons' yard; whilst many an embryo "master" displayed his dexterity and constructiveness in mud, sand, and shavings!

. . . . . .

The Consuls of the Guild are named as taking part in the negotiations instituted, in 1280, by Cardinal Latino dei Frangipani, acting as Papal Legate, for the purpose of reconciling the Guelphs and the Ghibellines. They, together with the Consuls of the Guilds of "*Calimala*," "Wool," "Bankers" and "Money-changers," "Skinners and Furriers," and "Retail Cloth Dealers," were not favourable to the negotiations, and nothing was done, except to augment still more the power of the *Parte Guelfa*.

The number of Consuls, in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, seems to have been three; at all events that number is named, as in attendance, at the combined conferences of the Twelve Greater Guilds. Undoubtedly they exercised the same functions as the Comacine *Capo Maestro*; and, for assistants, they also had two *Soprastanti*, who bore the titles of "*Cancelliere*" and "*Camerlingo*"—like their brother officials in the other Guilds.

It would fill a biggish volume to reproduce all the regulations,

cautions, and notices which were, from time to time, issued for the better ordering and discipline of the craftsmen. One example will suffice. On June of 1456, the *Provveditore* put out the following notice:—"It is desired that on no account shall any Master go to work outside the *Opera*, without the deliberation and consent of all four *Operai*. If any absent himself without this permission, he shall be considered as discharged." [1]

The office of *Provveditore* was no sinecure, by reason of the constant differences between masters and men; but he had by way of assessors two *Buonuomini*, who acted as arbitrators in trade disputes, and also as auditors of the accounts of the Guild.

When "Masters" were dissatisfied with their salaries,—for all commissions were undertaken in the name of the Guild and were not matters of personal or direct payment by patrons to the actual worker,—or when workmen refused to work, it was the custom to call in the assistance of independent people. For example, in the *Opera del Duomo*—the cathedral building, all disagreements came before the Consuls and Council of the "Guild of Wool," which was charged with the various undertakings. They called for the estimates, and for reports of progress, and, after prolonged discussion, the matter was usually settled by compromise, fixing averages of price and time.

In questions which affected the internal working of the Guild the members of the *Opera Fabbrica* and the instructors of the *Laborerum* formed a deliberative Council. All Masters were bound by contract to the *Laborerum*. Sometimes payment was by the day; at other times piece work was agreed for.

Very many men,—skilled and unskilled,—were, of course, employed from time to time in the vast building contracts undertaken by the Guild. These men were not enrolled on the Craft-major, but were incorporated in trade-unions or associations during the continuance of the works, each under its own special officers and regulations; but all subordinated to the Guild proper.

What working members of the Guild looked like in the

[1] *Archivio dell' Opera del Duomo*, Cæsare Guasto's abstracts.

fifteenth century may be seen in the woodcut of the *Knyght's Paune* in Jacopo de Cessoli's *Guioccho delle Scacchi.* He says :— "The seconde paune y$^{t}$ standeth to fore the Knyght on the right side of the Kynge hath the forme and figure of a man as a Smyth. And that is reson For it apperteyneth to ye knyghtes to have bridellys, sadellys, spores and many other thynges made by the

MASTERS IN STONE, WOOD, AND METAL— "DE FABRI E DE MAESTRI." FIFTEENTH CENTURY

handes of smythes and ought to hold a hamer with his right hand and in his lyfte hande a dolabre and he ought to have in his gyrdell a trowell for by this is sygnefied all manner of workemen as goldsmiths, marchallis, smithes of all forges, forgers and makers of monoye. . . . The carpenters ben signefyed by the dolabre or squyer and by the trowell we understand all masons and kervars of stones and all them that make howses, castels and tours."

The Council of the Guild also held periodical discussions upon designs, methods, materials, etc. etc. for public works; and ex-

perts were employed to examine every branch of the various undertakings.

When Francesco Talenti was *Capo Maestro* many meetings were held to settle matters of detail. In June 1553 one such meeting ordered the removal of the scaffolding from the new Baptistery. In August of the same year scale models in wood of the Campanile were ordered to be made, to judge of dimensions and decorative features. The following month found the "Masters" anxious about the financial position of the Guild. A Notary was appointed to press the Signoria for the payment of one hundred and fifty *lire* due to the Guild; and further to consult with the "*Regolatori*"—perhaps "auditors," and the captains of the *Misericordia* with respect to the settlement of certain legacies under the wills of deceased members of the Guild.[1]

At another meeting in the following year, the *free* supply of wine to master-builders, architects when engaged in operations, was docked off owing to the lowness of the Guild funds!

At the recension of the Constitutions of the various Guilds in 1415 the "Guild of Masters of Stone and Wood" came in for its share of amendment. Many Rubrics were passed affecting operatives, etc.

Paviors, brick-kiln men, masters of stone and wood, and labourers were bound to make and keep strictly accurate measurements of quantity, and to maintain an even quality in their work. Surveyors were appointed to examine and test all deliveries of stone and brick, and to inspect thoroughly each stage of building operations. Inferiority of material, and inefficiency of workmanship, were visited with prompt punishment. The surveyors were themselves visited with pains and penalties if they performed their duties merely in a perfunctory manner; indeed they were liable to expulsion from membership in the Guild.[2]

Paviors and workers in stone and wood were forbidden to

[1] C. Guasto, "Opere del Duomo in Firenze."
[2] Statuti Pop. et Com Florentiae, 1415; Rub. lvii.

have direct dealings with dealers in paving stones. They were constrained to work for their masters alone, and with materials provided by their masters.[1]

Kiln-men and brickmakers generally were admonished to pack their kilns with lime of the best quality only, and to see to it that the bricks they burnt were free from blemishes, and well and truly shaped, according to the customary standards. Each brick had to be stamped on all four sides with the arms of Florence, and the sides had to measure exactly four times the size of the ends. The ends were required to be evenly finished so that joinings could be made as neatly and closely as possible. Tiles, troughs, and edging squares followed in the same category.

Wall measurements were taken with an iron yard-measure, the exact length of the "*Calimala*" *canna.* Clay-fields and lime works were under direct State supervision. Rents and percentages were paid for the right of working, and State imposts were made at the Gates upon loads of bricks and tiles, which went under the names of *mattoni*, *mezzane*, *tegole*, *pianelle*, *quadrucchi*, according to shape and purpose.[2]

Strict regulations were in force with respect to the situation and dimensions of the brick-kilns. All such erections were required to be beyond the three-mile radius of the old *Contado*, and were not to exceed a height of nine *braccia*—arm's-length.[3]

The price of bricks per thousand, and the scale of wages per week, were settled from time to time by the Consuls of the "Guild of Masters in Stone and Wood"; and the values were exposed in all brickfields and workshops of the city.[4]

By the Statutes of 1415, precise regulations were laid down with respect to timber. Stocks of wood were not allowed to be kept merely for sale through brokers. The quantity permitted in the workshops was in strict proportion to the work in hand. Masters in wood, and their apprentices, were required to work only in timber which bore the stamp of the Guild. Much greater

[1] Rub. lviii., 1415.
[2] Rub. lix., 1415.
[3] Rub. lx., 1415.
[4] Rub. lxv., lxvi., 141

ROAD-MAKING AND QUARRYING

FIFTEENTH CENTURY

liberty was extended to foreign workers, although they were required to be affiliated to the Guild, and to submit to the ruling of the Consuls. Inducements were held out especially to Lombardian workmen, who were housed free of rent for a time, and were permitted to bring in their tools and implements free of custom dues.[1]

The wages of an ordinary stone-mason or bricklayer were one *lira* a day, with half a *lira* for his labourer. A carpenter's mean wage was the same. These amounts compared favourably with the wages of agricultural labourers, who could rarely earn more than ten *soldi* a day.

The Residence of the Consuls was in the Chiasso di Baronelli, not far from the Loggia de' Lanzi. Over its portals were sculptured the arms of the Guild, which of course were also blazoned upon its banner—a white axe upon a red field.

. . . . . .

In the neighbourhood of Florence two or three kinds of stone were easily accessible.

1. *Pietra forte* — a durable sandstone with calcareous ingredients—excellent for building purposes and for paving, but found generally in small pieces only. The most used quarry was at Camfora outside the Porta Romana.

2. *Pietra serena*—or *Macigno*,—a siliceous sandstone of a dark grey or bluish-black colour, with singular black patches, which assumes, in course of time, a bronzy hue. Benvenuto Cellini says this stone is found in the hilly country round Florence—especially at Settignano, Signa, Montelupo and Fiesole. "It is," he adds, "marked by beauty and fineness of texture, and is easily worked; but, as it does not resist water nor stand open-air exposure, it is best suited for inside work and statuary under cover."

3. *Pietra morta* is also mentioned by Cellini, who praises its rich tan colour, and its softness and ease in chiselling. It with-

[1] Rub. lxvii., lxviii., 1415.

stands winds and rains and every action of time, and is excellent for ornamental work and for the frames of windows and doors.

"There is," says Sir Richard Dallington, "digged out of the Tuscan hills a kinde of freestone, passing hard, of colour—according to the nature of its place wherein it is taken—white, red and black, of all of which there are in Florence many very gallante and stately palaces. They have also in many places pits of marble—white, blue and parti-coloured excellently good." The old chronicler speaks too of the well paved streets, "long and straighte and wide and fair laid with *hastia*,"—broad setts—"so as no weather fouls them."[1]

Statuary marble came chiefly from Massa and Carrara, but Michael Angelo, at the instance of Pope Julius II., worked also in marble from Seravezza. The prospecting, quarrying, and transporting of the huge blocks which were required by the Masters of stone in Florence, called forth big inventive faculties and great engineering abilities on the part of the members of the Guild.

Rare marbles too for the enrichment of monuments, and for use in mosaic work, were imported from far and wide. Very many costly examples came directly from Rome—the ancient "Marmorata" being the marble emporium of the world.

With respect to the timber needed for scaffolding and building generally, and the finer woods used in decorative work, there was no difficulty about supply. The Vale of Arno was an *arboretum* of trees of all kinds. Pines, oaks, elms, and planes furnished the builders, and walnuts, ashes, briars, and many another, the carvers with all that they required. Plantations too of useful trees were constantly made by the sapient rulers of the city to replenish garnered plots. In 1534, for example, Duke Alexander converted river-mud and sandbanks into the umbrageous *Cascine*, and he and his successors planted many a *podere*,—farm lands—with trees and shrubs.

Arnolfo di Cambio, born in 1232, was a native of Colle di Val d'Elsa and was the first great Master-builder of the Floren-

[1] "Survey of the Great Duke's Estate."

tine Guild. He must not be confused with Arnolfo di Lapor or with Arnolfo Fiorentino—both of whom were sculptors of the School of the Pisani.[1]

Di Cambio's training, of which we have few records, was probably carried out at Siena, with, perhaps, a chance visit to Pisa, and to Niccola Pisano there. His father,—Jacopo Tedesco da Campione or di Cambio,—had, in a sense, exercised the office of *Capo Maestro* of the Florentine Guild, and had, in 1258, built the Bargello. Thirty years later Arnolfo became the architect of the Church of Santa Croce.[2]

Arnolfo's fame, however, rests mainly upon his work at Santa Maria del Fiore, where he acted as chief architect and builder from 1294 up to the day of his death in 1310.[3] The Palazzo Vecchio also looks to him as its creator. It was indeed a *tour de force* which incorporated the old tower of the Foraboschi, called later the Torre della Vacca, and crowned it with its crenelated mural cap!

An entry in the "Archives" records the grant by the State, in 1300, of certain privileges,—freedom from taxation and a seat in the Signoria,—"for his industry, his experience, and his talent." He is styled:—"*Caput Magister laborerii et operis ecclesiæ beate Reparate.*"[4] A special feature of his manner was the use of panels or slabs of variously coloured marble, an example followed by all his successors.

From 1340 to 1348 Giotto was *Capo Maestro* and Consul of the Guild. For his glorious Campanile four Master-masons were sent in 1350 to Carrara to buy marble.

Other famous Master-builders and Consuls were Taddeo Gaddi, who rebuilt the Ponte alla Carraia in 1337, and prepared plans for the new Ponte Vecchio and Ponte alla Santa Trinita; and Andrea Orcagna, who built the shrine of Or San Michele and the pillars of Santa Maria del Fiore.

[1] Crowe and Cavalcaselle, "History of Painting in Italy," vol. i. p. 127.
[2] Gaye "Carteggio inedite," vol. i. p. 445.
[3] "*Archivio del Duomo—Antica Necrologia di Santa Reparata*," *Carta* 12.
[4] Provv., No. X., p. 235.

The Registers of the Guild contain the names and commissions of many Master-builders right down to the year 1418. Among them, Simone Giovanni del Pino who in 1363 carved the twisted columns of red marble in the windows of the Duomo; Taddeo Ristori,—one of the Cione family,—the architect, in 1336, of Or San Michele and of the Loggia de' Lanzi; and Giovanni Stefani, in 1381, a noted builder of scaffolding and a specialist in foundation work.

In 1349 the *Ringhiera*—Speaker's Tribune—was erected outside the Palazzo Vecchio by Brother Lorenzo, at a cost of one thousand gold florins. Ten years later the plans for the façade of the Duomo were made public. They were the joint production of the following members of the Guild:—Neri di Fioravante, Benci di Cione, Francesco Salvetti, Niccolo Tommasi, who, with Taddeo Gaddi and Andrea Orcagna, formed a Special Commission for the purpose. All these we may suppose were serious and able Architects and Master-builders, but in 1418 we have a record of one Piero d' Antonio, who, although elected a Consul and *Capo Maestro*, was nicknamed "*Fannullone*"—Braggart, or idle fellow!

Six Master-builders competed in 1418 for the erection of the dome of the Cathedral; among them were Nanni di Banco, Lorenzo Ghiberti and Donatello. None of them were, however, successful, and the commission was given to Filippo Brunellesco, who, by the way, was not a member of the Guild. He had been matriculated in the "*Arte della Seta*" in 1398, and later, in 1404, had enrolled himself a member of the new "*Arte degli Orafi*"—"Guild of Goldsmiths,"—which was a subordinate corporation of the greater Guild of Silk.

The selection of Brunellesco to build the cupola, and also, in 1434, to complete the lantern, gave great offence to the "Masters of Stone and Wood." They insisted upon his matriculation in their Guild, but, to show that a man need not be a Freemason to build a church, Brunellesco ignored their protests, and never paid his fees! This led to an amusing, but irritating, process at

BRICKLAYER STONE-MASON ARCHITECT SCULPTOR

NANNI DI BANCO

law—the Masters of the *Laborerum* sued him for debt and the successful architect was imprisoned! The offender's cause was nevertheless championed not only by the "*Por Santa Maria*," but also by the "Guild of Wool,"—the former doubtless on account of his membership therein, and the latter probably from its stewardship of the Cathedral works,—and he was released, whilst a scapegoat was found in an unfortunate, but nameless, member of the "Guild of Masters of Stone and Wood," who was pitched without trial into Brunellesco's cell upon a trumped-up charge of being an idle fellow!

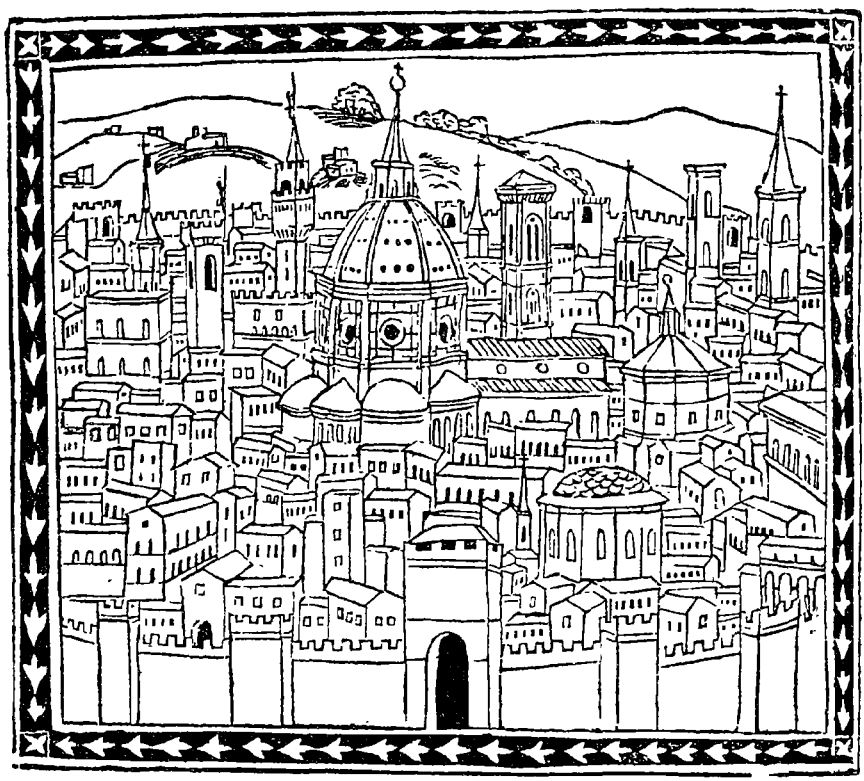
The story of Columbus and the egg may be, with far more probability, ascribed to Brunellesco in relation to the famous dome of the Duomo. The art of building a cupola like that of the Roman Pantheon had been lost, and Brunellesco recreated it. None of the scientists consulted by the authorities could do it, but he proposed that the man who could make an egg stand upright upon a flat base should be chosen as architect. With a gentle tap he broke in one end and thus easily set it up upon the slab!

Of Brunellesco's achievement the familiar Tuscan proverb is applicable:—"*Piu rondo che di l'O Giotto*"—"Rounder than the O of Giotto"—anything more perfect is impossible. Indeed the reverberation of sounds is extraordinary. No echo is discernible, but words and music appear to be carried up through the lantern and never return again!

The erection of the cupola put the builders of scaffolding upon their mettle. The whole city seems to have taken the matter in hand, for public meetings were held whereat all were asked to give expression to their opinions. Models in brick, plaster and wood were projected to scale with and without scaffolding. Very ingenious plans were devised for the hoisting up of heavy material, among others by Antonio da Vercelli—a leading *Maestro di legno*. The workmen were kept at their giddy posts all day to avoid the loss of time in descending and ascending for their mid-day meal. For their accommodation, moreover,

a kitchen and a dining-room were provided at the top of the scaffolding![1]

One of the most striking evidences of the immense prosperity of Florence was the erection of magnificent edifices of all kinds —public and private.



OUTLINE VIEW OF FLORENCE. 15TH AND 16TH CENTURIES

In harmony with the devotional spirit of the period, the thirteenth-century buildings were principally ecclesiastical:—The Baptistery of San Giovanni,—founded in the seventh century,—was rebuilt 1202-1294; Santa Reparata,—founded in the eighth century,—was rebuilt as Santa Maria del Fiore—1101-1298;

[1] C. Guasti, "La Cupola di Santa Maria del Fiore," p. 61.

Ognissanti dates from 1256, La Nunziata — 1258, Or San Michele—1285, Santa Maria Novella—1279, Santa Croce and San Spirito—1295 and San Marco—1299. San Miniato al Monte,—first built under Charlemagne in 774,—was rebuilt in 1093; and was much added to in the thirteenth century by the munificence of the "Calimala" Guild.

Civil architecture also engaged the attention of master-builders in the thirteenth century. Designs for all these undertakings were prepared, and estimates made out, by the first descendants of the old Comacine Masters; and the work was taken in hand by their sons and grandsons in travail. Of Palaces were erected:—Bargello—1258, Badia—990-1285, and Vecchio —1294; Bridges:—Alla Carraia—1218, Santa Trinita—1252, Alle Grazie, or Rubaconte—1237, and Vecchio—1080-1333; Gates:—Al Prato, San Gallo, and San Ambrogio in 1284, and Ghibellina in 1290; Hospitals:—San Gallo—1218, Santa Maria Nuova—1267 and San Bartolommeo—1295. The City Walls were rebuilt and extended 1285-1299, and the Stinche—Prison—was erected in 1260.

The fourteenth century, so far as architecture was concerned, was notable for the completion and decoration of many noble edifices. Sculptors in stone, wood, and metal, mosaic-masters, workers in terra-cotta, and fresco painters were all hard at work under the auspices of the Guild. It was the epoch of the greatest workers of the Fine Arts. Even the humblest labourer felt the influence of their personalities, and the meanest work was marked by boldness and elegance combined. The very tools they used were ornamented with decorative features.

The Foundation-masters too had their work cut out in the laying out of the city in fine squares, and well paved streets, and the removal of unsightly and incommodious premises. The *Piazze*:—di' San Giovanni—1300, della Santa Maria Novella—1302, della Signoria—1307; and the *Loggie*:—del Bigallo—1330, de' Lanzi—1334, della Zecca—Mint—1361, and Mercato

Nuovo—1362, were some of the principal undertakings of the "Masters in Stone and Wood."

Other *Operai*—Masters of Works—took in hand the interior decoration of Churches, Palaces, Guild-Residences and the private homes of wealthy citizens. Splendidly designed and decorated wooden ceilings were a marked feature. That in the Biblioteca Laurenziana, by Tasso and Carola—shows what manner of artificers the Masters of wood-carving were. The favourite style was what we call "King Post," concealed by panelling. Rood-screens and Shrines, the work of Donatello and Brunellesco, are to be seen in Santa Croce.

The fifteenth century was famous for the construction of superb Palaces, which wealthy families erected in noble rivalry. Never were the Master-builders and their workmen busier. Florence resounded with the significant music of the trowel, the chisel, the hammer, and the plane. Bulky scaffoldings transformed the whole city into a huge woodyard, but there arose edifices artistic and grandiose, which will for all time command admiration and emulation.

The Palazzi Antinori, Borgherini, Guadagni, Guicciardini, Niccolini, Panciatichi, Pandolfini, Pitti, Pecori-Geraldi, Rucellai, Serristori, Torrigiani, Uguccione, and many another followed in quick succession. In 1430 the Palazzo Riccardi was completed for the Medici. The old Palazzi Strozzi, Albizzi, Pazzi and Buondelmonti had been burnt to the ground by the *Ciompi* in 1378, and now—phœnix-like—new structures took their place. The protection of the city edifices, the erection of lordly villas in the *Contado*, and the dedication of country shrines, all called for the skilful labours of architect and sculptors.

An examination of these masterpieces of a century's domestic architecture reveals at once the striking fact, that every characteristic of the Florentine race has been preserved and perpetuated in stone and wood and metal. Solidity, boldness, and dignity, are joined to elegance, simplicity, and reserve, and the product is a special style, somewhat inappropriately called "Rustic."

SCAFFOLDING AND BUILDING

FRESCO—BENOZZO GOZZOLI, 1476

The sixteenth century has been called the period of the "Late Renaissance," rather should we designate it as the "Finished Renaissance." Florence was built up, her architecture was complete. She was adorned by statues and carvings in stone, wood, and metal, and little more required to be done in the decoration of the fair city.

There remained only the placing of the cap-stone of her architecture, the finishing touch of her sculpture, the removal of her scaffolds, and the unveiling of her latest art treasures. These duties were undertaken by the most commanding personality of the century—Michael Angelo Buonarroti. The son of a city magnate, born amid the attributes of wealth and culture, he, a motherless child, was brought up by a simple mason's wife at Settignano. He was thus in himself the representative of all the noblest traits of citizenship.

The models of Buonarroti's life's work were the well proportioned virile figures of his daily companions, hence his ideals realised in architecture, sculpture, and painting the highest aspirations of the Masters of all times.

During the siege of Florence by Clement VII., in 1529, Buonarroti was appointed Commissary-General of the Forces of the Republic. He gathered round him the "Masters of Wood and Stone," and with their assistance threw up earthworks and walls of defence which were quite remarkable for their correct and scientific form.

The century was marked by a rage for wax-modelling. Every man with artistic tastes set up to be a *Ceraiuolo*—Wax-worker. No class took to the art with more earnestness than the "Masters of Stone and Wood." Apprentices were instructed and encouraged in its pursuit, and in a very short time quite a school of artists had arisen, who displayed their skill in portraiture and other fine work. One of the most famous modeller-portraitists was Orsino, who made many wax casts of the features of Lorenzo de' Medici—*il Magnifico*.

The cutting of gems and cameos became a specialty of the

Florentine sculptors in the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Among the better-known engravers of gems may be placed Giovanni and Bernardino Peruzzi—1300-1379, Giovanni delle Corniole, with his portrait of Savonarola—1494, Pietro da Pescia, the friend of Michael Angelo—1513, and Domenico da Pola—1527. These were all matriculated members of the "Guild of Masters of Stone and Wood."

Florentines set themselves the agreeable tasks of entering into the labours of their ancestors, and of taking full enjoyment out of the glories of their environment. The Medici were past masters in the art of entertaining, and open square and narrow street revelled in the daily pageants. The magnificent buildings and the noble bridges were the boast of the citizens, for had not their fathers made them, and were they not their custodians!

To give a mere list of the members of the "Guild of Masters of Stone and Wood," who have made their names, their Guild, and their City famous, and to compile a bare catalogue of their achievements, would be a work of supererogation, seeing that for their memorial, one has only,—as in St Paul's Cathedral, with respect to Sir Christopher Wren,—"to look around!"

Nevertheless, the following Masters, along with those already named, gave character and life to their centuries: Jacopo della Quercia, Benedetto da Maiano, Mino da Fiesole, Desiderio da Settignano, Il Cronaca, Baccio d'Agnolo, Baccio Bandinelli with the Della Robbia, the Rossellini, the Sansovini, the Pollaiuoli, the Ammannati, and the San Gallo or Giamberti.

Leon Battista Alberti, 1405-1472, stands out as a great figure—architect, sculptor, painter, mechanician, etc. His "*De Re Ædificatoria*" was the first systematic treatise on Art since the days of Vitruvius; and his ten books on Architecture, Sculpture, and Painting, rank as classics.

Lorenzo Ghiberti, Luca della Robbia, and Donatello, were "the three brightest stars of the Renaissance," and Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael Santi, and Michael Angelo Buonarroti were "the School of the World!"

All Europe felt the force of these vigorous craftsmen. The Emperor's Court attracted numbers of Florentine Masters; whilst, in Paris, Francis I. welcomed with royal honours Leonardo da Vinci, Benvenuto Cellini, Primaticcio and other members of the Guild.[1]

Artistic settlements of Italians, chiefly from Florence, were scattered all over England, especially about Winchester and Southampton. Their members did work of all kinds in stone, bronze, wood, leather, etc., in many public buildings and private dwellings. The exhibition of their skill was a tremendous revelation and a mighty incentive to native craftsmen.

Piero Torrigiano came in 1513, and, with the help of his *Schola* at Westminster, he erected the glorious shrine of Henry VII. and Queen Eleanor—a perfect example of the art of the Florentine Renaissance. It is said the Master paid his assistants in the Abbey at the rate of three gold florins a month each for the first year, and forty ducats with bed and board and horse-hire each following year.

Antonio di Lorenzo, Toto della Nunziata, Benedetto da Rovezzano, Giovanni da Maiano, Pietro Baldi, Giovanni Utricci, with "the famous engravers Ruccieri and Ambrogio" were all greatly encouraged by Henry VIII. and Cardinal Wolsey, and employed at Windsor, Oxford and Hampton Court.[2]

The wooden screens and stalls in King's College Chapel, Cambridge, were sculptured by Florentine Masters of Wood. The Tuscan "Rustic" style became the foster-mother of a native school of architects and carvers; and very many country mansions still exist to indicate how those skilful guildsmen prepared the way for what we call the "Elizabethan style."

"Those beasts the English,"—as Torrigiano called our ancestors of his day,—were, in spite of his spleen, among the most appreciative patrons of the Florentine Arts and Crafts. When Elizabeth visited Greenwich in 1583, Roger Manners writing to

[1] M. Vasari, iv. 262, note.
[2] J. A. Gotch, "Architecture of the Renaissance," vol. I. xxii.

the Earl of Rutland, says:—"She was never in any place better pleased, and sure the house, garden, and walks may compare with any delicate place in Italy."[1]

. . . . . .

The decline in the fortunes and enterprise of the Guild may be traced to the appointment, in 1434, of Brunellesco, after his deliverance from prison, as chief architect to all the public buildings in Florence. This action proved to be something of a death-blow to the great Masonic Guild. Its influence remained, but its organisation was broken up into separate corporations. The great *Laborerum* was shut up, and the *Scholæ* dwindled to very moderate dimensions.

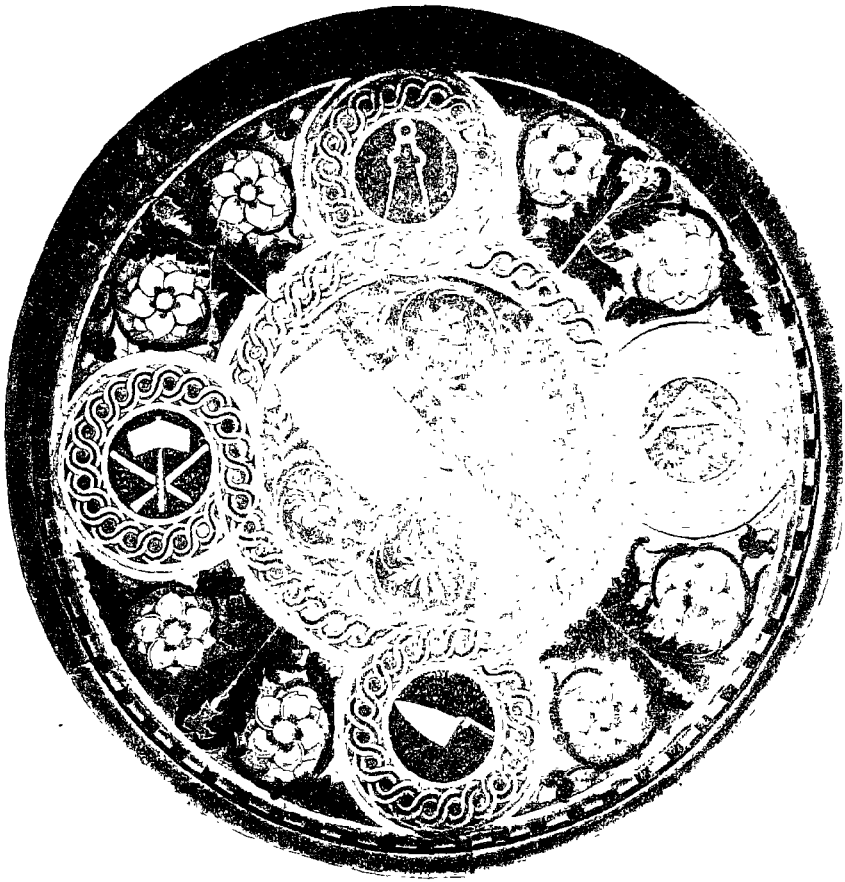
Lorenzo de' Medici tried hard to revive the work of the Guild by opening and endowing munificently a School of Sculpture in his garden at Villa Larga, and it certainly had a measure of success. Anyhow to this *Schola* is due the collection of, and preservation of, all the finest models and examples of wellnigh three centuries of splendid achievements of "Masters of Stone and Wood."

. . . . . .

It appears to be necessary to say a few words upon the subject of Pottery and to account for the silence of authorities upon the existence of a Corporation or Guild of Potters.[2]

The Potter's art was of course as familiar to Florentines as any other. It was the custom on many *poderi* in the *Contado*, early and late, not only to make utensils for ordinary domestic and business purpose, but also to fashion figures out of the tenacious subsoil of the Arno valley. Some of the latter were of ambitious dimensions and were finished in colours in the city workshops. Among modellers in terra-cotta were Bicci di Lorenzo (1373-1452) and the Della Robbia (1430-1529). All these men were artists and were members of the "Guild of Workers of Stone and Wood." Hence the higher styles of Pottery were regarded as the province of sculptors, whilst the

[1] Historical MSS., Report 12, app. iv. p. 150.
[2] See p. 12, note 2, and pp. 254, 255.



ARMS OF THE GUILD OF MASTERS IN STONE AND WOOD

LUCA DELLA ROBBIA

more homely output of the Potters'-wheel was classed among articles for consignment to the apothecaries' and corn-chandlers' shops.

There was, perhaps, no scope for a separate Corporation solely composed of workers in clay and glaze. Besides this the best descriptions of earthenware were of foreign origin, for example, the finest pottery was made from the opaque white clay of Siena commonly called "St John's Earth."

On the other hand the first artificial porcelain known to have been made in Europe was produced in Florence about the year 1580 under the patronage of Francesco de' Medici, the second Grand Duke of Tuscany, who died in 1587. It was composed of soft or hybrid paste unlike that required for hard crockery. The manufactory was in the Boboli Gardens, but only continued for a few years. The usual trade-mark, stamped in blue, was the Dome of the Duomo, with the letter "F" below.

## II. L'ARTE DE' RIGATTIERI

A. Retail Cloth-dealers.
B. Linen-Manufacturers.

The history of the two branches of this Guild, the twelfth in order in the Hierarchy of the Guilds, is not a little difficult to disentangle from confusion and disparity of notice in the Archives of Florence.

The earliest notices of the various trades and callings included within the operations of the Guild are apparently as follows :—

"1032. *Casa Florentii Sarti*—Shop of a Tailor."
"1084. *Bonus, fil. Johannis, baro*—Hawker."
"1191. *Martinus, pignolajno*—Maker of fine linen."
"1211. *Ristoro, fil. Pieri—buorsajo*—Pouch-maker."
" „ *Albizi di Fferrare, pezzaio di Lung' Arno*—Ragseller."

Indeed the "Guild of Retail Dealers" seems to have grown

out of the fact that very many minor Crafts, somewhat similar in character, gradually formed themselves into a union, upon the usual Florentine co-operative principle, for mutual benefit and defence.

The "Guild of Linen Manufacturers" one would have thought would have had precedence alongside the Guilds of the kindred industries of wool and silk, but, for some reason or other, quite impossible of solution, the growers of flax and the makers of linen had to put up with an inferior rôle.

### A.—*L'Arte de' Rigattieri*

This Guild had a most comprehensive character, and included in its membership retail-traders of almost every kind. In old Florence there was always a goodly number of men who were not exactly "Idlers" but who, having matriculated probably into their father's Guild, had not entered heartily into its industries. Some of them were doubtless men of want of application, but many felt that they could do better than by remaining in the orthodox ranks of their family avocation.

The constant increase of commerce, with the inflow of attractive objects and the creation of fresh wants, introduced new interests and opened out new pursuits. The *Sensali*, or agents of the Greater Guilds, in their travels, took note of novelties, and learned foreign customs, which their keen eye to business taught them might be profitably transported to Florence.

Then again, it was seen that the activities of the Greater Guilds were of a wholesale character, and that the employers of labour had neither place nor opportunity for the sale of small quantities. Gradually, therefore, shops were opened, whereat citizens and passing visitors might purchase articles, useful and ornamental, in retail. The buyers of remnants of silk tissue and of woollen and linen cloth, at the workshops, saw a margin of profit on sales of such things in the open market. The doffings, cuttings, and waste of materials had their values, and old clothes and rags, with cuttings of fur and hide became negotiable assets.

Buyers too went about purchasing the woven and knitted work of industrious housewives.

Very many objects exposed for sale by the Apothecaries appeared to fall under the category of "Odds and Ends," hence, a certain number of traders came into market daily as pedlars or barterers.

In some of these avocations,—for example, silk and cloth remnants, articles of clothing, strips of leather, etc. etc.—a goodly fortune might be amassed. Sons of merchants and merchants too themselves entered largely into these new lines of trade, and the estimation in which such dealers were held grew, until the necessity of union for the mutual defence of common interests was obvious.

Conditions of life and occupation in old Florence were surprisingly like those which rule our time. Men made fortunes "round the corner," and in all sorts of unwonted ways, and out of all kinds of unexpected sources. The knowing how and what to buy was an initial desideratum for every salesman, whether he were an opulent "*Calimala*" merchant, or an indigent hawker of haberdashery.

The "*Arte de' Rigattieri*"—the Guild of Retail-Dealers—was first incorporated in 1266, and received its banner—charged half red, half white. With it was incorporated the "*Arte de' Linaiuoli*" —"the Guild of Linen Drapers."

At the same date the place of the Guild in the order of precedence, was fixed—immediately after the "Masters of Stone and Wood," or twelfth in rank; and consequently, when the Five Intermediate Guilds were called into conference with the Greater Guilds, the "*Arte de' Rigattieri*" was always included. This distinction of position however was rather depreciated by the fact that the Retail-Dealers were regarded as a "Sandwich" Guild, and a link with the Nine Lesser Guilds.

The Consuls of the Guild are named as voting in 1293 among the Consuls of the *twelve* Greater Guilds. Statutes of "*L'Arte de' Rigattieri della Magnifica Citta di Firenze*,"—to give

the Guild its full official and courtly title,—were drafted in 1295, and were amended and adopted in the following year.[1]

The *Codex Membranaceo*,[2] under date March 1295, has two manuscripts, numbered respectively "No. 1" and "No. 19." The former contains the Statutes, etc., of the *Rigattieri*, *Linaiuoli*, *Sarti*, and *Venditori di panne*, and begins with the dedication:—"In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. This is made and composed in honour of Almighty God, of the Virgin and St. John the Baptist, by the men who are Consuls and Rectors of the '*Arte del' Ementium*' (Remnant-dealers?), vendors of cloth, and vendors of fur linings."

The manuscript is well written, as are most of the records of the period, but the language employed—that also common to all—is a mixture of base Latin with many abbreviations and local colloquialities, almost, if not quite, undecipherable.

The earlier sections of the manuscript deal, as usual, with the Statutes and rules for the election of Consuls and other Guild officers. One rubric deals with apprentices convicted of theft, who were visited by a fine of twenty-five gold florins and the cancelling of their indentures.

Several rubrics prescribe observances at the burial of members—such as the burning of ceremonial candles in the chamber of death, the display of banners, with arms of the Guild and of the family,—at the doors of the deceased's house, etc. etc.

*Sarti*—tailors—are specially named in the manuscript. They are not to make or use stuff mixed with *Struppa* (*stoppa*)—fine hemp or tow,—and *Bambix* (*bambagia*)—coarse cotton, such as was used for lamp wicks. In short, "*Sartia mista*,"—mixtures,—of every sort were forbidden.

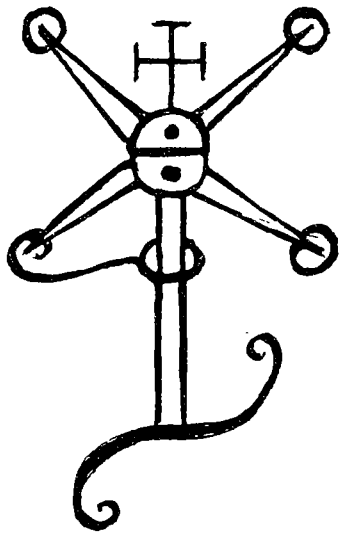
The second manuscript is the document dealing with, and settling, the purchase of a house—it is entitled "*Compra de residenza de Rigattieri*," etc.; but it goes on to name the *Linaiuoli*, the flax weavers,—as the actual owners of the property on behalf of

[1] "Le Consulte," iii. 396.

[2] Archivio di Firenze.

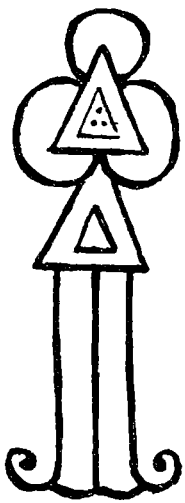
the united trades of "*Rigattieri, Venditori di panj-linj, Linaiuolj e Sartj.*"

The signatures at the end of the Code of Statutes are crosses, more or less ornamental, with the names of the Consuls written underneath in a different hand—quite suggestive of the inability of these *Magnificos* to append their own signatures!



EGO JACOBUS, INDEX APPROBATORO ET OFFICIATOR FLOR

"*Mark*" *of a Consul of* "*The Guild of Retail or Second-Hand Dealers*"



CONSULONI JACOBI DI CIONIS

"*Mark*" *of a Consul of* "*The Guild of Retail or Second-Hand Dealers*"

These Statutes of the Guild were revised in 1317 and further additions were made in 1323 and in 1326. At the revision of the Statutes in 1415, the following rubrics, among many others, were enacted with respect to the Guild.

Any one selling woollen cloth or *Sargia d'Irlanda,*—Irish frieze,—was required to use not only the *Canna* measure of the "*Calimala,*" but also the *Passetto,*—yard measure of the Market. This regulation was rendered necessary by reason of the custom

of selling fine cloth when fully stretched. Breaches of this rule laid the offenders under a penalty of one hundred *lire*.[1]

The Retail-dealers were not allowed to sell *Zendado*—the richest silk taffeta, or *Imbacciacinato*—highly-raised brocade, to any of the *Popolo Minuto*. The fine for infraction was fifty *lire*, which was accompanied by the withdrawal of the selling license of the dealer, and the confiscation of the illicit merchandise.[2]

Retail-dealers,—called frequently members of the "*Arte de' Boldagiori*"—were allowed to sell woollen cloths of the following descriptions—*Romagniuolo*—Roman wove, *Bigello*—frieze, *Burello*—coarse cloth, *Cremonense*—Cremona wove, *Pignolati*—fine linen, and all other kinds except redressed foreign cloths, whether manipulated in Florence, Milan or elsewhere. They were forbidden to sell pouches stamped or decorated, caps, belts, fine silk scarves, veils and any sort of stuff of greater weight than one pound. Small metal basins, mortars, pieces of ivory and other small articles were to be sold at so much the pound weight.[3]

With the Retail-dealers and Linen-drapers were generally classed *Pennaiuoli* — stationers, *Copertolari* — coverlet-sellers, *Farsettori*—doublet-makers, and *Coltellinai*—cutlers, together with Dealers in raw flax, hemp, canvas, and string nets. Their shops were not to be opened before the ringing of the bell for matins, and had to be shut before the stroke of four in the afternoon.[4]

All tailors were directly under the jurisdiction of the *Ufficiali della Grascia*,—the Surveyors of Markets and Trades,—who carefully inspected and noted the quantities and qualities of cloth—woollen and linen—which they had in their shops. Not only so but the price which they were permitted to charge for each garment they made was fixed, and upon each value a certain tax was levied by the State. For example a *Roba*,—robe of red fine cloth,—paid five *lire*; a *Cottardita*,—tunic of blue cloth,—three *lire*; a *gammurra*,—petticoat with stitching in front and buttonholes behind,—two *lire*, five *soldi*; a *Guarnello*,—a fustian gown for a

[1] Statuti C. e P. Florentiæ, 1415, Rub. xliii.
[2] Rub. xliv., 1415.
[3] Rub. xlv., 1415.
[4] Rub. xcix., 1415.

woman open at the front,—one *lira*, fifteen *soldi*; a *Giubba*,—jerkin with folds or tucks,—four *lire*, five *soldi*; a *Villano*,—cloth cloak with a turn-down collar or hood,—one *lira*; a *Tagliatura*,—a pair of trousers made of cloth,—seven *soldi*; a *Gonnella*,—a pair of trousers made of thin linen and lined,—one *lira*, fifteen *soldi*, and so on.[1]

No tailor was allowed to put in pawn woollen or linen cloth, or cloth of mixed wool and flax,—whether cut or uncut,—or any garment,—finished or unfinished,—or anything pertaining to the Craft. Fines of twenty-five *lire*, and above, were inflicted, not only upon the spendthrift tailor, but upon any person who accepted the pledge.[2]

Fraudulent and fugitive tradesmen were of course found in connection with all the Guilds, but possibly the "*Arte de' Rigattieri*" furnished the largest proportion of such unfortunate persons. When such a man fell on evil days, he not only suffered himself, but the partners in his business and his family also were declared delinquent, and mulcted in penalties. A case in point is recorded in the Archives under date January 17, 1330, when the partners of a merchant and artificer in the trade of the "Guild of Second-hand Dealers," for the sale of old remnants of woollen cloth and of linen cloth, belonging to the *popoli* of Santa Cecilia, who had become bankrupt, are declared outlaws.[3]

The Retail-dealers were allowed to keep in stock, and sell the following descriptions of goods :—[4]

| | |
|---|---|
| *Panni Milanese e Bresciano* . | Milanese and Brescia cloths. |
| *Bigelli Romagniuoli* . . . | Roman friezes, plain and coloured. |
| *Giubboni e Farsetti* . . . | Doublets and under vests. |
| *Coltre e Coltroni* . . . | Coverlets and quilts. |
| *Panni lini-tinti* . . . | Cloths with coloured threads. |
| *Berrette e Cappelli* . . . | Caps and hats. |
| *Calze, Calzini e Calzone* . . | Stockings, socks, and drawers. |

[1] Rub. lxxii., 1415.
[2] Rub. lxxii., 1415.
[3] Archivio del Stato Fiorentino, "della Riforma."
[4] Cantini x., p. 66.

| | |
|---|---|
| *Feltri e Baracani* . . . | Felt cloaks and capes. |
| *Tappeti e Celoni* . . . | Table cloths and striped tester-stuffs |
| *Sargie* . . . . . | Coarse serges for men's garments. |
| *Spalliere* . . . . . | Tapestry hangings, and chair backs. |
| *Ciambellotti e Mocaiardi* . . | Camlets and hair-cloths. |
| *Dobbletti* . . . . . | Stuffs with cotton and flax mixtures. |
| *Saie e Rense* . . . . | Light serges and cambrics. |

and many other kinds of woollen materials.

It was permitted also to deal in all kinds of silken goods and in sewing silks. Ivy-berries — for the red dye called *grana*, dried kermes,—whence the crimson dye *chermisi* was derived, gold and silver—in cakes, powder, flake, and leaf. Pearls and jewellery of all kinds, veils, thin capes, and fichus, every sort of gilt leather and tinsel work, were also exposed for sale. Many other objects, far too numerous to mention, but still each with the special permission of the Council of State, and under the direction of the Consuls and officials of the Guild, were allowed to be sold by the *Rigattieri*.

. . . . . .

### B. *L'Arte de' Linaiuoli*

Linen is probably the oldest manufactured material for domestic use in existence. Thousands of years ago the art of weaving linen cloth was known and practised in India, Egypt and Greece. Linen was known too to the peoples of the Stone age and to the Lake dwellers. The Romans held flax in high esteem for personal clothing.

Apuleius, the wise old monk of the fifth century, says sententiously :—" Wool, the excretion of a sluggish body taken from a sheep, was deemed a profane attire even in the times of Orpheus and Pythagoras ; but flax—that cleanest production of the field, is rightly used for the inmost clothing of man."

Every monastery on the plains of Italy had its flax patch, and the monks encouraged the peasants around them to cultivate the useful little plant, with its thin verdant blade and delicate blue flower. The Religious, further, engaged themselves everywhere in the manufacture of linen-thread and cloth, and gave instruction to their neighbours in the mysteries of the craft.

Sacristies of churches became treasuries of fine linen, for, by Canon Law, this material was exclusively prescribed in the ritual of the Mass and for other functions.

From the point, too, of domestic economy, linen was known to be practically indestructible, consequently noble and peasant alike had in it the most durable material for ordinary uses.

The cultivation of flax was very general in the Vale of Arno all through the period of the Renaissance. In extent it vied with that of the vine and the olive, but it far exceeded both in the intelligence and labour demanded by its cultivators. Special methods of tillage, manuring, sowing, and harvesting, were in operation which have remained until to-day.[1]

The four processes of harvest were as follows: 1. *Pulling*—The plant being in boll and browned was pulled up by the roots—never cut; 2. *Rippling*—the bolls were removed on the field by a combing-frame with iron teeth. Two men were engaged together—one gathered up the seeds, the other the stalks; 3. *Retting*—two kinds, water and dew. In the first, pure water from the Arno was used, without any addition of lime or iron. The stalks of the flax were laid flat in bundles, in hollowed out dams or pits, four feet in depth. On the top of the last layer a cover of fresh cut rushes was laid, over which were placed heavy stones. Fermentation quickly set in when the fibre and the stalk became separated—the sheath falling away. The dew *Retting* required that the bundles of flax should be opened and spread upon close growing grass, without any protection from sun, wind, and rain, and in full contact with air and dew. This was, of course, a tedious process, and only resorted to by the less enterprising

[1] Encyclopædia Britannica, "Flax," 1900.

harvesters; 4. *Scutching*—the fibre of the flax was separated by hand from the wood or stalk, and then passed between grooved wooden or iron rollers, which required very careful adjustment to avoid, on the one hand, matted skeins, or lumps, and on the other, the too complete crushing of the flax, which resulted in a breakage of fibre and the production of lint. Flax thus treated was ready to be placed upon the market. In the fourteenth century the average price for one hundred pounds weight of raw flax was five gold florins.[1]

The first mention of the "Guild of Linen-Manufacturers" seems to be in 1236, when the "*Arte de' Linaiuoli*" was placed sixteenth in the Hierarchy of the Guilds. Probably it was the offspring of a humble association of flax growers and linen-thread spinners.

An early notice of the linen industry is found in the Florentine Archives of the same year—1236—when Guido, Abbot of Coltibuono, received from Iacopo son of Bellioto dei Albertischi a loan of one hundred and fifty *lire*, for the payment of a debt due to Buonosegno Malcristiano, who had sold the crops, which fed the Abbot's household, and which furnished flax for their clothing.

At the reformation of the Guild Statutes in 1266, the name of the Guild does not appear: but the "*Arte de' Rigattieri*" is scheduled. Again in the revision of 1280-1282 the "*Arte de' Regattieri*" figures but no "*Arte de' Linaiuoli.*"

There is a record in the Florentine State Archives of the year 1294 of a Company of four merchants trading in *lino*—flax, *accia*—hemp, *stoppa*—oakum, *capecchi*—flocks, and every sort of material for the manufacture of linen, and in all things pertaining to the trade. This firm had one warehouse in the house of the Cipriani family of the *popolo* of San Pietro Bonconsiglio, another in the house of Petracchio de' Cipriani and his partners of the *popolo* of Sant' Andrea, and a third in the house of the Admidei of the *popolo* of San Stefani. Each partner in the business contributed one hundred and fifty *lire* to the capital—the senior member of the firm bore the name of Matteo di Beliotto.[2]

[1] Peruzzi, Alberti Accounts, p. 367.
[2] Davidssohn, "Geschichte von Florenz," p. 49.

At the General Revision of the Statutes of all the Guilds—1301-1309—there was still no mention of the old "*Arte de' Linaiuoli*"; but in 1340 there appeared a body of regulations and laws for the "Guild of Linen-Manufacturers." These, which were based upon the common model of the Statutes of the "*Calimala* Guild," were accepted unanimously by the workers in flax.

Between 1340 and 1350, the Guild was exceedingly flourishing, and the manufacturers of linen shared in the general prosperity of the city to such an extent, that negotiations were set on foot for inclusion amongst the Greater Guilds.

The Consuls and the Council of the Guild undertook a searching revision of the Statutes of the Guild. The result of their labours was a disappointment for the ambitious aims of the members, for they were denied admittance among the Seven Great Guilds, and had to be content with union with the twelfth guild in order, that of the "*Arte di Rigattieri.*"

All the same the *Linaiuoli* retained the right to elect their own officers, without restriction of any kind, and to put forth bye-laws for the observance of the members, irrespective of their articles of association with the "Guild of Retail-Dealers."

Matriculation into the Guild was conducted upon the same terms as in the Greater Guilds—so far as *men* were concerned; but, unlike them, *women* were admitted to full privileges and duties. The fees upon matriculation were, for candidates residing in the city, twenty-eight *lire*: for those living in the *Contado*, fourteen *lire.*

The officers, in 1342 and onwards, included two Consuls, one Chancellor and two *Provveditori*—Managers. Two leading agriculturist members were appointed *Veditori delle Coltrici*—Inspectors of the flax-beds. They not only inspected the seed, the soil, and the labour, but also made agreements with the Custom-House officials with respect to the *Dogana* duties payable by growers. They delivered written agreements to the landed proprietors and to the peasants which were endorsed by the custodians of the Gates of the city. These documents dealt with the weights and condition

of the bundles of cut flax. In busy years when the area under cultivation was extended, assistant *Veditori* were elected.[1]

The Staff of the Guild was further augmented by the appointment of six *Misuratori*,—Surveyors of Weights and Measures,—at the flax-grounds, at the Gates, and in the Market: they were generally chosen from the smaller manufacturers of linen. *Stimatori*,—Valuers,—generally two in number, were elected to examine the peasants' pledges, as the rightful growers of the flax cut for sale, to appraise the value of the beaten flax, and, in disputes about the quality of the linen-cloth, to decide its value. The officials of the Guild also included four *Donzelli*—Porters, who were specially employed at the Residence and Office of the Consuls.

As in the case of the sister industries the growers of flax and the manufacturers of linen suffered from the existence and intrusion of *Sensali* or Middle-men. These agents, as we might call them, or brokers received the reports of the *Stimatori*, and fixed the actual sale-prices of raw beaten flax and of spun thread and woven linen—whether of native or of foreign origin. They were bound by the articles of their admission, as *Sensali*, to render copies of such values each month to the Consuls for their official approval.

No flax-worker was permitted to purchase the raw produce direct from the grower, but only through six senior *Sensali* appointed by the Consuls—sales of linen came under a similar regulation. Breaches of these bye-laws were visited severely—fines were enforced of from one *lire* twenty-five *piccioli* for a first offence, to one hundred *lire* in an aggravated case.

The *Sensali* appear to have been unusually tenacious of their rights and of their fees; and *Provvisioni*, and *Bandi*—provisions and cautions — were constantly enacted for or against their interests. Every piece of linen-cloth woven in Florence required the official stamp of the Guild, and a *bullettino* or label had to be attached, marked with the length, width, quality, and any special points. Imported pieces required also the seal of the Custom-House authorities, and only cloth so marked was permitted to be

[1] Cantini, viii. 286, etc.

sold. Any Retail-dealer, or salesman, offering other cloth pieces or linen-thread, became liable to fines ranging from five *lire* upwards according to the gravity or craftiness of his offence.

Localities where the manufacture might be carried on, and where stalls or shops for the sale of linen-cloth and thread might be opened, were fixed by the Consuls. The neighbourhood of the church of San Lorenzo and the Via dei Servi were particularly set apart for the prosecution of the linen industry. Public sales were held, in the Market, each Wednesday and Saturday.

In the fifteenth century fustian cotton-cloth was used for church chasubles. The Cistercian Order of Monks were forbidden to wear any other kind. Fustian was also generally in vogue for doublets and jackets for laymen.

In the process of manufacture in Florence, the spindle, upon which the thread spun from the distaff, or rack, was run, was usually about twelve inches in length. After the application of the bobbin, a whorl of stone, or glazed terra-cotta, was fixed upon the top of the spindle to give steadiness in the rotatory movement. These whorls were often enough the handiwork of artistic persons, indeed such great masters as the Della Robbia did not disdain to mould, paint and glaze them beautifully for such of their lady friends as desired to make their spinning-wheels ornamental. Very many such objects are to be found in all art collections, but unknowingly they have been labelled "Terra-Cotta *Beads*"!

Graceful kindred industries also sprang up, and women of leisure, as well as ordinary workers in linen-thread, took up the art of Lace-making. In this very soon the nuns were acknowledged as proficient teachers. Their work was known in the Market as "*punto tagliato*"—"cut point," because bits of the linen base were cut out, and the holes worked with needle and thread. Flax-thread and silk-tissue were generally used for ordinary laces, but a very delicate fibre,—that of the aloe,—and withal strong, was preferred for the finest work. This aloe thread is used to-day for sewing the well-known Florentine show plaits together.

Agnolo Firenzuola in his "*Elegia sopra uno Collaretto*" in 1520

speaks much of "*scolpi*"—carved in relief—really highly raised point-lace, which was not only woven, or handmade upon cushions, but was further subjected to the points of fine scissors, and cut to add to its sculpturesque appearance.

Catherine de' Medici, when she entered Paris as a bride, introduced Florentine point, which became a perfect rage at the French court. A sister of Francis I., in 1545, purchased "*soixante aulnes fine dantelle de Florence*," and Madame Elizabeth de France, upon her marriage with Philip II., in 1559, added to her trousseau, "*passements et de bisette en fil blanc de Florence.*"

At the great upheaval of society in 1378 caused by the Rising of the *Ciompi*, very many groups of aspiring craftsmen came to the front. In the Second Operative Guild, established under Michael Lando's auspices, an *Arte*, or *Associazione de' Linaiuoli*—"Association of Flax Weavers"—took an active part under the common banner of "*Giustizia.*" These people doubtless were only workers in flax and linen, not merchants or manufacturers. This organisation was a further proof of the importance of the industry, and of the prosperity of the "Guild of Linen-Manufacturers."

The Residence of the Consuls and the General Offices of the two United Guilds was in the large Casa d' Anzio in the Piazza de Sant' Andrea at the corner of the Mercato Vecchio. In 1387 the foundation stone of a fine new building was laid, and the edifice, when completed, became the headquarters of the "*Arte e Universita de Rigattieri, e Linaiuoli, e Sarti*"—as was then the title,—with armorial escutcheons above the principal door. The arms were very simple, just a shield divided longitudinally into two halves, red and white. The Audience Hall was one of the most noble in the city, and was full of marble statuary, wood-carvings, and polychromatic decorative painting by rising artists. A Guild record of 1466 is preserved which says the Residence "is splendidly adorned with every artistic treasure."

The shops of Guild members, and their private rooms also, were remarkable for their elegance and rich decoration. The wealth of the Guild was further attested by the commission

DOORWAY OF THE RESIDENCE OF THE CONSULS OF THE GUILD OF RETAIL-DEALERS AND LINEN-MANUFACTURERS

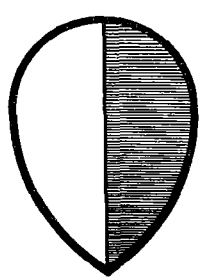
THE SHIELDS BEAR THE ARMS (1) THE PEOPLE, (2) THE POPL, (3) THE CITY, (4) THE "PARTE GUELFA"

confided to Donatello in 1411, and to Fra Giovanni Angelico in 1433, for the enrichment of Or San Michele.

At the last general reform of the Guilds, in 1415, the union of the two Guilds was still effective although the name of the *Linaiuoli* did not appear. This arrangement and nomenclature —"*Arte de' Rigattieri*"—continued until the year 1534.

During all these strenuous years the flax industry of Florence had made remarkable progress, keeping well abreast of the general development and prosperity. Quite late however in the industrial history of the City of Merchants, the Linen-Manufacturers came, in a sense, to their own. At the end of the last-named year, under the rule of the Medici, there blossomed forth the "*Universita de' Linaiuoli*"—"the University of Linen-drapers," and the Guild, which had for three hundred years hidden its name, now came to the front and dominated a union of Lesser Guilds: the *Vinattieri*—Wine-merchants, *Albergatori*—Innkeepers, the *Sarti* —Tailors, and its senior in the long partnership—the *Rigattieri.*

The Guild continued to flourish until 1537, when the new order of things, introduced by the Medici, greatly altered and modified the character of the industry of Florence. Facilities and monopolies were created and abolished, at almost one and the same time. The march of new ideas, and the introduction of new methods, sounded the death-knell of the old shopkeepers. One by one their shutters went up, and Guild-life was extinct.



"*Stemma dell' Arte de' Rigattieri*"
Half white, half red

## CHAPTER XII

# THE GUILDS OF WINE-MERCHANTS, AND INN-KEEPERS, AND TANNERS

### *LE ARTI DE' VINATTIERI, E DEGLI ALBERGATORI, E DE' GALIGAI*

I. WINE-MERCHANTS.—The famous red wine of Tuscany. Cultivation of the vine. Early barterings. Pergolas. First wine-seller, 1070. Growers and consumers. First tavern-keeper, 1189. Rectors in 1291. Two casks of wine only: Red—White. Measures. Drinking-shops limited. Wine-presses. Utensils duly stamped. Wine-merchants not to sell food. Time limits. Wooden casks. Famous members of the Guild. Sir Richard Dallington's observations. Sorts of Grapes. Processes. The Vintage. Favourite wines. Festivals.

II. INN-KEEPERS.—Hostels and Inns indispensable. Reception of embassies. Commercial travellers, etc. *Albergatori Maggiori.* First Innkeeper, 1211. Distinction between taverns and inns. Early Roll of Matriculation. *Camere Locande* taxed. *Dogana.* Triennial tenure of premises. Monopoly of foreign wines. The *Canto degli Speziali.* Sign—a bottle of wine. Rules affecting lodgers. Supply of food. Pack-mules. Games. Ancient inns and hostelries. Cooks and cooking. Supper clubs. Sandro Botticelli, Andrea del Sarto, and Giovanni Boccaccio—good fellows. *La Cena Fiorentina.* Costly Banquets. Boiled peacocks and roasted cranes. Cook's fees.

III. TANNERS.—Natural elements:—Animals, oaks, marsh-mallows. The father of Florentine tanners. *Filii Galigai.* Guild expenses. Precedence. Various allied Crafts. Relations with other leather Guilds:—Shoemakers, Skinners, etc. *Capitudo.* Agents and their duties. Rules and regulations. No secret work allowed. No tanning within the city bounds. A tanner's outfit. Methods of the trade. Arno douches. Test of dryness. Parchment-making. *Cartolari.* Bookbinding. Tomasso Maioli. Boiled leather work—*Cuoio lesso*—for armour. Block-stamping.

## I. L'ARTE DE' VINATTIERI

"TUSCANY is pre-eminently fitted for agriculture" was an old and trite saying; so, also in a special sense, were her soil and climate suited for the cultivation of the Vine. The undulating character of the ground, with its rolling uplands,

averaging four hundred feet or so above the sea, is that most desirable for the perfection of the grape.

The red wine of Tuscany is the most generous and the most famous of all the vine products of the world, and, when it is added that the neighbourhood of Florence yields more than one-half of all this rich vintage, the importance to her of the vine will be at once apparent.

The cultivation of this invaluable plant in primitive times was very uncertain. Whilst cereal crops may be raised with little difficulty amid scenes of political unrest and combats of contending forces of armed men, fruits of all sorts require periods of tranquillity and fixture of tenure to come to maturity.

Such was the condition of affairs in Tuscany all through the Middle Ages. The vine however was indigenous in the Vale of Arno and grew wild up the hill sides. Men, as they trudged along upon warlike expeditions, or on peaceful errands, plucked the luscious bunches to quench their thirst. If only a short respite was afforded, during the ripening of the fruit, its expression filled the ample skins and bulky gourds of the wayfarers with crude but refreshing wine.

When times became more settled, and the peasantry were left with some measure of freedom, one here and another there turned his attention to the wild vine, which threw its trailing branches across his land and over his habitation. The labourer who digged and dunged, pruned and watered, tasted with zest the rich fruit of his toil.

Owners and landlords were quick to see the possibilities of this harvest, and encouraged their farm servants in its development; indeed, some of these worthies, with instincts keen for commercial enterprises, took in hand a thorough system of cultivation with the view to profitable sales. The law of *Mezzaria*,—"going halves,"—was observed in the matter of grape-culture—the first half going to the land-owner, the second to the labourer-farmer.

The year's produce in early days, doubtless rejoiced the hearts of the owners and producers, first of all, and what was

to spare, they bartered or sold immediately to their neighbours or their friends in the city or elsewhere. A commerce so primitive in its inception speedily developed as harvest followed harvest, and vine growers' gains bulked larger in their year's accounts as they added to their vineyard occupations the business of wine-merchants in the city.

The methods adopted in the thirteenth century or even earlier, were almost exactly those which prevail to-day generally. Where the vine grew there it remained. With the least amount of labour the plants were trained up growing tree stems, and where these were absent *Testucchi*,—testers or wooden supports,—were fixed under the weighty branches. These were of two kinds—espaliers or lengths of trellis work, and single posts stuck up at certain distances apart.

In the vineyards of the richer proprietors the *Testucchi* gave way to substantial stone or brick pillars, to which the name of *Pergole* was given. In either case the plant was allowed to grow as it willed, forming a distinctive and characteristic note of beauty in the landscape. It was encouraged too to yield as many bunches of grapes as possible; the art of lopping or close pruning being unknown to the Tuscan vinegrowers.

The situation and the aspect of the vineyard excited a mighty influence upon the yield both in quality and quantity. On the hill terraces, which were made with infinite care and patience, the grapes produced a drier and more alcoholic wine than on the lowlands. A Southern aspect made for a sweeter and richer vintage.

At first probably the people in the Mercato Vecchio brought in and sold their vintages along with their other country produce. There sprang up gradually the custom of separating wine from the market commodities, and the opening of shops specially concerned in its sale. Each important landowner found this a convenient way of dealing with his proportion of the year's yield, and either he occupied a wine-shop himself, or appointed some friend or other to open one. In this way no

doubt the business of wine-merchant came into existence. The first record of such an individual in the Archives of the city is as follows:—"1070—*Paganus, qui vocatur vinadro*"—Wine-seller.

Whether this good man had what we call a license, who can say, but apparently he sold only beverages in his little wine-shop: and we must regard him—for want of earlier records—as the father of Florentine Wine-merchants. Paganus had many followers, whose names figure in the Archives, but at the end of the twelfth century there is a novel entry:—"1189 —*Marcellus — tabernarius*" — Tavern-keeper. This worthy citizen, unlike his neighbour of the wine-shop, sold both food and drink. He was an important personage in the estimation of his fellows, and for want of a scion of earlier pedigree must be held as the first eating-house keeper in Florentine history.

Thus by the end of the twelfth century there were two distinct classes of sellers of wine alike dependent upon the produce of the vintage. The year 1211 however reveals a third class by an entry in the Archives:—"*Servodeo—osste*"—Host or landlord—the first recorded parent of the Innkeeper proper.

Not much can be gathered from the Statutes, which have been spared destruction, of the exact Constitution of the Guild. The first mention of Officers is in a petition which the *Rettori* presented on April 3rd, 1291, at the Council of State, seeking the refunding of a sum of money due to the Guild as a rebate of a tax lately paid.[1]

Certainly the Guild followed the example of the other Guilds and adopted, early in the fourteenth century, many of the Statutes enacted for the "*Calimala*" Guild, at the same time adding such rubrics of a special character, as were necessary for the efficiency of the Guild, and for the well-being of its members. In the years 1339 and 1341 alterations and additions were made in the Statutes, and a Register of Matriculation, down to the year 1335, has been preserved.

[1] "Le Consulte," ii. 177.

One of the earlier enactments was to the effect that Wine-merchants were forbidden to have broached at the same time more than two casks of wine in their vaults or cellars for retail use. The casks had a fixed capacity, and were ordered to hold, one red, and the other, white wine. Wine in quantities was usually sold by the barrel or cask. Two casks made up the burden of a pack-horse or mule. The highest liquid measure in Florence was called *Cogno*—and was equal to ten casks.

The general revision of Guild Statutes in 1415 contained rubrics enacted for the benefit of "the Guild of Wine-Merchants," and many of these are interesting.

The porch of San Giovanni Battista was a favourite lounging-place for the poorer sort of people and for beggars. Wine-merchants were strictly forbidden to sell wine and other beverages therein or within a distance of fifty yards.[1]

Wine-merchants were not allowed to have vine-pits or presses within the city bounds nor vats for unfermented grape juice. They were not permitted to treat grapes or wine-mash with water or other liquids, anywhere where smell or waste would cause a nuisance.[2]

Every utensil, jug, and measure, required to be stamped with the arms of the city, and to bear upon it the quantity it held, whether *Terzeruola*—quart, *Metreta*—pint or *Mezzetta*—gill. Failure to observe this rubric led to a fine of one hundred *soldi*.

Wine-shops were forbidden to take in travellers, and to sell beverages to be drunk on the premises. They were not to supply bread, wine, meat, cooked fish, or any other comestible. Sellers of wine were not allowed to stand opposite the Palace of the Priors, and the House of the Captain of the People, nor within a distance of two hundred arm's-lengths. No wine-shop was permitted in the neighbourhood of the Monastery of San Giovanni Evangelista.[3]

No private person who sold wine to the poorer people was

[1] Rub. lxxxv., 1415. [2] Rub. lxxxvi., 1415. [3] Rub. xc., 1415.

AT AN INN

FOURTEENTH CENTURY

NOTE:—THE *SPONTELLO*—WITH GLASSES READY, AND THE REGULATION TWO BARRELS OF WINE—RED AND WHITE

allowed to provide food also,—whether in the city or in the *Contado*,—either in a retail wine-shop or in his own house. Any one selling wine to citizens after the final stroke of the Compline bell incurred a penalty of one hundred *lire*. The sale of provisions was forbidden also within fifty arm's-lengths of any wine-shop or wine-cellar.[1]

Wine-merchants and tavern-keepers were not allowed to have on the front of their premises bushes or signs, either of laurel, olive, or of any other tree.[2] Wines both new and old were ordered to be transported in wooden barrels. Each barrel required the official seal of the Podesta.[3]

No victualler was permitted to make or to buy unfermented wine or crude wines fortified with spirit during the time of vintage and up to the feast of All Saints, under a penalty of ten *lire*; and no wine merchant or innkeeper could sell such beverages to the public before that festival.[4]

From the Registers of Matriculation of 1335 and 1415 may be learnt how that the following families of Wine-merchants, among many others, gave their sons to the membership of the guild:—Albizzi, Ricasoli, Strozzi, and Guicciardini, of Florence proper,—Niccolini, of Carmignano,—Pucci, of Siena and also of Val d'Elsa,—Salviati, of Pisa,—Toscanelli, of Pontedera,—Cocconi, of Montepulciano,—and Caspelli, of Pontascieve. These names are interesting, not only in themselves, but as indicative of the wide diffusion of the members of the Guild. They were in truth landed gentry, who owned many acres of vineyards and olive orchards, and who engaged in the profitable and agreeable trade of Wine-merchants at the same time.

. . . . . .

In the first List of Guilds, in 1236, we find *vinadro*, *tabernarius*, *osste*, all merged in the "*Arte de' Vinattieri*"—"The Guild of Wine-Merchants." This association continued for fifty years,—for the nomenclature of the Guild remained the same in

[1] Rub. xci., 1415.
[2] Rub. cclxiv., 1415.
[3] Rub. cclxxi., 1415.
Rub. clxxxiii., 1415.

that important year of reform, 1266,—and the Guild was reckoned the thirteenth in order in both lists.

Under the year 1267 there is a curious entry in the Archives, which indicates a sort of fusion of the Guilds of Bakers, Wine-Merchants, and Innkeepers. For some purpose, not distinctly stated, "Ciprianus Pane, son of Vincente, a Tavern-keeper of the *sestiere* of St Pancrazio, late Rector of the said Guilds, was appointed Syndic by the votes of twenty-three members of the Guilds, and in the name of the absent members, to negotiate a loan of forty-two pounds from Giovanni Alboni Bilicozi of the *sestiere* of Oltrarno.[1]

The first cleavage in the constitution of the "Guild of Wine-Merchants" took place in the year 1282, when the Order of the twenty-one Guilds was re-arranged. In the List of Guilds the thirteenth place was still occupied by the "*Arte de' Vinattieri*," but the fourteenth was occupied by a perfectly new Corporation with the title "*Arte degli Albergatori Maggiori*"—"Guild of the Greater Innkeepers." Probably the sale of victuals was proved to be inconvenient in the wine-shops, or possibly the influx of strangers required to be dealt with on a larger and more enterprising scale.

The order of 1282 was maintained at all the subsequent revisions of the Statutes until 1539, when in the fourth University established by the Grand Duke Cosimo I. were included the "Guilds of Retail-Drapers and Linen-Manufacturers," "Wine-Merchants," and "Innkeepers," under the style of "*Universita e Arte de' Linaiuoli*."

The Residence of the Consuls of the Guild was next the side-door of the Church of San Stefano, in Via de' Lamberteschi. Over the entrance was, as usual, stuck up a shield with the Guild arms:—a blue cup in a white field; and the same badge figured upon the Gonfalon confided to the Guild Standard-bearer in 1266.

Sir Richard Dallington,—that most worthy traveller and most interesting historian,—records many matters dealing with the

[1] Archivio Fiorentino, SS. Annunziata.

THE VINTAGE DURING THE RENAISSANCE

NOTE:—THE TESTUCCHI SUPPORTING THE VINES

cultivation of the vine. He says that "Grapes were, in the sixteenth century, a very important item in the dietary of the Tuscan country people. In August and September they eat their grapes, with the leaves they feed their oxen and dung the land, upon the pips their pigeons feed, and even the strippings of the plant they riddle out and sell at twenty *soldi* the *staio*. The Vine-dressers used to hang up the bunches of grapes in the *Palco*, or roof, of their dwellings, and keep them to eat in Lent."

"There are divers sorts of grapes, the names of such as I remember are these:—*Uva Canaiuola*, good either to eate or for wine; *Passerina*, a small grape, whereof sparrows feed, good only for wine; *Trebbiana*, the best sort of white grapes for wine, whereof they make them *Vino Trebbiano*; *Zibibbo*, dryed for Lent; *Moscatella*, with a taste like muske, not for wine but to eate; *Uva Grossa*, not to eate nor for wine, but a few of these put among a great vessell of wine, giveth it a colour, for which it only serveth; *San Columbana* and *Rimaldesca*, a very delicate grape, either for wine or to eate; *Lugliola*, which hath his name of the month of July, wherein it is ripe, better to eate than for wine; lastly, *Cerisiana*, named for the taste it hath like a cherry, better for wine than to eate."[1]

So far as may be gathered from scattered notices in many authorities the gathering of the vintage was very much the same in Tuscany, in the Renaissance, as it is to-day. On the first day the peasants of the estate, and hired labourers from the city, accompanied the Vine-growers, with shears and baskets, into the vineyards.

White grapes were picked first, and left to dry in the sun for some weeks, until the juice began to drop from them. This was the *Vino Santo*—the favourite white wine of honour, and that prescribed for use in the Mass.

The best black grapes were cut and left to ferment by themselves, whilst those of inferior quality were cast into big wooden vats. When full the vats were drawn by white oxen to the vat-house, where, twice a day, for a week, bare-legged

[1] Sir R. Dallington, "Survey," p. 32.

lads and lassies stamped and danced, upon the fruit, to their hearts' content. The first draughts of this expressed juice, which had of course been fermenting all the time, were poured over the richer black clusters placed carefully in the winepress, whilst the rest of the mixture, called "*il Primo Vino*," was the beverage of the well-to-do citizens. Second and third qualities were also produced—the latter by the addition of water whence its name "*il Mezzo Vino*" the drink of the common people. The wine-press was of wood strongly though clumsily constructed, with a big wooden screw and flat wooden slabs.

The Florentines of old were a pleasure-loving race despite the many serious traits in their character. Nothing pleased them more than to sit in the wine-shops after their meals, and there to sing and dance, to wager and to drink, to their hearts' content; but, like sensible men, they knew when they had had enough!

The wines most in demand at these jovial scenes were *Vernaccia*, *Leatico*, *Trebbiano*, and *Vino Santo*. They were all sweet and aromatic, and of a rich and flashing golden colour, yet not too potent to interfere with the full enjoyment and exhilaration of their votaries.

To this list must be added the sweet wines of *Montecalcino*, *Pescianico*, and *Verdea*, named by many writers. *Carmignano*, *Pomino*, and *Chianti* were alike celebrated,—the latter grown on the sides of the rocky hills around Siena, both red and astringent, and white and luscious. The wine of *Artimino* had the character of the claret of to-day, whilst *Montepulciano*,—by far the most famous,—combined luscious flavour, with aromatic sharpness and a remarkably brilliant purple colour. The finest blend of Tuscan wine was that which has been held in the highest estimation for more than four hundred years, namely:—7/10 *Sangiogheto* grapes, 2/10 *Canaiuolo* and 1/10 *Malvasia* or *Trebbiano*.

The amount average of wine consumed per annum in Florence in the middle of the fourteenth century was upwards of fifty-five thousand *cogni*—measures containing each ten barrels. In years of public rejoicings the total attained to sixty-five thousand *cogni*.

And wine was cheap in those days. Mazzei[1] says that he had "heard of an entire vineyard offered for sale at sixty gold florins!" The wine served to the Priors during their tenure of office cost only thirty gold florins (£15), a sum marking the moderation of their Magnificences!

The extraordinary love of the Florentines for fixing and regulating quantities, qualities, weights, bulks, prices, etc., descended to the merest trifles. Nothing which could in any way be called a marketable commodity was forgotten. The common cheap drink of the peasantry,—clover juice,—was free in the *Contado* but taxed in the city.[2]

The value of the Vine industry and the wealth of the Wine-merchants were attested in a curious way in the year 1435. During the Patronal Festival of San Giovanni Battista of the previous year, the immense canvas and silk awnings, which had been from early days provided by the "Guild of *Calimala*" to cover over the Piazza di' San Giovanni, were almost completely destroyed by fire. To assist the "*Calimala*" merchants to bear the heavy expense of restoration, a decree of the Council of State was passed on April 14th, 1435, placing, for a space of three years, a tax on all wines sold in barrels in the Piazza del Vino. From each year's gross yield fifty-two gold florins were to be deducted by way of compliment to Messere Bino de' Pecori, Prior of the Monastery of San Piero Scheraggio, and twenty-nine gold florins in payment to the collector of the tax.

## II. L'ARTE DEGLI ALBERGATORI

No symptom of the fame and prosperity of Florence as the Mother of Commerce was more pronounced and characteristic than the inauguration and incorporation of a Guild of "Innkeepers."

The mere hamlet needs no guest house, and the village is satisfied with a modest house of call, but the rising town requires

[1] Mazzei, i. 158, 395.

[2] Perrens' "Histoire de Florence," vi. 492.

to lodge the visitors who wish to spend some time within her walls. This was the condition of affairs created in Florence in consequence of the enterprise of her travelling agents and merchants. Wherever they went trade routes opened, and along their course, hostelries sprang up to meet the needs of passers-by.

Reflexive action was imperative in Florence herself for the reception and entertainment of man and beast—in the form of foreign traders and their equipages. Embassies from other States and cities began to visit the home of industry, intent quite as much upon commercial aims as upon political achievements.

The origin of the "Guild of Innkeepers" is not difficult to trace; its actual incorporation, and its inclusion in the Hierarchy of the Guilds of Florence, took place in the year 1282. Its style was "*Arte degli Albergatori Maggiori*"—"The Guild of Greater Innkeepers," and this is significant.

The first record, of an Innkeeper, in the Archives of Florence, which has been preserved, appears under the date 1211, when one *Servodeo—osste,*—Host, or Innkeeper,—is named. He was probably a superior and prosperous sort of *tabernarius,*—tavern-keeper,—who opened his house specially to such visitors as came to reside for some days at least in the city, and as we say, "catered for a better class of custom."

Up to the year 1282,—as has been related in the history of the "Guild of Wine Merchants,"—Wine Shops for the sale of beverages only, and Taverns for the supply of food and drink sufficed for the needs of the city. They continued to minister to the wants of ordinary strangers, and of citizens of the lower and lower middle classes, whilst the landlords of the more pretentious and roomy Inns set up for a class apart from their former fellow Guildsmen.

Antonio Miscomini in the "*Giuoccho delle Scacchi*" has given a woodcut of the Quene's Alphyns' or Judge's Paune in the person of an Innkeeper of the fifteenth century. "For it is a man," as William Caxton printed in his translation of 1481, "that hath the right hande strached oute as for to calle men, and holdeth in

his lyfte hande a loof of brede and a cuppe of wyn, and on his gurdelle hangythe a bondell of keyes and this resembleth the Taverners, Hostelers and sellars of vitaylle . . . and it apperteyneth to them for to seke and enquyre for good wyns and good vitaylle for to gyve and selle to the byers. It appertyneth to them to kepe their herberowes and innes and all the thynges that they

INN-KEEPER—"DELLAUERNIERE." FIFTEENTH CENTURY

brynge in to theyr loggyuge and for to putte hyt in seure and sauf warde and kepynge, ben represented by the keyes hangynge on ye gurdell. . . ."

. . . . . .

Little can be gathered from the Statutes of the Guild of any special features in the constitution. The Statutes of 1266,—so far as they related to the section of the "Guild of Wine-Merchants," to which Innkeepers belonged,—were approved in 1282. The general revision of the Statutes of the Guilds in 1301-1309, and the additions of 1324 and 1327, made little alteration in the

status or economy of the Guild. Revisions were also undertaken in 1334, 1338, 1357, 1415, 1440, and 1529. There is also in existence a Roll of Matriculations of the year 1353, but most of the documents relating to the origin, and containing the constitutions, were destroyed during the Rising of the *Ciompi* in 1378. From the sources at command we are able to gather some interesting facts, and to obtain some definite knowledge of the working of the Guild.

It appears that Innkeepers were rather hardly dealt with in the matter of taking out what we call licenses. The tax levied by the State upon the *Camere Locande*—lodgings for strangers—as the Inns were sometimes called, was pretty heavy. As many as forty, fifty, and even eighty gold florins were extracted every third year, at which period all Innkeepers were compelled to appear before the officials of the *Dogana* to render up their accounts.[1]

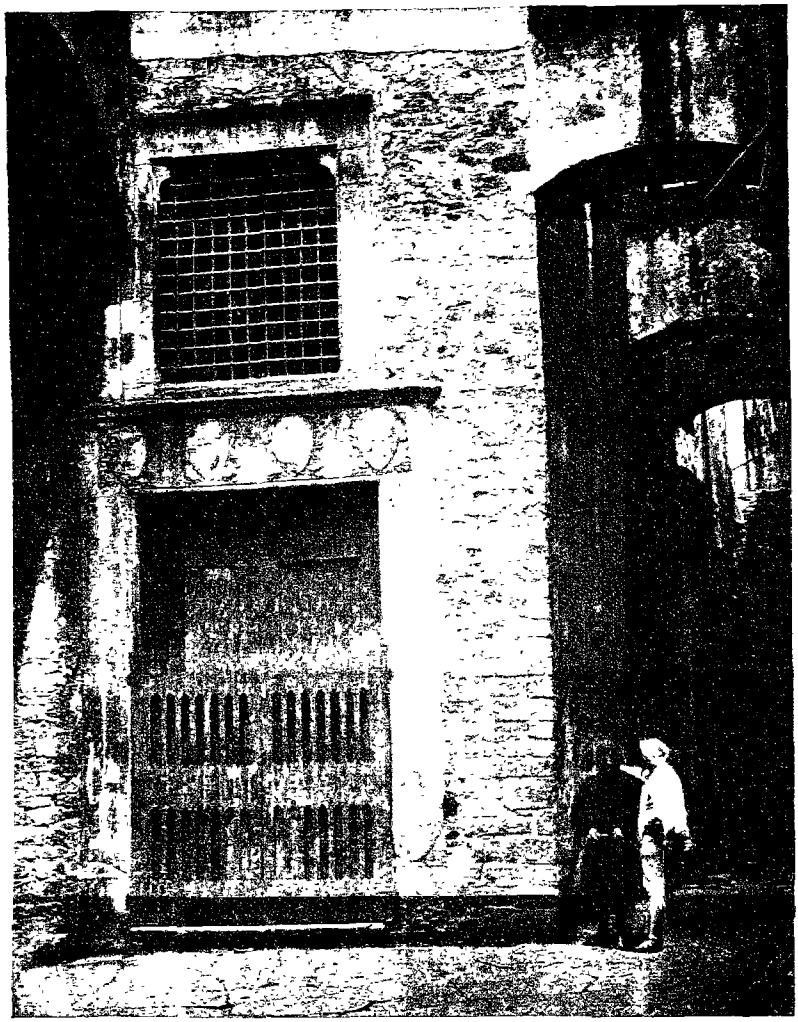
Triennial tenure seems to have been the usual custom, and any man might bid for any particular Inn, and might even outbid the occupier, who, in such an event, was compelled to vacate his house. This auction, for such it was, was marked by a quaint custom,—the lighting of a candle, and, only whilst it lasted, was it lawful to bid.

Whereas the sale of native wines was restricted to the shops of the Wine-merchants, and to the houses of the Tavern-keepers, Innkeepers were allowed a monoply in the import of foreign wines, both for immediate consumption and for storage.

Strangers visiting Florence, and seeking accommodation, were instructed, by the officials at the gates, to apply at the Offices of the Guild, at the *Canto*, or corner of the Via de' Speziali. Certain Inns were set apart for the reception of foreigners, and others, for natives of Tuscany, living outside the city boundaries. All these hostelries were directed to advertise their willingness to take in visitors by exposing, in some doorway or window, a bottle of wine.

By one of the 1357 Statutes no Innkeeper was allowed to

[1] "Sir R. Dallington," "A Survey, etc.," p. 50.



THE RESIDENCE OF THE CONSULS OF THE GUILD OF INNKEEPERS

THE SHIELDS DISPLAYED ARMS OF (1) EDWARD (2) THE PEOPLE (3) THE "PARTI GUELFE" (4) THE GUILD

exhibit, inside or out, any other public sign than that of the Guild arms; and none were permitted this privilege who had not paid all Guild dues, State taxes, and any fines, which had been, from time to time, incurred.

Innkeepers were expressly warned not to admit on any pretext men and women of evil fame. There were also strict rules affecting the food and drink supplied by landlords to their guests, for example: No host, innkeeper, cook or any one else was allowed to cook in his house, hostelry, or kitchen, liver, sausages, kidneys, and sweet-breads, nor to offer such for sale.[1]

Innkeepers were strictly warned not to sell wine or potables of any kind to the poorer people. They were in no way to do a rival trade to that of Wine-merchants. They might sell beverages to guests and persons in their houses, but not to outsiders. All wines required the stamp of the Custom-house.[2]

With respect to the housing of pack mules and horses, no stables were permitted immediately under the windows of rooms occupied by visitors. Certain streets and localities were set apart for the purpose, for example, the Via Lontanmorte had ranges of stables for baggage animals, and sheds for the deposit of loads. The affluence of visitors became so great that in 1290, only eight years after the incorporation of the Guild, there were as many as eighty-six Innkeepers and retail Wine-merchants in Florence and the *Contado*.

Games of chance were forbidden in Inns, Taverns and Hostelries within the city and the *Contado*, as they were in all places, within three hundred *braccia* of any public thoroughfare.

The Residence of the Consuls of the "*Arte degli Albergatori Maggiori*," was situated in the Palazzo Lamberti Simonetti, in Via de' Cavalieri, and opposite the Palazzo de' Pilli. The front was finely carved in hard stone. The architrave had four shields with arms, among them the escutcheon of the Guild,—a red star on a silver field. Within, in the Council-chamber, was a finely painted ceiling of the fifteenth century, borne upon marble

[1] Rub. ccxxii., 1415. [2] Rub. xcii., 1415.

pilasters inlaid with mosaic. Very many relics of this fine building are preserved in the National Museum in Florence.

. . . . . .

Among the ancient Inns which were destroyed in 1878 in the clearing away of the Mercato Vecchio and its neighbourhood, were the following :—

"del Cammello," near Porta Rosa, formerly the Palazzo Soldanieri.

"della Corona," Via del Proconsolo, in the house of the Buonafi family. In 1427 it was held by Ambrogio di Giovanni, called "Romanello" from his affectation of Roman manners and dishes.

"del Guanto," Via di San Romeo. This Inn was a fore-gathering place for the workers in kid and fine leathers.

"della Marciana," at the corner of Via dell' Arciveccordo, in a house belonging to the Pecori family.

"del Moro," Via Vaccherecia, the property of the Fantoni family, and a famous lounge for the superior silk-workers—the *Setainoli Grossi.*

"dell' Ossa," Via del Piazza, belonging to the Bizzini family.

"del Re," Piazza de' Macci, the property of the Macci, and later, of the Garliani families.

"di San Luigi," corner of Via alla Paglia, appertaining to the Marignolli family.

The families named here were all members of the "Guild of Innkeepers," their houses were registered in the Guild books, and they received periodical visits of inspection from the Guild officials.

In Via de' Speziali were four much frequented hostelries :—"del Giglio," "del Cervo," "della Rondina," and "del Falcone." Near San Martino stood the popular hostelry of "delle Bertucche," —the Baboons, so called from the fancy of its worthy hosts for the rare and curious animals brought to Florence by her merchants and their agents in foreign parts. It was too a favourite centre for the *Cerretani,*—conjurers,—whose command of racy dialect and tasty expletive was unlimited.

A peep into any of these Inns, and into the Eating-houses, which abounded in and near the Old Market, revealed not only a curious array of cleanest dishes and plates and brightest pots and pans, but discovered a great wooden and iron wheel revolving over a steady fire. Upon its spokes and tyre hissed fowls and ducks, pheasants and partridges, thrushes and larks, wild duck and pigeons, and many another feathered favourite. Stuffed well

KITCHEN OF AN INN. 1500 A.D.

with soft bread-crumbs, bits of fat pork and sage leaves, they gave forth, as they went round, the most grateful of odours, and caused many a watering mouth to anticipate the pleasures of the feast.

In frying-pans *Polenta*,—is frying in oil, *Migliaccio*,—chestnut and millet pudding,—is turning a rich golden brown, and *Fritto misto*,—that mystic agglomeration of tasty bits and toothsome scraps,—is scenting the air.

*Risoto con regalia*—perhaps Englished by "Hash"—using up odds and ends of chickens' livers, cocks' combs, oyster bones and

the like delicious trifles, ever a favourite with all classes, offers irresistible attractions!

Yes, there was good eating to be had for the paying, almost anywhere in the Mercato Vecchio, although the grimy-looking basements and dark cavernous chambers were not quite inviting. If you would, you might sniff the grateful incense of stuffed boar's-head, and well-larded venison as you passed the open doorways.

Supper clubs were always the rage in old Florence and none maintained their popularity with greater brilliancy than the "*Societa delle Cene poetiche*"—"the Poetical Supper Society." Associates of the Club observed two primary rules:—1. The Bill of Fare was a nightly competition in smart poetic quips; 2. Each member, in turn, was responsible for the ordering of the supper. The convivial meetings of this club were held at Fico's *Osteria* or Tavern in the Mercato Vecchio. The ground landlord was of the family of Adimari, who also owned another well-known Inn in the Old Market, which went by the name of "del Porco"—perhaps "Wild-boar"—and which was worthy of its designation by reason of the excellence of its *Risoto* and the cunning delicacy of its *Salame*. No *Osteria* had anything like so numerous a *clientèle* of artists and young bloods. And no habitué was more jovial and more brilliant than Sandro Botticelli, the leader of a merry crew of artists and good fellows.

The window-sills of Fico's, and the doorway used to be decorated with dishes of *Fritti*,—fried meats,—and small birds on spits. Inside were large open fires for grilling and frizzling. *Salame* and figs usually did duty as *hors-d'œuvre*. The favourite fish was *Tinche*, from the marshes, fried in oil with rosemary leaves, but *Arnotti*,—a river fish,—served in vinegar, ran it very close for first honours.

Thrushes, when in season, stuffed with sage and bread, were always very acceptable; but *Beccafichi*,—fig-pickers,—stuffed with mushrooms and toast, was quite the most popular "bird."

The wine most in demand at Fico's was *Malvasia*, hence the

Tavern was also known as "Osteria della Malvasia." A great specialty was *Macciana* or *Maccheroni*—crisp macaroons, which went very well with the favourite beverage.

Andrea del Sarto, "*Andrea senza errore*," as his title runs, had another side to his character. He belonged to the celebrated artists' club called, "*Societa del Calderai*,"—"Society of the Cauldrons,"—whose members excelled in modelling in wax and chiselling in stone, comestibles of every sort and kind after the manner of a modern Italian *chef's* highly decorative sugar confectionery!

"*La Cena Fiorentina*," "The Florence Supper," became a proverb, so vastly grew the fame of her cooks and the joviality of her guests. In 1388 no cuisine in all Italy was anything like so famous, for not only did her dinners and her suppers surpass all others, but her delicious confitures and her tasty snacks between meals, washed down with delicate and luscious wine, both red and white, recalled the historic days of the Greek epicures.

Nothing pleased the successful members of the Guilds more than to sit in their *Loggie* giving on the Market, or on the streets, and invite their friends to join them in discussing light refreshments for the admiration of the passers-by. For more substantial repasts the custom was to adjourn to some well-known Inn, and then to feast upon the good things served up by the worthy landlord.

By 1472 a rage for costly banquets had set in, both public and private. These functions were marked by extravagance and luxury before which the notable entertainments of the noble and wealthy Romans almost paled. Arrayed in richest garments, and adorned with precious stones and gold, the magnates of the city reclined upon softest silk and fur. Waited upon by small armies of gaily liveried attendants, both white and coloured, each great man vied with his neighbour in the magnificence of his hospitalities, and the literary and poetic culture of his guests.

Such festivities culminated in the public Festivals of Christmas, Easter, Pentecost, and the Patronal Feast of San Giovanni

Battista. Each Guild had its Commemoration with its procession, its games, its music, and its banquets. Rich men too were wont to show off their wealth by ostentatious entertainment of their poorer brethren. These celebrations were usually held in connection with Marriage-feasts, and the like, and were undertaken by some well-known Innkeeper, whose cook was famed for his culinary skill.

A goose baked in the oven, and stuffed with garlic and quince, was an exquisite dish in the days of Francesco Sacchetti.[1] The same racy author relates that, at a supper given by the *Gonfaloniere*, in his Palace, to a celebrated physician, the first dish brought to table was a calf's belly, followed by boiled partridges and stewed sardines. Chichibio, cook to the Gianfigliazzi family, according to Boccaccio, served his master with a roasted crane.[2] Leeks were ordered as a special dish by the Constitutions of the Chapter of San Lorenzo, when the Canons were in residence. Sweet tarts were served with the roast and counted as a single dish. Saffron was an ordinary condiment both in soup and other dishes. As an appetiser Liverwort was eaten first.[3] Soup was flavoured with marjoram and other herbs. Kid was served boiled in white wine. On great occasions boiled peacock, with the feathers on, was displayed but not eaten, and wine and fruit jellies coloured and moulded into shapes was a dish of honour.[4]

The salaries, or fees, payable to cooks varied with the occasion which demanded their services. For a banquet at the Investiture of Knighthood—two gold florins; for a Wedding-breakfast—one gold florin; for a repast of twelve covers—twenty to thirty *soldi*, and so on.[5]

## III. L'ARTE DE' GALIGAI

The history and practice of Tanning and Currying leather marches hand in hand with the records of the "Skinners and

[1] F. Sacchetti, "Nov." 185.
[2] Boccaccio, "Nov." 8.
[3] L'Osservatore Fiorentino, vol. vi. p. 108.
[4] Firenzuola, "Nov." 8.
[5] Rub. ccxvi., 1415.

Furriers." The mediæval wearing of skins and furs, both by warring robbers from the north, and by peaceful inhabitants of Tuscan lands, called forth early enterprise to render such primitive coverings strong and durable.

Together with prolific animal life—wild and tame—there flourished on the hillsides great groves of lordly oaks, whilst in the marshy lands, and by the river sedges, grew patches of the humble mallow. Oak-bark and the ruddy *robbia* furnished, ready to hand, the basis of tanning and of dyeing. It needed but the awakening intelligences of the dwellers by the banks of Arno, and on the Fiesolan hills, to co-apply these natural riches in the production of the very useful and the very profitable leather industry.

In the absence of earlier records, we must hail one, *Paganuccio*, who under date 1098, is called in the Archives of the State, —"*Galligario*"—"Tanner," as the father of the Leather workers of Florence, and this appears to be the first mention of the industry.

In the Roll of the Guilds of the year 1236, the "*Arte dei Cuoiai e Caligai*,"—"Leather-dressers and Tanners,"—is placed eleventh, and consequently fourth in the order of the Lesser Guilds. In a Latin document, dated August 9th, 1245, mention is made of a Society of Tanners under the designation of "*Filii Galigai*."

The Archives of Florence record a meeting held on December 11th, 1276, in the church of SS. Apostoli, at which forty-two tanners were present—all inhabitants of the *popoli* of SS. Apostoli. The business transacted was the nomination, by the *Rettori*,—Rectors,—of a Syndic, "who shall take up a loan on behalf of the Guild, in order to pay the tax levied that year upon the members of the Guild, and also to meet the general expenses of the Guild." The latter included salaries of officials, hire of premises for Guild purposes, river freight-dues, and various other items. Provision was also made, at the same meeting, for the "rent of the Residence of the Rectors, or Consuls, and of certain

workshops and a leather warehouse." At the same time agreements were come to, whereby members of the Guild might purchase materials required in the exercise of their industry, at two per cent. discount off retail prices.

The revision of the Title and Statutes of the Guilds in 1282 considerably altered the former, and confirmed the latter. The style "*Cuoiai e Caligai*" disappears, and instead we have "*L'Arte dei Galigai Grossi*"—"The Guild of Master-Tanners." The Guild moreover is now placed sixteenth in the order of precedence. Why this degradation was accomplished no one can say, possibly the increasing prosperity of the city affected more favourably the "Masters of Stone and Wood," "the Retail Cloth-Drapers and Haberdashers," "the Wine-Merchants," "the Innkeepers" and "the Salt-Merchants—or General Provision Dealers," —all five Guilds being scheduled before the Tanners.

In the fourteenth century no alteration in the position of the Guild was effected. A minor Corporation, probably affiliated to the "*Arte de'Galigai*," came into existence in 1327, called "*Compagnia de' Vaginari*"—Company of Scabbard-makers. Of the three operative Guilds, formed at the Rising of the *Ciompi*, in 1378, the third was made up of "Sheep-shearers," "Patchers of Skins and Hides," and "Sandal-makers," in addition to other minor Crafts, all of which had relations with the "Guild of Tanners."

The Order of the Guilds in 1415 raised the "*Arte de'Galigai*" one step in precedence over the "Salt-Merchants," who henceforth were styled the "*Arte degli Oliandoli*"—"Oil-merchants." At the final grouping of the Lesser Guilds, in the year 1534, when four "Universities" were created, the second of them included "*Calzolai*," "*Galigai*," and "*Coreggiai*," and bore the title of "*Universita de' Maestri di Cuoiame*"—the "University of Masters of Leather."

The "Tanners" doubtless had all along dealings with "Skinners and Furriers," "Shoemakers," and "Saddlers," but apparently no details have been preserved of such intercourse.

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From the scrappy references to the "Guild of Tanners," in the Archives of Florence, and in consequence of the wholesale destruction of documents during the *Ciompi* riots, and other city tumults, very little information can be gathered of the Constitution of the Guild. Among the Archives, however, is a Roll of Matriculation for the year 1320, which gives little information beyond a record of names. That there were earlier codes and rolls than the above is obvious, but probably no complete set of Statutes was put out until after the General Revision of 1301-1309.

The title of Consul was not bestowed upon the chief officer of the Guild until the fourteenth century, before which period he was merely called "*Capitudo*" or "Head." His Residence was in the Via delle Torre, near the Buondelmonti tower, where the armorial bearings of the Guild were carved,—a white field divided by a broad red stripe,—the same device appearing on the Guild gonfalon.

The *Sensali*,—agents,—numbered four, and were practical and experienced workers in leather of every description. They were appointed by the Consuls and held office for a year. They fixed the price of skins, hides, leather in the rough, and also the rates for tanning, dressing, etc., and kept registers of all workpeople employed by the Guild. They received a percentage upon all imports of skins and hides,—for each hundred pairs of skins and hides from India, Greece, England and Norway, seven *lire*,—for each roll of leather dressed abroad one *lire*, and so on. The consignments were made to the *Sensali*, and by them distributed to the various tanners and dressers.[1]

No tanner, currier, or scrap-leather dealer, was allowed to offer for sale hides of oxen, cows, and other large animals, within the city and *Contado* unless they had been soaked in brine and cold water for eight months, or for at least three months in hot water. The fine for infraction was two hundred *lire*.[2]

All such persons were warned against currying hides with cinders or ash, or treating leather to any tanning mixture which would become a nuisance to the neighbourhood. Leather could

[1] Rub. lxxv., 1415.

[2] Rub. lxxvi., 1415.

not be sold in the market, or at the tanyards, which was not perfectly dry, and well cured, and free from putrefaction, under risk of fines of not less than one hundred *lire*.[1]

Tanners and scrap-leather dealers were forbidden to burn the hoofs and horns of cattle, and the hard corns upon horse skins and cow hides for use in the process of currying.[2]

All workers in leather were forbidden to work in secret. Every tanyard and dresser's shop was inspected from time to time. Stringent regulations were in force dealing with offal and other unsavoury and insanitary matters. Cuttings and rubbish were ordered to be burnt or removed. The skinning of dead carcasses was not permitted within the city, and the limits were constantly enlarged wherein such prohibition held good, until, in the sixteenth century, no *Beccai*,—slaughterer-skinner,—was allowed to exercise his calling within a radius of ten miles from the Palazzo Vecchio.[3]

The ordinary outfit of a "Tanner" and "Currier" cost the rather considerable sum of eighteen gold florins; probably this sum included expenses incurred through the distance of the scene of operations.

The methods of the Florentine Tanners would seem to have been much as follows: The raw hides were first salted to check putrefaction, and limed in weak lime liquor and brought to a suitable condition for dishairing and fleshing, within somewhere about three months. Then they were placed between layers of coarsely ground oak bark in pits until full, when a thick topping of bark was put over them. No water or any other kind of liquid was allowed to get into the pits. These packs were taken up and reversed several times, fresh oak bark being introduced. This kind of tanning occupied somewhere about eighteen months.

Oak-bark was the only tanning medium used in early days, and of it there was no limit in the supply. All around Florence were thick forests of oak trees, which not only provided the

[1] Rub. ccxxvii., 1415. [2] Rub. lxxviii., 1415. [3] Cantini, xi. pp. 106, 107.

"*Galigai*" with their material, but also fed the fires and furnaces of all the houses and workshops in the city and *Contado*.

Quick-witted Tanners however disregarded the rule about the introduction of water, and, knowing the virtues of the Arno, they freely used douches, and were able to secure rapid absorption of tannin by the skins.

The next process was "handling," in which the hides were transferred to larger pits, and then turned over every day in a liquid or ooze made of oak-bark. This process lasted five or six weeks. In later times *robbia* and other dyes in liquid form were introduced in the Tanning process, so as thoroughly to saturate the skins which it was wished to finish coloured or dyed. For the last manipulation the skins were hung over big wooden bars immersed in the tanning-dyeing medium.

The drying process was the most difficult and uncertain, so far as the looked-for result was concerned. Too rapid action led to discoloration and cracking, whilst a slow method made for moulding and unevenness. The drying shed was a wooden building, provided with many openings at the sides, to admit of currents of air, but excluding the direct rays of the sun.

The usual test of dryness was the holding of a mirror, or some other highly polished object, close to the hanging skin—if moisture was condensed upon the bright surface the Tanner knew the piece was not ready, and *vice versâ*.

Foreign tanned and curried skins and hides were imported to make shoe-soles and sandals, but were treated, by the Florentine Tanners, with baths of brine and oak. Sometimes to get a quicker market they limited the period of re-soaking but thereby incurred fines and penalties.

An important and profitable branch of the currying industry was the preparation of parchment. Up to 1209 its use for writing was confined to the Monasteries and to Notaries, but thenceforward the sale was thrown open to the public. Good sheets were usually rare and costly, but in Florence the same address which characterised her sons' skill in other industries was

not wanting in the production of superior quality and in a sufficiency of supply.

White parchment, smooth and nearly transparent, was best suited for fine penmanship, and it took the overlay of gold and silver better than skins which had been stained yellow or purple. Only the very finest quality of kid skin was used for this purpose, whilst other descriptions were rendered for more general and rougher purposes—for example, the binding of books.

The market prices were moderate, hence the number of *Zibaldoni* and other private diaries, as well as public records and business journals. The "*Cartolai*," or Stationers—were a trade corporation affiliated to the "Guild of Doctors and Apothecaries"; they retailed the produce of the parchment-makers, and always appear to have had a large stock on hand, from which they exported prepared skins to every European country.

Bookbinding was an important section of the leather industry, but whether it was undertaken by the "Guild of Tanners" or by that of "Saddlers" or by an association of leather workers employed by the "Guild of Doctors and Apothecaries," or by all three separately, no one can say. Anyhow the skill possessed by the Florentine workers and stampers of leather could not have been turned to better account, and, from the first, Florentine books were turned out in peculiarly attractive forms.

The most common bindings were of white smoothly dressed sheepskin and polished vellum, either perfectly plain or with ornamental markings in black ink and gold. Tooling leather covers for books,—that is to say the art of impressing small dies in a running or connecting pattern,—undoubtedly originated in Florence. Rich skins,—often enough with the fur retained and closely clipped,—were used and associated with clamps of silver and copper. About the middle of the sixteenth century books were—as an old rhymer has it:—

> "Full goodly bound in leather coverture,
> Or of satin damask, or else of velvet pure."

Tommaso Maioli, of Florence, was a famous book-collector,

who stamped his treasures "*Il Maioli et Amicorum.*" His style of binding set the fashion of the day for delicacy and richness of material and workmanship. His favourite material was the finest white kid, with gold enrichments. His chaste manner however soon gave way to an almost embarrassing richness of decorative detail, so that Florentine books of the sixteenth century are remarkable for the variety and elaboration of their bindings. Wood, silver, ivory, parchment, enamelled plaques, papier-mâché, embroidered textures, and every possible material, was put under contribution, and enrichments of pearls, precious stones, and gold-work were added.

It would of course be quite impossible to describe at length the various uses to which the skilful Florentine Tanners put the leather they manipulated. They produced in short the whole of the base-material which formed the industries of such indispensable craftsmen as Shoemakers, Saddlers, Bookbinders, Shieldmakers, Wall-hangers, Chair-upholsterers, etc. etc. Painters, Modellers, Bas-relief workers, and many other artistic artificers looked to the Tanners for the substance upon which to place their beautiful workmanship.

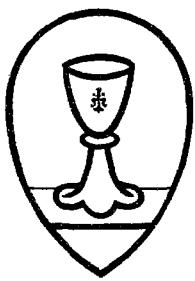
Quite a speciality of the leather-workers' trade was the rendering of the hides of various animals, by repeated soakings and boilings in the tan pits, soft and malleable for mouldings. *Cuoio-lesso*,—boiled leather,—as it is called, was shaped by pressure, when damp, and then upon, and in, its surface were stamped and cut ornaments of all kinds, both in high and low relief, after the manner of wood-carving. This decorative process was called "block stamping."

Articles in leather so treated were usually stained black or rich dark madder-brown, and examples are to be found in every collection of Art Treasures, in the various shapes of:—Bellows, book-backs, chair-backs and seats, writing-cases, picture-frames, door-panels, wall-friezes and hangings, pouches and bags, boxes of all kinds, etc. etc. *Cuoio-lesso* was employed in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries by the fitters of suits of armour, as elbow,

knee, and loin guards. Thanks to this fashion very many most valuable documents have been preserved in their ornamental leather cylindrical cases.

The Guild continued its successful career far on into the sixteenth century; but, inasmuch as Francis I. of France and other royal patrons encouraged workmen to settle in their dominions, Florentine Tanners and Leather-dressers were amongst those who found homes in foreign lands, and, thus, uniting with native workers, carried on their industry, whilst in consequence Florence was the poorer.

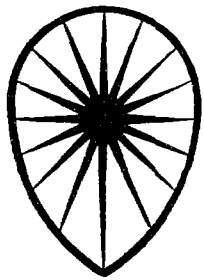
1



1. "*Stemma dell'Arte de' Vinattieri*"

Blue cup in a white field

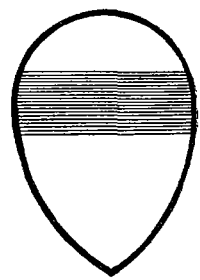
2



2. "*Stemma dell' Arte degli Albergatori*"

Gold star upon a silver field

3



3. *Stemma dell' Arte de' Galigai*"

A red stripe upon a white field

## CHAPTER XIII

# THE GUILDS OF OIL-MERCHANTS AND GENERAL PROVISION DEALERS, OF SADDLERS, AND OF LOCKSMITHS

*LE ARTI DEGLI OLIANDOLI E PIZZICAGNOLI, E DE' COREGGIAI E DE' CHIAVAIUOLI*

I. OIL MERCHANTS.—Tuscany an agricultural country. Land-tenure. *Mezzeria.* "Share-and-share alike." The *Mezzadro* and his *Podere.* Sir Richard Dallington's comments upon the soil, etc. Farm labourers. Cattle. Crops. Sheep. Poultry. Silk-cocoons. Fruit. Vegetables. Fine physique of peasantry. Leonardo da Vinci's models. "David." *Contadine.* Luca della Robbia's models. Happy people. *Cantastorie.* Cultivation of the olive. *La Mosca olearia. Fattori.* Sales of land. The Guild of Oil-merchants essentially the Guild of the country people. Many small dealers. Early salesmen. Importance of pork and salt. *Biadaiuoli* join the Guild. Shops in the Mercato Vecchio. Standard weights and measures. Limitations of sales. Unlicensed persons fined and imprisoned. Women beaten! Sunday closing. No loiterers allowed. Perfect wholesomeness of comestibles. Fines. Risks from fire. Straw and fire-wood. Bargemen of the Arno. List of saleable articles at the shops. Cheese of Lucardo. Custom dues on imports. No goose! Monopoly of salt. Italian warehousemen of to-day.

II. SADDLERS.—Horsemanship. Agnolo Pandolfini. Duke Federigo's broken nose! *Il Cortigiano. Giostre*—Games. "To win one's spurs." Saddles, Harness, Stirrups, Scabbards, Shields, etc. Brunetto Latini "On Horses." Jobbers and Horse-dealers. Pack-animals. Many Crafts affiliated to the Guild. Six classes of members. Imitation pig-skin. Kinds of shields. *Scarselle*,—Pouches. The "Guild of Painters" and good workmanship.

III. LOCKSMITHS.—An ancient Craft. *Diversarium artium Schedula.* Early Florentine craftsmen. Affiliated trades. Scrap-iron. Engravers in copper. Ill-written and ill-spelled documents. Tests of skill required before admission to the Guild. Early prosperity. Fashionable trifles. Cardinal Wolsey's horse-harness. Sunny skies affect workmanship. Wax models. Fine bronze-work. Famous "Masters of metal." Damascening. Rich cabinets. Benvenuto Cellini. Embossing. Francesco del Prato. Artistic tools. *Salve!*

## I. L'ARTE DEGLI OLIANDOLI E PIZZICAGNOLI

"*LA Toscana è regione eminentemento agricola*"—"Tuscany is pre-eminently an agricultural country,"—was a well-worn axiom erstwhile the civilisation of the Renaissance dawned upon the fruitful Vale of Arno.

The form of land tenure in Tuscany during the period of the Renaissance, and that still largely in vogue, was the *Mezzeria*—"share and share alike." It was the outcome of the Feudal system, and preserved many of its features. Each estate was divided into so many *poderi*, or fields, averaging between thirty and forty acres. Half the produce went to the landlord and half was retained by the *Mezzadro* — peasant-farmer. There was however a tacit understanding that the year's harvest was split into three portions, one of which was always kept out of the reckoning!

The *Mezzadro* held his land by a contract with the landlord, which, although nominally only binding for a year, or from year to year, was treated practically as a life-interest, and commonly passed on from father to son.

Sir Richard Dallington speaking of the sterility of the soil of Tuscany, and of the extraordinary patience and diligence of the peasantry in cultivating "fruites, herbages, and graine," says[1]:—"The nature of the soile is generally light and sandy. But by reason of the cities and great towns neare, and the number of the people it is much forced, and made more fruitful. For there are those who all their life-time doe nothing but with their asse go up and downe the cities, gathering up the dung in the streets, and carrying it to the land of those with whom they have bargained." He also refers to the system of the divisions of the *poderi*, and says:—"The country man will stirre of them eighteen with his two yoke of oxen,—the one yoke feeding while the other laboureth,—in one day. He hath for his labour foure *crazie* apiece, which is three halfpence sterling, so that he and his beasts earne som foure shillings, sixpence sterling the day. . . ."

The same old chronicler goes on to say:—"On the hill sides they grow acorns, olives and chestnuts, for acorns," he continues, "they eat, and so do their pigs. Olives they eat not, but crush them to export the oil, chestnuts are the countryman's bread as

[1] "Survey of the Estate of the Great Duke," pp. 30-36.

water is his drink." He remarks also that Florentines appeared to be excessively fond of green-stuff, and says :—" Herbage is the most generall food of the Tuscans, at whose tables a sallet is as ordinary as salt is at ours." Figs too formed, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, a profitable source of revenue to the cultivator ; the best kinds were called " *Brugiotti*."

Expenses necessary for the upkeep of the farm-buildings, and for the plantation of trees, were met by the landlord, who also was part owner of the spans of oxen used on the *podere*, and in addition paid the taxes upon the land. On the other hand, labour, which was beyond the strength of the *mezzadro*, was paid for by him, such payment generally consisting simply of board and lodging. The *mezzadro's* usual helpers were his younger brothers and his sons, who lived somewhat hugger-mugger in the farmhouse. Hired labourers were at a discount, as they were usually townsmen out of work, or spare hands who bore doubtful reputations.

Upon each *podere* were a roomy labourer farmer's cottage, a stable and yard for cattle, a shed for fodder, a vat-house for grapes, and an oil-press, all of which were the property of the landlord.

The *mezzadro* knew exactly the capabilities of each portion of his holding, and understood all about the proper rotation of crops. His principal objects of cultivation were vines, olives, wheat, beans, and millet for forage, which kept him pretty busy the year through. Mulberry-trees, chestnuts, and oaks, with flax, hemp, fruit, and vegetables claimed also his care and labour.

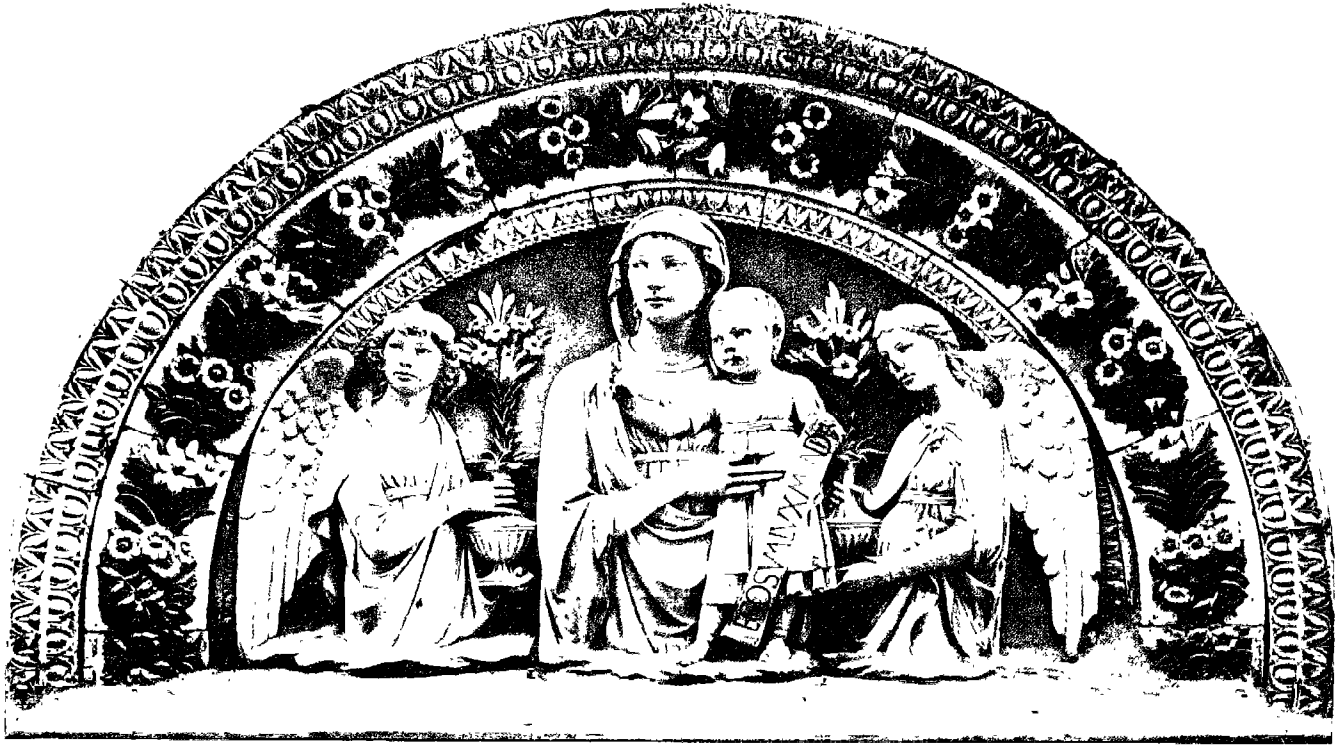
Whilst he looked after his pigs his spouse minded the poultry, and she too made the butter and the cheese, and grew her flowers and sweet herbs, and other items, for the market. To her was assigned the care of the bees and the rendering of the honey. Many a goodwife had, besides, her trays and drawers of silkworms and silk-cocoons, under the patronage of the " Guild of Silk," and she also spent much of her time in spinning flax, plaiting straw, and in assisting her husband to make wicker baskets.

The breeding of cattle and of sheep, only indirectly, formed part of the peasant-farmer's occupation, for, generally speaking, in the neighbourhood of Florence, the herds and flocks, were the property and business of the *Beccai*,—wholesale breeders and butchers,—and chiefly ranged almost wild through the Maremma, the low lands by the seaside. Horses, however, and mules and goats, claimed the attention of the *mezzadro*, along with his oxen and his dogs—the latter he used to watch his crops and his stock, and to give notice of intruders.

The Tuscan peasants were a fine well-developed race with handsome brown faces and intelligent expressions. The vigour begotten of healthy open-air life and constant toil and exercise conduced to sobriety, and simplicity, which made for natural courtesy of manner.

The "David" of Donatello,—the first nude bronze of the Renaissance,—represents truthfully the peasant-boy of Tuscany just budding into manhood. It was characterised by Leonardo da Vinci as a "perfect figure." Michael Angelo's "David" was modelled from just such a youth, alert and conscious of strength and fine condition. Many handsome farm lads like the shepherd boy of Israel found their way daily into Florence with market produce. The two statues are quite typical of the race to which the young peasants belonged.

Leonardo, himself a son of the soil, was possessed of immense physical strength and high spirits. He used to go out into the *poderi* and chat with the farm-labourers. Nothing pleased him more than to make well formed youths jump, wrestle, and climb trees, that he might behold their muscular charms, and transfer their bodily perfection to his pictures. In 1506 he painted a comely young man, seated upon a grassy mound, his head crowned with vine leaves. The form is purely Florentine, and the physical beauty of every part indicates the fine qualities of the Tuscan peasant. The picture is entitled "Saint John Baptist," but it is more truly a representation of a trimmer of vines and a presser of olives—a Renaissance "Bacchus"!



A CONTADINA AND HER CHILD

LUCA DELLA ROBBIA'S SPRIGHTLY TYPES OF THE RENAISSANCE

The great Florentine was also in his element when telling groups of lounging peasants ridiculous stories, which convulsed them with laughter, for then he swiftly sketched their attitudes and expressions.

And if these great artists have preserved to us the traits of manly character and vigour, the Della Robbia, Raphael, and Andrea del Sarto, and many more beside, have given us the no less striking charms of the *contadine*, old and young. The terra-cottas of Luca Della Robbia, in particular, reproduce faithfully the two types of the women of the Renaissance. Stateliness of carriage and solemnity of manner are characteristic of the silent country-life of the hills, where the drama of nature is ever being enacted. In the other type, the abandon of town life in the valley where all is gay and busy lends assurance to the bearing. The "Madonna and Child" of the Via dell' Agnolo is at once the true representation of a healthy, radiant peasant woman and her babe, and the symbol of the intelligence of the Renaissance.

The peasants of the *Contado* and beyond were happy people, and beguiled the monotony of their daily toil with jests and songs.[1] As soon as one ended what he knew, another burst forth with the melody, each vieing with his neighbour in friendly rivalry. Whoever could sing the most songs was acclaimed the leader. Parties of songsters were wont to frequent the fairs and public games, and exhibit their vocal powers, getting for their recompense many a flowing bowl of good red wine, and a supper fit for a king, at one or other of the hospitable hostelries! These popular ditties were known by the name of "*Cantastorie*," and none went with a better swing than those which they sang on May mornings.

Something of what a country-man looked like in the fifteenth century may be seen in a woodcut of the Rooke's Paune in Jacopo de Cessolis' "*Giuoccho delle Scacchi*." "This manner of people," he says, "is figured . . . in the shape of a man holdynge in his right hand a spade or shovell, and a rodde in the left hand. The spade or shovell is for to delve and labour therewith the earth, and

[1] "Italian Folk-Lore Songs."

the rodde is for to dryve or conduycte with all the bestes into the pastures. Also he ought to have in his gyrdell a crokyd hachet for to cutte of the superfluytees of the vignes and trees. . . . ."

The cultivation of the olive-tree was a very important branch of country life. Planting, irrigating, pruning, and shaking, called for constant attentions, for no tree is more fickle in the matter of

"DELLAVORATORE"—FARM LABOURER. FIFTEENTH CENTURY

bearing. The oliveyards of Tuscany vied with the vineyards in area under cultivation. Wealthy citizens owned scores and hundreds of trees, whilst the humblest *contadino* had his two or three.

Agricultural ways are slow to change, for, in the present day, the methods of shaking and collecting the dark purple-green fruit are exactly those of five hundred years ago. Big canvas sheets are spread upon the ground under each tree, into which nimble youths climb armed with long thin sticks to shake gently each branch and cluster, so that the berries shall not be injured

by their fall. The value in ordinary years of the yield of each tree-beating averaged ten to twelve gold florins, equal to £5 or £6 of our money.

Tuscan oliveyards were always more or less troubled by visitations of the dreaded *Mosca olearia*, the olive pest. Expedients of many kinds were employed year after year to check its ravages, which sometimes caused the entire failure of the crop, and moreover weakened the tree for future bearings.

The methods employed for the extraction of the oil were pretty much those now in use all over Italy. Each *podere* had its olive-press and clearing-mill,—generally lumbering constructions of wood and iron,—which were worked both by hand and by ox-power. The price of good average olive-oil in the fifteenth century was six *lire* ten *soldi* a barrel—equal to one-half a pack-mule or ass burden. The best oil was produced at Lucca, Calci and Buti to the north of Florence.

That there was an ample and constant supply of fruit of all kinds for consumption in Florence, is borne out by the characteristic summary which Buonaccorso Pitti gives in his "Chronicle" of the fruit trees in his garden. He says: "On the twenty-fourth of April in the year 1419, being my natal day, I counted all the fruit trees in my garden and vineyard, and found that, exclusive of hazel-nuts, they amounted to five hundred and sixty-one, of fig trees—sixty four, of peaches—one hundred and six, of plums—eighty, of cherry trees—fifty-eight, of almond-trees—twenty-four, of apples—twenty five, and of pears—sixteen. There are besides six orange trees, seven pomegranates, two quinces, four walnuts, and nine *Amarini*—bitter cherry. In addition to sixty olive trees in full bearing there are a great many more fruit trees of all kinds, which have not yet borne any crop, but maybe they will if the drought does not trouble them." [1]

The *Fattore*—bailiff—was the owner's agent, and superintended the working of the different *poderi*, and rendered his master a bi-annual account. These men were sometimes cruel to the

[1] "Cronica," p. 112.

*mezzadri*, and not always too honest in their relations with the landlord; but, generally speaking, they were conspicuous for fairness and discrimination in their dealings. Many of them, after serving a lengthy stewardship on the land and having acquired some considerable property, settled in the city, and became Wine-merchants, General provision dealers and Innkeepers.

OLIVE PRESS—END OF SIXTEENTH CENTURY

Indeed it was no uncommon custom for a *Fattore* to be matriculated in one of the *Arti*, "*de' Vinattieri*," "*degli Oliandoli*," or "*degli Albergatori*"; and this spread to the better-to-do *mezzadri*, who thus were able to carry on the combined trade of growers and salesmen.

Some idea of the conditions of property, and of the relations between landlord and tenant, may be gained from the example of Guido del Antella, who has been already named in this book. That he was a man of means is shown by the fact of his letting certain premises for shops. One of these had a rental of fifteen

gold florins a year, with "a fat goose at the Feast of All Saints each year according," as he is careful to add, "to the feudal custom." In 1379 he let a piece of land,—or *podere*,—on condition that the tenant should yield him at Christmas, one hundred and fifty pounds weight of pork, with a couple of capons, and five dozen eggs; and at Easter, a couple of capons and five dozen eggs. In addition the farmer was bound to deliver by his waggon the portions of wheat, oats, and oil, and half the portion of wine which were his due as proprietor. The farmer too had to tend certain vines belonging to his landlord, and had to break in each year two span of oxen which he had to part-purchase.

Sales of land were generally effected at Or San Michele where a number of *Agremensori*—Surveyors—were in daily attendance. Their fee was one gold florin for each sale effected, with what we now call a stamp-duty of nine *soldi*.

. . . . . .

This Guild,—the eighth in the order of Precedence among the fourteen Lesser Guilds,—was essentially the Guild of the Market people. Under its white banner, charged with the singularly appropriate arms of the Guild,—a red lion gardant under a green tree,—were ranged not only lordly growers of olive trees, owners of fruitful orchards, makers of country cheese, and sportsmen keen after game, but every sort and kind of great and small dealers in the numberless necessaries of daily life.

The Guild provided a common union of persons occupied in avocations of an agricultural character, just in the same way as the "*Arte de' Rigattieri*" furnished a comprehensive Corporation for citizens engaged in small industrial pursuits.

The precise date of the first enrolment of the "*Arte degli Oliandoli e Pizzicagnoli*" is, as with most of the other Guilds, absolutely uncertain. Early records have disappeared, and the first historical notices of the existence of some of the trades, united in the Guild, appear to be as follows:—

"1021. *Florentius—paliarius*—Straw-seller."

"1084. *Bonus f. Johannes—baro* (for *barullo*)—Hawker."

"1104. *Bonizo—olearius*—Oil-merchant."

"1139. *Lupaccia—lo tricco*—Fruit and Vegetable-dealer."

"1188. *Arizito—piezicario*—Victualler."

"1191. *Ugolinus—granario*—Corn-chandler."

"1211. *Ispenallo—kasciajuto*—Cheese-monger."

In the first list of the Guilds, that of the year 1236, the "*Arte degli Oliandoli e Pizzicagnoli*" is placed fifteenth. The revision of 1266 preserved the same order, but gave to the "Guild of Oil-Merchants and General Provision Dealers" suitable armorial bearings.

The list of Guilds, made in 1282, makes no mention of the "*Arte degli Oliandoli e Pizzicagnoli*," but instead we see, in the fifteenth position, the "*Arte dei Venditori del Sale*"—"the Guild of Salt-merchants." This was still the designation of the Guild in 1295, in which year the "Guild of Salt" is named in the Archives. The reason may be found in the fact, that as the city grew in population, so grew in estimation the merchants and dealers whose business relations were of the greatest value to the citizens.

At the reformation and rearrangement of the Guilds in 1415 the fifteenth place was taken by the "*Arte de' Galigai*," "the "Guild of Tanners" and the "Guild of Oil-Merchants and General Provision Dealers" was put sixteenth. Why this loss of precedence was effected it is impossible to say, anyhow the Tanners maintained their superiority till the very break-up of the Guilds in the sixteenth century.

There is an entry in the Archives of the *Mercanzia* dated 1328, of judgment delivered against a certain *Granaiuolo*—grain-merchant of the "Guild of Bakers," and in favour of the Consuls of the "Guild of Oil-merchants." The title of the Guild is given in full, and it includes a variety of curiously linked industries: *Biadaiuoli*—Corn-chandlers, *Casciaiuoli*—Cheese-factors, *Bicchierai* — Glass-blowers, *Funai* — Twine-pullers, and *Saponai* — Soap-boilers. In 1380 the *Biadaiuoli* threw in their lot with the *Oliandoli* and ceased to be a separate association.

Although no special proofs are at hand to show, there can be

CORN-CHANDLER AND BAKER

NOTE:—THE CIRCULAR FESTIVAL CAKES

no doubt that the "Guild of Oil-Merchants and General Provision Dealers" followed the example of the Crafts in the adoption of the Statutes of the "Calimala" of 1301-1309, with certain adjustments to circumstances, as a code of moral and commercial procedure.

Early memorials and acts of Consuls or Councils have perished, consequently we cannot discover the exact number, or the duties, of the various officers, nor indeed can we obtain a complete list of all the trades and callings which were allied under the banner of the Guild.

That the chief officials had the rank at all events ultimately of Consul is perhaps shown by the fact of their Residence being situated in the basement of the Palazzo de' Lamberti, the upper part of which edifice was occupied by the Consuls and Courts of the "Guild of Doctors and Apothecaries." It is however of special interest to record that Savonarola established his famous "*Monte di Pieta*" in the same basement which also bore the name of "*La Casa di Pigli*"—as a set-off to the exactions and rapacity of the Jewish money-lenders.

Happily the Statutes of 1415 have been preserved, and in them we see ample evidence of the importance, prosperity, and admirable government of the members of the Guild.[1] The following are some of the interesting items which may be gathered from a perusal of the three portly volumes.

All Provision dealers, whether members of the "Guild of Oil-Merchants and General Provision Dealers" or not, were required to provide themselves with weights and measures strictly in accordance with the established standards, and were further obliged to exhibit them to the State official inspectors. All utensils of capacity were to be approved by the Consuls of the Guild, and patterns of those articles approved were kept at the Residence for imitation.[2]

On no account were such dealers to sell fresh fish but only such descriptions as had been salted or dried. Eggs, cheese,

[1] Statuta P. et C. Florentiae, 1415, vol. ii. 111. [2] Rubs. xciii. and xciv., 1415.

chickens, mushrooms, small birds, venison, and game of all kinds, were all marketable commodities on their stalls.[1]

The export of foodstuffs from Florence,—city and *Contado*,—was very strictly prohibited. Included in the prohibition were :—Grain of all kinds, ears of corn, vegetables, olives and olive oil, fat beasts, oxen, pigs, wine, fresh meat, fish, undressed hides, fruits, cheese, and victuals of every kind.[2]

It was strictly forbidden to offer grain for sale mixed with chaff, seeds, or any other matter. Blades of wheat were not to be steeped in water to swell them before being exposed in the Market, *Granaiuoli*,—Corn-chandlers,—guilty of such conduct were mulcted in heavy penalties. They were moreover required to state the place of origin of their merchandise, and on no account to substitute the crop coming from one locality for one issuing from another.[3]

Vegetable-dealers, whether men or women, were not allowed to offer for sale any sort of grain in quantities exceeding two *staioi*—bushels—unless with the special license of the Officials of Or San Michele. No dealers in vegetables were permitted to purchase fruit or vegetables before the hour of "Nones," nor to frequent public places where wholesale salesmen were before that hour. Women were forbidden to hawk green produce about the streets. Green nuts were also forbidden to be sold. It was strictly prohibited to carry through the streets, or to offer for sale, more than three bunches of unripe grapes. Ripe wine grapes were also forbidden as marketable commodities.[4]

On Sundays, and all through Holy Week, the sale of green-stuff in the Mercato Vecchio was absolutely prohibited. All fruiterers and dealers in vegetables were required to appear in the month of January each year, before the Market Officials, and swear to carry on their business honestly, peacefully, and diligently.[5]

The sale of certain articles was absolutely forbidden in the squares, bridges, and certain other localities :—Olives, fruit, vege-

[1] Rubs. xcv., xcvi., 1415.
[2] Rub. clviii., 1415.
[3] Rub. clix., 1415.
[4] Rub. clxi., 1415.
[5] Rubs. ccxxiii., ccxxiv., ccxxv., ccxxvi., ccxxvii., ccxxviii., 1415.

tables, grass, straw, cheese, eggs, fish, geese, small birds, chickens, foxes, hares, and venison. Hawkers of such were not allowed to stand in front of the Market-stalls or street shops of established tradesmen.

Poultry, vegetables, fruit, eggs, game, venison, and other like produce could not be offered for sale in the Markets or shops if the place of origin was outside a nine-mile radius. Thrushes and blackbirds were on no account allowed to be offered for sale in Florence. Quails might be sold only in August, September and October.[1]

No Innkeeper, Vegetable-dealer, or anybody who traded in such things, was allowed to buy in the streets, bridges, or squares the following comestibles:—pigs, kids, calves, chickens, pigeons, eggs, cheese, and joints of fresh meat, or sows with litters. The last prohibition held good also in the case of butchers. Pork-butchers were not allowed to use the same slaughter-houses as those occupied by the *Beccai*. Pigs indeed could only be killed between September and March. In the shops of the Guild every kind of salt meat was on sale, and also fish salted and dried.[2]

If any fruiterer or poulterer of whatever condition ventured to buy mushrooms, cheese, eggs, chickens, or poultry of any kind and venison, or to loiter about where such things were offered for sale before the hour of "nones"—with or without license—or to wait within two hundred yards, he or she was liable to a fine of ten *lire*, which if he or she could not, or would not pay, then the man was put in prison for a month, and the woman was beaten through the streets with a stick![3]

All Provision dealers were obliged to appear in the month of January each year before the Market authorities and their notary, and to pay over a sum of fifty silver florins by way of security for their honest dealings with the poorer people. They were under the same schedule of Statutes as were the millers and bakers with respect to the sale of grain and baked meats.[4]

[1] Rub. ccxxix., 1415.
[2] Rub. ccxxx., 1415.
[3] Rub. ccxxxii., 1415.
[4] Rubs. ccxl., ccxli., 1415.

The olive-oil they offered for sale had to be pure and clear and sweet-smelling, and meat stuffs of whatever kind required correct marking—substitution of inferior for superior qualities were closely watched. If any comestible was found to be bad or mouldy, the dealer was visited with a fine of twenty *lire*.[1]

The measures for oil were the same as for wine, and each cask, jar, bowl, ewer, bottle, or other utensil, had to bear in clear figures the quantity which it was reputed to hold. No oil-merchant could have in his shop at the same time more than four jars of olive oil, which were labelled with the name of the olive yard and the olive-grower. Dealing in oil between private persons was forbidden, as also was its hawking about the city.[2]

Provision dealers who supplied candles were enjoined to see that they were made of good tallow, and had serviceable cotton wicks. All inferior descriptions were seized and destroyed by the Market officials. The boiling and melting of tallow for making candles was forbidden within sixty yards of any principal street.[3]

Sellers of straw, fire-wood, and other burning materials, were required to appear each January before the Market officials, and to promise solemnly to observe all the regulations and bye-laws affecting their calling: failure to appear incurred a fine of fifty *lire*. At the same time no combustible matter was allowed to be stored for sale within the city walls.[4]

Cautions were further addressed to the packers of loads of straw and inflammable materials. The burden for each donkey was not to exceed two hundred pounds in weight, and to be compactly and evenly ordered. Vegetable-dealers, and others of like calling, were also cautioned about the bulk of fire-wood they led into the city. No timber of more than two yards in length and two hundred pounds in weight was permitted for each animal.[5]

Restrictive laws were in force also with respect to the amount of firing which a citizen might purchase. In the case of private houses no more than two ass loads were allowed, at factories and

[1] Rub. ccxlii., 1415.
[2] Rubs. ccxliii., ccxliv., ccxlv., 1415.
[3] Rubs. ccxlvi., ccxlvii., 1415.
[4] Rubs. cccxlviii., cccxlix., 1415.
[5] Rubs. ccl., ccli., 1415.

shambles larger quantities were permissible. No one was permitted to hawk about, in carts or on pack animals, coals, pitwood, straw, or any other such matters.[1]

The barge and boat men of the Arno were under strict regulations and bye-laws. Once a year in the month of January they were required to give security to the amount of one hundred *lire*, that they would neither lade, carry, nor land, any contraband or merchandise which was contrary to the laws of the State. They were forbidden to load for export grain, vegetables, olive-oil, fruit, bulls, oxen, pigs, wine, cheese,—beyond an hundred pounds in weight,—salt-meat, fish, lake-tench, baked-bread above a bushel, mushrooms, and all other comestibles, scheduled for home consumption by the officials of Or San Michele.[2]

In spite of all these careful, not to say restrictive, measures, the operative classes, and many even among the better to do citizens, were remarkable for their disregard of the ordinary rules of eating. Improper food, ill-fed meat, and bad qualities, were as little considered as were, in badly managed homes, the simple and cleanly laws of cooking. Many *Provvisioni* were passed against purveyors supplying inferior descriptions of food to the poor, and against uncleanliness in the preparation of the people's table.

The Statutes of the Guild were revised and added to in 1345, 1415, and 1529. At the final grouping of the Lesser Guilds in 1534, the "*Arte degli Oliandoli e Pizzicagnoli*" was included in the first University of the four along with the *Beccai*, and the *Fornai*, and the Association was styled "*Universita di Por San Piero*"—"University of Saint Peter's Gate."

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Whilst a complete list of all the articles sold by the Oil-merchants and General Provision Dealers would be a very lengthy document, it will suffice to schedule the following, as being the principal items:—Olives—fresh and bottled, olive-oil—of various qualities, olive-wood ashes—for religious and domestic purposes, crushed olive beans, cedar fruit, dried cedar-wood—for fumigations,

[1] Rub. cclii., 1415.

[2] Rub. ccliv., 1415.

pine-cones—for burning, mulberry leaves—for silk-worms, chestnuts—whole and powdered, sweet oranges, cucumbers—fresh and pickled, beans—whole, crushed, and salted, herbs—fresh and dried, cereals and corn stuffs, all sorts of fruit and vegetables, cheese, butter, eggs, salt, pork—fresh and salted, beans, sausages, lard, dried fish of all kinds, dried meat—whole or in powder, and every other sort of foodstuff.

In another category were :—Straw—in bundles, or made into bands and mats, rope and string, sieves, hoops for tubs, tubs, casks, barrels baskets, nets, wicker-cases for oil-jars and wine-flasks, willow-withs, bottles and glass articles of all kinds, pitchers and pots—in stone, earthenware, and metal, flails—for thrashing corn, canvas—of all lengths and strengths, soap, tallow, grease, candles—wax and tallow, pitch, tar, and what not.

In Franco Sacchetti, Simone della Tosa, the Peruzzi Codex, the "*Libro di Montaperti*," the accounts of the Alberti, the *Provvisioni*, and other sources, we find a great number of interesting details about the values and prices of commodities of all kinds in Florence during the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries.[1]

The best cheese came from Lucardo, in the Val d'Elsa, "where they make good cheese," as the common report had it. Much also was imported from Sicily and Sardinia, as well as from Apulia, but upon all such foreign supplies a tax of ten *soldi* was charged, for each thirty pounds of weight.

On October 13th, 1330, notice was given to the Officials of the "*Mercanzia*," of the arrival at Leghorn, of a ship laden, among other things, with three hundred and fifteen jars or casks of clear olive-oil, eighty-five of unrefined oil, and forty thousand pounds of Apulian cheese.[2]

The Customs officials at the Gates were a very acute sort of men, and in truth they had need to be, for in a trice they could detect the massive gold chain of a Siena *Magnifico* underneath his

[1] See Perrens, vol. iii., Appendix.
[2] Mercanzia, 1415, f. 127.

AGRICULTURAL OCCUPATIONS, 1362

silken jerkin, and punish him by annexing not only it, but the good cob he was riding also! The Market people suffered greatly at the hands of these nimble gentry. Sir Richard Dallington says: "I saw a poore country-woman, who coming to the gate to pay her tolle for a basket of Lettice she brought in: one of the foxes, who I thinke could smell a goose, for he could not possibly see any, searched under the hearbes, and finding one dead without feathers, sent the poore woman away halfe dead for sorrow, without her goose!" [1]

Whilst Florentines were moderate in the consumption of butchers' meat, they were very partial to a preparation called "*Mischiasto*,"—desiccated beef,—an import from Barbary. This meat powder was on sale at all the shops of the Guild.

The worldly wisdom of the Florentines in their aptitude for striking good bargains is amusingly illustrated by a wise saw of the period with respect to the purchase of grain:—"When you *buy* oats look out that the measure is not filled too quickly, for it will always sink two or three per cent.; but when you *sell*, fill quickly and your oats will grow!" [2]

The monopoly of salt was in the hands of the State, which owned the ancient pits at Volterra, Portoferraio, and Castiglione; but upon the "Guild of Oil-Merchants and General Provision Dealers" devolved the retail-sale of this indispensable commodity. So important to the community at large was its supply that in 1266 the Guild became popularly known as the "*Arte dei Venditori del Sale*"—"The Guild of Salt-Merchants."

The price charged at the shops of the Guild for salt varied with the circumstances of the time, for upon no other article did the legislators of the Republic fasten new taxes so readily and stiffly.

The treatment of Salt was on a par with the exercise of the other industries of the city, and Florentine Salt-Merchants became famous. A document, dated November 16th, 1564, is in the possession of the Paganelli family, by which Queen Elizabeth of

[1] "Survey of the Great Duke's Estate," p. 67.

[2] G. Biagi, "The Private Life of the Renaissance Florentine," p. 24.

England grants to Tommaso Baroncelli of Florence, the privilege of introducing into England the art of refining and bleaching salt, as practised in Florence, and the monopoly of manufacturing white salt, for a period of twenty years.

The "*Arte degli Oliandoli*" was after all not wholly confined to Florence, but sent out branches far and wide. Under the style of "Italian Warehousemen" General Provision Dealers have long been known in England. In the shop of any such a tradesman may be seen to-day most, if not all, the heterogeneous articles which used to make the salesmen of old Florence busy in supplying daily wants.

## II. L'ARTE DE' COREGGIAI

Few things were regarded with more pride among Florentines of the Renaissance than the art of Horsemanship. To begin with the ownership of a riding-horse was esteemed as a passport to good society, although with respect to the use of mounts by the *Messeri* of the "Guild of Doctors and Apothecaries" very little attempt was made by such worthies to ride a horse for riding's sake!

The curriculum of all the physical-culture schools of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries included skill in horse exercise. Agnolo Pandolfini,—"The Peaceful Citizen" (1360-1446), as he was acclaimed by his fellow citizens,—had at his villa at Segni twenty highly bred and trained horses. He was an adept at every sort of physical exercise, and in the pursuit of every fashionable sport; and he trained his sons, his apprentices, and his servants, to follow in his footsteps.

Vittorino da Feltre also (1397-1446), the founder of the celebrated Physical-Culture School at Mantua, placed horsemanship and hunting in his list of obligatory exercises for the noble youths who were committed to his charge.

The great Duke Federigo d'Urbino,—himself a pupil of Vittorino,—was a proficient in all manly sports. He adopted the profession of arms, and joined the troop of the Condottiere Niccolo

Peccinino. He bore in his body honourable marks of his prowess, inasmuch as at a Jousting, outside the town gate, he had the misfortune to lose an eye and to break his nose!

Among the exercises necessary for a gentleman, laid down by Conte Baltazzare di Castiglione, in his world-famous book, "*Il Cortigiano*,"—"The Courtier,"—published in 1531, was horsemanship. "I would have," he says, "that a gentleman should be a perfect horseman in every respect—skilled in riding, running at the ring and tilting, . . . hunting the wild-boar and bull. . . ."

In the days of the "olde chivalrie," when not engaged in active hostilities with foreign foes, young warriors found outlets for their exuberant vigour in the tournaments. These were at first bloody combats wherein one, sometimes both, of the combatants were slain. Such sanguinary encounters were suppressed by Sacred Canon from Rome, and instead were instituted less sanguinary pastimes. To these Florentines applied the title "*Giostre*."

The great *Giostre* were held at the principal Church Festivals. The Tilting-ground was of considerable extent to allow of a free gallop for the horses. Each knight had to ride three courses. Tilting at "*Il Saracino*"—the Moor—our "Turk's Head!"—offered opportunities for fearless horsemanship.

To "win his spurs" was the ambition of every esquire, and indeed the dream of every youthful page. The esquire could wear only short and plain silver spurs, whilst the knight was spurred in gold. The use of spurs was a mark of independence and authority.

Such being the fashion of the times there was an immense scope for the employment of manipulative skill in the making of saddles, bridles, stirrups, and all the adjuncts of the stable and the course. Saddlers, Harness-makers, Shield-makers, Scabbard-makers, and the like had their hands full of commissions, which of course called for greater skill, and provided greater gain, than the world-old manufacture of ordinary cart and carriage harness and accoutrements.

"There are," says Brunetto Latini, "horses of all kinds—chargers, or tall horses, for the combat, others for gentle exercises use palfreys—which are also called amblers and hackneys, others again employ pack-horses to carry loads.[1] Mares were never used for saddle purposes—indeed to offer a mare to a knight was considered an insult: they were reserved for traction and pack-horse purposes.

Horse-dealers and Horse-Jobbers formed a not inconsiderable portion of the Guild: at least Guildsmen were the acknowledged agents between the raisers of stock in the *Contado* and beyond, and the horse-buyers of the city. Doubtless, in this trade, they were in a sense partners with the *Albergatori*,—Innkeepers,—many of whom owned, or rented, stables for the baiting of travellers' horses and mules.

The numbers of pack-animals and draught-horses were of course considerable on the trade routes between the sea and Florence, and upon the more distant lines of communication with France and Germany. Merchants and commercial travellers looked to the dealers and jobbers of Florence, and the neighbouring cities and townships, for their relays of convoy animals.

The Archives of Florence contain several records of Saddlers and allied craftsmen, for example:—

"1031. *Martinus—Cabellarius*"—Horse-jobber.

"1073. *Aezo—Sellarius*"—Saddler.

"1076. *Barone—Scutarius*"—Shield-maker.

"1101. *Sichelmus—Stafarius*"—Stirrup-maker.

"1211. *Ristoro fil. Picri—Buorsajo*"—Pouch-maker.

These various branches of the leather industry and others like Bookbinding, Gauntlet-making and many fancy trades having a common material and ministering to the wants of the fashionable and the literary classes of Society, were quite naturally drawn together, to the mutual advantage of all.

The "*Arte de' Coreggiai*" first appears in the list of Guilds in 1236, when it was placed twelfth in the order of the Fourteen

[1] "Il Tesoro," 13th century.

Lesser Guilds. The same position was retained in the revisions of 1266 and 1280-82. In the latter year the style of the Guild was added to and became' '*L'Arte de' Sanolacciai e Coreggiai e Scudai*"—"The Guild of Harness-makers, Saddlers, and Shield-makers." Incorporated as a branch of the Guild an Association of Bridle and Reins-makers is recorded in 1285 under the style of "*L'Arte de' Frenai.*"

Among minor Associations affiliated to the Guild was that of "*Prestatori di Ronzoni*"—"Horse-dealers and Jobbers," which is frequently named in the years 1309-1316. In 1321 another Company is mentioned—the "*Vaginari*"—"Scabbard-makers."

The Guild must have prospered, for in 1415 it no longer occupied its very lowly position in the Hierarchy of the Guilds, but had advanced to the tenth place among the Lesser Guilds.

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The first regular Statutes of the Guild were put forth in 1301-1309, as was the case with all the Guilds, Greater and Lesser. They were revised and added to in 1342, 1415, and 1501. Under Consuls, whose numbers as usual varied as circumstances required, but were always in excess of some other Lesser Guilds, as representing the various associated trades—were the usual Guild officials.

The Saddlers were arranged in six classes:—(1) Makers of saddles and harness—for heavy haulage, and stirrups, (2) Carriage-reins and Bridle-makers, (3) Gold and silver spurriers and Horse armourers, (4) Makers of saddle-bows and pack-frames—all of wood, (5) Curriers, who covered the wood-work with leather, and (6) Saddle-painters and decorators.

The Shield-makers also were sub-divided:—(1) Workers in metal-frames, (2) Turners of the wooden foundations, (3) Stretchers and liners in leather, (4) Embossers and Painters. The other constituents of the Guild were similarly sub-divided:—Harness-makers, Scabbard-makers, Gauntlet-makers, Bookbinders, etc. etc.

Under Cosimo I. in 1530 the "Guild of Saddlers and Shield-makers" was amalgamated with the "Shoemakers" and "Tanners"

in the third University of Lesser Guilds, under the style of "*L'Universita de' Maestri di Cuoiame*"—"the University of Master Leather-Workers."

The Arms of the Guild were two red stripes upon a white field. They were emblazoned upon the Banner, first given to the Guild in 1266, and also appeared upon the Consuls' Residence.

With respect to saddles, their use for military purposes,

STIRRUP-MAKER'S SHOP. END OF SIXTEENTH CENTURY

came in with steel and iron armour. Men in armour could not keep their balance without support, consequently for combats not only were leather seats provided, but the flaps of the saddle were made to enwrap the thighs of the horseman, and so give him a steadier perch.

Saddles were by degrees provided with:—(1) the Tree or Stretcher upon which to fix the leather—this was made of wood, (2) the Seat proper, (3) the Skirt, and (4) the Flaps. The "Tree" was usually made of beechwood upon an iron framework.

Pig-skin was the customary leather used, but tricky saddlers were not beneath using imitation skins, as many a horseman found to his cost!

Pillions and litters for ladies and for the sick, with saddle-cloths and horse-caparisons, were made by saddlers, who had recourse to embroiderers and to stampers of leather for enrichments.

Saddlers were also engaged in cutting and sewing bridles, reins, and stirrup-straps for riding horses, and the heavier harness for draught-teams and pack-animals. For these articles, which were required to be at once light and strong, they made use of uncoloured strips of hardened well seasoned leather which had also undergone the process of pressing.

Stirrups were first made in France, and were of various shapes and sizes to suit military and civil equestrians. The tournament stirrups were bulky and heavy, but richly adorned and strengthened with iron bearings. They were essential in combat, whether in the field of battle or in the lists of chivalry, but ordinary horse-exercise was taken without them.

A list of Saddlers' ironmongery is quite a long one:—Buckles, bits, snaffle-chains, head-pieces, collar-steels, saddle-bearings, gearing-chains and bolts, spurs for civilian use, straps of all sorts and kinds, whips and whip-bands, etc.

With respect to Shields,—the making of which appertained to the Craft of Saddlery,—in the twelfth century, they were kite-shaped or triangular. Smaller shields of much the same shapes were introduced in the thirteenth century, with holes cut on the right hand upper corner to serve as a rest for the spear or lance. Round bucklers were worn upon the hand in the fourteenth century, and pear-shaped shields upon the arm. In the fifteenth century knights' shields had a bulge, and were about two feet and a half long.

Various names were given by the Florentine Shield-makers to the different kinds of bucklers for example:—*Rotella*—round, *Scudo*—oblong, *Brocchiere*—a small shield worn upon the arm

and bulging, *Targa*—a large square or round shield, and *Pavese* —a shield which covered the whole body.

The materials used were iron, copper, wood, and leather, but generally in combination. When two materials were used the shield was bound with an iron rim. Tournament shields were a speciality of the Florentine "*Scudai*," and were made rather for show than for use. They were elaborately adorned with paintings, or embossed with mouldings of *gesso*, or inlaid by patterns in wood and metal, and were decorated, often enough by artists of the first rank.

Pouches, Purses, and Gauntlets all came under the category of Saddlery. Their manufacture and adornment formed an attractive trade and one of no little profit to the skilful craftsman. Each class of citizens had a distinctive shape of pouch or purse, and it was possible to distinguish the wearers' Guild by the shape each affected. Civilians were accustomed to display their arms, or those of their Guild, upon their Pouches,—"*Scarselle*," as they were called.

Very much rivalry and considerable variety were excited by this custom. The smarter a man was in his dress and in the style of his belt and pouch and his gauntlets the more consideration did he receive in public.

Dante refers to this fashion in the "*Inferno*":—

> " . . pendant from his neck each wore a Pouch
> With colours and with emblems various mark'd
> On which it seemed as if their eyes did feed."[1]

"*Scarselle*" and gauntlets of leather were sold by the "*Rigattieri*," as well as by the Saddlers, who were also the makers of gloves of all kind.

The *Scarselle* were often works of art, wherein the finest effort of the dresser of leather, or the stitcher of cloth, was coloured with the pigments of acknowledged artists, and decorated with the embroideries of skilful silk-workers and goldsmiths. They were suspended from the belt, on the right side, or from the

[1] "Inferno," Canto xvii.

neck, and contained the wearer's petty-cash, daily tablets, and other fashionable nicknacks.

As time went on more and more care was expended on the finishing and adorning of leather work. As a case in point, it is on record that in the middle of the fifteenth century the Saddlers of Florence had introduced a debased style of workmanship. Fashion demanded pictorial embellishment on saddles, shields, book-backs, and other objects in leather; and the "Guild of Painters" stepped in, and passed a rubric which forbade their members to paint or decorate any kind of leather but the very best ox-hide or pig-skin—and on no account were they allowed to use inferior colours.[1]

### III. L'ARTE DE' CHIAVAIUOLI

The Renaissance made demands upon all sorts and conditions of artizans for finer and more artistic workmanship than had been sufficient in mediæval times. No industry felt this influence more keenly than that of metal-workers. The "Guild of Blacksmiths," by reason of the bulk and character of their materials, no less than by the solid requirements of their trade, were entirely unequal to cope with the thousand and one tasteful objects which skilled hands could fashion out of base metal.

As early as the fifth century Ampelius, the monkish historian, in his "Legends of the Saints," speaks of a "Corporation of Locksmiths," and instances the intricacies of their craft. Another monkish historian, Theophilus, in his "*Diversarium Artium Schedula*," put out in the early part of the twelfth century, gives descriptions of methods of embossing, and damascening, and other work, in iron, steel, copper, and bronze. He further adds a list of locksmiths' tools, including hammers, chisels, screw-jacks, saws, scalpers, burins, scratching-needles, burnishers, etc. etc.

In the Archives of Florence of the twelfth century there are the following records of locksmiths:—

"1108. *Florentius—Clavajulus*"—Locksmith.

[1] Rub. lxxix., 1415.

"1146. *Johannes (faber) f. Brictonis*"—Knife-maker.

"1147. *Uguccione—Calderarius*"—Copper-smith.

In the first List of the Guilds—1236—the "*Arte de' Chiavaiuoli*" is reckoned tenth in the Fourteen Lesser Guilds. This position was maintained in 1266, but in 1280-82 the Guild was promoted to the sixth place, and received an extension of its title, namely:—"*L'Arte de' Chiavaiuoli e Ferraiuoli-Vecchi e Nuovi*"—"The Guild of Locksmiths and Workers in old and new Metal."

In 1301-9, when the Statutes underwent a strict revision in consonance to the general adoption, by all the Guilds, of the model code prepared for the "Calimala" merchants, an alteration was made in the designation of the Guild as follows:—"*L'Arte de' Chiavaiuoli, Ferraiuoli, e Calderai*"—"The Guild of Locksmiths, Iron-Workers and Braziers." In 1415 the original style of 1236 was restored and the Guild was classed eleventh in the Fourteen Lesser Guilds.

Very many trade Associations were affiliated to the Guild, for no industry presented fuller opportunities for varied workmanship, both useful and ornamental. These Associations ranged from groups of most skilful artists in metal,—both precious and common,—to the very dregs of the population, for example, in 1311 the "*Ferravecchi*,"—"Scrap-iron Dealers," a recognised trade apart, were incorporated, and in 1327 the "*Incisori in Rame*"—"Engravers in copper," were included in the Guild-membership.

If the custom which Ampelius the Monk cites in the fifth century, of electing two Consuls, and which he calls, "the good old Republican title," was continued in the twelfth and thirteenth century, by the Locksmiths of Florence, then the Guild was quite in line with the other trade corporations with respect to its chief officers.

Who and what the remaining officials were can only be traced after a laborious search through ill-written, ill-spelt, and much abbreviated vernacular documents. We may however take it

A LOCKSMITH AND HIS APPRENTICE

FIFTEENTH CENTURY

for granted that much of, if not all, the system carried out in the "*Laborerum*" of the "Guild of Masters of Stone and Wood" was adopted by the Masters of iron and copper.

Tests of skill in workmanship were required before admission to the Guild, and not only had the candidate to produce samples of his work, but he was further called upon to give evidence before the Consuls of his dexterity in the use of tools of all kinds, by then and there manipulating metals of various sorts.

The Residence of the Consuls of the Guild was a small house opposite Or San Michele and contiguous to the Offices of the "Guild of Wool." On the wall were carved as usual the Arms of the Guild,—a big black key,—which appeared also upon the red field of the Guild gonfalon.

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Some idea of the progress and prosperity of the Guild may be gained by comparing the amount contributed, at the taxing of the Guilds in 1325, to pay the expenses of the warlike enterprises of the Republic, with that furnished by the "Guild of Masters of Stone and Wood"—the amounts were exactly alike, namely, eighty gold florins. This sum was in excess of that raised by the "Guild of Tanners and Skinners." This test of development holds true with respect to the number of members of the Guild, their financial capacities, and their ability and fame.

Workshops abounded in old Florence for the artistic working of metals, sometimes two or three trades shared the same premises, and carried on their work side by side. In Fico's basement, in the Mercato Vecchio, was a furnace for Glass-blowing, and a shop for Locksmiths and Gimlet-grinders, where one could purchase a flattering hand-mirror, or a tasteful flower-vase, and inspect the latest fashions in metal belt-clasps, dress buttons, cinctures, the fittings for purses, and other personal ornaments.

Florence very soon became the rival of lordly Milan in the art and craft of Locksmithery. Indeed, on one occasion at least she bore off the palm—when Cardinal Wolsey ordered in Florence

two thousand sets of horse-harness, with embossed and damascened metal work. The price was sixteen shillings per set—a large sum in those days.

Much of the fineness and delicacy of Florentine Locksmithery was undoubtedly due to the sunny, tonic climate of Tuscany. In the very characteristic workmanship there is an entire absence of deep furrows and profound shadows, whilst low relief and lightness of touch are evident in every object. The designs are instinct with life and cheerfulness. If the mask of tragedy scowls menacingly, there is something about its expression which suggests merely a passing mood. The features of comedy never relax their merry laughter: every smile, every dimple, and every blush, are exactly marked with sympathetic touch.

In nothing so much as in the making of locks and keys, and the hinges of doors and cupboards, etc., did the nimble-fingered artworkers in metal exhibit this influence of atmosphere, in the perfection of skill and adaptability.

These articles were almost always constructed in connection with wood and leather, hence locksmithery, joinery, and curriery, marched hand-in-hand, absorbing and assimilating like ideas and methods. For an example of this statement it is only needful to compare the tongued and grooved work of the Middle Ages with the framed and morticed treatment of the Renaissance. The long, over-strapped, hinge of a door, or chest, was changed into the dove-tailed "bull-hinge," as it is called.

The making of locks attained such a degree of excellence, that they were accounted rare objects of art, and taken, with the utmost care, from place to place. The designs most commonly carried out in Florence were armorial bearings, letterings, and grotesques, with conventional foliage and ribbon work—all in sympathetic relief. Keys followed suit: they were first distinguished in Florence as "male" and "female,"—the former had solid shanks, the latter were barrelled.

The models of these objects, and others similar in character, were invariably made in wax. The wax-modellers of Florence

excelled those of all other art cities. It is curious, perhaps, that they never associated themselves as a Guild or Corporation. Their finest workmanship resulted in glorious bronze medallions, which are the pride and the joy of artist, artificer, and collector alike. They are remarkable for the lowness of their relief, nothing more delicate was ever achieved by the hand of man working in metal.

The following are some of the more prominent Masters in bronze, who worked in the shops of the Locksmiths :—Antonio Avertino, Giovanni Petrecini, Michelozzo Michelozzi, Andrea Guazzalotti, Niccolo Fiorentino, in the fifteenth century ; and in the sixteenth, Benvenuto Cellini, Giovanni da Bologna, Francesco di Sangallo, Antonio Pollaiuolo, Domenico Poggini and the brothers Gianpaolo—who were all of them matriculated members of the Guild.

The damascening of metal—a beautiful Art—consists of the incrustations of gold and silver upon steel and bronze. The method pursued in Florence was that introduced from the East, namely the spreading of the stamped-out design laid flat and close upon the surface of the metal. Pressure and blows were applied both under heat and cold. Artificers called it "*All' Azzimina*"—like a "coat of mail," and "*Alla Gemina*"—"after the original."

The finest work of this description was exhibited in the magnificently wrought iron cabinets, inlaid with gold and silver, which became the craze of wealthy citizens in the sixteenth century.

Benvenuto Cellini is very warm in his praise of the damascening of steel by Florentine craftsmen. He says :—"With their needle-like chisels they turn up every twist and curve of the most intricately overlapping acanthus leaf, and their introduction of little singing birds and playful animals seems to make the bare metal a living entity."

The embossing of metal was by no means the least admirable of the output of the Florentine Locksmiths. In this art-craft they emulated the workers in leather and the carvers of wood.

Indeed so skilful did all three classes of workmen become that, given a subject to be done in each of the three materials, it was their aim to produce a common result, wherein nobody could say at sight which was metal, wood, or leather!

Few artificers were greater in this beautiful craft than Francesco dal Prato di Girolamo: he worked on the lines of Michele Agnolo, who perhaps introduced it into Florence from Germany.

The greatest artists were not above making the most simple things, for instance, Benvenuto Cellini made salt-cellars, Jacopo Sansovino—inkstands, Donatello—mirror-frames, the Pollaiuoli—candlesticks, and so on. That these objects were strong as well as beautiful one has but to recall the feat of Leonardo da Vinci in wrenching off door-knockers with one hand alone in response to a wager. A favourite style of door-knocker was a chiselled figure of a naked child, much after the lovely *bambini* of the Della Robbia, holding a scroll inscribed "*Salve.*"

Endless are the objects which the clever members of the "Guild of Locksmiths" have left to posterity to admire and to imitate. Among the most striking, as evidences of thoroughly artistic proclivities and practical convenience combined, were the everyday working tools. These were not, as now, mainly, and often obtrusively, utilitarian, but they were designed and made by men who have taught the eternal lesson that the useful and the ornamental need never be parted.

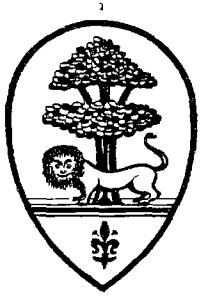
Many humble but indispensable implements of daily life have beautiful enrichments, for instance, cloth smoothing-irons with coiled snakes for handles, carpenters' compasses with floral designs impressed and chiselled, nut-crackers, trays, scent-caskets with delicately fine pierced work, farriers' tools have richly embossed work, surgical saws, of the sixteenth century, have handles of ivory inlaid with silver and amber, other instruments have ebony handles, with incrustations and small plaques of bronze. Snuffers were embellished with patterns in stamped diaper. Braces for drilling, pincers, fire-irons, knives, forks, spoons, skewers, thimbles, candle-prickets, hand-planes, and the tools and instruments used

in all the trades of Florence, were all of them made for work but adorned by art.

In a word the Locksmiths' Art was an absolute affirmation of all the mighty powers of the Renaissance. Without the clever artificers of metal much of the charming revelation of that precious awakening would have been non-existent. The "Guild of Locksmiths" supplied the instruments with which the secrets of ornamental craft and useful art have been revealed to a delighted world. They gave spatulas to sculptors, paint-boxes to painters, compasses to architects, sextants to explorers of nature, pestles and mortars to doctors and apothecaries, combs to silk-carders, fine frame wires to silk weavers, smoothing-irons to "*Calimala*" cloth finishers, needles to lace-workers and embroiderers, sensitive scales to coiners at the Mint—and many more indispensable implements and apparatus.

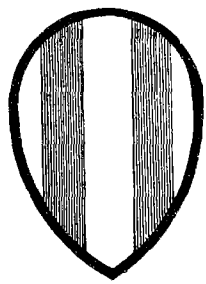
When Cosimo, the first Grand Duke, in 1534 established his four Universities of the Crafts, the "Guild of Locksmiths" was incorporated as the Third in order along with the "Blacksmiths," the "Masters of Stone and Wood," the "Armourers and Sword-makers," and the "Carpenters." The style of the "Combination" was "*L'Universita de' Fabbricanti*"—"University of Artificers."

1



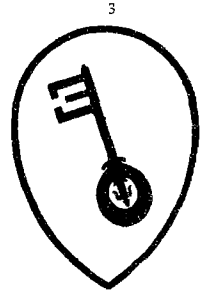
1. "*Stemma dell' Arte degli Oliandoli*"
Green tree, red lion, in a white field, with a *giglio*

2



2. "*Stemma dell' Arte de' Coreggiai*"
Two red bars upon a white field

3



3. "*Stemma dell' Arte de' Chiavaiuoli*"
A black key in a white field

## CHAPTER XIV

# THE GUILDS OF ARMOURERS, CARPENTERS, AND BAKERS

*LE ARTI DE' CORAZZAI E SPADAI, E DE' LEGNAIUOLI, E DE' FORNAI*

I. ARMOURERS.—Italy the battlefield of Europe. Mediæval armour. Renaissance armourer-smiths. Early Florentine craftsmen. Cuirass and sword-makers united. Thirteenth-century Guild Officers. Dispute about a banner. Many linked industries. Tent-making. The *Condottieri*. Tournaments. A knight's kit. Price of a *Ronzone*—a charger. Duels. Feats of strength. "Treatise on Military Arts." The artillery of 1530.

II. CARPENTERS.—At first subordinate to "Masters of Stone and Wood." *Fabri-tignarii* of Charlemagne. Many kinds of workers in wood. Price of tools. Rules about obstructions. Fines. No litter. Furniture. The "festive board." *Cassoni*. *Intarsiatura*—Mosaic. Walnut and pear wood abundant. Carvings. *Gesso*. *Certosatura*. Families of skilled craftsmen. "*Il Grosso Legnaiuolo*!" Giovanni Rucellai's dressing-table.

III. BAKERS.—*Contado* produced little corn. The "*Annona*," or Magistracy of Abundance. Foreign supplies. Gate-dues and ruses. An ancient custom. Qualities of wheat. The *Vacca*. Or San Michele—Shrine and Market. Affidavits. Chopping-off fingers! Ill fame of bakers. Sweating. Distinction in the Guild between *Mugnai*—millers, and *Fornai*—bakers. Storage of corn and flour. Boccaccio's satires. Bylaws. Pastry-cooks. Carnival song. Yearly inspections. Fuel. Bakers prosperous and ostentatious.

## I. L'ARTE DE' CORAZZAI E SPADAI

ALTHOUGH the primitive arms of the Etruscans came originally from Greece, and were famed for the excellence of pattern and manufacture, and although the legions of the conquering Roman armies crossed and recrossed Tuscany, and impressed the solidity and workmanship of their weapons and armour upon the subjected races; it is a matter of certainty that Florentine arms and armour came directly from Germany.

In Italy the business of making armour and weapons—especially swords—was a specialty of Milan and other towns in

Lombardy. The patterns and workmanship exhibited in these workshops were undoubtedly Teutonic, but, in the skilful hands of Italian workmen, the plain and practical instruments of attack and defence received the addition of artistic decoration.

One of the earliest armourers of fame in Milan was Galvano Fiamino, who, in 1288, had established a great renown for making helmets, breastplates, shields, and other portions of body-armour, in burnished metal. The Giulino family too was famous for making steel-armour, but excelled especially in defensive armour for horses.

From the eleventh to the fourteenth century armoured men wore iron shirts only. In the thirteenth century cross-bows were generally used, with a variety of arrows, for example :—*Verrettoni* —sharp, short darts, *Moschette*—ball-pointed medium length, and *Quadrelli*—long four-feathered shafts.

Before the invention of gunpowder,—in the middle of the thirteenth century,—the instruments used for artillery were as numerous in variety as they were extraordinary in form. Their manufacture required the services, not only of armourers and workers in metal, but the assistance of carpenters, rope-makers and other artificers. After the application, in 1280, of gunpowder to artillery, this class of offensive weapons became a distinct and largely employed industry. With the introduction of fire-arms there came into activity a rival class of workman—gunsmiths, who, as the science of warfare developed, ousted by degrees armourers from their place and employment.

Throughout the whole of the fourteenth century knights continued the practice of wielding lance, sword, and battle-axe. Foot-soldiers were armed with short swords, bows and arrows, darts, short axes, slings, knives, daggers, and javelins. Scale armour was rarely, if ever, used after the fourteenth century.

In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries Tuscan infantry were armed with steel or iron breastplates, but were unarmed on their backs. They carried pikes of iron, set upon stout wooden poles, seventeen feet long, with swords, rounded at the point. Head

armour was not worn. Arquebuses made their appearance only at the beginning of the sixteenth century.

The work of Armourer-smiths seems to have reached its highest point of excellence in the second half of the fifteenth century. The influence of the Renaissance made itself felt in the richness of decorative attributes rather than in the quality of the metal used.

Very evident too was the advance made,—intelligent as well as artistic,—in the output of the armourers' shops. Ill-fitting pieces yielded to well moulded articles, much in the same way that badly-made cloth garments never leave the table of an observant and diligent tailor.

Bronze armour came in during the sixteenth century and was worn until the year 1558. Its adoption was mainly due to the fact that it was far easier to keep clean than was steel. Black armour followed on the heels of bronze armour, and its sombreness brought into vogue the splendid decorative qualities of gold and silver damascening. Embossed and fluted armour was quite the latest adaptation of defensive dress, and became fashionable at the end of the sixteenth century, rather for State functions and parades, than for use in field or at joust.

. . . . . .

As early as the end of the eleventh century Armourers were in existence in Florence—if not much before that period. The Archives have the following entries :—

"1090. *Johannes, fil. Rodolfo—pugnitore*"—Dagger-maker.

"1128. *Florentius—Spaliarius*"—Armourer.

Workmen who had been trained in the Milan workshops found their way to Florence, along with very many other artificers, when her sun began to rise so gloriously in the early Renaissance.

Florentine armourers, along with those of Pisa and Pistoja, very soon attained to fame as proficient in the art of making arms and armour. To the latter city is due the distinction of having manufactured the first "Pistol,"—a lethal weapon with a wheel lock and a barrel a foot long. The increase of the industry led

naturally to an incorporation of the artizans, and so it is not to be wondered at that in the first list of the Guilds,—that of 1236,—the "*Arte de' Corazzai e Spadai*" finds a place.

Certainly the rank of the "Guild of Armourers and Sword-makers" was very humble—eleventh among the Fourteen Lesser Guilds. This position was maintained in 1266, but in the List of 1280-82 the Guild displaced that of the "Locksmiths," and retained the step in 1301-1309, and right on till 1415. In the latter year the "Armourers and Sword-makers" gave way to their rivals in the industry of artistic metal-work, and even lost one place more, coming out as last but two of all the Twenty-one Guilds.

Upon the last re-arrangement of the Lesser Guilds in 1534, the "Armourers and Sword-makers" were scheduled with the other workers in metal, stone, and wood,—the "Blacksmiths," "Locksmiths," "Masters of Stone and Wood," and "Carpenters," under the comprehensive title of the "*L'Universita de' Fabbricanti*"—the third of the four Universities incorporated under the Grand Duke Cosimo.

In a document of the thirteenth century, to which no date is attached, it is stated that "those who hammer their metal plates and make steel cuirasses are a Guild apart, and exercise their craft under Consuls, or Rectors, like the other Guilds of Florence."

Another entry, dated 1303, names nineteen individuals "who are declared to be more than two-thirds of the members of the Guild, and who in full meeting elected two Consuls or Rectors." Among other matters which came before these officials was a dispute between the "Armourers' Guild" and that of the "Escutcheon and Shield-makers' Guild." They appointed two members of the Guild to act as arbitrators. The disputants, who, it is stated, had, or ought to have had, a common Banner, were of different opinions as to who should pay for a new one, and who should have the care of it. The decision arrived at charged the "Armourers" with two-thirds, and the "Escutcheon and Shield-makers" with the remaining one-third of the cost. Further,

because the latter had held possession of the Banner for one whole year, to the former was allocated its custody for two years in succession.

Another matter in dispute,—the share of grain which the two Guilds were called upon to contribute to the Florentine army in the field,—was arranged in the same way.

Hardly anything can be gathered out of the Archives and Records of Florence which relates to the Constitution of the Guild.

Statutes were first put out in 1300, up to which date custom and convenience appear to have been considered sufficient for the purposes of government and development. These were revised in 1305 upon the model of the "*Calimala*" Code. Additions and alterations were made in 1314-1316, 1321, 1342, and 1463, in the same way as in the case of the "Guild of Carpenters."[1] Among the Statutes of 1315 was one which required every horseman, serving in a campaign, to provide himself with a helmet, breastplate, gauntlets, cuishes, and leg-pieces,—all of iron,—made by acknowledged armourers of Florence.

That there were many linked industries included in the membership of the Guild goes without saying, but what were their relations one with another it is not easy to say. One such association is recorded in 1309-1316:—the "*Compagnia degli Arcariai*," the "Company of Makers of Bows and Arrows."

Armourers were looked to to supply camp equipage generally as well as the arms and armour of the soldiers. *Trabacche*—bell tents, and *Padiglioni*—pavilions, were made of stout canvas, and were, in early days, provided by the soldiery themselves. The latter were often of immense size, very handsomely adorned with painting and embroidery, and were much beflagged.

Doubtless the progress of the Guild was much assisted by the ample native supply of metals for which Tuscany was ever famous. As significant of the expansion there is a record in the Archives which states that:—In September 1294 an Assisi merchant pro-

[1] G. Gonetta, "Bibliografia Statutaria delle Corporanzie d'Arti e Mestieri d'Italia."

mised to pay Nato Melliorati and Pela Lapi,—partners in business and citizens and merchants of Florence,—a sum of seventy *lire*, payable within a month, for a certain consignment of merchandise —belts, hats, breeches, bucklers, helmets, and swords. In the following year also there is a record of a credit sale by three Florentine armourers and merchants to a tradesman from Assisi, of a number of breastplates, breeches, helmets, caps, and short swords, etc.[1]

In the Taxing List of 1321, when the Guilds were mulcted in proportionate charges for the benefit of the State, the "*Arte de' Corazzai e Spadai*" is put down for one hundred and fifty *lire*—a very small sum indeed as compared with the contribution of two thousand gold florins by the "*Arte della Lana*." In the same List the "*Compagnia degli Arcariai*" is charged separately the very modest sum of eight *lire*—the least amount of all.

In the days of the *Condottieri*, when the spirit of warfare and the scourge of brigandage were joined hand in hand, lethal weapons and body armour were greatly in demand. Florentines however were an industrial race, not a warlike folk, and managed their battles by proxy.

Vast sums of money were paid for the arming, mounting, and provisioning of the trained bands of mercenary troops, who, led by Florentine commanders or alien captains, vindicated the honour of the "City of the Lily" and proclaimed her power over rash opponents. Such leaders were Uguccione della Faggiola, Castruccio Castracane, Bartolommeo Colleoni, Giovanni de' Medici (delle Bande Nere), Guarnieri, and Hawkwood.

Each *Condottiere* regarded his troop,—and some of them numbered thousands of soldiers,—as the arbiter of peace and war, and took the utmost pains to keep his armaments abreast of his times.

Every young Florentine of birth was trained in some such school as that of Urbino, and quickly assimilated the teaching of Castiglione's "Courtier." "I would have," wrote the Count, "a complete gentleman to be of good shape, and well proportioned in

[1] "Archivio della Citta di Firenze," i. f. 26.

his limbs, yet light and easy, and to be well acquainted with all exercises becoming men of arms. To handle, besides, well all kinds of weapons, and to wrestle well, which generally accompany all exercises of arms on foot."[1]

TYPES OF ADULT FLORENTINES—SIXTEENTH CENTURY—MICHAEL ANGELO

The kit of a Florentine warrior was by no means a small one, nor one cheaply to be obtained. In October 1365 an armourer, Barna da Valorino by name, presented his bill for goods supplied to a knight, one Paolo Sassetti,—which bill by the way was made out by the hands of Ser Lorenzo di Ser Lando, a notary :—

One Cuirass—with screw and lace holes.

[1] "Il Cortigiano," 1531.

One Helmet—with an iron band or chin-chain.
One pair Gauntlets of fine chain-work.
One armoured Neck-piece.
One pair of Armlets, and Cuffs of leather.
One pair of Thigh-pieces of thin metal.
One pair Leather Greaves.
One Tilting-Helmet or Casque.
One Pennon with its staff.
One cavalry Lance.
Two Saddle-bags.
Two Knights' coffers.[1]

Although the prices of these articles are not appended, we gather, from a Price List of the year 1372, that it was no inconsiderable undertaking to furnish a knight with his body armour, weapons, horse, and banners. A *ronzone*,—charger,—cost forty to fifty gold florins, and his daily keep at a public-stable came to the fifth part of a gold florin, or more. A pair of spurs cost half a gold florin, a bridle three-fourths, and a chased chafing-bit nearly one gold florin. For the Page, a mule cost twenty gold florins, a pair of stirrups half a gold florin, and the bridle three quarters. A sumpter-horse for a servant cost at least twenty-five gold florins.[1]

If Milan was the acknowledged mart for warlike armour, Florence was no less renowned as the source of weapons of display. Her "Armourers and Sword-makers" were chiefly employed in making outfits for knights for the *Giostre* or Tournaments—things of beauty and of price rather than of strength and of use.

As early as the year 1260 young Florentines of all classes were accustomed to go out to Peretola,—a famous jousting-field,—three miles away, and practise with lance and sword in friendly rivalry. The ancient rule had been that only young men of noble birth, and soldiers of fame, were eligible to take part in these contests; indeed the right to wear weapons was denied

[1] See Perrens, "Histoire de Florence," Appendix.

the lower classes. Under the rule of the Medici however the *Giostre* were thrown open to all classes.

These tests of skill, strength, and agility, were always carried out at the chief Church festivals. Tilting-grounds were formed in the larger squares of the city and in all the more important villages.

One of the most famous duels, fought to the death, was during the siege of Florence in 1530, when the gigantic Dante da Castiglione encountered Bertino Aldobrandi, a renowned Florentine champion. With one crushing blow the latter,—although his right arm was crippled,—clove his adversary's helmet and skull right down to the shoulder!

Another celebrated Florentine renowned for all time as proficient in many arts and sciences—Leon Battista Alberti—was also a great athlete. He thought nothing of leaping in full armour upon the back of a galloping horse!

Much encouragement was thus given to the craft of the armourer, and the members of the "*Arte de' Corazzai e Spadai*" became extremely skilful and also extremely wealthy.

The Residence of the Consuls of the Guild was in the Piazza del Duomo—in the same building as that occupied by the offices of the "*Misericordia.*" One of the most important workshops of the "Armourers" was situated in the Via de' Spadai, by the side of the Church of Sant' Andrea of the Mercato Vecchio, and contiguous to the famous Market-shrine of the Madonna. The Arms of the Guild were put up over both buildings: a red sword and a blue cuirass in a white field.

In the year 1472 appeared a "Treatise on Military Arts" by a Florentine called Giovanni Valturio: in it is the first mention of guns, and the like engines of war, as being wrought by the "Guild of Armourers and Sword-makers." Up to 1474 Florentines had only iron guns drawn by bullocks—more or less for show—for after each discharge these primitive weapons required several hours to cool before they were again available! The standing army of the Republic was small. It had no artillery

A TYPICAL YOUNG FLORENTINE SOLDIER

ST. GEORGE, PATRON OF THE GUILD OF ARMOURERS — DONATELLO

[See page 530]

until 1530, except a few clumsy pieces called "*Moschetti*," which were limbered about on mule-back.

## II. L'ARTE DE' LEGNAIUOLI

The Guild of Carpenters was one of the least esteemed in the Hierarchy of the Guilds, and occupied in every List the penultimate position, taking precedence only of the "*Arte de' Fornai*." The why and wherefore of this inferiority it is quite impossible to state. Possibly the mutual relations between the Guild and the "Masters of Wood,"—incorporated with the "*Arte de' Maestri di Pietra e Legname*,"—were such as to associate in the latter all the more skilful and artistic, no less than the richer and more influential, workers in wood.

It is quite probable that the rougher wood-craftsmen were originally peasants of the *Contado*—accustomed to felling trees and preparing them for the Master-builders in the city. Some too were doubtless gatherers of fuel and loose timber, and such men would be quite able to put together, more or less crudely, the huts and cottages in which they dwelt, and the sheds and barns wherein they sheltered their cattle and stored their harvests.

What the "Guild of Carpenters" failed to attain of high place in the Guild economy they undoubtedly possessed in the question of origin. Priority of existence of the trade is without contradiction.

In the days of Charlemagne there are records of a "Society of Carpenters" in Tuscany, under the designation of "*Fabri-tignarii*"—"Workers in wood." The Robber-captains in the war-like times before Countess Matilda, like her ancestor Boniface, created first Marquis of *Torscia* or *Toscana* in 828, found plenty of occupation in clearing forests and planting stockades, and in manufacturing pike sticks and bows and arrows. Many sons of such wild sires, in later days, apt in their manipulation of timber, became members of the first Carpenter Associations in Florence.[1]

[1] Perrens, "Histoire de Florence,' vol. i. p. 190.

In the Archives of the State the earliest preserved entries of handicrafts in wood are as follows :—

" 1038. *Johannes, qui tornario vocatur* "—Turner.

" 1132. *Berignallo, fil. barlittario* "—Cooper.

" 1136. *Scartone—pettinario* "—Comb-maker.

" 1199. *Reinaldus—pancone*"—Carpenter's-bench and Loom-maker.

In 1209-1213 mention is made of certain workmen under the designations of "*Bottariai*"—Coopers, and "*Madiellariai*"—Trough-makers. Reference is made in 1327 to two other allied trades :—" *Cunatori* "—Chest and cradle-makers, and " *Verniciatori* "—Varnishers.

In the List of Guilds at the various revisions of the Statutes in 1236, 1266, 1280-82, 1301-1309, and 1415, the "*Arte de' Legnaiuoli* " is placed twentieth : in the latter year it is entitled " *Arte de' Legnaiuoli Grossi* " — " Guild of Master Carpenters."

A set of carpenters' tools in early days cost a man a very small amount, for example : a broad-axe—5 *soldi*, a plain saw—3 *soldi*, a plane—4 *soldi*, an adze—2 *soldi*, a square, a spoke-shave, and a chisel—1 *soldo* each !

. . . . . .

The Statutes of the Guild, first put out in 1300,—as was the case in the similarly situated Guilds of " Armourers," " Locksmiths," and " Saddlers,"—were written in characters so difficult to decipher that no one has yet succeeded in making known fully the details of its Constitution. The General Code, drawn up for use by all the Guilds, with adaptations to their peculiar requirements, in the years 1301-1309, was adopted in 1305 by the Carpenters.

As to the peculiar Officials, elected to adminster the affairs of the Guild, we seem to have no information. That there were Consuls, as in the other Guilds, goes without saying, and is proved by the fact that their Residence was situated in the Via de' Lamberteschi, next door to the *Zecca*—Mint ; over which their

coat-of-arms was emblazoned :—a green tree and a red house in a white field.

No carpenter or dealer in wood in the Mercato Vecchio was allowed to move timber by night under the penalty of ten *lire.* They were forbidden to place their benches outside their houses and to make litter in the public thoroughfares. Articles in course of making, such as benches, chairs, chests, etc., were not permitted to encumber the footpaths.

Projections of any kind into the street or Market-place were subject to measurement, and anything which exceeded the *canna* of the "*Calimala*" had to be removed, and the owner incurred a fine of ten *lire.* In the Mercato Nuovo wooden frames with hooks for stretching and drying woollen cloth ; and along the Ponte Vecchio tubs, boxes, blocks, and other articles or encumbrances of wood, were prohibited, and the offenders were fined ten *lire* for each offence.

Carpenters were forbidden to work in the two Markets, and also in front of Or San Michele. Any work absolutely necessary there had to be completed within three days, and every care exercised to remove shavings, sawdust, and litter, without delay. No carpenter was allowed to leave timber beyond three days lying in front of his workshop, but he had the right to a foot's width beyond his wall, where to store wood he was actually using.[1]

Whether an arbitrary line can be drawn between the avocations of the "Masters of Wood" and those of the "Carpenters" is a matter of opinion. Apparently scaffoldings, roofings, and panellings, and all such important matters, which required strict architectural knowledge, were undertaken by the former Guild, together with the designing of artistic decorations and, possibly, their manipulation. The "Carpenters" were doubtless more especially concerned with frame-work, flooring, and fitting, and repairing jobs, whilst much of their time was absorbed in cabinet-work.

The furniture of the Renaissance was by no means the least

[1] "Tractatus Extra-ordinatus," Lib. IV., Rub. xlii., etc.

considerable object of artistic workmanship. In the varied forms of bedsteads, cupboards, chests,—for marriage outfits, and other purposes,— couches, chairs, tables, picture-frames, etc. etc., Florentine workmen gained a high reputation for skill and thoroughness.

Up to the fifteenth century, with few exceptions, the table for meals was nothing but a loose board, or boards, laid upon trestles —hence the term "festive board!" With respect to chairs, until the end of the first decade of the sixteenth century, the only chair set by the board was that occupied by the Master of the house, the Bishop or General of a Monastery, or the Head of a business house. "Taking the chair" is an expression directly traceable to this custom, meaning thereby the place of honour. Only gradually did the long hard benches disappear, and chairs,—seated, first in plain wood, and then with leather, and lastly, upholstered,— take their places.

And who is not familiar with the splendid *Cassoni*,—marriage coffers,—belonging chiefly to the sixteenth century,—with their grandeur of outline, and substantiality of workmanship, which the whole School of Florentine painters, man by man in turn, adorned with superb paintings, forming, in a way, a running history of the men and the women, the manners and the fashions of the Renaissance.

Cabinetmakers were not satisfied with crude effects or simple treatment, but added enrichments of all kinds. Veneering was the mother of mosaic-work, and it was an early accomplishment in Florence. At first it was confined exclusively to the addition of various sorts of cane and foreign wood. Gradually a more solid surface became the fashion, and almost imperceptibly Florentine mosaic became the characteristic of her Carpenters and workers in wood.

The surface of the wood,—in this art,—is no longer visible, or only visible in part, for upon the plain timber foundation is laid a solid mass of stone and metal,—Lapis-lazuli, malachite, and jasper columns, with gilt capitals and enwreathments, and

pedestals of gilt bronze, are associated with medallions of agate, carnelian, bloodstone, and onyx. By an easy transition this inlay, or encrusting work was applied to stone foundations, and here was obtained that class of artistic work which commonly goes by the name of "Mosaic." The Grand Duke Ferdinand I. introduced the style from Milan, in the year 1580, for the adornment of the Medici tombs at San Lorenzo.

Another form of artistic carpentry was an especial favourite in the sixteenth century—the overlaying of ivories upon ebony groundwork. This was called "*Scagliuola*," and in it was produced the latest expression of the artistic taste of the Renaissance.

Walnut and pear were the favourite woods in the hands of the carvers of wood, who probably belonged to the "Masters of Wood"; whilst the workmen of the "Carpenters' Guild" did the roughing out of panels, borders, balustrades, etc. etc.

The secrets of the manufacture of Florentine picture-frames have never left the fair city on the Arno. Wood gilding was a fine art as much as was the carving of the wood. The mouldings were covered with red lead and then with coatings of thinnest white glue,—thicker in the burnished parts,—and sometimes as many as ten coats were applied.

Polishing too of wood-work, whether on the flat or carved, was a serious art. A mixture of turpentine and beeswax was brushed carefully and repeatedly over the surface, and then rubbed down with hard brushes. Olive-oil was poured unstintingly over the parts, and then heavy heated irons were applied, and the whole finished with the swift manipulation of soft leather and silk waste.

*Gesso*,—which was a very ancient process,—was revived in Florence in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Cennino Cennini, in his "Treatise upon Painting," throws much light upon the different methods of working in this material.

The material was calcined chalk, or whiting, mixed with viscid liquid such as glue or size. This formed an admirable

medium for low-relief, and was much used by carpenters and cabinet-makers in the decoration of ceilings, marriage-coffers, wall-panels, tournament-shields, and very many kinds of furniture. "*Pastiglia*" was the term applied, in the workshops, to this fictile substance, which was laid on almost like pigment, with hog's-hair-brushes and metal spatulas. Indeed this form of decorative art was actually relief painting, and engaged the attention and energies of many a craftsman who had a feeling for beauty.

*Intarsiatura*,—called also briefly "*Tarsia*,"—was employed for the floors and walls of rooms, and consisted of a simple inlay of various sorts of wood. The term "*Certosiatura*" was applied to the finest descriptions especially the inlaid work put down in Churches and religious houses, hence the name—"work of the '*Certosa*.'" This furnishes an interesting proof that the monasteries bore their part in the advancement of the arts and crafts.

A common practice was to glue together long rods of various kinds of wood, and, when dry, to saw through the block, whereby a chequered pattern was disclosed. The favourite blend was black or very dark wood, and the palest strain of white, which produced the effect of a draughtboard, and was much in vogue in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

That the Guild was prosperous, and its members profitably engaged in their calling, is evidenced by the position occupied by the Guild with respect to the raising of taxes. In 1321, for example, the Carpenters are mulcted in the proportionate amount of fifty gold florins, the Guild counting tenth in order of affluence among the whole Twenty-one!

Some of the names of worthy craftsmen and their special branches of carpentry have been preserved, for example:—Antonio Leopardi was a well-known maker and inlayer of tables, 1450-1525; the family of d' Agnolo, Bernardo the father, and Domenico and Giovanni, his sons, were celebrated as designers of inlay-work and as carvers of wood in the churches of Florence, 1460-1563; and the brothers Tasso,—Domenico and Giovanni,—who worked with Michael Angelo, were renowned wood-carvers.

An amusing tale is told in one of the *Novelle*, "*Il Grasso Legnaiuolo*" or "The Fat Ebony-Carver":—A good-natured fellow of thirty-five, by name Manetti Ammanotini, in 1409, opened a shop in the Popolo San Giovanni. He was an agreeable and amusing butt for the wags of the quarter, very fat and good looking, and quite hail-fellow-well-met with everybody. A party

"THE FAT CARPENTER." EARLY SIXTEENTH CENTURY

of young bloods, seeing him very busy in his new holding, got round him, and talked and talked, until they fairly persuaded him that he was another man. Supping with him later on the same Sunday evening, at Tommaso de' Pecori's, they tricked him, and made the poor fellow so thoroughly miserable, that he waddled home, and made up his mind to commit suicide. The jest became so serious that the larrikins had the greatest difficulty in unravelling the muddle they had caused. However Manetti recovered his senses and his own personality once more. He was all the same

a very skilful workman, and was overdone with commissions from rich merchants. One of his creations was a remarkable inlaid dressing-table for Giovanni Rucellai.[1]

Almost the last movement in connection with the Guild was that of 1534, when, under Grand Duke Cosimo I., the Lesser Guilds were divided into Four Universities. The third in number was styled *L'Universita de' Fabbricanti*, and included "Smiths," "Lock-smiths," "Masters of Stone and Wood," "Armourers and Sword-makers," and, last but not least,—"Carpenters."

. . . . . .

*Note*:—Much of the information concerning the Guilds of "Armourers" and "Carpenters" has been derived from "cuttings" collected by the late Rev. S. T. Baxter and most kindly placed at the Author's service.

## III. L'ARTE DE' FORNAI

In spite of the natural pre-eminence of Tuscany as an agricultural country, her inhabitants were singularly unappreciative of their advantages with respect to the growing of cereals.

Vines, olives, mulberries, and flax, seem to have claimed the attention of the old-time agriculturists, to the exclusion, relatively speaking, of grain crops. This is the more remarkable because the Florentine instinctive far-sightedness in the making of money in this matter, at all events, was actually at fault. Possibly industrial pursuits engrossed them, as offering better prospects of financial success.

The *Contado* produced little corn, certainly not more than three or four months' consumption. Montepulciano, Arezzo, the higher parts of the Val d' Arno, and around Pisa, were the most favourable home granaries. The provisioning of a city of the size of Florence, with her rapidly growing population was a very serious business.

A Magistracy of Abundance, or "*Annona*," as it was called, existed from very early times, but no records of its institution

[1] Roscoe's "Famous Italian Novelists," vol. iv.

have been preserved. Originally this Magistracy was composed of eight *Capitudini*,—Heads of Families,—but in 1352 their duties were assumed by the Council of State.

The officials of the "*Annona*" were chiefly occupied in buying and importing foreign grain. In ordinary times their operations were carried on in Romagna, the country north of Siena, and in Sicily, whilst in years of scarcity recourse was had to the more remote supplies of Egypt, Barbary, and the East.

This system however set up a monopoly, and the working of the Government contracts became a matter of oppression and of scandal. No regular reports were issued of the supply and demand. Prices were not fixed, and losses were not examined into. As long as the daily supply of foreign corn in the public market of Or San Michele amounted to fifty or sixty loads, at ordinary price, no questions were asked.

On the other hand all the roads leading into Florence from the country districts were placed under the surveillance of six officers, whose duty it was to see that no hindrance was placed in the way of the easy access of grain.

Nevertheless taxes were imposed at the Gates upon all loads of corn from districts not directly under the rule of Florence. Many were the ruses adopted to evade this impost. Messengers, spies, and agents in disguise, intercepted convoys, and either purchased the loads on the spot, or relabelled the consignments before they reached the city. The successful running in of grain packs entitled the bold driver and the skilful agent to security from arrest for debt and to other privileges.

Many Statutes, Rubrics, and *Provvisioni* were put forth by the Government during the years 1296-1299 to regulate this contraband commerce.[1]

The prices current for grain of course varied with circumstances; for example, between the years 1224 and 1232, the limits were from fifteen to two *soldi* per *staio* or bushel.

The annual fixing of the price of corn, flour, and bread, was

[1] Provv. vi. 126; viii. 98; x. 39.

the subject of a very quaint and primitive ceremony. "The Officers of Abundance," as they were called, mounted to the top of the ancient Granary of Or San Michele, just before the harvest, and settled the year's quotations by the impressions they got on viewing the country from that coign of vantage—the greener the crops the higher were the rates![1]

Corn in the market at Or San Michele was sorted into four descriptions:—1. *Calvello*—big barley which would not pass through the standard sieve,—the highest priced; 2. Sicilian wheat, second in value; 3. *Grano Comunale*,—the last Florentine harvest, —sometimes mixed with barley; and 4. *Grano Grosso*,—coarse varieties of corn.

All grain for human use was exposed for sale in *Bigoncie*, baskets or trays, made of rushes or wood, each generally holding seven or eight *staii*. As many as three hundred of these receptacles were to be seen in the Corn-market in times of plenty.

Another duty of the Officials was to go about amongst the sacks, bags, and baskets of grain, brought into the market for sale, and make personal examination of quantities and qualities. The amount of wheat required for daily consumption in 1427 was one hundred *moggi*—about a bushel. Daily when the great "*Vacca*" struck the hour of nine the "Officers of Abundance" seated themselves on a platform, within the Loggia of Or San Michele, and from thence watched the orderly distribution of the certified stocks.

In front of the Shrine of the Madonna del' Or San Michele was placed an office,—a desk and a bench,—where sat daily at certain hours one or more Notaries. These legal officials were appointed for the purpose of receiving the *affidavits* of Corn-chandlers and writing out contracts. These were couched in stringent terms, so as to bind buyer and seller alike to act honourably, and to prevent the imposition of inferior qualities, and the inflation of prices. Appeals in disputes on the spot were referred to the Notary, who, not uncommonly, was accompanied by a Dominican

[1] Cantini, iii. 60.

or other religious personage, the duty of the latter being to set up burning candles before the Shrine as witnesses of straight dealing before God and man.

THE SHRINE OF OR SAN MICHELE, WITH THE CORN MARKET AND THE NOTARY FOR AFFIDAVITS

In times of dearth or distress well-disposed merchants, and others, were accustomed to send in waggons laden with corn, to be sold as the "Officers of Abundance" directed to the poorer citizens. Very often too, wealthy and ambitious men, in order to

curry favour with the populace, placed supplies of grain at the disposal of the Officers for gratuitous apportionment.

Sometimes, when the pinch of want became severe, people clamoured and fought around the Granary-shrine for daily doles of wheat. Among relics of the "good old times" preserved for years, in the Sacristy, was a fearsome instrument in the shape of an axe, and a wooden block. The latter used to stand by the platform whereon the "Officers of Abundance" presided under the Loggia, and was used in connection with the very summary method to which these worthies resorted, when they quietly chopped off a finger or two from the hands of the more unruly claimants!

The effect of the intervention of the "*Uffiziali della Grascia*" and "*dell' Abbondanza*,"—the Market authorities,—was not wholly conducive to the cheapening of comestibles. The constant succession of new men and new laws made for confusion and difficulty, and hence the sales of corn in the Markets and the shops of the *Granaiuoli*,—Corn-chandlers,—no less than the prices of flour and bread at the bakehouses of the members of the "Guild of Bakers" varied considerably and perpetually.

The preponderating influence of the "*Annona*" had a great deal to do with the subordination of the "*Arte de' Fornai*." Members of the Guild were wholly dependent upon their good offices—or bad—in the prosecution of their trade.

Whilst at Pisa the "Guild of Bakers" ranked amongst the Seven Greater Guilds, in the Florentine hierarchy it came last of all the Twenty-one Corporations! This inferiority of precedence lends colour to the story of the ill-fame of the trade in general in the capital city.

Certainly in reading through the acts of the Council of State of Florence one is struck with the frequency with which the "Guild of Bakers" and its members appear as delinquents. It was constantly necessary to take measures against them, in common with "the Guild of Butchers," in consequence of "the dishonour they do the Commune, and the Podesta, by the bad quality of the flour and of the mutton they offer for sale."

A light is thrown upon the reason of the disesteem in which the Guild was held in a speech made in the Council of the Captain of the People on January 30, 1282, by Bernardo Rossi—a baker. He maintained that "there were many wealthy citizens, who had money interests in the trades of milling and baking; but who took no part in the business themselves. By the high prices they charged for flour they encouraged working bakers to mix inferior qualities, and by the high rents they demanded for the hire of bakehouses they compelled the tenants to make excessive charges for inferior bread. The latter indictment had its complement in the use of unjust weights. This state of things," he went on to say, "affected the poorer classes more than the better-to-do citizens, and consequently excited popular prejudices against the ill-used bakers, rather than against the grasping capitalists!" [1]

. . . . . .

Of the actual date of the establishment of the Guild there are no records; indeed the early Archives of Florence,—such at least as have been preserved,—contain only very scanty notices of milling and baking, and hardly any of a Corporation of Craftsmen.

That avocations so essential for the public weal were actively and largely in operation goes without saying from the earliest period. Doubtless a goodly number of customs and methods had grown with the lapse of time, and out of these quite naturally more or less regular codes of procedure and conduct had been elaborated.

In the Archives there are early notices as follows:—

"1028. *Ursus . . . pistor*—a Baker."

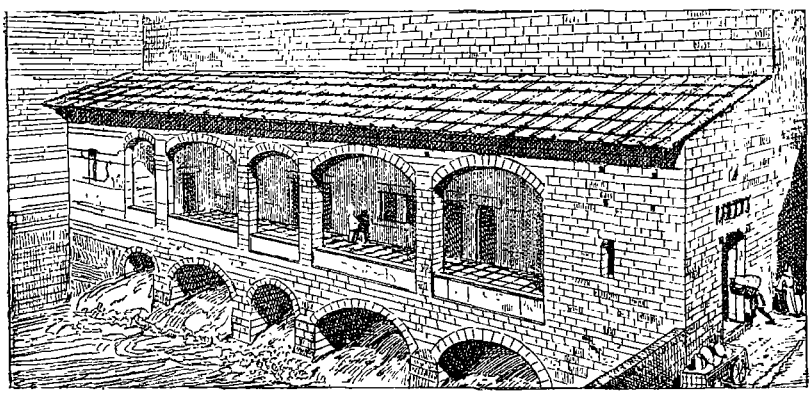
"1147. *Bernardus—Mugnarius*—a Miller."

In the year 1236 the "*Arte de' Fornai*" was duly scheduled with the rest of the Twenty-one Guilds, and placed seventh in the order of the Fourteen Lesser Guilds. This pride of place was retained only for a few years, for in 1282 the "Guild of Bakers" appears last of all the Guilds, and so it continued to the end.

[1] "Le Consulte," tom. i. Quad C. p. 48.

Certainly in 1534 the Guild received something like promotion for it was included with the Guilds of "Butchers" and "Oil-Merchants and General Dealers" in the *Universita di Por San Piero*—the first of the four Unions of Lesser Guilds established by the Grand Duke Cosimo I.

Whatever special features or peculiar Officers the Guild may have had in earlier days, seem to have disappeared by the end of the thirteenth century, and the Guild fell into line with the rest,



A FLOUR MILL ON THE ARNO. SIXTEENTH CENTURY

and accepted as a model for its new constitution the reformed Statutes of the "*Calimala*" Guild of 1301-1309.

Probably at first the chief officers were styled "*Capitudini*"—"Heads" rather than "Consuls," although their Residence was called consular, and was a fine house situated in the Chiasso del Buco by the Mercato Vecchio. Upon its front was emblazoned a white star in a red field—the armorial bearings of the Guild, which were assigned to the "*Arte de' Fornai*" by the Priors in 1266.

From the first a distinction was drawn between the two different classes of citizens who formed the membership of the Guild:—the *Mugnai*—Millers and *Fornai*—bakers. The former

were engaged in grinding flour at their mills in the *Contado*, or along the river side, and in carrying their full sacks to the Corn-market at Or San Michele. The latter were employed in kneading and baking bread and in selling it retail.

Millers were forbidden to retail flour in Florence on their own account. Three pounds of grain went to the bushel. Millers were expected to deliver the ground flour within three days of the receipt of the grain.[1]

The wholesale storage of corn and flour, which would have a tendency to harden the market, and which could be sold at higher rates in times of scarcity, was absolutely forbidden. Persons evading the prohibition were liable to have the whole of their stock confiscated and to see their names exposed to public infamy.[2]

Probably much of the obloquy which attached to the bakers must be laid at the door of the millers. Boccaccio throws out many a hint that, in spite of their well-lined doublets and fair white aprons, the latter class passed in general for sharp fellows, not to say cheats. It was said that they invariably kept back one-half the flour which every grinding produced![3]

In 1296 full powers were granted to the Priors to draw up a Statute against this dishonest way of dealing, and also a *Provvisione* to determine the retail-price of bread.[4] This was all the more needful seeing the great variations which existed in the value of corn, flour, and bread, at different periods. In 1224, for example, a *staio*,—bushel,—of wheat cost fifteen *soldi*; whilst, during the great famine, in 1328 the price rose to one gold florin—ten shillings.[5]

A Statute was passed fixing four *denari* for a *staio*,—one third of a sack of corn,—of bread; but inasmuch as fuel,—always more or less a scarce commodity,—cost more in winter than in summer, it was impossible to sell at one price the year round. Naturally people wished to buy at the lowest

[1] Rub. ccvii., 1415.
[2] Rub. ccix., 1415.
[3] Boccaccio, "Giorn." vi. "Nov." 2, tom. iii. p. 26.
[4] Provv. vi. 25, v.
[5] "Le Consulte," i. 114.

summer prices, and consequently any rise on the part of the baker led to disputes and sometimes to the raiding of their shops. They complained that they were the wronged persons, and made appeals to the State for protection. At last it was agreed that the bakers should charge four *denari* in the summer and five in the winter, for the same quantity of bread.

Villani says the bakers were the gainers by the new arrangement, and daily made into bread as much as one hundred and fifty loads of grain. Each loaf had to bear the mark of the baker stamped upon it. Any bread offered for sale unstamped was at once confiscated by the "Officers of Abundance," and the offending baker was mulcted in heavy damages.[1]

Bakers, however, felt the strain of taxation, because they had to pay a tax, not only on the flour they baked, but also for the privilege of keeping their shops open and their ovens heated.[2] The constant alterations in bye-laws pressed arduously upon the bakers. One day, for instance, a man might bake and sell bread of a certain quality and weight, which the next were deemed illegal.[3]

Kneaders of dough, and bread-bakers, were not allowed to work on Sundays and other days of solemnity. Any one so doing was fined forty *soldi*. The "*Sportello*" however might be open on such days after Mass for the sale of bread.

Makers of maccaroni and vermicelli were required to take out their licences in the month of January, and all unlicensed bakings were fined ten *lire* for each sale effected.[5]

Citizens were warned not to purchase nor to keep large quantities of bread, unless they were Innkeepers. Bread for the family had to be purchased fresh daily, and no private individual, or person unconnected with the Guild, might sell bread under any conditions.[6] Foreigners visiting Florence and residing

[1] Villani, xi. 93.
[2] M. Villani, i. 57.
[3] Villani, 1347, xii. 72, xiii. 956.
[4] Rub. cc., 1415.
[5] Rub. ccxiv., 1415.
[6] Rubs. clxxxix., cxli., 1415.

for a period were permitted to bake, cook, and sell, as they liked, regardless of the embarrassing regulations which hampered the Florentine bakers.

Bakers never gave credit beyond the value of ten *lire*, and they were obliged to furnish the Consuls of the Guild, at stated periods, with lists of their customers and the amount owed by each.

Bread was not by any means the only commodity which bakers might sell, but flour of all kinds, as well, and bran and sifted grain of every description. There was consequently a sort of rivalry set up between them and the *Granaiuoli*,—Corn-chandlers,—who were associated with the "*Arte degli Oliandoli*."

A very important, and withal popular, branch of the Bakery business was that of the *Panattieri*—Pastry-cooks—but this was a later development of the art of baking. Pastry made with eggs, butter, sugar, milk, and flour, however, is never named in Records before the end of the sixteenth century, when a company of pastry-cooks migrated from Milan to Florence, and introduced their special delicacies.

In the *Canti Carnascialeschi*—Carnival Songs—where all the Guilds and Crafts are celebrated, or caricatured, there is no mention of Pastry-cooks. First sung by Berni in his "*Orlando Innamorato*," pastry supplied the epicure with delights he had never even dreamed of:—

> "To live delicately in every way
> Needs the aid of foreign culinary.
> Pastry goes well with your savories and with your
> Poultry, boiled and roast, and with baked meats." [1]

The Pastry-cooks' shops, it need hardly be added, were, in later times, irresistible attractions to the merry Florentines. Many a pretty young *contadina*, tripping along with her lover, picked up some toothsome trifle or other. Just off the hot iron plates of the oven, and temptingly set out in dainty wicker-baskets, were such delicacies as *berlingozzi*—puff-pastry, *cialdoni*—thin spiced wafers,

[1] Lib. iii. chap. vii. sect. 51.

*ciambelle*—jam rolls, *bericuocoli*—ginger-bread cakes, *bracciatelli*—crisp sweet biscuits, *lasagne*—maccaroons, and many other delights, along with whole cakes and confectionery of all descriptions.

All bakers and pastry-cooks—whether men or women—were required to exhibit a sign over their bakeries and shops emblazoned with the Lily of Florence in blue.[1] Once a year, in the month of December, they were required to appear before the Officials of Or San Michele, and to swear solemnly that they would well, truly, and honestly, prosecute their calling, and commit no fraud against the State and the public, but observe, strictly and intelligently, all the regulations of their Guild, and the laws of the State.[2]

The weights and measures used by members of the Guild were under the inspection and correction of the officials appointed by the "Captains of Or San Michele"; who also had power to examine and test the weight and quality of all bread baked in Florence.

Within the first month of their assumption of office Podestas and Captains of the People caused a careful inquiry to be made into the position, construction, and inoffensiveness, of all public and private bakeries and ovens. All nuisances or dilapidations were pointed out, and time given for their amendment. Failure to comply with the directions of the officials led to fines of one hundred *lire*, or more.[3]

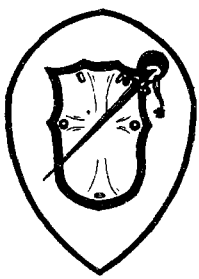
Attention was also paid to the amount of fuel,—wood or other inflammable matter,—stored by each baker, and strict rules were enjoined as to its storage and protection from fire.[4]

The Guild,—in spite of let and hindrance,—flourished exceedingly. The members built fine bakehouses and shops, and palatial residences, which they furnished handsomely, encouraging thereby many a rising artist and craftsman. In their Sunday and gala dress they were not a whit behind their more aristocratic fellow-Guildsmen, whilst in their hospitality, and the upkeep of their tables, they yielded to none.

[1] Rub. ccxxxviii., 1415.
[2] Rub. cxcv., 1415.
[3] Rub. ccii., 1415.
[4] Rub. cciii., 1415.

They apparently cared little enough for their arbitrary position of inferiority in the Guild Hierarchy and each individual did his best to show that he was as good a citizen, if not better, than his neighbour the Butcher and the Provision-Dealer!

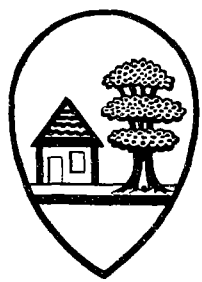
1



1. "*Stemma dell' Arte de' Corazzai e Spadai*"

Red sword, blue cuirass, in white field

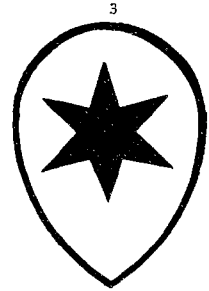
2



2. "*Stemma dell' Arte de' Legnaiuoli*"

Red house, green tree, in white field

3



3. "*Stemma dell' Arte de' Fornai*"

White star in red field

## CHAPTER XV

# LIFE AND WORK IN THE MARKETS

*MERCATO VECCHIO—MERCATO NUOVO*

MERCATO VECCHIO. — The lungs of commerce. Tradition. Dante's testimony. Conrad II. Palaces. Origin of the *Loggia*. A ghost story. *Oratorio della Tromba*. The Market language. "The Echo of the Market." Antonio Pucci. "*La Proprieta di Mercato Vecchio*." Market churches. Donatello's *Dovitzia*. Market bells. A day in the Market. Silence unknown. Market games. "*Accorr 'Uomo!*"—Help! The Stocks for knaves. Chaos and dirt. Strict Market bye-laws. Market porters. Story-tellers. A mermaid. *Sbirri*. Good food and drink. Cattle. Fish. Poultry. The "*Giglio*." Fruit. Thirsty souls. "*Salate!*" Barbers. Burchiello. *Voce Toscana*. Legend of the White Hen.

MERCATO NUOVO.—Rise of silk industry required a new Market-place. The Loggia for Bankers. Tables of Money-changers. No comestibles in Mercato Nuovo. The "*Carroccio*." Whipping bankrupts. Debtors privileged. Bearing of arms in the Market forbidden. Goldsmiths' shops. Benvenuto Cellini. Hat-raising. *Le genti di Firenze*. "Making the fig!" Sad days. Party strife. Great prosperity. Junkettings. A terrible storm. "*Il Centro di Firenze*."

THE lungs of the Commerce of Florence were the two Markets —the Mercato Vecchio and the Mercato Nuovo. The home-trade of all the Guilds and Crafts, for more than five hundred years, was transacted within their precincts. Here went up for ever and a day the hue and the cry after gain. Men, and women too, toiled, as only those busy Florentines of old knew how, both for individual success, and for the prosperity of their beloved city. The keenness of her barterers and hucksters, no less than the alertness of her manufacturers and her merchants, have their cue in the words of Boccaccio :—

"Those who have no possessions are little better than dumb cattle ; he who has most is reputed the most worthy."[1]

[1] Boccaccio, "Centi Novelle," Giorno viii. "Nov." 10, fol. 195.

. . . . . .

The Mercato Vecchio was the most venerable site in Florence. The first portion of the city to be built, it was geographically the centre of the municipal area, and became, judicially, the seat of the most ancient legal tribunal, socially, the residence of the old aristocracy, and, commercially, the emporium of the known world.[1]

An old tradition marks out the Old Market as the exact spot where the fierce Fiesoleans of old, coming down armed from their stronghold on the hills, bartered with the peaceful dwellers by the river banks.

Dante says, that before 1150 Etruscans, Romans, and Lombards had all spoken of the Mercato Vecchio: at which date one of the earliest important buildings was erected—the tower of the Caponsacchi family.

Among traditions of the Old Market, perhaps, the earliest relates that Conrad II. visited Florence in 1037, and took up his abode in the Market-place. Already there were well-known residents of the Market: a wealthy noble—Conte di Martino, a rich dealer—Rufo, and certain well-to-do artisans—Olivo and Giovanni. At least, it is said, that Conrad seized the dwellings of the three latter and bestowed them upon the canons of San Giovanni, who had championed his cause.

The earliest historical record gives the year 1079 as the date when the Mercato Vecchio received its name. Markets seem to have been held in various parts of the old-world city, and old woodcuts represent trafficking as going on just outside the doors of San Giovanni Battista; but such "pitches" were of uncertain and inexact prescription.[2]

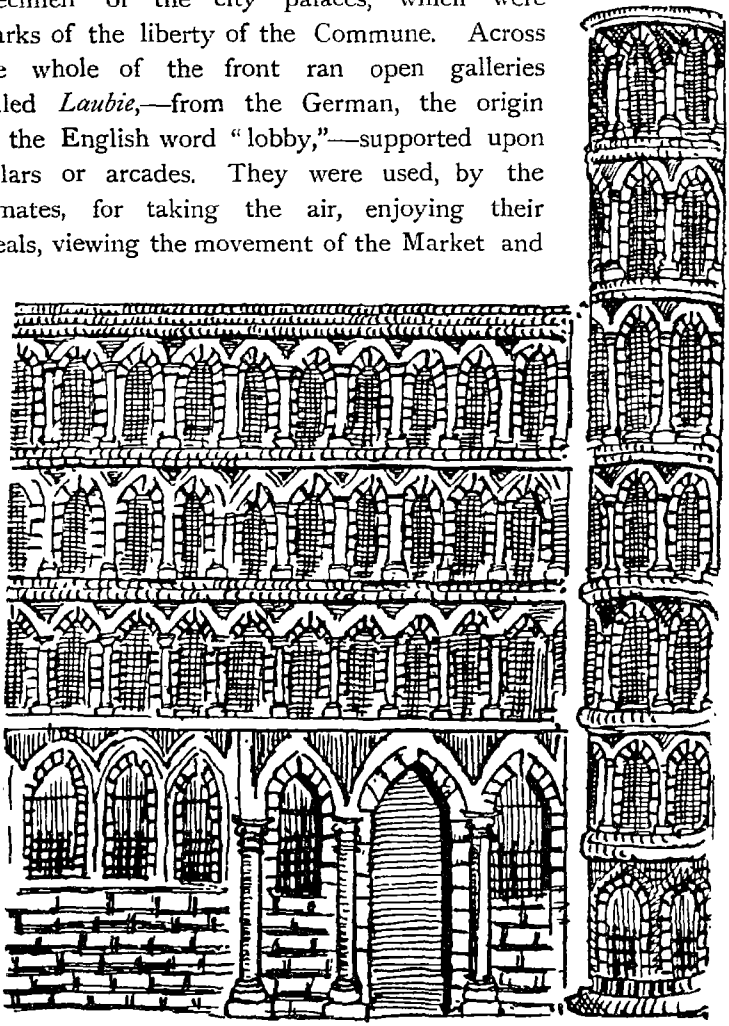
Around the Old Market were the houses, or palaces, of many of the principal inhabitants:—the Adimari, Amieri, Agolanti, Alamanni, Alfieri, Altieri, Caponsacchi, Cacciaguide, Macci, Manfredi, Medici, Nerli, Pegolotti, Sizi, Soldanieri, Tosinghi, Tornaquinci, Vecchietti, and others.

The Palazzo Tosinghi,—called also "Il Palazzo," because it

[1] F. L. del Migliore, p. 572.

[2] Follini, iv. 188.

surpassed the rest in size and dignity,—was an excellent specimen of the city palaces, which were marks of the liberty of the Commune. Across the whole of the front ran open galleries called *Laubie*,—from the German, the origin of the English word "lobby,"—supported upon pillars or arcades. They were used, by the inmates, for taking the air, enjoying their meals, viewing the movement of the Market and



PALAZZO DE' TOSINGHI, "IL PALAZZO," MERCATO VECCHIO

addressing crowds. Later on *Laubie* gave place to *Loggie*.

The Amieri Palaces formed a range of fine buildings in the

Old Market. Their Ghibelline towers looked down upon many a strange scene, but on none so weird as the shrouded figure of Ginevra di Niccolo degli Amieri knocking helplessly at the big door of her father's house. Married to Francesco Agolanti, she sickened of the plague in 1400, and was laid out for dead. Funeral rites were duly performed, and the poor young wife was left in her grave; but she had only swooned, and, awaking in alarm, she cast off her grave clothes, and, wrapping the burial shroud around her, she hurried to her husband's house. Terrified at what he was convinced was a ghost, he rushed away from her. All her friends, affrighted, refused her assistance, and the poor girl was like to perish really from exposure and hunger, when a boy-lover appeared upon the scene. Ginevra returned his impassioned embrace, and Antonio Rondinelli led her to her second bridal, and, as the story books say, "they lived happy ever after!" Via della Morta was named from Ginevra's Wake.

At the corner of the Market, where enters the Via degli Speziali, was a tabernacle with an altar, to which the name was given of "Oratorio di Santa Maria della Tromba." It was built in commemoration of the ministrations of Saint Peter Martyr, and more especially as a thank-offering for his miracle in exorcising the Evil One, who, in the shape of a black horse, terrified the neighbours. In 1361 the care of the Shrine was entrusted to the "Guild of Doctors and Apothecaries." It was adorned with a painting of the Madonna and Saints by Jacopo del Casentino. Mass was said daily, and devotions were addressed to the Mother of God and the Saints, by devout passers-by. Moreover every poor criminal condemned to death was dragged past this Madonna and compelled to bend the knee on his way to execution.

The Mercato Vecchio was distinguished for its possession of a language of its own—a conglomeration, in truth, of all the dialects of the *Contado*, intermixed with popular renderings of classical Latin.

Whilst Dante fixed the Tuscan language of the Early Renaissance, and laid the foundation of "*della Crusca*"—the polite speech

of the Florentines,—Boccaccio,[1] Sacchetti and Pucci harked back upon ancient usage, and have preserved for us the vernacular—"*La Lingua Fiorentina di Mercato Vecchio*"—used alike by rich and poor. Francesco Sacchetti has been justly called "The Echo of the Old Market"; born in 1335, of the family of Benci d'Uguccione, he died in 1410. His "*Novelle*" are precious repositories of the topical slang of the Market.

Frate Passavanti, of the "Order of Preachers," and chaplain to Archbishop Acciajuoli, in his "*Specchio della vera Penitenza*,"—written in the support of the *Accademia della Crusca*,—reproaches Tuscans, and especially Florentines, for their indiscriminate use of vulgarisms, for clipping their words, and for the affected pitch of their voices: "the idiotic style of the Mercato Vecchio,"—as he calls it,—"which has sacrificed both grace and vivacity, but which, nevertheless has preserved honourable traits."

Antonio Pucci, the inimitable poetaster of the Markets, who rejoiced in the style of poetry called "*Satirico-giocoso*,"—perhaps "satirical banter,"—has given us a living picture of the life and work of the Mercato Vecchio.[2] His "*La Proprieta di Mercato Vecchio*," written very early in the fourteenth century,—long before "The Chronicle of Villani" saw pen and parchment,—is composed of many stanzas, some of which, freely translated, are as follows:—

"Our old Market, for all the world, finds ample food,
And beats all other marts in produce rich and good,
You could not match it, out of Florence, an' you would!

It is highly bless'd for busy occupation,
At each corner, a church for godly contemplation;
Whilst streets branch out in every direction.

Physicians are at hand for every human woe,
Flax-merchants display yarns and linen-cloths also,
About are pork butchers—apothecaries too.

Here they sell fine glasses, and plates, and pitchers stout,
Taverns, too, with food and drink temptingly laid out,
And pretty serving maids, with whom to flirt no doubt!

[1] Boccaccio, "Giorn." i., "Nov." 9.
[2] Delizie degli Eruditi Toscani, tom. vi. p. 267, etc.

SANTA MARIA IN CAMPIDOGLIO IN THE OLD MARKET AS IT APPEARED IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Good woollen cloths and silks attract, the world well dress'd,
And look where e'er you will, in spite of jeer and jest,
Are open butcher's stalls with joints quite of the best.

On one side poulterers with many luring words
Sell hares, and boars, and kids,—prey of sportive shepherds,
And pheasants, starlings, pigeons and all kinds of birds,

And here and there and everywhere are keen bargainers,
With seats and desks for ready-money changers
Needful in the push of commercial undertakers.

Pawnbrokers also—and dealers in quaint old guise
Are ready with their loans ; whilst others cast the dice,
So that none need be hindered be he fool or wise.

And where else can a man so fair a garden view—
As that presented in the Markets—old and new,—
Which daily feasts the eyes of Florentines so true?"

—and so he runs on.

Well may he speak, as he does, in the last verse; for the Mercato Vecchio was called "*Giardino di Firenze*"—"the Garden of Florence"—just because it was always full of abundance and delights, and because it was the fruitful source of the life and enterprise of the whole community.

Pucci places first—as all devout Florentines would—the temples of religion. Santa Maria in Campidoglio—just behind the old Fish-market—adjoined a popular tavern, the *Osteria della Croce di Malta*, the social meeting-place of the members of the various Associations of commercial travellers. Its site was that of the ancient Roman Capitol. San Piero Buonconsiglio,—abbreviated to San Pierino,—at the south-west corner,—was founded in the eighth century, and was the Sanctuary and Parliament-House combined, of the "Guild of Judges and Notaries." It had a little outside pulpit, whence it was customary for orators to address general audiences, and for doctors of the law to deliver public lectures.

San Tommaso,—at the north-east angle,—became later on the church of the Medici. "The Guild of Doctors and Apothe-

caries" used this temple for private and public devotions. Here too many of the Wool-merchants were wont to attend the daily early Mass. Sant' Andrea,—the senior parish church of Florence, —was a very ancient edifice, having been founded as a convent of Nuns, in 852. Near at hand was the Piazzetta di Sant' Andrea —where the members of the "Guild of Linen-Merchants" were wont to forgather. In the church was the chapel and altar of the Guild. Merchants also of the "Calimala Guild" used to pop in, as they passed, and count their beads.

In the centre of the Mercato Vecchio was erected a fine column of oriental *cipollino*, which came out of the Baptistery of San Giovanni. Upon it was placed, in 1430, a marble figure emblematic of Abundance—the "*Dovitzia*" of Donatello. Two iron rods ran up the shaft, one connected with the bell, which was rung at the opening, and at the closing of the day's business; the other rod smartly jangled a similar bell when it was necessary to warn all and sundry that there were thieves and evil persons prowling around!

Before dawn rumbling wheels bore in the day's supply of country produce. The clatter of iron hoofs upon the big flat stone setts mingled discordantly with the harsh imprecations of drivers and dealers. The barking of country dogs, and the yelping of town curs—cuffed perchance by lusty yokels or trod upon by belated carousers—accompanied inharmoniously the cackling of geese and the bleating of lambs and calves.

The Florentines of old were early risers, for before the bells for "Lauds" had ceased their clang in the belfries, artisans were all thronging the portals of the churches, euphemistically at least, assisting at the hurried low Mass, as for a brief space they checked their course to smithy, tanyard, and loom. Yes, work began at daybreak the year round; aye, and before the shades of night had passed, many a flickering lantern danced its way across the grim old Market-place.

Mingling in the throng were leather-aproned smiths and armourers, bare-armed cloth dressers of the "*Calimala*," silk-

THE MERCATO VECCHIO, WITH THE COLONNA DELLA DOVIZIA AND THE LOGGIA DI PESCE

spinners wending their way to San Bigio, carders and weavers hurrying to their workshops from Oltrarno, goldsmiths' artificers in tidier guise, dyers and tanners with stained hands and arms and clothes, and many another honest working man and working woman,—greeting one another with kindly words of cheer or taunting cries in jest.

The day wears on and simple housewives, in their plain woollen gowns and linen kerchiefs, basket on arm, and child at breast, range themselves along the rows of market-people ready for their custom,—seeking their husbands' breakfasts and other homely needs. The *Albergatori*—the Innkeepers—too, are early afoot to pick up cheap food stuffs for good wives to cook to set before their hungry guests.

The *Messeri* of the Great Guilds pick their way through the chattering, chaffering crowd, to and from their palaces. Possessed, as most were, of pleasant villas in the suburbs, where true *villeggiatura* was ever to be had, they loved the Old Market, and all its dirt and noise. It was to every Florentine the well of his life, the fulcrum of his fortune, and the show-ground of his pride.

Some of these Magnificos are wending their way to the Residence of the Consuls of their Guild, or to the offices of their various companies, to meet travellers and agents from abroad. Others are going to see how their workpeople are getting on in the workshops, and to inspect new machines and new methods. Many too are bound to the Palace of the Podesta, or to the Palazzo Vecchio to transact affairs of State, or to advance their own political interests. Each wears the *lucco*, or gown, of his class, with its distinctive marks.

Judges too and Notaries in the habits of their callings are on their way, with befitting dignity, to their seats in the Courts—carefully shunning, as they pass, all familiarities and jocular greetings.

Silence was unknown in the Old Market. Early and late, by night as well as by day, the good year round its many voices rose up far beyond the roof-ridges of the houses, and climbed away

into the belfries of the four churches, where they were re-echoed amid the jingle-jangle of the bells. At all seasons there were noisy clinking at the Money changers' tables, and highly vociferated prices

"LATE DONE! LATE FRESCHA!"—MILKMAN

of exchange. The banging of pots and pans daily met the challenge of hucksters and cheap-jacks of every kind. The harsh "*Chiabbratta-baratta, b'ratta!*"—"who wishes to exchange or to sell!"—not unlike the creaking of a cart-wheel,—sounded here and there and everywhere.

As noon approaches the animation of the Market mounts still higher. Into the Square begin to pour batches of frolicsome apprentices, set free until the bell tolls them back to their work. With empty stomachs and hungry mouths they snatch and toss one to the other, onions and chunks of bread and cheese, casting anywhere their *piccioli*—small money—as often as not throwing down no coin at all! On they surge, munching as they go, and cutting down many a fat sausage hung in their way, on the stalls of the Pork-butchers. Unheeded are the protests of the *contadine* and the salt-meat sellers. Their empty flasks and drinking cans replenished with good *Trebbiano*, at wine-shops by the way, they jostle to and fro,—a merry, noisy, mischievous throng, to finish their frugal meal on the steps of Santa Maria in Campidoglio, and then to play *impromptu* at *Calcio* or *Pallone* among the stalls and tethered beasts—heedless of place and circumstances.

Artists too, and artisans, with brief respite for their hands, flock into the Market precincts—dirty, hungry, and tired. Some are bent on dining simply in the open, on fruit and eggs, perchance with Donatello, Luca della Robbia, and their set; and some, with pockets better lined, are intent on richer fare, with the Ghirlandaji and Pollaiuoli, and with men of fashion—a Rucellai, an Alberti, or a Medici.

The *siesta* is not forgotten, and many a brawny limb and curly head of hair lie prone on steps, nay even on the bare ground —in later days with fragrant weed or smoking pipe between their teeth. But, hark! the work-bell rings, and in a trice, the dreamers rise and stretch themselves, and hie them to their tasks again.

But, "*Accorr 'uomo! Accorr 'uomo!*"—"Help! Help!"—sounds out alike for a runaway horse and for a personal assault. Taken up, the cry became, often enough, the signal for the prompt closing of shops and dwelling-houses, as conflict broke out between class and class and trade and trade. Riots in the Market were normal events. Perhaps a clumsy porter, or a pack mule, accidentally kicked a Ricci, who at once struck the offender, and he in his turn was belaboured with blows from every Albizzi within

reach, until the two families and their adherents were involved in a grim death struggle.[1]

Rival trades were wont to join in battle-royal over the merest incident. The dyers and the finishers of the "*Calimala* Guild" fought out to a finish disputes with the operatives of the "Guild of Wool," and so on.

Stone-throwing was ever a ready means to an end. Many a time the street-boys,—"Hooligans" great and small,—bent on mischief, formed light troops in the van of the opposing parties.

The Podesta and the Magistrates sat long and wearily dealing with troubles of the Market. Litigants were as fierce as they were numerous. Often enough no other remedy was readier than to clap the lot in the town's Stocks to cool their ardour! Such unfortunates, it need hardly be said, became the butt of all that passed them by. Sometimes the poor wretches suffered grievous bodily injury, but the Market overseers were wont to punish the aggressors by placing them cheek by jowl with their victims!

Was that busy Mart ever swept and garnished? Garnished indeed it was, but with such materials as only made the litter greater. Vegetables, stripped by the side of their natal beds, went through a further toilet. Chestnut shells lay thick around the barrows of Brucciata and his brother roasters. Bits of cloth and linen, and oddments of silk and velvet, with many a tuft of fur and leather-shavings, were tossed hither and thither. Offal, filth, and rags vied with rascality, brutality, and disorder, in offering unsavoury and forbidding objects to the gaze of noble and simple wayfarers.

Notwithstanding all this chaos and dirt, strict rules governed, not only the traders in the Old Market, but also their customers: contraventions of which were treated with severity. The accused, —whether guilty or not,—were usually tied to the column in the centre of the Market, with fools' caps upon their heads, and labels, —stating the nature of their offence,—upon their breasts! More

[1] G. Biagi, "Private Life of the Renaissance Florentines.

serious infractions of the Market Bye-laws were visited by periods spent in the Stocks, with a heavy iron collar locked round the neck, and attached by a chain to a post![1]

The market porters,—and mighty men were they,—were of course under strict rules and subject to special bye-laws. For instance, no man was to undertake loads of more than two hundred pounds in weight, for a course of two hundred and fifty yards, and his wage was fixed at six *denari*. For greater, or less distances, and with lighter loads or heavier, the payment was to be *pro rata*. Refusal to pay the recognised tariff, attempts at over charges, or disputes about the weight and distance, landed the offender in prison for a month.

As the sun westerns, preparations are made by the country people for trooping home, but are intermitted whilst quiet groups steal into the four churches, at the bidding of the Vesper bell, and there, whilst mechanically counting down their beads, they mentally cast up their day's accounts!

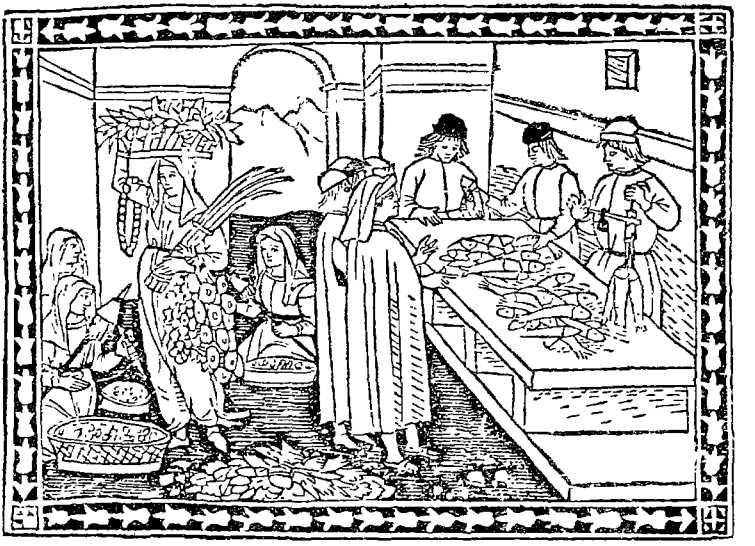
If a lull comes over the busy scenes of trafficking, it is but a cover for the activities of unfortunate beggars: whilst dicers, gamblers, and rogues of every degree look out of their hiding places. Vagabond boys, whose tongues were wont to wag in concert at brutal street games, pilfer where they will and can, and little children, running home from school, carry scares and tales amid bitter tears and rippling laughter.

Evening coming on apace finds many a group of interested hearers gathered around the seats of the story-tellers, for few things did Florentines more thoroughly enjoy than tales—romantic or of war. Now laughing, now crying till salt tears ran down the cheeks of all, the speaker's pathos touched sympathetic chords, and every one dipped into a shallow pocket for a coin of some sort or another to cast into the charmer's proffered cap.

At times strange exhibitions amused the leisure hours of the busy workers: for example, in 1413, a great sensation was caused by the capture, in the Mediterranean, of a mermaid or syren.

[1] Rub. cclxii., 1415.

Presented to the Signoria, it was exposed to public view in the Palazzo Vecchio, and excited universal astonishment. Very fitly it was called in the public notices—"The Fish out of Water"—a term ever after offensively applied to any foolish freak, and especially when an official of the State proved himself an unskilful workman! Night settles down upon a sleeping city, whilst ghostly *sbirri*,—watchmen,—steal along the streets with clanking iron-shod staves and glowing lanterns.



A MARKET SCENE—MERCATO VECCHIO. FIFTEENTH CENTURY

All the public wants in food and drink were supplied in the Mercato Vecchio. Originally the cattle and sheep market was held in the Old Market, but the inconvenience became intolerable, and a more suitable site was found in Borgo d'Ognissanti. In the same way the stalls of the Butchers were later on felt to be unsuitable and encumbering in the Market, and they were removed to the shops upon the Ponte Vecchio.

Fish was first sold, of course, on the banks of the Arno, as soon as it was landed from the river boats, but, later on, its sale

was taken in hand by dealers in the Mercato Vecchio. This proved a nuisance, and as early as 1177 a small fish-market was opened in a shed erected at the Lung' Arno end of the Ponte Vecchio. The Grand Duke Cosimo I. rebuilt the Loggia del Pesce, and put up the inscription—

"*Forum piscarium q. usq. ad huc temporitur*
*Quadragesimalibus ad Pontem Veterum frequentabatur.*"

Attached to this Fish-market was a small market for the sale of fruit and vegetables which could not find room in the Mercato Vecchio.

Poultry, game, and pork,—alive and dead,—were brought daily to market by the country people, and were sold at the shops of the "*Arte degli Oliandoli.*" The cries of these creatures added not a little to the hubbub of the scene. Falcons, goshawks, and other birds of prey, were not allowed to be sold publicly, whilst faddists and lovers of feathered songsters,—among the latter being Leonardo da Vinci,—went about buying up the little birds to give them again their liberty!

With Poulterers were allied Greengrocers, and no stalls in the market were gayer than those which were daily decked with flowers, and fruit and vegetables. The *Giglio* of course was the prime favourite—the famous iris-lily of Florence, but roses and pinks filled the air with fragrance, as did the bunches of sweet herbs and lavender. The painters have preserved the form and colours of the floral treasures of the hillsides and gardens of the *Contado*—Botticelli and his mates.

Of fruit there was no dearth, and endless was the variety. Yellow apricots divided first honours with pine fruit and prickly pears; brown medlars, piled up in baskets, had for neighbours what looked almost like strawberries, but were luscious arbutus berries. Children spent their *piccioli* upon the glossy brown berries of the *Giuggiolo*—jujube-tree, and the oval cherry-berries.

In summer time water-melon sellers reaped rich harvests, but many a thirsty soul preferred the acid juice of the *Nespolo*,—the

yellow medlar, — or the fresh made lemonade of the lemon squeezers from the Vicolo de' Limonai.

Nuts too were in universal demand, and none were more toothsome or more in favour with the apprentices than the little kernels of the stone-pine. Chestnuts raw and roasted were ever a Florentine fancy. *Pinocchiato*,—pine seeds, eaten with honey and sugar, never came amiss.

Vegetables were as plentiful as they were decorative. Strings of crimson capsicums, piles of scarlet tomatoes, heaps of purple *Petronciani*,—pumpions or mad-apples, mounds of golden pomegranates, mingled their attractions with cabbages of all colours, creamy marrows, yellow *Ceci*,—chick-pea,—and beans of all sorts and sizes. Tender sprays of dark green fennel, strange looking *Fungi* with succulent *Radicchio*,—endive,—and tasty *Gobbi*,—the market name for *Carciofi* because of their "humpy" appearance,—artichokes, and many a toothsome herb besides.

Cries of "*Salate! Salate!*" daily rent the air,—for all Florentines understood how to make and how to enjoy a salad,—whilst everybody made a point of patronising the itinerant vendors of salted lupine seeds.

Under the Vecchietti Palace lived the famed *Cavolaja*, or cabbage woman, who made her fortune by coming into the Market every day to sell the produce of her little *podere*, or farm. When she died the bells of the four Market churches and of Santa Reparata were rung from All Saints' Day till Ash Wednesday—so she willed. She was buried with much pomp in the Baptistery in Bishop Rannucci's tomb.

In sunny weather, and amid winter rain, covers were allowed over the stalls in the Market, and awnings were permitted over the fronts of the shops, but none of these might extend beyond the width of the stalls, nor more than five yards beyond the buildings.[1]

Naturally a great number of private interests and personal perquisites, if not absolute rights, sprang up in connection with

[1] Rub. lxxxix., 1415.

the Mercato Vecchio. For example in the "Petition of the Guilds," presented to the Signoria in 1378, clause 15 runs as follows:—"That Giovanni de'Mone, honourable citizen of Florence, always zealous in the service of the Commune, and already rewarded by the belt of Knighthood, shall receive, during his natural life, three hundred gold florins annually in respect of Market-dues, paid by the butchers and the retail-dealers in meat and poultry."[1]

These dues were really the annual rents paid for the *botteghe* or shops, which were arranged all round the Mercato Vecchio, immediately in front of the entrances to the houses and palaces. Giovanni de' Mone was a Corn-chandler, who, with Guido Bandiera and Salvestro de' Medici, was knighted by acclamation of the *Popolo Minuto* in the *Ciompi* rising.[2]

The merriest busiest *botteghe*, in and around the Old Market, were the shops of the Apothecaries and the saloons of the Barbers. All the fashion of the day forgathered at the former to deluge the city with gossip, whilst at the Barbers men congregated alone to hear and tell the latest scandal.

The operations of the Florentine *Barbieri* were usually conducted in fair weather in the open: each barber having the right to place a chair, a shaving basin, and a looking glass, outside his shops. They were permitted to keep open on Sundays, and to employ their apprentices; but were not allowed to place their shaving stools and other articles of their craft outside their doors.

On Sundays and Festivals they were forbidden to go or send out to shave their customers at their homes. Among other prohibitions, barbers were on no account to exercise their calling by candle-light. If any customer ventured to wash his hands or his face in public the accommodating barber was fined ten *soldi* for each offence![3]

Perhaps the most famous of all the barber confraternity was Domenico di' Giovanni Burchiello—"the son of a barber, and

[1] G. Capponi, "Storia della Repubblica di Firenze," vol. i. p. 346.
[2] Provv. i. 80, 1288.
[3] Rub. lxxv., 1415.

the grandson of a barber"—as he liked to call himself. His *bottega*, in 1408, was close to the Residence of the Consuls of the "*Calimala* Guild"; and it became the most celebrated shaving saloon of the century.

Burchiello, who matriculated in the "*Calimala* Guild" in 1432, was by way of being a poet, and versified the current topics of the day in the vernacular and style of the Old Market. Indeed he is justly famous as the originator of the "*Lingua Burchiellesca*"—the inimitable Society slang of Florence. Nothing was more taking than his witty verses and his pointed jokes, —perhaps, at times, a little strong, and unsuitable for general repetition! They were published, in Florence, in 1480—one of the earliest prints of the Printing Press.

His keen razor kept time with laugh and splutter. Many a smart *lucco*, and many a tight-fitting hose suffered from soapsuds shot out of choking roaring mouths! Still no one could give a clean shave better than Messere Domenico Burchiello, and in the fifteenth century at all events a smooth face was the fashion. George Eliot puts into the mouth of the Florentine barber Nello —"Here at Florence, we love not to see a man with his nose projecting over a cascade of hair."[1]

Quite the most favourite fashion of hairdressing, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, was known as "*Zazzera*."[2] The crop was cut square on the shoulders and not thinned downwards. A saucy finish was added with the curling-tongs, for the love-locks were disposed as an aureole, or, as they said, "like a moon in a mist." This was *par excellence*, in Paris, London, and elsewhere, known as the "Florentine cut"! Machiavelli, it is said, was cute enough to value the delicacy of the barber's art, and to discern in his manipulation of *il pelo dell' uovo*,—"the skin of the teeth,"—as we say —the quickening of his faculties.

Barbers and Apothecaries were rivals in the Market, but the former pointed jestingly at the crowds thronging "*Il Moro*"— "the Moor"—and other famous *botteghe degli Speziali*, as bereft of

[1] G. Eliot, "Romola," chap. iii.

[2] See Plate xxiii. p. 162.

the joys which alone a sharp razor and a lively wit could bestow!

Antonio Alamanni, born in 1480, was a disciple of Giovanni Burchiello, and kept up the cult of "*La Burchia*"—the Burlesque. He too produced topical melodies and established "*La Trottola*" —banter-songs. It must have been a very funny sight to watch grimacing Alamanni, arm in arm with his eccentric and serious friend Antonio Magliabecchi,—the great Librarian,—crossing the Market-place with Giovanni Pegolotti tagging on behind! The latter was the inexhaustible author of jokes and gibes at the expense of the clergy and the medical faculty, capricious and bizarre, but entirely characteristic of the lighter side of life in the Market.

Music too, vocal and instrumental, was not wanting from the purlieus of the Old Market. Living in a hilly country, and by a swiftly running river, the Florentines were naturally endowed with sweet and full toned voices, and with correct and musical ears—the "*Voce Toscana*" became a proverb. Dante has preserved the name and the fame of Belacqua, a musical instrument-maker in the Market, and of Casella, his skilful musician friend.[1]

The Mercato Vecchio was a treasury of local traditions and stories. One,—"The Legend of the White Hen,"—is as follows :— There was in the Old Market-place of Florence an ancient house and shop, over the door was the figure, in bas-relief, of a good fat hen, to show that eggs could be got there. The old body who kept the shop was called Furicchia, and she was a mystery to her simple minded neighbours. She had always on hand an enormous quantity of eggs, but where they came from nobody knew. She did a splendid trade, and rapidly became rich—especially as her eggs had the virtue of curing sick people and bewitched children.

One day a poor but high born Florentine dame, who was very jealous of Furicchia's prosperity, determined to discover the secret. She visited the little shop, and found its mistress out, but she heard a hen clucking in a cupboard :—

[1] "Purgatorio," Canti ii. and iv.

"Coccode! Dear me!—Where can Furicchia be?
Coccode! Furcchia mine—Bring me some warm red wine,
Coccode! These eggs I have laid. Coccode! now six for your trade,
Coccode! Now these are mine. Bring me quickly the warm red wine.
Coccode! Take them away; Many more further will I lay,
And thou wilt be a lady grand, As fine as any in all the land;
And should it happen that any one, Drinks of this wine as I have done,
Eggs like me she will surely lay; That is the secret, that is the way.
Coccode! Coccode!" [1]

Sure enough on the fire there was a pot of red warm wine, and without more ado the Signora drank a big mouthful and hastened home. Alas for her curiosity and her thirst, for she began to sing to everybody's amazement:—

"Coccode! what a pain in my leg!
Coccode! I must lay an egg.
And if any eggs I cannot lay
I shall surely die to-day."

And so she went on laying, laying, and pecking at crusts like a hen. Soon she began to shrivel up until she became a hen and hatched mice from her eggs, which all ran away—and then she died! This is the "Legend of the White Hen."

. . . . . .

The name "Mercato Nuovo" was first applied to the auxiliary of the Mercato Vecchio in the fourteenth century. The destruction of many houses and towers laid bare a site, within easy reach of the Old Market, at a time when the daily barterings were overtaxing its capacities.

The rise of the silk industry, and the immense number of crafts and trades associated with it, required almost a separate mart. Together with the increase of industrial output, the "Guild of Bankers and Money-Changers" found the Mercato Vecchio very unsuitable for the discharge of their daily monetary business. Accordingly an area was cleared of rubbish and surrounded by fine buildings—residences, shops, and offices. The principal families resident in the Mercato Nuovo were the Cavalcanti, Giandonati, Infangati, and Mangiatori. Among the offices

[1] Leland, C. G., "Legends of Florence," p. 11.

THE MERCATO VECCHIO—WITH (LEFT TO RIGHT) THE TABERNACOLO DELLA TROMBA, CASA E TORRE DE CAPONSACCHI AND THE CASA DEGLI AMIDEI

newly erected was a branch agency of the "*Calimala*" Guild, where the banking business of the "*Mercanti Francesca*" was chiefly conducted.

At one side of the Market was erected a Loggia, and here the "Guild of Bankers and Money Changers" established an Exchange, where couriers and agents might be matriculated, and where also those already in commission might forgather to render their accounts, and compare the daily bulletins of foreign Bourses.

Tables with seats for Money-changers were set up all around the Market: those of the Matriculated Guild members covered with green cloth, and those of uncovenanted exchangers merely bare boards. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries there were nearly a hundred such "Banks" set up. The number of "Banks" was adjusted to the accommodation of the Market—for conservatism of locality was ever a canon among Florentines. Not till the sixteenth century did bankers presume to extend their business-holdings to other *Piazze* and along the streets.

The Mercato Nuovo differed from the Mercato Vecchio, in that no comestibles were sold within its precincts. The sale of flowers however was allowed, especially for Church festivals and public ceremonials,—a form of merchandise and a delightful custom which continues to the present day.

Cosimo de' Medici,—"The Father of his Country,"—ever loyal to his native city and to his family, noted the inferiority of the Florentine Loggia to the Borsa of Amsterdam, and other capitals, and determined to erect a more worthy edifice. Two architects undertook the commission,—Bernardo Tasso and Buono Talenti, but the former did most of the work, and the present beautiful building was completed in 1548. By the side of one of the pillars stands the famous bronze Boar, calmly regarding the cool fountain—it was cast by Tacca, a pupil of Giovanni da Bologna.

The Loggia presented a fine sight when filled, as it was every day, at the hour of "*Tierce*," with merchant nobles in their stately robes, and distinguished foreign visitors, swarming like bees, and

discussing the state of the Florentine money-market and foreign financial quotations. The crowd was divided into three sets, according to the order of the columns, which supported the roof of the building:—(1) the venerable fathers of banking interests, (2) the vigorous middle-aged operators and speculators, and (3) the pushing young men clerks and aspirants to fiscal prominence.

In the centre of the Mercato Nuovo used to stand the "*Carroccio*,"—the old Florentine battle-chariot,—for thirty days before the armies of the Republic moved out to meet the foe. Kept in the Baptistery, it was in troublous times drawn by two milk-white oxen, covered with vermilion cloths, into the New Market. Over it was raised the red and white banner of the people, and, at an altar, erected upon its square platform, Mass was said daily. A guard of youths, dressed all in white, kept watch around this *Palladium* of the city.[1] The use of the "*Carroccio*" began early in the thirteenth century, when it preceded the Florentine army on their way to Siena, in 1230. Strange to say, the sacred car was last used in another war against the same city, during which it fell into the hands of the Sienese, by whom it was destroyed.

In place of the "*Carroccio*" the Signoria ordered a marble device to be laid in the centre of the Market, where the car had been wont to stand. This took the shape of a wheel with six alternate spokes of black and white marble, let into the paving.

On this spot, later on, was erected a stone pillar, or post, to which bankrupts were tied, and publicly beaten three times with every mark of personal indignity. Doubtless the present-day custom of "hammering" a delinquent on the London Stock Exchange had its origin in this Florentine usage!

There was no way for a man to obtain his discharge but by undergoing this degrading flagellation. If there was one thing the Banking community of the Mercato Nuovo feared and hated more than any other it was, of course, failure. A man, or a business house, who could not meet payments was an object of universal contempt and persecution. The same measure was also

[1] Delizie degli Eruditi Toscani, vol. vii. p. 84.

meted out to all citizens who persisted in "playing games with cards and dice, which distract honest men from work." [1]

A special privilege however was allowed, by custom and law, to debtors, who were free from arrest, so long as they remained within the precincts of the Market.

Another law was passed, and generally observed, which made for the dignity and the liberty of the Mercato Nuovo—no person bearing arms was permitted to enter. In times of public tumult, no doubt, this regulation was inoperative: nevertheless the trained bands of the "Guild of Bankers and Money-changers" were always on guard to defend the interests, and fight for the privileges of the money-market.

Many goldsmiths' workshops were established in the basements of the houses bordering the Market. The studio of Giovanbattista Sogliani,—Benvenuto Cellini's third master,—who admitted his distinguished pupil to share his quarters, was here. They did such a thriving business that they required three shops, which were held from the "Guild of Goldsmiths" by Salvadore and Michele Guasconti, workers in the precious metals.[2]

It was not the fashion to raise the hat in old Florence, and this was nowhere more evident than in the Market. Even the *Messeri* of the "Doctors" and the "Judges" Guilds were received with scant courtesy, for were not the frequenters also mostly members of honourable Crafts, and possessed of full civic rights, or aspiring thereto?

There was a good deal of "I'm-as-good-as-my-neighbour" about the *genti* of Florence. To salute an equal betokened inferiority: to cap a superior—well there were none in the opinion of the artizan-aristocrats! All were members of a great and progressive industrial and commercial Republic, wherein the meanest citizen had the power of attaining to the highest seats of dignity. Ceremonious customs came in with the rule of the Medici, and marked the downward course of Florentine greatness.

On the other hand not a few were the gestures of contempt

[1] Ademollo, i. 179.

[2] J. A. Symonds, "Life of Benvenuto Cellini."

and indifference. To turn sharply away upon the heel from a person whom it was wished to insult, or to pay out, and to "make the fig," were very common and offensive customs in the Markets. The thumb was pushed between the laid down two first fingers of the hand, and then pointed at the disesteemed person. Dante refers to this gesture in his "*Inferno*":—

> "When he had spoken, the wretch just raised his hand
> Pointing in mockery, and cried, 'Take them, the deuce,
> At thee I jerk my fig.'" [1]

And certainly our English expression—"don't care a fig"—has its origin in this Florentine custom.

Sad days however,—as in all human affairs,—befell the Markets. Riot, Famine, Flood, Fire, and Plague, in rapid sequence avenged the frolics and the crimes of heedless and treacherous citizens. The cry of *All'Arme! All'Arme!* resounded many and many a time, from side to side of the busy Market-place, and re-echoed down the streets and lanes, until it was caught up at river side, and wafted across to Oltrarno and right over the *Contado*.

In 1304 terrible encounters were witnessed between the *Bianchi* and the *Neri*—the "Whites" and the "Blacks,"—under the Cerchi and the Donati respectively. Fierce popular passions were aroused, and many a lusty craftsman, as well as many a noble merchant, lay weltering in his life's blood. Whole families were wiped out, and industries were checked and destroyed. Fire was laid to the houses of the rival factions, and the Cavalcanti and Gherardini, of the Markets, were burnt out.

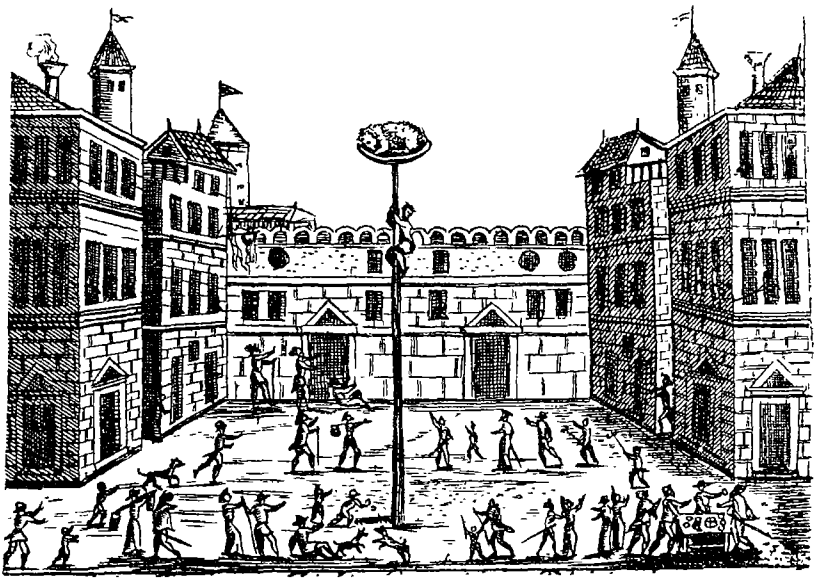
Again in 1312 party strife broke out with renewed frenzy, and Guelphs and Ghibellines fought out their feuds in the Markets. Operatives and people from the country joined in the fray, and every workman plied his axe, his knife, his mallet, and his saw, in the bloody work of civil war. "Men," says Dino Compagni, "kill each other regardless of law." [2]

The fourteenth century found Florence torn and distraught

[1] "Inferno," canto xxv.

[2] Dino Compagni, "Cronica," p. 312.

by party strife. Headed by the Acciaiuoli, the Bardi, and the Frescobaldi,—the Donati, the Pazzi, and the Cavicciuli,—the Adimari, the Albizzi, and the Medici—respectively, the populace was divided into three hostile camps. Day and night resounded in the Markets and in the streets—"*Evviva il Popolo!*"—each party was *the* people's party!—"Shut your shops—follow us!—



STREET ARCHITECTURE—SPORTS AND PASTIMES

pay no more tolls and taxes!—down with the despots!" Such were the rallying cries.

Machiavelli, in commenting upon those times of disorder, says: "They demonstrated forcibly how perilous it is to free a people who prefer slavery."[1]

A few years later saw the city at the very pinnacle of her prosperity, when citizens and their wives paraded Market and street arrayed in rich attire and bedizened with jewels and gold. Music and dancing shortened the hours of labour, and the tourna-

[1] Machiavelli, "Le Istorie di Firenze," iii. 51 A.

ments and shows reduced the daily Market throng. The whole city went mad with excesses, and the Mercato Vecchio and the Mercato Nuovo were the scenes of wild debauchery.

The junketings however were rudely stopped in November 1333, when a fierce storm raged for four whole days and nights. The terrified citizens, sobered by the catastrophe, sought the sanctuaries of the churches, until they too were washed by the flood. The Market was four feet under water, and many houses fell: the bridges over the Arno were washed away. Very many people were drowned and much cattle was carried off. When the waters,—after a week of destructive action,—abated, a fœtid slime was left behind, which covered everything and,—emitting an evil odour,—caused a pestilence to break out in the cramped houses of the city. The wells too and springs of water were polluted, and stacks of corn and hay and other food stuffs were rendered useless. Famine seemed to threaten completion of the fateful work of an avenging Providence.

. . . . . .

"*Il Centro di Firenze*" became a social and political expression in the middle of the last century. Decay, dirt, and dissolute habits, had combined to invest the Mercato Vecchio and its precincts with an evil reputation. Schemes for restoration, or amelioration, were raised and dropped: questions of private compensation and of public convenience were ranged against one another. Financial obligations became the doom of many a sane suggestion. At last people tired of a project which seemed to be insoluble, but the cry for the demolition and removal of ancient buildings became fierce and urgent.

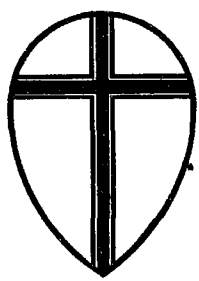
The Municipality yielded, not unwillingly, to the demand, and the fell work of destruction was commenced. At first tentatively, and timidly, the housebreaker plied his calling; but getting bolder, and casting to the winds his reverence for antiquity, a vast area was cleared of buildings.

The palaces, towers, shops and taverns of the Old Market have disappeared. Its four churches have gone, and the *Colonna*

*della Dovitzia*, with all its spiral stories of a busy past, has been laid low.

The living, though choked up lungs, which had breathed in and out the life of centuries in Florence—"the Beautiful and the Busy," ceased for ever their functions! The Mercato Vecchio was no more!

Memories of long past deeds, and perhaps the ghosts of long dead worthies still linger, and mingle in a weird maze of "*Inferno*" with "*Paradiso.*" Time and distance have mellowed the cries of the traders, and stilled their tramping feet. A dim figure glides off, and a hushed voice proclaims:—"Here once was the Old Market!"



*Stemma del Popolo di Firenze.*
A red cross upon a white field.

## CHAPTER XVI

# THE STREETS, THE SQUARES, AND THE BRIDGES, WITH SOME OF THEIR STORIES

STREETS :—A maze of streets and lanes. Description of Florentine houses. Linen windows. Street noises. Children's games. Straw-matting. Fires—Pace da Certaldo's expedient. Via di Calimala and its State awnings. "Rowdy Row." Bernardo Cennini's printing office. Gorgeous banners of the Por Santa Maria. Apprentices and their tricks. Artists' workshops. A great blaze. Buffalmacco's jokes. Il Diavolo del Mercato. A street of Palaces. Narrow *Chiassi*. Dark deeds. Charles Dickens.

SQUARES :—Piazza della Signoria the focus of official life. Giants at the Gates. Palazzo della Mercanzia. Loggia de' Lanzi. Piazza di San Giovanni and great religious festivals. *Palla e Maglio*. The Crusades. *Il Pallone*. Santa Croce. *Il Calcio*. Annual fairs. Love philtres.

BRIDGES :—Ponte Vecchio. A bridegroom done to death. Butchers and Gold-smiths. Ponte alla Carraia. Loads of wool. A link between past and present. Ponte Rubaconte, or Alle Grazie. Shop signs—animals. The quay of the sand-men. Ponte alla Santa Trinita. Trysting-place for lovers. Dante and Beatrice.

Scenes and stories :—Street violence. Bordone Bordoni. Wedding-bells. Practical jokes. Horse races in the Duomo ! Solemn Processions. Madonna dell' Impruneta. The Misericordia. Festival of St John Baptist. Banners. Towers. *Il Palio*. *Burle e Beffe !* The curfew. The Spirits of the past.

A PERFECT maze of streets and squares, with tall irregularly built houses, of every kind and degree, extended all around the Markets. Mostly paved with big hard flat stones, and, here and there, a range of river cobbles set upon their roughest ends, they were the substantial but the noisy stage upon which the comedies and the tragedies of old Florence were enacted.

The houses of Florence bore many designations—for example :—*Palazzo*—a town mansion, *Palagetto*—a smaller edifice, *Casolaro*—an old palace inhabited by many poor people, *Casa*—an ordinary house, *Casella*—a small dwelling, *Bottega*—a shop, and *Loggia*—a porch or arcade.

Some of the buildings were all that remained of the grim castles of the *Società delle Torre*: others showed the crenelated battlements characteristic of Guelph and Ghibelline days of conflict. As a rule the basements were arcaded, or at least big pilasters and arches bore up the superimposed floors, leaving cavernous depths, into which scarce glinted the light of the sun.

By day these arcades and loggie were thronged by small dealers in every conceivable commodity, who kept up a never-ending babel of voices, pitched in every possible key.

At night time, and in days of stress,—domestic or political,—big doors or shutters and strong iron bars were wont to be shot into position for the security of the inmates and their property.[1]

Many were the gaming dens of ill-repute which flourished in those dark entries. Tables for "Chess" and for "Woman,"—the two popular games,—were laid out, and others for risky and nameless games of chance. On rough forms sat the players, whilst around were grouped idle and dissolute persons wagering upon the play. A charge of cheating, or a run of ill-luck, set gamblers, spectators, and the proprietors of the tables, at maddened variance. Knives were whipped out, and e'er the cry "*Accor' uomo!*" had reached the outside world a poor wretch lay prostrate and done to death.

Shabby enough were the fronts of many of those grand old houses, in spite of titanic stones and massive metal-work, for, were not their windows,—if such we may call the many shaped openings for light and air,—covered only with dirty strips of oiled linen, stretched tightly over wooden frames? Window-glazing was a luxury of the rich, and even many of the *Magnificos* were content to live in the semi-darkness of their poorer neighbours.

The street noises were intolerable. What with the raucous ejaculations of vendors of merchandise puffing their multifarious wares, the fierce oaths of drivers of pack-animals and carts, the imprecations of the jostled hucksters and passers-by, the ribald and obscene snatches of song and jest, and the howling of un-

[1] G. Biagi, "Private Life of the Renaissance Florentines."

controllable ragamuffin boys, the air was rent with bewildering uproar, which no poorly fitting oiled-skin could possibly keep out.

The merry laughter of school children, passing to and fro, or indulging in happy games, and the pert tones of winsome

GROUP OF FLORENTINES—A STREET DISPUTE

maidens giving back as much as they had taken from their bold lover lads, were wont to be harshened by the scudding rush of cutting stones, as one hooligan band gave battle royal to its rival from the adjoining street.

Of all the children's games played in the streets of old Florence none was more characteristic than that of "*Guelfi o Ghibellini*"

—doubtless the parent of our "Oranges or Lemons." Two strong youths or maidens, grasping tight each other's hands, stood and sought to encircle the waists of passers-by, as well as of their playmates, asking each captive to which party he or she belonged. The prisoner was released only to hold on to the tail of his chosen side. When enough recruits were obtained the two strings pulled as hard as ever they could, the conquerors tugging their weaker opponents where and how they listed.

Full of people in every sort of costume, rich and poor, old and young, merry and grave, all the live long day, no time was ever found to sweep away the litter and the dust. Happily rain ran in rivulets, and washed betimes the gutters free from refuse, but this cleansing swept the people's "porkers," which grubbled in the dirt, into the basement of the houses, and made the disorder indescribable. The straw-matting, which was on the floors of rich and poor alike, harboured both dirt and vermin!

The houses were, as to their interiors, swept once only in the week—on the Saturday, so well may be imagined the accumulations which choked every corner, and dusted the tangled veilings of prodigious spider-webs![1]

The dwellings of the Florentines were much exposed to fire: their linen windows, the wooden frame-work of their fittings, and their doors, the vast expanse of drying clothes,—woollen and linen,—waving their lengths from the topmost stories, all these, and many another object, favoured conflagration. Ill-contrived too were the measures of security from fiery outbursts.

Pace da Certaldo,—a fourteenth-century writer,—advised all and sundry, "to keep handy at least twelve capacious canvas sacks, in which to put your things, whenever there is a fire in your neighbourhood, and also a thickish piece of rope, to reach the ground, to help your escape through a window!"[2]

[1] "Florence Gazette," 1891-92.

[2] MS. Biblioteca Riccardiana.

## I. STREETS

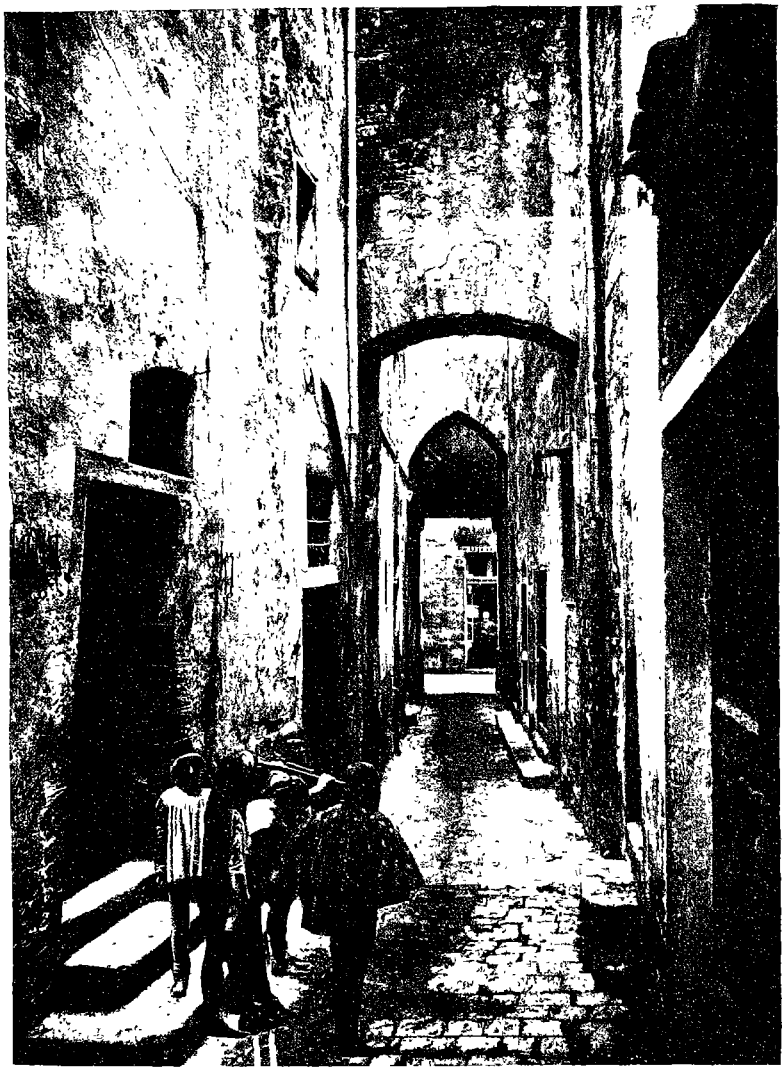
Of all the streets which debouched into the Mercato Vecchio by far the most important was the Via di Calimala—sometimes called Strada Francesca. Not only did the most considerable merchants daily frequent it, but it gave its name to the greatest of all the Guilds. Its principal building was the Palace of the Cavalcanti, which they gave over as a Residence for the Consuls of the Great Guild. Upon the feast of the Patron Saint of the city the whole street was covered with a State awning of blue canvas richly embroidered.

This was always the rallying-point for friends, and for foes too, of the merchants. At times the solemn tread of venerable city fathers and their subdued and serious conversation gave way to the hurried march of armed *Ciompi*, seeking,—with protest first and then with fire,—the removal of some trade injustice, or the granting of some political privilege.[1]

At the end of the Via Calimala, where it entered the Mercato Nuovo, was a narrow lane, leading to the Via de' Calzaiuoli—called "*Il Baccano*,"—"Rowdy Row!"—because of the hoarse and profane cries made by apprentices to attract customers to fare that way. In 1470 a change came over the scene, and the discordant voices of disorderly lads, gave place to the metallic music of the first type-foundry of Florence. Here Bernardo Cennini established himself as a printer and publisher, and his machines have revolutionised the world. In the Via Baccano was situated the first banking-house of the Medici. From "*Il Baccano*," to the little Via del Garbo, was but a pace or two, and there only a short time after printing became the step-mother of learning, was set up the first Florentine Booksellers' Row.

The Via Por Santa Maria yielded to none in importance, wealth, and romance. Here was the Residence of the great Silk

[1] L'Osservatore Fiorentino.



THE VIA LONTAMORTE BY THE OLD MARKET

Guild, whose façade was wont to bear the finest banners of the city, and whose Consuls and merchants walked with heads erect, and pockets full of gold florins, prouder than their fellows. And just because of this swagger the street was famed for its practical jokers, with crossed chains and unexpected obstacles, to trip up the finest of all the fine folk!

A favourite trick of the apprentices and practical jokers of the Via Por Santa Maria was to place before the doors of the houses of the merchants, and under the deep shadows of the Torre degli Amidei, and of the other towers, butts or pails of dirty water. The unwary pedestrian tumbling into one of them, was the signal for uproarious mirth, whilst skilful stone-throwing boys, at the corners, sent in deadly volleys! It was in the Via Por Santa Maria that Benvenuto Cellini, when only sixteen years old, routed five opponents who had basely stricken down his brother.

In the street leading from the Por Santa Maria to the Piazza della Signoria was situated the ancient church of Santa Cecilia, where were held the joint meetings for mutual advantage between the two great Guilds of Wool and Silk. Sometimes these conferences led to disturbances through the mutual jealousy of individual members.

Via de' Calzaiuoli was originally divided into three parts:—Corso degli Amidei, Via de'Pittori, and Via de'Caciaiuoli. The latter was ever odoriferous with the merchandise of cheesemongers,—members of the "*Arte degli Oliandoli*,"—and many an epicure came dawdling along on tasting bent. Via de'Pittori appealed to the art instincts of the people, as did the other to their olfactory senses. The new name came about through the prosperity of the "Guild of Shoemakers," and their cutting, knocking, punching, and the other noisy details of the trade, were in full operation. In Via de' Calzaiuoli was the Palazzo Macci, the residence of the Duke of Athens during his tenure of the Chief Magistracy. The shops too of the makers of body-hose and stockings were in this street. This manufacture was a speciality

of Florence, so that when Charles V. entered the city in 1506, wearing light breeches, he was hailed as a true Florentine![1]

Just beyond the Bigallo, in the Via de' Calzaiuoli, Donatello, Luca Della Robbia, Michelozzo, and Masaccio, worked as brothers for the common cause of art and craft.

The Corso was the scientific frontier between the Cerchi and the Donati. The Via de' Cerchi,—a quaint narrow lane,—ran parallel to the Via de' Calzaiuoli. At the corner, where the Via di Cimatori joined it, a stone pillar stood displaying three circles —the arms of the redoubtable "Whites,"—it was part of their loggia. The Borgo degli Albizzi, at the other end of the Corso, contained the houses of the "Blacks."

During a street fight, between these hostile parties, in the year 1302, a great many candles were burning at the shrine of Or San Michele. One evening the flames ignited some waxen votive offerings hanging there. The blaze so greatly excited the populace, that, catching up the burning fragments, they madly set fire to all the houses in the neighbourhood!

Just beyond the Church of San Pierino, of the Market, was the Vicolo del Guanto—Glove Lane, where dwelt the dressers of kid and calf skin, and the makers of gloves and gauntlets,—a favourite trysting-place for cavalier and maiden bent on tasteful hand wear. Sometimes the narrow lane was called Vicolo del Leoncino, from its noted hostelry and world-famous banking-house.

In the Via di Mellone—now Via Ricasoli—forgathered thirteenth century artists and artificers, and playful wags. Tafi, long gowned and almost giddy with his mosaic-fixing within the dome of the Baptistery, had to put up with the daily girdings of Buffalmacco—the champion joker. Giotto cast his quaintly-capped shadow adown that way, after ceasing his toilsome "Gospel of Labour" on the Campanile—his chisel and his measure stuck in his belt. Jostling them came many an enthusiastic comrade, with song and jest and gossip, and coy

[1] Florence Gazette, 1891-92.

glances from buxom lassies, at the street doors, excited many a palpitating heart!

In the Via di Vaccherecia the musical tintinabulations of goldsmiths' hammers, and niellists' gimlets subdued the harsher melodies of engravers' scratching needles and burnishers' rasping files. The Pollaiuoli, with Maso Finiguerra and many and many more, made pleasant and profitable metal harmonies, amid the chitter-chatter of Brunellesco and his boon companions. Hard by, in the Via di Sant' Egidio, at the Casa Della Robbia, Ghiberti cast his glorious gates, whilst from Cellini's furnace, next door, in the Via della Pergola, issued the celebrated pewter-fatted "Perseus" of the Loggia dei Lanzi.

Andrea del Sarto with Franciabigio had their shop at the corner of the Piazza dell' Or San Michele, a famous gathering place for artists and for wits. Peals of laughter arrested ofttimes the passers by, and caused many a curious step to pace the dark threshold in search of sport. Fra Bartolommeo della Porta,—the painter *par excellence* of Florence,—gained his name from his birthplace near the Roman Gate, and there his faithful companion, Albertinelli, exchanged his brush and palette for the wine-flask and glass-beaker of the *Vinattiere.*

The Via de' Pelliccieri,—with its palaces and towers of the Lamberti, Toschi, Cipriani, Pilli, and other families connected with the "Guild of Skinners and Furriers," was equally frequented by the Goldsmiths. In this historic street too, pigment masters dallied, as they chose the fairest pieces of vellum for their miniature illuminations, or the finest grained panels for their Madonna pictures.

From the elegant and comely avocations of the Via de' Pelliccieri to the dirt and reek of the Via del Fuoco,—just round the corner of the Residence of the "Guild of Wool,"—was but a step in distance, yet a league in sentiment. With its image and shrine of the Virgin, and her ever-burning lamp,—a votive offering for the staying of a city conflagration,—the Street of the Furnaces was always grimy as grimy could be. Charcoal-dealers, iron

moulders, and traders in fiery elements, were ever a strenuous and a noisy race.

At the corner of the Via de' Vecchietti and the Via de' Ferrivecchi—where once stood the Palazzo Cavolaia—the Palace of the "Cabbage-woman,"—was put up the uncanny bronze figure of "*Il Diavolo del Mercato*," cast by Giovanni da Bologna. Appropriate enough was its fixture there—the scene of the labours of scrap-iron dealers, wrangling and blaspheming the live-long day! The principal workshops of the "Armourers" and "Locksmiths" were hard by—scenes of noisy machinery and voluble machinists.

The Via de' Bardi was and is a characteristic thoroughfare of the city, where every course of stone, and door of wood, and heavy bits of iron, speak of warlike times, and of old-world romance. Its palaces have gone,—gone by fire, pillage, and flood,—but there still remain the spirits of strenuous, busy woolworkers and the subtle-minded bankers.

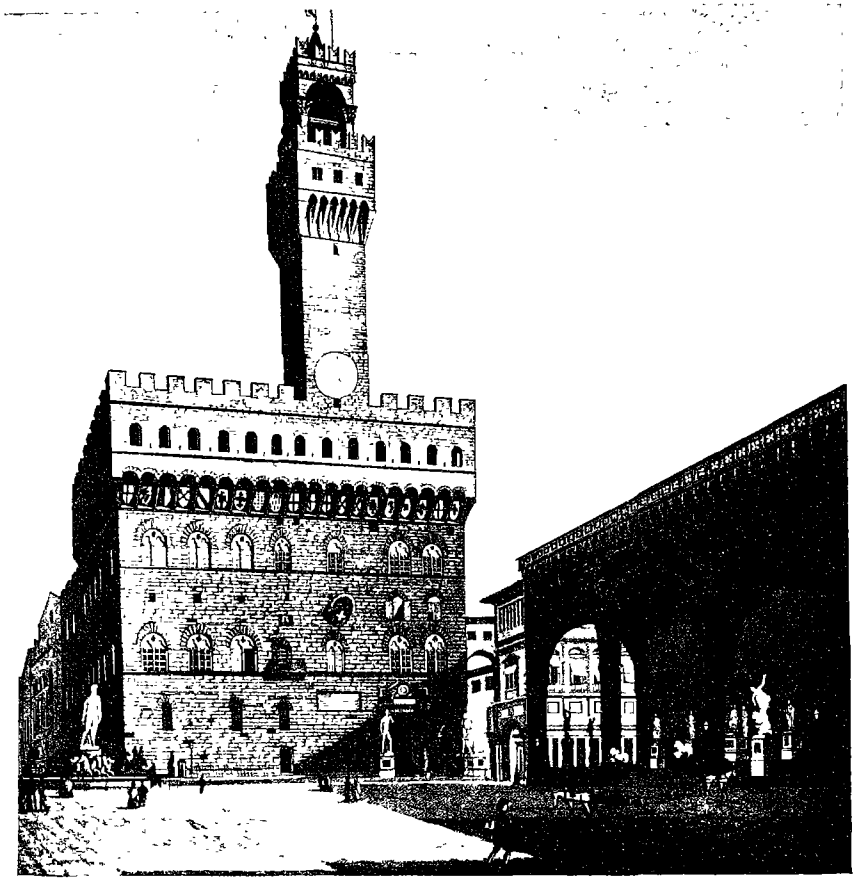
The Chiasso de' Ricci, and the Chiasso de' Erri, and many another lane and ginnel of the busy centre of old Florence, were alive with human interests. Almost shut out of the light of the sun, by the contiguity of the sheltering eaves of opposite buildings, the silent warning to wayfarers—"only can you pass an' we will"—seemed to be as effective to arrest locomotion, as the notorious street chains in times of unrest and uproar.

Weird entries and courtyards existed,—fringes of the lanes and streets,—and well designed for tragedy and oblivion. Secret histories and plots, as well as noble enterprises and literary memories, invest those narrow, busy thoroughfares with the romance and the reality of a living humanism.

"Magnificent, stern, and sombre," wrote Charles Dickens, "are the streets of beautiful Florence."

## II. SQUARES

The Piazza della Signoria was the focus of the legislative and official life of old Florence, and at the same time the rallying



THE PIAZZA DELLA SIGNORIA, WITH THE PALAZZO VECCHIO AND THE LOGGIA DE' LANZI

NOTE "THE GIANTS AT THE GATE,"—"DAVID" AND "HERCULES"

place of the armed bands of the Guilds in times of unrest. Dominated by the Palazzo Vecchio,—built in 1298,—it was a secure residence for the Priors. The tower,—world famous,—is that of the old Foraboschi Palace, and it gained the name of *Torre della Vacca*, because the great bell of Florence was hung up there—the bell whose notes called citizens to fight, or to work, as times were warlike or peaceful.

"The Giants at the Gates," as they were fittingly termed, were heroic marble statues of "David" by Michael Angelo, and "Hercules slaying Cacus" by Baccio Bandinelli. Over the great portal of the Palazzo may still be read the proud legend, carved in the fifteenth century:—"*Rex Regum et Dominus Dominantium.*" Along the front of the Palace ran the *Ringhiera*, or public orator's platform, completed in 1349.

Close at hand was the Badia,—the official residence of the Podesta,—in it was kept the "Banner of the People,"—half red and half white. Not very far away was the Bargello, the Palace of the *Capitano del Popolo*, he had the custody of the Banner of the Republic—the *Giglio* or Lily of Florence.

On one side of the Piazza was the Palazzo della Mercanzia—the Chamber of Commerce—the Parliament so to speak of the Guilds. At an angle of the Piazza stood originally the Church of San Piero Scheraggio—removed to make way for the *Uffizi*—or Offices of the Government, and next it the Loggia de' Lanzi—begun in 1374 by Orcagna, and named after his lancer legendaries by the Grand Duke Cosimo I. in 1541.

Beyond the Palazzo Vecchio was the great Neptune Fountain,—constructed by Baccio Bandinelli,—and called by Florentines, "*Il Biancone*"—"the great White Figure"—when, by time-honoured custom, they invariably bade it a respectful farewell before starting upon a foreign journey.

The Piazza di San Giovanni Battista was the most venerable square in Florence, and the most highly venerated by the Florentines. It was the scene of all the great public religious festivals. In 1283 the Rossi family and their adherents, to the

number of one thousand persons, dressed all in white under a leader styled "the Lord of Love," presented a series of miracle plays during the Festival of the Patron Saint.

Marriages of prominent citizens were sometimes held in the open Square, for example, in 1419, Salvestro di Messere Filippo Adimari wedded Lisa del Abbatacchio de'Ricasoli, amid great magnificence, in the presence of Pope Martin V. The bridegroom's best man was the Condottiere Braccio da Montone, a successful adventurer and Lord of Perugia.

This circumstance called forth the doggerel verse :—

| | |
|---|---|
| "*Braccio valente* | "Brave Braccio waring |
| *Vince ogni gente.* | Conquers every nation. |
| *Il Papa Martino* | But not worth a farthing. |
| *Non vale un quattrino!*" | Is Pope Martin's station!" |

—the poverty and gentleness of his Holiness making no appeal to the practical Florentines.

In 1526, when a new armed force of young cavaliers was raised to oppose another Pope,—Clement VII.,—a richly decorated altar was placed in the centre of the Piazza, whereat officers and simple knights publicly took the oath of allegiance to the Republic, in the presence of the magnificent Signoria.

Naming great things and small together—not a few Bull-fights were celebrated on the quasi-holy ground for the delectation of foreign princes and ambassadors, whilst, in 1453 a Goose Fair was established as an annual observance upon the Feast of All Saints, greatly to the advantage of the members of the "*Arte degli Oliandoli*," who kept high festival in consequence.

The Piazza di San Marco contains in its Monastery and Library the most lasting memorials of Cosimo de' Medici—"the Father of his Country." Memories too of the good Archbishop Sant' Antonino, and of Fra Angelico, the "Divine" painter, linger lovingly around. But by way of contrast the Piazza was the playground of the young men of the city. The popular game played was "*Palla e Maglio*"—"Ball and Bat." The "*Maglio*"

was a bat of wood like a flat club, the wicket—a single stump, and runs were scored much as in modern single-wicket cricket. The "*Palla*" was a small hard ball. This was without doubt the parent of the British national game, brought to England's public schools and colleges in the sixteenth century at the time of the so-called "Tuscan Fever," when so many Florentine customs took root in Great Britain.

The Piazza di Santa Maria Novella was ever the scene of religious fervour and warlike romance. Here was unfurled, in 1287, the banner of the Florentine Company of the Second Crusade, which had been committed to the charge of proud Pazzino de' Pazzi, by the Bishop, in the neighbouring church of San Donato alla Torre. Thither too he rode back, at the head of his knights, wearing the mural crown placed upon his brows by Godfroi de Bouillon.

To mark his gratitude to Almighty God, Pazzino set apart a sum of money to pay for a perpetual annual remembrance of the exploits of his command. This festival is still celebrated on Holy Saturday with the ceremony of the Sacred Fire, but it has been transferred to the Piazza del Duomo.

In this famous Square there were wont to gather the ring-leaders of the city's tumults. Brave were the speeches and stout were the hearts of those fierce "Wooden Shoes," as shouldering tool and weapon, they rallied to the cry "*Evviva il Popolo!*"

Sports and pastimes too found place and partizans under the shadow of the glorious church. "*Il Pallone*," the foster-father of Rackets and Court Tennis, was the special game, and the ball was tossed up merrily against the massive walls and traceried windows, until prudence and the sense of fitness led to the players migrating to the Cascine.

The Piazza di Santa Croce yielded to none in the magnificence of its pageants, nor in the romance of its associations. In early days given over to the solemn chants of monks and the harmless plays of children, it became the scene of the city's welcome to, and entertainment of, her distinguished visitors.

Together with exhibitions of skill in arms,—the Tournament and the Parade,—was displayed the special Florentine game—"*Il Calcio*"—the parent of Rugby Football, and introduced at that celebrated School by Florentines in the sixteenth century.

Twenty or more noble youths formed equal sides, clad in red and blue respectively. The rules, the players, and the ball, were all as we see them to-day, only the artistic proclivities of the Florentines surrounded them with splendid pageantry. By the

PIAZZA DI SANTA CROCE—A TOURNAMENT IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

middle of the sixteenth century "*Il Calcio*" reached its climax: as great a sum as £1600 was spent in mounting the spectacle, and the spectators, ranged around the Square, numbered upwards of forty thousand. All that was noble and lovely forgathered, and true was the saying:—"None but the brave deserve the fair."

The spirits of the mighty dead still hover over the Piazza:—for do not the bodies of the greatest men of Florence lie buried within the sacred walls of the grand old church!

The Piazza dell' Annunziata had its annual fair, not a serious traffic mart in cloth and silken tissue, but a winter festival and feast combined, in honour of the Conception of Saint

Mary. To it was given the name of "*Fiera collina*" from the *contadine*, who came yearly out of the hill country of Pistoia and the Casentino, to sing their plaintive hymns to the Virgin Mary, and to sell their yarn and dried mushrooms,—the former the produce of the past year's home-industry, borne in big bundles upon their sturdy backs. Devotions completed and sales effected, the residue of the day was devoted to pleasure in the booths and among other attractions of the fair ground.

It was a mothers' and a children's revel, with every innocent deception and delight. Quack-doctors, conjurers, and cheap-jacks roared out from their different pitches their nostrums, their tricks, and their bargains. Mystic pills to allay headache, ear-ache, and may be, heartache too, were to be had cheap enough, and antidotes against drowning, burning, and the like uncanny ills, were moderate enough.[1]

But the Square, quiet enough at other times, was the gracious scene of much kindly benevolence on the part of the saintly Servite Brethren. There too, in later days, many a returned explorer related to his fellow-citizens, and the members of his Guild,—the Doctors and Apothecaries,—tales of adventure and of success.

The Piazze de' Brunelleschi, and di Cipolle, were ever much frequented. In the former, also called Piazza di Marroni, were, along with candied-chestnut vendors, shops of the "*Arte de' Rigattieri*," where the newest things in tasteful nick-nacks to deck a maiden's boudoir attracted many a loving couple. The latter, just behind the Strozzi Palace, was the dumping-ground of the less odoriferous but ever popular onions. The salesmen displayed them on the big stone benches, which surrounded the Square, and, whilst fashionables rarely risked a visit, many an amorous little city lass stole furtively along to secure a love philtre, from one or other of the old "gossips," who sat meditating and soliloquising there.

In almost every Square and open space young fellows of good

[1] G. Biagi, "Private Life of the Florentines of the Renaissance."

birth and manners were accustomed to engage in a curious sort of game or posing called "*Il Civettino*,"—"The Fop." Generally three youths were engaged together, and their movements partook of the graceful steps of a minuet and the elegant postures of the gymnasium.[1]

### III. Bridges

The building of bridges has ever been regarded as a token of vigorous political and commercial life. Florence easily took a lead over other cities by her early enterprise in bridging the Arno. Much of the life and business of the city was carried on upon, as well as over, her four substantial bridges, whose stones were polished by the hurrying feet of craftsmen, and their beasts of burden.

The most famous bridge, as well as the oldest,—the Ponte Vecchio,—dates from Roman times, when the Roman-Etrurian street was conducted over the river upon a stone archway. The first structure was washed away, but in 1080 another bridge was thrown across—a kind of herald of the Renaissance. The vicissitudes of the Ponte Vecchio were countless in number and various in effect, and aptly illustrate the fortunes of the city itself. Flood, fire, pest, and bloodshed, swept those ancient piers, and assailed those venerable superstructures time out of mind.[2]

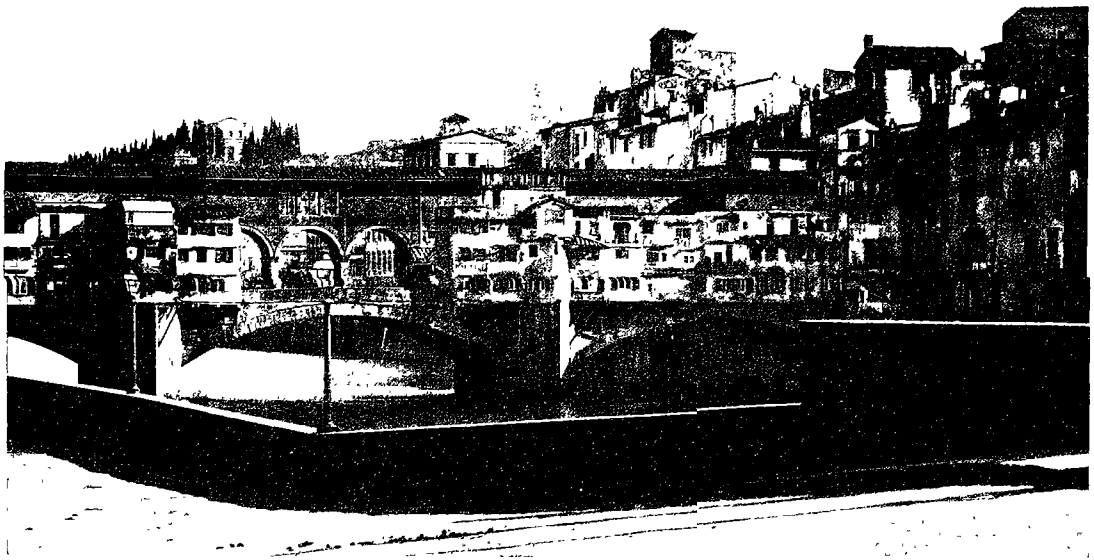
It was upon this bridge, and at the foot of the mutilated statue of Mars,—the city's earliest *Palladium*,—that, on Easter Day in 1215, a comely bridegroom was dragged from his richly caparisoned steed, and done to death by the daggers of the enraged Fifanti. Buondelmonte de' Buondelmonti had jilted a daughter of the Amidei, and had espoused Beatrice Donati: it was Mosca de' Lamberti who said, "Let him die!" This murder gave rise to the two great factions,—the Guelphs and Ghibellines.

The present most interesting bridge was built by Taddeo Gaddi in 1345, at a cost of sixty thousand gold florins. Upon a buttress may still be seen the original inscription:—

Gaddi me fece, il Ponte Vecchio sono."

[1] See Plate xxiii., p. 162.

[2] G. Villani, "Storia Fiorentina," Lib. ix.



THE PONTE VECCHIO.—SAN MINIATO AL MONTE IN THE DISTANCE

In 1378, in recognition of his devotion to the cause of the *Popolo Minuto*, Salvestro di Messere Alamanno de' Medici was awarded, together with his knighthood, by the leaders of the *Ciompi* government, the annual rental of all the forty-four shops, which had been erected upon the bridge. This produced in 1281 only the paltry amount of five hundred *lire*, but a hundred years later the shops were worth at least a thousand gold florins a year.

These shops appear at first to have been occupied by any and all comers, but from 1422 to 1490 they were rented exclusively by members of the "Guild of Butchers," whose trade had outgrown the Old Market precincts. Under Cosimo I., the *Capitani di Parte Guelfa* signed an order for the Butchers to abandon the bridge, and in their stead were installed the Goldsmiths.[1] Thenceforward have resounded the lusty voices of jolly young apprentices, assailing all who pass their way, to purchase some of the pretty trinkets which their skilful hands have made.[1]

In 1564 Cosimo I. constructed the covered corridor which connects the Pitti and the Uffizi, and completely altered the appearance of the venerable bridge.

The Ponte Alla Carraia,—built and washed away, and built again by turns,—was the workman's bridge. None was so greatly thronged by hastening operatives to and from the woollen factories of the "Umiliati" and of the merchants of the "Wool Guild."

Its very name betokens toilsome enterprise, for daily were its approaches blocked by laden carts and burdened pack-mules. Its earliest designation, however, was "Il Ponte Nuovo," and that it bore in the opening years of the thirteenth century. The first bridge was of wood, and thrown across in 1218. The Ponte alla Carraia is, metaphorically, the link between the mediæval seclusion of the monasteries and monastic influences and the Renaissance freedom of the arts and crafts. Gaddi's bridge was finished in 1337, and cost seventy-two thousand gold florins.

The Ponte Rubaconte—first built under the Podesta Ruba-

[1] D. Manni, "Della Vecchiezza Sovraggranda del Ponte Vecchio."
[2] "*Tractatus Extraordinatus*," Rub. xlv., Lib. iv.

conte da Mandola by Messere Lapo, master of Arnolfo di Cambio in 1237,—suffered like its fellows, but it came to be regarded as the fashionable bridge of Florence, and its houses were lofty and handsome.

There is a notice in the Archives dated August 22, 1297, of the letting of fourteen or fifteen shops newly erected upon the Ponte Rubaconte. The average rental was fixed at from five to forty *lire*, per annum, according to proximity to the Via di Por Santa Maria. Among the traders on the bridge were six Strap and Stirrup-makers and five Pouch or Purse-makers—members of the "Guild of Saddlers." Each shop was required to bear a separate sign,—and these signs were all of animals, for example:—"The Two Lions," "The Unicorn," "The Wolf," "The Leopard," "The Stag," "The Cat," "The Panther," "The Bear," "The Camel," etc.[1] In 1333, when the disastrous flood, which carried away the other four bridges over the Arno, spared the Ponte Rubaconte, the name was changed, as a token of thankfulness to the Almighty, to Ponte alle Grazie, and a votive chapel was erected over the centre arch.

On the Oltrarno side of the bridge was the Piazza de' Mozzi. Tommaso de' Mozzi built his palace where the river was afterwards embanked by the Via dei Renai or the Quay of the Sandmen. They were a very vigorous set, but given, so report had it, to personal violence and robbery. Nevertheless they figured as models for Michael Angelo's "*Slaves*," and Benvenuto Cellini's "*Perseus*," and their Trade-association was not the least considerable among its fellows.

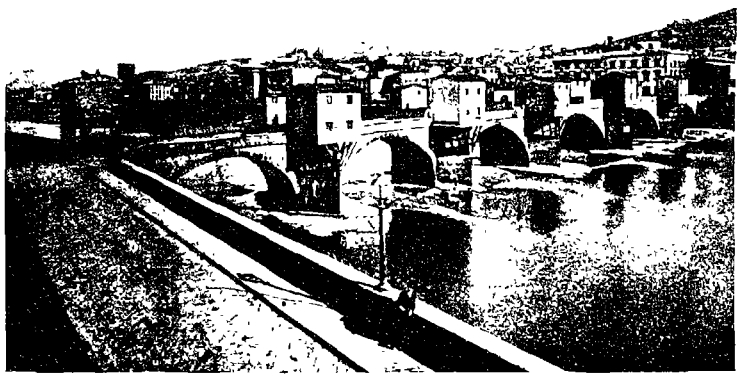
The Ponte alla Santa Trinita was the last of the four bridges to be built. It is said that the Frescobaldi, who with many other merchant families settled in the erstwhile poor suburbs of Oltrarno in 1252, threw a private wooden bridge across the river from the Borgo San Jacopo. This was a favourite trysting-place for lovers. The young men were wont to lounge upon the bridge, and because it was unencumbered with houses and shops, its parapets

[1] Archivio del Stato Fiorentino, cap. xxiv. fol. 165.

ON THE
PONTE VECCHIO,
WITH THE
TORRE DEGLI
AMIDEI

THIRTEENTH CENTURY

NOTE :—
1. THE TORCH-SCONCE,
2. THE BANNER-HOLDER,
AND THE
3. WOOLLEN-CLOTH
BRACKET
TO THE LEFT



THE PONTE ALLE GRAZIE (RUBACONTE)

gave directly upon the Lung 'Arno right and left. Thence could the maidens of their choice, or the reverse, be seen, modestly walking hand-in-hand, along the pavement, by the river walls. Dante was not the only Florentine youth who saw and loved his Beatrice there!

Taddeo Gaddi built a new bridge in 1339, at a cost of twenty-six thousand gold florins, after the flood of 1333, and the present structure was completed in 1346.

. . . . . .

Chronicles of faction fights are not the only records of interest in the story of the Streets and Squares of Florence. Amusing and diverting are very many of the old narratives. At one time, for example, robbery with violence became rife and unbearable. Houses and persons were alike attacked, and the whole scheme was arranged upon an elaborate system.

A band of thieves organised themselves to sweep the city bare. Many carried instruments of music and serenaded the occupants of houses, who felt bound to unbar door and window, and bow to their visitors; but, when thus engaged, confederates of the musicians effected an entrance, and of course ransacked the premises!

A charming and unique feature of their exploits was the engagement of the best connected children, who might be accessible, to accompany them as dancers, singers, collectors, and the like. Some of these were posted at the ends of streets to be "burglared," to warn wayfarers not to venture there, as danger was brewing! One of the leaders was a young fellow called Bordone Bordoni, well connected and rich. He was at last caught and beheaded, and his band of prowling miscreants scattered.

Wedding bells too rang in and out of tell-tale belfries, as, with jingling spurs and chafing bits, cavaliers pranced along to their bridal with maidens fair of high and noble mien and parentage. The *frou-frou* of silken skirt and the sheen of flashing gems sweep many a time over the pages of the history of old

Florence. Where eye spoke to eye, and heart beat for heart, there they stretched right across the narrow streets, striped awnings, and greenery festoons. On house fronts were emblazoned proud coats of arms, gay banners waved aloft, and, hanging over balcony and window sill, were tapestries and skins of beauty and of worth.

The Via della Vigna was crowded from end to end with people in gala dress and spectators of the show, and all was gay for Romola or Caterina, or some other lovely bride. And then, the marriage over, with music, flowers, and sunshine, the Tilting-match attracts the crowd.

On such days the bouquet of fine vintages pervaded the air, as streets and lanes ran deep with red and yellow wine; whilst workmen, serving folk, and beggars, were regaled with much good cheer.[1]

High days were days of frolic too for gay young Florentines. Inflamed perhaps with game and wine, or with the mere excess of animal spirits, companies of festive youths were wont to course through the city, entering houses and breaking up the many parties they contained, or constraining the hospitable hosts to make open house and to admit them to the feasts.

Young bloods would, as Benvenuto Cellini records, resort to practical jokes, which became sometimes outrages upon decorum and sanctity. It was considered quite a first-rate prank to seize the ink-horns of passing Notaries, and,—rushing with them into the churches,—pour their contents into the holy-water stoups! Raids too were made upon the cringing Apothecaries, and assa-fœtida and other ill-odoured concoctions were seized to mingle with the incense stocks in the sacristies! No sport, however, equalled in jest and desecration that of driving market animals into the churches, and racing on horseback around the Tribune at the Duomo!

But days of gloom, and hushed with the tread of heavy feet, came oftentimes to the good people of Florence. The solemn

[1] G. Biagi, "Private Life of Renaissance Florentines."

dirge of monks tramping in from La Pineta with the sacred image of the *Madonna del' Impruneta*, in propitiatory procession to the Duomo, in face of some disaster or catastrophe, brings all men to their knees. With a hastily marked cross upon the breast and a whispered "*Ave*," working men and women kneel for a moment side by side on the causeway with their employers and their rulers. The Guilds are prostrate before the emblems of the Christian faith. Church candles are all ablaze, whilst the loom lights are extinguished, and hands skilful in the Crafts are dropping rosary beads one by one in silent reverent pause.

"May God, Saint Mary and the Saints—especially the good Saint John—avert the plague or stay it,—give needful rain, or dry up the flood-waters,—defend the right against the public enemy,—compose the feud of rival houses: may God protect Florence!"—such were the orisons which pierced the blue Tuscan vault of heaven.

Still other sights, affecting and arresting, were witnessed day in day out in old Florence. Through spacious Square and narrow Street pass the silent hooded bearers of the sick, the dying, and the dead. The *Misericordia* Brethren have, time out of mind, picked up a poor body in some dingy corner—an outcast or a waif—perchance the victim of another or of himself, and passing through the buyers and the sellers in the busy Markets, have struck a pathetic chord in many a rugged heart, and have called forth the quiet cry "*Miserere nobis Domine*" from many a pursed-up mouth.

The Festival of San Giovanni Battista, the Patron of Florence, was always an occasion of rejoicing in the Markets and the Streets. The ceremonies of the day began in front of the Palazzo Vecchio, in the Piazza della Signoria, where every one, noble and simple, in holiday attire, went to pay their respects to the *Gonfaloniere di Giustizia* and the other Magistrates. These dignitaries, arrayed in robes of State, took their places upon the *Ringhiera* early in the day.

One hundred gorgeous banners were unfurled, and displayed by as many richly apparelled *gonfalonieri*. They represented not

merely the various *sestieri* of the city, and the Twenty-one Guilds, —with the pennons of allied trade companies and confraternities— but among them were many trophy flags—the captured emblems of vanquished cities.

Greetings over, the Magnificos led a vast procession to the Baptistery—there to lay their offerings upon the altar of the Saint. A splendid feature in the cavalcade was the succession of gaily ornamented cars belonging to the several Guilds, each attended by the Consuls and Officers and a full complement of members. Famous artists were employed to decorate the cars—for example Andrea del Sarto painted one for the "Guild of Wool," and Piero di Cosimo another for the "Guild of Silk." The cars were drawn by richly bedecked horses and oxen, and many bore curious waxen towers, painted and adorned, which were made to revolve.

At San Giovanni costly offerings were dedicated by the Officers of State, by the Consuls, and by the richer citizens; whilst even the poorest person presented his humble tallow-candle, which he had purchased at one of the Apothecaries' shops.

The towers of wax were always hailed with delight, but often as not with jests. Generally young fellows, up at house windows on the route, tried to upset the towers and the boys inside them, with long wands. Others varied the joke by jerking out of the hands of the processionists their candles and their lamps, which they did with long wands or rods. Such scapegraces were dubbed "*bel Ceio*"—"Impudent stupid fellow": but nevertheless their pranks were always condoned.

For the Festival the whole of the Piazza di San Giovanni was covered with a vast awning of light blue linen canvas, at the expense of the "*Calimala* Guild." It was made up of five pieces, three of which covered the Piazza and the space between the Baptistery and the Duomo—the middle strip before the doors bearing the embroidered arms of the Republic. The other two pieces were stretched over the side of the *Misericordia* Office and formed a canopy to San Giovanni. The purpose of the awning was, first of all, to afford shelter from the heat of the midsummer

sun, and next to lend dignity to the festive ceremonies. It was originally put up in the year 1349. An entry in the Archives of the Guild is as follows :—"By the direction of the Consuls of the '*Calimala* Guild,' the awnings were made for San Giovanni: they were light blue, sprinkled with yellow lilies, which numbered fifteen hundred." [1]

At noon a general feast was held. Every tavern and eating-house in the Market and its contiguous streets was crammed with hungry, thirsty, and rollicking, merry-makers, perhaps, each one realising for himself a favourite saying of the Market people :—"caught like a flea in a bundle of tow!"

Then, after the briefest of siestas under the Market loggie, or elsewhere in the shade, every one moved off to find a place for the "*Palio*"—the great annual horse-race. The course lay right through the city from the Porta al Prato to the Porta alla Croce, along the Borgo degli Albizzi, the Via Vigna Nuova, and the Borgo d'Ognissanti.

The "*Palio*" invariably formed a foremost feature in all public rejoicings. If a victory had been won over Siena, Lucca, Pisa, Prato or any other rival city, horse-races were the natural and popular adjuncts. They were held immediately under the walls of the vanquished stronghold by the victorious troops, as well as in Florence by the peaceful citizens.

This spectacle over, a further adjournment was made, either to the sports ground at Peretola, or to the Piazze della Croce and Santa Maria Novella, to view the *giostre*, or tournaments and games. The merry, noisy, perspiring, throng of the city, swelled by the incursion of visitors from the *Contado* and the neighbouring towns and villages, passed to and fro with *burle* and *beffe*—jokes and pranks.

An ancient Carnival song ran thus :—

"To the *Calcio*-field, up comrades and away.
The bounding football there invites us all to play
No game so full of sport to occupy the day."

[1] Vasari, "Vita di Cecca Inseguere."

Whilst exquisite forms of youthful manly beauty displayed their perfect physical charms in sportive exercises, fair maidens—Tessas, Giovannas, and Marias—smiled approvingly, and, by the language of the eye, bespoke the lover's tryst.

Fun and frolic ran wild, and many a broken head with tattered clothes and empty pockets, was carried painfully home by weary feet, long after the curfew had sounded!

. . . . . .

IL CALCIO—FLORENTINE FOOTBALL IN THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

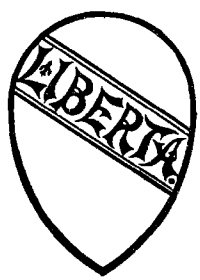
And oh! how, what is left us of venerable palace and ancient shop, of well worn street and busy mart, speaks, in solemn tones, of the sternness and the grandeur, of the frolic and the fray, of those far-off scenes in old Florence!

Those stout and massive buildings are like the serried ranks of armoured city companies, those open doorways and secluded basements resemble busy toilers. Those solid towers,—with square headed merlins of the Guelphic builders, or forked, after the manner of the Ghibellines,—proclaim watchful captains of the Guilds, and proud nobles of the Signoria—all bent and hoary,

but full of dignity and pathos still. Her buildings are in truth human entities, with the features, on their fronts, of a Dante, a Farinata, a Soderino, a Lando, a Savonarola, a Machiavelli, an Alberti, a Pazzi, and a Medici, all sons, fathers and makers of Florence!

And out, beyond the city gates, the fruitful *Contado* and the fair hill country, with the clear blue Tuscan sky overhead, are eloquent witnesses of the joys and of the sorrows of Florence the Busy and the Beautiful.

Her lilies still emit the time-old sweet odours, and her silk-worms are still spinning the web of industry and romance. From Fiesole come echoes of the past caught up by shady San Miniato, and silent spirits of the dead, from the historic Streets and Squares, and Bridges, linger whispering around the Campanile of Giotto, the Dome of Brunellesco, and the Torre della Vacca!




*Stemma de' "Priori de' Liberta,"* 1434.
(Red "Liberta" on a white field.)

## CHAPTER XVII

# THE RELIGION OF THE GUILDS

Humanism. Greek ideals. Roman methods. Pleasure, ambition and avarice. The Church non-aggressive. The Pope's party: the People's party. *Campsores Papæ.* Types of the great artists of Florence. The Baptistery. Early system of registration of births. Religious associations. "The Watchers and Servants of Mary." The *Umilitati.* Public participation in daily "Hours." No cant, no hypocrisy! The Madonna. Prayers before business. Obscure "Beatitudes." "Candle-spikers" and "Breast-beaters." Poor and rich alike affected. Private chapels. The Certosa di Val d'Ema. "Apostles of the Lord." Days of religious obligation. The *Sportelli. Ex votos.* Facilities for attending Mass. Free thought. Religious equality. Platonic philosophy. Writings of Leonardo da Vinci, Leon Battista Alberti, Francesco Guicciardini, Niccolo Machiavelli, and of others. Church festivals. "The Feast of Love." Superstitions. San Giovanni Battista. Lorenzo de' Medici's image. Miracles of healing. "How to extinguish a big blaze!" Cleanliness next godliness. The "Evil Eye." The *Brevi.* Large families. Fatalistic tendencies. Monks and nuns. "Firenze la Prima!" The Council of Florence. The Inquisition. Savonarola. Sermons. "Imitate Barletta!" Burial customs. Michael Angelo's torch. The *Paterini.* The "Black Company."

THE Religion of the Florentines of the thirteenth century was simple humanism. The blending of the various strains of human life, which formed the Tuscan race, produced also a spiritualism which inspired men and women with virile devotional sentiments.

A people so conspicuous for keenness of mind and vigour of body could not be otherwise than affected strongly by religious instincts. Essentially practical in everything which concerned human progress, the Florentines were ready to assimilate all spiritual truths which presented themselves in sympathetic measure.

Together with simple trust in all the generally accepted traditions of their race and land, there was mingled a tenacious hold upon Greek ideals and Roman methods.

In the days when the law of might was superior to that of the law of right, and when households were broken up and men became fugitives, the scattered details of a warlike people held on to all they knew of nobility of aim, energy of will, and effectiveness of accomplishment. Into their personalities entered the characteristics of Dante's three weird animals—the nimble panther, the haughty lion, and the lean-looking wolf,—pleasure, ambition and avarice.[1] Whereas in most States and cities in the Middle Ages the action of the priesthood was aggressive, the Religious, who settled in Florence, were remarkable for their reserve and reticence. Probably this characteristic was induced by the spirit of freedom, which early breathed throughout Tuscany; and which was indeed the guiding influence in all her pre-eminence in later years. Hermit clergy, in their cells on hillside and by river bank, —the self-denying pioneers of Catholic Rome,—bore their part nobly in the softening and refining of the minds and lives of the wild people they dwelt among. The favourable bearing of the Papal See did much to control and to subordinate the passions of the lower classes, and to encourage and to foster the goodwill of the ruling citizens. The Pope's party became also that of the People, and, under the title of Guelphs, stood for liberty and progress. The Church of Rome was regarded as a political government to negotiate with, rather than a spiritual institution to submit to.

Florentines were essentially of a non-theological cast of mind: religious doubts and differences of belief had little or no interest for them. Rome, ever wise, and able at once to feel the public pulse and to recognise the popular temperament, never trenched upon the liberties of the city. If Pontiffs launched now and again their Interdicts, they were pretty soon persuaded to remove them, and to consult the People's prejudices and wishes; whilst they profited not a little by the sapient industrial enterprise, and far-reaching commercial policy, of their adherents.

That the Florentines were emotional goes without saying—the

[1] "Inferno," Canto I.

Greek and Etruscan in their blood provided this characteristic, just as clearly as did the Roman and the German reticence fashion their stoicism. There was a good deal of the Greek in the expression of their religious feelings. Fine forms, fine features, and fine movements, were ever held in just reverence. Simplicity, naturalness, and grace, marked their public functions, and their private devotions.

The singing boys and girls of Luca Della Robbia's "*Cantoria*" with the trinity of "Davids":—Donatello's goat-herd, Verrocchio's town-apprentice, and Buonarroti's young giant-hero,—preserve the comely types of the youth of those days. Masaccio, Ghirlandaio, and Botticelli, have fixed, with their rare pigments, the features of the men and women who worshipped God and reverenced perfect manhood.

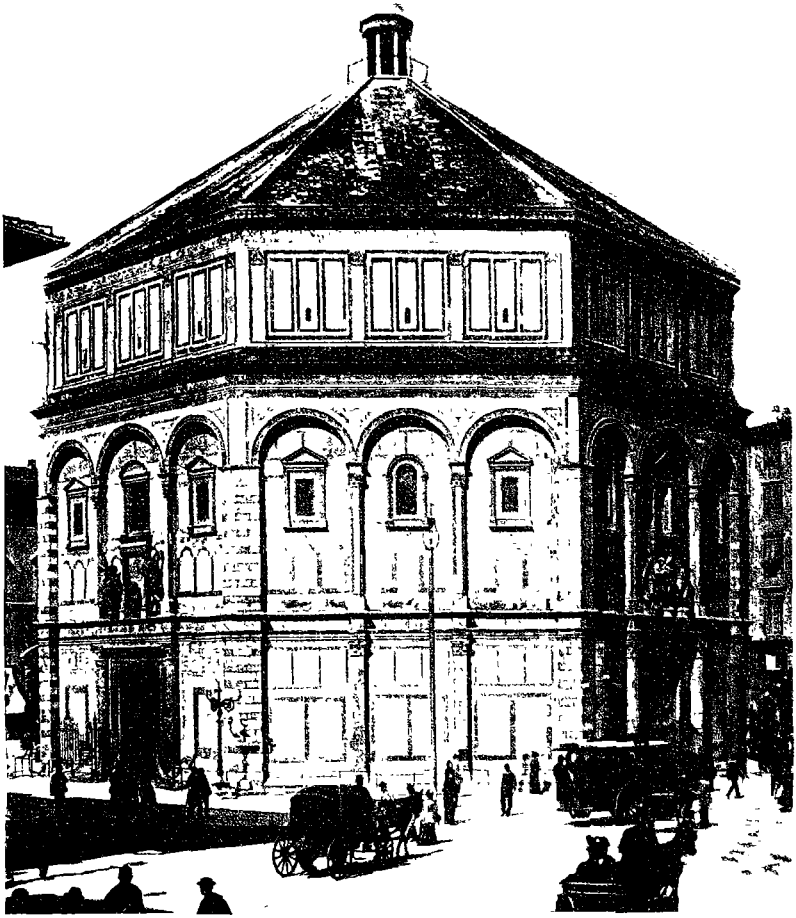
San Giovanni Battista was the earliest centre of the religious life of Florence. There, in the midst of stalls and carts of market people, with sales going on almost within the sacred portals, stood, —like the heart in a human body,—the venerable temple of God, sanctified by the baptism, first vows, and earliest Mass, the marriage and the death rites, of the whole population.[1]

The black and white beans, respectively, registered at one and the same time a child of God and a child of the Commune. Prayers and bargains were in close comradeship, and were joined together in every contract and statute, as they were in every church ceremony and civic feast.

Candles too were burnt there, not for meaningless show and illumination, but, in some sort of a way, as sure accommodations with heaven.

Catechisms and sermons were taught and preached by priests —sons of the people—to their own kith and kin, with a freedom and a sincerity quite as profound as were those traits in the characters of the hearers. Each and all worked as hard at religious duties as in the ordinary avocations of life. They judged that, as groups and companies in industry and commerce

[1] Biblioteca Laurenziana, "Biadaioli" MS.



THE BAPTISTERY OF SAN GIOVANNI
(WITH A TOUCH OF MODERN TIMES[1])

prospered by the contact of interest and respect, so association in worship brought with it consolation and refreshment. The voices of laymen and the conduct of lay devotions were heard and seen in every sacred building, as people spared time to count their beads and recite their "*Pater-nosters*."

The Monastery and the Church of La Nunziata, for example, was built by the Servites,—an Order of working monks, founded in 1239,—by seven rich and noble citizens of Florence. They were in the habit of meeting daily to sing "*Ave Maria*," in the chapel of San Zenobio, then standing on the site of Giotto's Campanile. It is said that their piety and charity were so conspicuous, that passers-by in the streets pointed them out as "*Guardatori e Servi di Maria*"—"Watchers and Servants of Mary." The walls of their sanctuary quickly became covered with votive offerings from all conditions of men of like passions.

Great as was the influence of the "*Umiliati*" upon the industrial life of the Florentines, it was even more emphatic in its religious and charitable bearings. Their example and teaching appealed irresistibly to all classes of the population. The peers of merchants and manufacturers in mental calibre, the "Humble Brethren" were also the equals of artizans and operatives in manual skill. They were laymen, and as such with no special class distinctions, they were in full accord with the human interests of their neighbours. Brethren in labour they were at the same time fathers in religion.

The "*Umiliati*" exhibited daily how it was possible and profitable to combine toil and worship. To fear God and to honour man was the initial tenet of this faith. The daily recitation, in their chapel, of "The Hours" and various lay devotions, attracted masters and workpeople alike. There was something virile about their way of serving God, which agreed admirably with the instincts of the Florentines.

Very soon there sprung up in groups and families the self-same spirit of sobriety, morality, and devotion. The churches were visited regularly, and serious men and women joined heart

and soul in the daily offices. This was nowhere more remarkable than at Santa Reparata. The clergy, ever tactful, gauged the temper of the people, and admitted them freely to choir and lectern. Immense psalters, with their great big black square notes, were set up at the entrance of the Sanctuary, in order that men and lads might stand around and join their voices to the clerical recitations. This admirable observance was continued in the new church of Santa Maria del Fiore, and it is still to-day regarded as a special and highly valued privilege, by all the right-minded men-folk of the city.

No less admirable was the effect of the example of the "*Umiliati*" upon the charitable instincts of the people among whom they settled. Their ready sympathy with every form of suffering and adversity, their loving care of children and the aged, and their own self-denying lives, won the affection and imitation of all with whom they were thrown in contact. Intolerant almost to brutality of any mere mawkish sentiment and maudlin ministration, the thirteenth century Florentines were greatly affected by all that was manly and chivalrous. A high-toned piety and a discriminating charity became guiding lights upon their life and their work.

Florentines shared with all other Catholics a profound veneration for the Madonna, regarding her under many attributes. Early art had fixed her personality and her power upon the intelligence as well as upon the vision of her devotees. The whole city, for example, kept holiday when Cimabue's famous picture was ceremoniously escorted through the streets to its place in the Rucellai Chapel in Santa Maria Novella.

Santa Maria di Cigoli, near San Miniato al Monte, Santa Maria della Selva, Santa Maria Primavera di Fiesole, Santa Maria del' Impruneta, and Santa Maria dell' Or San Michele were, in turn and often enough simultaneously, objects of enthusiastic devotion.

Merchants and agents about to undertake a foreign journey, and manufacturers and citizens at the outset of some important

enterprise, were wont to throng the altar of their favourite Madonna to beseech her patronage and aid.

The little chapel of Santa Maria alle Grazie, upon the Bridge of that name, was daily thronged with worshippers. So small was the sanctuary that the candles offered on one day had to be removed to make space for the morrow's offerings.

Perhaps the most famous Madonna of them all was that of "Impruneta." In the early years of the sixteenth century at times of political excitement the "Black Madonna,"—as she was also called,—was conducted from her shrine, along the seven miles of road to the Porta Romana, by immense crowds of clergy and people, with mounted guards furnished by the Seven Greater Guilds. At the Gate she was taken charge of by the monks of S. Trinita, who bore her in solemn procession, and placed her upon a throne in the midst of the Duomo. There she remained until the tumult was abated, and where she received the deferential visits of thousands of the inhabitants. Her prerogative was the calming of popular passion and the peaceful administration of the city. Consequently it became a rule to transport the Madonna into the cathedral before each election of the Signoria, "in order that God may give us good and wise leaders."[1] The "Madonna del Impruneta" was also regarded as possessing the power of healing the sick, curing persons stricken down by wounds, and driving away evil spirits. The road up to her shrine was daily traversed by bands of Guildsmen seeking a guerison, or rendering a thank-offering.

Next to the cult of the Madonna came, oddly enough, irregular devotions to the least authentic and most obscure worthies of the saintly calendar. Florentines cared little about the Papal *imprimatur* in such matters, but when they listed they dubbed this or that individual a "Beatitude!"

The *Umiliati* naturally furnished many a saintly personage —great in prayer and great in toil. Of such were San Gherardino di Villamagna—a popular monkish teacher in the woolshops; and

[1] Perrens, ii. 411.

San Barduccio—a virtuous wool-carder, who simply did his duty to God and to man.

The figures and features of such blessed examples of industrial excellence, reproduced by "Masters in Wood and Stone," or in metal and pigment, were always accompanied by the halo of canonisation.

Every family had its Patron Saint, in imitation of the Patrons of the Guilds. These were often enough obscure citizens, the founders of the families' name and fame. To them something like ancestor-worship was accorded in the annual commemoration of worthy lives and meritorious deaths.

The peasants of Marignolle canonised a blind poet whose cantos had enchanted them, and also a poor village girl, who had lost her girdle and her purse, and discovered them in answer to vehement prayer. At the graves of such as these their relatives and friends burnt candles and sang litanies. These country-side observances spread far and wide, and almost every village had its cottage-chapel, its orchard-shrine or its roadside *ex voto*. These devotees gained the designation of "*Spigolistri*"—"Candle-spikers"—and "*Picchiapetti*"—"Breast-beaters"—by the profane, who regarded them all as hypocrites!

Not merely were the peasantry and the poorer townspeople affected by these devotions, but they spread their charm over the inmates of many a country villa—the residences of wealthy Florentines. At Montebuoni were the Buondelmonti, the Gherardini, the Fenzi, and the Machiavelli; at Signa dwelt the Alberti, the Altoviti, the Morelli, the Cavalcanti, the Pitti-Leparelli, the Passerini, and other rich Merchant-princes.

The Medici villa was at Poggio a Caiano, the Strozzi and the Borgherini had country houses at Bellosguardo, and at Peretola were the Panciatichi and the Vespucci. The Capponi, the Nerli, the Gianfigliazzi, and the Sacchetti were at Marignolle, and at Legnaia,—where were grown the best vegetables which were sold in the Mercato Vecchio,—resided the Rinuccini, the Caducci, the Artinini, and others. All these families, and many another too, have left splendid evidences of their pious zeal and lordly charity

in frescoed church and sculptured cloister—witnesses too of the wealth and influence of the Guilds.

The Certosa di Val d'Ema especially attracted members of the Guilds. Some aged and tottering to their graves, and some in the prime of life, but all weary of the worry and the whirl of commerce and industry, and yearning for quiet, sought within those silent courts, by acts of self-abasement, the peace of God. You may see what those craftsmen were like in the flesh, by contemplating their features characteristically sculptured in glazed terra-cotta busts by Giovanni Della Robbia upon the walls of the cloister. The Acciaiuoli family has left a great name at the Certosa. Niccolo of that ilk endowed the monastery and dedicated it to Saint Lawrence, the patron of his Guild, and bequeathed to it his precious marbles, pictures, and bronzes.

At times a serious mood affected rich and poor alike both in the city and in its suburbs. Men and women affected the monastic habit, and went about with heads downcast and uttering pious phrases. At home they spent their leisure in saying prayers, and in making repeatedly the sign of the cross, to render their lonely hours harmless. They called each other "Brother"—"Sister," and spoke about the Society to which they belonged as "The Apostles of the Lord."

Sacchetti, and his kind, did not spare these gloomy religionists, both he and Boccaccio dubbed them "*Buonapostoli*"—good only in that they revealed as much of the old Adam in their natural lives, as did most other people![1] To call them hypocrites would perhaps be too strong, but at all events they were almost the only individuals in Florentine history to whose tenets and observances the term "cant" may be truthfully ascribed.

Cant and bigotry were alike distasteful to the Florentines of old. They were a good deal too sincere and too downright in character to tolerate anything which made for creed respectability and religious professionalism.

[1] Sacchetti, "Lettere," t. iii. p. 375. Boccaccio, "Giorn." iii., "Nov." iv. t. ii. p. 54, etc.

Days of religious obligation were scrupulously observed in old Florence. Not only were the individual duties of citizens, with respect to attendance at Mass and other functions, exactly laid down by the Church authorities; but members of the Guilds were admonished to visit the churches in their corporate capacity.[1]

On Holy-days no public business of any kind was permitted between early Mass and Vespers. Times of fasting and abstinence were marked by an entire cessation of labour, and the closing of workshops and market stalls.

Drivers of carts and other vehicles, and mule and horse teamsters, were forbidden to carry merchandise, and to work their animals. Farriers might, under exceptional circumstances, shoe horses and mules, but they were not allowed to forge iron. Cattle and horses might be treated medically, and, of course, there was no restriction in the matter of feeding and watering stock.

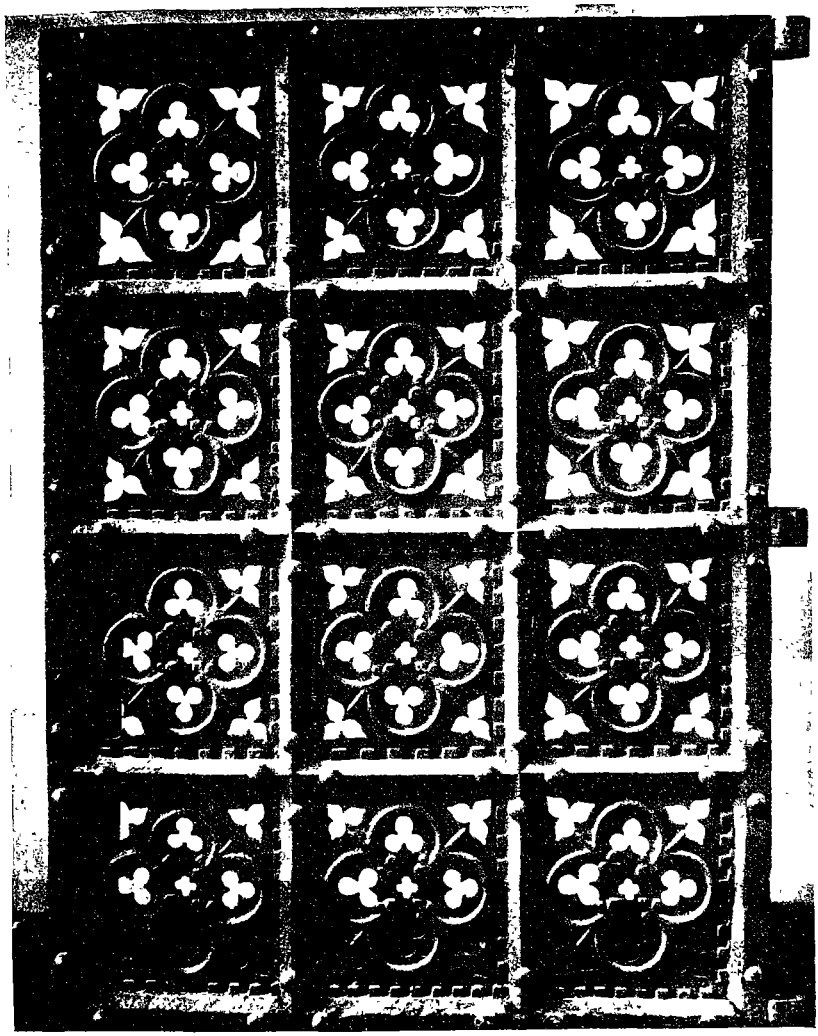
Haberdashers, Tailors, Shoemakers, Cobblers, Pork-Butchers, Cattle-Slaughterers, and Retail Cloth-dealers were especially warned to keep their places of business strictly closed all day. *Cuirmadori*—quacks of all kinds—were penalised for taking money during prohibited hours.

The *Sportelli*—wickets—of the Apothecaries,—for the sale of medicines, and of the Retail-butchers,—for the sale of fresh meat and fish, were allowed to be partially open. The stalls of Poulterers and Game-dealers, and those of certain fresh pork sellers, were suffered to be half open between Mass and Vespers. "*Stare a sportello*"—"open half the shop," and "*La mia bottega sta a sportello oggi*"—"I open my shop only half to-day," were common sayings with respect to days of obligation.

Bakers, Sellers of Macaroni and Vegetables, and Fishmongers were permitted to hawk their merchandise in public places, without restrictions all the year round. Millers were allowed, when it was necessary for public convenience, to work upon days of obligation,—but with closed doors,—and they were forbidden to deliver flour.

Church candle-makers were required to keep their shops half

[1] L. Cantini, i. 370.



A *SPORTELLO*, OR HOLY-DAY WICKET
FOURTEENTH CENTURY

open for the sale of ecclesiastical objects, and *ex voto* images, but on no account were they to sell other goods, or candles for secular purposes.

Roasters of chestnuts, whilst not allowed to roast them in public, might do so at home, and they were permitted to offer them for sale between Mass and Vespers. Hawkers of small objects could not dispose of their wares during prohibited hours by stealth, and, if caught secretly bartering, they were cast into prison, and their goods were confiscated.

Doctors, Surgeons, and Barbers, were required to stay in doors on Holy Days and Fast Days, and on no account to seek patients and clients in the streets. Taverns and Inns, for the sale of food and drink, were kept closed until mid-day. Domestic servants, except those of colour, were free after Vespers ; and masters and mistresses were exhorted to grant facilities for the attendance of their dependants at Mass.[1]

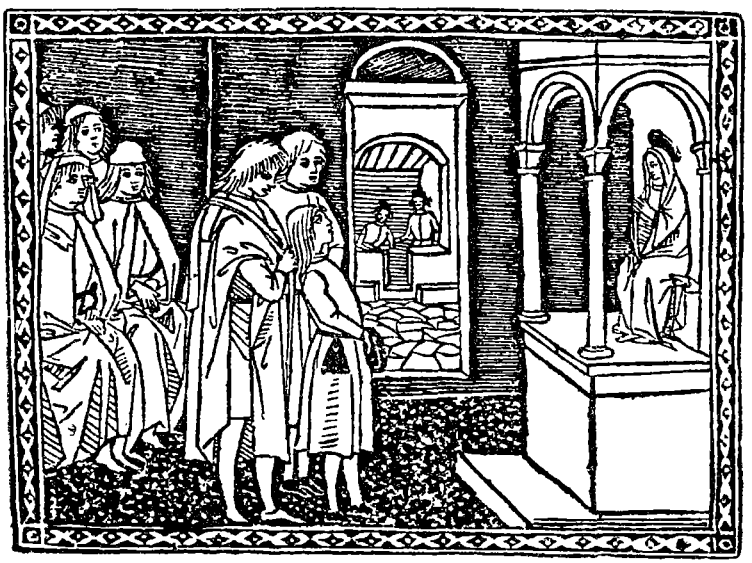
The churches were the homes of the people, for no city could boast so many, at once so beautiful and so eloquent of personal devotion. The Republican sentiments of the population,—rich and poor,—were nowhere so evident. In every group of kneeling worshippers at Mass, or in any congregation listening to the impassioned words of a preaching-friar,—the noble, the merchant, the tradesman, the artizan, the peasant, and the beggar,—knelt and stood, shoulder to shoulder, each the peer of the other. Religious equality was ever a mark of Florentine citizenship.

Free thought undoubtedly was permitted in Florence, and it existed to such a degree that the Academy of Florence raised Platonic philosophy to the second throne in the religious hierarchy of the State. The officers of the Guilds, men of culture, merchant princes, and successful men of business, generally caught up the spirit of theological inquiry, and no assemblage or reunion of such persons, was complete without a debate wherein Christianity and Paganism each had adherents.[2]

[1] L. Cantini, "Legislazioni," and the Rubrics of 1415.
[2] Grimm, "Michael Angelo," i. 55.

Still it is obvious, from a careful study of the writings of such men as Leonardo da Vinci, Leon Battista Alberti, and Francesco Guicciardini and many others, that pure Scepticism was far removed from the minds of those quick-witted makers of Florence.

The soundness and strength of the hold of the commercial and industrial classes upon the faith of the Church is evidenced by the abundance, in the streets and squares, of shrines and



AN "AVE MARIA" BEFORE A STREET SHRINE. SIXTEENTH CENTURY

religious objects. Many still bear their pendant lamps, where once flickered the devotions of a religious people. These objects are not mere inartistic manufactures of ill-conditioned hucksters, but they are *chefs d'œuvre* of Masters in Stone, in Wood, in Iron, and in Terra-cotta.

Nevertheless the men of the Renaissance were imbued with something not inconsiderable of a Pagan spirit, for many came to regard Christianity as a guide to private morality, and in no sense as a controlling power in corporate life. Machiavelli, over and over again, emphasises this in his "Prince" and "Discourses."

The phrase, originally uttered by Gino Capponi, "those who love their country better than the safety of their souls are wise," was often on his lips. He contrasts too, vividly, the power of their religious rites over the lives and characters of the Romans with the feebleness of the Keys over the morals and intelligences of the Florentines of his day. The halting between Christian morality, so called, and political expediency was a danger and a deceit in the life of many a Florentine worthy.

There was also a striking medley of things serious and profane in the religious observances of the citizens. If they went, as was their wont, on the first Sunday in each month, to say their prayers and count their beads at San Gallo,—just beyond the Gate,—it was in order that the craftsmen and their friends might spend a merry afternoon and evening in eating, playing, dancing, and courting!

The Feast of the Epiphany — "*Befana*" — as they called it, from the Doll which was carried about on the Eve, provided both religious services and pleasant entertainments. Each house, workshop, convent, and church, had its *Bambino*, sometimes beautifully dressed by artists. Every child carried about by day its sacred doll, and exhibited it in keen rivalry with others; whilst at dusk, they were placed upon a window sill, or in the doorway, and flanked by burning candles and gaily painted paper lanterns. Pageants and cavalcades of the Three Holy Kings passed through the streets whilst "Bethlehems" were decked out by the Altars of the Nativity, and were visited by merchant and artizan, noble and simple, young and old, as though upon a solemn pilgrimage.

The First of May was the "Feast of Love." After hearing Mass, and making offerings at the Shrines of Or San Michele, and La Nunziata, apprentices with their sweethearts made off to the hills and woods, to spend the day in amorous sports.

"Youths and maidens enjoy to-day,
Naught ye know about the morrow!"[1]

[1] From a Sonnet by Michael Angelo.

Many a city lad won his country lass, but many an one was jilted that happy sad May Day!

The choice of lad and lass was hotly discussed in the home circle, for marriage was to the Florentines as much a commercial contract as it was an union of hearts. Florentine mothers were much addicted to match-making. Alessandra Machinghi degli Strozzi used to go to Mass every morning in Santa Maria del Fiore, to have a good look at the girls her son Filippo admired, and returned with critical remarks, to which she chided him to attend. Whilst a good figure and a pretty face went far towards securing the maternal approval, still more conclusive points were family influence and financial means.[1]

Superstition,—as has Nature's occult science been named,—had its place, and that not an unobtrusive one, both in the individual life, and in the collective activities of the Florentines.

Mars,—earliest patron of the city's destiny,—had hearty devotees in every class in spite of his supersession by Saint Giovanni Battista. For years his statue graced the temple on the Citadel, then what was left of him by barbarian invaders was erected upon the Ponte Vecchio. Whilst his marred effigy brooded over the hurrying river below, Florence was triumphant. His destruction meant for her unheard-of woes, so, when at length in 1337, the disastrous flood, which claimed almost all Florence as its prey, bore away bridge and *Palladium* together, lamentations loud arose to propitiate a vengeful Providence.

The attributes of the warrior god,—his strength, his boldness, and his victory,—were transferred to the peaceful Forerunner, who had for co-ordinates the saintly virtues of the Gospel. Monkish tradition and popular fancy, fond of blending like natures, joined St Sebastian to Apollo, St Mary to Venus, and made of Mercury the valiant St George.

Every unusual circumstance was magnified and ascribed to occult influences:—a comet in the sky portended war and blood-

[1] G. Biagi, p. 64.

shed; lights shooting at night like falling-stars betokened personal danger to men of eminence; thunder in clear moonlight threatened industrial pursuits; the fall of a monument, or of masonry, pointed to family troubles, and so forth.

No one was in the least surprised, when Lorenzo de' Medici died, to hear that his votive image in wax in the church of La Nunziata had fallen, and was broken in pieces. The cry went from lip to lip:—"*Boto, caduto in Santissima Nunziata!*" and some added "May God pardon him," "Rest his soul," and "The price of wax will rise!"—referring, doubtless, to the subsequent stately obsequies of the departed prince.

The folk-lore of the Florentines embraced ghosts, witches, spells, and were-wolves; but many of their superstitions—so called—were harmless and even childish. If a woman, as an instance, lost her cat, her best resource was to burn a candle to the Madonna—by preference at Or San Michele. If a man could not avoid beginning a new enterprise or making a bargain on a Friday, he was careful to slip into the nearest church to say a hurried "*Pater-noster.*"

Green was regarded as the colour of the unspeakable Turk, and even suggested the pallid hue of the "*Inferno*"; hence no self-respecting citizen would willingly wear clothes dyed with that hue, although for hood or cap it was admissible.

The loss of reason was recoverable by the superimposure, on the head of the unfortunate person, of the mitre of San Zenobio, the Saintly Bishop of Florence in the fifth century, whose memory was and is still highly venerated. A further infallible cure was the clothing of a deranged person in the mantle of San Giovanni Gualberti, Abbot of San Miniato, who died in 1073. The miracles wrought by these two beatified patrons of Florence have furnished Ghiberti, Ghirlandaio, and Benedetto da Rovezzano with subjects for artistic representation.

Here is a famous recipe:—"How to extinguish a big blaze":—"Write the following words on three round flat stones, and throw them into the fire, which will at once be put out—✠ In the

Name of the Father—Shadrach ; ✠ In the Name of the Son—Meshach ; ✠ In the Name of the Spirit—Adenago." [1]

Any uncanny or unusual noise sent off young and old in quest of holy-water, with which to sprinkle the locality and thus to exorcise the disturbing spirit. If a murderer could, unmoved, eat his supper placed upon the body of his victims, he was excused execution.

Strange views were held with respect to the curing of ailments :—for example, jumping three times upon a skein of boiled twine, and rubbing the person with oil dripping from the frame work of church bells, were considered efficacious and very commonly were they carried out!

Florentine mothers of the poorer sort also had a superstitious dread of children's clean hands and feet! The more dirt which the little toddlers acquired, in their grubbings in the gutter, the more likely were they to escape illness and death. When ablutions became absolutely necessary they were followed by visits to the shrine of the favourite Madonna, where an "*Ave*" was said to avert the evil consequences of such unavoidable cleanliness!

The cult of the Evil-eye was followed by all classes of the community, but sometimes the hasty presentation of the pointing fingers led to recriminations with knife or stone! No people were swifter in resentment of imagined insult than were the toilers in the Markets and streets of Florence. Any leading citizen whose name came to be even accidentally associated with the city's misfortunes, or with personal and party sufferings, was always an object for point and cross. Sometimes the superstition held true against every member of his family. Thus the Soderini, —Niccolo, Lorenzo, and Piero,—were regarded with suspicion and aversion. This custom originated probably in the general fear and contempt of the Jewish race. Anyhow no one would think of passing through the Ghetto—the Israelitish adjunct of the Mercato Vecchio—without extending the protective sign.

[1] Biblioteca Riccardiana, Codex 3632.

Every one wore, suspended by a silken or a woollen cord, around the neck, a little crooked horn of brass or bone or coral, which they were accustomed to touch if any evil shadow seemed about to cross their path. This token was often accompanied by a little silken or cotton bag called the "*Breve*" containing, as often as not: nothing but harmless powder! Conjurers and charlatans sold such charms readily to their simple-minded audiences. "Wear this," they said, "next your breast, it will help you in danger and in love." Many a lass took her "*Breve*" to her confessor to obtain the blessing of the Church upon her destiny.

The course of human life was regarded pretty much as an experience of the inevitable. Man was born, the Florentines considered, primarily to reproduce his kind, and secondarily to resign his offspring absolutely to the mercies,—tender or otherwise,—of the overruling powers.

To have twenty, or more, children was quite a natural condition of family life. If they lived to maturity the parents fervently exclaimed:—"Heaven be praised"; and, if they died in childhood, they sanctimoniously ejaculated:—"Yes, and for everything heaven be praised. Amen!"[1]

This fatalistic tendency exhibited itself also in their dealings with aged and distressed dependants. Gregorio Dati, in his "*Libro Segreto*," writes about the epidemic of 1426:—"The pestilence was in our house. It began with our man servant Piccino, within three days later our slave Martha died. On the first of April my daughter Sandra, and on the fifth, Antonia. We left the house and went into one opposite. In a few days Veronica died. Again we moved, and went to live in Via Chiara. Here Vandecca and Pippa were taken ill, and, on the first of August, both went to heaven. They all died of the plague. Heaven help them!"

Among the private records of the Strozzi family are the following particulars of two old people,—the only survivors of a family of labourers on the estate:—"Piero and Monna Cilia are

[1] G. Biagi, p. 57.

both alive and infirm. I have overflowed the field for the next year, and as I must put it in order, these two old people, if they do not die, must go and beg. Heaven will provide." In a letter written in the same hand a few months later we read :—" Piero is still alive, so he must put up with it, and go and beg. It would be best, of course, if heaven would take him ! "

Religious persons abounded—indeed occasionally they bore an abnormal ratio to the whole population. In the beginning of the sixteenth century—" The Golden Age of Florence "—there were upwards of one hundred monasteries and convents, with, perhaps, thousands of inmates, besides the great number of secular clergy who served the parish churches.

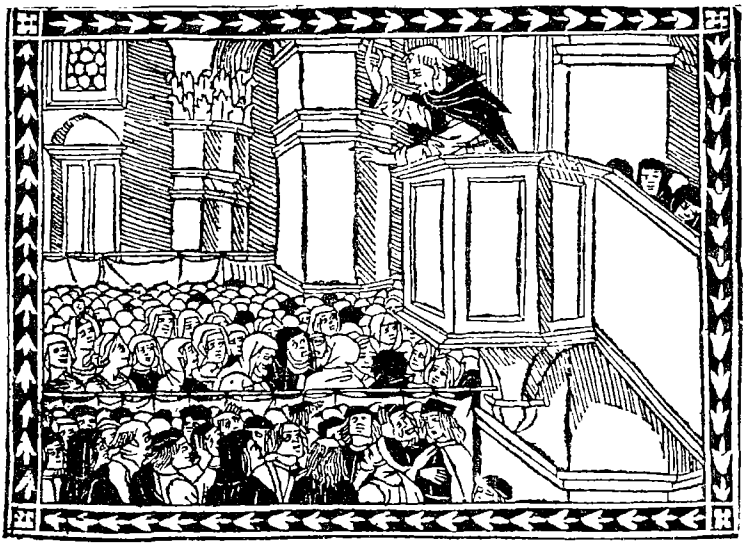
The dignified clergy,—from the Archbishop downwards, no less than the youngest priests,—were, as a rule, scions of Florentine families. The noblest citizens rendered up willingly their sons for the work of the priesthood. There was always more or less resentment expressed against alien clergy, and the men who were admitted to Holy Orders were, as a rule, actuated by patriotic and popular motives. " *Firenze la prima* "—" Florence first "—was their motto. This happy condition of things ecclesiastical was provocative of nothing but good in the intercourse between the Altar and the Home.

The Council of Florence, held in the Duomo, in 1439, was marked, not alone by the distinction of the personages attending its deliberations, and by the unanimity of its decisions, but by the profound respect and sympathy of the public at large. Perhaps this was due to two causes—the popular element in the constitution of the Council, and the absorption of merchants and artisans in their worldly callings, with little time and will to study matters of religious order.

There was in Florence little or no scope for the operations of the " Holy Office of Inquisition." Only one authenticated burning is recorded, that of Giovanni da Montecatini in 1450. Whether the reason for this exemption was to be found in the undoubted ort odoxy of the people, or in their absolute indifference to

dogmatic questions, no one can say. Probably the tacit policy of the Vatican, not to interfere with the religious ardour of a population triumphant in the world of commerce and industry, had a good deal to do with the immunity of the city from the rigours of the stake. Only in the day of Savonarola's domination did ecclesiastical disputes assume an acute stage.

Perhaps no movement stirred so thoroughly the great heart of



SAVONAROLA PREACHING IN LENT IN SANTA MARIA DEL FIORE

Florence as the coming of the great preaching friars in the fifteenth century. Girolamo Savonarola and his brethren proclaimed aloud "Jesus Christ is King of Florence!" The city was groaning under a load of tyranny, jealousy, and veniality, well nigh unbearable. The lust of money, the pride of life, and the affectation of culture, were leading men to view commercial probity, political freedom, and domestic virtue, with distorted vision.

Savonarola opposed the Medici and their usurpations with all his energy, and preached unweariedly against excess of worldly power in high places. His dogmas he formulated generally, as

follows :—1. The fear of God in the reform of personal liberty and habits, 2. The love of religion in the subserviency of all, 3. Peace among men and forgiveness of injuries, and 4. Government upon sound Republican principles.

The eloquence of the famous Frate created a three-fold division among the population :—"*Palleschi*"—from the Pawnbroker's balls—was the name adopted by the adherents of the Medici ; "*Frateschi*" or "*Piagnoni*"—"Tears and Treachery"—were the party of Savonarola ; and "*Arrabbiati*,"—perhaps "*Irreconcilables*" was the designation of the general body of opponents.

Florentines loved sermons, but those which treated least of Religion were most to their liking. Their highly cultured intellects were more attuned to sceptical emotions, and sarcastic utterances. At first Savonarola failed to touch them, and, not until he began to deal in metaphors, did they rally to his preaching. His vehemence, and a somewhat brusqueness of manner, and speech, offended them.

The preachers who drew the largest audiences were those who belonged to the school of Gabriele Barletta of Naples, about whom it was said : "No one knows how to preach if he cannot imitate Barletta." His eloquence was fantastic, uncouth, and extravagant.

Savonarola's doctrines were ridiculed by the profaner sort of men. A goodly number of young fellows,—apprentices, students, and well-to-do loiterers,—associated themselves together for the purpose of turning the impassioned eloquence of the Frate and his companions into ridicule. The "*Compagnacci*," as they were dubbed by the populace—"good for nothing chaps"—revived old Bacchanalian revels, as a set-off to the bands of children sent out to divest citizens of worldly vanities. They poked fun at the asceticism and self-abasement of the followers of the monk. "If," they said, "Savonarola enters the fire he will undoubtedly be burnt : if he refuses to enter it, he will lose all credit with his followers."[1] Marini Sanuto,—an observant Venetian of the Savon-

[1] P. Villari, "Savonarola," ii. 300.

arola period,—sententiously wrote : " Florence is *in extremis*, since after being under the hands of the Medici (doctors) she is now suffering under those of the monks."

A DYING MERCHANT. 1496

Customs of mercy and religion attended the bestowal of the bodies of the dead. Notice of death was at once despatched to the Office of the *Misericordia*, and *beccamorti*,—mutes,—were detailed to take up their station at the door of the house of mourning, and to render the last offices. They also registered

the deceased person's name, age, and calling, at the Palazzo Vecchio. The corpse was first moved to the "Guardamorto," at the corner of the Piazza di San Giovanni, but, within eighteen hours, the relatives were obliged to accompany it to the grave.

Mourning colours were brown, or dull red, and some people affected the unlucky green. Mortuary Masses, in the presence of the departed, became customary in the thirteenth century. Very careful were people of all classes to have the bodies of relatives, who died in foreign lands, brought home for interment.[1]

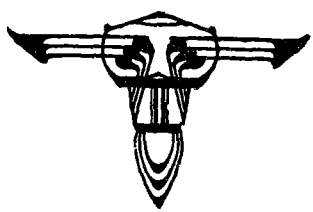
Notorious evil-doers, and those to whom absolution had been denied, received scant courtesy in death. Their bodies,—unwashed and unshrouded,—were cast out naked into the ditches like dead dogs. The unknown and unclaimed dead, found in the city or river, were disposed of to the hospitals, and to sculptors for anatomical purposes. It is said that Michael Angelo was wont to study, in a room lent him by his early patrons, the monks of San Spirito, with a flaming torch stuck into the breast of a corpse!

Criminals were wont to be harshly treated, no less for small offences than for great crimes. Those condemned to death were left to the tender mercies of the gaolers, and no provision was made for their spiritual wants. Many efforts were made by citizens to ameliorate these sad conditions, but nothing was actually accomplished till 1361. In that year twelve young Guildsmen, influenced by religious enthusiasm, which still remained as a token of "*Paterini*" influence, went boldly to the Signoria, and asked for a piece of waste land outside the city, but near the Piazza di Santa Croce—where executions were performed. On this site they erected a chapel, wherein the condemned might hear Mass before ascending the scaffold, and under the walls of which their bodies might be decently interred.

The founders of the charity called themselves "*La Compagnia de' Neri*"—"The Black Company." Their numbers increased to fifty in 1442, when fifty names were drawn by lot from the

[1] Cibrario, p. 262.

*Compagnia della Maria Vergine della Croce*—a religious Guild connected with the Church of Santa Croce,—and recruited from the competitors in the annual *Giostre*. The Society continued its operations all through the sixteenth century, and there is still, at Santa Croce, a Confraternity with similar objects.



## CHAPTER XVIII

## THE PATRONAGE OF THE GUILDS

Machiavelli's maxims. Pious trusts of Guilds. Man's usefulness to the State. Self-restraint and unselfishness. Guicciardini's aphorism. "*Calimala* Guild" and San Miniato al Monte, the Baptistery, and the Piazza di San Giovanni. The workpeople of the Guild. The "Wool Guild" and the *Duomo*. The Board of Works of the Cathedral. Poll-tax,—£225,000. The "Guild of Judges and Notaries" and San Ambrogio. "Feast of the Miracle." The "Guild of Skinners and Furriers" and the *Cappella dell' Arte* in San Apollinare. Endowments. The "Guild of Shoemakers" and the *Cappella dell' Arte* at La Nunziata. Frescoes. The "Guild of Carpenters" and the *Cappella dell' Arte* at Santa Maria Maggiore. Distressed carpenters. Patron saints. Altars and sacred observances. "The Society of Dyers." Association of foreign workmen,—Flemish and German,—at La Nunziata. Merchants of Lorraine at San Spirito. Society of Lombard cooks at San Piero del Mugnone. Chapels and altars in foreign cities for Florentines. *Or San Michele*, the Shrine of the Guilds. Corn-market and Church combined. "The Company of the Pillar." Munificence of the "*Compagnia dell' Or San Michele*." Orcagna's Tabernacle. The Statues of the Guilds. Mendicity. Sacchetti's "Three blind beggars." Private Benefactions. The Chapels of noted families at Santa Croce, Santa Maria Novella, and San Lorenzo. Employment for all the grand artists of Florence. "The lovely peasant-maid." The chapel of the Chestnut-Roasters. Palaces, Libraries, Art-Collections, etc.

FROM the very first outburst of Florentine prosperity, when money began to flow into the pockets of her merchants and her artizans as pleasantly as the waters of the Arno murmured under the arches of her bridges, notions of benevolence guided the hands of generous givers.

Human nature, nature's wants, and nature's mistakes ever occupied the first place in Florentine economics. Thus not alone the kindly disposed householder and the sympathetic good-wife gave of their substance in private charity, but the Guildsmen in their corporate character rendered toll of the good things they possessed, and the State, taking up the same parable, marked liberality as an alliteral anagram upon its Priors' shield of "*Liberta*."

Among the maxims of Machiavelli, with respect to duties of religion and charity incumbent upon the State, are the following :—

"Governments," he says, "that wish to preserve themselves incorrupt, must above all else maintain religious ceremonies incorrupted, and hold them always in the very highest reverence. Amongst all the qualities that distinguish a citizen in his country is his being above all other things liberal and munificent—especially in the construction of public edifices, such as churches, monasteries, and retreats for the poor, for the infirm, and for pilgrims."[1]

The Statutes of all the various Guilds in addition to a formal dedicatory preface, contain, in their opening entries, lists of piou-trusts undertaken by the Guilds with explicit directions how, where, and when, fitting observances are to be performed.

This is quite in keeping with the characteristics of the people of Florence, and though such provisions appear to us somewhat perfunctory, and, in a way, hypocritical, they were in no sense regarded as such in old Florence.

The intimate union of religion and work was as natural as it was conventional, and betrayed no unreasoning deference to dogma and doctrine; but, on the contrary, it manifested a sane view of the spiritual power in the republic of industry.

In the same way there was in the Florentines of old time an entire absence of professional Christianity and mock religion. The Catholic Faith offered to one and all a reasonable and a practical means of grace, which appeared to them exactly suited to their needs, their work, and their rest.

There was a good deal of mutual sincerity as well as a vast amount of individual sympathy in all the religious exercises of those sensible and wide-awake people. Next to the man came his usefulness in the State: love of human progress was the keys note of the religion of Florence.

Lorenzo Guicciardini writes thus :—"Whoso in Florence

[1] "Il Principe," chap. i.

would be well-liked by the people, must avoid a name for ambition, nor betray, even in the most trivial matters of every-day life, any desire to appear grander or more refined than his fellows. For in a city, which has for its foundations equality, and brims over with jealousies, every man must of necessity be odious, who is suspected of wishing to stand on a different level to the rest, and to deviate from the common way of living." [1]

The lead in pious enterprises was taken, as one would expect, by the Master Guild—the "*Calimala.*" When the ancient Basilica of San Miniato al Monte—originally built in 1013, out of the ruins of the third century Oratory of St Peter, by the Emperor Henry, Queen Cunegonda, and Archbishop Hildebrand—fell into disrepair, what more natural than that an appeal should be made to wealthy citizens to undertake its restoration? The Guild stepped into the breach, and expended money and labour upon its adornment. In addition to structural work, Spinello Aretino painted the fresco of Saint Bernard, and Luca Della Robbia put up glazed terra-cotta medallions of the Virtues, all at the expense of the Guild.

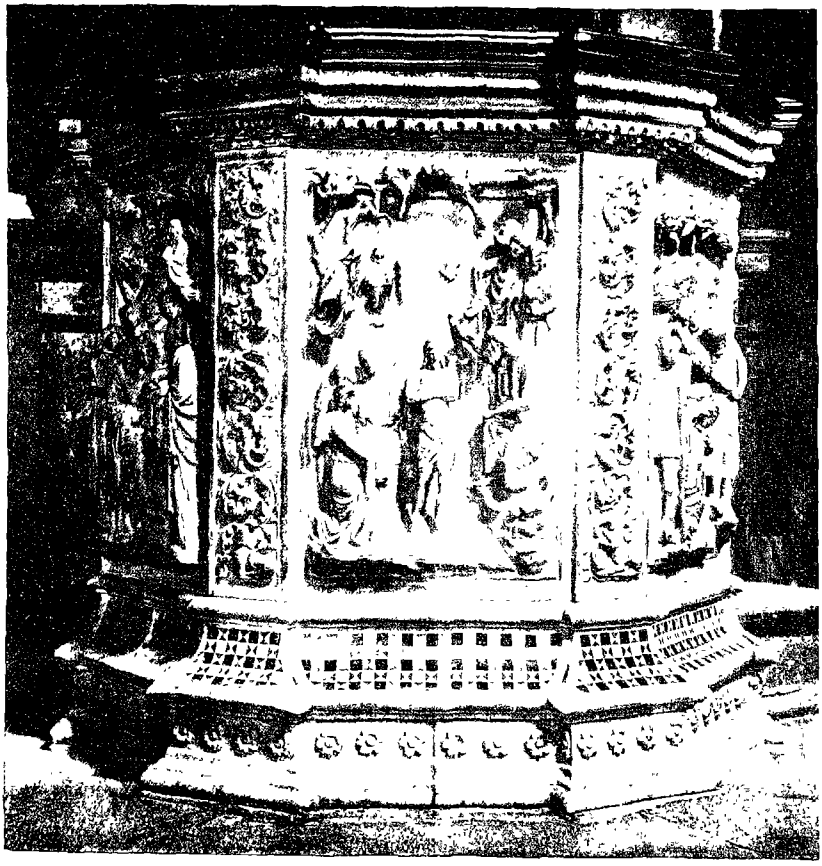
Dante mentions San Miniato in his "*Purgatorio*":—

> "That Steep upon whose brow, the chapel stands,
> O'er Rubaconte looking lordly down." [2]

Many Rubrics in the Statutes of the "*Calimala*" Guild make provision for the works, and earlier records—even before 1220—exist, which show the devotion of the Merchants of Foreign Cloth to the interests of piety. The Guild retained the privilege of repairing and guarding San Miniato al Monte until Piero de' Medici took it out of their hands.

The restoration of the Baptistery of San Giovanni,—one of the most ancient churches in Florence, and originally a Temple of Mars,—was undertaken by the "*Calimala*" Merchants, and a new building was completed in 1150, mainly at their expense. "Already," says an early historian, "in the middle of the twelfth century certain merchants of the Commune gave money to assist

[1] "Opere Inedite," vol. iii., "*Counsels of Perfection.*" [2] Canto xii.



THE GREAT BAPTISMAL FONT IN SAN GIOVANNI BATTISTA

1371

building up the battered old church."[1] In 1451 they erected the façade, and later on, employed the most famous artists of the day to do the wood-carving and *intarsiatura* of the choir.

In 1292 when every citizen of Florence, young and old, was fired with religious enthusiasm by the miracles wrought at the shrine of Or San Michele, the "*Calimala*" Guild,—quite in touch with the spirit of thankfulness and liberality then engendered,—undertook once more the repair and the completion of the Baptistery.

Old columns and worn-out stone-work were removed and replaced by splendid marbles brought at great cost from the East. Mosaics were commenced in the tribune by Giacomo da Turrita, and carried on by Andrea Tafi,—the greatest of all the mosaic masters. Much of this elaborate work was done whilst the feud between the Buondelmonti and Amidei was at its height.

Andrea Pisano, in 1339, and Lorenzo Ghiberti, in 1452, put up the famous bronze doors which bear their names. Andrea was enrolled as a freeman of Florence by way of reward and was matriculated into the "*Calimala*" Guild. The latter commission was by way of being a thankoffering for the passing of the great plague. The workmanship is characteristic of the intelligence of the people of Florence, for the faces and figures are "*la gente di Firenze*" in miniature.

The interior was enriched by costly offerings—the product of silk-loom, goldsmith's tool, sculptor's chisel, and painter's palette, provided in religious emulation by "the Merchants of Calimala, the wisest and the powerfulest in Florence."

Every year, eight days before the Patronal Festival, six *Buonuomini*—or Deputies—were designated by the Consuls to attend at the Baptistery on the morning of the Feast, and there to receive the offerings, made at the Altar of the Saint, in money and kind, by each matriculated member of the Guild, and by well disposed members of the other Guilds. The Podesta was

[1] Lami. "Sanctae Ecclesiae Florentinae Monumenta."

always careful to remind the Consuls of their duty on this behalf, and not unfrequently he joined the *Buonuomini* in person, or named his deputy, to assist in their pious duty.[1]

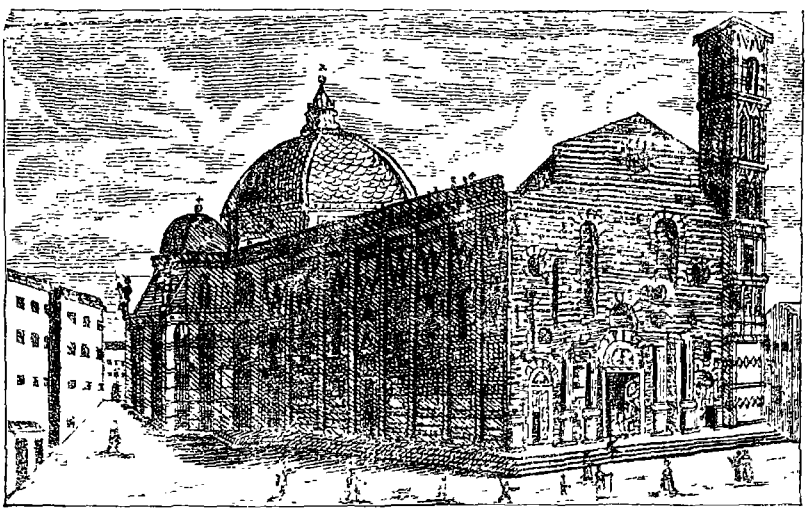
The Guild, in 1341, zealous for the embellishment of the city, and wishing to enlarge the Piazza di San Giovanni, purchased a piece of land near the Archbishop's Palace.[2] The Consuls had already, in 1338, bought two houses belonging to the Adimari family, near San Cristofano, which they gave to the Chapter of the Cathedral, in exchange for the Canons' houses near the Archbishop's tower. In 1339 they acquired a third house for the sum of seventy-three gold florins from the brothers and sons of one Martellino; the title-deeds being drawn up by the Guild notary, Ser Giovanni Ugolino. The several tenements were pulled down, and their sites thrown into the Piazza, which added much to the dignity of the venerable Baptistery.

The salaries or wages paid to those employed by the Guild, in their various public works, were strictly moderate, for example:—the Superintendent of works at San Giovanni Battista had only twelve *lire* a year! Payments to builders, and others, appear to have been made through foremen, who were required to render accounts of work done, together with reports upon the moral conduct and assiduity of those under them. All moneys were paid by scale, deductions being made for delinquencies.

The Cathedral,—at first known as Santa Reparata,—had fallen into a ruinous condition, and cried aloud for restoration. A decree accordingly was issued by the State Council, in 1294, which commanded the immediate building of a new church. Among the instructions given to Arnolfo di Cambio, the architect, was one requiring him to design a church, "of such magnificence that neither the industry nor the genius of man shall be able to invent anything that shall surpass it."[3]

[1] E. J. Delecluze, "Florence et ses Vicissitudes," xiii. 276.
[2] Archivio di Calimala, Lib. "O."
[3] A. von Reumont, "Tavole Cronologiche," xiii. Secolo.

Arnolfo's plan was unanimously approved, and the solemn blessing of the first stone took place on September 8th, 1298, when the new dedication of Santa Maria del Fiore was bestowed upon the edifice, by popular vote. The expense was undertaken by the whole community, with the imposition of a tax of four *denari* in the gold florin,—equal to about one and a half per cent.,—upon all citizens who were in respectable circumstances, and a poll-tax of two *soldi* levied on all inhabitants of the city



SANTA MARIA DEL FIORE AND CAMPANILE. 1478

and *Contado.* The average yearly yield amounted to upwards of twelve thousand gold florins.

Wars and feuds greatly hindered building operations, but in 1331 work was again resumed, and the Signoria confided the superintendence of the enterprise to the great and flourishing "Guild of Wool." This privilege accorded to the Guild by the Civil Power was confirmed in 1427 by a "Bull" of Pope Martin V. The members entered enthusiastically upon their responsibilities. The Consuls nominated the "*Operai di Santa Maria del Fiore*," —"Board of Works of the Cathedral," in order that its members

should be able to bring expert knowledge to bear upon each part of the undertaking.[1] This body still carries on the work of restoration, with the title of "*Operai del Duomo*."

The amount realised by the two taxes was wholly inadequate, therefore the Consuls directed that every factory and shop—wholesale and retail—connected with the Guilds, should place a box at all entrances and exits, into which visiting merchants, buyers, and strangers generally, should be invited to deposit offerings. At first a precise sum was named,—a *denaro* per person,—hence the name of "*Deodenaro*"—"God's penny"—was given to the contribution. This produced in one year the goodly sum of two thousand gold florins.[2]

The "Guild of Wool," between 1282 and 1527, spent upon Santa Maria del Fiore, the sum total of four hundred and fifty thousand gold florins = £225,000!

Savonarola also threw his influence into the Cathedral Completion Fund. He directed that all Wills should, at Probate, bear a Duomo stamp of seventy *soldi*, and allowed no letters of administration to be granted, until this condition had been fulfilled, It is said that this provision is still in force in Florence.

By a decree of the Signoria the superintendence and upkeep of the Chapel of the Holy Miracle in the Church of Sant' Ambrogio was assigned to the "*Arte de' Giudice e Notai*"—"the Judges' and Notaries' Guild." Every year upon the Feast of the Holy Miracle, which was celebrated during the octave of *Corpus Christi*, the Consuls and officials of the Guild assisted ceremoniously at High Mass, and gathered in the offerings of the members. A kind of Court was held in the Chapel, when any members accused, or disbarred for minor misdemeanours, or breaches of the Guild rules, were set free. At the same time and place a review was had of the public pious works of the Guild, and distribution of alms was made to necessitous cases.

The "*Arte de' Vaiai e Pellicciai*"—Skinners and Furriers—had a chapel of their own. It is named in the Statutes of the

[1] Follini, tom. vi., chap. xxi., p. 212. [2] Villani, vi. 226.

Guild under the designation, "*Cappella dell' Arte di Sant' Apollinare.*" The Consuls of the Guild accepted lawful control of the chapel, and the nomination of a chaplain, in the year 1448, when good Antonino was Archbishop of Florence.

The chapel was originally built and painted at the expense of one Bartolommeo, son of Costello di Giacherio, of the parish of Sant' Apollinare,—a furrier by trade and member of the Guild,—who, by his Will, desired to be buried in his own vault, below the Chapel of SS. Bartholomew and Christopher. The Chapel was endowed with "the proceeds of several pieces of land—olive groves, orchards, woods, and vineyards,—in all thirty-nine *staiori* —acres; with three cottages in the parishes of San Martino da Guigabanda and San Stefano da Calcinaia."[1]

The chaplain, or rector, was obliged to celebrate weekly Mass, and High Mass upon the Feast of Saint Bartholomew, for the repose of the soul of the pious founder—for ever. This last provision was still being religiously carried out both in 1636 and in 1663, and was so certified by the registrars of the chapel at these dates. The arms of the Guild were stuck up over the chapel, and were also sculptured on the façade of the church.

At La Nunziata, among the chapels were those of the "*Arte de' Calzolai*"—"The Shoemakers' Guild"—and of the subordinate "*Arte de' Pittori*"—or "Society of Saint Luke." The latter had frescoes painted by Vasari and Pontormio. Rich Guildsmen, moreover, made numberless offerings of artistic treasures to the Church—splendid works by Andrea del Sarto, Ghirlandaio, San Gallo, Alesso Baldovinetti, the Rossellini, Giovanni da Bologna, Perugino, and Bandinelli.

The "*Compagnia di San Giuseppe,*"—the Company of Saint Joseph,—was a religious confraternity of members of the "*Arte de' Legnaiuoli,*"—the Carpenters' Guild,—founded in the time of the Duke of Athens, when he sought supporters from among the Lesser Guilds. The chapel and altar of the *Compagnia* was in the Church of Santa Maria Maggiore, and the Office of the Guild for

[1] Manni, "Sigilli," Inventory made 1589.

the relief of distressed carpenters was hard by, in the old palace of the Carnesecchi family.[1]

Almost all the trade associations, and industrial companies, subordinated to the Guilds proper, had their Religious Confraternities with their special Patron Saints, Altars, and sacred observances, with which were usually joined offices for the administration of charity and the encouragement of art.

In 1300 the "Society of Dyers" had a Church, Guild-House and Hospital in the Via de' Malcontenti, where the Capuchin monastery more recently stood. Their coat-of-arms may still be seen upon the front of the building.

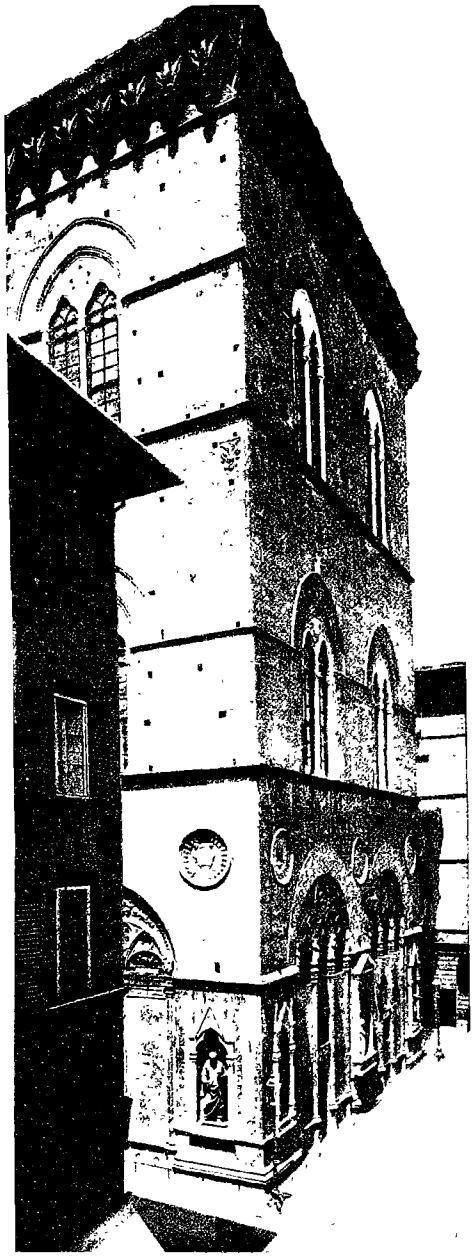
The example of the Florentine Guildsmen and members of trade unions, with respect to religious and charitable observances, was heartily followed by the various bodies and groups of foreign workmen, who flocked to Florence from every European country, and settled down with their wives and families, or else married Florentine girls and established new families.

At La Nunziata the Companies of Flemish and German Artizans had their Altar, dedicated to Saint Barbara, where they resorted for the daily and weekly Masses, and told their beads and made their confessions. At San Spirito the Merchants and Artizans of Lorraine had a Chapel, in the Sacristy of the Church, to which the dedication of San Felice was given. They had also a separate burial-place within the sacred precincts.

Among minor associations was the "Society of Lombard Cooks." They had many privileges — sacred and profane. They were accustomed to recite their hours, first in San Piero del Mugnone, in the Via San Gallo, but later on, they transferred their devotions to a Chapel within the church of their patron saint, San Carlo, in the Piazza del Or San Michele.

On the other hand Florentine Merchants were very careful to retain as much of their home life as possible during their residence in foreign cities. Hence in Rome, Naples, Paris, Montpellier, and other centres and depots of Florentine trade, they established

[1] F. L. del Migliore, p. 436.



EXTERIOR OF THE GUILD CHURCH OF OR SAN MICHELE

1336

Religious Confraternities, and founded Chapels and Altars in one or other of the town churches. These were almost always dedicated to Saint John the Baptist, and everywhere traders, agents, and work-people, gathered together periodically for religious exercises, and wise counsel in the local Chapel of the Saint.

The devotional corporate life of the Guilds centred in the Guild Shrine of Or San Michele. The very name bespeaks its origin,—the "Garden-Chapel,"—for, away back in the eighth century, holy monks from Lombardy dedicated a small church to the patron of their country—the Archangel Michael, and then planted trees around it. Rebuilt somewhere about the year 1000, and made a parish church for the extension of the city between Santa Reparata and the river, the Garden was still preserved and tended by Cistercian fathers. A Piazza was formed by the Uberti, Abati, Cavalcanti, Caponsacchi, Macci, and other rising families, who built their houses around the Church.

Despite the encouragement of the Popes—especially Innocent III. and IV.—the venerable building became greatly dilapidated, so much so that, in 1249, the Signoria intimated their intention of pulling it down. This was accomplished in 1284, and in consequence of the inadequacy of accommodation in the Mercato Vecchio for the Hay and Corn-dealers, it was determined to build in the middle of the Piazza a Loggia for the purposes of a Grain-market.

Arnolfo di Cambio was commissioned to supply a plan, which he did; and he also undertook the erection of the Church of San Carlo di Mercato, in lieu of the more ancient shrine. Arnolfo's work was destroyed by fire in 1304. The new Loggia for the market was opened in 1317, Taddeo Gaddi being the architect. He worked in *pietra forte* of the best kind, and he and his assistants, were placed under the special observation of the "*Por Santa Maria*"—the Guild of Silk.

Whilst the Loggia was in building, a famous Byzantine-like Madonna, painted by Ugolino da Siena, which was attached to the wall of a house in the Piazza, became famous by reason

of the many miracles which she was supposed to work. Transferred solemnly to an alcove under the Loggia, and fixed to one of the supporting pilasters, the Sacred Picture continued to carry on its beneficent mission, until it became daily the object of the devotions of great numbers of pilgrims.

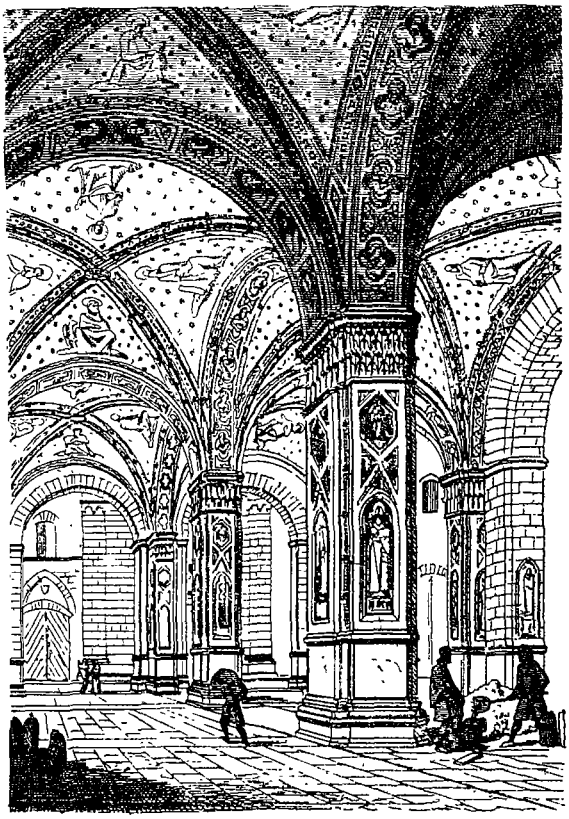
So vastly grew the cult of the *Madonna del Orto* that in 1291 a Confraternity was founded, which included many members of the Greater Guilds and other influential citizens. They called themselves "*La Compagnia del Or San Michele*"—but were more familiarly known as "*La Compagnia del Pilastro*"—"The Company of the Pillar."

The Statutes of the Company contained forty chapters, which were mainly concerned with the receipt and application of the offerings of pilgrims. These consisted of many objects of value, and in kind, with votive waxen images. A Notary was in constant attendance to inscribe the names of visitors, to enter the amounts of their donations, and to chronicle the effects of their religious exercises. He also enrolled the names of new associates of the Company, and kept a list of those, who when dying, desired the prayers of the faithful.

Every day "Lauds" was sung by the lay brethren, who attended in *rota*, whence came a new designation of the Company:—"*Laudesi di Santa Maria*"—"The Singers of Saint Mary." Allocutions were constantly addressed by brethren to groups of worshippers, counselling piety and charity; and personal visits were made to the bedsides of aged, crippled, and dying people. Processions of the brethren were held every year to the Churches of Santa Croce, Santa Maria Novella, San Marco, San Spirito, del Carmine and La Nunziata, where litanies and hymns were sung: the streets through which they passed being decorated, and crowded with devotional spectators.

Undoubtedly the great glory of the "Company of Or San Michele" was the munificence of its charities, which benefited, not only the dwellers in the city, but those who lived far away in the *Contado* and beyond.

In the conflagration of 1304 the Sacred Picture escaped, almost miraculously, and this added enormously to the reputation of the "*Madonna del Orto.*" The Corn Market became



THE CORN GRANARY—OR SAN MICHELE

thronged not with the buyers and sellers of grain only, but with pilgrims at their devotions. Business was greatly impeded, and consequently, in 1336, the Signoria closed the Loggia, and converted it into a church, by building up the arches and inserting mullioned sculptured windows.

For some years the dual avocation of selling corn and singing

hymns went on simultaneously, and those who came to buy and those who sold alike left their offerings. Thus into the fierce commercial life of the Florentines entered a new and enthusiastic spirit—that of unwearied piety. The offerings in money received in 1348 reached the great sum of three hundred and fifty thousand gold florins.

In 1350 a staff of priests was attached to the Oratory, who said Masses daily at the altars of the Church, which, nine years later, was adorned by the exquisite Tabernacle of Orcagna. The old records say that, "the members of the 'Company of Or San Michele,' having amassed very great wealth, resolved to erect a tabernacle for the Madonna."

By an old decree of the State Council it was enacted that all property left to Hospitals must be sold within two years and its value devoted to pious uses. Failure to observe this law caused the benefaction to lapse to the "Company of Or San Michele."[1]

At one time the annual income of the Confraternity amounted to eighteen thousand gold florins from estates bequeathed directly, or lapsed, and seven thousand gold florins from other sources. During the ravages of plague, in the middle of the fourteenth century, legacies and gifts produced, in one year, the sum of one hundred and twenty-five thousand gold florins.[2]

The greatest respect and veneration was paid not alone to the Shrine but to its precincts. The tethering of asses, beasts of burden, and cattle under the Loggia or by the columns, or anywhere near the building, was visited with fines of forty *soldi*. No rubbish or merchandise was suffered to be deposited within the sacred area under pain of similar penalties.[3]

The first united action on the part of the Guilds, with respect to Or San Michele, was taken in the year 1406. The building, which was a parallelogram, had niches let into its exterior walls. Inside one of these the "Guild of Silk" obtained permission to erect a statue in marble of their patron saint—Saint John the Evangelist. As a matter of fact the Statue was not completed

[1] Varchi, ii. 109. [2] S. Ammirato, i. 373. [3] Rub. cclii., 1415.

and installed until two hundred years had passed, when Baccio da Montelupo, a pupil of Michael Angelo, finished it.

The application of the "Silk Guild" however stirred up the Consuls of the other Guilds, and they secured, from the Signoria, the right to regard the building as the peculiar property of the Guilds of Florence.

Each Craft,—great and small,—offered to supply a statue without and a painting within. At the same time the members of each Guild bound themselves to make an annual collection, on the Festival of their Patron Saints, which should be handed over to the "Company of Or San Michele," for distribution amongst poor and ailing folk. As a gauge of ownership the Consuls of the Guild were pledged to receive, once a year, on Michaelmas Day, a visit from the Signoria, and there and then, to pledge them in libations of wine—newly made and blessed.

The "*Calimala* Guild,"—ever foremost in good works,—in 1406, commissioned Lorenzo Ghiberti to chisel their Patron Saint —Saint John the Baptist, and in 1428 he was put up in his niche, being the first statue actually placed in position.

The "Wool Guild" following suit the same year, put up in the third niche on the west side, the figure of Saint Stephen in bronze—also by Ghiberti. The first niche, on the south side, that of the "Guild of Doctors and Apothecaries," was the most richly adorned of them all. Simone da Fiesole sculptured the Arms of the Guild—the Madonna and Child—with a rich framework of statuettes. Twice subsequently was this statue removed—once in 1493, when a fanatical Jew threw a stone at it, and again, under the Grand Duke Ferdinand, because a rumour went abroad that it possessed miraculous powers, and crowds were attracted to pay their devotions before the new shrine.

The "Guild of Furriers and Skinners" had St James for their patron, and Nanni di Banco or Niccolo d'Arezzo was entrusted with the commission for a statue. The third niche was occupied by St Mark, by Donatello, ordered in 1411 by the

"Guild of Retail Cloth-dealers and Linen Merchants," and set up in 1430.

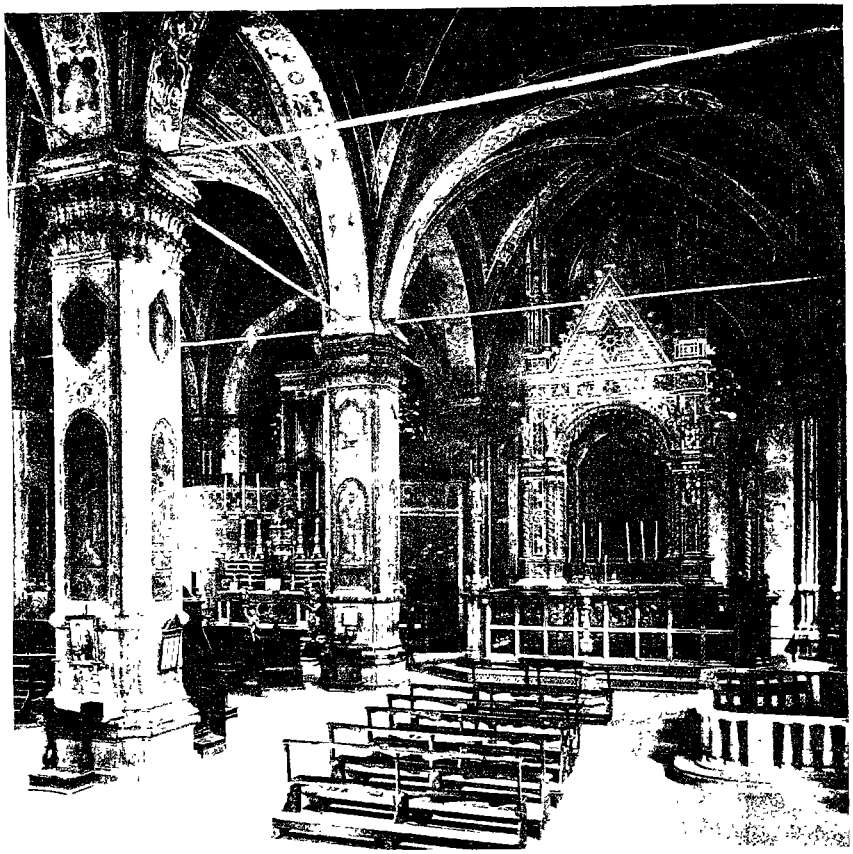
On the western front of the church, the statue of Saint Eligius,—the patron of the "Guild of Blacksmiths," by Nanni di Banco, was put up in 1431. The next position was originally assigned to St Lawrence,—Patron of the "Guild of Bakers," but their funds running short, they yielded their niche to the "Guild of Bankers and Money-Changers," who, in 1419, employed Michelozzo Michelozzi to do St Matthew—in 1422 Ghiberti became his partner in the work.

Undoubtedly the finest statue of the whole series, and one of the *chefs d'œuvre* of the Renaissance, was on the north side—St George—chiselled by Donatello, in 1416, for the "Guild of Armourers and Sword-Makers." This splendid figure exactly preserves all the physical attributes of a manly young Florentine —alert, serious, strong, and virtuous. When Michael Angelo saw it, he exclaimed in delight, "*Commina!*"—"March!"—it seemed so life-like.

The "Guild of Masters in Stone and Wood" erected in 1417-1420, in the next niche, a group of four sculptors martyred under Diocletian. Nanni di Banco carved them, but Donatello adapted them to fit into their places.

"St Philip," who comes next,—likewise by Nanni di Banco, was commissioned by the "Guild of Hosiers"—an ambitious corporation not included in the Hierarchy of Twenty-one Guilds. The Guild of Butchers, in 1408, commissioned their patron—Saint Peter—next in order. Donatello was again the sculptor. Their arms appeared in a medallion above the niche as *il Becco*—the Goat—which is said to have given them their name "*Beccai.*"

In addition to St John Baptist of the "*Calimala*," the east front of the church has Saint Luke—the protector of the "Guild of Judges and Notaries." It was the work in bronze of Giovanni da Bologna, late in the sixteenth century. A fine group occupies the next niche, "Christ and Saint Thomas," erected at the expense of the Corte della Mercanzia—the Chamber of Commerce



INTERIOR OF THE GUILD CHURCH OF OR SAN MICHELE—ORCAGNA'S SHRINE

—and done in 1483 by Verrocchio, after a dispute about terms with Ghiberti and Donatello.

All around the four sides are medallions and bas-reliefs : the former reproduce the Coats of Arms of the Guilds, and the latter are mostly scenes from the lives of the different Patron Saints. The curious lean-to arch-way joining the Shrine to the Residence of the "Guild of Wool" was an afterthought.

The interior of Or San Michele is very striking. The walls and pillars were richly painted by artists in the fifteenth century, at the charge of the various Guilds, who also contributed funds for the rich stained glass. The Tabernacle of the Madonna is one of the most magnificent monuments of the Renaissance Orcagna has given his masterpiece the appearance of having been carved out of a single piece of marble. The Altar itself, dedicated to the Patron Saint of Florence, was erected by the Signoria in 1349. The whole building is a unique example of the life, thought, and work, of the great Guild system of Florence, and preaches eloquent sermons to the religious and the industrious alike.

Mendicity—unknown in the earlier years of the Renaissance, became, by the natural devolution of things mundane, in course of time a scourge and a bye-word. Loafers, cripples, beggars, and the other human atoms of a submerged tenth, infested the Markets, the Bridges, and the doors of Monasteries, Palaces, and Churches. Or San Michele, by reason of the immense concourse of worshippers and pilgrims, became their favourite dumping-ground. There assembled daily a mass of human misery, which invited at once commiseration and abhorrence. At one time, as many as eighteen thousand destitute and reprobate persons are said to have crowded the portals of the Shrine.

Dante speaks of the begging confraternity in pathetic terms :—

> "So those blind beggars that have lost their all
> Frequent the churches to supply their need."[1]

The tricks and subterfuges of these wastrels and sufferers

[1] "Purgatorio," Canto xiii.

were infinite in variety and viciousness, and created a tradition in the annals of Florence, which exists at the present day. Writers of the times sought to throw obloquy upon the public disgrace, and to rid the city of the undesirables by jibes and sarcasm.

Sacchetti's tale of "Three Blind Mendicants" is highly amusing. They agreed to beg in certain separate districts of the city, and to divide the gross proceeds. They met at a small wine-shop in the suburbs, and immediately began to disagree and to beat each other. In their struggles they unwittingly demolished much of the furniture of the room, but when the landlord came in to quell the riot they beat him too. The worthy landlady however was something of a virago for she belaboured the quartette and made off with the poor men's plunder![1]

Not satisfied with the benefactions offered to the cause of religion, and to the adornment of churches by the members of the Guilds, in their corporate capacity, very many of the richer nobles and merchants made individually munificent contributions, and employed leading artists, for the decoration of Chapels and Altars. Indeed, there appears to have been quite a fierce rivalry between influential citizens in the erection of artistic memorials in connection with the offices of the Church.

These memorials,—at once the imperishable records of commercial prosperity, and the most splendid achievements of modern art,—exist in every sacred building in Florence, and especially in the magnificent churches of Santa Croce, Santa Maria Novella, and San Lorenzo. At Santa Croce the Choir belonged to the great Alberti family, and the surrounding chapels to the Cavalcanti, Pazzi, Bardi, Peruzzi, Riccardi-Guigni, Soderini, Morelli, Baroncelli, Castellani, Medici, Rinuccini, Tosinghi-Spinelli, Ricasoli, Conti-Bardi, Pulci, and Niccolini.

This is a roll of famous Merchant-princes such as no other city could produce, and at the same time an honour list of glorious artists. It contains the great names of Giotto, Margaritone,

[1] Sacchetti, "Nov." cxl.

Agnolo Gaddi, Mainardi, Giovanni da Milano, Andrea del Sarto, Giottino, Donatello, Mina da Fiesole, Desiderio da Settignano, Perugino, Michelozzo, the Della Robbia, the Rossellini, and others!

One family—Pazzi—further ennobled their name, in 1410, by the erection of the contiguous and beautiful chapel of Santa Maria Maddalena, after plans by Brunellesco, with its *chef d'œuvre* of Perugino, "The Crucifixion," ordered in 1493.

In Santa Maria Novella are the chapels of the Merchant-princes Rucellai, Strozzi, Filippo-Strozzi and Gaddi. These art patrons employed Cimabue, Orcagna, Uccello, Filippino Lippi, Ghirlandaio, Bronzino, Bernardo Rossellino, Benedetto da Maiano, and Neri di Bicci to beautify their family shrines.

The Cappella degli Spagnuoli,—the name was perhaps given from the fact that Spanish merchants and artizans assembled in the chapel for their daily Mass and devotions,—unrivalled for its frescoes by Taddeo Gaddi, Simone di Memmi, Andrea da Firenze, and Antonio Veneziano,—is a further witness, if such were needed, of the prosperity of the Florentine Guildsmen, of their whole-hearted encouragement of the Fine Arts, and of their admirable devotion to the services of Holy Church. Giovanni Rucellai in 1470, after the designs of Leon Battista Alberti, erected at his sole cost, and to the honour of God, the fine façade of Santa Maria Novella—the noblest example of Tuscan Gothic ever built.

San Lorenzo, with its Sacristies, is the superb memorial of the Medici family. Its re-erection, however, after the calamitous fire of 1417, was undertaken by the Medici and seven other merchant families, as a thankoffering for success in business and in the State. It was due to Giovanni de' Medici that San Lorenzo became the shrine of his family. Brunellesco, Donatello, and Filippo Lippi were associated in the new building and its decoration; whilst Michael Angelo made the "New Sacristy,"—built in 1529, by Guilio de' Medici, Clement VII.,—a treasure-house of masterpieces of sculpture.

By way of affirming the adage that "money is made in

humble callings," and to point the moral of Florentine prosperity, it is not a little interesting to note that a well-known chestnut-roaster in the Mercato Vecchio amassed quite a considerable fortune. The worthy huckster, when an old man, gave a commission to Andrea del Sarto, to decorate the "Chapel of the Chestnut Roasters" in the Church of San Frediano.

Castello Quaratesi,—a Wool-merchant,—bequeathed to the "Guild of Wool," in 1450, a sum of money to erect the façade of Santa Croce, but insisted that his coat of arms should appear over the principal portal. The Franciscan monks objected specially to honour one man, when so many had so munificently adorned the church. Quaratesi, in a huff, altered his will, and built instead the Church of San Salvadore al Monte. He employed Il Cronaca as his architect, and when the building was completed, in 1508, it was so perfect that Michael Angelo called it "*La Bella Villanella*" —"The lovely peasant maid!"

The Arms of the "Captains of Or San Michele"

A TYPICAL BEGGAR AT THE SHRINE OF OR SAN MICHELE

1473-4

[See page 531]

## CHAPTER XIX

## THE CHARITY OF THE GUILDS

A large subject. The *Calimala* Guild an example for the rest :—Monasteries, Hospitals, Schools, Homes for aged persons, and the insane, Poor-houses, etc. etc. *Spedali*—di Sant' Eusebio, di Santa Maria e San Gallo, di Santa Maria Nuova and its drug-store, di San Lazaro, di Santa Maria della Scala, del Ortebello, di San Giovanni, di San Matteo and the Notary Lapo Mazzei, di San Giovanni di Dio, di San Paolo, the Convalescent Hospital of "*Por Santa Maria*," and degli Innocenti. Home for widows. Hostel for young men. Munificence of Niccolo da Uzzano and of Francesco da Mantoa. Marriage dowries. The *Misericordia*—its origin and development. The *Compagnia del Bigallo.* A dead body. Sylvanus da Samosata. Fra Pietro da Verona. *Paterini. Congregazione di San Martino.* Archbishop Antonino. *I Poveri Vergognosi.* List of the first twelve *Buonuomini.* Money-boxes. The *Buonuomini della Stinche.* The *Buonuomini di San Bonaventura.* Bankrupt merchants.

IT would be quite impossible, save only at very considerable length, to tabulate all the Charitable and Pious Works of the Guilds, during the period of the Renaissance. Perhaps a brief list of such benefactions in connection with the "Calimala Guild" will serve as an example for the rest, and substantiate the contention that the Florentines were inspired with all the noblest instincts of humanity.

The "*Calimala*" Statutes, and other records affirm that the "Merchants of Foreign Cloth" maintained the following benevolent institutions, in and about Florence :—

*Monasteries* :—at Montecalvoli, Ripoli, San Donato in Torri, Faventia, Le Mura, Borgo San Lorenzo da Mugello, Santa Maria al Prato, San Jacopo in Vincoli, Bibbiena, Maiano, San Matteo d' Arcetri, Santa Lucia in Quaraceshi, Sant' Egidio, Podio della Croce, San Giovanni Battista da Mugello, San Spirito, del Carmine, etc., etc.

*Hospitals* :—San Gallo, di Bigallo, Giambuoni di Val d'Ema,

Bella Gionalina, Santa Maria Nuova, Sant' Eusebio, Santa Maria di Cafaggio, San Lazaro, San Miniato al Monte, San Giovanni Battista, etc. etc.

And what the premier Guild did, on such a munificent scale, all the other Guilds emulated, and, in their degree of competency, achieved relatively splendid records of beneficence.

Monasteries were endowed for a variety of purposes. They served not only as sacred refuges for religious persons, who gave up their whole time to divine exercises; they were also retreats from the world for many a weary worker in the Market and the shop.

Some of them were schools for the young in sacred and profane knowledge, whilst in others the Brethren were taught useful Crafts. Many too were homes for the aged, the crippled, and the mentally afflicted, and some were hospitals for the sick, and some shelters for the needy.

Their custodians were, at first, Religious, the clergy,—regular and secular,—and holy and devout women. Later on the laity were entrusted with these charitable offices, in concert with the Religious, and at last the priestly element was entirely superseded.

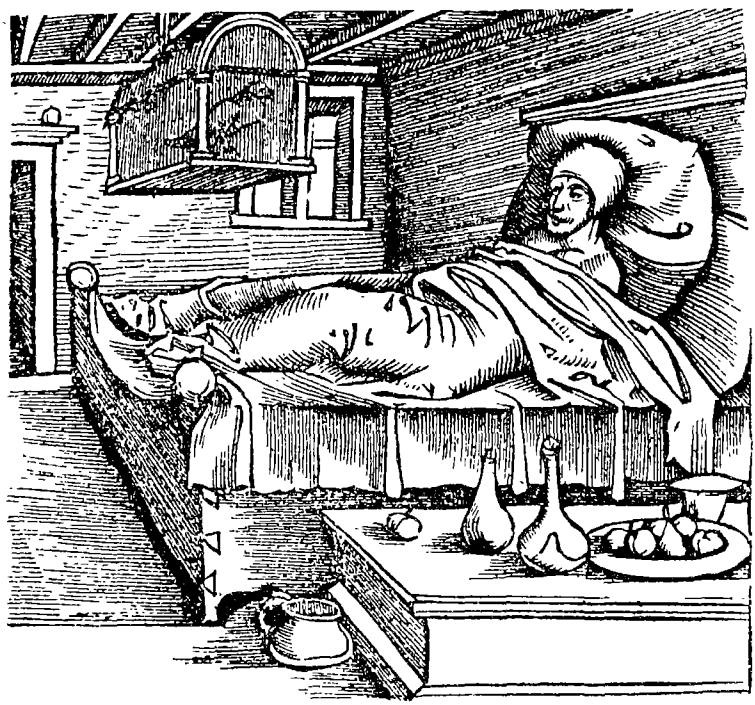
For example:—In 1344 the Duke of Athens, during his Podestaship, confided the sole charge of the Spedale di Sant' Egidio to the "Calimala" Guild; and the Monastery of San Barnabo was, in 1350, placed, by the State, under the exclusive care of the "Guild of Doctors and Apothecaries." These lay holdings were confirmed by Papal "Bulls."

Every considerable building enterprise, and every great industrial establishment, had its complement of trained charitable assistants. At San Miniato al Monte, San Giovanni Battista, and Santa Maria del Fiore, the workpeople and their families were looked after, both in health and in sickness, and were placed under disciplinary and beneficent regulations.

Machiavelli records the temper of his time with respect to such matters:—"Public works," he says, "should be carried on

with the utmost becoming and kindly treatment of the workmen, so as not to drive them to despair."[1]

There were Hospitals, Refuges, and Homes, for all sorts and conditions of men and women. Such Guilds as had no special Hospitals under their care, maintained their poor sick members in



A SICK MAN IN HOSPITAL

their own dwellings or in small Lodges; and not only so, but paid handsome pensions to the aged sufferers and, often enough, to their relatives as well. Many Hostels for poor travellers had their useful and charitable mission. Persons out of work were registered at their respective Guild Offices, and assisted out of Guild funds. Leper stations were placed near the Gates of the city, supported wholly by the gifts of members of the Guilds. In

[1] "Il Principe," chap. vii.

1338 there were thirty fully equipped Hospitals,—great and small,—in the city, with more than one thousand beds for the accommodation of sick, needy, and aged, people.

In Lorenzo de' Medici's time there were at least forty Hospitals of various descriptions in active operation, with a total annual income, from investments alone, of more than sixty thousand gold florins. During the same period the monasteries and convents numbered upwards of one hundred large,—and very many small houses.

The following is a list of the more notable Guild Charitable Institutions :—

1. *Spedale di Sant' Eusebio.*

Probably the Hospital of Sant' Eusebio in Prato d'Ognissanti was the earliest charitable institution founded in Florence for the relief of suffering humanity. Primarily the building was a convent of the Nuns of Saint Ann, and among early benefactors were members of the Donati family. In 1186 the Religious added, to their duties in religion, the care of the afflicted; and they retained their pious charge till the year 1278, when the Captain of the *Parte Guelfa*, with the consent of the Papal See, relieved the nuns of their charitable functions, and entrusted the care of the sick to a mixed commission of *Umiliati* and "*Calimala*" and "Wool" merchants, under the direction of the *Mercato* of the monastery.

2. *Spedale di Santa Maria di San Gallo.*

Early in the thirteenth century Guidalotto di Volto dall' Orco founded this Hospital, for the relief and maintenance of the poor, and of pilgrims. In 1218 he bequeathed his benefaction to the Church, by whom it was greatly extended, especially as a refuge for young children deserted by their parents. In 1292 the Hospital was placed under the protection of the "Guild of Merchants of Porta Santa Maria." New buildings were erected in a garden near the Piazza dei Servi belonging to the Guild; but, owing to the "*Scarsezza de' denari*,"—as the record quaintly has it,—they

FEEDING THE HUNGRY

GIOVANNI DELLA ROBBIA

VISITING THE SICK

GIOVANNI DELLA ROBBIA

were not finished until 1444, under the direction of Francesco della Luna. In 1463 the "Brefotrofio di San Gallo,"—as it was then called,—was amalgamated with the Hospital of Santa Maria degli Innocenti.

### 3. *Spedale di Santa Maria Nuova.*

The Hospital of Santa Maria Nuova,—which still exists,—was founded in 1285 by Folco Portinari, two years before the marriage of his daughter,—Dante's Beatrice,—to Simone de' Bardi. Dante describes him as "a man of exceeding goodness." He held in turn all the highest Offices of State, and was often elected Consul of his Guild—the "*Calimala.*" The Hospital was opened on January 23, 1288, with seventeen beds. In 1329 bye-laws were made for the government of the Hospital. Two wards were established,—one for men and one for women,—which were daily visited by members of the first Order of the "Guild of Doctors and Apothecaries."

A Medical School was attached to the Hospital in 1350, and a Library of Medical Books, a Museum of Drugs,—chiefly foreign and constituted by the Apothecaries,—and an Anatomical Theatre were added.

The patronage of the Greater Guilds assured to the charity permanence and competency: indeed the amount of benefactions was so considerable, that in the fifteenth century, the Governors had, at one time, a yearly revenue of upwards of fifteen thousand gold florins. The year of the Great Plague,—1348,—a sum of at least twenty-five thousand gold florins was contributed to the funds of the Hospital.[1]

### 4. *Spedale di San Lazaro.*

In the year 1338, the "*Calimala* Guild" built this Hospital outside the Porta a Faenza, in a hamlet called Campoluccio, and endowed it with food, clothing, and medical treatment, for old and

[1] Varchi, ii. 109.

infirm poor persons. This institution carried on its charitable work until 1529, when, during the famous siege of Florence, it was demolished to make way for the fortifications of Michael Angelo.

### 5. *Spedale di Santa Maria della Scala.*

The Spedale di Santa Maria della Scala was founded in 1306, by Cione di Lapo Pollini, a member of the S. Maria Novella chapter of the "Guild of Wood-carvers," on the lines of an hospital established at Siena, in the ninth century, for travellers and persons in distress. Cione was by way of being a cobbler—the humble trade of the least esteemed division of the "Guild of Shoemakers." His connection with the Wood-carvers' Guild is not very obvious: perhaps pride of place, if not of trade, had its influence: but then it was of course a common practice for a member of an inferior Guild to seek honorary enrolment in one of higher degree.

Anyhow the benevolent operations of the Hospital, with the upkeep of its buildings, etc., were taken in hand by a "Company of Shoemakers" which, under the title of "*La Compagnia di SS. Crespino e Crespigniano*—was established in 1502. Their Offices, for the relief of poor craftsmen, were in the old Palazzo Marucelli, where assistance was freely given to German, and other foreign workers in leather-shoes and slippers, and to jobbing cobblers. In 1531 the Hospital of Santa Maria della Scala was incorporated with the Hospital of Santa Maria degli Innocenti.[1]

### 6. *Spedale del Ortebello.*

Niccolo degli Alberti,—a wealthy Wool-merchant,—founded a charity in 1377, for the benefit of aged poor women, who should act as nurses to unfortunate young mothers. It was, perhaps, the earliest Florentine Lying-in Hospital, and was originally reserved for wool operatives.[2]

[1] Pagnini, ii. p. 121.

[2] Ademollo, ii. 419.

7. *Spedale di San Giovanni.*

Bonifazio Lupi, Marchese di Soragna, who was one of the famous *Condottieri*, employed by the Republic of Florence in the wars with Pisa, built a Hospital, in 1377, for insane people, to which the name of "*Manicomio di Bonifazio*" was given. It was the only asylum for these unhappy people, who hitherto had been assigned to the *Stinche*—the Debtors' prison! The building and endowment cost twenty-five thousand gold florins, and was a thankoffering for the freedom of the city, which had been conferred by a grateful people, upon their successful General. Lupi also left, at his death, an annual income of seven hundred gold florins, and confided its administration to the "*Calimala* Guild."[1]

8. *Spedale di San Matteo.*

Lemmo da Montecatini,—a Banker,—towards the end of the fourteenth century, commenced to build a Hospital for poor country people visiting Florence, which he dedicated to Saint Nicholas, and, dying in 1389, he left an ample endowment. Early in the fifteenth century the "Guild of Bankers and Money-Changers" took over the completion of the buildings, and the administration of the charity. The name of the Patron Saint of the Guild,—Saint Matthew,—was joined to the original dedication, but ultimately it was known as the Spedale di San Matteo. Its special function was also changed, and it became an Asylum for aged men and women. The Consuls of the Guild were appointed sole governors, whilst each member of the Guild was taxed—*pro rata*—to contribute towards the expenses of the upkeep. Among administrators of the Hospital was the well-known Notary Lapo Mazzei. He has left several interesting letters bearing upon the question of charities. "There are many merchants," he says, "who after their yearly accounts are made up, come to me to ask which are the more worthy charities, in order that they may judiciously apportion certain proportions of

[1] Cavalcanti, ii. 496-498.

their profits." With respect to the accommodation provided, Mazzei says, "at one time the inmates numbered two hundred and fifty." [1]

The Hospital of Saint Matthew still continues its useful mission, but it has been removed, for in 1784 the Grand Duke took the building for the purposes of the *Accademia delle Belle Arti.*

9. *Spedale di San Giovanni di Dio.*

In the same century, somewhere about 1411, Simone Vespucci endowed the Convent of Santa Maria dell' Umilita, in the Borgo d'Ognissanti, for poor and infirm workmen. After the death of its founder, it was placed under the direction of the Captains of the Bigallo. In 1580 the Hospital was transferred to the care of the Order of San Giovanni di Dio—better known as the "*Frati dei Bene Fratelli*"—"The Brotherhood of Good Brethren," and received its new name.

10. *Spedale di San Paolo.*

Within the building, which became known as the "Hospital of Saint Paul," had settled a body of Franciscan Pilgrim Fathers, and the house served as a resting-place for religious persons on their way to and from Rome. In 1413 the monks opened a wing, as a lay Convalescent Hospital, which, in 1457, was transferred to the care of the Proconsul and the Consuls of the "Guild of Judges and Notaries"—the Arms of the Guild are still upon the façade. Somewhere about 1500 sick poor were admitted, and the scope of the foundation was enlarged. Another change awaited the Hospital, for at the end of the sixteenth century, the sick folk made way for other inmates, and an Industrial School for Girls, especially devoted to the silk trade, was established within its portals by the Grand Duke Piero Leopoldo.

11. The "*Por Santa Maria,*" erected, in the middle of the little town of Segna, somewhere about 1430,—a Convalescent Hospital

[1] L. Mazzei, i. 39, 244.

COSIMO DE MEDICI, "*IL PADRE DELLA PATRIA*," AND ARCHBISHOP ANTONINO SUPERINTENDING THE BUILDING OF THE MONASTERY OF SAN MARCO, FLORENCE

ARCHBISHOP ANTONINO VISITING A FOUNDRY IN THE CONTADO

and Loggia, for the reception of their workpeople, who had been taken ill in the prosecution of their industry, and who, upon partial recovery, required country air. The Hospital, which had no saintly dedication, was furnished with every convenience, and even luxury, as befitted the wealth of the Guild.

12. *Spedale di Santa Maria degli Innocenti.*

Perhaps the best-known Hospital in Florence in the present day is the "Hospital for Foundlings," with its portico splendidly decorated with medallions of *bambini* by Andrea Della Robbia. Moved by a stirring speech of the learned Leonardo Aretino in 1421, upon the urgent question of the great increase of illegitimate births in Florence, the Signoria determined to erect a Foundling Hospital, where such unfortunate children might be received and nursed.

Designs for the edifice were prepared by Brunellesco, and the Hospital was opened for its little inmates in 1444. The care of it was bestowed, by the Signoria, upon the wealthy and rising "Guild of Silk." The number of children within the Hospital in 1579 was sixteen hundred. A sum of ten thousand gold florins was raised for the purpose of apprenticing the boys between the ages of twelve and sixteen to shipmasters of Livorno.[1]

At the corner of the Piazza Santa Maria Novella and the Via della Scala, in 1430, Lisa di Ranieri Paganelli, the wife of Gentile di Vanni degli Albizzi,—a member of the "Guild of Wool,—founded a Home for four indigent widows of the poorest class of woollen workers of Oltrarno.

In connection with the University of Florence, Niccolo da Uzzano—a wealthy "*Calimala*" merchant, by his will, in 1432, bequeathed a sum of money to build, and to endow, a Hostel for the reception of fifty poor but honest and promising young men, natives of Florence. He nominated, as his trustees, the Consuls of the "Calimala" Guild. Da Uzzano was quite the

[1] Diario de' Settimani.

most prominent citizen of his day, the leader of the aristocratic party, and the opponent of the ambitions and aims of the Medici. His disinterestedness and absolute loyalty have been memorialised by Machiavelli, who puts into his mouth the saying: "God deliver this city from private usurpation."[1]

By way of example of the charitable liberality of Florentine citizens in connection with their Guilds, the will of Francesco da Mantoa, in 1400, may be quoted. To the *Spedale di Santa Maria della Scala* he left six hundred gold florins "for marrying girls and maintaining children,"—to the *Spedale di San Giambattista*, two hundred gold florins,—to the *Spedale di San Gallo*, two hundred florins,—to the *Compagnia del Bigallo*, four hundred gold florins for distribution to the occupants of the debtors' prison, and eight bushels of bread a month for twenty years; and many bequests to churches for completion, decoration, and repair.[2]

The Linen Manufacturers were not a whit behind the other Guilds in religious and charitable proclivities. Two members of the Guild,—Antonio di Antonio and Giuliano Carracci,—left by their wills in 1475 certain sums of money to be invested for the benefit of the daughters of deceased matriculated members as dowries upon marriage. The choice of the maidens rested annually with the whole of the living members,—as did also the approval of the fortunate swains,—preference for whom was always given to youths matriculated in the Guild.[3]

It is interesting to note that every *popolo* or parish in Florence had a number of "marriage portions" for deserving poor girls of good character.

. . . . . .

In old Florence there were three great and influential general organisations of a corporate character:—"*La Misericordia*"—"*La Compagnia del Bigallo*" and *Il Congregazione di San Martino.*

[1] Machiavelli, "Le Istorie di Firenze," pp. 175-177.
[2] L. Mazzei, i. 253. [3] L Cantini, ix. 87.

*La Misericordia.*

The founder of this great institution was a plain market porter of the name of Pietro Borsi. Its history may be briefly told.[1] At the time of the great annual fairs in the early part of the thirteenth century, which were held in October and November, and which were chiefly concerned with the sale of

SEVEN CORPORAL ACTS OF MERCY

NOTE.—*In the foreground are rich men forming a* Monte di Pieta, *whilst others are relieving poor pilgrims.*

woollen cloth of native manufacture, many porters were employed to carry goods from the manufactories to the Market. Whilst looking for jobs the men were accustomed to congregate in and about the Piazza di San Giovanni, and, in bad weather, they were permitted to shelter in the cellar of a house belonging to the

[1] Florence Gazette, March 1898.

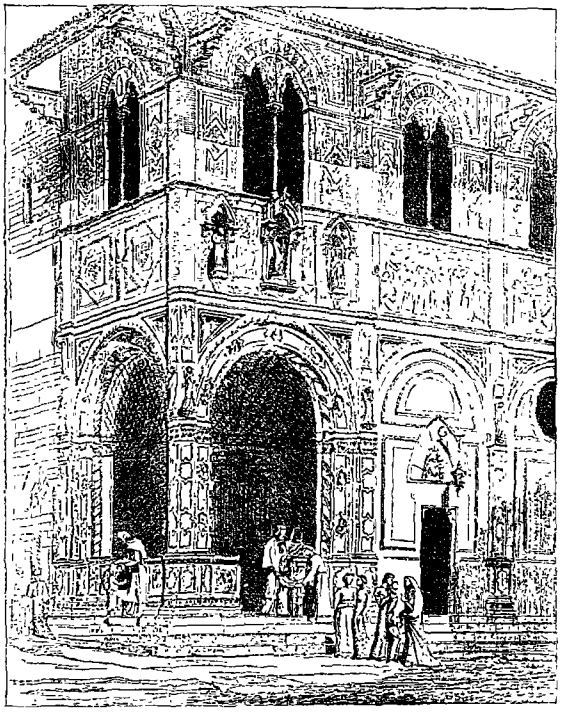
Adimari family. Here they spent their leisure in gambling, drinking, and blasphemy. When a mere stripling, in 1240, Pietro Borsi joined this vicious society. He had been carefully and religiously brought up, and he was greatly shocked by the scenes and sounds around him. Waxing bold one day, he approached a set of men, who were the leaders in infamy, and reproved them, suggesting that it would not be a bad thing if they were to impose upon one another, and upon all the frequenters of the locality, a small fine every time a man uttered a blasphemous word,—blasphemy was ever held as a grievous sin by the Florentines. His proposition was received seriously, and he was emboldened to plead that the men should form themselves into a Society to help the sick and needy. This also was agreed to and, with the amount raised by fines, they purchased six litters, —one for use in each of the six *sestieri* of the city,—to convey victims of street accidents, and sick persons generally, to the Hospitals, and the dead to burial. Contributions in money and kind flowed in, for example, during the Great Plague, in 1348, thirty-five thousand gold florins represented the amount of public alms bestowed upon the Fraternity.

Part of the house, under which they were accustomed to meet, was purchased, and converted into a street hospital, with an Oratory attached; and in 1250, without ceremony, the erstwhile company of blasphemers blossomed out into the "Company of Brothers of Mercy." A distinctive dress was adopted, for the protection of the Brethren, when engaged in charitable duties, and for the prevention of undue curiosity, and inconvenient demonstrations—this was at first a dull red colour, but black being thought more suitable, that colour was adopted.

Somewhere about the year 1350 plans were approved for the erection of a Loggia wherein Brethren engaged in their daily duties of mercy might rest for a while; and where, also, little children,—strayed or abandoned,—might be retained until claimed by their parents, or some benevolent sympathiser. This was but the expansion of the beneficent work carried on since

1242, when the *Orfanotrofio del Bigallo* was founded for the care of parentless children. Andrea Orcagna was the architect of this exquisite building—with its delicate iron grille by Francesco Petrucci.

Among daily duties were included the nursing at their homes



THE BIGALLO

of the sick poor, and the regular visitations of such sufferers as had been conveyed to Hospitals and Hostels. As time went on many other duties of benevolence were undertaken by the Brethren: their one aim being to render effective help in the readiest and best manner. The *status* of the members, moreover, underwent considerable change.

No longer were the members only market-porters, or confined

to the humblest ranks in society, but the scions of noble families and the sons of wealthy Guildsmen gladly assumed the habit of the Order, undertook its duties, and shared its privileges,—thinking themselves happy if allowed to bear their part in sustaining the terrible weight of human suffering. A rota was arranged, and a bell was hung in the Loggia, so that when it sounded the Brethren, down for duty in the streets, might hasten to render their service.

Mass was said every morning in the Oratory, and Litanies were sung by the Brethren in attendance, the objects of their devotions being the pious intention of the Brethren, and the repose of the souls of the departed. Boxes for the receipt of contributions were placed in several parts of the city, each adorned with a pictured "*Pieta*." They bore the legend:—"Give alms for the poor and needy sick," and by the side of each stood a Brother-guardian in his habit. It is said that the box placed outside the Baptistery, in one day, received more than five hundred silver florins and small coins.

In 1425 the "*Misericordia*" united with the "*Compagnia del Bigallo*," but the fusion did not work well, for members of the latter Society refused to carry sick persons.

A sad circumstance led to the reconstitution of the "Brothers of Mercy." Early in the year 1475 the corpse of a man was found in the Via de Macci, with no one to bury it. A market-porter passing by, threw down his load, and, taking the dead body reverently upon his shoulders, staggered with it to the Palazzo Vecchio, and deposited it at the feet of the Gonfaloniere di Giustizia.

This act determined the "*Misericordia*" to sever their connection with the "*Compagnia del Bigallo*" and again to undertake the burial of the dead, as well as to resume their other distinctive organisation. At first bodies interred by the Brethren were buried in a pit, which they dug, and railed in, upon the site of the Torre della Guardamorto,—destroyed by the Ghibellines. This was soon found to be wholly inadequate for the demands of

sepulture, and a petition was presented to the *Operai di Santa Maria del Fiore*, for the grant of facilities for burial. Three vaults, below the Cathedral, were granted for this pious purpose, which may still be recognised by the sculptured arms of the "*Misericordia*." The Brethren continued to use the Bigallo until the year 1524, when they gave it up to the "*Compagnia del Bigallo*," and transferred their headquarters to the Church of San Cristofano, which stood in the Corso degli Adimari. The last removal of the "*Misericordia*" was in 1576—to the present Oratory and Office in the Piazza del Duomo.

*La Compagnia del Bigallo.*

Another charitable organisation, very much upon the lines of the "*Misericordia*," was evolved from an emotional movement far away in the Middle Ages, which played an active rôle in the lives of the Guildsmen of the Renaissance.

In the seventh century one Silvanus of Samosata, an unreasoning disciple of the Apostle Paul, denied the Incarnation of Christ. His followers became out and out Manichæans. One of them found his way to Florence, in 1212, and claimed the title of Bishop. Many converts,—chiefly Ghibellines,—flocked to his banner. He was a plain Milanese working-man enthusiast, and called Filippo Paternono.

Dominicans and Franciscans joined their forces against these heretics, and, under a young monk,—Fra Pietro da Verona, better known as Saint Peter Martyr—as leader, the "Society of the Captains of Holy Mary" was enrolled, from the ranks of young cavaliers, for the suppression of the sectaries.

The sufferings these misguided people endured gained for them the designation of "*Paterini*." In 1245, the Captains, robed in white, attacked and routed them, and finally drove them from the city. The victors set up the Colonna di Santa Felicita and the Croce al Trebbio, as tokens of the triumph of the Catholic Faith.[1]

[1] Dino Capponi, tom i. p. 32.

On their part, the scattered "*Paterini*" accepted their defeat, and wisely turned their energies into another and more sensible direction. In and around Florence were a number of small Hospitals and Asylums, ill-supported and ill-conducted. These the "*Paterini*" took in hand, and made their headquarters in one, on the way to Arezzo, which bore the title of "Il Bigallo."

Very many members of the Guilds, especially of the Lesser Guilds, who sincerely sympathised with the sufferings of the poor heretics, gave their support, and even joined hands with the new hospitallers, who assumed the style of "*La Compagnia del Bigallo.*"

At first they assembled for united worship in the small church of Santa Maria di San Gazzio—or San Cajo,—but, amending their errors, they were ultimately granted a Chapel in Santa Maria Novella, for their religious devotions, and for the administration of their charities.

For generations the influence of the tenets of Paternono was felt in the minds and lives of many a wool-carder and dyer of Oltrarno. This probably had something to do with their indifference to public opinion, and with their political unrest. There was in the religious character of the average Florentine workingman and woman, not a little of the rigour of the latter-day Methodists!

### *La Congregazione di San Martino*

Florence, with her perpetual succession of new Governments, the continually varying ascendency of parties, and the private rivalries between families, was exposed to greater vicissitudes of fortune than are the inhabitants of industrial centres, who are merely victims of the caprices of trade.

Men, who one day held power and office and the making of wealth in their hands, were liable, on the morrow, to charges, incurring fines, imprisonment, exile, and even death. The result of such a state of things was a large amount of misery, nobly

THE APPOINTMENT OF THE FIRST TWELVE 'BUONUOMINI DI SAN MARTINO' BY ARCHBISHOP ANTONINO
1441

borne and of poverty, carefully concealed. The finest palaces often enough sheltered the greatest suffering. Gently born and delicately reared, their inmates were the pathetic victims of untoward circumstances.

Private, unostentatious charity failed to reach these objects of misfortune, until the year 1435, when Frate Antonino di Niccolo Pierozzo was elected first Prior of the Monastery of San Marco. He at once took up the Apostolic mantle of benevolence, for he saw and understood the suffering around him, and thought out very earnestly the means of helping *i poveri vergognosi*—the shame-faced victims of poverty—as they were called.

The good Prior sent for twelve of the most upright men in Florence,—men of all classes, a merchant, a manufacturer, a banker, a wool-carder, a furrier, a silk-winder, a shoemaker and others,—members of the Guilds, laid before them the harrowing details of distress, and unfolded his ideas for their relief.

The twelve *Buonuomini*, touched to the heart by Frate Antonino's revelations, and by his unaffected disinterestedness, warmly offered themselves as assistants in carrying out the charitable programme. In this way arose, in 1441, an institution, which still survives and prospers, "*La Congregazione di San Martino*"—so called from the little church of that name, where the meetings—devotional and conversational—of the "good men" were held.

The names of the first "Congregation" have been preserved:—

Michele di Messere Piero Benini.

Francesco di Benedetto di Caroccio degli Strozzi.

Luigi d' Urbano Bruni.

Bernardo di Maria di Messere Foresse Salviati.

Ser Alessio di Matteo di Pello—*Notaio*, Notary.

Nofri d' Agnolo—*Drappiere*, Cloth-dresser.

Primerano di Jacopo—*Calzaiuolo*, Hosier.

Giovanni di Baldo—*Lanaiuolo*, Woollen-draper.

Pasquino d' Ugolino del Vernaccia—*Setaiuolo*, Silk-manufacturer.

Antonio di Matteo da Barlienio.

Giuliano de' Staggi—*Drappiere*, Cloth-dresser.

Jacopo di Bragio—*Testore*, Weaver.

They established a Central Office in a room in the Badia, granted to them by the Signoria, where, along with a store of medicines and surgical appliances, were always in attendance members of the "Guild of Doctors and Apothecaries," with nurses —both male and female. In 1470, however, Primerano di Jacopo presented the Congregation with a house in the Piazza di San Martino, to which the agencies of the *Buonuomini* were removed.

Outside the Church of San Martino and the Office of Charity, were money-boxes placed to receive offerings from passers-by. The former was put in its place by Prior Antonino, and is still *in situ*. The alms thus gathered were divided each month among the twelve *Buonuomini*, who, in pairs, visited each of the six *sestieri* of the city, and made direct distribution among impoverished and decayed nobles and merchants and their families.

"The Good Archbishop,"—as he was affectionately and popularly called,—after his consecration, in 1446, as fifth Archbishop of Florence,—forbade the Congregation to hold capital, or to purchase land, and other securities; at the same time he counselled the *Buonuomini* to conduct their charitable work without charge on the Congregation. Every benefaction, in kind, was quickly reduced to its best marketable cash value, and the money was distributed promptly and without distinction of any sort. The story of the foundation and early work of the *Congregazione di San Martino* was preserved upon the walls of the Church of San Martino.

. . . . . .

The "Twelve Good Men of Saint Martin" found very helpful coadjutors in their works of charity in the twelve *Buonuomini della Stinche*, empanelled in 1470, for the purpose of distributing discriminatory relief to unfortunate persons condemned to prison. A few years later, in the first decade of the sixteenth century, another benevolent "Twelve," the *Buonuomini di San Bona-*

*ventura*, added their kindly offices to the alleviation of distress in the families of merchants, and of all others who came under the category of "*I Poveri Vergognosi*." Their aims were chiefly the assistance and direction of merchants who had become bankrupt through no fault of their own.

RELIEVING THE NEEDY—STREET BEGGARS

## CHAPTER XX

# "FIRENZE RICCA PER INDUSTRIA!"

*(FLORENCE PROSPEROUS THROUGH HER INDUSTRIES)*

I. POPULATION AND PROSPERITY.—First Register of Baptisms—black and white beans. Podesta Torcello di Strado's census. Villani's testimony. Ariosto's rhyme. Numbers and classes of the people. Factories and operatives. Banks. Bake-Houses. Pestilence, Flood, and Famine. A State Balance-Sheet. Objects of Commerce. Taxation. Self-denial and extravagance. Embassies. "Florence is the Fifth Element in the Universe!" A Millionaire. Ratepayers. Marriage portions. Machiavelli on soundness in finance. The siege of Florence. Noble shopkeepers. An ancient pocket-book. Guido del' Antella's "*Ricordanze.*" Slaves and slavery. Baldovinetti's "*Zibaldone.*"

II. MINT, COINAGE, AND PAWNSHOP, OF FLORENCE.—The Zecca. *Maestri della Zecca.* Testing gold florins. Minting coins. Touchstones. Price of gold and silver. Official assayers. Foreign mints. Leather money. Coins of all countries pass current. The Silver florin of 1150. The gold florin of 1252. Money values. Penalties against coiners of bad money. *Bargellini.* The "*Presto*" or Lending Office. Accumulation of money. Jews invited to settle in Florence. Their prosperity and their expulsion. Preaching monks. Growth of the "*Presto.*" Strict laws and regulations.

III. THE GOLDEN AGE OF FLORENCE.—The era of the Medici. Salvestro di Alamanno de' Medici,—*Capitano di Parte Guelfa.* Giovanni de' Medici,—*Gonfaloniere di Giustizia. Il Catasto.* Cosimo de' Medici,—"the Great Merchant,"—"*Padre della Patria!*" Lorenzo de' Medici,—"*Capo della Repubblica.*" "The Splendour of all Italy!" Piero and Giulio de' Medici. Precarious conditions. The discovery of America. The passing of Florence. Florence the Queen of the Crafts.

IT was an old saying that:—"The Sienese are the richer in land, the Florentines in industry," and this may be compared to Aristotle's maxim:—"The more barren the soil the richer the city."

In a sense this was true of Florence and of Tuscany,—although the fruitful Vale of Arno can in no way be called barren,—perhaps in the sense implied in the distich:—

"Ma ne si bella seta, ne fin oro.
Nai Fiorentini industri tesser fanno!"

. . . . . .

"Not for lovely silk nor for finest gold,
But for her industry the fame is told
Of busy Florence!"

Yes, it was industry that made her fortunes!

The Florentines were perhaps the very first people who kept a Register of Baptism. Every baby born in Florence was, from the earliest time, baptised by immersion in the big font at San Giovanni. A box was originally placed near the font, in which the sex of each child presented was marked by dropping in beans—black for a boy and white for a girl. An old chronicler says this "became a very unreliable and a very dirty habit, as dust accumulating destroyed the colour of the beans."[1] In 1450 a better method was adopted for the registration of the population—the keeping of written records of all baptisms performed within the Baptistery.

Some idea of Florence and her population at different epochs in her history may, of course, be gathered from historians.

At the period of Totila's invasion of Tuscany, in the sixth century, Florence was a large city, counting upwards of sixty thousand souls. In Dante's time she numbered as many as one hundred and fifty thousand inhabitants, inclusive of the *Contado*. An attempt was made in 1233, by the Podesta, Torcello di Strado, to schedule the population. All the male inhabitants of Florence were ordered to appear before the Notaries of their several *sestieri*, to declare whether they were nobles, knights, doctors, judges, merchants, men of leisure, soldiers, tradesmen, mechanics, artizans, operatives, and what not.

Villani says that in the year 1300 there were in the city 90,000 inhabitants enjoying the full rights of citizenship. Of rich *Grandi* there were 1500, and of those able to bear arms 25,000. Strangers passing through the city numbered about 2000. In the elementary schools were 8000 to 10,000 children.

[1] Lastri, "Richerche della Populazione Fiorentina."

From 1000 to 1500 boys were studying arithmetic, and 500 to 600 grammar and rhetoric.

The churches and religious houses numbered one hundred and ten. In twenty-four nunneries were five hundred Religious, and there were also ten monastic houses of Regulars. Thirty hospitals and poorhouses afforded aid and shelter to upwards of one thousand sick and needy people, who were served by more than three hundred monks or nurses.

Within the city were very many palaces and considerable private buildings, as well as the public edifices. The *Contado*,—within which boundary there were upwards of 80,000 armed men,—was full of villas, and handsome country residences, surrounded by fine gardens and fruitful orchards. Ariosto refers to this token of the wealth of Florence :—

> "While gazing on thy villa-studded hills
> 'Twould seem as though the earth grew palaces."

Villani also furnishes many very interesting notes with respect to the industry and commerce of Florence in the first half of the fourteenth century. The taxes raised at the gates represented, on the average, fifty-five to sixty-five tuns of wine, four thousand fat oxen and calves, sixty thousand sheep, thirty thousand pigs, twenty thousand goats, three to four thousand loads of melons.

The factories, warehouses, etc., belonging to the "Guild of Wool" numbered more than two hundred; wherein were manufactured seventy to eighty thousand pieces of cloth, valued at 1,200,000 gold florins. The woollen operatives were upwards of 30,000 all told. The value of foreign woven cloth imported by the "*Calimala*" Guild after being redressed and finished in Florence was well over 300,000 gold florins. Of Exchange Banks there were eighty. The value of the gold coinage in circulation ranged about 350,000 gold florins, in addition to 20,000 pounds in weight of small silver and bronze money.

The morals and legal rights of the inhabitants were looked after by members of the "*Arte de' Giudici e Notai*,"—eighty-four

Judges and six hundred Notaries or lawyers,—whilst their bodily health and wellbeing was attended to by sixty Physicians and Surgeons, who handed them on to the hundred shops of Apothecaries for dose and medicament. That there might be an ample supply of bread, one hundred and fifty bakehouses, and as many more bakers, were busily at work.

Within fifty years of Villani's computation the population had decreased in an extraordinary fashion. Years of Pestilence, Flood, and Fire, followed in quick succession, so much so indeed that in the year 1348 the first of these terrible scourges alone accounted for forty thousand deaths—nearly one-half of the whole number of inhabitants!

Fluctuations occurred as years rolled on, but in 1478 signs of permanent decrease were apparent, the census only showing a total of seventy-one thousand people of all kinds and conditions in the city. Fifty years later, in 1532,—the year of the silencing of the *Campana*—and the end of the Republic, the numbers of Totila's Florence were again reached, namely 67,000, but then "Ichabod" was written big over the workshops of the one time busy city, and her population was numbered upon a downward grade; the lowest figure—fifty thousand—was reached in 1574.

The financial prosperity of the Republic in the middle of the thirteenth century is shown by extracts from the annual accounts of Receipts and Expenditure.[1] The average of the former totalled up to three hundred thousand gold florins, the latter to less than fifty thousand: a yearly balance on the right side of the account of nearly £130,000 was no mean profit.

The following rough and abbreviated Balance-Sheet may aptly show the financial position in the fourteenth century:—

*Expenditure* (1320):—

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Salaries—Podesta, and his attendants | . . | 15,240 piccioli.[2] |
| Do. Captain of the People, and do. | . | 5,880 do. |

[1] Villani, lib. xi. cap. 91-94.

[2] Picciolo = sixpence.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Salaries—Defender of the Guilds, and fifty horse, and one hundred foot soldiers | 8,400 | gold florins |
| Judge of Appeal | 1,100 | piccioli |
| Expenses—Executing Judicial Orders against the *Grandi* | 4,900 | do. |
| Inspectors of sumptuary offences | 1,000 | do. |
| Table of the Consuls | 3,600 | do. |
| Musicians, Heralds, Criers, etc., etc. | 1,000 | do. |
| Feeding Lions, Torches, Candles for Consuls | 2,400 | do. |
| Prizes for "*Il Palio*," etc. | 100 | gold florins |

In addition to this very modest statement the *Signoria* spent an annual amount upon public edifices,—in fact the moiety of the whole cost of upkeep, repair, and alterations,—the other moiety being shared among the Guilds, the Religious Corporations, and Private citizens.

*Revenue* (1366) :—

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Gate-tolls upon Merchandise, Food-stuffs, etc. | 90,200 | gold florins |
| Duty on retail sale of Wine (one-third the value) | 58,300 | do. |
| "*Il Estimo*"—Property-tax in *Contado* | 30,100 | do. |
| Tax on Cattle slaughtered | 19,400 | do. |
| Duty on Salt | 14,450 | do. |
| Tax on House-porches, Loggie, and shop projections | 7,000 | do. |
| Duty on Flour Mills | 4,250 | do. |
| Taxes or Licenses upon Money Lenders | 3,000 | do. |
| Licenses to carry Arms (at 20 *soldi* a head) | 1,300 | do. |
| Tax on Sweepings of the Corn-Market | 750 | do. |
| Tax upon Green-grocers' Stalls | 450 | do. |
| Tax on Timber Rafts on the Arno | 50 | do. |

The Total Revenue reaching upwards of 300,000 gold florins on an average for the ten years, 1366-1376.[1]

The almost endless variety of articles of commerce, which were despatched to and from Florence, in the early years of the fourteenth century, may be seen in an inventory of goods, forwarded in 1321, from Pisa to Florence.[2] The following are some of the items :—Old cloth-remnants, sea-fish, old iron, palm-branches, a bundle of veils and shawls, books, Tunisian washed-wool, sugar, chests full of men's clothes, pike-staffs, drawn silk in hanks, silk-worm eggs, silk fibre unwound, Siena wine, saddles, donkeys, mattresses, etc. etc.

In another inventory are tabled :—Nine hundred and fifteen pieces of gold and white tinsel for leather embossing, one parcel new keys, a cloak-bag of leather, velvet saddle-bags, seven balls of raw Sardinian lambs' wool, dogs' collars, linen gloves, Greek wine, a bale of horse brushes, a bundle of sundries from Bulgaria, etc. etc.

During the greater part of the fifteenth century the mean price of wheat was one *lira*, two *soldi*, eight *denari* per bushel ; wine—both red and white—twenty-seven *soldi*, eight *denari* a barrel ; oil, six *lire*, ten *soldi* a barrel ; fresh butchers' meat, four *soldi* to two *soldi* per pound.

Artizans, bankers, and merchants, were the founders of the wealth of the Republic. The rolls of *Gonfalonieri* and other State officials contain the names of men of all sorts and conditions. Every man paid his quota to the common purse, and undertook the share of the common burden. In this connection it may be interesting to note the amounts received from direct taxation in each of the six *sestieri* vary, not with respect to their class superiority from rich to poor, but rather the reverse.

In 1340 the sum total raised in this way was 100,000 gold florins, as follows :—Oltrarno—the poor man's quarter—28,000, San Piero Scheraggio—the official quarter—25,000, San Piero

[1] Napier, ii. p. 573. [2] Archivio del Stato di Firenze,—Mercanzia, 14, 1441.

Maggiore—12,000, San Pancrazio—13,000, Borgo d' Ognissanti —12,000, and Porta del Duomo—11,000.

This equality, or indeed superiority of the *Popolo Minuto* contributions to the Public Exchequer had very much to do with the manners, the dress, and the food of the people. The responsibility of upholding the State raised the character and

A MERCHANT'S DINNER PARTY IN THE LOGGIA OF HIS HOUSE

demeanour of all classes of the population. There was a levelling up, as we call it, throughout the whole of Florentine society. The hovel became a small house, the small house—a town residence, and the town residence—a palace. Fittings, furniture, decorations, utensils, etc. etc., all followed suit, and ennobled festive boards and homely meals alike.

Still the old-world habit of hoarding and of self-denial held its ground, with respect to certain private indulgences. The use of

silver plate, for example, until well on in the fifteenth century, was regarded as ostentatious, even upon the table of the richer citizens. At most, forks and spoons and cups were allowed in the precious metals, other vessels were of brass—including candlesticks, basins, and dishes. It was nevertheless quite customary to emblazon the owner's coat-of-arms, or crest, in silver upon each of such articles.

At public banquets, however, these limitations were disregarded, and no community could offer such regal magnificence in their table equipage as could the Merchant-princes of Florence. They gloried in the fact that, whilst in private life they kept up the good old rules of simplicity and frugality, in their public entertainments they surpassed reigning monarchs in prodigality.[1]

This characteristic had been all along very marked in the private life and public service of the merchants. None were too proud not to put one hand upon shuttle, scale, knife, or other implement, in the exercise of their craft, whilst with the other they directed the great policies of the State.

Never perhaps was the wealth and importance of Florence more strikingly exhibited than during the Jubilee of Pope Boniface VIII. in 1300. She sent to Rome an embassy splendidly equipped, and representative of every era in her history. Not only so, but, through her bankers and her merchants resident in, or dealing with, foreign states, she contrived that the representatives, specially accredited to the Papal Court for the ceremonies of the Jubilee by almost all the European Powers, were actually Florentines. Vermiglio Alfani represented the Emperor of Germany, Simone de' Rossi—the Emperor of Byzantium, Musciatta Franzesi—the King of France, Ugolino de' Cerchi—the King of England, and so on, Florence herself being directly represented by Palla de' Strozzi. A large suite of knights, superbly mounted and attired, escorted the ambassadors, who were all equipped in the State uniforms of the countries represented.

Boniface, amazed at the magnificence of the cavalcade, and

[1] Borghini, "Discorso della Moneta Fiorentina," vol. ii. p. 163.

astonished at the opulence of the gifts brought to his feet, cried out, as records an old manuscript: "Whatever sort of a city is this Florence?" No one was found ready with an answer, but at last a Cardinal,—fearing the Papal displeasure,—timidly remarked: "Your Holiness, the city of Florence is a good city."

"Nonsense," replied the Pope, "she is far away the greatest of all cities! She feeds, clothes, and governs us all! Indeed she appears to rule the whole world! She, and her people, are in truth, the fifth element of the universe!"[1]

Of all the rich men of Florence in the fourteenth century probably Niccolo degli Alberti was the richest. He died in 1377, possessed of at least three hundred and forty thousand gold florins —£150,000—an enormous sum in those days!

Florence in 1422 was considered the richest city in Europe: every useful trade and ornamental art flourished exceedingly. No less than two million gold florins were in effective circulation —an amount not arrived at in London until the year 1838! The expenses of the wars with Genoa, Pisa, and Leghorn, amounted, in 1427, to two and a half millions of gold florins—a further proof of prosperity and wealth.[2]

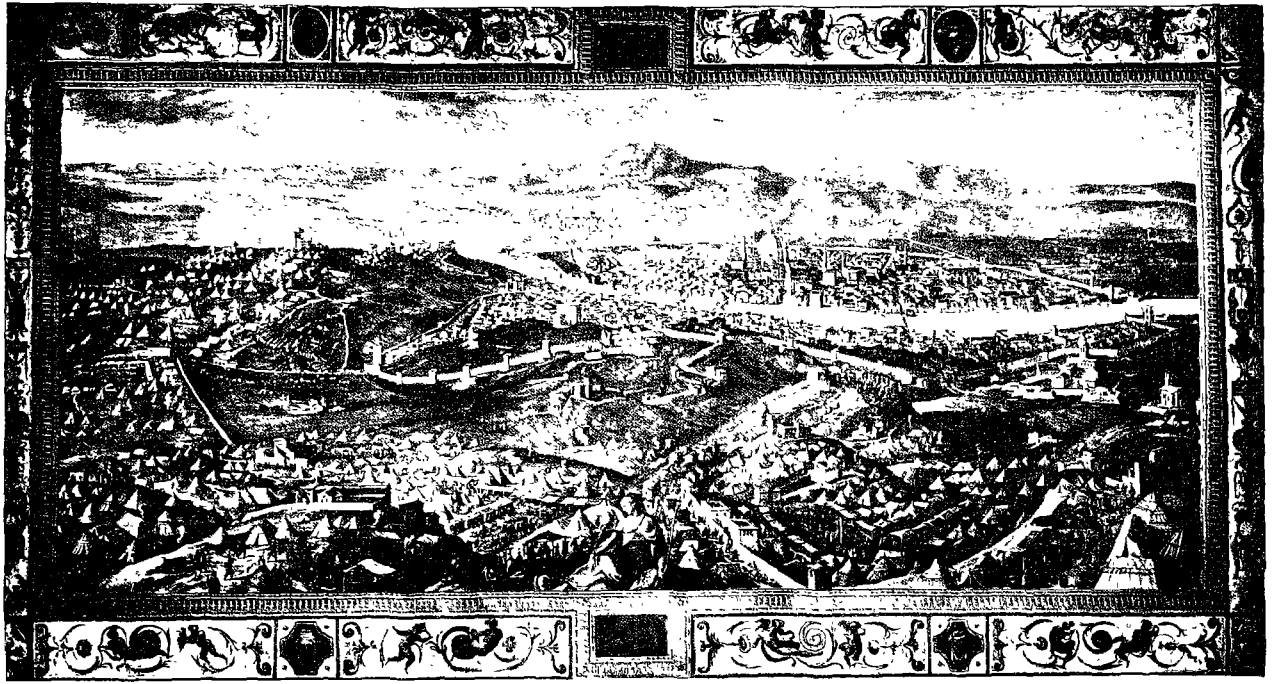
In the same year the number of *Sopportatori*,—Ratepayers,—those who contributed to the year's "*Catasto*," came up to 37,225; in 1470 they were 40,238. The Revenue at the end of the century totalled 345,540 gold florins,—without taking into account the "*Decima*,"—and the Expenditure—226,000. The average yearly yield of the latter impost between, say, 1470 and 1520, was from 40,000 to 50,000 gold florins.

"At that period the city," writes Giovanni Cambi, "appeared to be richer than ever before, for whereas forty years before fourteen hundred gold florins were given as a marriage portion on both sides among citizens of the Greater Guilds, they now give as much as two thousand five hundred, and even three thousand, gold florins!"[3]

[1] Bibl. Laurenziana,—Osserv. Fior. vi. 21.

[2] Lorenzo Pignotti, "Storia della Toscana," vol. iii. pp. 21-38.

[3] "Istorie" (Delizie degli Eruditi Toscani, vol. xxii.).



PANORAMA OF FLORENCE WITH THE CAMP OF THE PRINCE OF ORANGE IN THE SIEGE OF 1529-30

Machiavelli has a sententious economic axiom which exactly places the condition of industrial and financial matters in their true and sound relative positions, when he writes as follows of the Florentines,—merchants and citizens,—of his time. He says:—"The people are rich when money does not go out of their country, when they are content with what their land produces, and when money is constantly brought in by those who want the products of their industry, which they supply to foreign countries."[1]

The wealth of the city during the first decade of the sixteenth century attracted princely usurpers and beggars from all lands. To the King of France the Republic paid 100,000 gold florins, and the same amount to the Emperor, whilst the King of Spain received fifty thousand.

In 1527, however, owing to the numbers of armed bands, marching to and fro, the city was strongly fortified; and the liberty of the citizens was greatly curtailed. No person was allowed to go more than sixteen miles beyond the city boundaries. Provisions for a period of fifteen days were not permitted to enter the city without paying duty, except wine and oil, upon which the tax was reduced fifty per cent.[2]

The famous siege of Florence by Pope Clement VII. and his mercenaries, under the Prince of Orange, in 1529-30, found Michael Angelo Buonarroti at the head of affairs as generalissmo of the forces and director-in-chief of the fortifications. The enemy approached the city crying:—"Prepare, Florence, your brocades of gold, we are coming to purchase them with the measure of our pikes!"

A very interesting relic of the ancient commercial greatness of Florence is seen in the existence of the little wicket-gates, or small shop doors at the corner of the palaces of nobles. Over them one reads the words, "*Canova di Vino*," "*Canova di Torchi di Cera*," "*Canova dell' Olio*," etc. etc., indicating that the produce of the princely owners' estates or factories might be purchased

[1] Machiavelli, "Le Istorie di Firenze," chap. viii.
[2] Lorenzo Pignotti, "Storia della Toscana," vol. iv. pp. 123, 159.

retail within. As a case in point, the Strozzi family still keeps a large candle-factory and shop.

In the Buondelmonte Palace a few years ago was discovered hidden away a pocket writing-tablet. The leaves of this memorandum book are of wood, covered with a cake of wax. Upon this medium the merchant to whom it had belonged had, with a stile, made many entries and marks concerning the day's business. Unhappily the outer cover, which probably bore the owner's name, has disappeared, but the date, 1300, is quite legible.

Guido del' Antella, has left in his "*Ricordanze*," not only his trade-journal, but also a diary of domestic life, which is full of interest, and reveals much of the inner life of the Florentines of the fourteenth century. These "*Ricordanze*" were continued by his sons and their descendants.

In 1375 the head of the family says that he has taken as domestic servant, one Caterina del' Passa, at a wage of six gold florins a year, with a three weeks' annual holiday. To another maid servant,—whom he calls *schiava*—slave,—he arranged to give only thirty *lire* a year. The worthy man seems to have been blessed with many olive-branches, for he notices the engagement of four or five nurses in succession, whose average wage was sixteen gold florins. Some of his children were put out to nurse on equally favourable terms.[1]

This revelation of the domestic hearth of a typical Florentine home introduces a subject affecting the private life of the citizens, which has been hardly touched upon by historians—that of slaves.

Domestic service was abhorrent to the freedom-loving and proud Florentine: men and women shirked it, and difficulty was constantly experienced in the matter of servants. The extension of the trade of the city, and the enterprise shown by the agents of merchants in foreign lands, led to an alien supply of a common want.

At first, by ones and twos, returning merchants introduced young boys and girls, who had attracted them in Eastern or

[1] Archivio Storico Fiorentino, I. Series, tom. v. p. 5.

Southern lands. They came as pages and playmates for themselves and their children, and every well-to-do establishment boasted coloured dependants—they became the fashion and the fad of the time.

The custom grew, being fed by the vagabond lives led in foreign lands by Florentine traders, until the traffic in slaves became a feature of the commerce of the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. "Oriental slaves bought as live goods," says Doltore G. Biagi, "generally through Genoese, Venetian, and Neapolitan, brokers, were chiefly Tartars, Greeks, Turks, Dalmatians, and Circassians. . . ." [1]

An ancestor of Baldovinetti,—the painter,—has left drawings of three slaves in the margin of his *Zibaldone*, whom he bought in 1377, 1380, and 1388:—"Dorothea, a Tartar, from Russia, eighteen years or more of age; Domenica, of white skin, from Tartary; and Veronica, sixteen years old, whom I purchased almost naked from Bonaroti, son of Simon de' Bonaroti." Such women entered the houses of wealthy citizens to perform humble offices, and to take care of the children.

Alessandra Macinghi, the mother of the Strozzi, in 1469, wrote thus to her son Filippo, when at Naples:—"Let me remind you of the need we have of a slave, for so we have always had one. If you give orders to have one bought, ask for a Tartar, for they are the best for hard work, and are simple in their ways."

"Slaves often enough obtained by faithful labour, good behaviour, and general aptitude, many a liberal bequest on the death of their masters. Indeed not infrequently the child of the female slave was looked upon as legitimate, and passed by the name of the master,—thus Alessandro de' Medici was the reputed son of Lorenzo, Duke of Urbino—but in all probability Clement VII. was his father. His mother was a mulatto slave, and he had dark skin, thick lips, and the curly hair of a negro!

Slaves were common in all the cities and States of Italy in

[1] Guido Biagi, "Private Life of the Renaissance Florentines," pp. 30, 31.

the era of the Renaissance, and their treatment varied with the characters of their masters. Pistoja in 1205 led the way in freeing her slaves, Bergamo followed in 1237, Vercelli, in 1243, Bologna, in 1256, and Florence—by three stages—severally in 1289, 1344, and 1415. The last date was not only that of absolute emancipation for all persons held in bondage, but of the proclamation which forbade citizens of the Republic to have, or to buy, slaves, whether old or young, male or female, under severe penalties in cases of contravention.

The character of the population and the greatness of the prosperity of Florence—beautiful and busy—proved the truth of the ancient distich :—

> "*Gens trepidat cuncta datque tributa,*
> *Ceu Longobardi, ceu Tuschi, sunt tremefacti*
> *Cum Florentibus!*"

. . . . . .

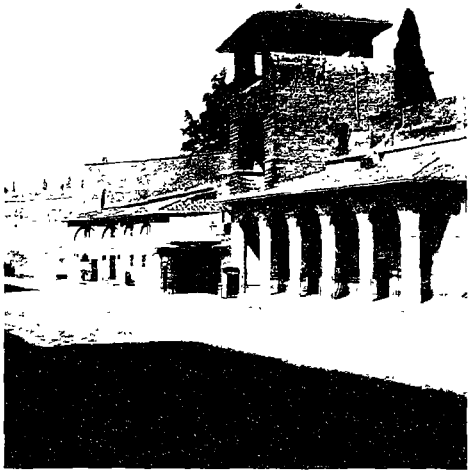
The old Mint of Florence was behind the Church of Santa Croce, but in 1252, when the currency was thoroughly overhauled, and when the financial transactions of her Merchants and Bankers had attained vast proportions, a new Mint was erected at the Uffizi, where the present-day Post Office is situated.

Two officials called *Maestri della Zecca*—Masters of the Mint—presided over the manufacture and circulation of coinage. They were chosen by the Head of the State: one was required to be a member of the "Calimala" Guild, the other—of the "Bankers and Money-changers." Their term of office was six months, like the Consuls.

In addition to these presidents a goldsmith, of proved probity and intelligence, was employed twice every year at the incoming of the new "Masters" to test and to weigh a number of gold florins in circulation, and newly minted. Such as failed in his tests were rejected, and of those approved, a number were enclosed in a small leathern bag, which was firmly sealed and labelled, as a guarantee or proof of quality—hence the designation "*fiorino di suggello.*"

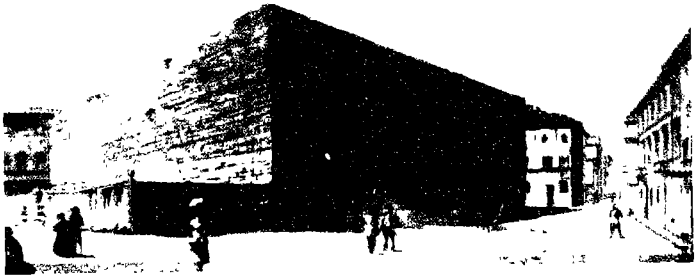
THE PORTA

THE MOST IMPORTANT



DI SAN GALLO

OF THE NINE ORIGINAL GATES



THE *"STINCHE"*—PRISON—AS IT APPEARED AT ITS DEMOLITION

[*See page 89*]

Gold and silver coins were generally struck without alloy of any kind. The minters were well accustomed to the mysteries of cupellation, for frequent mention is made, in the Archives of the *Zecca*, of *acqua prima*, *acqua filosofica al primo grado*, mixtures of nitre and acetic acid, and their property of separating gold and silver, and of oxidising metals, etc.

Florentines in the thirteenth century understood the use of touchstones in dealing with valuable metals. The family papers of Balducci Pegolotti, and the records of the Peruzzi Company, explain that the testing of the currency of Florence was done by means of *paragoni* or touchstones. The Company, for example, received four gold florins every year from the Mint for the hire of a touchstone, which they sold outright in 1329 for twenty gold florins. The charge for testing coins with a touchstone was six *denari*. It appears likely that the Money-changers kept a touchstone by them, and made a charge for its use by their clients on the spot.

The following is an extract from a manuscript.[1] "For four touchstones which we have in Florence, we are to receive in the kalends of July 1335 one hundred and sixty-four gold florins, to be paid to Giotto Peruzzi and our Company as in the book '*del Asse*' No. 5, p. 14. One is in the gold Mint, for the hire of which we receive four florins a year; the other three are with Bartolo Uguccioni in his house at the shop."

In the Balducci Pegolotti manuscript is a dissertation on the practice and method of treating and alloying gold and silver. The formula for refining gold with cement required the composition of the cement,—brick-dust and salt,—to be absolutely pure, and free from earth and sand. Separating gold and silver was done with sulphur and lighted charcoal. Many other instructions follow, the gold being always reckoned by the carat, and the alloy by the pound and ounce.

Balducci Pegolotti further says:—"For the expenses of the Mint of Florence it may be calculated that the cost of melting

[1] Riccardina MS.

10 lbs. of gold will be one *denari* of gold. And in refining the gold,—that is the gold and silver taken from the cement,—from six ounces of gold you will receive five ounces of refined gold. And the cost of refining a pound of gold is 10 *soldi* (*piccioli*) for the expenses of the chief refiner. And the cost of one *fuoco*,—firing,—in the mint, as decreed for the better safeguard of the Commune, costs 4 *soldi* 7 *denari* (*piccioli*) per pound, for the expenses of the *Rimettitori* of the said mint. And for melting the cement and cleansing,—a mass which they make of 90 pounds of cement,—costs 35 *soldi* in florins of 29 *soldi* to the gold florin. And the cost of parting the gold and silver taken from the cement is 2 *soldi* and 6 *denari* (*piccioli*) per pound. And the cost in Florence for a carat of gold parted from the silver by cementation is 10 *soldi a fiorini* of 29 *soldi* to the gold florin. And the cost of the rough silver parted from the gold is 14 *soldi a fiorini* an ounce. And the cost in Florence of the slag from the melted cement of each mass is 5 *soldi* (*piccioli*). "It may be calculated that for gold carried to the Florentine exchangers for sale, either flat or in bars, the price will be — for 21 carat gold, 9 *soldi*, 7 *denari a fiorini*, and downwards according to the carat. And 8 *denari a fiorini* for each carat of silver."

Thus far Balducci Pegolotti. The reader will observe that the *lire*, *soldi* and *denari* are designated *a fiorini*, which means a "florin of account" and not a "market florin"—that is a conventional or imaginary florin of 29 *soldi*, like the *scudo* and *pezza*.

The ancient Registers of the Florentine Mint, which fortunately remain to us, give particulars every six months of the administration of the mint, and striking of the currency. But as no register was kept before 1303, the chronicler Villani, who was one of the heads of the Mint in 1316, introduced an official book called the "*Fiorinario*," which explained the stamp or symbols impressed upon the coins struck every six months,—this book is in the Magliabecchian Library. These symbols ceased to be described in 1373, for the Masters of the Mint, being members of the

leading families, suppressed the stamps, and struck the money with the arms of their houses.

In 1327, the Duke of Calabria appointed two principal merchants to execute the offices of assayers of the gold and silver coinage for a period of six months. They were Giovanni Villani, of the "Calimala Guild," and Bartolommeo de' Simonetti, of the "Guild of Bankers and Money Changers."

Balducci Pegolotti also gives a description of the corresponding foreign Mints, their locality, the metallic compositions in use,—that is silver, gold, and alloy,—according to the currency to be struck, with their prices and the expense of each Mint. The Mints mentioned by Pegolotti are the following—Tana on the Black Sea, Torrisi in Persia, Ajazza, Famagosta, Tunis, Chiarenza, Castel di Castro, Majolica, Messina, Naples, Ancona, Aquileia, and Venice. In Cambalu, capital of the Chinese Empire, there was only a paper currency.[1]

The fame of the Florentines for skill in minting was great, and many foreign Mints were actually in their hands. In 1269 the Tornaquinci Company held the Mint of Bologna. Under Edward II. a Frescobaldi was made director of the London Mint,—to correct its errors. In 1338 Angiolo Vernaccia and Francesco Benacquisti held the Mint of Aquileja: those of Rome, Naples, and Perugia, were also governed by Florentines.

Paolino Pieri,—in his "Chronicle"—from 1080 to 1305,—and Targioni-Tozzetti, Vettori, and Borghini, agree that, before the time of Federigo Barbarossa, several kinds of coins were struck, and were in circulation in Florence.

Nevertheless Antonio Pucci relates that leather money was in circulation, stamped with the Emperor's head. He goes on to say that Frederick II. in 1240 coined at his own expense a gold "Augustus," and put a number of such coins into the hands of the merchants and artizans. This favour was "highly valued by the people of Florence, who were very sorry for themselves at having only leather money, and gladly exchanged it."[2]

[1] B. Pegolotti, "Manuale del Mercante Fiorentino." [2] "Centiloquio," 6, 17.

Whilst the coins of all the nations and cities with which Florentines had business connections were accepted and passed current in the city; and whilst each had its market value, and was subject to the daily vicissitudes of exchange, there was, of course, a system of coinage peculiar to Florence herself.

The currency was in silver—*lire* and *fiorini*. The former was the value of a pound weight of various coins of the same metal. Probably the earliest Florentine pound was issued in the reign of Charlemagne. It had an arbitrary value of twenty *soldi*, of twelve *denari* each,—which, it need scarcely be pointed out, was the origin of our own British coinage.

The "florin," which contained twelve *denari*, first made its appearance in 1150. The name was of course derived from the name of the city. It was worth the twentieth part of the pound originally, and was, in 1181, equal in value to four-pence English. Both it and the pound, or *pezza*, were silver coins.

By another system of values the *lira* was divided into twelve *crazie* or sixty *quattrini*, or two hundred and forty *denari*. The following table shows the value in grains of the *lira* in pure silver at different dates:—

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1252—770 | 350—225$\frac{71}{118}$ | 1471—136 |
| 1305—391$\frac{99}{171}$ | 1417—140 | 1531—100$\frac{5}{8}$ |

The higher figures of course point to periods of prosperity, the lower to seasons of depression.

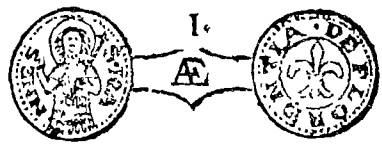
In 1252, "the Signoria determined," says Peruzzi, "to strike a gold coin like the ancient *nummo aures*, which should be without equal for intrinsic value and artistic workmanship."[1] The coin, to which the name of *Fiorino d'oro* was first given, weighed seventy-two grains, or the eighth of an ounce, and its standard value was put at twenty-four carats. It bore upon its face the effigy of St John the Baptist, the city's saintly patron,—and on the reverse, the floral emblem—the lily, or iris. It was worth about ten shillings English.

[1] Peruzzi, "Storia del Commercio," p. 125.

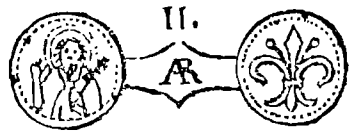
In addition to its official designation it bore several names according to its variations of shape and face value:—"*fiorino di suggellò*"—mint stamped florin, "*fiorino di galea*": —exchange florin, "*fiorino largo*"—florin sterling; but each kind was of standard value.

This splendid coin was at once universally accepted and became the model for the gold coinage of England, France, and Spain. The *Zecca* was called upon to mint as many as four hundred thousand gold florins annually to keep up with the demand.

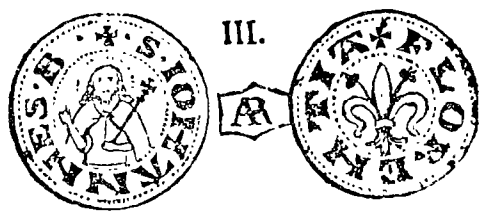
As in the case of the silver florin the face value of the gold florin varied considerably. At first it contained twenty *soldi* like the silver coin, but as early as 1291 its value had risen to thirty *soldi*. In 1301 the Consuls of the Guilds in conference determined the arbitrary value of twenty-nine *soldi*. This value was adopted by the Banks of Florence, and was registered as obligatory.[1]



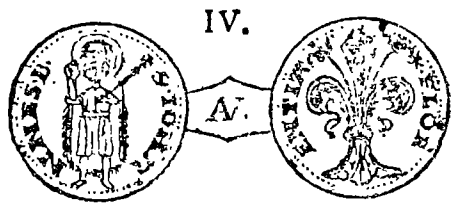

A DENARIO, 1150




A SOLDO, 1252




A SILVER FLORIN, 1150




A GOLD FLORIN, 1252

IMPRESSIONS OF COINS IN CIRCULATION IN FLORENCE IN THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY

*Note.*—The last one is the famous gold florin of 1252, actual size

[1] Paolino di Pieri, "Cronica," Rub. i. Suppl. ii. 33.

Gold florins, however, of the 1291 value, were in extensive circulation, and consequently much confusion ensued. By a *Provvisione* the new values were called "small florins," and their component parts were renamed *piccioli* in place of *soldi* and *denari*.[1]

It was after the Fall of the Republic, that the gold florin became known as a *ducato*, a *scudo*, or a *corona*.

The silver florin was used for the daily market transactions, and from shop to shop, and the gold florin was reserved for financial business, exchange, and transportation. Salaries also of magistrates and officials were paid in gold. In the Statutes of 1415 :—"all merchants and artizans in the City and *Contado* are required to make use of the silver and copper coinage, and not the gold florin of commerce, in their dealings among themselves, except members of the "*Calimala*," "Wool," "Silk," "Bankers," "Doctors and Apothecaries," and "Furriers and Skinners"—the Seven Greater Guilds.[2]

During the fifteenth century the smallest coins current were of bronze:—*piccioli* or *denari*—four of these made a *quattrino nero*,—first coined in 1332,—and five went to a *quattrino bianco*.

*Moneta bianca*, and *moneta nera* or *di rame*,—silver money and silver mixed with baser metal,—were first distinguished in 1316.

The *quattrino* was the amount of the tax upon a barrel of wine at the Gates—it was also called "*Battezzone*," and bore St John Baptist's effigy on the obverse, like the florins. Five *quattrini* made one *crazia*—the twelfth part of a *lira*. These *quattrini* were equal to seven *soldi*, which was also the value of a coin little used, but a value often quoted, namely, a *grosso* or *grossone*.

On March 21, 1307, ordinances were enacted against all such as had, or passed, false gold, silver, and copper coins, or who cut, or debased, good money. Every month all coins in circulation were ordered to be returned to the Mint for examination, and for comparison with new genuine issues. At the same time all Bankers and Money-changers were directed to keep, and expose prominently, tables of values. Such tables also were

[1] Provv. vi. 118 vo.

[2] Rub. xxxvi., 1415.

*IL PRESTO* THE PAWNSHOP

EARLY FOURTEENTH CENTURY

ordered to be stuck up in the Mercato Vecchio, the Mercato Nuovo, at Or San Michele, on the Ponte Vecchio, and in other public places.[1]

Base coins were constantly issued by dishonest speculators, and such were generally called "*Bargellini*," a name given to the debased coinage of the four months' Podesta, Lando da Gubbio.

The "*Presto*," or Lending-office, had really been tacitly in existence, for many a long day, in Florence, before the Government of the Republic took the question up, and made laws to regulate the borrowing and lending of money. Perhaps to state the fact more clearly, we may say that every man who had a spare florin or two was *ipso facto* a "*Presto!*"

In 1430 public attention was effectively directed to an evil which had grown by degrees until it was no longer soluble. The accumulation of money in the hands of Bankers and Merchants, and such like, had assumed such vast proportions, that the poorer citizens were actually ground down under an unbearable yoke, and had little or no chance of raising themselves out of their misery.

The borrowing of money had become a glaring pretence for demanding exorbitantly usurious interest. At last the Magistracy took the matter in hand, and after much debate the solution they discovered,—to us so extraordinary,—was effective. They determined to invite Jews to come and settle in Florence and bring their money with them![2]

These wary money-makers had of course made their influence felt all over Europe, but, up to the date named, they had never been suffered to set foot in Florence. An intimation was addressed through the agents of the "*Calimala*" and the other Guilds to all centres of Jewish population, extending a cordial welcome to all Jews possessed of means, and offering them inducements to make Florence their home and their market.

The invitation, it need hardly be said, was eagerly accepted, although it was accompanied by some stringent and ungracious

[1] Provv. xiii., fo. 72.

[2] "Florentine Gazette," March 1899.

restrictions. A Jewish settlement was formed in Oltrarno—to which was at once applied the name *Via dei Giudei.* The Jews were compelled by law to wear yellow badges to distinguish them from the citizens. They were forbidden to carry arms, and to take part in any way in the government of the City and Republic. They were also forbidden to engage in any wholesale business, and they were denied admittance into the Craft Guilds. Their trading instincts were to be confined within reasonable bounds, and in no case were they allowed to levy interest upon loans of money to citizens in excess of 20 per cent.

In spite of all these disabilities the Jews prospered exceedingly in Florence. Their wealth and their influence mounted up far beyond anything the Bankers and Merchants could attain. They had not been in Florence fifty years when they had collectively made upwards of fifty million golden florins!

The discovery of this condition of affairs stirred the anger of the populace, which rose in a body, and demanded the expulsion of all and every Jew from Florence. The voice of the people prevailed, as usual, and a decree was promulgated by the Signoria, in 1495, expelling the whole of the Jewish inhabitants. Only a few months however passed before fickle public opinion veered round, and the decree was withdrawn.

The Jews, nevertheless, found themselves faced by another, and even stouter enemy—the Church. The preaching friars—both Dominicans and Franciscans—took up their parable, not only against the Jewish money-lenders, but generally against the corrupt practice of loans at exorbitant rates. Antonino,—"the good Archbishop,"—Bernardino da Feltre, and Girolamo Savonarola, in turn, denounced the iniquities of the money-dealers. Like the wise men they were, they did not cry down a corrupt system without advocating amelioratory measures. Their ideas were much as follows, either:—(1) loans should be effected without any interest at all, or (2) money should be lent on the receipt of a pledge, and a very low rate of interest should be charged only to meet the expense of the transactions.

The Signoria were unanimously affected by the pleadings and reasonings of the good monks, and they advocated the adoption of the second plan suggested, with a view to the protection of the people against exactions and overcharges by men of means. In fact the solution reached gave to Florence her first Pawn-shop, or "*Presto*,"—established by the law of the State, and it was further confirmed by the approval of the Church in decrees issued from the Vatican.

The "*Presto*" began its work in 1495 upon the small capital of 2890 florins (about £1500) collected by means of private alms and gratuitous loans and deposits, In 1530, after the defeat of the rebels at Pisa, a grant was made to the "*Presto*," out of the property confiscated, so that the funds in reserve for carrying on the State Pawnshop amounted to upwards of £9000.

The work of the "*Presto*" increased rapidly, and consequently, to meet the convenience of the people, three distinct Offices were opened in different parts of the city. By degrees another development came into use, and several dependencies of the Head-offices were authorised, under the control of private individuals, but subject to the inspection of the State officials. These private pawnshops,—so to speak,—were allowed to keep open doors when the Head-offices were closed. Here money could be obtained, on pledges left, by those who could not wait for the ordinary business hours. These pledges were transferred every day to the Head-offices, where only owners could redeem them.

The Pawn-shops became a source of danger to the public, inasmuch as it was possible for any one to give himself out as a "Presto-dependency," and thereby confiding and unwary clients found themselves mulcted in charges in excess of the legal rate, and also repeatedly lost their pledges through their premature sale by the pseudo Pawn-brokers.

From the middle of the sixteenth century the Statutes of the Republic are full of enactments passed to regulate these rogueries, for example, no man or woman was allowed to practise the trade of Pawn-broker, or "*Vetturino*" except possessed of a license

issued by the Administrator of the "*Presto*."[1] The name "*Vetturino*" was due to the fact that a "*Vettura*," or vehicle, was necessary for the transport of the pledges to the Head-office day by day.

A very interesting Codex is still preserved in the "*Presto*," which gives the laws and regulations by which the Institution has been managed ever since its inauguration.

The headquarters of the "*Monte di Pieta*" are now in Via Palazzuolo, in the old monastery of San Paolino, which is itself a link with worthy monkish founders in the fifteenth century.

. . . . . .

The era of the Medici was the "Golden Age of Florence."

If the foundations of the Commune and of her industry have been well and truly laid, and the superstructure of the Republic and of her commerce wisely and nobly reared, the brains and hands which planned and placed the capstone of the splendid edifice, were none other than those of the great Merchant-princes —the Medici.

The attitude of the makers of the family towards the industry and commerce of Florence was marked by admirable and consistent diligence, loyalty, and enthusiasm. If it be opposed that they did but seek to serve their own ends, it should be remembered that the pre-eminence, riches, and glory, of family were ever the chief aims of all Florentines.

In this characteristic emulation the Medici did, through natural ability and force of genius, outrun all competitors. They were entirely sympathetic with respect to popular aspirations and prejudices. They lived as citizens among citizens, keeping unobtrusive their private affairs, and their public conduct unostentatious. Risen from the middle class they first entered upon the profession of medicine, but later took up the more influential occupation of banking.

Salvestro di Alamanno de' Medici was the first member of the family who rose to eminence. A rich and ambitious *popolano*, he

[1] Cantini, "Legislazione," vol. viii., p. 99, etc.

was tactful enough to conceal his bent, but acted upon the maxim he was never tired of quoting:—"Never make a show before the people."

In 1376 he became *Capitano di Parte Guelfa*, and, two years later, *Gonfaloniere di Giustizia*—the nominal head of the State. His rivalry with Benedetto degli Alberti threw him into the arms of the *Ciompi*—"the wooden shoes"—as the mass of woollen operatives were called. He and the popular leader, Michele Lando, swayed that tumultuous rising, and steered the ship of State safely through the troubled waters.

The patriotic and statesmanlike course taken by Salvestro inspired the confidence of the populace, and also of the middle classes—both in himself and in his family. His death in 1388 was the dawn of the Medicean dominion.

Giovanni de' Medici, who was born in 1360, belonged to another branch of the family—that of Averardo de' Medici. He was a man of extraordinary strength of character—a born ruler of men. He gained the goodwill of his fellow-citizens by his unselfishness and generosity.

In 1421 Giovanni was elected *Gonfaloniere di Giustizia*, as the representative of the middle classes, in opposition to Rinaldo degli Albizzi and Niccolo da Uzzano. The Republic sighed for peace, the Crafts for quietness, but immense liabilities, incurred by many costly warlike enterprises, had to be met. Giovanni proposed, in 1427, a tax which should not weigh too heavily upon any body. Each citizen, who possessed a capital of one hundred gold florins, or more, was mulcted in a payment to the State, of half a gold florin—five shillings. This tax, which was called "*Il Catasto*," was unanimously accepted: it was said "it pleased the people greatly." Giovanni himself was taxed as high as any one, namely, three hundred gold florins.

Giovanni associated himself with Agnolo Pandolfini, the leader of the Peace Party, who is remembered in the annals of Florence as "The Peaceful Citizen." The tenets of the party were: 1. Peace abroad, 2. Prosperity at home, and 3. Low taxation.

Giovanni was also instrumental in the founding of the *Studio Generale*—the University of Florence—whence such excellent fruits were gathered by craftsmen of all kinds. He died in 1429.

Cosimo de' Medici,—Giovanni's eldest son,—was, perhaps, the greatest of all that noble family. Born in 1389, he early evinced mercantile proclivities, and was placed by his father, when he was a mere lad of seventeen, in charge of the foreign agencies and correspondence of the family's banking business. He used his opportunities so well that he speedily excelled all the men of his house as a successful financier and merchant. He placed the fortunes of his family in such an unassailable position that their bankruptcy would have meant the irremediable insolvency of the State.

Cosimo was not unworthily acclaimed as "The Great Merchant." He could give commercial advantages to all who asked. As the richest citizen he had absolute control of all markets. Bribes influenced rivals, whilst gifts controlled the Church and the poor. He never interfered with the middle classes, but left them to their business and their pleasure. On the other hand he did all he could to conciliate the lower classes, carrying on the democratic policy of Salvestro. Assuming the office of *Gonfaloniere di Giustizia* in 1455, he made little or no effort to alter the form of government. His administration of public funds gave rise to the proverb:—"Taxation must be used as a dagger!" The introduction in 1447 of the "*Scala*" or "Sliding Scale," and its application gave this saying its point. For example, incomes of under fifty gold florins were rated at eight per cent., whilst those over fifteen hundred were taxed at fifty per cent.

Cosimo dealt with the luxury and extravagance of his times quite characteristically. He induced rich merchants to undertake public office as a matter of pride, and clothed them with increasing dignity and circumstance.

Certainly, as a counterpoise perhaps to his own aspirations, he curtailed some of the political power of the Guilds. By advancing

D A B C E

THE MEDICI.—A, COSIMO, "*IL PADRE DELLA PATRIA*,"—B, PIERO,—C, GIOVANNI—SONS OF COSIMO; D, LORENZO ("IL MAGNIFICO"),—E, GIULIANO,—SONS OF PIERO

SANDRO BOTTICELLI

families rising to affluence, but belonging to the *Popolo Minuto*, to association with the Greater Guilds, he checked the exclusive influence of the latter, whilst he diminished the growing power of the Lesser Guilds. He was wont to say jokingly:—"Two yards of scarlet cloth is enough to make a citizen!"

Cosimo lavished enormous sums of money in charity and in the adornment of the city. Every Craft felt the impulse of his munificence, for his heart and soul were set upon the prosperity of his city and of her people. The five years of his exile furnished an object lesson to friend and foe alike—the absence of the Medici meant ruin and decay.

One of Cosimo's famous sayings was:—"One must always consult the will of the people," and "the People" replied by acclaiming him "*Padre della Patria*"—"Father of the Country." He died in 1464. He has been called "a great merchant and party leader—the first of Florentines by birth, and the first of Italians by culture." He will be remembered for all time as a perfect example of the great Florentines of the fifteenth century.

Lorenzo de' Medici came to the headship of the family when the noontide sun of its glory was at its greatest brilliance. Born in 1449, he entered upon his inheritance,—a structure of princely magnificence and financial security,—as one fully fitted for his position. The wealth of his house provided him with the means and with the leisure he desired.

Unanimously elected *Capo della Repubblica*,—"Chief of the Republic,"—in succession to his grandfather, in 1470 he emphatically enforced the axiom, "the family is the unit of Florentine life." The authority of the *Podesta* and the judicial power of the *Tribunale della Mercanzia*,—"The Chamber of Commerce,"—were at once diminished by the assumption of princely attributes by Lorenzo for himself and his heirs.

The combined powers of the Consuls also called for reform, and Lorenzo made an effort to reduce the number of the Guilds. The latter move was made probably rather against the accumulation of capital than for political ascendency. Anyhow it was

aimed principally at the Greater Guilds. Indeed matters went so far that the realisation of the assets of the *Parte Guelfa*, and of the *Mercanzia*, was effected.

Lorenzo's charities, and his patronage of the Arts and Crafts, gained him his title "*Il Magnifico*"—an acknowledgment of his claim to be addressed as "Your Magnificence." He was much more of a Prince than a Merchant, and the men who gathered round him thought more of display than of business. In truth extravagant idleness began to take the place of frugal industry.

Nevertheless he invited and patronised artizans and men of good parts from every land. Printing and Engraving, Embroidered Tapestry, Engraving on Cameos, Painted Porcelain and many other useful and ornamental handicrafts blossomed forth in the Florentine home of their adoption. He himself was entirely devoid of interest and knowledge with respect to commercial matters. Indeed the principal foreign agents of his house at Paris, Lyons, Bruges, Brussels, London, and elsewhere, speedily took his measure, and were not slow to profit by his unbusiness-like proclivities.

Lorenzo de' Medici was far and away the greatest of all the Medici in the universality of his attainments. Magistrate, Orator, Poet, Artist, Benefactor, Athlete, Lorenzo took first honours in the "University of Humanism" which he had so lavishly endowed. He is, so to speak, the epitome of the spirit and life of the Renaissance. His was the epoch of the Platonic Academy—his villa at Careggi was a second Areopagus.

There was in short nothing that he could not do. One of his favourite sayings was:—"Whatever is worth doing at all, is worth doing well." This had its pendant in his boast:—"I am a Florentine, and a Florentine is a citizen of the great world." With the death of Lorenzo de' Medici in 1492,—whom Benedetto Dei describes as:—"The splendour not of Tuscany only, but of all Italy,"—disappeared the most brilliant period of the Renaissance.

Piero de' Medici, son of Lorenzo the Magnificent, proved the

truth of the adage:—"Ability rarely runs in two consecutive generations." He was just as feeble as his father was strong. Entering upon an unique heritage he frittered it away, and by his pusillanimity brought ruin and disaster upon Florence and her commerce. He died miserably in 1503.

Decay in the merchant-spirit of the Florentines set in with his death, and the later Medici, with few exceptions, did nothing to arrest the decline of industry and commerce.

Cardinal Giulio de' Medici, during his temporary charge of the destinies of the city and people in 1518, certainly retrieved some of her fading glories. He reduced the public finances to order, checked the power of monopolies, lightened taxation, restored prestige to the Guilds, and entered into new commercial treaties.

Acceptable to the populace on account of his ecclesiastical dignity, and to the better-to-do citizens by reason of his name and family, he was wise enough to dissociate himself from all the parties in the State. "It was," records Nardi the historian, "the universal opinion that never since the city had been under the rule of the Medici had it been governed with a greater appearance of civil liberty."[1] In 1523, Giulio became Pope under the style of Clement VII. and died in Rome in 1534.

. . . . . .

Three conditions existed from the middle of the sixteenth century which rendered the position of Florence uncertain and even precarious:

1. The instability of political institutions.
2. The insecurity of property through frequent commercial failures.
3. The competition of other markets, and the discovery of America.

With respect to the latter it is not difficult to understand how dreams of the New World drew off men's attention from the steady prosecution of their wonted occupations. The dis-

[1] Nardi, "Storia di Firenze," vol. ii. p. 64.

coveries of Christopher Columbus, Vasco de Gama, and especially of Amerigo Vespucci, the Florentine, caused an appreciable diminution in the commercial pursuits and prosperity of the old channels of business.

AMERIGO VESPUCCI ON THE SHORES OF SOUTH AMERICA
(*Note the Southern Cross*)

A new light, still more brilliant than that of the Medici, had burst in upon an expectant hemisphere, and Tribaldo de' Rossi wrote of it thus: "A letter has come to the Signoria saying that certain youths, gone out in sailing ships, have arrived at an immense island, to which never before have any people sailed, which is inhabited by men and women all naked!"[1]

This was the proclamation of the discovery of the New

[1] "Ricordanze di" (Delegie degli Erudite Toscani, vol. xxiii. p. 281).

World. Dante, in mystic vision, had, with prophetic voice, away back in 1306, foretold this new terrestrial paradise :—

> "To the right hand I turned, and fixed my mind
> On the other Pole attentive, where I saw
> Four Stars ne'er seen before save by the ken
> Of our first parents. Heaven of their rays
> Seem'd joyous."—"PURGATORIO," canto i.

With the beginning of the sixteenth century dawned a new era, gilding alike the sky of Poetry and the Arts, and the river of Literature and the Crafts. The preliminary signs had made themselves felt in the growth of wealth, in enfranchisement from its prejudices, and in release from primitive rules of living. Egotistical tendencies, which had been working very quietly but surely, prepared the way for the evolution of what we now call "Individualism."

Here we have the limits and the tokens of the Spirit of the Renaissance. The love of country, and the ties of the family, were weakened by an universal craving for pleasure and self-gratification. Idleness, sensuality, scepticism, — three baneful sisters,—gained the upper hand, and loosened the fabric of Florentine society.

The gradual extinction of public spirit, the slow deterioration of general character, and the sapping of personal energy, are the dull tones which tinge with melancholy the later pages of Florentine History.

. . . . . .

Ring down the curtain! Merchant and Artizan have doffed their workaday garments of leather, cloth, and fustian! The ghosts of Guildsmen pass silently along, stretching out their hands helplessly: their time has come and gone! But, hark! Into the slumbers of the past, there steals softest, sweetest, music, and many melodious Tuscan voices are singing in unison :—

"*Firenze—ricca per industria!*"

"*Firenze—Regina dell' Arti!*"

"*Firenze la Bella!*"

"*Evviva! Firenze la Bella!—la Bella!*"

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# CHRONOLOGY

B.C.

200. Roman Camp of Florentia
The Flaminian Road assists early development, and crosses the Arno by the earliest "Ponte Vecchio"

A.D.

488. Baptistery of San Giovanni founded
542. Totila, King of the Goths, besieges the settlement
556. First Wall,—Primo Cerchio,—built
625. Theodelinda, Queen of the Lombards, encourages industry
724. Church of Santa Reparata so named
774. Church of San Miniato al Monte built
786. Charlemagne, Emperor of the West, visits the town
816. Pope Leo III. encourages the Crafts of Tuscany
825. A *Collegium Artium* founded under the Emperor Lothair's *Constitutiones Olonenses*
852. Wool trade flourishing in Florence
934. Medical faculty in practice
962. Otto I. extends the *Contado* to six mile radius
990. Benedictines settle and build the Badia
1003. Florentine Cloth-merchants finish San Miniato al Monte
1036. Bonifazio III., Marquis of Tuscany, a friend to Florence
1038. Smithing and kindred trades flourishing
„ "Consuls" first named (Burello, Florenzetto, Broccada, and Servolo)
1062. Fulling-mill first mentioned
1063. Great Religious Revival
1074-78. Second Wall,—Secondo Cerchio,—begun: Oltrarno taken in
1076. Countess Matilda of Tuscany greatly encourages Crafts
1079. Mercato Vecchio first so called
1080. Old Roman bridge rebuilt in stone and called Ponte Vecchio
1096. First Wool Dyer named, *Petrus-tentore*
1101. Consuls for the Crafts first appointed by Matilda
1107. Expansion of city: Monte Orlandi and Prato taken in
1115. Death of Matilda: Birth of Commune—Florence declared independent of all external rule
1138. City divided into Six Wards—*Sestieri: Buonuomi* elected for each
1150. Silver Florin first used
„ Calimala Consuls take in hand the Battisterio di San Giovanni
1154. First record of Florentine merchants trading with Great Britain—chiefly wool
1165-1177. "Society of the Towers" for the *Grandi*, and "Corporations" for the *Popolani* established

1183. The Peace of Constance confirms self-government to Florence and other Tuscan Communes
1187. College of Judges founded
1190. First mention in documents of the "Calimala Guild"
1192. Federigo I. visits Florence, and extends the *Contado* to a radius of ten miles
„ Consuls of the *Lana*, *Calimala* and *Seta* Guilds sign documents—first of such Records
1193. Title "Rector" replaces that of Consul
1194. First record of Florentine Bankers
1197. Legal Tribunals fully established
„ First distinct mention of Seven Greater Guilds—the Calimala Guild being entirely separated from that of "Wool"
1198. Tuscan League under lead of Florence established by Pope Innocent III. at San Miniato al Monte
1199. First recorded mission of Florentine Bankers to London
1200. Commercial Treaty with the Lords of the Mugello for the Protection of Trade Routes
„ Silk industry in a thriving condition. Early patterns for weaving obtained from the pavement of the Baptistery
1201. First mention of the Guild of Bankers
1202. Florentines capture Castles and protect Communes
1204. The Rectors of the Guilds styled "Priors"
„ Ammirato's Census of the population and occupations
1206. Old title of Consul replaces that of Prior
1207. First *Podesta*—Gualfredotto Grasselli da Milano—elected
1208-1228. Wars with Pisa, Pistoja, Semifronte, Siena and other cities
1215. Tragedy at the Buondelmonte-Amidei marriage originates the two great parties—the Guelphs and Ghibellines
1218. College of Doctors and Apothecaries in existence
„ The Ponte alla Carraja built in stone
„ Inhabitants of the *Contado* required to take oath of allegiance to Florence
1222. The first *Monte Comune* or Pawnshop opened
1223. School of Medicine and Surgery founded
1228. First State enactment affecting the Guilds issued
1233. The *Podesta*—Torcello da Strada—orders every adult male to register his name, age, and occupation
1234. Mercantile Companies affiliated to the various Guilds
1236. First Scheduled List of the Guilds—Twenty-one
„ Influential position held by Butchers and Graziers
„ Streets of Florence paved with hard stone setts
1237. The Ponte alle Grazie—Rubaconte—built
1238. The "*Umiliati*"—Humble Fathers—arrive and settle
1240. The "*Misericordia*" founded
1247-49. Party feuds and the encroachments of Federigo II. and of the Uberti retard trade and commerce
1250. *Podesta* deposed—*Capitano del Popolo* appointed instead
„ Foreign *Condottieri* first employed

1250. Thirty-six representatives of Trades chosen—six to each *Sestiere*—the first really popular Government of Florence
1251. First *Capitano del Popolo*—Uberto da Lucca—elected
1252. *Zecca*—Mint—established. The Great Gold Florin coined
„ The Ponte alla Santa Trinita built
1254. Pisa grants free import for all Florentine merchandise
1258. Bargello built
1260. "*Lettere di Cambio*" first issued by Bankers
„ The Roman Ponte Vecchio rebuilt
„ Battle of Montaperti
1261. Count Guido Novello assumes supreme authority
„ The Public Prison—*Stinche*—opened
1266. Second Scheduled List of the Seven "Greater" and Fourteen "Lesser" Guilds
„ The Consuls of the Seven Greater Guilds constitute the Supreme Magistracy of the State
1267. The "*Parte Guelfa*" enrolled
„ First record of a Florentine Commercial Journey in Europe by Guido del Antella
„ Council of Capitudini delle Arti Maggiori
„ Charles of Anjou, Lord of Florence, makes many Knights
1269. Disastrous floods destroy bridges, factories, etc.
1271-79. Serious family and party feuds prevalent. No checks to industry, but spurs to enterprise!
1278. Taddeo d' Alderotti established as Professor of Medicine in Florence
1280. First "*Signoria*" assume office
„ First five Lesser Guilds designated *Arti Mediane*—"Intermediate Guilds"—and their Consuls admitted to the conferences of the Consuls of the Seven Greater Guilds
1282. Three "Priors of the Guilds" elected: their powers second only to that of the Chief-Magistrate of the State
„ The Guild of Wool undertake the charge of Santa Maria del Fiore
1283. Third Scheduled List of the Guilds—their Precedence settled
1284-85. Third Wall,—Tertio Cerchio,—built
1284. Great additions made to the number of Mercantile Companies
1285. Hospital of Santa Maria Nuova founded
1287. Piazza di San Giovanni enlarged for the Patronal Festival
„ Feuds between the Cerchi and Donati hinder work
1289. Great Fire destroyed many workshops and much merchandise
„ Battle of Campaldino
„ Abolishment of slavery in Florence
1291. Many miracles at the Shrine of Or San Michele
„ Banners and coats-of-arms allotted to nine lowest Guilds
1292. Giano della Bella in power
1293. "*Ordinamenti di Giustizia*" promulgated
1294. Duomo, Palazzo Vecchio, Santa Maria Novella, and Santa Croce begun
1294-1310. Arnolfo di Cambio flourished, great builder and architect

1296. "*Il Statuto*" put out as a tentative General Code for the Guilds upon the founding approximately of the *Corte della Mercanzia*
„ Calimala Guild established many agencies in France
1300. Many countries represented at Jubilee of Pope Boniface III. by Florentines as ambassadors
„ Feud between "Blacks" and "Whites," *Neri e Bianchi*
„ Dante Alighieri elected Prior, instrumental in expelling *Neri* and *Bianchi*
1301-1307. Full revision of the Statutes of all the Guilds. The New Code adopted first by the "Calimala" Guild
1305-1377. Papal Schism. Increased activities and privileges of Florentine Bankers
1307. Piazza della Signoria laid out and paved
1310. Walls and moats finished. Great scarcity and bad trade
1312. Census and description of Florence by Dino Campagni
1313. King Robert of Naples Lord of Florence
1315. Many silk-workers from Lucca settle in Florence
1315-1327. Francesco Balducci Agent of the Bardi in Flanders and elsewhere
1318. Troubles among the wool workers
1320. University,—Studio di Firenze,—founded
1322. Constitution of subordinate Guild of Goldsmiths revised by officials of "*Por Santa Maria*"
1324. First official Register of Florentine merchants abroad
1325. Charles, Duke of Calabria, Lord of Florence
1326. Scali Bank failed, 400,000 gold florins
1328. Revision of the *Squittino*
„ *Consiglio del Popolo* and *Consiglio del Comune* empanelled
1329. Statutes of Society of Painters and of Society of Goldsmiths passed
„ *Ringhiera*,—public platform,—fixed outside Palazzo Vecchio
1330. Factory doors of *Umiliati* closed by General of the Order
1335. "*Il Statuto Vecchio*" of the Silk Guild promulged
1336. Alliance between Florence and Venice
„ Shrine of Or San Michele decorated by the Guilds
„ A new Ponte Vecchio built by Taddeo Gaddi
1339. Florentine merchants expelled from France
„ Guild of Painters incorporated
„ First record of resident Florentine Consular Agents at foreign ports
„ Disastrous failure of the Bardi and Peruzzi Banks
1340. The Campanile projected by Giotto
1335-1410. Francesco Sacchetti, "The Echo of the Old Market!"
1342. The Duke of Athens, appointed Conservator of Peace and Lord of Florence, favoured *Grandi* and *Popolani* in turn
1343. Buonaccorsi Bank failure
„ Attack by *Popolani* on palaces of *Grandi*
„ The *Popolo Minuto* in the ascendency
„ Niccolo Acciaiuoli founded *Certosa* at Montaguta for fifty apprentice youths

1344-5. Many *Grandi* families enrolled among *Popolani*
1345. Re-enactment of the *Ordinamenti di Giustizia*
„ Butchers occupied the forty shops in the new Ponte Vecchio
1347. Powers of the *Corte della Mercanzia* enlarged
„ Artizans strike for higher wages
1348. Great Plague. Three-fifths of the inhabitants die
„ Bargello rebuilt
1355. *Condottiere* system first created. Many Florentines became soldiers
1358. Florence had one hundred Judges and six hundred Notaries
1362. *Loggia di Pesci* in the Mercato Vecchio erected
1364-1427. Matteo Palmieri flourished,—famous Apothecary and poet
1372. "Ten of Liberty" elected
1373. Giovanni Boccaccio, Professor of Literature at the University
1374-1410. Buonaccorso Pitti's "Chronicle"
1376. Salvestro di Alamanno de' Medici, Captain of the *Parte Guelfa*
1378. Papal Schism beneficial to banking business of Florence
„ Rising of the *Ciompi*. Three operative Guilds formed
„ Michele Lando, *Gonfaloniere de Giustizia*
1386. Thorough revision of the Statutes of the Guilds
1388. "*La Cena Fiorentina*,"—The Florentine Supper,—all the rage
1391. Tribunal of the *Mercanzia* at zenith of its power
1395. Buonaccorso Pitti's Commercial Journey and Diary
1399. "White Penitents" made pilgrimages
1404. Pisa captured. Florence very prosperous
1404-75. Leon Battista Alberti flourished—Physician and astronomer
1411. Cortona purchased for 60,000 gold florins
1413. Hospital of San Paolo founded
1415. Fourth Scheduled List of the Guilds—twenty-one
1419. Martin V. resides in Florence, and gives the "Golden Rose" to the Government
1420. Bishopric of Florence raised to an archbishopric
1421. Giovanni de' Medici *Gonfaloniere di Giustizia*
„ Spedale degli Innocenti founded
„ Port of Livorno purchased for 100,000 gold florins
„ Six Maritime Consuls appointed—*L' Arte del Mare*
1427. New system of taxation—"*the Catasto*"
„ *Grandi* attempt to reduce fourteen Lesser Guilds to seven
1430. Jews allowed to settle in the Ghetto
„ First date of Wood-engraving in Florence
1436. Consecration of the Duomo
1437. Cennino Cennini's "*Trattato della Pittura*" written
1439. Church Council held at Florence
1440. Compulsory planting of mulberry trees
1441. *Congregazione di San Martino* enrolled by Archbishop Antonino
1451. Florentine commerce suffers through Venetian protective tariff
„ Cosimo de' Medici hailed "*Padre della Patria*"
1458. Priori della Libertà elected
1463. Piazza della Signoria completed

1466-67. War and peace with Venice
1470. Lorenzo de' Medici styled "*Capo della Repubblica*"
1471. Bernardo Cennini's printing-press first in operation
„ Luca Della Robbia President of the Guild of St Luke
1472. Lavish hospitality by members of the Merchant Guilds
1475. Unwritten law affirmed: "Every Florentine-born adult is free to gain his living as he wills"
1478. Conjuration of the Pazzi
1480. Many fiscal reforms agreed to
„ First private Florentine merchant-ship launched at Livorno
1482. Paolo Toscanelli, the discoverer, died
1483. Savonarola preaches in Lent
1489. Francesco Guicciardini's account of the State of Florence
1490. The Guild of Wool undertake charge of the Duomo
1492. Death of Lorenzo de' Medici
1494. Great constitutional changes. Curtailment of liberty
1495. Government Pawnshop—il Presto—opened
1497. Amerigo Vespucci sailed from Cadiz to discover America
1498. Vespasiano da Bisticci, the last *Scriptorius*, died
1502. Corruption creeps into Florentine Legal Tribunals
„ *Giudici alla Rota*—Council of Justice—appointed
„ Piero Soderini elected *Gonfaloniere* for life
1509. Florentine militia established by Machiavelli
1511. Great frost. *Il Calcio*, and other games, played on the frozen Arno
1527. Florence a prey to disorders and plague
„ Population divided between "*Palleschi*"—adherents of Medici—and "*Arrabbiati*"—the popular party
1528. Michael Angelo fortifies the city
1529-30. Siege of Florence by Prince of Orange for Pope Clement VII.
1530. Manufactory of Tobacco established
„ Honesty and patriotism of Niccolo Capponi
1532. Alessandro de' Medici created Duke of Florence by the Pope
„ The "*Signoria*" abolished
1534. Fourteen Lesser Guilds arranged in four Universities. Many privileges curtailed
1536. Charles V. visits Florence. Great Illuminations
„ Burial Reforms instituted by Statute of the Guild of Doctors and Apothecaries
„ Cascine laid out
1537. This is the usual date assigned to the end of the Republic and the transformation of Florence into a Principality
1540. First notice of casting steel in Tuscany at Florence
1543. Duke Cosimo I. induced Flemish tapestry workers to settle
1546. New *Loggia* erected in Mercato Nuovo
1547. Inundation and famine
1557. New Code of Por Santa Maria provided by the Medici

1561. Cosimo II. forbids imports of woollen cloth from England and Flanders—the death-knell of the Calimala !
„ Cosimo II. institutes Military Order of St Stephen
1562. Accademia delle Belle Arti founded by Cosimo II.
1564. Last of the *Umiliati*
1568. Cosimo II. gives new Constitution to the Tribunal of the *Mercanzia*
1580. Decline of merchant spirit evident in every sphere
1595. Sir Richard Dallington's visit and Diary
1597. Guild of Judges and Notaries abolished. "College of Judges and Notaries" incorporated instead

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