

the Saint. Of all the frescoes, perhaps the series in the chapel of St. Martin by Simone Martini, of Siena, done between 1322 and 1326, are the most pleasing for their delicacy and sense of mysticism.

In the lower church, the four frescoes of Poverty, Chastity, Obedience and the Apotheosis are attributed by tradition to Giotto. In the upper church the famous series of 28 frescoes of the life of St. Francis appear to have been completed before 1310 and again Giotto and his followers, among them especially Capanna, are supposedly the authors.

Assisi has two other churches of considerable interest, widely differing in style and source of appeal. First, the Cathedral of S. Rufino (who converted the Assisians), a severe Romanesque church, built from local stone and still retaining a dull rose tinge. S. Rufino was completed before the Basilica of St. Francis was started. Its facade has three doorways flanked by lions and griffons. The figures above the central doorway are of Christ between the Sun and the Moon, the Madonna and a deacon. They have a severe charm. The massive Campanile, with double bifore openings, is entirely in keeping with the facade. The interior is disappointing and stucco-covered.

Santa Chiara, whose three massive flying buttresses attract the attention of the visitor on his way to the only car park in the Piazza alongside, is more interesting within than without. It is a XIIIth Century building, similar in

form to San Francesco. The rose window at the western end shows very fine stone work. Inside some excellent frescoes are well preserved, and cover a wide range of religious interest. Some attempt is made to explain them to visitors. In this church the acoustics favour the choral services which are well conducted.

Assisi has a museum and picture gallery whose opening hours at present seem a little uncertain. Among its exhibits are a collection of Roman and Etruscan sculpture and bronzes and a well-known sarcophagus with a figure of Bacchus asleep—or perhaps under his own influence. In the Piazza Vittore Emmanuele III is an open loggia whose vaulted ceiling has some interesting non-religious paintings, dating from about 1530. They are a little reminiscent of those in certain houses at Pompeii.

The climb to the Rocco Maggiore, the old Suabian Castle above the town, is not recommended on hot days, though it is said that the view of the city well repays the effort. Beyond the city the panorama is said to offer fine contrasts between plains, hill and valley.

Assisi has a number of minor places of interest in its vicinity. Among them is the large Santa Maria Degli Angeli and the Torre d'Andrea. Interesting though these may be, time is probably better spent in the neighbouring town of Spello which is slightly to the left of the road toward Foligno.

CONCERNING TASTE

By R. D. McE.

The Irishman who reputedly murmured *De gustibus non disputandum est* as he kissed his cow, used this Latin tag as a device to answer inquisitive questioners of his taste. *There is no arguing about tastes*, quoted in Latin or colloquially, is at best merely a useful half-truth whether applied in the field of demonstrative affections or to paint-

ing, decoration or architecture. There is as much wrangling in the field of art as grumbling in the army—doubtless for the good of both.

"Talk as you will of Taste my friend, you'll find
Two of a face, as soon as of a mind."

—Pope.