

centre of an important school of painting even before the XIVth Century. The Chapel has some superb wrought iron railings: there is also a picture of S. Ansano by Sodoma in which a kneeling figure at the left exactly recalls Michelangelo's head of Adam in the Sistine Chapel.

The cathedral next demands attention but should time permit, a visit to S. Dominico and to S. Giovanni Battista—which has several Donatellos—and to Santa Maria dei Servi is worth while.

The cathedral at first glance seems so strange with its mass of carved detail, and the use of alternating bands of black and white stone that its full beauty is not appreciated. For this reason it is preferable to pay one or two quick visits and then later study the immense detail. The use of banded stone of different colour is common in central Italy and is partly a result of Moorish influence. Indeed, many people feel that the interior is reminiscent of North Africa. Southern Spain or Morocco afford better parallels.

The Cathedral of Siena was commenced early in the XIIIth Century and finished, except for the facade, in 1267. It is a remarkable commentary on the methods of the day that the name of the architect is unknown and the first architect whose name has come down is Giovanni Pisano who designed the facade.

Siena Cathedral as it appears today was intended merely as the transept of the "New Cathedral" which after many vicissitudes and the decimation of the Black Death in 1348, was abandoned. Some of its walls can be seen to the east of the present church, and the north aisle of the unfinished building serves as the museum for the cathedral. This is well worth visiting as it has, among many treasures, a complete set of the artists' drawings for the engraved marble floor of the cathedral, much of which is normally covered over. This marble floor is remarkable for a series of plaques by Beccafumi who has succeeded in drawing in marble with the delicacy of a woodcut. Pinturicchio and Bastiano di Francesco contributed to the wonderful floor.

In the Cathedral is the Piccolomini Library. It has ten fine frescoes by Pinturicchio, the artist of the Borgia apartments at the Vatican. So fresh is the colouring of these masterpieces that they appear to be only a few years old. One of the Kings of Scotland is figured in the series. The choir-stalls of the Cathedral show the superb craftsmanship of the XIVth and XVth Century Senese while in the sacristy is one of the finest of wrought iron gates. The terracotta heads in the nave are all Popes, of whom Siena has found eight.

Leaving the cathedral, one crosses the Piazza to the Ospedale Della Scala in which are several important frescoes. Siena has an Academy of Fine Art and also a private collection of the first importance in the Palazzo Saracini, to which admission can be obtained only by invitation.

The gates of the city survive, and of these the Porta Romana is, perhaps, as well preserved as any. The Porta Camollia at the northern end has had a very lucky escape from bombs.

The back streets well repay attention, and hardly any of the lesser palazzi, small churches and curious, arched byways like the Via del Galluza are without interest. Behind the main Piazza are to be found such simple and pleasing little structures as the Loggia di Pio II.

The Senese still retain their great pride in their city and also that curiously long memory for ancient wrongs which is to be found all over Italy.

