

would be easier to appreciate in its proper setting in Churches than as it is seen today on the damp walls of the Pinacoteca Vannucci at the Palazzo Communale. Later on, both the Commune and the wealthier families became patrons of the local artists. The excellent murals of Bonfigli and the work of Vannucci, better known as Perugino, show how they turned with equal skill to less religious subjects. Perugino was the teacher of Raphael who came from Urbino to learn from the Umbrian School.

The Umbrian collection is now being placed once more on exhibition, though bomb damage has broken many windows in the galleries. At the present time, there is no comparable collection on public display in Italy, and, even without some of the better pictures, it should not be missed.

The Palazzo Communale ranks among the best in all Italy. Its north facade opens on to the Piazza di Municipio, and, flanking the doorway, appear the Guelph Lion and the Perugia Griffon. The longer east facade has nearer its northern end a much - preserved, carved doorway. Inside the entrance is a wrought-iron lantern nearly five feet high. Incidentally, the chains which hang from the Lion and Griffon on the north wall were taken from the gates of Siena in 1358: Thus are memories of old victories and past struggles retained.

A little farther down the Corso Vannucci, one enters the Sala del Collegio della Mercanzia, the old Headquarters of the Mercanti, decorated early in the 1400's with rich painting and carved and inlaid wood. A few steps to the right of the Via Boncambi is the Sala del Cambio where the money-changers built their magnificent quarters in 1452. It contains some fine interior decoration, much of it by Perugino.

The fountain in the middle of the Piazza di Municipio is one of the finest of XIIIth Century fountains. Its sculpture is principally by Nicolò and Giovanni Pisano and dates from 1278. The column at the top supports a bronze basin with the Three Nymphs holding three griffons, - traditional emblem of Perugia.

Beyond the fountain is the severe exterior of the Cathedral of San Lorenzo, its plain lines broken by the little Loggia added by Braccio Braccioforte in 1423. The Cathedral Museum contains a number of notable works of art and should be visited.

Of the other churches of Perugia, San Pietro is most likely to appeal to New Zealand tastes. It is at the lower end of Borgo XX Giugno near the Porto S. Constanzo. This church has the Basilica form, and the nave is divided by eighteen Ionic Columns. These have in part been re-used from older buildings and one has a "miraculous" figure on it. A striking feature in the Church is the altar of many rare marbles and the richly carved choir stalls. The ceiling is richly decorated and among the innumerable religious pictures are works by Perugino, Bonfigli and the best artists of the Umbrian School. A delightful Child Jesus with St. John by Raphael is amongst the church's treasures. Other interesting churches are S. Dominico the curious little polygonal church of St. Angelo, and S. Agostino.

The story of Perugia must conclude with one more scene of Italian violence, for it is said that the characters in Raphael's well - known Deposition now in the Villa Borghesi in Rome was inspired by a murder which occurred about 1500. In that year a terrible storm concealed and helped a family conspiracy which led to the partial extermination of the powerful Baglioni family. The attackers were fifteen to one. Asterre Baglioni and his bride Lavinia who covered him with her body were killed as were the older members.

Gian Paolo alone escaped and planned revenge. Collecting some friends, he returned to the town and encountered outside the "Spedale" his enemy Griffoni, through whose throat he thrust his sword. Zenobia and Atlanta Baglioni ran to the dying man and gathered him up as he breathed his last. The last look of the dying son to his mother and wife were the source of Raphael's inspiration for his Deposition.