THE FLORENTINE GUILDS

BY

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The Florentine guilds from the twelfth to the sixteenth century, with one notable exception to be referred to hereafter, represent the high-water mark in the history of these great mediaeval institutions. But the formation of guilds was not confined to the city-states of Tuscany. England, France, Germany, Spain and other parts of Italy were the seats of these effective corporations.

Not only the etymology and spelling of the word "guild" are open to more than one interpretation, but, which is of greater weight, the very origin of the corporate activities of the guilds. The word "guild", which a noted authority ¹ believes should be spelled "gild", is of Teutonic root. The Anglo-Saxon word "gildan", meaning to pay, is found in the noun form "gegilda", meaning the "the subscribing member of a guild".

Brentano ² is of the opinion that the guild had its origin in a development from the family unit of Nordic life which, under the mollifying influences of Christianity became the merchant and manufacturing guilds, as well as the craft guilds. There are oth-

ers who maintain that the guilds may be traced to the corporate bodies of Roman times which existed under the names of "collegia" and "universitas". This view necessarily must be predicated upon the fact of whether (a) the corporation law of Rome existed in the provinces as well as in northern Italy after the down-fall of the Western Empire, and (b) the extent, if any, of its content during and after that debacle. It is true that the Roman law had the concept of the corporation as a unit aside and distinct from the persons who comprised it.¹

The codification of the Roman law under the direction of Justinian was practically completed in the year 533 A.D. The Code of the Corpus Juris Civilis refers to corporations such as those of the firemen and scavengers of Rome.² The musicians of Puteoli, likewise, were so organized.³

While scholars are undoubtedly divided upon the antecedents of the guilds, the view that they are traceable to Teutonic rather than Roman influences seems to have a better basis in fact. This does not deny the existence of organizations in Rome which

¹ Max Radin, Handbook of Roman Law, p. 266
² C.I.L. VI, 1872; 29, 691 Cf. Radin, op. cit.
may well have been the prototype of the guilds. It means that the influences under which the guilds were molded and developed were probably not aware of such organizations.

The guilds of England are traced to the seventh century. But the earliest well-known type of guild in Italy is that of the "mercanzia", in the tenth century.

The Florentine guilds from the standpoint of organization and achievement are indeed preeminent. The four golden centuries during which they thrived are full of their accomplishments. Since an understanding of the history of Florence is necessary to the proper perspective of the Florentine guilds themselves, a brief chronicle of Florentine history must be given. One can not but realize the tremendous genius of these people when one recalls that despite constant warfare not only between Florentines and their commercial rivals, but also among the citizens themselves: the age-old struggle of democracy.

Eight years after the promulgation of the code of Justinian, 541, Florence was captured by Totila, to be re-taken in 552 by Narses, the Byzantine general who was sent from the East which was then the
seat of Justinian, Rome having been superceded by Constantinople as the seat of the empire. Indeed, the very language of the Justinian Code became Greek, the language in which it was invoked in the Eastern Empire. When Charlemagne absorbed the Lombard kingdom which included Florence he honored the city by spending Christmas, 786, in its midst. In the quarrels which followed the demise of the Countess Matilda in 1115, Florence sided with the Pope and with the Guelphs, rather than with the Emperor and the Ghibellines. By so doing she was insuring her own liberty. Florence has been taken by many historians as the type which best represents the Italian communes. At first Florence was governed by two consuls, but in 1193 she substituted a "podesta", or chief magistrate. The legislative power was vested in the chief guilds (artes majores), to which were afterwards added the fourteen lesser guilds. A parliament met four times each year, but it was required that all public offices should be held alone by guild members.

In 1249, because of the re-enforcements sent the Ghibellines by Emperor Frederick II, the Guelphs were

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defeated, and an aristocratic form of government succeeded a democratic one although the "podesta" was retained. However, the captain of the people (capitano del popolo) shared his power, while the town was divided into six wards, or "sestieri", for military purposes. Over each ward were placed two elders, or aldermen. In 1254, the Guelphs once more assumed the ascendancy. Ghibelline Pisa was overcome in 1254, but in 1260, with foreign assistance, the Ghibellines once more were able to retaliate, whereupon the Guelphs chose to exile themselves with their families. In 1266, the people rose up in arms against their Ghibelline oppressors, restored the governments of the guilds and peace was concluded in 1280. The guild elected two councils. Eight Guelphs and six Ghibellines shared the executive power. In 1293 the nobles were deprived of eligibility to the office of guildmaster. A "gonfaloniere di giustizia" was selected to curb the abuses of the nobles. One is reminded of the animosity existing between the Montagues and Capulets in "Romeo and Juliet", as the story of the almost incessant feuds of the Florentines is pictured again and again in the various accounts which have been brought down to an interested pos-
terity. In 1300 a fresh internecine affray broke out between the nobles, led by Donati, who formed the "Neri, or Black faction", and the Cerchi, who became the "Bianchi, or White faction". The guildmasters resorted to a very clever expedient, they exiled the rival leaders. Among those who were obliged to leave Florence was Dante Alighieri, Florence's poetic gift to the world. When in 1310 Emperor Henry VII invaded Italy and compelled the submission of the Lombard and Tuscan cities, Dante, particularly in his treatise "De Monarchia", complained of the revolutionary spirit of the Florentines. Therefore, the Emperor was disinclined to treat the Florentines too lightly.

As in the thirteenth, so in the fourteenth century, the political history of Florence, like that of other Italian communes, is one of blood-shed and dissension. In the fifteenth century the unhappy Medici come upon the stage. The figure of the forceful Dominican monk, Savonarola, who was excommunicated and publicly burned in 1498, is the theme of the well-known work of George Eliot entitled "Romola".

The sixteenth century witnesses the decline of Florence. Her glory is in the accomplishments of
her citizens. Their labor, much of which is extant today, is a source of endless admiration to the countless visitors to Florence. Certainly without her guilds Florence should have attained little if any prominence because of her many sanguinary periods. But Dante, Giotto, the painter, sculptors like Ghiberti and Michelangelo, and architects like Brunelleschi are only part of Florence's contribution to humanity. The activities of her glorious guilds form another part.

Every Florentine reaching the age of sixteen was obliged to become a member of one of the guilds. Failing to do so, he was derisively called "scioperato", loafer, and had no share in the government of the city. But to matriculate in one as in all guilds, certain conditions had to be fulfilled, not unlike our college matriculations:

1. To be a native born Florentine.

2. To have two sponsors for family and personal character.

3. Never to have been convicted before a magistrate for any misdemeanor or felony.

4. To be possessed of a property qualification

5. To pay a state-tax for the privilege of enrolling.
7. To pay an entrance fee to the particular guild.

The members of the craft guilds were of three classes: 1. Maestri: masters; 2. Lavoranti: workmen; 3. Garzoni: apprentices. The apprentices remained in their class from five to seven years, with the option of a shorter term for the sons of the masters. The partial analogy between this arrangement of the guild and the current arrangement whereby in trades-unions the system of journeymen and apprentices obtains, strikes one's notice immediately.

Women, however, were not wholly excluded from the guilds. There is extant a record of a woman being admitted to the "Company of Belt and Girdle-Makers", in 1294.

The heads of the guilds were first known as consuls, but in time the use of the title "prior" was the custom. The twelve greater guilds appointed delegates to a General Council of the Guilds. The function of this representative body was to arbitrate and, if that were impossible, to punish those guilty of delinquencies. Of course, appeals might be taken. The Podesta became thus the "court of last resort".

1. Edgcumbe Staley, The Guilds of Florence, p.68
Syndics were appointed by the guilds to aid in the enforcement of the regulations and statutes of the guilds. The word is of Greek origin, meaning "with justice", one armed with authority. The good sense of the regulations of the guilds is apparent in the following prohibitions:

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.

It is quite in good form for one to criticize the Middle Ages with reference to their lack of knowledge concerning hygiene and disease prevention, and no doubt much of the criticism is justified, even though it remained for Pasteur, Koch and Lister of the nineteenth century to show why disease spreads through germs. But there is wisdom in the precaution of forbidding diseased horses from drinking at the public watering troughs, even with people who might have believed in the "spontaneous generation theory".

As to the guilds themselves, they offer such
varied phases that they may be studied from almost any angle. Religiously, politically, socially and economically, a study of their activities is never a tedious labor. These phases will be adverted to during the exposition and description of the individual guilds themselves.

The number and precedence of the guilds varied with the decades. If, however, one should take the year 1415, one would probably have a period when they can be observed to best advantage. There were then seven greater guilds, "Le Arti Maggiori", as follows:

1. L' Arte Giudici e Notai: Judges and Notaries.
2. L' Arte di Calimala: Merchants of foreign Cloth.

There were also fourteen lesser guilds, "Le Arti Minori", as follows:

1. L' Arte de Beccai: Cattle-dealers and butchers.
2. L' Arte de' Fabbri: Blacksmiths.
4. L' Arte de' Maestri di Pietre e di Legnami: Master Stone-masons and Wood-
carvers.

5. L’ Arte dei’ Rigattieri e dei’ Linaiuoli: Retail-dealers and Linen-merchants.


10. L’ Arte dei’ Coreggiai: Saddlers.

11. L’ Arte dei’ Chiavaiuoli: Locksmiths.


The lesser guilds were later grouped into four classes, 1534, each of which was termed a "University". Each university was ruled by one consul, reverting to the older term, in lieu of that of prior, and the consul was assisted by a chancellor, three treasurers, three syndics and four sergeants.

It will cause some astonishment when one does not find that the painters such as Giotto, and sculptors like Michelangelo and Ghiberti were not members of guilds bearing the titles of their respective professions. The reply is that the guilds were not fully-panoplied. They are the result of customs as well as of statutes. Hence, these noble professions were listed with one or the other of the guilds mentioned aforesaid. The painters, for example, were with the Doctors and Apothecaries, the sixth of the major guilds. This was because the painters purchased
their colors from the Apothecary, who, not unlike today, carried a full supply of merchandise other than the drugs strictly so-called.

THE GUILD OF JUDGES AND NOTARIES

The legal profession obtained first place in the classification of the guilds. True, they were associated with tradesmen, in cognate guilds, but so were painters and sculptors. The English Inns of Court bear signal relationship to this guild, and the modern bar associations to a less degree. Florence, like the rest of Europe, looked to Bologna for the training of her judges and notaries. While Shakespeare did not secure for Antonio a doctor of laws from Bologna in the "Merchant of Venice", there is little question but that Antonio's friends would have done so. In the year 1262, more than twenty thousand students were to be found enrolled in courses in civil and canon law in the University of Bologna alone. This fertile mother of the great universities of the Middle Ages was the source of the renewed study of the Corpus Juris Civilis. The judges formed a guild mentioned first in 1197. The treaty between Florence and Siena bears the name of agents of the guild. It has been said: "Bologna is the fountain of doctors
of the law; Florence of doctors of the notariate." That the notariate was composed of those who appeared and pleaded before the judges needs hardly be stated were it not that the word in our day, notary public, brings to mind one having the mere power to take and administer oaths. Forsooth, the notaries were, citing the English practice, barristers and solicitors both, or, in the American practice, attorneys and counselors at law. The magistracy of the guild consisted of the pro-consul and eight judges. On public occasions following the Podesta and Captain of the People was found the Pro-consul. No person was eligible for matriculation who had resided ten or more years away from Florence. This provision, no doubt, had a two-fold purpose:

1. To discourage interlopers.
2. To prevent exiles from enjoying the privilege.

The guild could admit in certain cases not withstanding these facts, and their own discretion alone governed. While there was a line of separation, not unnaturally, between the judges and the notaries, and friction between the two bodies was not always absent, the differences were never permanent, and the high tone of the guild was source of pride to all Florentines.
The supreme authority in all matters dealing with crime was vested in the Podesta himself, though in fact, he delegated his authority to three senior judges in practice, providing they were not consuls. It will impress the reader with a sense of the impartiality for which the Florentines were noted, at least in justiciable matters, when he is assured that the Podesta was quite invariably a non-Florentine.

For purposes of administration, the city, as mentioned before, was divided into six wards or sestieri. From the time of the Countess Matilda, a tribunal was assigned to each sestieri for hearing disputes. At least two judges, two notaries and two supervisors were always present. These judges exercised a civil as well as a criminal jurisdiction. The judges as well as the attendants displayed armorial insignia as well as the escutcheon of the guild.

Since Florence was preeminently a commercial city, the Court of the Merchants, "La Corte della Mercanzia", founded in 1296, was of prime importance. Six judges sat on this tribunal under the presidency of a foreign juris consult who was in most cases a graduate of the University of Bologna. The power of the court in compelling witnesses to testify and
produce records reminds one of the wide powers of a modern court. It was important that fairness govern all transactions since the trade of Florence was with the whole known world. This tribunal was said to have a three-fold purpose:

1. To insure that Florentine merchants and their merchandise should go with all possible security throughout the world.
2. To provide for the maintainance of the credit of the state.
3. To give no reason for the complaint of foreigners concerning Florentine justice.

The technicalities of the law which have brought so much condemnation upon its administration are well exemplified in the reports of actual litigations which have come down to us. The fashions and attire of the people were the subject of regulation. One woman, whose head-dress was reported too high, with amazing ingenuity replied: "Why, no, do you not see it is a wreath?" Another, accused of wearing ermine, replied: "This is not ermine. It is the fur of a suckling". When asked what a suckling was, she replied: "Oh, its only an animal". Of the Florentine citizens, this motto was often used: "In Florence he who is wise is also a good citizen, since, were he not good, he would not be wise".1

Of this very important guild, named for a narrow street in the Old Market, the brevity with which it can be described is disproportionate to the place it held in the commercial world of Florence. Its function was exclusively the dyeing of foreign cloth brought to Florence from all over Europe. The statutes of the guild are very elaborate. Since the patron saint of Florence was St. John the Baptist, the guild required that each member was to visit the cathedral on the saint's day and, after praying, offer a wax candle for one's intention. They bound themselves never to use blasphemous language, hospitals were maintained by them and usury was prohibited because "it is a sin specially displeasing to God." The terms of matriculation were similar to the other guilds. Very stringent were the rules with reference to fair dealing and first class workmanship. The dyes used were of vegetable origin. The plant called Guado or woad was used for blue dye, Robbia or madder for red; and Oricello or white moss, for scarlet. Special care was taken of the manner in which the imported wool was packed. England had always exported great quantities of wool to Florence for dyeing purposes,
but Henry VII prohibited the further exportation of wool and this was one of the death blows to the Calimala Guild.

THE GUILD OF WOOL

It is not to be wondered at that the manufacture of woolen cloth should become one of the major industries of any country so situated as was Florence. The trade was highly specialized. Among one of these minute divisions is the task of carder. The father of Columbus was engaged in this operation in the town of Genoa not so far distant from Florence as not to have become her rival in some industry. To enumerate a few of the specialized phases the following is of interest: Shearers, washers, sorters, carders, spinners, weavers, fullers, dyers (domestic cloth), winders, master-spinners, carding machine oilers, special workers, combers, beaters, comb-makers and curriers.

After the fleece had been cut off, it was washed in soft water. Often ammonia was mixed in the water. Then it was scoured in hot soap-suds until the grease dissolved. The water of the river Arno which ran through Florence to the sea was especially adapted for the washing of wool. The drying and sorting of the wool was next undertaken, and then the card-
ing and spinning. Since the dye-houses were adjacent to the river, one wonders why there do not seem to be records of suits for the pollution of the stream.

The escutcheon of the guild bore a figure of an "Agnus Dei", with a banner, surrounded by a wreath with fruit interwoven in it.

THE GUILD OF BANKERS AND MONEY-CHANGERS

The word banker itself is of late origin and denotes the idea of a bench where the transaction of banking was carried on. The skill of the Florentine bankers was equal to the task of financing the great industrial life of Florence.¹ In addition, the guild lent money to other communes in Italy, and later, extended their loans to most of the countries of Europe. The support which the Florentines gave to the cause of the Papacy against the Emperor, made them particularly personae gratae at Rome. Hence, they became the agents through which the Peter's Pence, throughout the world, was collected. Aside from the remuneration which the guild received as a result of this service, their prestige throughout Christendom became firmly established. Perhaps it will be surprising to hear that intrinsically, the guild of bankers and money-changers was very devout and charitable

¹ Melvin M. Knight, Economic History of Europe to the End of the Middle Ages, p.245 et seq.
as well. It has been said that no class of citizens was more meticulous in attendance at Mass and other religious exercises than this guild. Among the list of names of famous banking firms of the year 1260, appears the name "Buonaparte". It is well known that the ancestry of the great Corsican was Florentine, and while the family tree might not have been traced to that early period of time, it would not seem unlikely that Napoleon was of the same family.

The banking house of the Bardi Company, a partnership of nine persons, had in 1311 representatives in France, England, Ireland, Tuscany, Lombardy, Germany, Cyprus and Rhodes. In the extent of its interests it was not unlike the New York National City Bank which has extensive agencies throughout the world.

Perhaps one of the greatest services performed by the guild was the coining of gold Florins of such artistic merit and of such uniform weight that they became everywhere recognized as entitled to full value in an age of mutilated currency. The debasement of the currency was well-known in practice before the adoption of the federal constitution in the United States in 1787.
Florence was undoubtedly the financial center of the world. Letters of credit were possible for the guild to grant because of the agencies held by her bankers almost everywhere. They are the first to use this medium of exchange. No longer was it necessary for merchants to carry gold with them, requiring armed bands to defend it, and danger throughout the journey. An order on a Florentine agency was sufficient. In 1340, King Edward III of England was loaned more than 750,000 pounds. Not infrequently, however, loans were not repaid by sovereigns. This reacted on the entire body of Florentines and panics ensued.

State loans were often made and an income tax was actually introduced in 1427 by Giovanni de' Medici. Indeed, the Medici owe their initial rise to prominence because of their relation to the banker's guild.

While interest was not asked at first, service charges were made which was quite the equivalent. Interest was not unknown to the early Roman law and the Church was not opposed to its exaction in later mercantile pursuits.

THE GUILD OF SILK

The cultivation of the silk worm in Florence was
the result of a successful campaign which King Roger of Sicily made against Thebes in 1148. It has been said that two monks brought the silk worms from India to the Emperor Justinian, and that, thereafter, in the East especially, sedulous care was given to this nascent industry. Since the mulberry leaf was essential to the nourishment of the silk-worms, many such trees were planted and Florentine soil was found well adapted to the growth of the mulberry tree. The work of making the silk cloth was highly specialized just as in the woolen guild.

Sir Richard Dallington,¹ in 1596, made the following observation regarding the silk industry:

"In the months of May and June this worm 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....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....It is though there are yearly made of Florenece Rashes to the worth of two million of duckets, and of Silkes and Cloathes of gold and silver, to the value of three millions."

Affiliated with the guild of silk was the guild of goldsmiths. The greatest, perhaps, of these great artists, was Lorenzo Ghiberti, whose Florentine doors still incite the wonderment and esthetic senses of

modern visitors to Florence. But there was Filippo Brunellesco as well. And the autobiography of Benvenuto Cellini is as much admired as his famous sculptural work of Medusa, slain by Perseus. Cellini also worked in Paris as well as in Rome. His word pictures of both cities at the outbreak of the Protestant revolution are singularly fascinating. He has all the "Sang froid" of Gil Blas but at heart was a consummate artist.

It is difficult to assign reasons for the decline of the silk guild and the masterpieces of the goldsmith's guild. The genius of the latter has never been equalled and there appears no present renaissance to give life to such a movement. The inspiration and the subject are not perhaps favorable. The fame of the silk guild witnessed its passing as the other cities of Europe, especially Paris, became centers for its manufacturing.

THE GUILD OF DOCTORS AND APOTHECARIES

For many reasons, the progress of the science of anatomy, chemistry and surgery was more to be conspicuous by its absence than its fruition, for it was deemed impious to dissect the cadaver. Hence, herbs of various kinds were taken for the various
ailments that inflict humanity. The founder of the school of medicine in Florence is by common comment Taddeo d’ Alderotti, whose fame and large fees seem dependent upon the attendance upon Pope Honorius IV, who suffered from gout. Whether his Holiness would have recovered without the ministrations of Taddeo is a question which might well be answered in the affirmative. None other than Dante Alighieri in 1296 matriculated in this guild. While Dante’s father was a notary, his son had a penchant for statecraft and poetry rather than law and medicine.

Petrach says this of the medical profession of his day: "When I see a doctor coming I know all that he is going to say to me: Eat a pair of young pullets, drink much warm water." 1

Sweating the body was much resorted to, and in deed it was a very wise remedy for colds and the like. One of the medicines was to take the water in which cabbage had been cooked and drink it. While the author of the reference uses an exclamation mark after the recipe, it seems that the minerals and vitamins, while not known as such, may have been observed in this way: That good health is promoted by this potion.

As to the drugs sold by the apothecaries, it seems evident that sidelines were more remunerative.

For the Florentine ladies were not hostile to the use of perfumes. Sundry articles of many kinds found their way into the apothecary shop. Books were sold there, and later the printers came to be associated with this guild as did the painters because of the fact that their colors were obtained from the apothecary. And the makers of stained-glass also sought and obtained admission to the guild for probably the same reason. Benvenuto Cellini calls "Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael Santi and Michelangelo...the book of the world." Da Vinci was an engineer as well, and by many is said to have anticipated Harvey by observing the circulation of the blood.

THE GUILD OF FURRIERS AND BUTCHERS

It cannot be denied that there is cause for the waning of one's academic interest in the Florentine guilds when the guilds above-mentioned are considered. That the workers in these guilds were diligent, thorough and honest as the craftsmen of all the guilds does not diminish one's feeling. The use of fur for costumes and to indicate the position in life of the wearer was peculiar to the Middle Ages. From the
inexpensive fox skin to the use of ermine, the Florentines gave every indication that they were pleased by rich attire as much because of vanity as because fur is a protection in cold weather.

Dante speaks of pristine Florence in his "Paradiso" as follows:

"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!"

One recalls with Dante's description the poet himself standing at the bridge in Florence as Beatrice passes by.

The great artist Luca della Robbia, in his twelve "Rondels", notes the costumes of the Florentines as follows:

"A plain shirt of wool or linen, or 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 woolen cloth, or coarse linen canvas; but when going into market or

1. Paradiso, Canto xv.
2. Staley, op. cit. p. 289
Mass, they superimposed a skirt of black or green, and covered their heads with white linen kerchiefs, or woolen shawls.

Of the butchers, it need only be said they worked under careful supervision to insure the killing of cattle under the most hygienic conditions known. The quality of the meat was as represented, the consuls of the guild requiring that good faith should govern all transaction between the guild and the public of Florence. At the same time, there were, as in other guilds, accretions of citizens whose functions did not in any way resemble the main purpose for which the parent guild was established. For example blacksmiths and shoemakers were added to the butcher’s guild.

THE GUILD OF MASTERS OF STONE AND WOOD

THE GUILD OF CLOTH DEALERS AND LINEN MANUFACTURERS

This rather complicated guild represents artistic Florence as the pinnacle of her greatness, for the names of Lorenzo Ghiberti, Luca della Robbia, Donatello, Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Buonarroti and Torrigiano loom before one. And can the useful occupations of cloth-dealers and linen-manufacturers be given a proper treatment in connection with that hierarchy of fame? Italians have always had a penchant for stone work. This is discernible in America today
by the number of Italian stone masons employed on various buildings. The Church of St. John the Baptist is a living memorial to the perfection of the workmanship of these artists of Florence. Far and wide did these master craftsmen travel to construct works of art. In 1513, Piero Torrigiano erected the shrine of Henry VII and Queen Eleanor in Westminster, England. Despite their patronage, Torrigiano called his employers: "Those beasts the English".

The linen manufacturers carried on the same process in the preparation of the flax for spinning as they do today and as the famous Irish linen manufacturers are doing.

The cloth merchants at first sold merely remnants, but later were given more extensive privileges. The utmost care was taken to prevent unfair practices. The stamp of the manufacturer and the size of the material was placed on every piece of cloth. There were rules, likewise, for the display of merchandise. No pavements were obstructed by greedy salesmen ready to make any representation respecting cloth.

THE GUILD OF WINE-MERCHANTS AND INN-KEEPERS

A Florentine would be an odd exception were he not to be interested not only in the manufacture but
in the consumption of wine. The growing of grapes was an art. The selection and blending of grapes, and the production of varying degrees of wine was a task for which they were well-fitted. At times of public rejoicing the consumption of wine greatly increased. It will seem an anachronism when it is observed that there were prohibitions concerning the sale of wine. For example: "Anyone selling wine to citizens after the final stroke of the campanile bell incurred a penalty of one hundred lire." ¹

There is a wood-cut of an inn-keeper of the fifteenth century standing with provisions and keys in his hands. It might offer suggestions to the hotel associations of America for more than one bill-board. No game of chance was permitted in the room, but whether or not notice of this fact was posted on the inside door of the guest's room does not appear. The liability of the inn-keeper to the guest for the theft of goods from his room, as in the Roman and English law, was maintained since it was to be feared that the inn-keeper and thief enter into a conspiracy against which the guest would be helpless. The cooking of the Florentines will long be remembered

by anyone who has read George Eliot's "Romola". Sup­per-clubs were matters of course. As to the menu: sa­lam and figs were the piece de resistance. Fish, fried in oil with rosemary leaves, was a delicacy. Thrushes stuffed with sage and bread or mushrooms, were always in demand.

THE GUILD OF OIL MERCHANTS
and
OTHER GUILDS

The raising of olives was of course a useful oc­cupation, as well as the production of olive oil there­from. Saddlers and locksmiths were in the same guild with the oil merchants and growers. Saddlers, armour­ers, carpenters and bakers came next in the order of the minor guilds. Each took precedence over the guild of bakers which was producing an article more necess­ary to life and state than the making of saddles. At public banquets, however, the wife of a brother-in­law, the sister of the member of the saddlers' guild acting as his hostess, would take precedence at table over the wives of the members of the bakers' guild.

While one is not prepared to agree with Dr. Walsh in his statement that the thirteenth is the very greatest of centuries, one can not escape the conviction that from the twelfth to the sixteenth
century especially there lived a race of men strong in intellect and faith who have left for succeeding generations an invaluable legacy. We have not produced their peers, and the immediate prospect of our doing so does not appear sanguine. Bold indeed is he who will essay to call these golden, glorious years the "dark ages".
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A BRIEF CRITICISM
of
THE BIBLIOGRAPHY

The "Guilds of Florence" a book written by Edgcumbe Staley has been the principal source of the material used in the writing of this brochure.
His treatment of the subject is sympathetic, and his appreciation of the religious motives of the guildsmen is worthy of commendation. However, he lacks the ability to write smoothly, and his style is lacking where there is such a fertile source of inspiration to even the dullest writer. The frequent use of exclamation marks which at times must have been inserted to lead the reader to believe that the Florentines had their vagaries, but on the whole were very clever, is clearly inadvised.

Professor Villari's book on "Mediaeval Italy" is written with the purpose of establishing the thesis that southern Italians are not inferior in culture or achievement to their northern neighbors. His treatment of the Tuscan communes with especial reference to Florence is illuminating.

Professor Knight's "Economic History of Europe" is short but fairly adequate. It might be used for collateral reading together with Thorndyke's "Mediaeval History" and Munro and Sontag's "The Middle Ages".

Perhaps as no one else, Dr. Walsh has caught the spirit of the Middle Ages. A new edition of his work on the "Thirteenth Century" would seem timely.

Bella Duffy's "Tuscan Republics" gives a clear
presentation of the Tuscan League and its problems.

Machiavelli's "History of Florence" is probably more interesting on account of the noted, if not "notorious", views of its author than for any other reason. His practical statesman will be remembered, but not with the same pleasure with which one will recall Dante Alighieri.

The Catholic Encyclopaedia has several good articles on the guilds. The author of the 'English Guilds', Edward Burton, and the author of the 'Italian' Guilds', P.J. Marique, seem to be in conflict regarding the origin of the guilds, the former contending that it is of Teutonic origin, the latter that the Roman collegia forms its conscious starting point. The Encyclopaedia Britannica also contains a very scholarly article upon the guilds.

The writer has had in mind the bringing out of the main points and especial glories of the Florentine guilds, rather than the presentation of uninteresting minutia. This together with the limited available material upon such a subject as the Florentine guilds, accounts for the author's short bibliography.