

Horse Racing Under Mediaeval Rules Still Popular Sport at Rome

ROME, Aug. 28.—In no other country are ancient usages and customs so well cherished as in Italy. The life of the middle ages could be described from observation and study of present day institutions. Thus

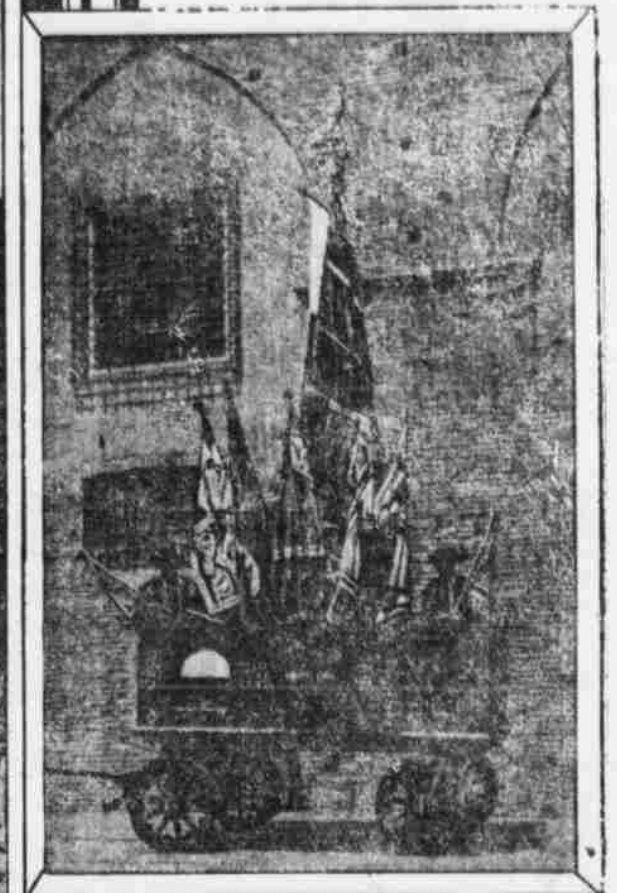


BANNER OF THE CONTRADA NAMED THE PANTHER, AND STANDARD BEARER.

BANNER OF THE CONTRADA NAMED THE DRAGON, AND STANDARD BEARER.



THE RACE FROM AN OLD PRINT.



THE CARROCCIO.

the Palio races in Siena on July 2 and August 16 have retained the character they had when instituted in 1500.

The origin of these races could be traced back to ancient Roman times. Before they were instituted in Siena the annual races were run by buffaloes ridden by jockeys, which contests supplanted bull fights in 1500, when, to quote a writer of the time, "the habits of the people began to become more gentle."

Palio is derived from pallium and refers to a banner awarded to the winning horse. The ten horses that run the race each represent a contrada or ward of the city. Originally the city was divided into six wards, each characterized by a special name, generally that of some animal or natural object, and each having its own church and patron saint, as well as its special banners, emblems and colors.

After the plague of 1330 the wards were reduced to forty-two, and subsequently the Medici reduced the number to twenty-three. In 1675 six contrade were suppressed for bad conduct and thus only seventeen are now left.

Ten wards are selected by lot to run the Palio. The horses are assigned by lot to the wards a week before the race takes place. The following are the names of the wards: Tortoise, Wood, Snail, Panther and Eagle, of the first division; Boar, Tower, Caterpillar, Owl, Bull and Unicorn, of the second; and Dragon, Goose, Wolf,

Giraffe, Fox and Deer of the third. Although only ten wards compete for the race all take part in the preliminary parade and two days beforehand the banners of all seventeen are taken to the cathedral, where they are hung till the time for using them comes. The patron saint of each ward plays an important part during the race, as although the races are run in honor of the Virgin to whom the Siennese have from time immemorial dedicated themselves, still the people of the winning ward ascribe the victory to the power of their protecting saint.

In fact on the day preceding the race two pages from each contrada, dressed in medieval costume, carry a huge basket of artificial flowers to the church of their saint and after the races are over the winning horse is escorted by his contrada to the church, into which he is carried for benediction. There is a deep rooted jealousy between the different contrade which has outlived the old divisions of party, and, even at present, leads to scenes of violence and bloodshed.

The jockeys are professionals, and they, like the horses, are assigned by lot to the wards. The means adopted to secure the prize are often most unscrupulous. Every possible attempt is made to corrupt or buy the jockey. Sometimes two contrade are so jealous of a third that they agree to prevent its winning, even if they have

to renounce the prize themselves.

The horses are ridden without saddles and each of the jockeys is armed with a thick whip called nerbo, with which by the old rules of the race still in force he can if he chooses not only cut his companions across the face or beat back their horses and thus prevent them from winning, but also knock them off their horses. It is not uncommon for fierce fights to take place between the riders, several of whom may be beaten off their horses.

As the race draws near the close the losing parties often attack each other violently and use every means in their power to drag and beat back the winning horse, so that in most cases the race degenerates into a fight. Since 1719 the whips used by the jockeys are distributed by the police at the time of the race in order to prevent the use of certain long whips which were such formidable weapons that they could easily be used to knock off the jockeys from their horses, with great danger to their lives.

Except for this change the rules of the races have never been altered, and they are practically the same as they were about 300 years ago. The race takes place in the Piazza del Campo, which is semicircular in shape and resembles a cockle shell, sloping gently from the curving rim toward the straight side, in the center of which stands the municipal palace.

This piazza is stone paved and quite unadapted for a race course owing to its unevenness, sudden curves and steep descents. At the most dangerous points mattresses are laid to break the fall of horse or rider for the race is seldom run without accidents, but there is a tradition that the Virgin will not allow a rider to be killed outright during the race, and in fact only one jockey is known to have been killed, Ossi Paci in 1719, after which the number of horses was restricted to ten by a civic decree.

The piazza is richly decorated on the day of the races. The pavement is strewn with yellow sand, tiers of seats are built round the lower stories of the buildings and draped with cloth, and temporary wooden barriers are erected round its boundary thus forming the race course. From every window and balcony rich draperies of every fabric and color are hung, while flags float from every building. Needless to say, the whole piazza is crowded, and it looks as if it were paved with faces.

After a long wait under the broiling mid-summer sun, which, however, does not seem to have any effect on the natural cheerfulness of the crowd, the course is cleared and the parade of the contrade enters. While the bands burst forth into music. First come the seven representatives of the contrade that do not take part in the race.

They are all dressed in mediaeval costumes, rich in color and texture. A drummer beating wildly on his drum marches in front and behind him come several members of the contrada with the banner and emblems of their district.

The ten other contrade follow. Besides their drummers each has two standard-bearers, who wave their flags backward and forward, fling them high up in the air, catch them as they fall, twist them round their bodies and execute all sorts of tricks with wonderful skill and grace. Four officers and the captain of the contrada, attended by two pages, all in ancient costumes, bring up the rear. Then, accompanied by his groom, comes the running horse, decorated with flowers, richly caparisoned and with his hoofs covered with gold leaf, and immediately following him comes the jockey or fanto, riding another horse and wearing a plumed helmet and a particular dress with the arms of the contrada on his back.

As each contrada passes it is saluted with loud cries. Meanwhile the drums are all beating together, bands playing, people shouting and cheering, multicolored flags waving. All this noise and color in a space enclosed with old mediaeval palaces and filled with a modern but Italian and hence excited crowd, carries one back out of the present century into the middle ages. The illusion is rendered complete when

drawn by six horses and surrounded by men in armor, the great Carroccio, with a tall pillar in the center, surmounted by a bell and with the flags of the contrada grouped on it, slowly rolls by at the end of the procession. The Carroccio is the old war chariot of Siena and the most characteristic feature of the whole show. It is a relic of mediaeval warfare, invented by the Milanese and originally intended to bear the flag of the city in battle. In fact, even today it carries the black and white colors of Siena.

The object of this war chariot in the middle ages was to give solidity to the charges of the army in the field, and it was a point of honor to defend it to the last. The Carroccio always accompanied the army, and wherever it stopped was the place of battle. The bell served to give the signal for attack or retreat or to call to council.

The direction of the car was generally given to the most expert in tactics and the art of war and he became its captain. He was accompanied by eight trumpeters and a priest, who said mass and shrived the dying during battle.

The Carroccio originally used in the Siena races was taken from the Florentines in the battle of Monte Aperto, fought in 1320, when the Siennese, who numbered only 1,100, against 40,000 Florentines, killed 10,000 of the latter. The carroccio now in use was

made after the old model. After the procession's slow parade around the ring, the representatives of the contrada take their seats in a special section reserved for them and the race begins. The jockeys take off their helmets and put on caps of the color of their contrade. The police distribute the whips, a gun is fired, the rope falls and the horses shoot forward amid a thunderous uproar. A lively struggle is then seen among the riders. They strike one another fiercely, they grapple together and strive to knock

their adversaries' horses back. Meanwhile the people, wildly excited, jump and scream, some hiss and hoot, while others applaud.

At almost every turn of the course—the race is three turns around the piazza—some jockey is tugged headlong against the padded mattresses. Others are dragged off their horses by sheer force, but generally these succeed in catching their adversary's bridle and spot his race as well.

Sometimes a horse or two, riderless and maddened by the tumult, break away and clearing the barrier rush through the excited crowd within, creating a panic and increasing the confusion and uproar. As the successful horse nears the goal the people of his contrada become wild with joy.

After the race the crowd rushes over the course and runs toward the winner, the majority to vent their anger on him, the others, those of his contrada, to protect him. He is surrounded, lifted off his horse, embraced, hugged and kissed until he is almost suffocated.

The police generally rescue him both from his friends and enemies. After a while both the winning jockey and horse are escorted by the people of their contrada to the post, where the prize, or palio, is awarded and the horse is borne away in triumph to church, where the banner just won is blessed.

For weeks after the race the festivities of the successful contrada continue. The horse is paraded through the streets with music, he is brought upstairs to the second story of the Palazzo Chigi and exhibited from the balcony to crowds of admiring and applauding spectators below, and finally banquets are given in the open streets and the horse is invited and occupies the head of a long table with a fine full manger before him.

Such are the races of the palio at Siena today and such have they been for hundreds of years gone by.

Cairo the Big Egyptian City Located at the Head of the Nile Delta

(Copyright, 1907, by Frank G. Carpenter.)

CAIRO, (Sept. 5.—(Special Correspondence of The Bee.)—Stand with me on the hill of the citadel and take a look over Cairo. We are high above the River Nile and far above the minarets of mosques which rise out of the vast plain of houses below. We are as high up as the tops of the pyramids, which stand out upon the yellow desert, away off at the left. The sun is blazing, and there is a smoky haze over the Nile valley, but it is not dense enough to hide Cairo. The city, which lies right under us, is the largest on this continent, and one of the mightiest of the world. It now contains 1,000,000 inhabitants, and, in size, it is fast approximating Heliopolis and Memphis in the height of their glory.

Of all the Mohammedan cities of the world, Cairo is now growing the fastest. It already has only 100,000 less people than Constantinople. It is four times as big as Damascus, eight times as big as Bagdad and fifteen or twenty times the size of either Mecca or Medina, where the Prophet Mohammed was born and died. It has more than doubled its population since I last visited it, and with my glass I can now see the scaffolding about the new buildings which are rising here and there over the plains. The town now covers an area equal to fifty quarter-section farms, and its buildings are so crowded together that they form an almost continuous structure. The only trees to be seen are those in the new French quarter, which lie on the outskirts.

Mohammedan Cairo.

The most of the city is of Arabian architecture. It is flat-roofed and is made up of yellowish-white buildings, are crowded along narrow streets that they can hardly be seen at this distance. Here and there, out of the field of white, rise tall, round stone towers with galleries running about them. They dominate the whole city, and under each is a mosque. These mosques are the Mohammedan churches. There are hundreds of them in Cairo, and not a few have been recently erected. Everyone has its worshippers, and upon every tower, five times a day, the shrill-voiced Arabian priest calls out for the people to come to prayers. There is a man now calling from the minaret of the mosque of Sultan Hassan, which is just under us. The mosque itself covers more than two acres, and the minaret is about half as high as the Washington monument. The priest is standing in a gallery, with scaffolding above and below him. His mosque is being repaired, and \$200,000 will be spent upon it when present plans are completed. Just next to another mosque, recently begun, and about as we can see evidence that

Mohammedanism is by no means dead, and that these people worship God with their pockets as well as with their tongues. In the Alabaster mosque, which stands at my back, fifty men are now praying, and in the courtyard a score of others are washing themselves before they go in to make their vows of repentance to God and the Prophet. Not far below me I can see the mosque el-Azhar, which has been a Mohammedan university for more than a thousand years, and where something like 5,000 students are now learning the Koran and Koranic law.

During my stay in Tunis the Mohammedans were celebrating their Lent or Ramadan, and not a one of the vast population of Tunisia, who believe in the Prophet, would take a bite to eat from sunrise to sunset, and the more devout would not even swallow their spittle. Here at Cairo I have seen the people preparing to take their pilgrimage to Mecca, rich and poor starting out on that long journey into the Arabian desert. At present many go part of the way by water. The ships leaving Alexandria and Suez are crowded with pilgrims and there is a regular exodus from Port Sudan and other places on this side of the Red sea. They go across to Jeddah and there lay off their costly clothing and make their way inland, clad only in aprons and a piece of cloth over the left shoulder. This is so of the rich and the poor. Many of the former carry gifts and other offerings for the sacred city, and such gifts cost the Egyptian government alone a quarter of a million dollars a year. Not only the khedive, but the Mohammedan rulers of the Sudan, send gifts, and I understand that the new railroad which has been recently completed from far up the Nile to the Red sea is now giving special rates to pilgrimage parties. It is by no means safe to look upon Mohammedanism as a dead religion.

Religion of the Lites.

And still I sometimes wonder whether this Mohammedanism is not a religion of the lips rather than of the heart. These people are so accustomed to uttering the words of prayer that they forget the sense. The use of the word God is heard everywhere in the bazaars. The water carrier, who goes about with a pail upon his back, jingling his brass cups to announce his business, cries out: "May God recompense me," and his customer replies as he drinks by giving him a copper in the name of the Lord. The lemonade peddler, who carries a glass bottle as big as a four-gallon crock, does the same, and I venture the name of the Deity is uttered here more frequently than in any other part of the world. It is through this custom of re-

ligious pretext that I am able to get free of the beggars of the city. I have learned two Arab words, "Allah yantik," which mean: "May God give thee enough and to spare." When a beggar pesters me I say these words gently. He looks upon me in astonishment and then touches his forehead in a polite Mohammedan salute and goes away.

City of the Egyptians.

The tourist who passes through Cairo and stays at the big hotels is apt to think that the city is fast becoming a Christian one. He is told that the British are its real governors, and as he drives over asphalt streets lined with the fine buildings of the European quarter it seems altogether English and French. If he is acquainted with many foreigners he finds them living in beautiful villas, or it may be in apartment houses such as would not be out of place in any city of Europe or of the United

States. He does his shopping in modern stores, and gradually comes to the conclusion that the Arab city is fast passing away. This is not so. Cairo is a city of the Egyptians. Not one-tenth of its inhabitants are Christians, and it is the 800,000 or 900,000 natives who make up the life blood of this municipality. They are people of a different world from ours, as we can see if we go down and stroll through the city. They do business in different ways, and they trade much the same now as they have been trading for generations back. Their stores are crowded along narrow streets which wind this way and that, so that one might lose himself in them. Every branch of business has its own section. In one place there are nothing but saddlers, in another only shoemakers, and in another the workers in copper, silver and brass. The book-sellers and bookbinders have a street of

their own, and so have the clothiers and tailors. Nearly every store is a factory as well, and most of the goods offered you are made in the shops.

I have been in most of the great bazaars of the world, and I know of none more interesting than those of Cairo. In them thousands are buying and selling, and each narrow street has a stream of long. From the top of one's donkey this stream is red and white upon a bed of black and blue. The red is the fez caps and the white the turbans, while the blacks and blues are the gowns of the people below them. The sides of the streets are bright with the goods hanging out of each little shop, and the whole is like wandering through a world's fair in which the exhibitors are dark-faced, turbaned, long-gowned men, who sit cross-legged on carpets, with all the treasures

of the orient piled about them.

Although the foreigner and his innovations are almost everywhere in evidence, native Cairo is much the same now as it was in the days of the Arabian Nights. These people believe the same as they did then; they wear the same costumes; the women are as closely veiled, and all the characters of the days of Haroun Al Rashid are to be seen. Here the visionary Alnasheed squats in his narrow, cell-like store, with his basket of glass before him. He has long water pipe in his mouth and is musing on the profits he will make from peddling his glass; growing richer and richer, until the khedive will be glad to offer him his daughter in marriage, and he will spurn her as she kneels before him. He almost expects to see the glass turned over as it was in the story, and his castles in the air shattered with his kick. Next to him is a shaven Mohammedan who reminds us of Sindbad the Sailor, and a little further on is a Harameelin, washing his hands with invisible soap in invisible water, and apparently inviting his friends to come and have a great feast with him. Here two long-gowned, gray-bearded men are sitting on a bench drinking coffee together; and there a straight, tall maiden, robed in a gown which falls from her head to her feet and with a long black veil covering all of her face but her eyes, looks over the wares of a handsome young Syrian, reminding us of how the hours slipped in the days of the past.

Donkeys and Camels.

Oriental Cairo is a city of donkeys and camels. In the French quarter you may have a modern cab for 15 cents a ride, or you may jump on the electric street cars and go a long distance for from 25 to 5 cents. You may even hire an automobile to carry you over the asphalt. The streets of the native city are too narrow for such things, and you are crowded to the wall again and again for fear that the spongy feet of the camels may tramp upon you. You are grazed by loaded donkeys, carrying grain, bricks or bags on their backs; and the donkey boy who is trotting behind an animal ridden by some rich Egyptian or his wife calls upon you to get out of the way. The donkey is the best means of getting around through the native city and the cheapest. You may hire one for two hours for 20 cents for half a day for 50 or 60 cents and all day for \$1. Every riding animal is numbered. My donkey of today was named "California" and the number on his saddle was 277.

Some Queer Citizens.

The characters of these bazaars are odd to an extreme and one must have an educated eye to know who they are. Take that man in a green turban; he is looked

Girls of Cairo.

But the crowd in these streets is by no means all men. There are women scattered here and there through it, and such women! Talk about your peek-a-boo winks! The Cairo girls have peek-a-boo winks! All their bodies, with the exception of their eyes, are hidden, and one has to look close through the slits in their veils to see whether their skins are white, black or brown. They are by no means good looking as they walk through the streets. Those of "upper classes" are clad in cloaks of black bombazine, made so full that they hide every outline of the person. Some have their cloaks tied in at the waist, and they look like black bedclothes walking off upon legs. Here one raises her skirts and you see that she has on zouave bloomers which fall to her ankles; they make me think of the fourteen-yard breeches worn by the girls of Algiers. The poorer women wear gowns of blue cotton, and a single gown and veil make up a whole costume. Some of them carry babies astride their hips or their shoulders, and the babies are often as naked as when they were born. Not a few of the women have eunuchs to go about with them. The latter are as black as my hat and as sour as the sphinx. They are to keep the young women from flirting as they shop in the bazaars.

Nearly all of the women have their faces covered. In the oriental quarters you will not meet any, except the very lowest of the peasants, who has not a long veil of black crepe, six inches wide, reaching from



PEEKABOO VEIL OF A CAIRO GIRL.

CARPENTER'S DARKEY CALLED "CALIFORNIA" AND NUMBERED 277.

(Continued on Page Four.)