

Viterbo the Unchanged and Its Atmosphere of Mediaeval Mustiness

ROME, Oct. 1.—If you want to see what an Italian town of the middle ages was like go to Viterbo. The city retains today all its medieval characteristics and modern progress and influence have practically failed to change its aspect.

Viterbo is moreover the birthplace of Santa Rosa, who obtained her position as patroness of the city rather through political than piety. Her feast, which is celebrated on September 4, is one of the most characteristic in Italy.

Santa Rosa was not a professed nun but only a Franciscan tertiary. She was born in the beginning of the thirteenth century when Viterbo was under the oppressive domination of Frederick II of Germany. At the age of 16, clad in the habit of the Third Order of St. Francis, she preached in the public streets against the crimes of the monarch.

The emperor banished not only the girl but the entire family. Still the work she had undertaken survived her departure and the people of Viterbo rose as one man against her foreign oppressor and drove him from the town. When the emperor died she returned triumphantly to her native city and a few years after her death (May 8, 1261) she was canonized by the pope she had served and invoked by the people she had advocated.

Pope Alexander IV instructed by a vision for three nights in succession, went in procession to Viterbo followed by all the cardinals and exhumed the body of the saint and transferred it to a newly built church, where it rested for several centuries. One night, a legend says, she arose from her grave when the chapel was on fire, rang the bell of warning for the people and quietly returned to her resting place.

The chapel was burned down and even the clothes and jewels on the saint, but her body remained unconsumed, although her face and hands were blackened by the flames. Visitors to the modern church built to replace the old one may see the body of the saint encased in glass under a golden shrine, still uncorrupted except for the marks of the fire.

The people of Viterbo of today show as much devotion to the town's patron saint as their forefathers. The festivities in her honor last three days. A huge, heavy shrine, representing the saint, her miracles and the incidents from her life, is carried in procession by fifty of the strongest men of the town.

The "Macchina di Santa Rosa," as the shrine is called, is the most wonderful contrivance of its kind, and as it winds through the narrow streets of Viterbo it overtops the houses and gives one the impression of a moving tower. Besides the procession, the feast of Santa Rosa is celebrated for its races, run through the narrow, winding streets, the same as in the middle ages.

Viterbo in the thirteenth century was

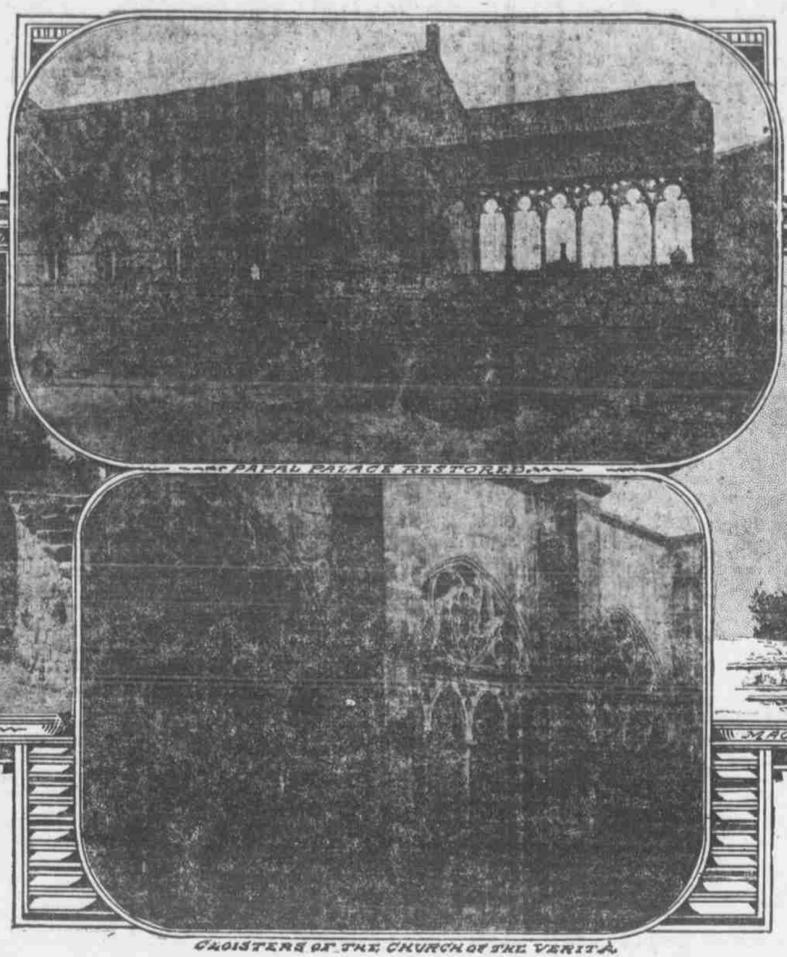
the favorite residence of the pope, who inhabited the palace near the cathedral, where six of them, viz., Urban IV (1261), Clement IV (1264), Gregory X (1271), John XXI (1276), Nicholas III (1277), and Martin IV (1281), were elected. The last conclave lingered on for six months, as the cardinals failed to agree. This angered Charles of Anjou, who was then at Viterbo, so much that in his impatience he ordered the removal of the roof of the conclave hall, which energetic step hastened the election of the pope.

Adjoining this hall is a smaller room,



also roofless, where John XXI was killed, owing to the falling of the ceiling. This pope was a man of letters and science and spent his short pontificate of a year in writing mathematical treatises, which were looked upon with suspicion by his cardinals and court.

His great desire seemed to be to abolish religious communities and naturally he was disliked by monks and nuns. Soon after his election he caused to be built a bedroom next to the council chamber, and while with head upturned he was contemplating with pride the noble chamber



he burst into laughter, and at that moment the roof fell on him.

A legend says that on the night of the accident a friar, who was calmly asleep in his convent, roused the community, crying: "Run, brothers; I see a man in black, knocking with a hammer on the walls of the apartment of the pope. Pray, pray, that it will not fall." Then he added, with a shriek: "It is too late; the wall has fallen!"

The black man was supposed to be the devil, but gossips at the time (and this pope was greatly beloved by the common people) whispered that the black man was prob-

ably one of the monks whom the pope hated so much.

The work of the devil or monk has been respected until the present day, and no human hand has dared to rebuild what was so mysteriously demolished. Quite recently the papal palace has been restored to its original beauty, but John XXI's room is and will probably remain roofless, as modern Italian workmen are as superstitious as those of the thirteenth century.

The cathedral near the papal palace is full of historical interest, as it was here that the son of Richard, earl of Cornwall,

nephew of Henry III of England, was murdered at the foot of the high altar where he was giving thanks together with his cousin, Prince Edward, for his safe return from the crusades.

Just at the altar steps he encountered Guy de Montfort, hereditary enemy of his family, who stabbed him as the priest was about to begin mass. The murderer, on leaving the church, thrust his sword into the ground and when his followers begged him remember that Simon de Montfort, his father, had been ignominiously dragged in the dust, he hastily returned to the church and taking the body of his dead foe by the hair dragged it in the piazza. His deed is commemorated in Dante's "Inferno," canto xii, 115.

Preserves of great value but mostly in a bad state of preservation are continually being discovered in the cathedral, which like all old buildings in Italy has been whitewashed several times over. A fresco lately discovered behind one of the side altars represents a sweet faced Madonna holding in her arms the Child. Many surmises have been made as to the author of this painting. Some recognize it as the work of Lorenzo di Viterbo, who spent his life on the frescoes of Santa Maria della Verita, others affirm that some other than Sebastiano del Piombo could be capable of such delicate coloring and simplicity of conception.

The doubt as to the origin of the painting mars in no way its beauty. The face of the Virgin is young, with a serene, patient expression, while the Christ Child, unlike many others, is a natural, pleasant looking baby.

Perhaps Viterbo affords the only instance in Italy in which the monuments of the past are not in ruins and crumbling into dust, but are still serving the purpose for which originally they were intended. Thus, for example, the Papal Palace is inhabited by the bishop and the conclave hall is never empty, as heretofore at the noon hour the recipients of the bishop's charity just as they used to do in the time of Pope John XXI, who is accused of lowering the dignity of the pontificate by conversing in a familiar way with people of humble origin.

The knights and nobles have disappeared and only their houses remain, yet these are inhabited as of yore, and one has the illusion that the modern inhabitants of Viterbo are using them only provisionally until their original owners come back. One imagines that the town did not look different when it was emptied on the occasion of wars or the crusades. It was empty then as now, its streets were silent and its houses dull and dreary.

How Modern Enterprise is Opening Up the Oasis and the Desert

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QUART TEFWIK, Oct. 24.—(Special Correspondence of The Bee.)—Modern enterprise is opening up the backwoods of Egypt. Syndicates are prospecting for coal and copper in the Sinai peninsula. The Egyptian Exploration company is working gold mines between Luxor and the Red Sea, and the Nile Gold Fields company is operating further south in the desert. An English syndicate with a capital of \$2,500,000 is about to build a railroad across the Libyan desert to develop the string of oases which lie 100 miles or so west of the Nile valley, and by the Assuan dam over 50,000 acres have been added to that great fertile spot in the desert known as the Fayoum. All of these regions may be called the backwoods of Egypt. Most of them have long been considered barren and worthless and about them little is known.

Gold Fields of the Desert.
Within the last two or three years a great interest has sprung up as to the gold fields of Egypt. Prospectors have been going over the desert above Cairo, between this country and the Fayoum, and more than a score of syndicates have been formed to prospect the various concessions. The whole country has been divided among them, and the Egyptian government has instituted a department of mines to control them. This department is under the minister of the interior, and it has a camel police so that its soldiers can go rapidly from place to place and keep order. Lines of communication from certain ports on the Nile to the Red Sea are being opened in order to get the minerals to be more economically sent to the mines and to give the companies better means of transport for the materials and food-stuffs which they require.

At present the headquarters of the mining department is at Edfu, between Assuan and Luxor. It has supplies and material stored there, and it has been making experiments of crossing the eastern desert on motor cars and motor cycles to some of the mining centers. Just now the chief mines are far away from the Nile, and it is necessary to have quick methods of reaching them. A number are right on the shores of the Red Sea, and they run up and down through the whole of the eastern desert in the mountainous regions bordering the coast. There are other mining companies operating in the Sudan, some which have concessions on the very borders of Abyssinia.

Ancient Mines Being Opened.
A number of these companies are reopening the workings of the ancient Egyptians. The Streeter concession, for instance, is looking for emeralds at the foot of Jabel Nugrus, near where gold mines once were. Its territory includes some of the most mountainous country in Egypt, with peaks rising from a mile to a mile and a half above the level of the Mediterranean. It lies within thirty miles of the Red sea, and is filled with ancient workings of gold, lead, copper, iron and emeralds. Just west of this concession the Egypt and Sudan mining syndicate has four prospecting areas of twenty-five square miles each, upon which ancient gold workings are shown. No evidences of old mines have been found in any of the other allotments.

It is well known that the desert east of the Nile supplied quantities of gold ages ago. It was for several centuries the California of the civilized world, and produced enough to make the Pharaohs rich and to enable them to send treasure to the kings of western Asia. Some of the letters to Pharaohs, which have been discovered, come from his royal correspondents in Asia, and they are filled with requests for gold, which is spoken of as being as plentiful in his country as dust.

A little later, when Egypt had lost her empire and had been overrun by the barbarians of the north, the amount of gold yielded by the mines of the desert was still great. Old Ramesses, the oppressor of the Hebrews, had a big income from them, and the Ptolemies the revenue of the country is said to have been something like \$20,000,000 per annum, a

large part of which came from the mines. On some of the oldest tombs there are pictures showing how gold jewelry was made over 4,000 years ago, and one of the officials of that time states that he had commanded an escort which brought gold from the mines of Kenah and Koaster to Coptos.

This same region is now being exploited by the Egyptian Mines Exploration company, and not far above Kossier, on the Red sea, is the Uru-Rus Mining company, which, with a capital of \$500,000, is working some of those old mines. It has erected a large plant, consisting of an electric generating station, air compressors for driving rock drills and a railway six miles long, connecting the mine with its ten stamp mills on the seashore. The main shaft is 400 feet deep, and the output is 37,000 or 42,000 per month. In the report of last October the Uru Rus officials stated that more than \$100,000 worth of gold had been mined, and that improvements were under way which would materially increase the output. This mine was worked as far back as 1377 B. C., and vast quantities of gold were taken out of it when the Pharaohs of the Bible were on the throne. At that time it is said that the Egyptian taskmasters worked the mines with slaves. They made them labor away day and night. The children were forced to carry the ore and the old people ground it to powder.

Exploiting the Oases.
The opening up of the oases of western Egypt is an agricultural proposition rather than a mining one, although extensive deposits of alum, phosphates and minerals are said to exist there. Gold, which runs as high as \$2 per ton, has been found in the lower beds of the phosphate rocks, but it is not known whether it is merely a local freak of nature or whether it may expand into richer gold-bearing ore.

The oases of Egypt lie 100 miles or so west of the Nile, in the heart of the Libyan desert. There are four great centers which have been known for ages, and some of which were noted for their fertility when the Hebrews were still at work under their Egyptian taskmasters. These oases are Kharga, which lies 120 miles directly west of Ebnah, but which is best reached from Assiout, Farafra, which is almost directly west of Assiout and may be reached by camels in the space of eight days; Bahja, which lies between



CHILDREN OF THE EGYPTIAN DESERT.

Kharga and Farafra, and also the oasis of Baharia, which is about three days' journey from Giza on the Nile.

The corporation of western Egypt proposes to build railroads to these oases, and as a consideration therefor it is to receive 500,000 acres of land and is to have the right, for thirty years, to mine the alum, ocheres and phosphates with which the oases abound. A part of its scheme is to irrigate the lands acquired by the concession. The company estimates that it will cost them \$3 per acre to do this, and that the lands will sell for \$75 per acre as soon as the water can be put upon them. Much of the irrigation will be done by artesian wells, some of which have been already sunk and are producing flowing streams. The company is composed of Englishmen and Egyptians, and it has a capital of \$2,000,000. It has already begun building its railway, and has laid the route from the Nile to Kharga with a telephone equipment. Its locomotives and other rolling stock are building in England.

Through Libya by Rail.
When the railroads are completed one will be able to go through some interesting parts of the Libyan desert by train, and it is probable that winter resorts, similar to that at Bahira in the Sahara, will spring up in these oases. I first saw the Libyan desert in Tripoli. It begins there and runs eastward to the Nile valley. Near Egypt it is a monotonous, stony tableland from 600 to 1,000 feet above the level of the Nile. It is absolutely barren, and is without doubt one of the blakest parts of the globe. As one goes westward and nears the oases the land drops. The desert is cut up by ravines and cliffs. The oases are in a depression running for several hundred miles irregularly north and south. Just west of them the land is still rocky, but after about six days' camel journey it changes to an ocean of sand which extends on and on for hundreds of miles.

These oases now have over 20,000 people. They are Mohammedans, and include both Arabs and Bedouins. They live in villages of mud brick houses, each oasis having one or two towns, in Farafra one and in Bahja fourteen.

Bahja is the most thickly populated of all the oases. It has over 17,000 people, and it is watered by 40 wells, many of which were bored by the Romans. All

of these villages have mosques, but the people drink it. It contains fish and the right to fish in it is let out by the government to one man, who allows the men living on the banks to ply their trade, and in return receives one-half the catch.

Some of the best fruits and most beautiful flowers of Egypt come from the Fayoum. A railroad has been built into it, which connects with the main Egyptian system, and one can go from Cairo to Medinet, its capital, in four hours. There are two trains each way every day and there is considerable travel from one place to the other. At Medinet there are branch railroads which reach every part of the oasis, and there is a system of tramways which includes a number of villages.

The Labyrinth.
The Fayoum is not often visited by tourists, although it contains some of the most wonderful ruins of ancient Egypt. There is a pyramid about five miles from Medinet, in which a mummy of an ancient king was recently found, and there are some traces left of the Labyrinth described by Strabo and other travelers. The Labyrinth is said to have been quite as wonderful as the pyramids. It was situated on the banks of Lake Moeris and was a vast palace which had 3,000 rooms, half of which were above ground and half below. The buildings composing the palace were connected by long covered passages which intersected each other and wound about so that a stranger could not go through them without a guide. Strabo says that the ceilings of every room consisted of but a single stone, and that the passages were covered with slabs of extraordinary size. Herodotus, who went through the rooms above ground, says that the structure was more wonderful than the pyramids and that the windings through the courts presented a thousand occasions of wonder as he passed through. Just who built this structure no one knows, but it is supposed to have been made as a temple and a tomb by one of the Egyptian kings who lived more than a thousand years after Cheops built the great pyramid.

How Egypt Governs Sinai.
The Peninsula of Sinai, in which the children of Israel wandered for forty years after they came out of the Nile valley, now belongs to the Egyptians and is governed by them. The country is visited by travelers by means of camels and Bedouin

guides, and it is possible to go up the mountains where Moses saw the Lord in a burning bush, and where he received the Ten Commandments engraved on blocks of stone, while the Israelites were worshipping the golden calf in the foothills.

The Peninsula of Sinai is one of the most unproductive deserts of the world. It has no tillable soil, but it is said to be well materialized and to have deposits of copper which were worked as far back as 3700 B. C. These deposits are now being again prospected, and a concession for mining them has been given to one of the exploration companies. The Cairo syndicate is investigating in the northern half of the peninsula and their engineers have reported the discovery of coal in small quantities. Petroleum is believed to exist there, and also turquoises and other valuable stones.

The government, however, is finding it difficult to administer the country and just before Lord Cromer left he directed that the whole peninsula be put under the War department. A British officer of the Egyptian army is to be the governor and commandant. His headquarters will be at Nekki, the chief town of the peninsula, which is about its center, and there will be other Egyptian officers stationed at various points. The intention is to make the country safe for tourists and travelers, as well as for prospectors, and it will soon be possible to visit all parts of the peninsula.

A Joke That Is Not Funny
In the November American Magazine Ernest Poole writes an article on "New Readers of the News." A million new readers come to this country from foreign shores every year. Mr. Poole tells many interesting stories. For example: Over on the East Side, in two rear rooms, in a tenement near the river, lived a Norwegian with his wife and their boy, Christy.

MINES LEADING CITIZENS OF KHARGA.

"My boy," he said to me, "he is why we come to America, to give him good chances. An' now he grow American so fast I can't keep him close." To keep close, he, too, was trying to "grow American fast." And as the subway was no help, he was working hard every night learning to read the newspaper.

"I must know," he said anxiously, "I must know dese t'ings. My boy he play games wid some dice. To him I say: 'Christy, it is wicked to gamble.' But he say: 'Fadder, it is not wicked. It is good business.' An' he talk to me Wall street. He talk an' I see he is wrong, but to make him see right I must know. So I read." He assumed a shrewd, knowing expression, ludicrously out of keeping on his big, serious face. "I begin to know well dis gamble business," he said.

"An' also I read of graft. My boy he talk too much de grafters. He talk to me big Tammany men an' trust men an' business men. Soon I get myself angry.

"Christy! I say to my boy, 'Dese men you must not like so much. All dese men are burglars!' But he laugh.

"No, not on your life!" he say. "Burglars go to jail. Dese men are only grafters!" At this the doctor and I both laughed. The big man leaned back and stared at us, perplexed and indignant.

"Why, is it a joke?" he asked. "You American men see so often jokes." He thought hard for a moment. "Maybe you see too often," he added. We laughed again.

"You was right," said the doctor. "We see. And America needs more just like you, men who won't see the joke!"

peace, the relations of the dead have the right to revenge on the bodies of the blood money be paid. The blood money for an ordinary murder is fixed at forty-one camel, and it may be paid on instalments, the payments running for a month or a year or more. If a man kills another secretly and hides the crime, but is found guilty, he is fined for the crime, but the murdered man's relations may take revenge by killing one of the family of the murderer, and still have the right to three blood monies.

How the Judge Detects Crime.
Shortly before he left Egypt, Lord Cromer made some investigations of justice in the Sinai peninsula, and in one of his reports described how a justice detected whether criminals were guilty or not. He had three methods—by water, by fire and by dream. The test by dream was made by his honest going to sleep and dreaming whether the accused was guilty or not. If the dream showed the man guilty, it was looked upon as a judgment of God and he was punished. The water test was made with a copper jug filled with that fluid. The judge, the accused and the spectators sat in a circle, and jug in some way or other, was made to move around through the group, and if it stopped opposite the accused he was guilty.

The fire test was severe. It was often used to convict men of stealing. In this case the judge heated an iron pan over the coals until the wax melted, and then the accused touch it three times with his tongue. If the tongue showed marks of burning, he was guilty; and if not, he was innocent. Two experts always sat with the judge to witness whether the tongues of the accused were burnt or not.

All such tests are now to be done away with, and the British and Egyptian officials are to see that justice is administered according to the laws of the land.

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