

SAINT CATHERINE OF SIENA.

PATRONESS OF THE ADORERS OF THE PRECIOUS BLOOD.

"In the Blood you find the fire."

ST. CATH. OF SIENA

(Continuation.)

CATHERINE had received at Pisa the glorious favor of the Stigmata.

Her heart, dilated by love, was full of an immense, an inexhaustible compassion. Everywhere the unfortunates, who were aware of this sentiment, pressed themselves around her. "I have often seen, said the Blessed Raymond, thousands of men and women hastening from the summits of mountains and from surrounding countries, as if a mysterious trumpet had called them. They were coming to see and to hear her.

All would kneel before her and lavish upon her the most extraordinary marks of respect, but she did not ever perceive their attentions. She was wholly engaged with the sufferings of those who approached her, with the woes of the Church and of her country, and those woes were always increasing.

Terrible bands of brigands, in the pay of all the ambitions, ravaged Italy, leaving nothing but ruin in their path. Rome, forsaken by the Pope and torn by factions, could not count more than seventeen thousand inhabitants. Florence, exasperated by the excess of bad governors and bad pastors, had raised the red banner whereon was written in letters of silver the word *Libertas*. Eighty cities imitated her in the revolt against the Holy See.

At Florence, the revolution turned, on the first day, into veritable jacquerie.

The Apostolic Nuncio was borne around upon a cart, flayed alive, amidst the hootings of the populace. The murderers threw the shreds of his flesh to the dogs, and finished by burying him while he was still breathing.

To these atrocities, Gregory XI, influenced by the French Cardinals, replied by a thunderbolt, the most terrible which a Pope had ever thrown.

He struck by an interdict, and placed outside of the