

of this point at Bolsena. The story goes that in the year 1263, while a Bohemian priest who was sceptical as to the doctrine of transubstantiation was celebrating mass, he was convinced of the truth of this cardinal dogma by the appearance of drops of blood on the host just consecrated which stained the linen *corporale* or chalice-cloth through and through. The scene forms the subject of one of Raphael's world-famous frescoes in the Stanze of the Vatican. This simple device of priestcraft has been so frequently repeated since then in various forms and places that it has grown rather stale. But for some reason, not very plain to us now, it made a tremendous sensation at the time and was regarded by the faithful as a complete refutation of all heretics and gainsayers, all the more perhaps because they had no strong arguments wherewith to put them to flight. Pope Urban IV., then residing at Orvieto for safety, was quick to see the value of an incident which caught the popular mind, and in order to make the most of it instituted the annual festival of Corpus Christi, which to this day is observed throughout the Roman Catholic world wherever possible by the public procession of the host through the streets, to the annoyance more than to the confusion of the aforesaid heretics. In further honour of the event the pope projected the erection of a great Cathedral which should be worthy to receive the miraculous bloodstain. His death a few months later prevented him from carrying out his plan. But it was not dropped, for sixteen years after in 1290 Nicholas IV. in solemn state laid the foundation stone of the present superb edifice. The construction was rapidly pushed on, notwithstanding the fact that all the material had to be carried up the steep incline, and within a few years it was open for service; but for two hundred years and more it continued to have lavished upon it within and without the choicest that Italy could produce in the way of sculpture, fresco and mosaic. The result is what we see.

The building taken as a whole, notwithstanding its vast size, is disappointing to one who has learned to admire the Gothic Cathedrals of northern Europe. For though this is Gothic, it is what is known as Italian Gothic and has nothing of the airy lightness of the genuine style. Italy for some reason has never taken kindly to the pointed arch and has seldom used it consistently throughout an entire building. Most of the arches here are round, and even when pointed are splayed out wide as if the architect had determined to have as few of them as possible. Nor do we ever find in