

walls, the stairways, even the very floors in many cases are of stone. On the corso or principal thoroughfare rise a couple of old towers square and grim that watch over the town like mediæval sentries frowning upon every stranger and challenging his right to entrance. The grimness, however, is all in the towers. The people are hospitable and kindly to the visitors, all too few in number, who find their way thither. They give them a hearty welcome and strive to make their stay as interesting as possible. Our visit at any rate proved so to an unusual degree.

Without at all intending it we happened to arrive during the festival of Corpus Christi, and the whole town was *en fete*. I know not what religious services had been held in connection with the festival, but we soon discovered that the day was to be turned to good account in the way of amusement. About noon we found ourselves in the midst of a crowd that thronged the leading thoroughfare almost from end to end, and unexpectedly became spectators of a scene such as used to be familiar in Rome during the Easter Carnival—the races of the wild horses through the corse. Steeds gaily decked with ribbons were started with much cracking of whips at the further end, and madly dashed forward through the dense mass of people that parted before them and lined the way on either side. Fresh speed was given to their heels by rifle-shots fired from soldiers stationed at the corners of all the cross streets. There was the most intense excitement, and the women especially, though unwilling to miss the sight seemed in terror of being run over. But in truth there was little danger. The horses appeared more frightened than the people. Having no masterful riders to urge them on and give them confidence they hesitated at every bound, and would not knowingly have trampled down a baby. They readily yielded to the first hand that was stretched out to seize the bridle. There was no one hurt, and the populace had the momentary thrill they craved. This street scene was to be followed by a circus performance in the amphitheatre, during which all the shops were closed that the whole population might be free to go. We contented ourselves, however, with some of the more permanent attractions of the place.

The chief of these is of course the splendid and famous Cathedral, in some respects without a parallel in all the world. Curiously enough its history has a very close connection with that of the festival of Corpus Christi which we had just seen the people celebrating in the Corso. Both took their origin from a wonderful miracle said to have been wrought within a few miles