

## CHAPTER V.

## THE LORENZETTI.

The unchangeable attachment of Siennese painters to old typical compositions and to a time-honoured method of painting, to peculiar richness of ornament and to forms and contrasts essentially distinct from the Florentine, might, in the apprehension of our times, involve an absence of variety in their productions. Yet the same language has its lyric and epic muse, and the Lorenzetti contrast with Simone by dramatic energy and original wildness. Pietro,<sup>1</sup> the eldest of two brothers, was a cotemporary of Simone, yet stood in relation to him much as Petrarch's tender sonnets to Dante's manly strophe. Whilst Simone affected grace and lacked energy, Pietro's vigour disdained the polish of his rival. The student feels the affectation of the first, he pardons the casual vulgarity of the second. Vasari was fain to admit that Pietro imitated and surpassed Cimabue, Giotto and other painters of Italy;<sup>2</sup> but he was unjust to the great Florentine, if he meant all that he said; and whilst Pietro boldly innovated on the technical processes of his country, he can only claim preeminence over the immediate followers of Giotto. Son of one Lorenzo, he was born in the close of the thirteenth century and appears as an artist in Sienna as early as 1305, having painted in that year some part of an altarpiece called "la tavola dei Nove."<sup>3</sup> Though

<sup>1</sup> It is remarkable that Ghiberti who greatly admired Ambrogio, does not seem acquainted with the existence of Pietro Lorenzetti.

<sup>2</sup> Vas. Vol. II. p. 26.

<sup>3</sup> Doc. Sen. Vol. I. p. 194. He receives 110 livres.