

CHAPTER X.

PERUZZI E BARDI.

Amongst the potent families of Florence, in the fourteenth century, that of the Peruzzi was most distinguished, for the extent of its trading connection, the greatness of its fortune, and the generosity with which it patronized the church of Santa Croce. From the time when that edifice first rose from its foundations,¹ the Peruzzi subscribed largely to its erection and built at their sole expense a chapel or sacristy which was adorned with frescos by Giotto;² "nor, says Cesare Guasti,³ did the reverence of the family for those sacred walls and for art diminish with the lapse of years; but there came a time when that reverence was obscured by a fatal niggardliness: — when to restore meant to destroy. So when one reads on the floor of the chapel that Bartholommeo di Simone Peruzzi "restaurare fecit AD. MD.CCXIV," he will guess that the brush of a common whitewasher ruthlessly passed over the scenes from the life of St. John the Baptist and St. John the Evangelist which Giotto had painted on the walls.⁴ In 1841, the dance of the daughter of

¹ May 3. 1294.

² At what time it is difficult to say; but it is proper to note that, according to a record of 1307, alluded to by Richa (*Chiese Fiorentine*. Vol. I. p. 13), Giotto was then in Florence, where he made a donation to the Company of Orsanmichele.

³ *Opuscoli*, ub. sup. p. 6.

⁴ This is confirmed by the fact that, when Cinelli, in 1677, published the *Bellezze di Firenze* by Bocchi with new comments, the paintings of the Peruzzi chapel were still in existence, whilst, in 1754, when Richa published his *Chiese Fiorentine*, they were no longer visible.