

Santi, and Melozzo, whose equal Sienna did not boast of at the time, and was not destined to boast of in the sequel.

The period filled by the Domenicos, Vecchiettas, Sassetas, and their satellites, was one of retrogression, preparatory to the final absorption of the Siennese into the Perugian school. It is a period interesting chiefly to those who seek to fathom the causes or note the results of a transfusion of elements from an expiring and worn out body artistic into another nascent and growing. That the Siennese school did not produce a class equivalent to that which in Florence comprised Brunelleschi, Ghiberti, Donato, and Paolo Uccelli, that it remained without a Mantegna, or Piero della Francesca, was, no doubt, fatal to its further existence. For the religious spirit of the older time had passed away, there as elsewhere; and men, whose aim might have been the combination of scientific and pictorial principles, could alone have succeeded in imparting a new life to an enfeebled and decaying frame.

The painters, who illustrate this last phase of Siennese art, are numerous and prolific. At their head stands Domenico Bartoli Ghezzi of Asciano, with Vecchietta, Francesco di Giorgio, Benvenuto di Giovanni, Girolamo di Benvenuto, Matteo da Sienna, and Cozzarelli in support. They held a position in Sienna resembling that of the Florentines from Brunelleschi to Ghirlandaio's time; but, unlike them, they contentedly and leisurely followed ancient models of Siennese composition, as if repelled by the mere suggestion of innovation. They did not attempt to infuse any new character into their ill-favoured impersonations. Their figures embodied errors similar to those of Taddeo Bartoli, without exhibiting the energy or earnestness which occasionally raised him above those less gifted than himself. They were, as colourists, inferior to the earlier men of their school, null in the science of light and shade.

By their side stood another branch, with Sassetta as