

tecture or sculpture. Domenico di Bartolo, though casually employed, was little known or considered by his contemporaries, and never rose to great notoriety. A short time after the Emperor Sigismund had visited Sienna, on the way to his coronation at Rome, the council of the Duomo proposed to found a memorial of the event. The pavement of coloured marble in the cathedral, which had been in progress since 1369, still remained unfinished, and a suggestion that "the Cæsar's Majesty" should be represented there, in company of his chief ministers, met with approval. Unhappily, the features of the Kaiser had not been authentically preserved, and though fancy portraits of ministers might appear a tolerable liberty, an ideal of the Emperor, who but two years before had triumphantly shown himself to the Siennese, might have been ridiculed. The council of the Duomo was informed in this emergency that "one Domenico" (di Bartolo) was owner of "a statue or design" in which a resemblance to the face of the Cæsar's Majesty might be traced, and accordingly purchased it, together with the incongruous addition of a S. John and a font, ordering the artist at the same time (1434) to prepare a sketch for the group of the Emperor.¹ This commission led to others; and, at intervals between 1435 and 1439, Domenico painted the whole sacristy of the Duomo with scenes from the lives of SS. Ansano, Vittorio, and Savino,² and in 1437 an altarpiece for S. Agostino of Asciano.³ By a curious coincidence, a picture hangs to this day in the church of this name, which might claim to be that contracted for by Domenico.⁴ The Virgin is enthroned between four standing saints, and above, the Eternal gives his benediction, whilst the Virgin and angel annunciate

¹ A proposal for this purchase, (Oct. 30. 1434) an order for it (Nov. 13). and payment for the design, are in Doc. Sen. II. 161. 2.

² Ib. II. 172. Della Valle Lett. San. II. 197. A fire destroyed these frescos in the sixteenth century.

³ Doc. Sen. II. 172. It is from this contract that we learn the real name of the painter, which is Domenico Bartoli Ghezzi di Asciano.

⁴ The central Virgin is on the high altar, the rest of the picture on an altar to the right as you enter S. Agostino.