

Florence and Northern Tuscany with Genoa eBook

Florence and Northern Tuscany with Genoa by Edward Hutton (writer)

The following sections of this BookRags Literature Study Guide is offprint from Gale's For Students Series: Presenting Analysis, Context, and Criticism on Commonly Studied Works: Introduction, Author Biography, Plot Summary, Characters, Themes, Style, Historical Context, Critical Overview, Criticism and Critical Essays, Media Adaptations, Topics for Further Study, Compare & Contrast, What Do I Read Next?, For Further Study, and Sources.

(c)1998-2002; (c)2002 by Gale. Gale is an imprint of The Gale Group, Inc., a division of Thomson Learning, Inc. Gale and Design and Thomson Learning are trademarks used herein under license.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Encyclopedia of Popular Fiction: "Social Concerns", "Thematic Overview", "Techniques", "Literary Precedents", "Key Questions", "Related Titles", "Adaptations", "Related Web Sites". (c)1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Guide to Literature for Young Adults: "About the Author", "Overview", "Setting", "Literary Qualities", "Social Sensitivity", "Topics for Discussion", "Ideas for Reports and Papers". (c)1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

All other sections in this Literature Study Guide are owned and copyrighted by BookRags, Inc.

Contents

Florence and Northern Tuscany with Genoa eBook.....	1
Contents.....	2
Table of Contents.....	14
Page 1.....	16
Page 2.....	18
Page 3.....	19
Page 4.....	20
Page 5.....	21
Page 6.....	22
Page 7.....	23
Page 8.....	24
Page 9.....	25
Page 10.....	26
Page 11.....	27
Page 12.....	28
Page 13.....	29
Page 14.....	30
Page 15.....	31
Page 16.....	32
Page 17.....	33
Page 18.....	34
Page 19.....	35
Page 20.....	36
Page 21.....	37
Page 22.....	38

Page 23.....	39
Page 24.....	40
Page 25.....	41
Page 26.....	43
Page 27.....	44
Page 28.....	45
Page 29.....	47
Page 30.....	48
Page 31.....	49
Page 32.....	50
Page 33.....	51
Page 34.....	52
Page 35.....	53
Page 36.....	54
Page 37.....	55
Page 38.....	57
Page 39.....	58
Page 40.....	59
Page 41.....	60
Page 42.....	61
Page 43.....	62
Page 44.....	63
Page 45.....	64
Page 46.....	66
Page 47.....	67
Page 48.....	68

Page 49.....	69
Page 50.....	70
Page 51.....	71
Page 52.....	72
Page 53.....	73
Page 54.....	75
Page 55.....	76
Page 56.....	77
Page 57.....	78
Page 58.....	79
Page 59.....	80
Page 60.....	81
Page 61.....	82
Page 62.....	83
Page 63.....	84
Page 64.....	85
Page 65.....	86
Page 66.....	87
Page 67.....	88
Page 68.....	89
Page 69.....	90
Page 70.....	91
Page 71.....	92
Page 72.....	93
Page 73.....	94
Page 74.....	95

Page 75.....	96
Page 76.....	97
Page 77.....	98
Page 78.....	99
Page 79.....	100
Page 80.....	101
Page 81.....	102
Page 82.....	103
Page 83.....	105
Page 84.....	106
Page 85.....	107
Page 86.....	108
Page 87.....	110
Page 88.....	112
Page 89.....	114
Page 90.....	116
Page 91.....	117
Page 92.....	118
Page 93.....	119
Page 94.....	120
Page 95.....	121
Page 96.....	122
Page 97.....	123
Page 98.....	124
Page 99.....	125
Page 100.....	126

Page 101.....	127
Page 102.....	128
Page 103.....	129
Page 104.....	130
Page 105.....	131
Page 106.....	132
Page 107.....	133
Page 108.....	134
Page 109.....	135
Page 110.....	136
Page 111.....	138
Page 112.....	139
Page 113.....	140
Page 114.....	141
Page 115.....	142
Page 116.....	144
Page 117.....	145
Page 118.....	146
Page 119.....	147
Page 120.....	148
Page 121.....	149
Page 122.....	150
Page 123.....	151
Page 124.....	152
Page 125.....	153
Page 126.....	154

Page 127.....	155
Page 128.....	157
Page 129.....	158
Page 130.....	159
Page 131.....	160
Page 132.....	161
Page 133.....	163
Page 134.....	164
Page 135.....	165
Page 136.....	166
Page 137.....	167
Page 138.....	168
Page 139.....	169
Page 140.....	170
Page 141.....	171
Page 142.....	172
Page 143.....	173
Page 144.....	174
Page 145.....	175
Page 146.....	176
Page 147.....	177
Page 148.....	178
Page 149.....	179
Page 150.....	180
Page 151.....	181
Page 152.....	182

Page 153.....	183
Page 154.....	184
Page 155.....	185
Page 156.....	186
Page 157.....	188
Page 158.....	189
Page 159.....	190
Page 160.....	192
Page 161.....	193
Page 162.....	194
Page 163.....	195
Page 164.....	197
Page 165.....	198
Page 166.....	199
Page 167.....	200
Page 168.....	201
Page 169.....	202
Page 170.....	204
Page 171.....	205
Page 172.....	206
Page 173.....	207
Page 174.....	208
Page 175.....	209
Page 176.....	210
Page 177.....	211
Page 178.....	212

Page 179.....	214
Page 180.....	216
Page 181.....	217
Page 182.....	218
Page 183.....	219
Page 184.....	220
Page 185.....	222
Page 186.....	223
Page 187.....	224
Page 188.....	225
Page 189.....	227
Page 190.....	229
Page 191.....	230
Page 192.....	231
Page 193.....	232
Page 194.....	233
Page 195.....	234
Page 196.....	235
Page 197.....	236
Page 198.....	237
Page 199.....	238
Page 200.....	239
Page 201.....	240
Page 202.....	241
Page 203.....	242
Page 204.....	244

Page 205.....	245
Page 206.....	246
Page 207.....	247
Page 208.....	248
Page 209.....	249
Page 210.....	250
Page 211.....	251
Page 212.....	253
Page 213.....	254
Page 214.....	255
Page 215.....	256
Page 216.....	257
Page 217.....	258
Page 218.....	260
Page 219.....	262
Page 220.....	263
Page 221.....	264
Page 222.....	265
Page 223.....	266
Page 224.....	267
Page 225.....	268
Page 226.....	269
Page 227.....	271
Page 228.....	273
Page 229.....	274
Page 230.....	275

Page 231.....	276
Page 232.....	277
Page 233.....	279
Page 234.....	280
Page 235.....	281
Page 236.....	282
Page 237.....	283
Page 238.....	285
Page 239.....	286
Page 240.....	287
Page 241.....	288
Page 242.....	289
Page 243.....	290
Page 244.....	291
Page 245.....	292
Page 246.....	293
Page 247.....	295
Page 248.....	296
Page 249.....	297
Page 250.....	298
Page 251.....	300
Page 252.....	301
Page 253.....	302
Page 254.....	303
Page 255.....	304
Page 256.....	305

Page 257.....	306
Page 258.....	307
Page 259.....	308
Page 260.....	309
Page 261.....	310
Page 262.....	311
Page 263.....	312
Page 264.....	314
Page 265.....	316
Page 266.....	317
Page 267.....	318
Page 268.....	319
Page 269.....	320
Page 270.....	321
Page 271.....	323
Page 272.....	324
Page 273.....	325
Page 274.....	326
Page 275.....	328
Page 276.....	330
Page 277.....	332
Page 278.....	334
Page 279.....	335
Page 280.....	336
Page 281.....	337
Page 282.....	338

Page 283.....	339
Page 284.....	340
Page 285.....	341
Page 286.....	342
Page 287.....	343
Page 288.....	344
Page 289.....	345
Page 290.....	346
Page 291.....	348
Page 292.....	350
Page 293.....	352
Page 294.....	354
Page 295.....	357
Page 296.....	361
Page 297.....	365
Page 298.....	369

Table of Contents

Section	Page
Start of eBook	1
IN MONOTONE	1
I. GENOA	1
I	1
II	3
III	5
IV	17
FOOTNOTES:	28
II. ON THE WAY	28
FOOTNOTES:	37
III. PORTO VENERE	38
IV. SARZANA AND LUNA	40
FOOTNOTES:	45
V. CARRARA, MASSA DUCALE, PIETRA-SANTA, VIAREGGIO	45
FOOTNOTES:	53
VI. PISA	53
I	53
II	54
III	71
FOOTNOTES:	86
VII. LIVORNO[81]	89
FOOTNOTES:	92
VIII. TO SAN MINIATO AL TEDESCO	92
FOOTNOTES:	97
IX. EMPOLI, MONTELUPO, LASTRA, SIGNA	98
X. FLORENCE	102
FOOTNOTES:	110
XI. FLORENCE	110
XII. FLORENCE	116
FOOTNOTES:	127
XIII. FLORENCE	127
FOOTNOTES:	132
XIV. FLORENCE	133
FOOTNOTES:	140
XV. FLORENCE	140
FOOTNOTES:	149
XVI. FLORENCE	150

FOOTNOTES:	156
XVII. FLORENCE	156
FOOTNOTES:	163
XVIII. FLORENCE	163
FOOTNOTES:	169
XIX. FLORENCE	169
FOOTNOTES:	179
XX. FLORENCE	179
FOOTNOTES:	188
XXI. FLORENCE	188
FOOTNOTES:	203
XXII. FLORENCE	203
FOOTNOTES:	211
XXIII. FLORENCE	212
I. THE FLORENTINE SCHOOL	213
II. THE SIENESE SCHOOL	220
IV. THE VENETIAN SCHOOL	223
THE NORTHERN SCHOOLS	226
FOOTNOTES:	227
XXIV. FLORENCE	227
FOOTNOTES:	237
XXV. TO FIESOLE AND SETTIGNANO	237
FOOTNOTES:	246
XXVI. VALLOMBROSA AND THE CASENTINO, CAMALDOLI AND LA VERNA	246
II. OF THE WAY TO THE CASENTINO	250
III. STIA AND MONTE FALTERONA	252
IV. BIBBIENA, LA VERNA	255
V. A RIVEDERLA	263
FOOTNOTES:	264
XXVII. PRATO	264
FOOTNOTES:	269
XXVIII. PISTOJA	269
FOOTNOTES:	277
XXIX. LUCCA	277
II	284
FOOTNOTES:	290
XXX. OVER THE GARFAGNANA	290
INDEX	294

Page 1

IN MONOTONE

Porto Venere

Pisa

wax model for the Perseus in the Bargello, Benvenuto Cellini

the Madonna della cintola, by Nanni di Banco, duomo, Florence

singing boys from the Cantoria of Luca della robbia, opera del duomo,
Florence

the crucifixion, by Fra Angelico, S. Marco, Florence

st. John the divine, by Donatello, duomo, Florence

the lady with the nosegay (Vanna Tornabuoni), in the Bargello, by Andrea
verrocchio

"La notte," From tomb of Giuliano de' Medici, by Michelangelo

the adoration of the shepherds, by Domenico Ghirlandajo, Accademia

the three graces, from the Primavera, by Sandro botticelli, Accademia

the birth of Venus, by Sandro botticelli, Uffizi gallery

the annunciation, by Andrea verrocchio, Uffizi gallery

Pieta, by Fra bartolommeo, Pitti gallery

the tomb of Ilaria del Caretto, by Jacopo della Quercia, duomo, Lucca

the tomb of the martyr S. Romano in S. Romano, Lucca, by Matteo Civitali

[Illustration: *A map of the cities of northern Tuscany*]

* * * * *

I. GENOA

I

The traveller who on his way to Italy passes along the Riviera di Ponente, through Marseilles, Nice, and Mentone to Ventimiglia, or crossing the Alps touches Italian soil, though scarcely Italy indeed, at Turin, on coming to Genoa finds himself really at last in the South, the true South, of which Genoa la Superba is the gate, her narrow streets, the various life of her port, her picturesque colour and dirt, her immense palaces of precious marbles, her oranges and pomegranates and lemons, her armsful of children, and above all the sun, which lends an eternal gladness to all these characteristic or delightful things, telling him at once that the North is far behind, that even Cisalpine Gaul is crossed and done with, and that here at last by the waves of that old and great sea is the true Italy, that beloved and ancient land to which we owe almost everything that is precious and valuable in our lives, and in which still, if we be young, we may find all our dreams. What to us are the weary miles of Eastern France if we come by road, the dreadful tunnels full of despair and filth if we come by rail, now that we have at last

returned to her, or best of all, perhaps, found her for the first time in the spring at twenty-one or so, like a fair woman forlorn upon the mountains, the Ariadne of our race who placed in our hand the golden thread that led us out of the cavern of the savage to the sunlight and to her. But though, indeed, I think all this may be clearer to those who come to her in their first youth by the long white roads with a song on their lips and a dream in their

Page 2

hearts—for the song is drowned by the iron wheels that doubtless have their own music, and the dream is apt to escape in the horror of the night imprisoned with your fellows; still, as we are so quick to assure ourselves, there are other ways of coming to Italy than on foot: in a motor-car, for instance, our own modern way, ah! so much better than the train, and truly almost as good as walking. For there is the start in the early morning, the sweet fresh air of the fields and the hills, the long halt at midday at the old inn, or best of all by the roadside, the afternoon full of serenity, that gradually passes into excitement and eager expectancy as you approach some unknown town; and every night you sleep in a new place, and every morning the joy of the wanderer is yours. You never “find yourself” in any city, having won to it through many adventures, nor ever are you too far away from the place you lay at on the night before. And so, as you pass on and on and on, till the road which at first had entranced you, wearies you, terrifies you, relentlessly opening before you in a monstrous white vista, and you who began by thinking little of distance find, as I have done, that only the roads are endless, even for you too the endless way must stop when it comes to the sea; and there you have won at last to Italy, at Genoa.

If you come by Ventimiglia, starting early, all the afternoon that white vision will rise before you like some heavenly city, very pure and full of light, beckoning you even from a long way off across innumerable and lovely bays, splendid upon the sea. While if you come from Turin, it is only at sunset you will see her, suddenly in a cleft of the mountains, the sun just gilding the Pharos before night comes over the sea, opening like some great flower full of coolness and fragrance.

It was by sea that John Evelyn came to Genoa after many adventures; and though we must be content to forego much of the surprise and romance of an advent such as that, yet for us too there remain many wonderful things which we may share with him. The waking at dawn, for instance, for the first time in the South, with the noise in our ears of the bells of the mules carrying merchandise to and from the ships in the *Porto*; the sudden delight that we had not felt or realised, weary as we were on the night before, at finding ourselves really at last in the way of such things, the shouting of the muleteers, the songs of the sailors getting their ships in gear for the seas, the blaze of sunlight, the pleasant heat, the sense of everlasting summer. These things, and so much more than these, abide for ever; the splendour of that ancient sea, the gesture of the everlasting mountains, the calmness, joy, and serenity of the soft sky.

Page 3

Something like this is what I always feel on coming to that proud city of palaces, a sort of assurance, a spirit of delight. And in spite of all Tennyson may have thought to say, for me it is not the North but the South that is bright “and true and tender.” For in the North the sky is seldom seen and is full of clouds, while here it stretches up to God. And then, the South has been true to all her ancient faiths and works, to the Catholic religion, for instance, and to agriculture, the old labour of the corn and the wine and the oil, while we are gone after Luther and what he leads to, and, forsaking the fields, have taken to minding machines.

And so, in some dim way I cannot explain, to come to Italy is like coming home, as though after a long journey one were to come suddenly upon one’s mistress at a corner of the lane in a shady place.

It is perhaps with some such joy in the heart as this that the fortunate traveller will come to Genoa the Proud, by the sea, lying on the bosom of the mountains, whiter than the foam of her waves, the beautiful gate of Italy.

II

The history of Genoa, its proud and adventurous story, is almost wholly a tale of the sea, full of mystery, cruelty, and beauty, a legend of sea power, a romance of ships. It is a narrative in which sailors, half merchants, half pirates, adventurers every one, put out from the city and return laden with all sorts of spoil,—gold from Africa, slaves from Tunis or Morocco, the booty of the Crusades; with here the vessel of the Holy Grail bought at a great price, there the stolen dust of a great Saint.

This spirit of adventure, which established the power of Genoa in the East, which crushed Pisa and almost overcame Venice, was held in check and controlled by the spirit of gain, the dream of the merchant, so that Columbus, the very genius of adventure almost without an after-thought, though a Genoese, was not encouraged, was indeed laughed at; and Genoa, splendid in adventure but working only for gain, unable on this account to establish any permanent colony, losing gradually all her possessions, threw to the Spaniard the dominion of the New World, just because she was not worthy of it. Men have called her Genoa the Proud, and indeed who, looking on her from the sea or the sea-shore, will ever question her title?—but the truth is, that she was not proud enough. She trusted in riches; for her, glory was of no account if gold were not added to it. If she entered the first Crusade as a Christian, it was really her one disinterested action; and all the world acknowledged her valour and her contrivance which won Jerusalem. But in the second Crusade, as in the next, she no longer thought of glory or of the Tomb of Jesus, she was intent on money; and since in that stony place but little booty could be hoped for, she set herself to spoil the Christian, to provide him at a price with ships, with provender, with the means of realising

Page 4

his dream, a dream at which she could afford to laugh, secure as she was in the possession of this world's goods. Then, when in the thirteenth century those vast multitudes of soldiers, monks, dreamers, beggars, and adventurers came to her, the port for Palestine, clamouring for transports, she was sceptical and even scornful of them, but willing to give them what they demanded, not for the love of God but for a price. Even that beautiful and mysterious army of children which came to her from France and Germany in 1212 seeking Jesus, she could hold in contempt till, weary at last of feeding them, she found the galleys they demanded, and in the loneliness of the sea betrayed them and sold them for gold as slaves to the Arabs, so that of the seven thousand boys and girls led by a lad of thirteen who came at the bidding of a voice to Genoa, not one ever returned, nor do we hear anything further concerning them but the rumour of their fate.

Thus Genoa appears to us of old and now, too, as a city of merchants. She crushed Pisa lest Pisa should become richer than herself; she went out against the Moors for Castile because of a whisper of the booty; she sought to overthrow Venice because she competed with her trade in the East; and to-day if she could she would fill up the harbour of Savona with stones, as she did in the sixteenth century, because Savona takes part of her trade from her. What Philip of Spain did for God's sake, what Visconti did for power, what Cesare Borgia did for glory, Genoa has done for gold. She is a merchant adventurer. Her true work was the Bank of St. George. One of the most glorious and splendid cities of Italy, she is, almost alone in that home of humanism, without a school of art or a poet or even a philosopher. Her heroes are the great admirals, and adventurers—Spinola, Doria, Grimaldi, Fieschi, men whose names linger in many a ruined castle along the coast who of old met piracy with piracy. Even to-day a Grimaldi spoils Europe at Monaco, as his ancestors did of old.

One saint certainly of her own stock she may claim, St. Catherine Adorni, born in 1447. But the Renaissance passed her by, giving her, it is true, by the hands of an alien, the streets of splendid palaces we know, but neither churches nor pictures; such paintings as she possesses being the sixteenth century work of foreigners, Rubens, Vandyck, Ribera, Sanchez Coello, and maybe Velasquez.

Yet barren though she is in art, at least Genoa has ever been fulfilled with life. If her aim was riches she attained it, and produced much that was worth having by the way. Without the appeal of Florence or Siena or Venice or Rome, she is to-day, when they are passed away into dreams or have become little more than museums, what she has ever been, a city of business, the greatest port in the Mediterranean, a city full of various life,—here a touch of the East, there a whisper of the West, a busy, brutal, picturesque city, beauty growing up as it does

Page 5

in London, suddenly for a moment out of the life of the place, not made or contrived as in Paris or Florence, but naturally, a living thing, shy and evanescent. Here poverty and riches jostle one another side by side as they do in life, and are antagonistic and hate one another. Yet Genoa, alone of all the cities of Italy proper is living to-day, living the life of to-day, and with all her glorious past she is as much a city of the twentieth century as of any other period of history. For, while others have gone after dreams and attained them and passed away, she has clung to life, and the god of this world was ever hers. She has made to herself friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, and they have remained faithful to her. Her ports grow and multiply, her trade increases, still she heaps up riches, and if she cannot tell who shall gather them, at least she is true to herself and is not dependent on the stranger or the tourist. The artist, it is said, is something of a daughter of joy, and in thinking of Florence or Venice, which live on the pleasure of the stranger, we may find the truth of a saying so obvious. Well, Genoa was never an artist. She was a leader, a merchant, with fleets, with argosies, with far-flung companies of adventure. Through her gates passed the silks and porcelains of the East, the gold of Africa, the slaves and fair women, the booty and loot of life, the trade of the world. This is her secret. She is living among the dead, who may or may not awaken.

If you are surprised in her streets by the greatness of old things, it is only to find yourself face to face with the new. People, tourists do not linger in her ways—they pass on to Pisa. Genoa has too little to show them, and too much. She is not a museum, she is a city, a city of life and death and the business of the world. You will never love her as you will love Pisa or Siena or Rome or Florence, or almost any other city of Italy. We do not love the living as we love the dead. They press upon us and contend with us, and are beautiful and again ugly and mediocre and heroic, all between two heart beats; but the dead ask only our love. Genoa has never asked it, and never will. She is one of us, her future is hidden from her, and into her mystery none has dared to look. She is like a symphony of modern music, full of immense gradual crescendos, gradual diminuendos, unknown to the old masters. Only Rome, and that but seldom, breathes with her life. But through the music of her life, so modern, so full of a sort of whining and despair in which no great resolution or heroic notes ever come, there winds an old-world melody, softly, softly, full of the sun, full of the sea, that is always the same, mysterious, ambiguous, full of promises, at her feet.

III

Page 6

The gate of Italy, I said in speaking of her, and indeed it is one of the derivations of her name Genoa,—Janua the gate, founded, as the fourteenth-century inscription in the Duomo asserts, by Janus, a Trojan prince skilled in astrology, who, while seeking a healthy and safe place for his dwelling, sailed by chance into this bay, where was a little city founded by Janus, King of Italy, a great-grandson of Noah, and finding the place such as he wished, he gave it his name and his power. Now, whether the great-grandson of Noah was truly the original founder of the city, or Janus the Trojan, or another, it is certainly older than the Christian religion, so that some have thought that Janus, that old god who once presided at the beginning of all noble things, was the divine originator of this city also. And remembering the sun that continually makes Genoa to seem all of precious stone, of moonstone or alabaster, it seems indeed likely enough, for Janus was worshipped of old as the sun, he opened the year too, and the first month bears his name; and while on earth he was the guardian deity of gates, in heaven he was porter, and his sign was a ship; therefore he may well have taken to himself the city of ships, the gateway of Italy, Genoa.

And through that gate what beautiful, terrible, and mysterious things have passed into oblivion; Saints who have perhaps seen the very face of Jesus; legions strong in the everlasting name of Caesar, that have lost themselves in the fastnesses of the North; sailors mad with the song of the sirens. On her quays burned the futile enthusiasm of the Middle Age, that coveted the Holy City and was overwhelmed in the desert. Through her streets surged Crusade after Crusade, companies of adventure, lonely hermits drunken with silence, immense armies of dreamers, the chivalry of Europe, a host of little children. On her ramparts Columbus dreamed, and in her seas he fought with the Tunisian galleys before he set sail westward for El Dorado. And here Andrea Doria beat the Turks and blockaded his own city and set her free; and S. Catherine Adorni, weary of the ways of the world, watched the galleons come out of the west, and prayed to God, and saw the wind over the sea. O beautiful and mysterious armies, O little children from afar, and thou whose adventurous name married our world, what cities have you taken, what new love have you found, what seas have your ships furrowed; whither have you fled away when Genoa was so fair?

* * * * *

It was about the year 50 when St. Nazarus and St. Celsus, fleeing from the terror of Nero, landed not far away to the east at Albaro, bringing with them the new religion. A lane leading down to the sea still bears the name of one of them, and, strangely as we may think, a ruined church marks the spot crowning the rock above the place, where a Temple of Venus once stood. Yet perhaps the earliest remnant of old Genoa is to be found in the Church of S. Sisto

Page 7

in the Via di Pre, standing as it does on the very stones of a church raised to the Pope and martyr of that name in 260. In the journey which Pope Sixtus made to Genoa he is said to have been accompanied by St. Laurence, and it is probable that a church was built not much later to him also on the site of the Duomo. However this may be, Genoa appears to have been passionately Christian, for the first authority we hear of is that of the Bishops, to whom she seems to have submitted herself enthusiastically, installing them in the old castello in that the most ancient part of the city around Piazza Sarzano and S. Maria di Castello. This castello, destroyed in the quarrels of Guelph and Ghibelline, as some have thought, may be found in the hall-mark of the silver vessels made here under the Republic. Very few are the remnants that have come down to us from the time of the Bishops. An inscription, however, on a house in Via S. Luca close to S. Siro remains, telling how in the year 580 S. Siro destroyed the serpent Basilisk. In the church itself a seventeenth-century fresco commemorates this monstrous deed.

Of the Lombard dominion something more is left to us; the story at least of the passing of the dust of St. Augustine. It seems that at the beginning of the sixth century these sacred ashes had been brought from Africa to Cagliari to save them from the Vandals. For more than two hundred years they remained at Cagliari, when, the Saracens taking the place, Luitprand, the Lombard king, remembering S. Ambrogio and Milan, ransomed them for a great price and had them brought in 725 to Genoa, where they were shown to the people for many days. Luitprand himself came to Genoa to meet them and placed them in a silver urn, discovered at Pavia in 1695, and carried them in state across the Apennines. Some of the beautiful Lombard towers, such as S. Stefano and S. Agostino, where the ashes are said to have been exposed, remind us perhaps more nearly of the Lombard dominion. Then came Charlemagne and his knights and the great quarrel. But though Genoa now belonged to the Holy Roman Empire, she was not strong enough to defend herself from the raids of the Saracens, who in the earlier part of the tenth century burnt the city and led half the population into captivity.

Perhaps it is to Otho that Genoa owes her first impulse towards greatness: he gave her a sort of freedom at any rate. And immediately after his day the Genoese began to make way against the Saracens on the seas. You may see a relic of some passing victory in the carved Turk's head on a house at the corner of Via di Pre and Vico dei Macellai. Nor was this all, for about this time Genoa seized Corsica, that fatal island which not only never gave her peace, but bred the immortal soldier who was finally to crush her and to end her life as a free power.

Page 8

There follow the Crusades. These splendid follies have much to do with the wealth and greatness of Genoa. It was from her port that Godfrey de Bouillon set sail in the *Pomella* as a pilgrim in 1095. He appears to have been insulted at the very gate of Jerusalem, or, as some say, at the door of the Holy Sepulchre. At any rate he returned to Europe, where Urban *ii*, urged by Peter the Hermit, was already half inclined to proclaim the First Crusade. Godfrey's story seems to have decided him; and, indeed, so moving was his tale, that the crowd who heard him cried out urging the Pope to act, *Dieu le veult*, the famous and fatal cry that was to lead uncounted thousands to death, and almost to widow Europe. In Genoa the war was preached furiously and with success by the Bishops of Gratz and Arles in S. Siro. An army of enthusiasts, monks, beggars, soldiers, adventurers, and thieves, moved partly by the love of Christ, partly by love of gain, gathered in Genoa. With them was Godfrey. They sailed in 1097: they besieged Antioch and took it. Content it might seem with this success, or fearful in that stony place of venturing too far from the sea, the Genoese returned, not empty. For on the way back, storm-bound perhaps in Myra, they sacked a Greek monastery there, carrying off for their city the dust of St. John Baptist, which to-day is still in their keeping.

Was it the hope of loot that caused Genoa in 1099 to send even a larger company to Judaea under the great Guglielmo Embriaco, whose tower to-day is all that is left of what must once have been a city of towers? Who knows? He landed with his Genoese at Joppa, burnt his ships as Caesar did, though doubtless he thought not of it, and marching on Jerusalem found the Christians still unsuccessful and the Tomb of Christ, as now, ringed by pagan spears. But the Genoese were not to be denied. If the valour of Europe was of no avail, the contrivance of the sea, the cunning of Genoa must bring down Saladin. So they set to work and made a tower of scaffolding with ropes, with timbers, with spars saved from their ships. When this was ready, slowly, not without difficulty, surely not without joy, they hauled and heaved and drove it over the burning dust, the immense wilderness of stones and refuse that surrounded Jerusalem. Then they swarmed up with songs, with shouting, and leapt on to the walls, and over the ramparts into the Holy City, covered with blood, filled with the fury of battle, wounded, dying, mad with hatred, to the Tomb of Jesus, the empty sepulchre of God.

Then eight days after came that strange election, when we offered the throne of Palestine to Godfrey of Bouillon; but he refused to wear a crown of gold where his Saviour had worn one of thorns, so we proclaimed him Defender of the Holy Sepulchre.

Page 9

But the Genoese under Embriaco as before returned home, again not without spoil. And their captain for his portion claimed the *Catino*, the famous vessel, fashioned as was thought of a single emerald, truly, as was believed, the vessel of the Holy Grail, the cup of the Last Supper, the basin of the Precious Blood. To-day, if you are fortunate, as you look at it in the Treasury of S. Lorenzo, they tell you it is only green glass, and was broken by the French who carried it to Paris. But, indeed, what crime would be too great in order to possess oneself of such a thing? It was an emerald once, and into it the Prince of Life had dipped His fingers; Nicodemus had held it in his trembling hands to catch the very life of God; who knows what saint or angry angel in the heathen days of Napoleon, foreseeing the future, snatched it away into heaven, giving us in exchange what we deserved. Surely it was an emerald once? Is it possible that a Genoese gave up all his spoil for a green glass, a cracked pipkin, a heathen wash pot, empty, valueless, a fraud?—I'll not believe it.

Embriaco, however, returned once more to Palestine with his men, fighting under Godfrey at Cesarea; and again he came home in triumph, his galleys low with spoil. And indeed, though we hear no more of Embriaco, by the end of the first Crusade, Genoa had won possessions in the East,—streets in Jaffa, streets in Jerusalem, whole quarters in Antioch, Cesarea, Tyre, and Acre, not to speak of an inscription in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, “Prepotens Genuensium Presidium,” which Godfrey had carved there, while the Pope gave them their cross of St. George as arms, which, as some say, we got from them.

Strangely as we may think, in the second Crusade, and even in the third, so disastrous for the Christian arms, Genoa bore no part; no part, that is, in the fighting, though in the matter of commissariat and shipping she was not slow to come forward and make a fortune. And indeed, she had enough to do at home; for Pisa, no less slow to join the Crusades, became her enemy, jealous of her growing power and of her possession of Corsica, so that in 1120 war broke out between them, which scarcely ceased till Pisa was finally beaten on the sea, and the chains of Porto Pisano were hanging on the Palazzo di S. Giorgio.

Soon, however, Genoa was engaged in a more profitable business, an affair after her own heart, in which valour was not its own reward,—I mean, in the expedition in 1147 against the Moors in Spain. Certainly the Pope, Eugenius *iii* it was, urged them to it, but so they had been urged to fight against Saladin without arousing enthusiasm. Yet in this new cause all Genoa was at fever heat. Wherefore? Well, Granada was a great and wealthy city, whereas Jerusalem was a ruined village. So they sent thirty thousand men with sixty galleys and one hundred and sixty transports to Almeria, which after some hard fighting, for your Moor was never a coward, they took, with a huge booty. In the next year they took Tortosa, and returned home laden with spoil, silver lamps for the shrine of St. John Baptist, for instance, and women and slaves.

Page 10

Still, Genoa had no peace, for we find her making a stout and successful defence shortly after against Frederic I, the whole city, men, women, and children, on his approach from Lombardy, building a great wall about the city in fifty-three days, of which feat Porta S. Andrea remains the monument. Then followed that pestilence of Guelph and Ghibelline; out of which rose the names of the great families, robbers, oppressors, tyrants,—Avvocato, Spinola, Doria, the Ghibellines, with the Guelphs, Castelli, Fieschi, Grimaldi. Nor was Genoa free of them till the great Admiral Andrea Doria crushed them for ever. Yet peace of a sort there was, now and again, in 1189 for instance, when Saladin won back Jerusalem, and the Guelph nobles volunteered in a body to serve against him, leaving Genoa to the Ghibellines, who established the foreign Podesta for the first time to rule the city. But this gave them no peace, for still the nobles fought together, and if one family became too powerful, confusion became worse confounded, for Guelph and Ghibelline joined together to bring it low. Thus in the thirteenth century you find Ghibelline Doria linked with the Guelph Grimaldi and Fieschi to break Ghibelline Spinola. The aspect of the city at that time was certainly very different from the city of to-day, which is mainly of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries where it is not quite modern. Then each family had its tower, from which it fought or out of which it issued, making the streets a shambles as it followed the enemy home or sought him out. The ordinary citizen must have had an anxious time of it with these bands of idle cut-throats at large. But by the close of the twelfth century the towers, at any rate, had been destroyed by order of the Consuls, the only one left being that which we see to-day, Torre degli Embriachi, left as a monument to a cunning valour. The thirteenth century saw the domination of the Spinola family, or rather of one branch of it, the Luccoli Spinola, which as opposed to the old S. Luca branch seems to have lived nearer the country and the woods, and was apparently most disastrous for the internal peace of the city; and indeed, until the Luccoli were beaten and exiled, as happened in the beginning of the fourteenth century, there could be no peace; truly the only peace Genoa knew in those days was that of a foreign war, when the great lords went out against Pisa or Venice.

The Venetian war, unlike that against Pisa, ended disastrously. Its origin was a question of trade in the East, where the Comneni had given certain rights to Genoa which on their fall the Venetians refused to respect. The quarrel came to a head in that cause of so many quarrels, the island of Crete, for the Marquis of Monferrat had sold it to the Venetians while he offered it to the Genoese, he himself having received it as spoil in the fourth Crusade. In this quarrel with Venice, Genoa certainly at first had the best of it. In 1261, or thereabout, she

Page 11

founded two colonies at Pera and Caffa, on the Bosphorus and in the Euxine, thus adding to her empire, which was rather a matter of business than of dominion. This is illustrated very effectually by the history of the Bank of St. George, which from this time till its dissolution at the end of the eighteenth century was, as it were, the heart of Genoa. It was Guglielmo Boccanegra, the grandfather of a more famous son, who built the palace which, as we now see it on the quay, is so sad and ruinous a monument to the independent greatness of the city. And since its stones were, as it is said, brought from Constantinople, where Michael Paleologus had given the Genoese the Venetian fortress of Pancratone, it is really a monument of the hatred of Genoa for Venice that we see there, the principal door being adorned with three lions' heads, part of the spoil of that Venetian fortress. This palace, on the death of Boccanegra, Captain of the People, was used by the city as an office for the registration of the *compere* or public loans, which dated from 1147 and the Moorish expedition. From the time of the foundation of the Bank the shares were, like our consols, to be bought and sold and were guaranteed by the city herself, though it was not till 1407 that the loans were consolidated and the Palazzo delle Compere, as it was called, became the Banco di S. Giorgio. Indeed, though its real power may be doubted, it administered, in name at any rate, the colonies of Genoa after the fall of Constantinople.

Of the building itself I speak elsewhere; it is rather to its place in the story of Genoa that I have wished here to draw attention.

And it was now, indeed, that Genoa reached, perhaps, the zenith of her power. For in 1284 comes the great victory of Meloria, which laid Pisa low. Enraged partly at the success of Genoa in the East, partly at her growing power and general wealth, Pisa, with that extraordinary flaming and ruthless energy so characteristic of her, determined to dispose of Genoa once and for all. Nor were the Genoese unwilling to meet her. Indeed, they urged her to it. The two fleets, bearing some sixty thousand men, that of Pisa commanded by a Venetian, Andrea Morosini, that of Genoa by Oberto Doria, met at Meloria, not far from Bocca d'Arno, when the Pisans were utterly defeated, partly owing to the treachery of the immortal Count Ugolino, who sailed away without striking a blow.[1] Yet in spite of her defeat Pisa carried on the war for four years, when she sued for peace, which, however, she could not keep, so that in 1290 we find Corrado Doria sailing into the Porto Pisano, breaking the chain which guarded it, and carrying it back to Genoa, where part of it hung as a trophy till our own time on the facade of the Palazzo di S. Giorgio.

Page 12

Nor were the Genoese content, for soon after this victory we find them, led by Lamba Doria, utterly beating the Venetians at Curzola, in the Adriatic, where they took a famous prisoner, Messer Marco Polo, just returned from Asia. They brought him back to Genoa, where he remained in prison for nearly two years, and wrote his masterpiece. Whether it was the influence of so illustrious a captive, or merely the natural expression of their own splendid and adventurous spirit, about this time the Doria fitted out two galleys to explore the western seas, and to try to reach India by way of the sunset. Tedisio Doria and the brothers Vivaldi with some Franciscans set out on this adventure, and never returned.

With the fourteenth century Genoa for a time threw off the yoke of her great nobles, Spinola, Doria, Grimaldi, Fieschi. The wave of revolt that passed over Europe at this time certainly left Genoa freer than she had ever been. The people had claimed to name their own "Abbate," in opposition to the Captain of the People. They chose by acclamation Simone Boccanegra, who, however, seeing that he was to have no power, refused the office. "If he will not be Abbate," cried a voice in the crowd, "let him be Doge"; and seeing the enthusiasm of the people, this great man allowed himself to be borne to S. Siro, where he was crowned first Doge of Genoa for life. The nobles seem to have been afraid to interfere, so great was the eagerness of the people. And it was about this time that the Grimaldi, driven out of Genoa, seized Monaco, which by the sufferance of Europe they hold to-day. It is true, that for a time in 1344 the nobles gathered an army and returned to Genoa, Boccanegra resigning and exiling himself in Pisa; but twelve years later he was back again, ruling with temperance and wisdom that great city, which was now queen of the Mediterranean sea.

To follow the fortunes of the Republic one would need to write a book. It must be sufficient to say here that by the middle of the century war broke out with Venice, and was at first disastrous for Genoa. Then once more a Doria, Pagano it was, led her to victory at Sapienza, off the coast of Greece, where thirty-one Genoese galleys fought thirty-six of Venice and took them captive. But the nobles were never quiet, always they plotted the death of the Doge Giovanni da Morta, or Boccanegra. It was with the latter they were successful in 1363, when they poisoned him at a banquet in honour of the King of Cyprus—for they had possessed themselves of a city in that island. Thus the nobles came back into Genoa, Adorni, Fregosi, Guarchi, Montaldi, this time; lesser men, but not less disastrous for the liberty of Genoa than the older families. So they fought among themselves for mastery, till the Adorni, fearing to be beaten, sold the city to Charles vi of France, who made them his representative and gave them the government. And all this time the war with Venice continued. At first it promised success,—at Pola, for instance, where Luciano Doria was victorious, but at last beaten at Chioggia, and not knowing where to turn to make terms, the supremacy of the seas passed from Genoa to Venice, peace coming at last in 1381.

Page 13

Then the Genoese turned their attention to the affairs of their city. In the first year of the fifteenth century they rose to throw off the French yoke. But France was not so easily disposed of. She sent Marshal Boucicault to rule in Genoa; and he built the Castelletto, which was destroyed only a few years ago in our father's time. In 1409, however, Boucicault thought to gain Milan, for Gian Galeazzo Visconti was dead. In his absence the Genoese rose and threw out the French, preferring their own tyrants. These, Adorni, Montaldi, Fregosi, fought together till Tommaso Fregosi, fearing that the others might prove too strong for him, sold the city to Filippo Maria Visconti, tyrant of Milan. So the Visconti came to rule in Genoa.

This period, full of the confusion of the petty wars of Italy, while Sforza was plotting for his dukedom and Malatesta was building his Rocca in Rimini; while the Pope was a fugitive, and the kingdom of Naples in a state of anarchy, is famous, so far as Genoa is concerned, for her victory at sea over King Alfonso of Aragon, pretender against Rene of Anjou to the throne of Naples. The Visconti sided with the House of Anjou, and Genoa, in their power for the moment, fought with them; so that Biagio Assereto, in command of the Genoese fleet, not only defeated the Aragonese, but took Alfonso prisoner, together with the King of Navarre and many nobles. That victory, strangely enough, made an end of the rule of the Visconti in Genoa. For, seeing his policy led that way, Filippo Maria Visconti ordered the Genoese to send their illustrious prisoners to Milan, where he made much of them, fearing now rather the French than the Spaniards, since the Genoese had disposed of the latter and so made the French all-powerful. This spoliation, however, enraged the Genoese, who joined the league of Florence and Venice, deserting Milan. At the word of Francesco Spinola they rose, in 1436, killed the Milanese governor outside the Church of S. Siro, and once more declared a Republic. To little purpose, as it proved, for the feuds betwixt the great families continued, so that by 1458 we find Pietro Fregosi, fearing the growing power of the Adorni, and hard pressed by King Alfonso, who never forgave an injury, handing over Genoa to Charles VIII of France.

Meantime, in 1453, Constantinople had fallen before Mahomet, and the colony of Galata was thus lost to Genoa. And though in this sorry business the Genoese seem to be less blameworthy than the rest of Christendom—for they with but four galleys defeated the whole Turkish fleet—Genoa suffered in the loss of Galata more than the rest, a fact certainly not lost upon Venice and Naples, who refused to move against the Turk, though the honour of Europe was pledged in that cause. But all Italy was in a state of confusion. Sforza, that fox who had possessed himself of the March of Ancona, and had never fought in any cause but his own, on the death of Visconti had with almost incredible guile

Page 14

seized Milan. He it was who helped the Genoese to throw out the French, only to take Genoa for himself. A man of splendid force and confidence, he ruled wisely, and alone of her rulers up to this time seems to have been regretted when, in 1466, he died, and was succeeded in the Duchy of Milan by his son Galeazzo. This man was a tyrant, and ruled like a barbarian, till his assassination in 1476. There followed a brief space of liberty in Genoa, liberty endangered every moment by the quarrels of the nobles, who at last proposed to divide the city among them, and would have thus destroyed their fatherland, had not Il Moro, Ludovico Sforza of Milan, intervened and possessed himself of Genoa, which he held till 1499, when Louis *xii* of France defeated him, Genoa placing herself under his protection.

Meanwhile Columbus, that mystical dreamer who might have restored to Genoa all and more than all she had lost in colonial dominion, was born and grew up in those narrow streets, and played on the lofty ramparts and learned the ways of ships. Genoa in her proud confusion heard him not, so he passed to Salamanca and the Dominicans, and set sail from Cadiz. Yet he never forgot Genoa, and indeed it is characteristic of those great men who are without honour in their own country, that they are ever mindful of her who has rejected them. The beautiful letter written to the Bank of St. George in 1498 from Seville, as he was about to set out on what proved to be his last voyage, is witness to this.

“Although my body,” he writes, “is here, my heart is always with you. God has been more bountiful to me than to any one since David’s time. The success of my enterprise is already clear, and would be still more clear if the Government did not cover it with a veil. I sail again for the Indies in the name of the Most Holy Trinity, and I return at once; but as I know I am but mortal, I charge my son Don Diego to pay you yearly and for ever the tenth part of all my revenue, in order to lighten the toll on wine and corn. If this tenth part is large you are welcome to it; if small, believe in my good wish. May the Most Holy Trinity guard your noble persons and increase the lustre of your distinguished office.”

Such were the last words of Columbus to his native city. You may see his birthplace, the very house in which he was born, on your left in the Borgo dei Lanajoli, as you go down from the Porta S. Andrea.

It was in 1499 that Louis of France got possession of Genoa. He held the city, cowed as it was, till 1507, when, goaded into rebellion by insufferable wrongs, the people rose and threw out his Frenchmen with their own nobles, choosing as their Doge Paolo da Novi, a dyer of silk, one of themselves. Not for long, however, was Paolo to rule in Genoa, for Louis retook the city, and Paolo, who had fled to Pisa, was captured as he sailed for Rome, and put to death.

Page 15

It was now that it came into the mind of Louis, who had learned nothing from experience, to build another fort like to the Castelletto, to wit the Briglia, to bridle the city. This he did, yet there lay the bridle on which he was to be ridden back to France. For the Genoese never forgave him his threat, which stood before them day by day, so that at the first opportunity, Julius *ii*, Pope and warrior, helping them, they rose again, and again the French departed. And in 1515 Louis died, and Francis I ruled in his stead. Then, the nobles of Genoa quarrelling as ever among themselves, Fregoso agreed with the French king, who made him governor of the city. The Adorni, angry at this, made overtures to the Emperor, Charles V it was, who sent General Pescara and twenty thousand men to take the city. There followed that most bloody sack, to the cry of Spain and Adorni, which lives in history and in the hearts of the Genoese to this day. This happened in 1522, and thereafter Antoniotto Adorni became Doge as a reward for his treachery.

But already the deliverer was at hand, scarcely to be distinguished at first from an enemy. Five years were the length of Adorni's rule, and all that time the French attacked and strove for the city, and in their ranks fought he who was the deliverer, Andrea Doria, Lord Admiral of Genoa, the saviour of his country.

Then in 1527 the French got possession of Genoa. Now Filippino Doria, nephew to the Admiral, had won a victory in the Gulf of Palermo over the Spanish fleet. But Francis, that brilliant fool, thought nothing of this service, though he claimed the prisoners for himself, for he liked the ransom well. Then the Admiral, touched in his pride, threw over the French cause and joined the Emperor. In 1528 a common action between the fleet under Doria and the populace within the city once more threw out the French, and Doria entered Genoa amid the acclamation of the multitude, knight of the Golden Fleece and Prince of Melfi.

This extraordinary and heroic sailor, born at Oneglia in 1466 or 1468 of one of the princely houses of Genoa, before 1503 had served under many Italian lords. It was in 1513 that he first had the command of the fleet of Genoa, while three years later he defeated the Turks at Pianosa. He helped Francis into Genoa and he threw him out; while he lived he ruled the city he had twice subdued, and his glory was hers. Yet truly it might seem that all Doria did was but to transfer Genoa from the Spaniard to the Frenchman and back again. In reality, he won her for himself. He drove the French not only out of Genoa, but out of her dominion. He filled up the port of Savona with stones, because she had under French influence sought to rival Genoa. With him Genoa ruled the sea, and with his death her greatness departed. And he was as liberal as he was powerful. Charles V knew him, and let him alone. He himself as Lord of Genoa gave her back her liberties, set up the Senate again, opened the Golden Book, *Il Libro d'Oro*, and wrote in it the names of those who should rule; then he set up a parliament, the Grand Council of Four Hundred, and the old quarrels were forgotten, and there was peace.

Page 16

But who could rule the Genoese, greedy as their sea, treacherous as their winds, proud as their sun, deep as their sky, cruel as their rocks! If the Admiral had brought the Adorni and the Fregosi low, there yet remained the Fieschi, old as the Doria, Guelph too, while they had been Ghibelline.

It is true that the old quarrels were done with, yet strangely enough it was on the Pope's behalf that the Fieschi plotted against the Doria. Now, Pope Paul *iii* had been Doria's friend. In 1535 he had for a remembrance of his love given the Admiral that great sword which still hangs in S. Matteo. But now, when Andrea's brother, Abbate di San Fruttuoso came to die, and it was known that he had left the Admiral much property close to Naples, the Pope, swearing that the estates of an ecclesiastic necessarily returned to the Church, claimed Andrea's inheritance. But the Admiral thought differently. Ordering Giannettino, his nephew, to take the fleet to Civitavecchia, he seized the Pope's galleys and had them brought to Genoa. Now, when the Genoese saw this strange capture convoyed into Genoa—so the tale goes—they were afraid, and crowded round the old Admiral, demanding wherefore he made war on the Church, and some shouted sacrilege and others profanation, while others again besought him with tears what it meant. And he answered, so that all might hear, that it meant that his galleys were stronger than those of His Holiness.

Then the Pope, knowing his man, gave way, but forgot it not. So that he called Gian Luigi Fieschi to him, the head of that family, a Guelph of a Guelph stock, and put it into his mind to rise against the Admiral, and to hold Genoa himself under the protection of Francis I. The blow fell on 1st January 1547. Now, on the day before, the Admiral was unwell and lay a bed, so that Fieschi waited on him in the most friendly way, and, as it is said, kissed many times the two lads, grand-nephews of the Admiral, who played about the room. Not many hours later, the Fieschi were in the streets rousing the city. Giannettino, nephew to the Admiral, hearing the tumult, ran to the Porta S. Tommaso to hold it and enter the city, but that gate was already lost, and he himself soon dead. Truly, all seemed lost when Fieschi, going to seize the galleys, slipped from a plank into the water, and his armour drowned him. Then the House of Doria rallied, and their cry rang through the city; little by little they thrust back their enemies, they hemmed them in, they trod them under foot; before dawn all that were left of the Fieschi were flying to Montobbio, their castle in the mountains. Thus the Admiral gave peace to Genoa, nor was he content with the exile or death of his foes, for he destroyed also all their palaces, villas, and castles, spoiling thus half the city, and making way for the palaces which have named Genoa the City of Palaces, and which we know to-day. For thirteen years longer Andrea Doria reigned in Genoa, dying at last in 1560. And at his death all that might make Genoa so proud departed with him. In 1565 she lost Chios, the last of her possessions in the East, and before long she lay once more in the hands of foreigners, not to regain her liberty till in 1860 Italy rose up out of chaos and her sea bore the Thousand of Garibaldi to Sicily, to Marsala, to free the Kingdom.

Page 17

IV

As you stand under those strange arcades that run under the houses facing the port, all that most ancient story of Genoa seems actual, possible; it is as though in some extraordinarily vivid dream you had gone back to less uniform days, when the beauty and the ugliness of the world struggled for mastery, before the overwhelming victory of the machine had enthroned ugliness and threatened the dominion of the soul of man. In that shadowy place, where little shops like caverns open on either side, with here a woman grinding coffee, there a shoe-maker at his last, yonder a smith making copper pipkins, a sailor buying ropes, an old woman cheapening apples, everything seems to have stood still from century to century. There you will surely see the *mantilla* worn as in Spain, while the smell of ships, whose masts every now and then you may see, a whole forest of them, in the harbour, the bells of the mules, the splendour of the most ancient sun, remind you only of old things, the long ways of the great sea, the roads and the deserts and the mountains, the joy that cometh with the morning, so that there at any rate Genoa is as she ever was, a city of noisy shadowy ways, cool in the heat, full of life, movement, merchandise, and women.

And as it happens, this shadowy arcade, so close to the hotels (under which, indeed, you must make your way to reach one of the oldest of these hostelries, the Hotel de la Ville), is a place to which the traveller returns again and again, weary of the garish modernity that has spoiled so much of the city, far at least from the tram lines that have made of so many Italian cities a pandemonium. It is from this characteristic pathway between the little shops that one should set out to explore Genoa.

Passing along this passage eastward, you soon come to the Bank of St. George, that black Dogana, built with Venetian stones from Constantinople, a monument of hatred and perhaps of love,—hatred of the Venetians, of the Pisans too, for here till our own time hung the iron chains of Porto Pisano that Corrado Doria took in 1290; and of love, since it was to preserve Genoa and her dominion that the Banca was founded. Over the door you may still see remnants of the device the Guelph Fieschi Pope, Innocent *vii*, gave to his native city when he came to see her, the griffin of Genoa strangling the imperial eagle and the fox of Pisa; while under is the motto, *Griphus ut has agit, sic hostes Genua frangit*.

It was Guglielmo Boccanegra who built the place, as the inscription reminds you,—it was his palace. But only the facade landward remains from his time, with the lions' heads, the great hall and the facade seaward dating from 1571, eleven years after Doria's death. In the tower is the old bell which used to summon the Grand Council; it is of seventeenth-century work, and was presented to the Bank by the Republic of Holland.[2]

Page 18

Within, the palace is a ruin, only the Hall of Grand Council being in any way worth a visit. Here you may see statues of the chief benefactors of the city from the middle of the fourteenth century to the middle of the seventeenth. And by a curious device worthy of this city of merchants, each citizen got a statue according to his gifts. Those who save 100,000 lire were carved sitting there, while those who gave but half this were carved standing; less rich and less liberal benefactors got a bust or a mere commemorative stone, each according to his liberality, and this (strangely we may think), in a city so religious that it is dedicated to Madonna, might seem to leave nothing for the widow with her mite who gave more than they all.

One comes out of that dirty and ruined place, that was once so splendid, with a regret that modern Italy, which is so eager to build grandiose banks and every sort of public building, is yet so regardless of old things that one might fancy her history only began in 1860. Mr. Le Mesurier, in the interesting book already referred to, has suggested that this old palace, so full of memories of Genoa's greatness, should be used by the municipality as a museum for Genoese antiquities. I should like to raise my voice with his in this cause so worthy of the city we have loved. Is it still true of her, that though she is proud she is not proud enough? Is it to be said of her who sped Garibaldi on his first adventure, that all her old glory is forgotten, that she is content with mere wealth, a thing after all that she is compelled to share with the latest American encampment, in which competition she cannot hope to excel? But she who holds in her hands the dust of St. John Baptist, who has seen the cup of the Holy Grail, whose sons stormed Jerusalem and wept beside the Tomb of Jesus, through whose streets the bitter ashes of Augustine have passed, and in whose heart Columbus was conceived, and a great Admiral and a great Saint, is worthy of remembrance. Let her gather the beautiful or curious remnants of her great days about her now in the day of small things, that out of past splendour new glory may rise, for she also has ancestors, and, like the sun, which shall rise to-morrow, has known splendour of old.

As you leave the Banca di S. Giorgio, if you continue on your way you will come on to the great ramparts, where you may see the sea, and so you will leave Genoa behind you; but if, returning a little on your way, you turn into the Piazza Banchi, you will be really in the heart of the old city, in front of the sixteenth-century Exchange, Loggia dei Banchi, where Luca Pinelli was crucified for opposing a Fregoso Doge who wished to sell Livorno to Florence. Passing thence into the street of the jewellers, Strada degli Orefici, where every sort of silver filigree work may be found, with coral and amber, you come to Madonna of the Street Corner, a Virgin and Child, with S. Lo, the patron of all sorts of smiths, a seventeenth-century work of Piola. These narrow shadowy ways full of men and women and joyful with children are the delight of Genoa. There is but little to see, you may think,—little enough but just life. For Genoa is not a museum: she lives, and the laughter of her children is the greatest of all the joyful poems of Italy, maybe the only one that is immortal.

Page 19

With this thought in your heart (as it is sure to be everywhere in Italy) you return (as one continually does) to the Arcades, and turning to the left you follow them till you come to Via S. Lorenzo, in which is the Duomo all of white and black marble, a jewel with mystery in its heart, hidden away among the houses of life.

It was built on the site of a church which commemorated the passing of S. Lorenzo through Genoa. Much of the present church is work of the twelfth century, such as the side doors and the walls, but the facade was built early in the fourteenth century, while the tower and the choir were not finished till 1617. The dome was made by Galeazzo Alessi, the Perugian who built so much in Genoa, as we shall see later. Possibly the bas-reliefs strewn on the north wall are work of the Roman period, but they are not of much interest save to an archeologist.

Within, the church is dark, and this I think is a disappointment, nor is it very rich or lovely. Some work of Matteo Civitali is still to be seen in a side chapel on the left, but the only remarkable thing in the church itself is the chapel of St. John Baptist, into which no woman may enter, because of the dancing of Salome, daughter of Herodias. There in a marble urn the ashes of the Messenger have lain for eight centuries, not without worship, for here have knelt Pope Alexander *iii*, our own Richard Cordelion, Federigo Barbarossa, Henry *iv* after Canossa, Innocent *iv*, fugitive before Federigo *ii*, Henry *vii* of Germany, St. Catherine of Siena, and often too, St. Catherine Adorni, Louis *xii* of France, Don John of Austria after Lepanto, and maybe, who knows, Velasquez of Spain, Vandyck from England, and behind them, all the misery of Genoa through the centuries, an immense and pitiful company of men and women crying in the silence to him who had cried in the wilderness.

Other curious, strange, and wonderful things, too, S. Lorenzo holds for us in her treasury: a piece of the True Cross set in a cruciform casket of gold crusted with precious stones, stolen, as most relics have been, this one from the Venetians in the fourth Crusade, when the Emperor Baldwin, whom Venice had crowned, sent it as gift to Pope Innocent *iii* by a Venetian galley, which, caught in a storm, took shelter in Modone in Hellas, where two Genoese galleys found her and, having looted her, sent the relic to S. Lorenzo in Genoa magnanimously, as Giustiniani says. Here also beside this wonder you may see the cup of the Holy Grail, stolen by the French, who, forced to return it, sent this broken green glass in place of the perfect emerald they carried away; or maybe, who knows, it was but glass in the beginning. Yet, indeed, the Genoese paid a great price for it, thinking it truly the emerald of the Precious Blood, but they may have deceived themselves in the joy that followed the winning of the Holy City: though that is not like Genoa. However this may be, and with relics you are as like to be right as wrong whatever your opinion, there is but little else worth seeing in S. Lorenzo.

Page 20

As you follow the Via S. Lorenzo upwards, you come presently on your left to the Piazza Umberto Primo, in which is the Palazzo Ducale, the ancient palace of the Doges, rebuilt finally in 1777; and at last, still ascending, you find yourself in the great shapeless Piazza Deferrari, with its statue to Garibaldi, while at the top of the Via S. Lorenzo on your right is the Church of S. Ambrogio, built by Pallavicini, with three pictures, a Guido Reni, the Assumption of the Virgin, and two Rubens, the Circumcision and S. Ignatius healing a madman. Not far away (for you turn into Piazza Deferrari and take the second street to the left, Strada S. Matteo) is the great Doria Church of S. Matteo, in black and white marble, a sort of mausoleum of the Doria family. Now, the family of Doria, one of the most ancient in Genoa, the Spinola clan alone being older, emerges really about 1100, and takes its rise, we are told, from Arduin, a knight of Narbonne, who, resting in Genoa on his way to Jerusalem, married Oria, a daughter of the Genoese house of della Volta. However this may be, in 1125 a certain Martino Doria founded the Church of S. Matteo, which has since remained the burial-place and monument of his race. Martino Doria is said to have become a monk, and to have died in the monastery of S. Fruttuoso at Portofino, where, too, lie many of the Doria family; but certainly as early as 1298 S. Matteo became the monument of the Doria greatness, for Lamba Doria, the victor of Curzola, where he beat the Venetian fleet, was laid here, as you may see from the inscription on the old sarcophagus at the foot of the facade of the church to the right. The facade itself is covered with inscriptions in honour of various members of the family: first, to Lamba, with an account of the battle. It reads as follows: "To the glory of God and the Blessed Virgin Mary, in the year 1298, on Sunday 7 September, this angel was taken in Venetian waters in the city of Curzola, and in that place was the battle of 76 Genoese galleys with 86 Venetian galleys, of which 84 were taken by the noble Lord Lamba Doria, then Captain and Admiral of the Commune and of the People of Genoa, with the men on them, of which he brought back to Genoa alive as prisoners 7400, along with 18 galleys, and the other 66 he caused to be burnt in the said Venetian waters,—he died at Savona in 1323." [3] It was in this engagement that Marco Polo was taken prisoner and brought to Genoa.

The second inscription on this facade refers to the battle of Sapienza, when in 1354 Pagano Doria beat the Venetians off the coast of Greece. It reads as follows: [4] "In honour of God and the Blessed Mary. In the fourth day of November 1354, the noble Lord Pagano Doria with 31 Genoese galleys, at the Island of Sapienza, fought and took 36 Venetian galleys and four ships, and led to Genoa 1400 men alive as captives with their captain."

Page 21

The third inscription deals again with a defeat of the Venetian fleet, by Luciano Doria in 1379. It reads as follows:[5] "To the glory of God and the Blessed Mary. In the year 1379, on the 5th day of May, in the Gulf of the Venetians near Pola, there was a battle of 22 Genoese galleys with 22 galleys of the Venetians, in which were 4075 men-at-arms and many other men from Pola; of which galleys 16 were taken with all that was in them by the noble Lord Luciano Doria, Captain General of the Commune of Genoa, who in the said battle while fighting valiantly met his death. The sixteen galleys of the Venetians were conducted into Genoa with 2407 captive men."

The fourth inscription refers to the earlier victory of Oberto Doria over the Pisans. It is as follows:[6] "In the name of the Holy Trinity, in the year of Our Lord 1284, on the 6th day of August, the high and mighty Lord Oberto Doria, at that time Captain and Admiral of the Commune and of the Genoese people, triumphed in the Pisan waters over the Pisans, taking from them 33 galleys with 7 sunk and all the rest put to flight, and with many dead men left in the waters; and he returned to Genoa with a great multitude of captives, so that 7272 were placed in the prisons. There was taken Andrea Morosini of Venice, then Podesta and Captain General in war of the Commune of Pisa, with the standard of the Commune, captured by the galleys of Doria and brought to this church with the seal of the Commune, and there was also taken Loto, the son of Count Ugolino, and a great part of the Pisan nobility."

The fifth inscription refers to the victory of Filippino Doria, nephew to the great Admiral over the Spanish galleys in the Gulf of Salerno, which led Andrea, to the consternation of Genoa, to attack the Pope's galleys at Civitavecchia.

Within, the church was altered in 1530 by Montorsoli, the Florentine who was brought from Florence by the Admiral. And there above the high altar hangs his sword, given him by Pope Paul *iii*, his friend and enemy. There, too, in the left aisle is the Doria chapel, with a picture of Andrea and his wife kneeling before our Lord. In the crypt, which was decorated in stucco by Montorsoli, you may see his tomb.

Questo e quel Doria, che fa dai Pirati
Sicuro il vostro mar per tutti i lati.

The beautiful cloister contains the statues of Andrea and Giovandrea, broken by the people in 1797. Close by is the Doria Palace, given by the Republic to Andrea when he refused the office of Doge. It is decorated with the privileged black and white marble, and bears the inscription, *Senat. Cons. Andreae de Oria Patriae Liberatori Munus Publicium*.

If you return from S. Matteo to the Piazza Deferrari and then follow the Via Carlo Felice (and without some sort of guidance such as this you are like to be lost in the maze of the city) on your way to the beautiful Piazza Fontane Marose, you pass on your left the Palazzo Pallavicini, empty now of all its treasures.

Page 22

On your right as you enter this square of palaces is the Palazzo della Casa, once the Palazzo Spinola, decorated with the black and white marble, built in the early part of the fifteenth century, in the place where the old tower of that great family once stood. It is the palace of the oldest Genoese family, and the statues in the facade represent the most famous members of the clan, as Oberto, the son of the founder of this branch of the race, the Luccoli Spinola, Conrado, who ruled the city in 1206, and Opizino, who married his daughter to Theodore Paleologus, Emperor of Constantinople, and lived like a king and was banished in 1309. The palace itself is said to have been built with the remains of the Fieschi palace which the Senate destroyed in 1336. Beyond it rise the Palazzo Negrone and the Palazzo Pallavicini, while opposite the Negrone Palace the Via Nuova, now called Via Garibaldi (for the Italians have a bad habit of renaming their old streets), opens, a vista of palaces, where all the greatness and splendour of Genoa rise up before you in houses of marble, and courtyards musical with fountains, walls splendid with frescoes, and rooms full of pictures.

Before passing into this street of palaces, however, the traveller should follow the difficult Salita di S. Caterina, which climbs between Palazzo della Casa and Palazzo Negrone towards the Acqua Sola, that lovely garden, passing on his way the old Palazzo Spinola, where many an old and precious canvas still hangs on the walls, and the spoiled frescoes of the beautiful portico are fading in the sun.

It is perhaps in the Via Garibaldi, Via Cairoli, and Via Balbi, avenues of palaces narrow because of the summer sun, bordered on either side by triumphant slums, that the real Genoa splendid and living may best be surprised. Here, amid all the grave and yet homely magnificence of the princes of the State, life, with a brilliance and a misery all its own, ebbs and flows, and is not to be denied. Between two palaces of marble, silent, and full maybe of the masterpieces of dead painters, you may catch sight of the city of the people, a "truogolo" perhaps with a great fountain in the midst, where the girls and women are washing clothes, and the children, whole companies of them, play about the doorways, while above, the houses, and indeed the court itself, are bright with coloured cloths and linen drying in the wind and the sun. It is a city like London that you discover, living fiercely and with all its might, but without the brutality of our more terrible life, where as here wealth rises up in the midst of poverty, only here wealth is noble and without the blatancy and self-satisfaction you find in our squares, and poverty has not lost all its joyfulness, its air of simplicity and romance, as it has with us.

Page 23

It is these palaces, so noble and, as one might think, so deserted, that Galeazzo Alessi built in the sixteenth century for the nobles of Genoa. And it is his work, whole streets of it, that has named the city the City of Palaces, as we say, and has given her something of that proud look which clings to her in her title, La Superba. Yet not altogether from the magnificence of her old streets has this name come to her, but in part from the character of her people, and in great measure, too, from her brave position there between the mountains and the sea, a city of precious stone in an amphitheatre of noble hills. Nothing that Genoa could build, steal, or win could even be so splendid as that birthright of hers, her place among the mountains on the shores of the great sea.

As one enters Via Garibaldi from Piazza Marose down the vistaed street where a precious strip of the blue sky seems more lovely for the shadowy way, the first house on the right is Palazzo Cambiaso, built by Alessi, while on the left, No. 2, is Palazzo Gambaro, which belonged to the Cambiaso family. No. 3 on the right is Palazzo Parodi, another of Alessi's works, built in 1567 for Franco Lercaro; No. 4 is Palazzo Carega; No. 5, Palazzo Spinola, again by Alessi; while Palazzo Giorgio Doria, No. 6, was also built by him. Here, beside frescoes by the Genoese Luca Cambiaso, you may find a Vandyck, a portrait of a lady and a Sussanah by Veronese. In the Palazzo Adorno too, No. 10, the work of Alessi, you may find several fine pictures, among them three trionfi in the manner of Botticelli, and a Rubens; while in Palazzo Serra, No. 12, but you may not enter, there is a fine hall. The Palazzo Municipale, built by Rocco Lurago at the end of the sixteenth century, has five frescoes of the life of the Doge Grimaldi, and Paganini's violin, a Guarnerius, on which Senor Sarasate played not long ago.

It is, however, in Palazzo Rosso, No. 18, possibly a work of Alessi's, that you may see what these Genoese palaces really are, for the Marchesa Maria Brignole-Sale, to whom it belonged, presented it to the city in 1874. It is into a vestibule, desolate enough certainly, that you pass out of the life of the street, and, ascending the great bare staircase, come at last on the third storey into the picture gallery. There is after all, but little to see; for, splendid though some of the pictures may once have been, they are now for the most part ruined. There remains, however, a Moretto, the portrait of a Physician, and the portrait of the Marchese Antonio Giulio Brignole-Sale on horseback, the beautiful work of Vandyck. Looking at this picture and its fellow, the portrait of the Marchesa, it is with sorrow we remember the fate that has befallen so many of Vandyck's masterpieces painted in this city. For either they have been carried away, like the magnificent group of the Lommellini family to Edinburgh, the Marchesa Brignole with her child to England, or they have been repainted and spoiled.

Page 24

It was in 1621, on the 3rd October, that Vandyck, mounted on “the best horse in Rubens’ stables,” set out from Antwerp for Italy. After staying a short while in Brussels, he journeyed without further delay across France to Genoa. With him came Rubens’ friend, Cavaliere Giambattista Nani. He reached Genoa on 20th November, where his friends of the de Wael family greeted him.

The city of Genoa, herself without a school of painting, had welcomed Rubens not long before very gladly, nor had Vandyck any cause to complain of her ingratitude. He appears to have set himself to paint in the style of Rubens, choosing similar subjects, at any rate, and thus to have won for himself, with such work as the Young Bacchantes, now in Lord Belper’s collection, or the Drunken Silenus, now in Brussels, a reputation but little inferior to his master’s. Certainly at this time his work is very Flemish in character, and apparently it was not till he had been to Venice, Mantua, and Rome that the influence of Italy and the Italian masters may be really found in his work. A disciple of Titian almost from his youth, it is the work of that master which gradually emancipates him from Flemish barbarism, from a too serious occupation with detail, the over-emphasis of northern work, the mere boisterousness, without any real distinction, that too often spoils Rubens for us, and yet is so easily excused and forgotten in the mere joy of life everywhere to be found in it. Well, with this shy and refined mind Italy is able to accomplish her mission; she humanises him, gives him the Latin sensibility and clarity of mind, the Latin refinement too, so that we are ready to forget he was Rubens’ country-man, and think of him often enough as an Englishman, endowed as he was with much of the delicate and lovely genius of so many of our artists, full of a passionate yet shy strength, that some may think is the result of continual communion with Latin things, with Italy and Italian work, Italian verse, Italian painting, on the part of a race not Latin, but without the immobility, the want of versatility, common to the Germans, which has robbed them of any great painter since the early Renaissance, and in politics has left them to be the last people of Europe to win emancipation.

Much of this enlightening effect that Italy has upon the northerner may be found in the work of Vandyck on his return to Genoa, really a new thing in the world, as new as the poetry of Spenser had been, at any rate, and with much of his gravity and sweet melancholy or pensiveness, in those magnificent portraits of the Genoese nobility which time and fools have so sadly misused. And as though to confirm us in this thought of him, we may see, as it were, the story of his development during this journey to the south in the sketch-book in the possession of the Duke of Devonshire. Here, amid any number of sketches, thoughts as it were that Titian has suggested, or Giorgione evoked, we see the very dawn of all that

Page 25

we have come to consider as especially his own. We may understand how the pride and boisterous magnificence of Rubens came to seem a little insistent a little stupid too, beside Leonardo's Virgin and Child with St. Anne now in the Louvre, which he notes in Milan, or that Last Supper which is now but a shadow on the wall of S. Maria delle Grazie. And above all, we may see how the true splendour of Titian exposes the ostentation of Rubens, as the sun will make even the greatest fire look dingy and boastful. Gradually Vandyck, shy and of a quiet, serene spirit, becomes aware of this, and, led by the immeasurable glory of the Venetians, slowly escapes from that "Flemish manner" to be master of himself; so that, after he has painted in the manner of Titian at Palermo, he returns to Genoa to begin that wonderful series of masterpieces we all know, in which he has immortalised the tragedy of a king, the sorrowful beauty, frail and lovely as a violet, of Henrietta Maria, and the fate of the Princes of England. And though many of the pictures he painted in Genoa are dispersed, and many spoiled, some few remain to tell us of his passing. One, a Christ and the Pharisees, is in the Palazzo Bianco, not far from Palazzo Rosso, on the opposite side of the Via Garibaldi. But here there is a fine Rubens too; a Gerard David, very like the altar-piece at Rouen; a good Ruysdael, with some characteristic Spanish pictures by Zurbaran, Ribera, and Murillo; and while the Italian pictures are negligible, though some paintings and drawings of the Genoese school may interest us in passing, it is characteristic of Genoa that our interest in this collection should be with the foreign work there.

As you leave Via Garibaldi and pass down Via Cairoli, on your left you pass Via S. Siro. Turning down this little way, you come almost immediately to the Church of S. Siro. The present building dates from the seventeenth century, but the old church, then called Dei Dodici Apostoli, was the Cathedral of Genoa. It was close by that the blessed Sirus "drew out the dreadful serpent named Basilisk in the year 550." What this serpent may really have been no one knows, but Carlone has painted the scene in fresco in S. Siro.

Returning to Via Cairoli, at the bottom, in Piazza Zecca on your left, is one of the Balbi palaces; while in Piazza Annunziata, a little farther on, you come to the beautiful Church of Santissima Annunziata del Vastato, built by Della Porta in 1587.

Crossing this Piazza, you enter perhaps the most splendid street in Genoa, Via Balbi, which climbs up at last to the Piazza Acquaverde, the Statue of Columbus, and the Railway. The first palace on your right is Palazzo Durazzo-Pallavicini, with a fine picture gallery. Here you may see two fine Rubens, a portrait of Philip IV of Spain, and a Silenus with Bacchantes, a great picture of James I of England with his family, painted by some "imitator" of Vandyck, though who it was in Genoa that knew both Vandyck and England is not yet clear; a Ribera, a Reni, a Tintoretto, a Domenichino, and above all else Vandyck's Boy in White Satin, in the midst of these ruined pictures which certainly once would have given us joy. The Boy in White Satin is perhaps the loveliest picture

Vandyck left behind him; though it is but partly his after all, the fruit, the parrot, and the monkey being the work of Snyders.

Page 26

On the other side of the Via Balbi, almost opposite the Palazzo Durazzo-Pallavicini, is the Palazzo Balbi, which possesses the loveliest cortile in Genoa, with an orange garden, and in the Great Hall a fine gallery of pictures. Here is the Vandyck portrait of Philip *ii* of Spain, which Velasquez not only used as a model, or at least remembered when he painted his equestrian Olivarez in the Prado, but which he changed, for originally it was a portrait of Francesco Maria Balbi, till, as is said, Velasquez came and painted there the face of Philip *ii*. Certainly Velasquez may have sketched the picture and used it later, but it seems unlikely that he would have painted the face of Philip *ii*, whom he had never seen, though the Genoese at that time might well have asked him to do so.[7]

As you continue on your way up Via Balbi, you have on your right the Palazzo dell' Università, with its magnificent staircase built in 1623 by Bartolommeo Bianco. Some statues by Giovanni da Bologna make it worth a visit, while of old the tomb of Simone Boccanegra, the great Doge, made such a visit pious and necessary.

Opposite the University is the Palazzo Reale, which once belonged to the Durazzo family. A crucifixion by Vandyck is perhaps not too spoiled to be still called his work.

So at last you will come to the Piazza Acquaverde and the Statue of Columbus, which is altogether dwarfed by the Railway Station. Not far away to the left, behind this last, you will find the great Palazzo Doria. It is almost nothing now, but in John Evelyn's day, when accompanied by that "most courteous marchand called Tornson," he went to see "the rarities," it was still full of its old splendour. "One of the greatest palaces here for circuit," he writes, "is that of the Prince d'Orias, which reaches from the sea to the summit of the mountaines. The house is most magnificently built without, nor less gloriously furnished within, having whole tables and bedsteads of massy silver, many of them sett with achates, onyxes, cornelians, lazulis, pearls, turquizes, and other precious stones. The pictures and statues are innumerable. To this palace belong three gardens, the first whereof is beautified with a terrace supported by pillars of marble; there is a fountaine of eagles, and one of Neptune, with other sea-gods, all of the purest white marble: they stand in a most ample basine of the same stone. At the side of this garden is such an aviary as S^r. Fra. Bacon describes in his *Sermones Fidelium* or Essays, wherein grow trees of more than two foote diameter, besides cypresse, myrtills, lentiscs, and other rare shrubs, which serve to nestle and pearch all sorts of birds, who have an ayre and place enough under their ayrie canopy, supported with huge iron worke stupendious for its fabrick and the charge. The other two gardens are full of orange trees, citrons, and pomegranates; fountaines, grotts, and statues; one of the latter is a colossal Jupiter, under which is a sepulchre of a beloved dog, for the care of which one of this family receiv'd of the K. of Spayne 500 crownes a yeare during the life of the faithful animal. The reservoir of water here is a most admirable piece of art; and so is the grotto over against it."

Page 27

Close by Palazzo Doria is the Church of S. Giovanni di Pre, with its English tomb and Lombard tower, and memories of the two Urban popes Urban V and Urban vi, the first of whom stayed here on his way back to Rome from the Babylonian captivity, while the other murdered eight of his Cardinals close by, and threw their bodies into the sea. This is the quarter of booty, the booty of the Crusaders, and it is in such a place and in the older part of the town near Piazza Sarzano and in the narrow ways behind the Exchange that, as I think, Genoa seems most herself, the port of the Mediterranean, the gate of Italy. Yet what I prefer in Genoa are her triumphant slums, then the palaces and villas with their bigness, so impressive for us who came from the North, which seem to be a remnant of Roman greatness, a vision as it were of solidity and grandeur. Something of this, it is true, haunts almost every Italian city; only nowhere but in Genoa can you see so many palaces together, whole streets of them, huge, overwhelming, and yet beautiful houses, that often seem deserted, as though they belonged to a greater and more splendid age than ours.

It is altogether another aspect of these splendid buildings that you see from the ramparts towards Nervi, from the height of the Via Corsica or from the hills. From there, with the whole strength and glory of the sea before you, these palaces, which in the midst of the city are so indestructible and immortal, seem flowerlike, full of delicate hues, fragile and almost as though about to fade; you think of hyacinths, of the blossom of the magnolia, of the fleeting lilac, and the lily that towers in the moonlight to fall at dawn. Returning to the city in the twilight with all this passing and fragile glory in your eyes, it is again another emotion that you receive when, on entering the city, you find yourself caught in the immense crowd of working people flocking homewards or to Piazza Deferrari, to the cafes, through the narrow streets, amid swarms of children, laughing, running, gesticulating or fighting with one another. From the roofs where they seem to live, from the high narrow windows, the warren of houses that would be hovels in the North, but here in the sun are picturesque, women look down lazily and cry out, with a shrillness peculiar to Genoa, to their friends in the street. It is a bath of multitude that you are compelled to take, full of a sort of pungent, invigorating, tonic strength, life crowding upon you and thrusting itself under your notice without ceremony or announcement. If on the 2nd November you chance to be in Genoa, you will find the same insatiable multitude eagerly flocking to the cemetery, that strange and impossible museum of modern sculpture, where the dead are multiplied by an endless apparition of crude marble shapes, the visions of the vulgar hacked out in dazzling, stainless white stone. What would we not give for such a "document" from the thirteenth century

Page 28

as this cemetery has come to be of our own time. It is the crude representation of modern Italian life that you see, realistic, unique, and precious, but for the most part base and horrible beyond words. All the disastrous, sensual, covetous meanness, the mere baseness of the modern world, is expressed there with a naivete that is, by some miraculous transfiguration, humorous with all the grim humour of that thief death, who has gathered these poor souls with the rest because someone loved them and they were of no account. The husk of the immortality of the poet and the hero has been thrust upon the mean and disgusting clay of the stockbroker; the grocer, horribly wrapped in everlasting marble, has put on ignominy for evermore; while the plebeian, bewildered by the tyranny of life, crouches over his dead wife, for ever afraid lest death tap him too on the shoulder. How the wind whistles among these immortal jests, where the pure stone of the Carrara hills has been fashioned to the ugliness of the middle classes. This is the supreme monument not of Genoa only, but of our time. In that grotesque marble we see our likeness. For there is gathered in indestructible stone all the fear, ostentation, and vulgar pride of our brothers. Ah, poor souls! that for a little minute have come into the world, and are eager not altogether to be forgotten; they too, like the ancients, have desired immortality, and, seeing the hills, have sought to establish their mediocrity among them. Therefore, with an obscene and vulgar gesture, they have set up their own image as well as they could, and, in a frenzied prayer to an unknown God, seem to ask, now that everything has fallen away and we can no longer believe in the body, that they may not be too disgusted with their own clay. Thus in frenzy, fear, and vanity they have carved the likeness of that which was once among the gods.

FOOTNOTES:

[1] Cf. P. Villari: *Primi due Secoli della Storia di Firenze* (2^o Edizione), vol. i. p. 246.

[2] See Le Mesurier, *Genoa: Five Lectures*, Genoa, A. Donath, 1889, a useful and informing book, to which I am indebted for more than one curious fact.

[3] See Le Mesurier, *op. cit.* p. 82. Le Mesurier thinks that “this angel” refers to “the central figure in a bas-relief” above the inscription and below the right-hand window of the church.

[4] See Le Mesurier, *op. cit.* p. 98.

[5] See Le Mesurier, *op. cit.* p. 107.

[6] See Le Mesurier, *op. cit.* p. 78.

[7] See Justi, *Velasquez and his Times* (English translation), 1880, page 315, and Le Mesurier, *op. cit.*, page 163.

II. ON THE WAY

Page 29

It was already summer when, one morning, soon after sunrise, I set out from Genoa for Tuscany. The road to Spezia along the Riviera di Levante, among the orange groves and the olives, between the mountains and the sea, is one of the most beautiful in Europe. Forgotten, or for the most part unused, by the traveller who is the slave of the railway, it has not the reputation of its only rivals, the Corniche road from Nice to Mentone, the lovely highway from Castellamare to Sorrento, or the road between Vietri and Amalfi, where the strange fantastic peaks lead you at last to the solitary and beautiful desert of Paestum, where Greece seems to await you entrenched in silence among the wild-flowers. And there, too, on the road to Tuscany, after the pleasant weariness of the way, which is so much longer than those others, some fragment of antiquity is to be the reward of your journey, though nothing so fine as the deserted holiness of Paestum, only the dust of the white temple of Aphrodite crowning the western horn of Spezia, where it rises splendid out of the sea in the sun of Porto Venere.

This forgotten way among the olive gardens on the lower slopes of the mountains over the sea, seems to me more joyful than any other road in the world. It leads to Italy. Within the gate where all the world is a garden, the way climbs among the olives and oranges, fresh with the fragrance of the sea, the perfume of the blossoms, to the land of heart's desire, where Pisa lies in the plain under the sorrowful gesture of mountains like a beautiful mutilated statue, where Arno, parted from Tiber, is lost in the sea, dowered with the glory of Florence, the tribute of the hills, the spoil of many streams, the golden kiss of the sun; while Tuscany, splendid with light and joy, stands neither for God nor for His enemies, but for man, to whom she has given everything really without an afterthought, the songs that shall not be forgotten; the pictures full of youth; and above all Beauty, that on a night in spring came to her from Greece as it is said among the vineyards, before the vines had budded. For even as Love came to us from heaven, and was born in a stable among the careful oxen, where a few poor shepherds found a Mother with her Child, so Beauty was born in a vineyard in the earliest dawn, when some young men came upon the hard white precious body of a goddess, and drew her from the earth, and began to worship her. Then in their hearts Beauty stirred, as Love did in the hearts of the shepherds and the kings. Nor was that vision, so full of wisdom (a vision of birth or resurrection, was it?) less fruitful than that other so full of Love, when Mary, coming in the twilight of dawn, saw the angel and heard his voice, and after weeping in the garden, heard Love Himself call her by name. Well, if the resurrection of God was revealed in Palestine, it was here among the Tuscan hills that man rose from the dead and first saw the beauty of the flowers and

Page 30

the mystery of the hills. Here, too, is holy land if you but knew it, full of old forgotten gods, out-fashioned deities beside whose shrines, though they be hushed, you may still hear the prayers of worshippers, the tears of desire, the laughter of the beloved. For the old gods are not dead. Though they be forgotten and the voice of Jesus full of sorrowful promises has beguiled the world, still every morning is Aphrodite new born in the spume of the sea, and in many an isle forsaken you may catch the notes of Apollo's lyre, while Dionysus, in the mysterious heat of midday when the husbandman is sleeping, still steals among the grapes, and Demeter even yet in the sunset seeks Persephone among the sheaves of corn. If Jesus wanders in the ways of the city to comfort those who have forgotten the sun, in the woods the gods are still upon their holy thrones, and their love constraineth us. Immortal and beloved, how should they pass away, for, beside their secret places, of old we have hushed our voices, and children have played with them no less than with Jesus of Nazareth. The gods pass, only their gifts remain, the sun and the hills and the sea, but in us they are immortal, not one have we suffered to creep away into oblivion.

Thus I, thinking of the way, came to Nervi. Now the way from Genoa out of the Pisan gate to Nervi is none of the pleasantest, being suburb all the way; but those eight *chilometri* over and done with, there is nothing but delight between you and Spezia. Nervi itself, that surprising place where beauty is all gathered into a nosegay of sea and seashore, will not keep you long, for the sun is high, and the road is calling, and the heat to come; moreover, the beautiful headland of Portofino seems to shut out all Italy from your sight. Once there, you tell yourself, what may not be seen, the Carrara hills, Spezia perhaps, even Pisa maybe, miles and miles away, where Arno winds through the marshes behind the Pineta to the sea. Now, whether or not in your heart of hearts you hope for Pisa, a white peak of Carrara you certainly hope to see, and that ... why, that is Tuscany. So you set out, leaving Genoa and her suburb at last behind you, and, climbing among olive groves, orange gardens, and flaming oleanders, with here a magnolia heavy with blossom, there a pomegranate mysterious with fruit and flowers, after another five miles you come to Recco, a modest, sleepy village, where it is good to eat and rest. In the afternoon you may very pleasantly take boat for Camogli, that ancient seafaring place, full of the debris of the sea, old masts and ropes, here a rusty anchor, there a golden net, with sailors lying asleep on the parapet of the harbour, and the whole place full of the soft sea wind, languorous and yet virile withal, the shady narrow ways, the low archways, the crooked steps pleasant with the song of the sea, the rhythm of the waters.

Page 31

In the cool of the afternoon you leave Camogli and climb by the byways to Ruta, whence you may see all the Gulf of Genoa, with the proud city herself in the lap of the mountains, and there, yes, far away, you may see the stainless peaks of Tuscany, whiter than snow, shining in the quiet afternoon; and nearer, but still far away, the crest of the horn of Spezia, with the ruined church of Porto Venere—a church or a temple, is it?—on the headland beside the island of Palmaria. Beside you are the sea and the hills, two everlasting things, with here an old villa, beautiful with many autumns, in a grove of cypress, ilex, and myrtle, those three holy trees that mark death, mystery, and love; while far down on the seashore where the foam is whitest, stands a little ruined chapel in which the gulls cry all day long. But your heart turns ever toward Italy yonder—towards the hills of marble. Will one ever reach them, those far-away pure peaks immaculate in silence, like a thought of God in the loneliness of the mountains? Far away below you lies Rapallo in the crook of the bay among the oleanders and vines. It is there you must sleep, far away still from those visionary peaks, which yet will in some strange way give you a sense of security, as though a legion of bright angels, ghosts in the pale night (for they fade away in the twilight), invisible to other men, were on guard to keep you from all harm. Somehow it is always into a dreamless sleep one falls in Rapallo, that beautiful and guarded place behind Portofino, where the sea is like a lake, so still it is, and all the flowers of the world seem to have run for shelter. It is as though one had seen the Holy City, and though it was still far off, it was enough, one was content.

[Illustration: ON THE ROAD]

Rapallo itself, as you find on your first morning, is beautiful, chiefly by reason of its sea-girt tower. The old castle is a prison, and the town itself, full of modern hotels, is yet brisk with trade in oil and lace; but it is not these things that will hold you there, but that sea-tower and the joy of the woods and gardens. And then there are some surprising things not far away. Portofino, for instance, with its great pine and the ilex woods, its terraced walk and the sea, not the lake of Rapallo, but the sea itself, full of strength and wisdom. Then there is San Fruttuoso, with its convent among the palm trees by the seashore, whither the Doria are still brought by sea for burial. Here they lie, generation on generation, of the race which loved the sea; almost confined in the deep, for the waves break upon the floor of the crypt that holds them. They could not lie more fitly than on the shore of this sea they won and held for Genoa. San Fruttuoso is difficult to reach save by sea. In the summer the path from Portofino is pleasant enough, but at any other time it is almost impassable. And indeed the voyage by boat from Rapallo to Portofino, and thence to San Fruttuoso, should be chosen, for the

Page 32

beauty of the coast, which, as I think, can nowhere be seen so well and so easily as here. Then, in returning to Portofino, the road along the coast should be followed through Cervara, where Guido, the friend of Petrarch and founder of the convent, lies buried, where Francis I, prisoner of Charles V, was wind-bound, to S. Margherita, the sister-town of Rapallo, and thence through S. Michele di Pagana, where you may see a spoiled Vandyck, to Rapallo. Who may speak of all the splendid valleys and gardens that lie along this shore, for they are gardens within a garden, and where all the world is so fair it is not of any private pleasance that one thinks, but of the hills and the wild-flowers and the sea, the garden of God.

And if the road, so far, from Genoa beggars description, so that I have thought to leave it almost without a word, what can I hope to say of the way from Rapallo to Chiavari? Starting early, perhaps in the company of a peasant who is returning to his farm among the olives, you climb, in the genial heat, among the lower slopes between the great hills and the sea, along terraces of olives, through a whole long day of sunshine, with the song of the cicale ever in your ears, the mysterious long-drawn-out melody of the *rispetti* of the peasant girls reaching you ever. And then from the stillness among the olives, where the shade is delicate and fragile, of silver and gold, and the streams creep softly down to the sea, the evening will come as you pass along the winding ways of Chiavari, for in the golden weather one is minded to go softly. So in the twilight pursuing your way you follow the beautiful road to Sestri-Levante, where again you are within sound of the sea that breaks on the one side on a rocky and lofty shore, and on the other creeps softly into a flat beach, the town itself rising on the promontory between these two bays. There, under the headland among the woods, you may find a chapel of black and white marble, surely the haunt of Stella Maris, who has usurped the place of Aphrodite.

Many days might be spent among the woods of Sestri, but the road calls from the mountains, and it is ever of Tuscany that you think as you set out at last, leaving the sea behind you for the hills, climbing into the Passo di Bracco, that, as it seems, alone divides you from the land you seek. It is a far journey from Sestri to Spezia, but with a good horse, in spite of the hill, you may cover it in a single long day from sunrise to sunset. The climb begins almost at once, and continues really for some eighteen miles, till Baracchino and the Osteria Baracca are reached, in a desolate region of mountains that stretch away for ever, billow on billow. Then you descend only to mount again through the woods, till evening finds you at La Foce, the last height before Spezia; and suddenly at a turning of the way the sunset flames before you, staining all the sea with colour, and there lies Tuscany, those fragile, stainless peaks

Page 33

of Carrara faintly glowing in the evening sun purple and blue and gold, with here a flush as of dawn, there the heart of the sunset. And all before you lies the sea, with Spezia and the great ships in its arms; while yonder, like a jewel on the cusp of a horn, Porto Venere shines; and farther still, Lerici in the shadow of the hills washed by the sea, stained by the blood of the sunset, its great castle seeming like some splendid ship in the midst of the waters. From the bleak height of La Foce, whence all the woods seem to have run down to the shore, slowly one by one the lights of the city appear like great golden night flowers; soon they are answered from the bay, where the ships lie solemnly, sleepily at anchor, and at last the great light of the Pharos throws its warning over sea and seashore; and gathering in the distance on the far horizon, the night splendid with blue and gold, overwhelms the world, bringing coolness and as it were a sort of reconciliation. So it is quite dark when, weary, at last you find yourself in Spezia at the foot of the Tuscan hills.

Spezia is a modern city which has obliterated the more ancient fortresses, whose ruins still guard the two promontories of her gulf. The chief naval station in Italy, she has crowned all the heights and islands with forts, and in many a little creek hidden away, you continually come upon warships, naval schools, hospitals, and such, while in her streets the sailors and soldiers mingle together, giving the town a curiously modern character, for indeed there is little else to call your attention. The beautiful bay which lies between Porto Venere and Lerici behind the line of islands, that are really fortifications, is, in spite of every violation, a spectacle of extraordinary beauty, and in the old days—not so long ago, after all—when the woods came down to the sea, and Spezia was a tiny village, less even than Lerici is to-day, it must have been one of the loveliest and quietest places in the world. Shut out from Italy by the range of hills that runs in a semicircle from horn to horn of her bay, in those days there were just sun and woods and sea, with a few half pagan peasants and fishermen to break the immense silence. And, as it seems to me, by reason of some magic which still haunts this mysterious seashore, it is ever that world half pagan that you seek, leaving Spezia very gladly every morning for San Terenzo and Lerici for Porto Venere and the enchanted coast.

Leaving Spezia very early in the morning, there is nothing more delightful than the voyage across the land-locked bay, past the beautiful headlands and secret coves, to San Terenzo and Lerici. If you leave the steamer at San Terenzo, you may walk along a sort of seawall, built out of the cliff and boulders of the shore, round more than one little promontory, to Lerici, whose castle seems to guard the Tuscan sea. Walking thus along the shore, you pass the Villa Magni, Shelley's house, standing, not

Page 34

as it used to do, up out of the sea, for the road has been built really in the waves; but in many ways the same still, for instance with the broad balcony on the first storey, which pleased Shelley so much; and though a second storey has been added since, and even the name of the house changed, a piece of vandalism common enough in Italy to-day, where, since they do not even spare their own traditions and ancient landmarks, it would be folly to expect them to preserve ours, still you may visit the rooms in which he lived with Mary, and where he told Claire of the death of Allegra.

The house stands facing the sea in the deepest part of the bay, nearer to San Terenzo than to Lerici. Both Trelawney and Williams had been searching all the spring for a summer villa for the Shelleys, who, a little weary perhaps of Byron's world, had determined to leave Pisa and to spend the summer on the Gulf of Spezia. Byron was about to establish himself just beyond Livorno, on the slopes of Montenero, in a huge and rambling old villa with eighteenth century frescoes on the walls, and a tangled park and garden running down to the dusty Livorno highway. The place to-day is a little dilapidated, and its statues broken, but in the summer months it becomes the paradise of a school of girls, a fact which I think might have pleased Byron.

However, the Shelleys were thinking of no such faded splendour as Villa Dupoy for their summer retreat. "Shelley had no pride or vanity to provide for," says Trelawney, "yet we had the greatest difficulty in finding any house in which the humblest civilised family could exist.

"On the shores of this superb bay, only surpassed in its natural beauty and capability by that of Naples, so effectually had tyranny paralysed the energies and enterprise of man, that the only indication of human habitation was a few most miserable fishing villages scattered along the margin of the bay. Near its centre, between the villages of San Terenzo and Lerici, we came upon a lonely and abandoned building called the Villa Magni, though it looked more like a boat or bathing house than a place to live in. It consisted of a terrace or ground-floor unpaved, and used for storing boat-gear and fishing-tackle, and of a single storey over it, divided into a hall or saloon and four small rooms which had once been white-washed; there was one chimney for cooking. This place we thought the Shelleys might put up with for the summer. The only good thing about it was a verandah facing the sea, and almost over it. So we sought the owner and made arrangements, dependent on Shelley's approval, for taking it for six months."

Shelley at once decided to accept the offer of this house, though it was unfurnished. Mary and Claire presently set out for Spezia, Shelley remaining in Pisa to manage the removal of the furniture. He reached Lerici on 28th April, writing, immediately on his arrival, to Mary in Spezia.

April 28, 1822.

Page 35

“DEAREST MARY,—I am this moment arrived at Lerici, where I am necessarily detained waiting the furniture, which left Pisa last night at midnight; and as the sea has been calm and the wind fair, may expect them every moment.... Now to business—Is the Magni House taken? if not pray occupy yourself instantly in finishing the affair, even if you are obliged to go to Sarzana, and send a messenger to me to tell me of your success. I, of course, cannot leave Lerici, to which place the boats (for we were obliged to take two) are directed. But *you* can come over in the same boat that brings this letter, and return in the evening.

“I ought to say that I do not think there is accommodation for you all at this inn; and that even if there were, you would be better off at Spezia; but if the Magni House is taken, then there is no possible reason why you should not take a row over in the boat that will bring this, but don’t keep the men long. I am anxious to hear from you on every account.—Ever yours, S.”

Shelley’s fears as to the accommodation of Lerici were by no means without foundation. Within the last two years a decent inn has been open there in the summer, but before that the primitive and not very clean hostelry in which, as I suppose, Shelley lodged, was all that awaited the traveller.[8] It was not for long, however, that Shelley was left in doubt about the house. Villa Magni became his, and, after much trouble with the furniture, for the officials put the customs duty at L300 sterling, they were allowed to bring it ashore, the harbour-master agreeing to consider Villa Magni “as a sort of depot, until further leave came from the Genoese Government.”

It was here that, very soon after they had taken possession of the house, Claire learned from Shelley’s lips of the death of her child, and on 21st May set out for Florence. A few evenings later, Shelley, walking with Williams on the terrace, and observing the effect of the moonshine on the water, grasped Williams, as he says, “violently by the arm and stared steadfastly on the white surf that broke upon the beach at our feet. Observing him sensibly affected, I demanded of him if he were in pain; but he only answered by saying, ‘There it is again—there!’ He recovered after some time, and declared that he saw, as plainly as he then saw me, a naked child (Allegra) rise from the sea and clap its hands as in joy, smiling at him.” Was this a premonition of his own death, a hint, as it were, that in such a place one like Shelley might well hope for from the gods? Certainly that shore was pagan enough. Sometimes on moonlight nights, in the hot weather, the half savage natives of San Terenzo would dance among the waves, singing in chorus; while Mrs. Shelley tells us that the beauty of the woods made her “weep and shudder.” So strong and vehement was her dread that she preferred to go out in the boat which she feared, rather than to walk among the paths and alleys of the trees hung with vines, or in the mysterious silence of the olives.

Page 36

Thus began that happy last summer of Shelley's life. Day by day, he, with Trelawney and Williams, watched for that fatal plaything, the little boat *Ariel*, which Trelawney had drawn in her actual dimensions for him on the sands of Arno, while he, with a map of the Mediterranean spread before him, sitting in this imaginary ship, had already made wonderful voyages. And one day as he paced the terrace with Williams, they saw her round the headland of Porto Venere. Twenty-eight feet long by eight she was: built in Genoa from an English model that Williams, who had been a sailor, had brought with him. Without a deck, schooner-rigged, it took, says Trelawney, "two tons of iron ballast to bring her down to her bearings, and then she was very crank in a breeze, though not deficient in beam." Truly Shelley was no seaman. "You will do no good with Shelley," Trelawney told Williams, "until you heave his books and papers overboard, shear the wisps of hair that hang over his eyes, and plunge his arms up to the elbows in a tar bucket." But he said, "I can read and steer at the same time." Read and steer! But indeed it was on this very bay, and almost certainly in the *Ariel*, that he wrote those perfect lines: "She left me at the silent time."

It was here too, in Lerici, that Shelley wrote "The Triumph of Life," that splendid fragment in *terza rima*, which is like a pageant suddenly broken by the advent of Death: that ends with the immortal question—

"Then, what is life? I cried,"

which was for ever to remain unanswered, for he had gone, as he said, "to solve the great mystery." Well, the story is an old one, I shall not tell it again; only here in the bay of Lerici, with his words in my ears, his house before me, and the very terrace where he worked, the ghost of that sorrowful and splendid spirit seems to wander even yet. What was it that haunted this shore, full of foreboding, prophesying death?

It was to meet Leigh Hunt that Shelley set out on 1st July with Williams in the *Ariel* for Leghorn. For weeks the sky had been cloudless, full of the mysterious light, which is, as it seems to me, the most beautiful and the most splendid thing in the world. In all the churches and by the roadsides they were praying for rain. Shelley had been in Pisa with Hunt showing him that most lovely of all cathedrals, and, listening to the organ there, he had been led to agree that a truly divine religion might even yet be established if Love were really made the principle of it instead of Faith. On the afternoon following that serene day at Pisa, he set sail for Lerici from Leghorn with Williams and the boy Charles Vivian. Trelawney was on the *Bolivar*, Byron's yacht, at the time, and saw them start. His Genoese mate, watching too, turned to him and said, "They should have sailed this morning at three or four instead of now; they are standing too much inshore; the current will set

Page 37

them there.” Trelawney answered, “They will soon have the land-breeze.” “Maybe,” continued the mate, “she will soon have too much breeze; that gaff topsail is foolish in a boat with no deck and no sailor on board.” Then, pointing to the south-west,—“Look at those black lines and the dirty rags hanging on them out of the sky—they are a warning; look at the smoke on the water; the devil is brewing mischief.” Then the mist which had hung all day in the offing swallowed the *Ariel* for ever.

It was not until many days after this, Trelawney tells us, “that my worst fears were confirmed. Two bodies were found on the shore—one near Viareggio, which I went and examined. The face and hands and parts of the body not protected by the dress were fleshless. The tall, slight figure, the jacket, the volume of Aeschylus in one pocket, and Keats’ poems[9] in the other, doubled back, as if the reader, in the act of reading, had hastily thrust it away, were all too familiar to me to leave a doubt in my mind that this mutilated corpse was any other than Shelley’s.”

A certain light has been thrown on the manner in which Shelley and his friend met their death in a letter which Mr. Eyre wrote to the *Times* in 1875.[10] Trelawney had always believed that the Livorno sailors knew more than they cared to tell of that tragedy. For one thing, he had seen an English oar in one of their boats just after the storm; for another the laws were such in Tuscany, that had a fishing-boat gone to the rescue of the *Ariel* and brought off the poet and his companions, she would with her crew have been sent into quarantine for fear of cholera. It is not, however, to the Duchy of Tuscany that Shelley owes his death, but to the cupidity of the Tuscan sailors, one of them having confessed to the crime of running down the boat, seeing her in danger, in the hope of finding gold on “the milord Inglese.” There seems but little reason for doubting this story, which Vincent Eyre communicated to the *Times* in 1875: Trelawney eagerly accepts it, and though Dr. Garnett and Professor Dowden politely forbear to accuse the Italians, such crimes appear to have been sufficiently common in those days to confirm us, however reluctantly, in this explanation. Thus died perhaps the greatest lyric poet that even England had ever borne, an exile, and yet not an exile, for he died in Italy, the fatherland of us all. Ah! “’tis Death is dead, not he,” for in the west wind you may hear his song, and in the tender night his rare mysterious music; when the skylark sings it is as it were his melody, and in the clouds you may find something of the refreshment of his spirit.

“Nothing of him that doth fade
But doth suffer a sea-change
Into something rich and strange.”

FOOTNOTES:

[8] For the identity of this inn see Leigh Hunt, *Autobiography*. Constable, 1903, vol. ii. p. 123.

Page 38

[9] The Keats was doubled open at the “Lamia.”

[10] *Trelawney Records*. Pickering, 1878, pp. 197-200, accepts this story, as clearing up what for fifty years had been a mystery to him.

III. PORTO VENERE

It is perhaps a more joyful day that may be spent at Porto Venere, the little harbour on the northern shores of the gulf. Starting early you come, still before the sea is altogether subject to the sun, to a little bay of blue clear still water flanked by gardens of vines, of agaves and olives. Here, in silence save for the lapping of the water, the early song of the cicale, the far-away notes of a reed blown by a boy in the shadow by the sea, you land, and, following the path by the hillside, come suddenly on the little port with its few fishing-boats and litter of ropes and nets, above which rises the little town, house piled on house, from the ruined church rising high, sheer out of the sea to the church of marble that crowns the hill. Before you stands the gate of Porto Venere, a little Eastern in its dilapidation, its colour of faded gold, its tower, and broken battlement. Passing under the ancient arch past a shrine of Madonna, you enter the long shadowy street, where red and green vegetables and fruits, purple grapes, and honey-coloured *nespoli* and yellow oranges are piled in the cool doorways, and the old women sit knitting behind their stalls. Climbing thus between the houses under that vivid strip of soft blue sky, the dazzling rosy beauty of the ruined ramparts suddenly bursts upon you, and beyond and above them the golden ruined church, and farther still, the glistening shining splendour of the sea and the sun that has suddenly blotted out the soft sky. A flight of broken steps leads to a ruined wall, along which you pass to the old church, or temple is it, you ask yourself, so fair it looks, and without the humility of a Christian building. To your right, across a tossing strip of blue water, full of green and gold, rises the island of Palmaria, and beyond that two other smaller islands, Tisso and Tissetto, while to your left lies the whole splendid coast shouting with waves, laughing in the sunshine and the wind of early morning, and all before you spreads the sea. As I stood leaning on the ruined wall looking on all this miracle of joy, a little child, who had hidden among the wind-blown cornflowers and golden broom on the slope of the cliffs, slowly crept towards me with many hesitations and shy peerings; then, no longer afraid, almost naked as he was, he ran to me and took my hand.

[Illustration: PORTO VENERE.

Alinari]

“Will the Signore see the church?” said he, pulling me that way.

The Signore was willing. Thus it was, hand in hand with Eros, that I mounted the broken steps of the tower of Venus, his mother.

Page 39

How may I describe the wonder of that place? For at last, he before, I following, though he still held my hand, we came out of the stairway on to a platform on the top of the tower surrounded by a broken battlement. It was as though I had suddenly entered the last hiding-place of Aphrodite herself. On the floor sat an old and lame man sharpening a scythe, and beside him a little child lay among the broken corn that was strewn over the whole platform. Where the battlements had once frowned, now stood sheaves of smiling corn, golden and nodding in the wind and the sun. Suddenly the lad who had led me hither seized the flail and began to beat the corn and stalks strewn over the floor, while the old man, quavering a little, sang a long-drawn-out gay melody, and the little girl beat her tiny hands in time to the work and the music. Then, unheard, into this miracle came a young woman,—ah, was it not Persephone,—slim as an osier in the shadow, walking like a bright peacock straight above herself, climbing the steps, and her hands were on her hips and on her black head was a sheaf of corn. Then she breathed deep, gazed over the blue sea, and set her burden down with its fellows on the parapet, smiling and beating her hands at the little girl.

Porto Venere rises out of the sea like Tintagel—but a classic sea, a sea covered with broken blossoms. It was evening when I returned again to the Temple of Venus. The moon was like a sickle of silver, far away the waves fawned along the shore as though to call the nymphs from the woods; the sun was set; out of the east night was coming. In the great caves, full of coolness and mystery, the Tritons seemed to be playing with sea monsters, while from far away I thought I heard the lamentable voice of Ariadne weeping for Theseus. Ah no, they are not dead, the beautiful, fair gods. Here, in the temple of Aphrodite, on the threshold of Italy, I will lift up my heart. Though the songs we made are dead and the dances forgotten, though the statues are broken, the temples destroyed, still in my heart there is a song and in my blood a murmur as of dancing, and I will carve new statues and rebuild the temples every day. For I have loved you, O Gods, in the forests and on the mountains and by the seashore. I, too, am fashioned out of the red earth, and all the sea is in my heart, and my lover is the wind. As the rivers sing of the sea, so will I sing till I find you. As the mountains wait for the sun, so will I wait in the night of the city.

For my joy, and my lord the sun, I give you thanks, that he is splendid and strong and beautiful beyond beauty. For the sea and all mysterious things I give you thanks, that I have understood and am reconciled with them. For the earth when the sun is set, for the earth when the sun is risen, for the valleys and the hills, for the flowers and the trees, I give you thanks, that I am one with them always and out of them was I made. For the wind of morning, for the wind of evening, for the tender night, for the growing day, take, then, my thanks, O Gods, for the cypress, for the ilex, for the olive on the road to Italy in the sunset and the summer.

Page 40

IV. SARZANA AND LUNA

It was very early in the morning when I came into Tuscany. Leaving Spezia overnight, I had slept at Lerici, and, waking in the earliest still dawn, I had set out over the hills, hoping to cross the Macra before breakfast.

In this tremulous and joyful hour, full of the profound gravity of youth hesitating on the threshold of life, the day rose out of the sea; so, a lily opening in a garden while we sleep transfigures it with its joy.

As I climbed the winding hill among the olives, while still a cool twilight hung about the streets of Lerici, the sun stood up over the sea, awakening it to the whole long day of love to come. Far away in the early light, over a sea mysterious of blue and silver and full of ecstasy, the coast curved with infinite beauty into the golden crest of Porto Venere. Spezia, like a broken flower, seemed deserted on the seashore, and Lerici itself, far below me, waking at morning, watched the sleeping ships, the deep breathing of the sea, the shy and yet proud gesture of the day.

Then as I crossed the ridge of the hill and began to follow the road downward towards Tuscany between the still olives, where as yet the world had not seen the sun, suddenly all that beautiful world, about to be so splendid, was hidden from me, and instead I saw the delta of a great river, the uplifted peaks of the marble mountains, and there was Tuscany.

Past Arcola, that triumphal arch of the middle age, built on high like a city on an aqueduct, I went into the plain; then far away in the growing day I saw the ancient strongholds of the hills, the fortresses of the Malaspina, the castles of the Lunigiana, the eyries of the eagles of old time. There they lay before me on the hills like *le grandi ombre* of which Dante speaks, Castelnovo di Magra, Fosdinovo of the Malaspina, Niccola over the woods. Then at a turning of the way at the foot of the hills I had traversed, under that long and lofty bridge that has known so well the hasty footstep of the fugitive, flowed Magra.

... Macra, che, per cammin corto
Lo genovese parte dal Toscano.

Thus with Dante's verses in my mouth I came into Tuscany.

Now the way from Macra to Sarzana lies straight across that great delta which hides behind the eastern horn of the Gulf of Spezia. At the Macra bridge you meet the old road from Genoa to Pisa, and entering Tuscany thus, Sarzana is the first Tuscan city you will see. Luna Nova the Romans called the place, for it was built to replace the older city close to the sea, the ruins of which you may still find beside the road on the way southward, but of Roman days there is nothing left in the new city.

Page 41

It was a fortress of Castruccio Castracani, the birthplace of a great Pope. Of Castruccio, that intolerant great man, I shall speak later, in Lucca, for that was the rose in his shield. Here I wish only to remind the reader who wanders among the ruins of his great castle, that Castracani took Sarzana by force and held it against any; and perhaps to recall the words of Machiavelli, where he tells us that the capture of Sarzana was a feat of daring done to impress the Lucchesi with the splendour of their liberated tyrant. For when the citizens had freed him from the prison of Uguccione della Faggiuola, who had seized the government of Lucca, Castruccio, finding himself accompanied by a great number of his friends, which encouraged him, and by the whole body of the people, which flattered his ambition, caused himself to be chosen Captain-General of all their forces for a twelvemonth; and resolving to perform some eminent action that might justify their choice, he undertook the reduction of several places which had revolted following the example of Uguccione. Having for this purpose entered into strict alliance with the city of Pisa, she sent him supplies, and he marched with them to besiege Sarzana; but the place being very strong, before he could carry it, he was obliged to build a fortress as near it as he could. This new fort in two months' time rendered him master of the whole country, and is the same fort that at this day is called Sarzanella, repaired since and much enlarged by the Florentines. Supported by the credit of so glorious an exploit, he reduced Massa, Carrara, and Lavenza very easily: he seized likewise upon the whole country of Lunigiana ... so that, full of glory, he returned to Lucca, where the people thronged to meet him, and received him with all possible demonstrations of joy.

It is, however, rather as the home of Nicholas V, I think, that Sarzana appeals to us to-day, than as the stronghold of Castruccio. The tyrant held so many places, as we shall see, his prowess is everywhere, but Tommaso Parentucelli is like to be forgotten, for his glory is not written in sword-cuts or in any violated city, but in the forgotten pages of the humanists, the beautiful life of Vespasiano da Bisticci. And was not Nicholas V. the first of the Renaissance Popes, the librarian of Cosimo de' Medici, the tutor of the sons of Rinaldo degli Albizzi and of Palla Strozzi? Certainly his great glory was the care he had of learning and the arts: he made Rome once more the capital of the world, he began the Vatican, and the basilica of S. Pietro, yet he was not content till he should have transformed the whole city into order and beauty. In him the enthusiasm and impulse of the Renaissance are simple and full of freshness. Finding Rome still the city of the Emperors and their superstition, he made it the city of man. He was the friend of Alberti, the Patron of all men of learning and poets. "Greece has not fallen," said Filelfo, in remembering him, "but seems to have migrated to Italy, which of old was called Magna Graecia." Yet Tommaso Parentucelli^[11] was sprung of poor parent and even though they may have been *nobili* as Manetti tells us, *De nobili Parentucellorum progenie*,^[12] that certainly was of but little assistance to him in his youth.

Page 42

“Maestro Tomaso da Serezano,” says Vespasiano the serene bookseller of Florence, with something of Walton’s charm—“Maestro Tomaso da Serezano, who was afterwards Pope Nicholas V, was born at Pisa of humble parents. Later on account of discord in that city, his father was imprisoned, so that he went to Sarzana, and there gave to his little son in his tender years lessons in grammar, which, through the excellence of his understanding, he quickly learned. His father died, however, when he who was to come to such eminence was but nine years old, leaving two sons, our Maestro Tomaso, and Maestro Filippo, who later was Cardinal of Bologna. Now Maestro Tomaso fell sick at that time, and his mother, seeing him thus ailing, being a widow and having all her great hope in her sons, was in the greatest anxiety and sorrow, and prayed God unweariedly to spare her little son. Thus intent in prayer, hoping that he would not die, she fell asleep about dawn, when One called to her and said: ‘Andreola (for that was her name), doubt nothing that thy son shall live.’ And it seemed in her vision that she saw her son in a bishop’s robe, and One said to her that he would be Pope. Waking then from this dream, immediately she went to her little son and found him already better, and to all those in the house she told the vision she had had. Now, when the child was well, because of the steadfast hope which the vision had given her, she at once begged him to pursue his studies; which he did, so that when he was sixteen he had a very good knowledge of grammar and the Latin tongue, and began to work at logic, in order later to come at philosophy and theology. Then he left Sarzana and went to Bologna, so that he might the better pursue his studies in every faculty. At Bologna he studied in logic and in philosophy with great success. In a short time he became learned in all the seven Liberal Arts. Staying at Bologna still he was eighteen, and Master of Arts, lacking money, it was necessary for him to go to Sarzana to his mother, who had remarried, in order to have money to furnish his expenses. She was poor and her husband not very rich, and then Tomaso was not his son, but a stepson: he could not obtain money from them. Determined to follow his studies, he thought to go to Florence, the mother of studies and every virtue at that time. So he went thither, and found Messer Rinaldo degli Albizzi, a most exceptional man, who carried him off to instruct his sons, giving him a good salary as a young man of great virtue. At the end of a year Messer Rinaldo left Florence, and Maestro Tomaso wishing to remain in the city, he arranged for him to enter the service of Messer Palla di Nofri Strozzi; and from him he had a very good salary. At the end of another year he had gained so much from these two citizens that he had enough to return to Bologna to his studies, though in Florence he had not lost his time, for he read in every faculty.”

Page 43

Such were the early years of one of the most cultured and princely of the Popes. Born in 1398, he was himself one of the sons of the early Renaissance. Not altogether without pedantry, he yet by his learning, by his patronage of scholars and artists (and indeed he was perhaps the first Pope who preferred them to monks and friars), secured for the Renaissance the allegiance of the Church. He died in a moment of misfortune for Europe in 1455, just after the fall of Constantinople, being succeeded on the throne of Christendom by Pius II, Pius Aeneas as he called himself in a moment of enthusiasm, one of the most human of all those men of the world who have become the vicegerent of Jesus. Nicholas V was not a man of the world, he was a scholar, full of the enthusiasm of his day. As a statesman, while he pacified Italy, he saw Byzantium fall into the hands of the barbarians. He was a Pagan in whom there was no guile. His enthusiasm was rather for Apollo and the Muses than for Jesus and the Saints. With a simplicity touching and delightful, he watched Sigismondo Malatesta build his temple at Rimini, and was his friend and loved him well. Pius II, with all his love of nature and the classics, though his own life was full of unfortunate secrets and his pride and vanity truly Sienese, could not look on unmoved while Malatesta built a temple to the old gods in the States of the Church. But then Pius had not lived all the long years of his youth at Luna Nova. Who can tell what half-forgotten deity may have found Maestro Tomaso asleep in the woods, that magician Virgil in his hands,—for on this coast the gods wander even yet,—and, creeping behind him, finding him so fair, may have kissed him on the ears, as the snakes kissed Cassandra when she lay asleep at noon in Troy of old. Certainly their habitations, their old places may still be found. We are not so far from Porto Venere, and then on the highway towards Massa, not long after you have come out of the beautiful avenue of plane trees, itself like some great temple, through which the road leaves Sarzana, you come upon the little city of Luna, or the bright fragments of it, among the sand of what must once have been the seashore, with here a fold of the old amphitheatre, there the curve of the circus, while scattered on the grass softer than sleep, you may find perhaps the carved name of a goddess, the empty pedestal of a statue.

Lying there on a summer day in the everlasting quietness, unbroken even by a wandering wind or the ripple of a stream, some inkling of that old Roman life, always at its best in such country places as this, comes to you, yes, from the time when Juno was yet a little maid among the mossy fountains and the noise of the brooks. Tacitus in his *Agricola*, that consoling book, tells us of those homes of a refined and severe simplicity in Frejus and Como, but it is to Rutilius, with his strange gift of impressionism, you must go for a glimpse of Luna. In his perfect

Page 44

verses[13] we may see the place as he found it when, gliding swiftly on the waves, perhaps on a day like this, he came to those walls of glistening marble, which got their name from the planet that borrows her light from the sun, her brother. The country itself furnished those stones which shamed with their whiteness the laughing lilies, while their polished surface with its veins threw forth shining rays. For this is a land rich in marbles which defy, sure of their victory, the virgin whiteness of the snow itself.

Well, there is but little left of that shining city, and yet, as I lay dreaming in the grass-grown theatre, it seemed to be a festal day, and there among the excited and noisy throng of holiday-makers, just for a moment I caught sight of the aediles in their white tunics, and then, far away, the terrified face of a little child, frightened at the hideous masks of the actors. Then, the performance over, I followed home some simple old centurion was it?—who, returned from the wars on the far frontier, had given the city a shady walk and that shrine of Neptune. We came at last to a country house of “pale red and yellow marble,” half farm, half villa, lying away from the white road at the point where it begins to decline somewhat sharply to the marshland below. It is close to the sea. Large enough for all requirements, and not expensive to keep in repair, my host explains. At its entrance is a modest but beautiful hall; then come the cloisters, which are rounded into the likeness of the letter D, and these enclose a small and pretty courtyard. These cloisters, I am told, are a fine refuge in a storm, for they are protected by windows and deep over-hanging eaves. Facing the cloisters is a cheerful inner court, then the dining-room towards the seashore, fine enough for anyone, as my host asserts, and when the south-west wind is blowing the room is just scattered by the spray of the spent waves. On all sides are folding doors, or windows quite as large as doors, so that from two sides and the front you command a prospect of three seas as it were; while at the back, as he shows me, one can see through the inner court to the woods or the distant hills. Just then the young mistress of the place comes to greet me, bidden by my host her father, and in a moment I see the nobility of this life, full of pure and honourable things, together with a certain simplicity and sweetness. Seeing my admiration, my host speaks of his daughter, of her love for him, of her delight in his speeches,—for he is of authority in the city,—of how on such occasions she will sit screened from the audience by a curtain, drinking in what people say to his credit. He smiles as he tells me this, adding she has a sharp wit, is wonderfully economical, and loves him well; and indeed she is worthy of him, and doubtless, as he says, of her grandfather. Then my proud old centurion leads me down the alleys of his garden full of figs and mulberries, with roses and a few violets,

Page 45

till in the perfect stillness of this retreat we come to the seashore, and there lies the white city of Luna glistening in the sun. As I take my leave, reluctantly, for, I would stay longer, my hostess is so sweet, my host so charming, I catch sight of the name of the villa cut into the rosy marble of the gates: “Ad Vigilias Albas” I read, and then and then ... Why, what is this? I must have fallen asleep in that old theatre among the debris and the fine grass. Ad Vigilias Albas—“White Nights,” nights not of quite blank forgetfulness, certainly. But it is with the ancestors of Marius I seem to have been talking in the old city of Luna, that in his day had already passed away.[14]

It was sunset when I found myself at the door of the Inn in Sarzana.

FOOTNOTES:

[11] Even the name is uncertain. In the Duomo here, in Cappella di S. Tommaso, you may find his mother’s grave, on which she is called Andreola dei Calandrini. His uncle, however, is called J.P. Parentucelli. In two Bulls of Felix V he is called Thomas de Calandrinis; cf. Mansi, xxxi. 190.

[12] Muratori, *Rer. Ital. Scrip.*, III. ii. 107.

[13] Sed deverticulo fuimus fortasse loquaces:

Carmine propositum jam repetamus iter.

Advehimur celeri candentia moenia lapsu:

Nominis est auctor sole corusca soror.

Indigenis superat ridentia lilia saxis,

Et levi radiat picta nitore silex.

Dives marmoribus tellus, quae luce coloris

Provocat intactas luxuriosa nives.

[14] You may see the place to-day—but it is of plaster now—as Pater describes it.—*Marius the Epicurian*, vol. i. 20.

V. CARRARA, MASSA DUCALE, PIETRA-SANTA, VIAREGGIO

And truly it is into a city of marble that you come, when, following the dusty road full of the ruts of the bullock-wagons, past Avenza, that little city with a great castle of Castruccio Castracani, after climbing into the gorge where the bullocks, a dozen of them it may be, yoked to a single dray, take all the way, you enter the cold streets of Carrara, that are always full of the sound of falling water. And strangely enough, as one may



think, in this far-away place, so close to the mountains as to be littered by their debris, it is an impression of business and of life that you receive beyond anything of the sort to be found in Spezia. Not a beautiful city certainly, Carrara has a little the aspect of an encampment, an encampment that has somehow become permanent, where everything has been built in a hurry, as it were, of the most precious and permanent material. So that, while the houses are of marble, they seem to be with but few exceptions mere shanties without beauty of any sort, that were built yesterday for shelter, and to-morrow will be destroyed. It is true that the Church of S. Andrea is a building of the thirteenth century, in the Gothic manner, with a fine facade and sculptures of a certain merit, but it fails to impress itself on the town, which is altogether alien from it, modern for the most part in the vulgar way of our time, when ornament is a caprice of the rich and merely ostentatious, the many living, without beauty or light, in barracks or huts of a brutal and hideous uniformity.

Page 46

It was a Sunday evening when I came to Carrara; all that world of labouring men and women was in the streets; in the piazza a band played; close to the hotel, in a tent set up for the occasion, a particularly atrocious collection of brass instruments were being blown with might and main to attract the populace to a marionette performance. The whole world seemed dizzy with noise. After dinner I went out into the streets among the people, but it was not any joy I found there, only a mere brutal cessation from toil, in which amid noise and confusion, the labourer sought to forget his labour. More and more as I went among them it seemed to me that the mountains had brutalised those who won from them their snowy treasure. In all Carrara and the valley of Torano I saw no beautiful or distinguished faces,—the women were without sweetness, the men a mere gang of workmen. Now, common as this is in any manufacturing city of the North, it is very uncommon in Italy, where humanity has not been injured and enslaved by machinery as it has with us. You may generally find beauty, sweetness, or wisdom in the faces of a Tuscan crowd in any place. Only here you will see the man who has become just the fellow-labourer of the ox.

I understood this better when, about four o'clock on the next morning, I went in the company of a lame youth into the quarries themselves. There are some half-dozen of them, glens of marble that lead you into the heart of the mountains, valleys without shade, full of a brutal coldness, an intolerable heat, a dazzling light, a darkness that may be felt. Torano, that little town you come upon at the very threshold of the quarries, is like a town of the Middle Age, full of stones and refuse and narrow ways that end in a blind nothingness, and low houses without glass in the windows, and dogs and cats and animals of all sorts, goats and chickens and pigs, among which the people live. Thus busy with the frightful labour among the stones in the heart of the mountains, where no green thing has ever grown or even a bird built her nest, where in summer the sun looks down like some enormous moloch, and in winter the frost and the cold scourge them to their labour in the horrid ghostly twilight, the people work. The roads are mere tracks among the blocks and hills of broken marble, yellow, black, and white stones, that are hauled on enormous trolleys by a line of bullocks in which you may often find a horse or a pony. Staggering along this way of torture, sweating, groaning, rebelling, under the whips and curses and kicks of the labourers, who either sit cursing on the wagon among the marble, or, armed with great whips, slash and cut at the poor capering, patient brutes, the oxen drag these immense wagons over the sharp boulders and dazzling rocks, grinding them in pieces, cutting themselves with sharp stones, pulling as though to break their hearts under the tyranny of the stones, not less helpless and insensate than they. Here and there you may see an armed

Page 47

sentry, as though in command of a gang of convicts, here and there an official of some society for the protection of animals, but he is quite useless. Whether he be armed to quell a rebellion or to put the injured animals out of their pain, I know not. In any case, he is a sign of the state of life in these valleys of marble. Out of this insensate hell come the impossible statues that grin about our cities. Here, cut by the most hideous machinery with a noise like the shrieking of iron on iron, the mantelpieces and washstands of every jerry-built house and obscene emporium of machine-made furniture are sawn out of the rock. There is no joy in this labour, and the savage, harsh yell of the machines drowns any song that of old might have lightened the toil. Blasted out of the mountains by slaves, some 13,000 of them, dragged by tortured and groaning animals, the marble that might have built a Parthenon is sold to the manufacturer to decorate the houses of the middle classes, the studios of the incompetent, the streets of our trumpery cities. Do you wonder why Carrara has never produced a sculptor? The answer is here in the quarries that, having dehumanised man, have themselves become obscene. The frightful leprous glare of crude whiteness that shines in every cemetery in Europe marks only the dead; the material has in some strange way lost its beauty, and with the loss of beauty in the material the art of sculpture has been lost. These thousands of slaves who are hewing away the mountains are ludicrous and ridiculous in their brutality and absurdity. They have sacrificed their humanity for no end. The quarries are worked for money, not for art. The stone is cut not that Rodin may make a splendid statue, but that some company may earn a dividend. As you climb higher and higher, past quarry after quarry, it is a sense of slavery and death that you feel. Everywhere there is struggle, rebellion, cruelty; everywhere you see men, bound by ropes, slung over the dazzling face of the cliffs, hacking at the mountains with huge iron pikes, or straining to crash down a boulder for the ox wagons. As you get higher an anxious and disastrous silence surrounds you, the violated spirit of the mountains that has yielded itself only to the love of Michelangelo seems to be about to overwhelm you in some frightful tragedy. In the shadowless cool light of early morning, these pallid valleys, horrid with noise of struggle and terror, the snorting of a horse, the bellow of a bullock in pain, seem like some fantastic dream of a new Inferno; but when at last the enormous sun has risen over the mountains, and flooded the glens with furious heat, it is as though you walked in some delirium, a shining world full of white fire dancing in agony around you. You stumble along, sometimes waiting till a wagon and twelve oxen have been beaten and thrust past you on the ascent, sometimes driven half mad by the booming of the dynamite, here threading an icy tunnel, there on the edge of

Page 48

a precipice, almost fainting in the heat, listening madly to the sound of water far below. Then, as you return through the sinister town of Torano with its sickening sights and smells, you come into the pandemonium of the workshops, where nothing has a being but the shriek of the rusty saws drenched with water, driven by machinery, cutting the marble into uniform slabs to line urinals or pave a closet. At last, in a sort of despair, overwhelmed with heat and noise, you reach your inn, and though it be midday in July, you seize your small baggage and set out where the difficult road leads out of this spoiled valley to the olives and the sea.

* * * * *

It was midday when, in spite of the sun, I set out up the long hill that leads to La Foce and Massa from Carrara. It is a road that turns continually on itself, climbing always, among the olive woods and chestnuts, where the girls sing as they herd the goats, and the pleasant murmur of the summer, the song of the cicale, the wind of the hills, cleanse your heart of the horror of Carrara. Climbing thus at peace with yourself for a long hour, you come suddenly to La Foce, a sort of ridge or pass between the loftier hills, whence you may see the long-hidden sea, and Montignoso, that old Lombard castle still fierce above the olive woods, and Massa itself, Massa Ducale, a lofty precipitous city crowned by an old fortress. Who may describe the beauty of the way under the far-away peaks of marble, splendid in their rugged gesture, their immortal perfection and indifference! And indeed, from La Foce all the noise and cruelty of that life in the quarries at Carrara is forgotten. As you begin to descend by the beautiful road that winds along the sides of the hills, the burden of those immense quarries, echoing with cries of distress inarticulate and pitiful, falls away from one. Here is Italy herself, fair as a goddess, delicate as a woman, forlorn upon the mountains. Everywhere in the quiet afternoon songs come to you from the shady woods, from the hillsides and the streams. Something of the simplicity and joy of a life we have only known in our hearts is expressed in every fold of the mountains, olive clad and terraced with walks and vines, where the husbandman labours till evening and the corn is ripe or reaping, and the sound of the flute dances like a fountain in the shade. And so, when at evening you enter the noble city of Massa, among the women sitting at their doors sewing or knitting in the sunset, while the children, whole crowds of them, play in the narrow streets, their laughter echoing among the old houses as the sun dances in a narrow valley, or you pass among the girls who walk together in a nosegay, arm in arm, or the young men who lounge together in a crowd against the houses watching them, there is joy in your heart, because this is life, simple and frank and full of hope, without an afterthought or a single hesitation of doubt or fear.

Page 49

There is little to be seen at Massa that is not just the natural beauty of the place, set like a flower among the woods, that climb up to the marble peaks. Not without a certain interest you come upon the Prefettura, which once was the summer castle of Elisa Baciocchi, Napoleon's sister, who as a gift from him held Lucca, and was much beloved, from 1805 to 1814. And joyful as the country is under that impartial sun, before that wide and ancient sea, among her quiet woods and broken shrines, it is not without a kind of hesitation and shame almost that you learn that the great fortress which crowns the city is now a prison in which are many half-witted unhappy folk, who in this transitory life have left the common way. It is strange that in so many lands the prison is so often in a place of the greatest beauty. At Tarragona, far away over the sea looking towards Italy, the hospital of those who have for one cause or another fallen by the way is set by the sea-shore, almost at the feet of the waves, so that in a storm the momentary foam from those restless, free waters must often be scattered about the courtyard, where those who have injured us, and whom in our wisdom we have deprived of the world, are permitted to walk. It is much the same in Tangier, where the horrid gaol, always full of groans and the torture of the bastinado, is in the dip of the Kasbah, where it joins the European city with nothing really between it and the Atlantic. In Massa these prisoners and captives can see the sea and the great mountains, and must often hear the piping of those who wander freely in the woods. Even in Italy, it seems, where the criminal is beginning to be understood as a sick person, they have not yet contrived to banish the older method of treatment: as who should say, you are ill and fainting with anaemia, come let me bleed you.

It is at Massa that on your way south you come again into the highroad from Genoa to Pisa, for while, having left it at Spezia, you found it again at Sarzana, it was a by-road that led you to Carrara and again to Massa Ducale. Now, though the way you seek be the highway of the pilgrims, it is none the better as a road for that. For the wagons bringing marble to the cities by the way have spoiled it altogether, so that you find it ground with ruts six inches deep and smothered in dust; therefore, if you come by carriage, and still more if you be *en automobile*, it is necessary to go warily. On foot nothing matters but the dust, and if you start early from Massa that will not annoy you, for in the early morning, for some reason of the gods, the dust lies on the highway undisturbed, while by ten o'clock the air is full of it. It is a bad road then all the way to Pietrasanta, but most wonderful and lovely nevertheless. For the most part the sea is hidden from you, for you are in truth on the sea-shore, though far enough from the waves, a land of fields and cucumbers coming between road and water. Swinging along in the dawn, you

Page 50

soon pass that old castle of Montignoso, crumbling on its high rock, built by the Lombard Agilulf to hold the road to Italy. Then not without surprise you pass quite under an old Albergo which crosses the way, where certainly of old the people of Massa took toll of the Tuscans, and the Tuscans taxed all who came into their country. Then the road winds through a gorge beside a river, and at last between delicious woods of olives full of silver and golden shade most pleasant in the heat, past Seravezza in the hills, you come to the little pink and white town of Pietrasanta under the woods, at noon.

Pietrasanta is set at the foot of the Hills of Paradise, littered with marble, planted with figs and oleanders, full of the sun. For hours you may climb among the olives on the hills, terraced for vines, shimmering in the heat; and resting there, watch the sleepy sea lost in a silver mist, the mysterious blue hills, listening to the songs of the maidens in the gardens. Thus watching the summer pass by, caught by her beauty, lying on an old wall beautiful with lichen and the colours of many autumns, suddenly you may be startled by the stealthy, unconcerned approach of a great snake three feet long at least, winding along the gully by the roadside. Half fascinated and altogether fearful, you watch her pass by till she disappears bit by bit in an incredibly small fissure in the vineyard wall, leaving you breathless. Or all day long you will lie under the olives waiting for the coolness of evening, listening to the sound of everlasting summer, the piping of a shepherd, the little lovely song of a girl, the lament of the cicale. Then returning to Pietrasanta, you will sit in the evening perhaps in the Piazza there, quite surrounded by the old walls, with its mediaeval air, its lovely Municipio and fine old Gothic churches. Here you may watch all the city, the man and his wife and children, the young girls laughing together, conscious of the shy admiration of the youth of the place; and you will be struck by the beauty of these people, peasants and workmen, their open, frank faces, their grace and strength, their unconcerned delight in themselves, their air of distinction too, coming to them from a long line of ancestors who have lived with the earth, the mountains, and the sea.

Then in the early morning, perhaps, you will enter S. Martino and hear the early Mass, where there are still so many worshippers, and then, lingering after the service, you will admire the pulpit, carved really by one of those youths whose frankness and grace surprised you in the Piazza on the night before—Stagio Stagi, a native of this place, a fine artist whose work continually meets you in Pietrasanta. Indeed, in the choir of the church there are some candelabra by him, and an altar, built, as it is said, out of two confessional boxes. In the Baptistery close by are some bronzes, said to be the work of Donatello, and some excellent sculptures by Stagio; while, as though to bear out the hidden paganism, some dim memory of the old gods, that certainly haunts this shrine, the font is an old Roman *tazza*, carved with Tritons and Neptune among the waves; but over it now stands another supposed work of Donatello, S. Giovanni Battista, reconciled, as we may hope, with those whose worship he has usurped.

Page 51

The facade of S. Martino is of the fourteenth century, as is that of S. Agostino, its neighbour, where you may find another altar by Stagio.

Then it may be at evening you seek the sea-shore, that mysterious, forlorn coast where the waves break almost with a caress. It was here, or not far away, somewhere between this little wonderful city and Viareggio, then certainly a mere village, that Shelley's body was burned, as Trelawney records.[15] "The lovely and grand scenery that surrounded us," he says, "so exactly harmonised with Shelley's genius, that I could imagine his spirit soaring over us.... Not a human dwelling was in sight.... I got a furnace made at Leghorn of iron bars and strong sheet-iron supported on a stand, and laid in a stock of fuel and such things as were said to be used by Shelley's much-loved Hellenes on their funeral pyres.... At ten on the following morning, Captain S. and myself, accompanied by several officers of the town, proceeded in our boat down the small river which runs through Via Reggio (and forms its harbour for coasting vessels) to the sea.[16] Keeping along the beach towards Massa, we landed at about a mile from Via Reggio, at the foot of the grave; the place was noted by three wand-like reeds stuck in the sand in a parallel line from high to low-water mark. Doubting the authenticity of such pyramids, we moved the sand in the line indicated, but without success. I then got five or six men with spades to dig transverse lines. In the meanwhile Lord Byron's carriage with Mr. Leigh Hunt arrived, accompanied by a party of dragoons and the chief officers of the town. In about an hour, and when almost in despair, I was paralysed with the sharp and thrilling noise a spade made in coming in direct contact with the skull. We now carefully removed the sand. This grave was even nearer the sea than the other [Williams's], and although not more than two feet deep, a quantity of the salt water oozed in.

"... We have built a much larger pile to-day, having previously been deceived as to the immense quantity of wood necessary to consume a body in the unconfined atmosphere." Mr. Shelley had been reading the poems of "Lamia" and "Isabella" by Keats, as the volume was found turned back open in his pocket; so sudden was the squall. The fragments being now collected and placed in the furnace here fired, and the flames ascended to the height of the lofty pines near us. We again gathered round, and repeated, as far as we could remember, the ancient rites and ceremonies used on similar occasions. Lord B. wished to have preserved the skull, which was strikingly beautiful in its form. It was very small and very thin, and fell to pieces on attempting to remove it.

Page 52

“Notwithstanding the enormous fire, we had ample time e’er it was consumed to contemplate the singular beauty and romantic wildness of the scenery and objects around us. Via Reggio, the only seaport of the Duchy of Lucca, built and encompassed by an almost boundless expanse of deep, dark sand, is situated in the centre of a broad belt of firs, cedars, pines, and evergreen oaks, which covers a considerable extent of country, extending along the shore from Pisa to Massa. The bay of Spezia was on our right, and Leghorn on our left, at almost equal distances, with their headlands projecting far into the sea, and forming this whole space of interval into a deep and dangerous gulf. A current setting in strong, with a N.W. gale, a vessel embayed here was in a most perilous situation; and consequently wrecks were numerous: the water is likewise very shoal, and the breakers extend a long way from the shore. In the centre of this bay my friends were wrecked, and their bodies tossed about—Captain Williams seven, and Mr. Shelley nine days, e’er they were found. Before us was a most extensive view of the Mediterranean, with the isles of Gorgona, Caprera, Elba, and Corsica in sight. All around us was a wilderness of barren soil with stunted trees, moulded into grotesque and fantastic forms by the cutting S.W. gales. At short and equal distances along the coast stood high, square, antique-looking towers, with flagstaff’s on the turrets, used to keep a look-out at sea and enforce the quarantine laws. In the background was the long line of the Italian Alps.

“... After the fire was kindled ... more wine was poured over Shelley’s dead body than he had consumed during his life. This, with the oil and salt, made the yellow flames glisten and quiver.... The only portions that were not consumed were some fragments of bones, the jaw and the skull; but what surprised us all was that the heart remained entire. In snatching this relic from the fiery furnace my hand was severely burnt; and had anyone seen me do the act I should have been put in quarantine.” Shelley’s ashes were taken to Rome, and buried in the English cemetery there, a place he loved, that is perhaps the most beautiful of the beautiful graveyards of Italy.

Of Viareggio itself there is little to be said. It is a town by the seaside, full in summer of holiday-making Tuscans from Florence and the cities round about. A pretty place enough, it possesses an unique market-place covered in by ancient twisted plane trees, where the old women chaffer with the cooks and contadine. But nothing, as it seems to me, and certainly not so modern a place as Viareggio, will keep you long from Pisa. Even on the dusty way from Pietrasanta, at every turn of the road one has half expected to see the leaning tower and the Duomo. And it is really with an indescribable impatience you spend the night in Viareggio. Starting at dawn, still without a glimpse of Pisa, you enter the Pineta before the

Page 53

sun, that lovely, green, cool forest full of silver shadows, with every here and there a little farm for the pine cones, about which they are heaped in great banks. Coming out of this wood on the dusty road in the golden heat, between fields of cucumbers, you meet market carts and contadini returning from the city. Then you cross the Serchio in the early light, still and mysterious as a river out of Malory. And at last, suddenly, like a mirage, the towers of Pisa rise before you, faint and beautiful as in a dream. As you turn to look behind you at the world you are leaving, you find that the mountains, those marvellous Apuan Alps with their fragile peaks, have been lost in the distance and the sky; and so, with half a regret, full of expectancy and excitement nevertheless, you quicken your pace, and even in the heat set out quickly for the white city before you,—Pisa, once lord of the sea, the first great city of Tuscany.

FOOTNOTES:

[15] I no longer believe it is possible to be certain of the place. At any rate, all the guide-books, Baedeker, Murray, and Hare, are wrong, though not so far out as that gentleman who, having assured us that Boccaccio was a “little priest,” and that Petrarch, Poliziano, Lorenzo, and Pulci were of no account as poets, remarks that Shelley’s body was found at Lerici, and that he was burned close by.

[16] See Carmichael, *The Old Road*, etc., pp. 183-202.

VI. PISA

I

To enter Pisa by the Porta Nuova, coming at once into the Piazza del Duomo, is as though at midday, on the highway, one had turned aside into a secret meadow full of a strange silence and dazzling light, where have been abandoned among the wild flowers the statues of the gods. For the Piazza is just that—a meadow scattered with daisies, among which, as though forgotten, stand unbroken a Cathedral, a Baptistery, a Tower, and a Cemetery, all of marble, separate and yet one in the consummate beauty of their grouping. And as though weary of the silence and the light, the tower has leaned towards the flowers, which may fade and pass away. So amid the desolation of the Acropolis must the statues of the Parthenon have looked from the hills and the sea, with something of this abandoned splendour, this dazzling solitude, this mysterious calm silence, satisfied and serene.

Wherever you may be in Pisa, you cannot escape from the mysterious influence of those marvellous ghosts that haunt the verge of the city, that corner apart where the

wind is white on the grass, and the shadows steal slowly through the day. The life of the world is far away on the other side of the city; here is only beauty and peace.

Page 54

If you come into the Piazza, as most travellers do, from the Lung' Arno, as you turn into the Via S. Maria or out of the Borgo into the beautiful Piazza dei Cavalieri, gradually as you pass on your way life hesitates and at last deserts you. In the Via S. Maria, for instance, that winds like a stream from the Duomo towards Arno, at first all is gay with the memory and noise of the river, the dance of the sun and the wind. Then you pass a church; some shadow seems to glide across the way, and it is almost in dismay you glance up at the silent palaces, the colour of pearl, barred and empty; and then looking down see the great paved way where your footsteps make an echo; while there amid the great slabs of granite the grass is peeping. It is generally out of such a shadowy street as this that one comes into the dazzling Piazza del Duomo. But indeed, all Pisa is like that. You pass from church to church, from one deserted Piazza to another, and everywhere you disturb some shadow, some silence is broken, some secret seems to be hid. The presence of those marvellous abandoned things in the far corner of the city is felt in every byway, in every alley, in every forgotten court. "Amid the desolation of a city" this splendour is immortal, this glory is not dead.

II

"Varie sono le opinioni degli Scrittori circa l'edificazione di Pisa," says Tronci in his *Annali Pisani*, published at Livorno in the seventeenth century. "Various are the opinions of writers as to the building of Pisa, but all agree that it was founded by the Greeks. Cato in his *Fragment*, and Dionysius Halicarnassus in the first book of his *History*, affirm that the founders were the Pisi Alfei Pelasgi, who had for their captain the King Pelops, as Pliny says in his *Natural History* (lib. 5), and Solinus too, as though it were indubitable: who does not know that Pisa was from Pelops?" Certainly Pisa is very old, and whether or no King Pelops, as Pliny thought, founded the city, the Romans thought her as old as Troy. In 225 B.C. she was an Etruscan city, and the friend of Rome; in Strabo's day she was but two miles from the sea; Caesar's time she became a Roman military station; while in 4 A.D. we read that the disturbances at the elections were so serious that she was left without magistrates. That fact in itself seems to bring the city before our eyes: it is so strangely characteristic of her later history.

[Illustration: PISA

Alinari]

But in spite of her enormous antiquity, there are very few left of her Etruscan and Roman days, the remains of some Roman Thermae, Bagni di Nerone near the Porta Lucca being, indeed, all that we may claim, save the urns and sarcophagi scattered in the Campo Santo, from the great days of Rome. The glory of Pisa is the end of the Middle Age and the early dawn of the Renaissance. There, amid all the hurly-burly

Page 55

and terror of invasion and civil wars, she shines like a beacon beside the sea, proud, brave, and full of hope, almost the only city not altogether enslaved in a country in the grip of the barbarian, almost overwhelmed by the Lombards. And indeed, she was one of the first cities of Italy to fling off the Lombard yoke. Favoured by her position on the shores of the Tyrrhenian Sea, yet not so near the coast as to invite piracy, she waged incessant war on Greek and Saracen. Lombardy, heavy with conquest, fearful for her prize, which was Italy, was compelled to encourage the growth of the naval cities. It was on the sea that the future of Pisa lay, like the glory of the sun that in its splendour and pride passes away too soon.

Already in the ninth century we hear of her prowess at Salerno, while in the tenth, having possessed herself of her own government under consuls, she sent a fleet to help the Emperor Otho II in Sicily. Fighting without respite or rest, continually victorious, never downhearted, she had opened the weary story of the civil strife of Italy with a war against Lucca, in the year 1004.[17] It was the first outburst of that hatred in her heart which in the end was to destroy her for she died of a poverty of love.

In 1005, still with her fleet engaged in Sicilian waters, the Arab pirates fell upon her, and, forcing the harbour, sacked a whole quarter of the city. For the time Pisa could do little against the foes of Europe, but in 1016 she allied herself with that city which proved at last to be her deadliest foe, Genoa the Proud, and the united fleets swept down on Sardinia for vengeance. It was this victorious expedition that aroused the hatred of the Pisans for Genoa, a jealousy that was only extinguished when at last Pisa was crushed at Meloria.

Many were the attempts of the Arabs to regain Sardinia, but Pisa was not to be deceived. Coasting along the African shore, her fleet took Bona and threatened Carthage. Yet in 1050 the Arabs of Morocco and Spain stole the island from her, only Cagliari holding out under the nobles for the mother city. There was more than the loss of Sardinia at stake, for with the victory of the Arabs the highway of the sea was no longer secure, the existence of Pisa, and not of Pisa only, was threatened. So we find Genoa once more standing beside Pisa in the fight of Europe. The fleets again were combined, this time under the command of a Pisan, one Gualduccio, a plebeian. He sailed for Cagliari, landed his men, and engaged the enemy on the beach. The Arabs were led by the King Mogahid, Re Musetto, as the Italians called him. He was over eighty years old at the time, and though still full of cunning valour, attacked by the fleets in front and the garrison in the rear, his army was defeated and put to flight. He himself, fleeing on horseback, was wounded in two places, and falling was captured; and they took him in chains to Pisa, where he died. Thus Sardinia once more fell into the hands of Europe, and the island, divided in fiefs under the rule of Pisa,[18] was held and governed by her.

Page 56

But Pisa was not yet done with the Arab. She stood for Europe. In 1063 she fought at Palermo, returning laden with booty. It was then, after much discussion in the Senate, [19] sending an embassy to the Pope and another to “Re Henrico di Germania,” that she decided to employ this spoil in building the Duomo, in the place where the old Church of S. Reparata stood, and more anciently the Baths of Hadrian, the Emperor. The temple, Tronci tells us,[20] was dedicated to the Magnificent Queen of the Universe, Mary, ever Virgin, most worthy Mother of God, Advocate of sinners. It was begun in 1064, and many years, as Tronci says, were consumed in the building of it.[21] The pillars—and there are many—were brought by the Pisans from Africa, from Egypt, from Jerusalem, from Sardinia, and other far lands.

At this time Pisa was divided into four parts, called *Quartieri*. The first was called *Ponte*, the ensign of which was a rosy Gonfalon; the second, *di Mezzo*, which had a standard with seven yellow stripes on a red field; the third, *Foriporta*, which had a white gate in a rosy field; and the fourth, *Chinsica* with a white cross in a red field.[22]

Nor was the Duomo the only building that the Pisans undertook about this time. Eight years later, the Church of S. Pietro in Vincoli, called to-day S. Pierino, was built on a spot where of old “there was a temple of the Gentiles” dedicated to Apollo; that, when the Pisans received the faith of Jesus Christ, they gave to St. Peter, the Prince of the Apostles. This church appears to have been consecrated by the great Archbishop Peter on 30th August 1119.

These two churches, and especially the Duomo, still perhaps the most wonderful church in Italy, prove the greatness of the civilisation of Pisa at this time. She was then a self-governed city, owing allegiance, it is true, to the Marquisate of Tuscany, but with consuls of her own. Since she was so warlike, the nobles naturally had a large part in her affairs. In the Crusade of 1099 the Pisans were late, as the Genoese never ceased to remind them,—to come late, in Genoa, being spoken of as “*Come l’ajuto di Pisa*”; and, indeed, like the Genoese, the Pisans thought as much of their own commercial advantage in these Holy Wars as of the Tomb of Jesus. In 1100 they returned from Jerusalem, their merchants having gained, *una loggia, una contrada, un fondaco e una chiesa* for their nation in Constantinople, with many other fiscal benefits. Nor were they forgetful of their Duomo, for they came home with much spoil, bringing the bodies of the Saints Nicodemus the Prince of the Pharisees, Gamaliel the master of St. Paul, and Abibone, one of the seventy-two disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ.[23]

Page 57

Encouraged by their success, not long afterwards, they, in their invincible confidence and force, decided to undertake another enterprise. Urged thereto by their Archbishop Peter, they set out, partly for glory, partly in the hope of spoil to free the thousands of Christians held captive by the Arabs in the Balearic islands. The fleet sailed on the 6th August 1114, the Feast of S. Sisto, the anniversary of other victories. There were, it seems, some three hundred ships of diverse strength; and every sort of person, old and young, took part in this adventure. Going astray, they first landed in Catalonia and did much damage; then, "acknowledging their unfortunate mistake," they found the island, where, under Archbishop Peter and the Pope's gonfalone, they were entirely successful. They released the captives, and, amid the immense spoil, they brought away the son of the Moorish king, whom later they baptized in Pisa and sent back to the Moors. The Pisan dead were, however, very many. At first they thought to load a ship with the slain and bring them home again; but this was not found possible. Sailing at last for Marseilles, they buried them there in the Badia di S. Vittore, later bringing the monks to Pisa.

Now, while the glory of Pisa shone thus upon the waters far away, the Lucchesi thought to seize Pisa herself, deprived of her manhood. But the Florentines, who at this time were friends with Pisa, since their commerce depended upon the Porto Pisano, sent a company to guard the city, encamping some two miles off; for since so much loot lay to hand, to wit, Pisa herself, the Florentine captains feared lest they might not be able to hold their men. And, indeed, one of their number entered the city intent on the spoil, but was taken, and they judged him worthy only of death. But the Pisans, not to be outdone in honour, refused to allow him to be executed in their territory; then the Florentines bought a plot of ground near the camp, and killed him there. When the fleet returned and heard this, they determined to send Florence a present to show their gratitude. Now, among the spoil were some bronze gates and two rosy pillars of porphyry, very precious. Then they besought the Florentines to choose one of these, the gates or the pillars, as a gift. And Florence chose the pillars, which stand to-day beside the eastern gate of the Baptistery in that city. But on the way to Florence they encountered the Mugnone in flood, and were thrown down and broken there. Hence the Florentines, that scornful and suspicious folk, swore that the Pisans had cracked their gifts themselves with fire before sending them, that Florence might not possess things so fair.

Other jealousies, too, arose out of the success of Pisa, though indirectly. For the Genoese, never content that she should have the overlordship of Sardinia, were still more disturbed when Pope Gelasius II., that Pisan, gave Corsica to Pisa, so that about 1125[24] they made war on her. The war lasted many years, till Innocent II, being Pope and come to Pisa, made peace, giving the Genoese certain rights in Corsica. About this time S. Bernard was in Pisa, where in 1134 Innocent II held a General Council; not for long, however, for in the same year he set out for Milan to reconcile that Church with Rome.

Page 58

Her quarrel with Genoa was scarcely finished when Pisa found herself at war with the Normans in Southern Italy, defending heroically the city of Naples and utterly destroying Amalfi, the wonderful republic of the South.[25] Certainly the might of Pisa was great; her supremacy was unquestionable from Lerici to Piombino, but behind her hills Lucca was on watch, not far away Florence her friend as yet, held the valley of the Arno, while Genoa on the sea dogged her steps between the continents. Thus Pisa stood in the middle of the twelfth century the strongest and most warlike city in Tuscany, full of ambition and the love of beauty and glory. For it was now in 1152 that she began to build the Baptistery, and in 1174 the famous Campanile, a group of buildings with the Duomo unrivalled in the world.

Meanwhile the Great Countess of Tuscany had died in 1115; more and more Italy became divided against itself, and by the end of the century Guelph and Ghibelline, commune and noble, were tearing her in pieces. Tuscany, really little more than a group of communes devoted to trade, with the great feudatories ever in the offing, without any real unity, slowly became the stronghold of the Guelphs. Only Pisa,[26] glorying in the strength of the sea and the splendour of war, was Ghibelline, with Siena on her sunny hills. Now, having won Sardinia for herself, her nobles there established were, as was their manner everywhere, continually at feud. The Church, thinking to make Pisan sovereignty less secure, supported the weaker. Already Innocent III had, following this plan, called on the Pisans to withdraw their claim to the island. And it was a Pisan noble, Visconti, who, marrying into one of the island families related to Gregory IX, recognised the Papal suzerainty. Thus this family in Pisa became Guelph. But the other nobles, among whom was the Gherardesca family, threw their weight on the other side, and so Pisa, who had ever leaned that way, became staunchly Ghibelline.[27]

The quarrel with Florence was certain sooner or later, for Florence was growing in strength and riches; she would not for ever be content to let Pisa hold her sea-gate, taking toll of all that passed in and out. It was in 1222 that the first war broke out with the White Lily. Any excuse was good enough; the bone of contention appears to have been a lap-dog belonging to one of the Ambassadors[28]. Pisa was beaten. In 1259, nevertheless, she turned on the Genoese and drove them down the seas. But the death of Frederic in 1250 was the true end of the Ghibelline cause in Italy.

What then did Pisa look like in these the days of her great power and prosperity? She was a city, we may think, of narrow shadowy streets like the Via delle Belle Torri, full of refuse and garbage too, for then, as now in the remoter places, the household slops were simply hurled out of the windows with a mere *guarda!* called from an upper window. And to the horror of less fortunate cities, these

Page 59

streets were full of "Pagans, Turks, Libyans, Parthians, and foul Chaldeans, with their incense, pearls, and jewels." Yet though so good a Guelph as Donizo, the biographer of the great Countess, can express his horror of these "Gentiles," Genoa, too, must have been in much the same case; but then Genoa was Guelph, and Pisa Ghibelline. Yet then, as to-day in that quiet far corner of the city, in a meadow sprinkled with daisies, the great white Duomo stood a silent witness to the splendour of the noblest republic in Tuscany.

But her day was too soon over. In 1254, Florence and Lucca met and defeated her. The Guelphs had won. In Pisa we find the government reformed, elders appointed, a senate, a great council, and Podesta, a Captain of the People. It seemed as though Pisa herself was about to become Guelph, or at any rate to fling out her nobles. But in many a distant colony the nobles ruled, undisturbed by the disaster at home. And then, almost before she had set her house in order, the splendid victory of Monteaperto threw the Guelphs into confusion, and the banners of Pisa once more flew wide and far. But the fatal cause of the Empire was doomed; Manfred fell at Benevento, and Corradino was defeated at Tagliacozzo by Charles of Anjou, who, not content with victory, expelled the Pisan merchants from his ports. There was left to her the sea.

Now Ugolino della Gherardesca, of the great family which had been especially enraged by the conduct of Visconti, married his sister to one of that family reigning at Gallura in Sardinia. This man, the judge of Gallura, as he was called, had come to live in Pisa. The Pisans looked with much suspicion on this alliance, and exiled first the Visconti and later Ugolino himself, with all the other Guelphs. Ugolino went to Lucca, and with her help in 1276 overcame his native city and forced her to receive again the exiles. Then the merchandise of Florence passed freely through her port, Lucca regained her fortresses, and Pisa herself fell into the possession of Ugolino.

Nevertheless, without a thought of fear, looking ever seaward, she awaited the Genoese attack, certain that it would come, since she was divided within her gates. It was to be a fight to the death. During the year 1282 the Genoese were driven back from the mouth of the Arno, the Pisans were driven from Genoa, and scattered and spoiled by a storm. These were but skirmishes; the fight was yet to come. In Genoa they built a hundred and fifty ships of war; the Pisans, too, were straining every nerve. Then came a running fight off Sardinia, in which the Pisans had the worse of it, losing eight galleys and fifteen hundred men. Yet they were not disheartened. They made Alberto Morosini, a Venetian, their Podesta, and with him as Admirals were Count Ugolino della Gherardesca and Andreotto Saracini. When the treasury was empty the nobles gave their fortunes for the public cause. We hear of one family giving eleven ships

Page 60

of war, others gave six, others less, as they were able. At midsummer 1284 more than a hundred galleys sailed to Genoa, and in scorn shot arrows of silver into the great harbour. But the Genoese were not yet prepared. They were ready a few days later, however, when the watchers by Arno “descried a hundred and seven sail” making for the Porto. Then Pisa thrust forth her ships. With songs and with thanksgiving the Archbishop Ubaldino, at the head of all the clergy of the city, flung the Pisan standard out on the wind. It was night when the fleet was lost to sight in the offing. In that night there came to the Genoese thirty ships by way of reinforcement unknown to the Pisans. These they hid behind the island of Meloria. At dawn the battle broke. In many squadrons the ships flung themselves on one another, and for long the victory hung in the balance. The Pisans had already grappled for boarding, the battle was yet to win, when the Genoese reinforcements sailed out from the island straight for the Pisan Admirals. The battle was over. Flight—it was all that was left for Pisa. Ugolino himself was said to have given the signal.

There fell that day five thousand Pisans, with eleven thousand captured, and twenty-eight galleys lost to Genoa. There was no family in Pisa but mourned its dead: for six months on every side nothing was heard but lamentations and mourning. If you would see Pisa, it was said, you must go to Genoa.

Pisa had lost the sea. In Tuscany she stood with Arezzo facing the Guelph League. She elected Ugolino her Captain-General.[29] A man of the greatest force and ability, he was ambitious rather for himself than for Pisa. Having many Guelph friends, his business was to beat Genoa and the Guelph League. He succeeded in part. He bribed Florence with certain strongholds to leave the League, and he expelled the Ghibellines from Pisa. Then he offered Genoa Castro in Sardinia as ransom for the Pisan prisoners; but they sent word to the Council that they would not accept their freedom at the price of the humiliation of their city. Such were the Pisans. And, indeed, they threatened that if at such a price they were set free, they would return only to punish those who had thought such treason. Ugolino for his part cared not.[30] He proceeded to bribe Lucca with other strongholds. In the city all was confusion. Ugolino was turned out of the Dictatorship, he became Captain of the People. Not for long, however, for soon he contrived to make himself tyrant again.

Now the Genoese, seeing they were like to get nothing out of their prisoners by this, were anxious for a money ransom. But Ugolino, fearing those brave men, broke the truce with Genoa, urging certain pirates of Sardinia to attack the Genoese; and, in order to make sure of this, while he himself went to his castle in the country, he arranged with Ruggieri dei Ubaldini, the Archbishop, to expel the Guelphs, among them his own nephew, from Pisa. The plot succeeded; but

Page 61

Pisa desired that the Archbishop should for the future divide the power with Ugolino. To this Ugolino would not agree, and in a rage he slew the nephew of the Archbishop. Meanwhile, Ugolino's nephew, Nino Visconti, was plotting with him to return. This came to the ears of Ruggieri, who called the Ghibellines to arms, and at last succeeded in capturing Ugolino and his family, after days of fighting. Well had Marco Lombardo, that "wise and valiant man of affairs," told him, "The wrath of God is the only thing lacking to you."

"Of a truth," says Villani, the old Florentine Chronicler,—“of a truth the wrath of God soon came upon him, as it pleased God, because of his treacheries and crimes; for when the Archbishop of Pisa and his followers had succeeded in driving out Nino and his party, by the counsel and treachery of Count Ugolino the forces of the Guelphs were diminished; and then the Archbishop took counsel how to betray Count Ugolino; and in a sudden uproar of the people he was attacked and assaulted at the palace, the Archbishop giving the people to understand that he had betrayed Pisa, and given up their fortresses to the Florentines and the Lucchesi; and, being without any defence, the people having turned against him, he surrendered himself prisoner; and at the said assault one of his bastard sons and one of his grandsons were slain, and Count Ugolino was taken and two of his sons and three grandsons, his son's children, and they were put in prison; and his household and followers, the Visconti and Ubizinghi, Guatini and all the other Guelph houses, were driven out of Pisa. Thus was the traitor betrayed by the traitor.... In the said year 1288, in the said month of March ... the Pisans chose for their captain Count Guido of Montefeltro, giving him wide jurisdiction and lordship; and he passed the boundaries of Piedmont, within which he was confined by his terms of surrender to the Church, and came to Pisa; for which thing he and his sons and family and all the commonwealth of Pisa were excommunicated by the Church of Rome, as rebels and enemies against Holy Church. And when the said Count was come to Pisa ... the Pisans, which had put in prison Count Ugolino and his two sons, and two sons of Count Guelpho his son ... in the tower on the Piazza degli Anziani, caused the door of the said tower to be locked and the keys thrown into Arno, and refused to the said prisoners any food, which in a few days died there of hunger. And albeit first the said Count demanded with cries to be shriven; yet did they not grant him a friar or a priest to confess him. And when all the five dead bodies were taken out of the tower, they were buried without honour; and thenceforward the said prison was called the Tower of Hunger, and will be always[31].”

Page 62

Enough of Ugolino. Count Guido, that mystical, fierce soul from Urbino, seeing danger everywhere, called the whole city to the army. Florence had allied herself with Lucca and Genoa[32]. Count Guido's business was to beat them. He did it[33]; so that by the Assumption of Our Lady in 1292 he had won back again nearly all the lost fortresses, and wrung peace from the Guelph League. Nevertheless, Pisa was compelled to sacrifice her captain, and to see Genoa established in Corsica and in part of Sardinia; also she had to pay 160,000 lire to Genoa for the Pisan captives, and in Elba to admit Genoese trade free of tax.

Some idea of the glory of Pisa even when she had suffered so much may be had, perhaps, from Tronci's account of that Festival of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin as it was kept in August 1293, when the peace had been signed.

The Anziani, Tronci tells us[34], "were used, for a month before the Festa, to publish it in the following manner. Twenty horses covered all with scarlet, went out of the city bearing twenty youths dressed in fanciful and rich costumes. The first two carried two banners, one of the Comunita, the other of the Popolo. Two others carried two lances of silver washed with gold, on which were the Imperial eagles. Two others bore on their fists two living eagles crowned with gold. The rest followed in a company, dressed in rich liveries. There came after, the trumpeters of the Comunita with the silver trumpets, and others with fifes and wind instruments of divers loudness, and they proclaimed the *Palii* which were to be won on land and water.

"On land, the first prize was of red velvet lined with fur, with a great eagle of silver. This he received who first reached the goal. To the second was given a silken stuff of the value of thirty gold florins, to the third in jest was offered a pair of geese and a bunch of garlic. On the water the race was rowed in little galleys and brigantini. He who came in first won a Bull covered with scarlet, and fifty *scudi*; the second a piece of silken stuff with thirty gold florins, the third got only geese and garlic.

"On the first day of August were placed on the towers of the city, certainly some 16,000 in number, three banners on each of them; one with the Imperial eagle, another of the Commune, and the third of the People. In like manner, on the cupola, facade, and corners of the Duomo, on S. Giovanni, on the Campo Santo and the Campanile, these banners flew not only on the top, but at all the angles of the columns. The same were seen on all the churches of the city, and on all the palaces, the Palazzo Pubblico, the Palace of the Podesta, the Palazzo del Capitano del Conservatore, the Corte del Consolato di Mare, on the palaces of the Mercati and of the seven Arti. The Contado followed the example of the city; and thus it continued all the month of August. And the whole people of every sort made great rejoicing and feasting, to which foreigners were particularly invited.

Page 63

“At the first Vespers of the Festa, the Anziani went to the Duomo in state: and before them walked the maidens dressed in new costumes; and after came the trumpeters, and the Captain with his company, and all the other lesser magistrates. When they were come to the Cathedral, the Archbishop, vested *a Pontificale*, began solemn Vespers. This ended, a youth mounted into the pulpit and chanted a prayer in praise of the Assumption of the Most Glorious Virgin. Then Matins was sung; and that finished, the procession made its way round about the church, and was joined by all the Companies and the Regulars, carrying each man a candle of wax of half a pound weight, alight in his hands. The Clergy followed with the Canons and the Archbishop with lighted candles of greater weight; and last came the Anziani, the Podesta, the Captain and other Magistrates, the Representatives of the Arti, and all the People with lights of wax in their hands. And the procession being over, all went to see the illuminations, the bonfires, and the festa, through the city.

“On the morning of the Festa, the *ceri* were placed on the *trabacche*, that were more than sixty in number, carried, by boys dressed in liveries, with much pomp. Immediately after followed the Anziani, the Podesta, and the Captain of the People with all the other Magistrates and Officials and the people, with the Company of Horse richly dressed and with the Companies of Foot; and a little after came all the *arti*, carrying each one his great *cero* all painted, and accompanied by all the wind instruments. It was a thing sweet to hear and beautiful to see. The offering made, they went out to bring the silver girdle^[35] borne with great pomp on a *carretta*; and there assisted all the clergy in procession with exquisite music both of voices and of instruments. The usual ceremonies being over, they encircled the Cathedral, and hung the girdle to the irons that were set round about. Yes, it was this girdle of a great value and very beautiful that was spoken of through the whole world, so that from many a city of Italy people came in haste to see it; but to-day there is nothing of it left save a small particle^[36].”

Misfortune certainly had not broken the spirit of Pisa. And so it is not surprising that, though she dared scarcely fly her flag on the seas, on land she thought to hold her own. No doubt this hope was strengthened by the advent in 1312 of Henry VII of Luxembourg. With him on her side she dreamed of the domination of Tuscany. But it was not to be. She found money and arms in his cause and her own. She opened a new war with the Guelph League; she suspended her own Government and made him lord of Pisa. He remained with her two months, and then in 1313 he died at Buonconvento. They buried him sadly in the Duomo. The two million florins she had expended were lost for ever. Frederick of Sicily, Henry's ally, though he came to Pisa, refused the proffered lordship, as did Henry of Savoy; and at last Pisa placed herself under the Imperial Vicar of Genoa, for that city also had been delivered by her nobles into the hands of Henry VII.

Page 64

Uguccione della Faggiuola, the Imperial Vicar of Genoa, remained, as Imperial legate, Podesta, Captain of the People, and Elector, bringing with him one thousand German horse. The rest of the army of Henry returned over the Alps. Pisa thought herself on the verge of ruin; she must make terms with her foes. This being done, there appeared to be no further need for Uguccione, whose German troops were expensive, and whose presence did but anger the Guelphs. Uguccione was a man of enormous strength, brave, too, and resolute, swift to decide an issue, wise in council, but a barbarian. What had he to do with peace. His business was war, as he very soon let the Pisans know. Nor were they slow to take him at his word. Pisa was never beaten. Uguccione marched through the streets with the living eagles of the Empire borne before him. Before long he had deprived the Guelphs of power, and was practically tyrant of Pisa. Everything now seemed to depend on victory. Lucca scarcely ten miles away, Guelph by tradition and hatred of Pisa, was in an uproar. Uguccione saw his chance and took it; he flung himself on the city and delivered it up to its own factions while the Pisans sacked it. Nor did they spare the place. The spoil was enormous; among the rest, a large sum belonging to the Pope fell into their hands. Florence and her allies sprang to arms. Uguccione took up the challenge, burnt the lands of Pistoja and San Miniato al Tedesco, ravaged the vineyards of Volterra, seized the fortresses of Val di Nievole, and at last besieged Montecatini.

It was now that the Ghibellines of Lucca with Castruccio Castracani joined Uguccione. They met the army of Florence at Montecatini. Machiavelli states that Uguccione fell ill, and had no part in the battle, which was won by Castruccio. Villari, however, gives the glory to Uguccione.

It might seem that Uguccione, whether ill or not on the day of battle, was jealous, and perhaps afraid, of Castruccio. Certainly he plotted against him, sending his son Nerli to Lucca with orders to trap Castruccio and imprison him; which was done. Nerli, however, wanted resolution to kill him; and his father hearing this, set out from Pisa with four hundred horse to take the matter in hand. The Pisans, who were by this time completely enslaved by Uguccione, seized the opportunity to rise. Macchiavelli tells us "they cut his Deputies' throats, and slew all his Family. Now, that he might be sure they were in earnest, they chose the Conte de Gherardesca, and made him their Governor." When Uguccione got to Lucca he found the city in an uproar, and the people demanding the release of Castruccio. This he was compelled to allow. With Castruccio at liberty, Lucca was too hot for him, and he fled into Lombardy to the Lords of Scala, where no long time after, he died.

After the great victory of Montecatini, Gherardesca and Castruccio soon came to terms with the Guelphs; and all that Pisa really seems to have gained by the war was that she was compelled to build a hospital and chapel for the repose of the souls of the dead at Montecatini. This chapel, hidden away in the Casa dei Trovatelli at the top of Via S. Maria in Pisa, became a glorious monument of the victory of Pisa over Florence.

Page 65

But the freedom of Pisa was gone for ever; others, lords and tyrants, arose, Castruccio Castracani and the rest, yet she was still at bay. On the 2nd October 1325 she again defeated Florence at Altopascio, and even excluded her from the port, and, in 1341, when Florence had bought Lucca from Mastino della Scala for 250,000 florins, she besieged it to prevent the entry of the Florentine army then aided by Milan, Mantova, and Padova. In 1342, the Florentines having failed to relieve Lucca, the Pisans entered the city. The possession of Lucca seemed to put Pisa, where centuries ago Luitprand had placed her, at the head of the province of Tuscany. This view, which certainly she herself was not slow to take, was confirmed when Volterra and Pistoja placed themselves under her protection; yet, as ever, her greatest danger was the discord within her walls. The Republic was weak, nearly a million and a half of florins had been spent on the war, and many tyrants were her allies; moreover, she had lent troops to Milan.[37] It was this moment of reaction after so great an effort that Visconti d'Oleggio chose for a conspiracy against Gherardesca the Captain-General. It is true the plot was discovered, the traitors exiled, and Visconti banished; but the mischief was done. When Lucchino Visconti heard of it in Milan, he imprisoned the Pisan troops in that city and sent Visconti d'Oleggio back with two thousand men to seize Pisa. Thus the war dragged on; and though these Milanese were destroyed for the most part by malaria in the Maremma, still Pisa had no rest. After Visconti came famine, and after the famine the Black Death. Seventy in every hundred of the population died, Tronci tells us,[38] while during the famine, bread, such as it was, had to be distributed every day at the taverns. Then followed a revolution in the city. Count Raniero of the Gherardesca house had succeeded to the Captain-Generalship of Pisa as though it were his right by birth. This brought him many enemies; and, indeed, the city was in uproar for some years: for, while he was so young, Dino della Rocca acted for him. Among the more powerful enemies of della Rocca was Andrea Gambacorti, whose family was soon to enslave the city. Now the one party was called *Bergolini*, for they had named Raniero Bergo for hate, and of these Gambacorti was chief. The other party which was at this time in power, as I have said, was named *Raspanti*, which is to say graspers, and of them Dino della Rocca was head. In the midst of this disputing Raniero died, and the Raspanti were accused of having murdered him, among others by Gambacorti. Every sort of device to heal these wounds was resorted to; marriages and oaths all alike failed. The city blazed with their arson every night, till at last the people rose and expelling the Raspanti, chose Andrea Gambacorti for captain. This happened in 1348. Seven years later, Charles IV, on his way to Rome to be crowned, came to the city. Now the Conte di Montescudaio

Page 66

was known to Charles, who years before had ruled in Lucca; therefore the Raspanti, of whom Montescudaio was one, took heart, and at the moment when Charles was in the Duomo receiving the homage of the city, they roused the people assembled in the Piazza, shouting for the Emperor and Liberty; but Charles heeded them not. Nevertheless Gambacorti, to save himself, thought fit to give Charles the lordship of the city; but the people, angered at this, demanded their liberty, so that the magistrates, fearing for peace, reconciled the two factions, who then together demanded of Charles his new lordship. And he gave it them with as good a grace as he could, for his men were few. Then again he heard from Lucca. There, too, they demanded liberty, and especially from the dominion of Pisa, and, it is said, the Lucchesi in France gave him 20,000 florins for this. But Pisa heard of it. When Charles sent his troops to occupy Lucca, the Raspanti saw their opportunity and rose. They put themselves at the head of the people, who slew one hundred and fifty of Charles's Germans, and held Charles himself a prisoner in the Duomo, where he lodged since the Palazzo Comunale had been fired. Montescudaio, however, secretly joined Charles with his men; he burnt the houses of the Gambacorti and dispersed the mob. Apparently Lucca was free. But Charles had reckoned without the Pisan garrison in the subject city. They fired their beacons, and Pisa saw the blaze. It was enough, their dominion was in danger; there were no longer any factions; Raspanti and Bergolini alike stood together for Pisa. They streamed out of the great Porta a Lucca to the relief of their own people, and though six thousand armed peasants opposed them, they won to Lucca and took it, the Pisani still holding the gates. Then they fired the city, and when the flames closed in round S. Michele the Lucchesi surrendered. Thus they served their enemies. But Charles had his revenge. He seized the Gambacorti, and appointing a judge, having given instructions to find them guilty, tried them and beheaded seven of them in Piazza degli Anziani, in spite of the rage of Pisa. Then, with a large amount of treasure, of which he had spoiled the Pisans, he fled back with his barbarians to his Germany. And as soon as he was gone the city took Montescudaio and sent him into exile[39], with the remaining Gambacorti also. So Charles left Pisa more Ghibelline than he found her.

It was at this time that Pisa really began to see perhaps her true danger from Florence. Certainly she did everything to prick her into war. But Florence was already victorious. Her answer was more disastrous than any battle; she took her trade from the port of Pisa to the Sienese port Talamone. Then Florence purchased Volterra, over the head of Pisa as it were; and at last, careless whether it pleased the Pisans or no, she permitted the Gambacorti to make raid upon Pisan territory, and allowed Giovanni di Sano, who had lately been in her service, to seize a fortress in the territory of Lucca. The peace was broken. On the brink of ruin, ravaged by plague, Pisa turned to confront her hard, merciless foe. For months Florence ravaged her territory, while she, too weak to strike a blow in her own honour, could but hold her gates. Then the plague left her, and she rose.

Page 67

Bernabo Visconti was sending her help for 150,000 florins.[40] The English were on the way; already over the mountains, Hawkwood and his White Company were coming to save her; meantime she tried to strike for herself. Pietro Farnese of the Florentines laid her low, taking one hundred and fifty prisoners and her general. The English tarried, but a new ally was already by her side. The Black Death which had brought down her pride, now fell upon the enemy, both in camp and in their city of the Lily: and then—the English were come. On the 1st of February 1364, Hawkwood, with a thousand horse and two thousand foot, drove the Florentines through the Val di Nievole; he harried them above Vinci and chased them through Serravalle, crushed them at Castel di Montale, and scattered them in the valley of Arno. They found their city at last, as foxes find their holes, and went to earth. There Pisa halted. Before the gates of Pisa the Florentines for years had struck money: so the Pisans did before Florence. Nor was this all. Halting there three days, says the chronicle,[41] “they caused three palii to be run well-nigh to the gates of Florence. One was on horseback, another was on foot, and the third was run by loose women (*le feminine mundane*); and they caused newly-made priests to sing Mass there, and they coined money of divers kinds of gold and of silver; and on one side thereof was Our Lady, with Her Son in Her arms; on the other side was the Eagle, with the Lion beneath its feet.... Thereafter for further dispite they set up a pair of gallows over against the gate of Florence, and hanged thereon three asses.”

Florence refused to submit. Other Free Companies such as Hawkwood's joined in the war. The Florentines hired that of the Star. But Hawkwood was not to be denied. He marched up Arno, devastating the country, and at last deigned to return to Pisa by Cortona and Siena.

Then Florence did what might have been expected. She bribed Baumgarten, who with his Germans had fought since the rout with Hawkwood. They met at the Borgo di Cascina on 28th July. Hawkwood was caught napping, and Pisa in her turn was humbled. The Florentines returned with two thousand prisoners, having slain a thousand men. They took with them “forty-two wagons full of prisoners, all packed together ‘like melons,’ with a dead eagle tied by the neck and dragging along the ground.”[42] Such was war in Italy in the fourteenth century.

Then followed the Doge Agnello: the greatness of Pisa was past.

It had ever been the plan of Milan to weaken Florence by aiding Pisa, and to weaken Pisa by this continual war, for it was the Visconti's dream to carry their dominion into Tuscany. Now at this time, amid all these disasters, the Pisan ambassador at Milan was a certain Giovanni dell' Agnello, a merchant, ambitious but without honour. This plebeian readily lent himself to the Visconti to betray the city, if thereby he might win power; and this Visconti promised him, for, said he, “if I win Pisa, you shall be my lieutenant, and all the world will take you even for my ally.”

Page 68

Agnello went back to Pisa full of this dream:[43] and at the first opportunity suggested that Visconti would be flattered if a Lord were to be elected in Pisa, if only for a year at a time; and in his subtilty he proposed Pietro d' Albizzo da Vico, a very much respected (*di gran stima*) citizen, as Lord. But Messer Pietro replied by asking to be sent with other citizens to Pescia to arrange the peace with Florence. Then a certain Vanni Botticella applied for the post; and Agnello praised him for his patriotism, but asked him whether he had money enough to be Lord. Certainly Pisa had fallen. By this Agnello was suspected, and indeed one night certain citizens got leave to search his house, for they believed him to be a traitor[44]. But he had warning, and already Hawkwood had sold himself, for it was his business. So, when those citizens had returned disappointed, for they found Agnello abed, he arose and joined his bandits. With Hawkwood he went to the Palazzo dei Anziani, bound the guard and had the Elders summoned, and told them a tale of how the Blessed Virgin had bidden him assume the lordship of the city. Well, he had his way, his bandits saw to that; so the Anziani agreed and swore obedience. Next day Pisa acclaimed her Doge.

Agnello remained Doge, or Lord as he preferred to be called, for four years. Then Charles IV marched back over the Alps into Italy. Bought off and thwarted in Lombardy, he came towards Lucca, which the Lucchesi exiles again offered to buy from him. Agnello was terrified. In haste he sent to Charles offering to give him Lucca if he were made sure in Pisa. Outside the walls of Lucca, Charles knighted this astute tradesman. Agnello ran back to Pisa and conferred knighthood on his nephews. Then he built a platform and awaited the Emperor. His end was in keeping with his life. As he stood on the insecure "hustings" which he had built, that in sight of all the people Charles might declare him Imperial Vicar of Pisa, the platform collapsed and Agnello's leg was broken. Now, whether the comic spirit, so helpful to justice, be strong in our Pisans still, I know not, but on learning of the misfortune of their Lord, they rose, and, without noticing their Imperial Vicar, appointed Anziani to rule by the old laws.

Then the burghers and nobles—"Cittadini amatori della Patria," Tronci calls them—formed the Campagnia di S. Michele, for it bore on its gonfalon St. Michael Archangel, and the black eagle of the Empire. It was the business of this company to restore peace and unity to the city. The leaders resolved to recall the exiles, among them Pietro Gambacorti. He came, and the city greeted him, and he swore to serve the Republic and to forgive his enemies. A riot followed; the Bergolini armed themselves and burnt the Gambacorti palaces. But Pietro Gambacorti called to the city, which had risen to defend itself and to make reprisals, saying, "I have pardoned them—I, whose parents they slew. By what right do you refuse to do what I have done?"[45] The Bergolini took the government, and there was peace. Then the Campagnia di S. Michele broke up.

Page 69

Not for long, however, could there be peace in Pisa. The Raspanti still held one of the gates; and thinking to better themselves, they sent an embassy to Charles, who was in Lucca, asking his help. He imprisoned the embassy, and at once sent his Germans to seize the city. But the Pisans heard of it. They rang the great bells in the Campanile, and barricaded the gates with the benches and stalls in the Duomo, on the Baptistery they set their bowmen, and on the Campanile the slingers. Then they tore up the streets, and waited to give death for death. The Germans, however, were easily beaten and bought off, and Pisa again returned to her internal quarrels.

Out of these sprang, in 1385, Pietro Gambacorti, as Captain of the people. It was the beginning of the last twenty years of Pisa's life as an independent city. She now stood between Visconti in the north and Florence close at hand. Florence was her friend against Visconti for her own sake: she meant to have Pisa herself. Gambacorti did his best. With infinite tact he kept friends with both cities. Under him Pisa seemed to regain something of her old confidence and prosperity. A man of fine courage, simplicity, and passing honest, he was incapable of suspecting a tried friend whom he had benefited. Yet it was by the hand of such an one he fell.

Jacopo d'Appiano's father had been exiled with Gambacorti in 1348. Like many another Pisan house which had risen from nothing, Appiano was at feud with certain of his fellow-citizens, among them the Lanfranchi family. For this cause he kept a guard about him. Now Gambacorti, who remembered his father's exile, made Appiano permanent "Chancellor of the Republic": and hoping to reconcile the Lanfranchi with the new chancellor, he sent for Lanfranchi, but the bandits of Appiano murdered him as he went thither, and then joined Appiano in his house. Gambacorti ordered his chancellor to deliver them up, but he refused. Then the Bergolini offered Gambacorti their assistance, but he refused it, trusting to justice. Appiano, however, at the head of the Raspanti, marched to the palace of Gambacorti. The city was in arms, and they had to fight their way. Arrived before the palace, Gambacorti ordering his men not to shoot his friend, agreed to confer with Appiano. So he went out of his house, and as Appiano stretched out his hand, in token, as it were, of friendship, his bandits fell upon him and slew him. A fight followed, in which the Bergolini were beaten; then Appiano became Captain of the People. In truth, it was only a device of Visconti for seizing the city. Appiano admitted the Milanese, and what Agnello had failed to do, he did, for he ruled as the creature of Gian Galeazzo. But there is no honour among thieves. Soon Visconti, hoping to win Pisa all for himself, plotted against Appiano. The quarrel went on, Appiano fearing to make treaty with Florence lest he should fall, and fearing, too, to decide with Visconti lest he should be murdered, till he died, and his son became Captain, only to sell Pisa to Visconti for 200,000 florins, with Elba also, and many castles.[46] Then Gian Galeazzo died in 1404.

Page 70

Now Florence knew that in the confusion which followed the death of the great Visconti, Pisa was weak and almost without defence, so without hesitation she sent an army to seize the city: but Pisa, always at her best in danger, worked night and day, nor was any man idle in building fortifications. In Genoa the Frenchman Boucicault, who had held that city, came to her assistance, for the last thing Genoa or Milan desired was to see Pisa and her port in the hands of Florence. Boucicault imprisoned all the Florentines in Genoa, and seized Livorno, nor would he agree to release his prisoners till Florence had signed a four years' peace. But Pisa soon wearied of this. In the grip of Genoa, fearing Visconti, unable to save herself, she revolted, and Boucicault sold her to Florence, for he had to defend himself in Genoa. It was in August 1405 that Pisa was given up to Florence, but although for a moment Florence then held the city, she was to fight for it in earnest before she could hold it for good. As yet she only possessed the citadel, and by a ruse the Pisans managed to win that from her: then they sent to Florence to negotiate. They offered to buy their freedom, but Florence was obdurate. She was determined to possess herself of Pisa; her armies were ordered to advance.

Pisa was ready. At that moment all feuds were forgotten; a united city opposed the Florentines: there was but one way to take it—by famine. And it was thus at last, on 9th October 1406, Pisa fell. Preferring to die rather than to surrender, it would have been into a city of the dead that the armies of Florence would have marched, but for the brutal treachery of Giovanni Gambacorti. As it was, it was only a city of the dying that Florence occupied. After every kind of heroic effort, Giovanni Gambacorti sold Pisa when she was too weak to fight, save against a declared enemy, for 50,000 florins, the citizenship of Florence and Borgo to rule. He opened the gates, and Florence streamed in. There was scarcely a crust left in the city which was at last become the vassal of Florence.

Here, truly, the chronicles of Pisa end—in the horrid cruelty, scorn, and disdain so characteristic of the Florentine. Certainly with the Medici a more humane government was adopted, so that in 1472 we read of Lorenzo Magnifico restoring the University to something of its old splendour, but nothing he could do was able to extinguish the undying hatred of Pisa for those who had stolen away her liberty. In 1494 that carnival army of Charles VIII, winding through the valleys and over the mountains, seemed to offer them a hope of freedom. They welcomed him with every sort of joy, and hurled the Marzocco and the Gonfalon of Florence into Arno, all to no purpose. And truly without hope, from 1479 to 1505, they bore heroically three sieges and flung back three different armies of Florence. Soderini and Macchiavelli urged on the war. In 1509, Macchiavelli, that mysterious great man, besieged her on three sides, and at last, forced by hunger and famine, Pisa admitted him on the 8th June. It was her last fight for liberty. But she had won for herself the respect of her enemies. A more humane and moderate policy was adopted in dealing with her. Nevertheless, as in 1406, so now, her citizens fled away, so that there was scarcely left a Pisan in Pisa for the victor to rule.

Page 71

Grand Duke Cosimo seems to have loved her. It was there he founded his Order of the Knights of St. Stephen to harry the pirates in the Mediterranean. Still she was a power on the sea, though in the service of another. And though dead, she yet lived, for she is of those who cannot die. The ever-glorious name of Galileo Galilei crowns her immortality. Born within her walls, he taught at her University, and his first experiments in the knowledge of the law of gravity were made from her bell-tower, while, as it is said, the great lamp of her Duomo taught him the secret of the pendulum.

Looking on her to-day, remembering her immortal story, one thinks only of the beauty that is from of old secure in silence on that meadow among the daisies just within her walls.

III

It is with a peculiar charm and sweetness that Pisa offers herself to the stranger, who maybe between two trains has not much time to give her. And indeed to him she knows she has not much to offer, just a few things passing strange or beautiful, that are spread out for him as at a fair, on the grass of a meadow in the dust and the sun. But to such an one Pisa can never be more than a vision, vanished as soon as seen, in the heat of midday or the shadow of evening.

But for me, of all the cities that grow among the flowers in Tuscany, it is Pisa that I love best. She is full of the sun; she has the gift of silence. Her story is splendid, unfortunate, and bitter, and moves to the song of the sea: still she keeps her old ways about her, the life of to-day has not troubled her at all. In her palaces the great mirrors are still filled with the ghosts of the eighteenth century; on her Lung' Arno you may almost see Byron drive by to mount his horse at the gate, while in the Pineta, not far away, Shelley lies at noonday writing verses to Miranda.

It is on the Lung' Arno, curved like a bow, so much more lovely than any Florentine way, that what little world is left to Pisa lingers yet. Before one is the Ponte di Mezzo, the most ancient bridge of the city, built in 1660, but really the representative of its forerunners that here bound north and south together: *En moles olim lapidea vix aetatem ferrus nunc mormorea pulchrior et firmior stat simulato Marte virtutis verae specimen saepe datura*, you read on one of the pillars at the northern end. For indeed the first bridge seems to have been of wood, partly rebuilt of stone after the great victory off the coast of Sicily, and finished in 1046[47]. This bridge, called the Ponte Vecchio, took ten years to build, and any doubt we might have as to whether it was of wood or stone is set at rest by Tronci,[48] who tells us that in 1382, "Pietro Gambacorta, together with the Elders and the Consiglio dei Cittadini, determined to rebuild in stone the bridge of wood which passed over Arno from the mouth of the Strada del Borgo to that of S. Egidio, for

Page 72

the greater ornament of the city, chiefly because there were many shops on the bridge that impeded the view of the beautiful Lung' Arno." One sees the bridge that was thus built, the foundations having been laid with much ceremony, a procession and a sung mass, in a seventeenth-century print in the Museo Civico.[49] There is a buttress a quarter of the way from each end, on which houses were still standing. Then in 1635 this bridge was carried away by a flood. A new bridge was immediately built, only to be destroyed in the same way on 1st January 1644. In 1660 the present Ponte di Mezzo was finished by Francesco Nave of Rome.

It was on these bridges that the great Pisan game the *Giuoco del Ponte* was played,[50] a model of which may be found in the Museo. This new bridge, at any rate, does not shut out the view of the beautiful Lung' Arno, *il bello di Pisa*, as one writer calls it. Standing there you may see the yellow river, curved like a bow, pass through the beautiful city, between the palaces of marble, their wrinkled image reflected in the stream, till it is lost in the green fields on its way to the sea; while on the other side, looking eastward, on either side the river are the palaces of Byron and Shelley, just before the hideous iron bridge, where Arno turns suddenly into the city from the plain and the hills. To the south of the bridge is the Loggia dei Banchi, and farther to the west, on the Lung' Arno, the great palace of the Gambacorti rises, now the Palazzo del Comune, and farther still, the Madonna della Spina, a little Gothic church of marble; while if you pass a little way westward, the Torre Guelfa comes into sight at the bend of the river among the ruins of the old arsenal.

It is of course to the wonderful group of buildings to the north of the city, just within the walls, that every traveller will first make his way. Passing from Ponte di Mezzo down the Lung' Arno Regio, past the Palazzo Agostini, beautiful in its red brick past Palazzo Lanfreducci with its little chain and enigmatic motto, "Alla Giornata," past the Grand Ducal Palace, you turn at last into the Via S. Maria, a beautiful and lovely street that winds like a stream full of shadows to the Piazza del Duomo. On your right is the Church of S. Niccolo, founded about the year 1000 by Ugo, Marquis of Tuscany. It seems that with Otho III there came into Italy the Marquis Hugh. "I take it," says Villani, [51] "this must have been the Marquis of Brandenburg, inasmuch as there is no other marquisate in Germany." His sojourn in Italy, and especially in our city of Florence, liked him so well that he caused his wife to come thither, and took up his abode in Florence as Vicar of Otho the Emperor. It came to pass as it pleased God, that when he was riding to the chase in the country of Bonsollazzo, he lost sight of all his followers in a wood, and came out, as he supposed, at a workshop where iron was wont to be wrought. Here he found men black and deformed,

Page 73

who in place of iron seemed to be tormenting men with fire and with hammer, and he asked them what this might be: and they answered and said that these were damned souls, and that to similar pains was condemned the soul of the Marquis Hugh by reason of his worldly life, unless he should repent. With great fear he commended himself to the Virgin Mary, and when the vision was ended he remained so pricked in spirit, that after his return to Florence he sold all his patrimony in Germany and commanded that seven monasteries should be founded. The first was the Badia of Florence, to the honour of St. Mary; the second, that of Bonsollazzo, where he beheld the vision; the third was founded at Arezzo, the fourth at Poggibonizzi, the fifth at the Verruca of Pisa, the sixth at the city of Castello, the last was the one at Settimo; and all these abbeys he richly endowed, and lived afterwards with his wife in holy life, and had no son, and died in the city of Florence on St. Thomas's Day in the year of Christ 1006, and was buried with great honour in the Badia of Florence. Tronci[52] says, that beside the Badia di S. Michele di Verruca outside Pisa, "this most pious Marquis" founded also the Church of S. Niccolo, for the use of the Monks of S. Michele Fuori. The Church of S. Niccolo has been altogether restored. The Campanile, however, the oldest tower left in the city, is strange and lovely. It has been given to Niccolo Pisano, but is certainly older than his day, and, resembling as it does the tower of the Badia at Florence and of the Badia at Settimo, seems to be of the same date as the church. There is a gallery joining the church with the palace of the Grand Dukes, to which it served as chapel.

Coming as one does out from this narrow deserted street of S. Maria into the space and breadth of the Piazza del Duomo, one is almost blinded by the sudden light and glory of the sun on those buildings, that seem to be made of old ivory intricately carved and infinitely noble. Standing there as though left stranded upon some shore that life has long deserted, they are an everlasting witness to the Latin genius, symbols as it were of what has had to be given up so that we may follow life at the heels of the barbarian Teuton.

It was in 1063,[53] after the great victory at Palermo, that the ships of the Republic returning full of spoil, "after much discourse made in the Senate,"[54] it was decided at last to build "a most magnificent temple" to S. Maria Assunta, for it was about the time of her Festa, that is to say, the 15th August, that the victory had been won. This having been decided on, the Republic sent ambassadors to Rome to the Pope and to King Henry of Germany, and the Pope sent the church many privileges, and the King a royal dowry. So they began to build the temple where stood the old Church of S. Reparata, and more anciently the Baths of the Emperor Hadrian; and they brought marble from Africa, Egypt, Jerusalem, Sardinia, and

Page 74

other far places to adorn the church. In 1065 we read that the Pope received under his protection the Chapter and Canons of Pisa. The Cathedral was finished in about thirty years, and was consecrated by Pope Gelasius II in 1118. The architects, two dim names still to be read on the facade ever kissed by the setting sun, were Rainaldus and Busketus. They built in that Pisan style which, as some of us may think, was never equalled till Bramante and his disciples dreamed of St. Peter's and built the little church at Todi, and S. Pietro in Montorio. However this may be, the Duomo of Pisa, the first modern cathedral of Italy, was to be the pattern of many a church built later in the contado, and even in Lucca and Pistoja and the country round about. It was a style at once splendid and devout, not forgetful of the Roman Empire, yet with new thoughts concerning it, so that where a Roman building had once really stood, now a Latin Church should stand, white with marble and glistening with precious stones. It is strange to find in this far-away piazza the great buildings of the city; and stranger still, when we remember that S. Reparata, the church that was destroyed to make room for the Duomo, was called S. Reparata in Palude, in the swamp. It may be that Pisa was less open to attack on this side, or that this being the highest spot near the city, a flood was less to be feared. But there were other foes beside the flood and the enemy, for the church was damaged by fire in 1595, and was restored in 1604.

The Duomo is a basilica with nave and double aisles[55], with a transept flanked with aisles, covered by a dome over the crossing. Built all of white marble, that has faded to the tone of old ivory, it is ornamented with black and coloured bands, and stands on a beautiful marble platform in the grass of a meadow. It is, however, the facade that is the most splendid and beautiful part of the church. It consists of seven round arches; in the centre and in each alternate arch is a door of bronze made by Giovanni da Bologna in 1602. Above these arches is the first tier of columns, eighteen in number, of various coloured marbles, supporting the round arches of the first storey; above, the roof of the aisles slopes gradually inwards, and is supported again by a tier of pillars of various marbles, while above rise two other tiers supporting the roof of the nave. On the corners of the church and on the corners of the nave are figures of saints, while above all, on the cusp of the facade, stands Madonna with Her Son in Her arms. The door in the south transept is by Bonannus, whose great doors were destroyed in 1595.

Page 75

Within, the church is solemn and full of light. Sixty-eight antique columns, the spoil of war, uphold the church, while above is a coffered Renaissance ceiling, of the seventeenth century. There is but little to see beside the church itself, a few altar-pieces, one by Andrea del Sarto; a few tombs; the bronze lamp of Battista Lorenzi, which is said to have suggested the pendulum to Galileo, and that is all in the nave. The choir screens, work of the Renaissance, are very lovely, while above them are the *ambones*, from which on a Festa the Epistle and Gospel are sung. The stalls are of the end of the fifteenth century, and the altar, a dreadful over-decorated work, of the year 1825. Matteo Civitali of Lucca made the wooden lectern behind the high altar, and Giovanni da Bologna forged the crucifix, while Andrea del Sarto, not at his best, painted the Saints Margaret and Catherine, Peter and John, to the right and left of the altar. The capital of the porphyry column here is by Stagio Stagi of Pietrasanta, while the porphyry vase is a prize from a crusade. The mosaics in the apsis are much restored, but they are the only known work of Cimabue,[56] and are consequently, even in their present condition, valuable and interesting. The most beautiful and the most interesting work of art in the Duomo is the Madonna, carved in ivory in 1300 by Giovanni Pisano, in the sacristy. This Madonna is a most important link in the history of Italian art; it seems to suggest the way in which French influence in sculpture came into Italy. Such work as this, by some French master, probably came not infrequently into Italian hands; nor was its advent without significance; you may find its influence in all Giovanni's work, and in how much of that which came later.[57]

It is but a step across that green meadow to the Baptistery, that like a casket of ivory and silver stands to the west of the Duomo. It was begun in 1153 by Diotisalvi, but the work went very slowly forward. In 1164, out of 34,000 families in Pisa subject to taxes, each gave a gold sequin for the continuation of the work, but it was not finished altogether till the fourteenth century. There are four doors; above them on the east and north are sculptures of the thirteenth century.[58]

Truly, one might as well try to describe the face of one's angel as these holy places of Pisa, which are catalogued in every guide-book ever written. At least I will withhold my hand from desecrating further that which is still so lovely. Only, if you would hear the heavenly choirs before death has his triumph over you, go by night into the Baptistery, having bribed some choir-boy to sing for you, and you shall hear from that marvellous roof a thousand angels singing round the feet of San Raniero.

Perhaps the loveliest thing here is the great octagonal font of various marbles, in which every Pisan child has been christened since 1157; but it is the pulpit of Niccolo Pisano that everyone praises.

Page 76

Niccolo Pisano appears to have been born in Apulia, and to have come to Pisa about the middle of the thirteenth century. We know scarcely anything of his life. The earliest record in which we find his name is the contract of 1265, in which he binds himself to make a pulpit for the Duomo of Siena.[59] There he is called *Magister Niccolus lapidum de parocchia ecclesie Sancti Blasii de Ponte, de Pisis quondam Petri*. Another document of later date describes him as *Magister Nichola Pietri de Apulia*. Coming thus to Pisa from Apulia, possibly after many wanderings, in about 1250, his childhood had been passed not among the Tuscan hills, but in Southern Italy among the relics of the Roman world. It is not any sudden revelation of Roman splendour he receives in the Campo Santo of Pisa, but just a reminder, as it were, of the things of his childhood, the broken statues of Rome that littered the country of his birth. Thus in a moment this Southerner transforms the rude art of his time here in Tuscany, the work of Bonannus, for instance, the carvings of Biduinus, and the bas-reliefs at San Cassiano,[60] with the faint memory of Rome that lingered like a ghost in the minds of men, that already had risen in the laws and government of the cities, in the desire of men here in Pisa, for instance, for liberty, and that was soon to recreate the world. If the Roman law still lived as tradition and custom in the hearts of men, the statues of the gods were but hiding for a little time in Latin earth. It was Niccolo Pisano who first brought them forth.

The pulpit which he made for Pisa—perhaps his earliest work—is in the form of a hexagon resting upon nine columns; the central pillar is set on a strange group, a man, a griffin, and animals; three others are poised on the backs of lions; while three are set on simple pediments on the ground; and three again support the steps. A “trefoil arch” connects the six chief pillars, on each of which stands a statue of a Virtue. It is here that we came for the first time upon a figure not of the Christian world, for Fortitude is represented as Hercules with a lion’s cub on his shoulder. In the spandrels of the trefoils are the four Evangelists and six Prophets. Above the Virtues rise pillars clustered in threes, framing the five bas-reliefs and supporting the parapet of the pulpit; and it is here, by these the most beautiful and extraordinary works of that age in Italy, that Niccolo Pisano will be for ever remembered.

Poor in composition though they be, they are full of marvellous energy, a Roman dignity and weight. It is antiquity flowering again in a Christian soil, with a certain new radiance and sweetness about it, a naivete almost ascetic, that was certainly impossible from any Roman hand.

Page 77

On the far side you may see the Birth of Our Lord, where Mary sits in the midst, enthroned, unmoved, with all the serenity of a goddess, while in another part the angel brings her the message with the gesture of an orator. Consider, then, those horses' heads in the Adoration of the Magi, or the high priest in the Presentation, and then compare them with the rude work of Bonannus on the south transept door of the Duomo; no Pisan, certainly no Tuscan, could have carved them thus in high relief with the very splendour of old Rome in every line. And in the Crucifixion you see Christ really for the first time as a God reigning from the cross; while Madonna, fallen at last, is not the weeping Mary of the Christians, but the mother of the Gracchi who has lost her elder son. In the Last Judgment it is a splendid God you see among a crowd of men with heads like the busts in a Roman gallery, with all the aloofness and dignity of those weary emperors. There is almost nothing here of any natural life observed for the first time, and but little of the Christian asceticism so marvellously lovely in the French work of this age; Niccolo has in some way discovered classic art, and has been content with that, as the humanists of the Renaissance were to be content with the discovery of ancient literature later: he has imitated the statues and the bas-reliefs of the sarcophagi, as they copied Cicero.

To pass from the Baptistery into the Campo Santo, where among Christian graves the cypresses are dying in the earth of Calvary, and the urns and sarcophagi of pagan days hold Christian dust, is perhaps to make easier the explanation we need of the art of Niccolo. Here, it is said, he often wandered "among the many spoils of marbles brought by the armaments of Pisa to this city." Among these ancient sarcophagi there is one where you may find the Chase of Meleager and the Calydonian boar; this was placed by the Pisans in the facade of the Duomo opposite S. Rocco, and was used as a tomb for the Contessa Beatrice, the mother of the great Contessa Matilda. Was it while wandering here, in looking so often on that tomb on his way to Mass, that he was moved by its beauty till his heart remembered its childhood in a whole world of such things? It must have been so, for here all things meet together and are reconciled in death.

Out of the dust and heat of the Piazza one comes into a cool cloister that surrounds a quadrangle open to the sky, in which a cypress still lives. The sun fills the garden with a golden beauty, in which the butterflies flit from flower to flower over the dead. I do not know a place more silent or more beautiful. One lingers in the cool shadow of the cloisters before many an old marble,—a vase carved with Bacchanalian women, the head of Achilles, or the bust of Isotta of Rimini. But it is before the fresco of the Triumph of Death that one stays longest, trying to understand the dainty treatment of so horrible a subject. Those fair ladies riding

Page 78

on horseback with so brave a show of cavaliers, even they too must come at last to be just dust, is it, or like that swollen body, which seems to taint even the summer sunshine, lying there by the wayside, and come upon so unexpectedly? What love-song was that troubadour, fluttering with ribbons, singing to that little company under the orange-trees, cavaliers and ladies returned from the chase, or whiling away a summer afternoon playing with their falcons and their dogs? The servants have spread rich carpets for their feet, and into the picture trips a singing girl, who has surely called the very loves from Paradise or from the apple-trees covered with blossom, where they make their temporary abode. What love song were they singing, ere the music was frozen on their lips by a falling leaf or chance flutter of bird life calling them to turn, and lo, Death is here?

It is in such a place as this that any meditation upon death loses both its sentimental and its ascetic aspect, and becomes wholly aesthetic, so that it can never be before this fresco that such a contemplation should be, as it were, "a lifelong following of one's own funeral." And indeed, it is not any gross fear of death that comes to one at all here in the mysterious sunshine, but a new delight in life. Those joyful pleasant paintings of Benozzo Gozzoli, a third-rate master, but one who is always full of joy and sunshine, with a certain understanding and love, too, of the hills and the trees, seem to confirm us in our delight at the sun and the sea wind, here in Italy, in Italy at last. For, indeed, in what other land than this could a cemetery be so beautiful, and where else in the world do frescoes like these stain the walls out of doors amid a litter of antique statues, graves, and flowers over the heroic or holy dead? Here you may see life at its sanest and most splendid moments. In the long hot days of the vintage, for instance, when the young men tread the wine-press, the girls bear the grapes in great baskets, and boy and girl together pluck the purple fruit. Call it, if you will, the Drunkenness of Noah, you will forget the subject altogether in your delight in the sun and the joy of the vintage itself, where the girls dance among the vines under the burden of the grapes, and the little children play with the dogs, and the goodman tastes the wine. Or again, in the fresco of the Tower of Babel: think if you can of all the mere horror of the confusion, and the terror of death, but in a moment you will forget it, remembering only that heroic Republic which amid her enemies built her splendid city, her beautiful Duomo, her Tower like the horn of an unicorn, and this Campo Santo too, where the hours pass so softly, and the hottest days are cool and full of delight. The Victory of Abraham is a battle gay with the banners of Pisa, when the Gonfalons of Florence lay low in the dust. The Curse of Ham, with its multitude of children, is just the departure of some prodigal for the Sardinian wars on a summer evening beyond the city gate. Thus alone in this place of death Pisa lives, ah! not in the desolate streets of the modern city, but fading on the walls of her Campo Santo, a ghost among ghosts, immortalised by an alien hand.

Page 79

Coming last of all to the greatest wonder of the Piazza, it is really with surprise you find the Campanile so beautiful, perhaps the most beautiful tower of Italy. It is like a lily leaning in the wind, it is like the slanting horn of an unicorn, it is like an ivory Madonna that the artist has not had the heart to carve since the ivory was so fair. Begun in 1174, it was designed by Bonannus. He made it all of white marble, which has faded now to the colour of old ivory. Far away at the top of the tower live the great bells, and especially La Pasquareccia,[61] founded in 1262, stamped with a relief of the Annunciation, for it used to ring the Ave. I think there can be no reasonable doubt that the lean of the Tower is due to some terrible accident which befell it after the third gallery had been built, for the fourth gallery, added in 1204 by Benenabo, begins to rectify the sinking; the rest, built in 1260, continues to throw the weight from the lower to the higher side. As we know, the whole Piazza was a marsh, and just as the foundations of the Tower of S. Niccolo have given a little, so these sank much earlier, offering an unique opportunity to a barbarian architect. There is, as has been often very rightly said, no such thing as a freak in Italian art: its aim was beauty, very simple and direct; nowhere in all its history will you find a grotesque such as this. It is strange that a northerner, William of Innsbruck, finished the Tower the fifth storey in 1260; and it may well be that this Teuton brought to the work something of a natural delight in such a thing as this, and contrived to finish it, instead of beginning again. It seems necessary to add that the tower would be more beautiful if it were perfectly upright.

The Piazza del Duomo is full of interest. Almost opposite the Campanile, at the corner of the Via S. Maria, is the Casa dei Trovatelli. It was here, as I suppose,[62] that the Pisans built that hospital and chapel to S. Giorgio after the great day of Montecatini.[63] Not far away, behind the Via Torelli in Via Arcevescovado, is the archbishop's palace, with a fine courtyard. If we follow the Via Torelli a little, we pass, on the right, the Oratory of S. Ranieri, the patron saint of Pisa, where there is a crucifix by Giunta Pisano which used to hang in the kitchen of the Convent of S. Anna,[64] not far away, where Emilia Viviani was "incarcerated," as Shelley says. Close by are the few remains of the Baths of Hadrian. At the corner we pass into Via S. Anna, and then, taking the first turning to the left, we come into the great Piazza di S. Caterina, before the church of that name. Built in the thirteenth century, it has a fine Pisan facade, but the church is now closed and the convent has become a boys' school. Passing through the shady Piazza under the plane-trees, we come into the Via S. Lorenzo, and then, turning to the right into Vicolo del Ruschi, we come into a Piazza out of which opens the Piazza di S. Francesco. S. Francesco fell on evil days, and was altogether desecrated, but is now in the hands of the Franciscans again. This is well, for the whole church, founded in 1211, and not the Campanile only, is said to be by Niccolo Pisano.[65] Behind it, in the old convent, is the Museo.

Page 80

As you come into this desecrated and ruined cloister littered with rubbish, among which here and there you may see some quaint or charming thing, it is difficult to remember S. Francis. Yet, indeed, the place was founded by two of his followers, the blessed Agnolo and the blessed Alberto, and still holds in a locked room one of the most extraordinary of his portraits. In the old Chapter-house are some fragments of the pulpit from the Duomo by Giovanni Pisano, destroyed in the fire of 1595. Here we may see very easily the difference between father and son. It is no longer the influence of the antique that gives life to Italian sculpture, but certainly French work, something of that passionate restless energy that, whether we like it or not, puts certain statues at Chartres, for instance, without shame beside the best Greek work. The subjects of these panels are the same as those of Niccolo's pulpit in the Baptistery; one could not wish for a better opportunity of comparing the work of the two men who stand at the source of the Renaissance.

Passing through the cloister, we enter the convent through a great room on the first floor, hung with the banners of the Giuoco del Ponte, and bright with service books. In a little room on the left (Sala I) we come into the gallery proper. Here, among all sorts of stained parchments, is the precious remnant of the Cintola del Duomo, that girdle of Maria Assunta which used to be bound round the Duomo.[66] It took some three hundred yards of the fabric, crusted with precious stones, painted with miniatures, sewn with gold and silver, to gird the Duomo. I know not when first it was made, nor who first conceived the proud thought,[67] nor what particular victory put it into his heart. Only the tyrant and thief who stole it I know, Gambacorti, whom Pisa brought back from exile.

In the chamber next to this are some strangely beautiful crucifixes by Giunta Pisano, and a little marvellous portrait of S. Francesco on copper with a bright red book in his hand.

Of the pictures which follow, but two ever made any impression upon me. One, a Madonna and Child by Gentile da Fabriano, is full of a mysterious loveliness that did not survive him; the other is an altar-piece from S. Caterina by Simone Martini of Siena, where a Magdalen holds the delicate casket of precious ointment, and, as though fainting with the sweetness of her weeping, leans a little, her sleepy, languorous eyes drooping under her heavy hair, which a jewelled ribbon hardly holds up. Something in this "primitive" art has been lost when we come to Angelico, some almost morbid loveliness that you may find even yet in the air about Perugia and Siena, in the delicate flowers there, the honeysuckle which the country people call *le manine della Madonnina*—the little hands of the Virgin, and even in the people sometimes, in their soft gestures and dreamy looks. And for these I pass by the pictures by Benozzo Gozzoli, by Sodoma, and the rest, for they are as nothing.

Page 81

It is, however, not a work of art at all that is perhaps the most interesting thing in the Museo; but a model of the *Giuoco del Ponte*, with certain banners, flags, bucklers, and such, once used by the Pisans in their national game.[68] This *Giuoco* was played on the Ponte di Mezzo, by the people who lived on the north bank of the river and those on the south, nor were the country folk excluded; and Mr. Heywood tells us that it was no uncommon sight a quarter of a century ago "to see hanging above the doorway of a contadino's house the *targone* [or shield] with which his sires played at Ponte." [69] The city and countryside being thus divided into two camps, as it were, each chose an army, that was divided into six *squadre* of from thirty to sixty *soldati*. The *squadre* of the north were, Santa Maria with a banner of blue and white; San Michele, whose colours were white and red; the Calci, white and green and gold; Calcesana, yellow and black; the Mattaccini, white, blue, and peach-blossom; the Satiri, red and black. The southern *squadre* were called S. Antonio, whose banner was of flame colour, on which was a pig; S. Martino, with a banner of white, black, and red; San Marco, with a banner of white and yellow with a winged lion, and under its feet was the gospel, on which was written *Pax tibi Marce*; the Leoni, with a banner of black and white; the Dragoni, with a banner of green and white; the Delfini, with a banner of blue and yellow. All these banners were of silk, and very large.[70]

Originally the game was played on St. Anthony's day, the 17th of January; later, this first game came to be a sort of trial match, in which the players were chosen for the *Battaglia generale*, which took place on some later date agreed upon by both parties. Thus, I suppose, if any noble visited Pisa, the *Battaglia generale* would be fought in his honour.

The challenge of the side defeated at the last contest having been received, a council of war was held in both camps, and permission being given by the authorities, on that evening, the city was illuminated. The great procession (the *squadre* in each camp, in the order in which I have named them) took place on the day of battle, each army keeping to its own side of Arno. Then the Piazza del Ponte for the northern army, the Piazza de' Bianchi for the southern, were enclosed with palisades to form the camps, and the battle began.

In order to save the *soldato* from hurt, his head was covered with a *falzata* of cotton, and guarded by an iron casque with a barred vizor.[71] The body was also swathed in cotton or a doublet of leather, over which iron armour was worn. The arms, too, were covered with quilted leather and the hands in gauntlets, and the legs were protected with gaiters, while round the neck a quilted collar was tied to save the collar bone. The only weapon allowed was the *targone*, a shield of wood curved

Page 82

at the top, and almost but not quite pointed at the foot. At the back of this were two handles, which were gripped by both hands, and the blow delivered with the smaller end of the shield. When the press of the fight was not very great, no doubt this shield was used as a club. These *targoni* were decorated with mottoes or a device, as we may see from these now in the Museo; they were evidently even heirlooms in the family which had the honour to see one of its members chosen for the *Battaglia*.

Four *comandanti* or captains on each side entered the battle itself. Two of these on each side stood on the parapet of the bridge directing their men. The two northerners wore a scarlet uniform with white facings, the two southerners a green uniform with white facings. Two other *comandanti* in each army stood on the ground. The two first were unarmed, and were not allowed to interfere with the fight, but the two on the ground, who were allowed two adjutants, could scarcely have been prevented from giving or receiving blows.

Before the fight began, the banner of Pisa, a silver cross on a red ground, floated from a staff in the middle of the bridge. This was lowered across the bridge to divide the two armies; and at the close of the fight it was so lowered again, and, according as either side was in the enemy's territory, so the victory went.

When the battle was over, the victorious side made procession through the city. If the north had won, all Pisa north of Arno was alight with bonfires, the houses were decorated, everyone was in the streets; while south of Arno the city was in darkness, the people in their houses, not a dog lurked without. Then followed, after a few days, the great trionfo of the victors.

"The procession was headed," says Mr. Heywood, "by two trumpeters on horseback, followed by a band of horsemen clad in military costumes, and by war-cars full of arms and banners of the vanquished. Thereafter came certain soldiers on foot with their hands bound, to represent prisoners taken in the battle; then more trumpeters and drummers; and then the triumphal chariot, drawn by four or six horses richly draped and adorned with emblems and mottoes. It was accompanied and escorted by knights and gentlemen on horseback. The noble ladies of the city followed in their carriages, and behind them thronged an infinite people (*infinito popolo*) scattering broadcast various poetical compositions, and singing with sweet melodies in the previously appointed places, the glories of the victory won, making procession through the city until night." After dark, bonfires were lighted. On high above the triumphal car was set some allegorical figure, such as Valour, Victory, or Fame.[72]

The last *Giuoco del Ponte* was fought in 1807. "Certain pastimes," says Signor Tribolati, "are intimately connected with certain institutions and beliefs; and when the latter cease to exist, the former also perish with them. The *Giuoco del Ponte* was a relic

of popular chivalry, one of the innumerable knightly games which adorned the simple, artistic, warlike life of the hundred Republics of Italy.... What have we to do with the arms and banners of the tourneys? At most we may rub the cobwebs away and shake off the dust and lay them aside in a museum." [73]

Page 83

To come out of the Museo, that graveyard of dead beauty, of forgotten enthusiasms, into the quiet, deserted Piazza di S. Francesco, where the summer sleeps ever in the sun and no footstep save a foreigner's ever seems to pass, is to fall from one dream into another, not less mysterious and full of beauty. How quiet now is this old city that once rang with the shouts of the victors home from some sea fight, or returned from the Giuoco. Only, as you pass along Via S. Francesco and turn into Piazza di S. Paolo, the children gather about you, reminding you that in Italy even the oldest places—S. Paolo al Orto, for instance, with its beautiful old tower that is now a dwelling—are put to some use, and are really living still like the gods who have taken service with us, perhaps in irony, to console themselves for our treachery in watching our sadness without them.

It is certainly with some such thought as this in his heart the unforgetful traveller will enter S. Pierino, not far from S. Paolo al Orto, at the corner of Via Cavour and Via delle belle Torri. Coming into this old church suddenly out of the sunshine, how dark a place it seems, full of a mysterious melancholy too, a sort of remembrance of change and death, as though some treachery asleep in our hearts had awakened on the threshold and accused us. The crypt has long been used as a charnel house, the guide-book tells you, but maybe it is not any memory of the unremembered and countless dead that has stirred in your heart, but some stranger impulse urging you to a dislike of the darkness, that dim mysterious light that is part of the north and has nothing to do with Italy. How full of twilight it is, yet once in this place a temple to Apollo stood, full of the sun, almost within sound of the sea, when, we know not how,[74] the Pisans received news of Jesus Christ, and, forgetting Apollo, gave his temple to St. Peter. Then in 1072 they pulled down that old "house of idols,"[75] and built this church, calling it S. Pietro in Vincoli, perhaps because of the presence of the old gods, perhaps because it was so dark—who knows; and on the 30th of August 1119, Archbishop Pietro, he who brought the cross of silver from Rome and put in it the banner of the city and led Pisa to victory in Majorca, solemnly consecrated it.

I was thinking somewhat in this fashion, resting on a bench in that cool twilight place, where the sounds of life come from very far off, when out of the darkness an old man crept toward me; he seemed as old as the church itself. "The Signore would see the church," he asked; "who can the Signore wish for better than myself?—it is my own church, I am its guardian." Truly he was very old: if he were Apollo, long and evil had been his days; if he were St. Peter, indeed he was very like.

Page 84

It was a long story of buried treasure, buried or lost I know not which, that he tried to tell me, while he pointed to the beautiful pavement, or caressed the old fading pillars, leading me up the broken steps into the greater darkness of the nave, where he showed me one of the most ancient pictures in Pisa, a great, mournful, and grievous crucifix, a colossal Christ, His feet nailed separately to the cross, His body tortured and emaciated, a hideous mask of death;—here in the temple of Apollo. “It is here,” said he, smiling, “that Paganism and Christianity were married; and in the temple lie the dead, and in the church the living pray, as you see, Signore, beside these old pillars that were not built for any Christian house. Such is the splendour and antiquity of our city. For, as you know, doubtless, the Duomo itself is built on the foundations of Nero’s Palace,[76] S. Andrea (not far away) was once a temple of Venus, in S. Niccola we besought Ceres, and in S. Michele called on Mars; such, Signore, is the splendour and glory of our city....”

Evening had come when I found myself again on the Lung’ Arno, in a world neither Pagan nor Christian, in which I am a stranger.

* * * * *

Leaving behind you Ponte di Mezzo and the Lung’ Arno, *quasi a modo d’un archo di balestro*,[77] you come into the Borgo, under the low arches of the old houses that make a covered way. This is perhaps the oldest part of Pisa. Almost at once on your right you pass S. Michele in Borgo, built probably just before his death by Fra Guglielmo, that disciple of Niccolo Pisano. Fra Guglielmo died in the convent of S. Caterina, for he had been fifty-seven years in the Dominican Order. Tronci tells us that, being one day in Bologna, where he had gone with Niccolo his master to make a tomb for S. Domenico, when the old tomb was opened he secretly took a bone and hid it, and without saying anything presently set out for Pisa. Arrived there, he placed the relic under the table of the altar of S. Maria Maddalena, and was seen often by the brethren praying there,—they knew not why. But at his death he revealed his pious theft, and showed the bone in its place, and it was guarded and shown to the people.

But S. Michele in Borgo is older than Fra Guglielmo, who died about the year 1313. Certainly the crypt is ancient as are the pillars. A certain *Buono* is said to have built a church here in 990; but little, however, now remaining can be of that date, the church as a whole being of about 1312, and, as I have said, probably the last work of Fra Guglielmo.

Passing up the Borgo, here and there we may see signs of ancient Pisa in the sunken pillars, for instance, before a house in a street on the left, Via del Monte, following which we come into the most beautiful Piazza in Pisa, perhaps in Italy, Piazza dei Cavalieri, once the Piazza dei Anziani.

Page 85

On the right is the Church of the Knights of St. Stephen, Santo Stefano dei Cavalieri; next to it is the beautiful palace of the Anziani, later the Palazzo Conventuale dei Cavalieri, rebuilt by Vasari. Almost opposite this is a palace under which the road passes, built to the shape of the Piazza; it marks the spot where the Tower of Hunger once stood, where the eagles of the Republic were housed, and where Conte Ugolino della Gherardesca with his sons and nephews was starved to death by Archbishop Ruggieri degli Ubaldini. Opposite to this is the marble Palazzo del Consiglio, also belonging to the Order of St. Stephen.

The Knights of St. Stephen, to whom, indeed, the whole Piazza seems to be devoted, were a religious and military Order founded by Cosimo I, Grand Duke of Tuscany, who sits on horseback in front of the beautiful steps of the *Conventuale*. The object of the Order was to harry the Moorish pirates of the Mediterranean, to redeem their captives, and to convert these Moors to Christianity; nor were they wanting in war, for they fought at Lepanto. Cosimo placed the Order under the protection of St. Stephen, because he had gained his greatest victory on that saint's day. The Knights seem to have been of two kinds: the religious, who took three major vows and lived in the Conventuale under the rule of St. Benedict, and served the Church of S. Stefano; and the military, who might not only hold property but marry. Their cross is very like the cross of Pisa, but red, while that is white.

In S. Stefano there is little to see, a few old banners, a series of bad frescoes, and a bust of S. Lussorius by Donatello, perhaps,—at least, that sculptor was working for eighteen months in the city. Before the sixteenth century this Piazza must have been very different from what it is to-day. Where S. Stefano stands now S. Sebastiano stood, that church where the Anziani met so often to decide peace or war.[78] Close by was the palace of the Podesta, while beyond the Palazzo Anziani rose the Torre delle Sette Vie, Torre Gualandi, Torre della Fame, for it bore all three names; only, the last came to it after the hideous crime of Ruggiero. If we cross the Piazza opposite the Palazzo Conventuale, and pass into Via S. Sisto, we come to the church of that saint, where also the Grand Council used to meet. It was founded to commemorate the great victories that came to Pisa on that day. Those antique columns are the spoil of war, as Tronci tells us.[79] Returning to the Piazza, and leaving it by Via S. Frediano, we soon come to the church of that saint, with its lovely and spacious nave and antique columns. A little farther on is the University, La Sapienza, founded by Conte Fazio della Gherardesca in 1338. In that year Conte Fazio enlarged the Piazza degli Anziani, so that *la nobilita* should be able to walk there more readily; and to render the city more honourable, with the consent of the *Anziani* and all the Senate, he founded

Page 86

a university, to lead the greatest doctors to lecture there; and to establish the Theatre of the Schools he sent ambassadors in the name of the Republic to Pope Benedict for his authorisation. Needless to say, this was given and in 1340 we find Messer Bartolo da Sassoferrato and Messer Guido da Prato, Doctor of Physics, lecturing on "Chirurgia." [80] In 1589, Galileo was Professor of Mathematics here. The present building dates from 1493. Close by, between the University and the Lung' Arno, are the remains of an old gate of the city, Porta Aurea, and some remnants of towers.

Crossing Arno by Ponte Solferino, and turning along the Lung' Arno Gambacorti to the left, we come suddenly upon a great Piazza in which an old and splendid church is hidden away. And just as the Duomo, the great church of the northern part of the city, is set just within the walls far away from the Borgo, so here, in the southern part of Pisa, S. Paolo a Ripa d'Arno is abandoned by the riverside on the verge of the country, for the fields are at its threshold. And indeed, this desolate church is really older than the Duomo, for, as some say, it served as the Great Church of Pisa while the Cathedral was building. Founded, as the Pisans assert, by Charlemagne in 805, it was rather the model of the Duomo, if this be true, than, as is generally supposed, a copy of it. Bare for the most part and empty, its original beauty and simplicity still remain to it; nor should any who find it omit to pass into the priest's house, to see the old Baptistry now in the hands of Benedictine nuns.

On our way back to Pisa by the Lung' Arno Gambacorti, we may look always with new joy at the Torre Guelfa, almost all that is left of the great arsenal built in 1200. And then you will not pass without entering, it may be, S. Maria della Spina, where of old the huntsmen used to hear Mass at dawn before going about their occasions.

And many another church in Pisa is devout and beautiful. S. Sepolcro, which Diotisalvi made, he who built the Baptistry, a church of the Knights Templars below the level of the way; S. Martino too, both in Chinseca, that part of the city named after her who gave the alarm nearly a thousand years ago when the Saracen sails hove in sight.—Ah, do not be in a hurry to leave Pisa for any other city. Let us think of old things for a little, and be quiet. It may be we shall never see that line of hills again—Monti Pisani; it were better to look at them a little carefully. A little while before to-day the most precious of our dreams was not so lovely as that spur of the Apennines.

FOOTNOTES:

[17] Muratori, *Annali ad ann.*: He quotes from *Annali Pisani* (see tom. vi., Rer. Ital. Scrip): "Fecerunt bellum Pisani cum Lucensibus in Aqua longa, et vicerunt illos." See Arch. St. It. VI. ii. p. 4. Cron. Pis. ad annum.

[18] Muratori, *Annali ad ann. 1050*: “et Pisa fuit firmata de tota Sardinia a Romana sede.”—*Ann. Pis.*, R.I.S., tom. vi.

Page 87

[19] Tronci, *Annali Pisani*, Livorno, 1682, p. 21.

[20] Ibid. p. 22.

[21] Muratori (*Annali ad ann.*) says Pope Alexander visited in this year S. Martino the Duomo of Lucca. Ad ann. 1118 he suggests 1092 for the foundation of the Duomo of Pisa.

[22] Thus Tronci; but Volpe, *Studi sulle Istituzioni Comunali a Pisa*, p. 6, tells us that these quarters did not exist till much later,—till after 1164, when the system of division by *porte e base* was abandoned for division by *quartieri*. Tronci, later, says that the city was unwallled (p. 38). But even in the eleventh century Pisa was a walled city; the first walls included only the Quartiere di Mezzo; and in those days the city proper, the walled part, was called “Populus Pisanus,” while the suburbs were called Cinthicanus, Foriportensis, and de Burgis. Cf. *Arch. St. It.* iii. vol. VIII. p. 5. Muratori, *Dissertazioni*, 30, “De Mercat.” says that in the tenth century a part of the city was called Kinzic; cf. Fanucci, *St. dei Tre celebri Popoli Maritt.* I. 96. Kinzic is Arabic, and means *magazzinaggi*.

[23] Tronci, *op. cit.* p. 38.

[24] Tronci, *op. cit.* p. 60.

[25] It was from Amalfi that they brought home the Pandects.

[26] The first Podesta of the city was Conte Tedicis della Gherardesca.

[27] Pisa was perhaps influenced, too, in her choice of the Ghibelline side by the interference of the Papacy against her in Corsica. While, if Pisa was Ghibelline, Lucca, of course, was Guelph.

[28] Cf. G. Villani, *op. cit.* lib. vii. cap. ii., “La cagione perche si comincio la guerra da’ Fiorentini a’ Pisani,” and Villari, *History of Florence* (Eng. ed. 1902), p. 176.

[29] This seems to give the lie to the accusation of treachery, which said that he gave the signal for flight at Meloria; but in fact it does not, for Pisa elected Ugolino for reasons, in the hope of conciliating Florence; cf. Villari, *op. cit.* p. 284.

[30] He knew them to be Ghibellines.

[31] It was also called *la muda*. It seems hardly necessary to refer the reader to Dante, *Inferno*, xxxiii. 1-90. This tower (now to be called the Tower of Hunger) was the mew of the eagles. For even as the Romans kept wolves on the Capitol, so the Pisans kept eagles, the Florentines lions, the Sienese a wolf. See Villani, bk. vii. 128. Heywood, *Palio and Ponte*, p. 13, note 2.

[32] Florence here means the League, to wit, Prato, Pistoja, Siena even, and all the allies, including the Guelphs of Romagna, who were fighting Arezzo under Archb. Uberti, and Pisa under Archb. Ruggieri.

[33] Yet in 1290 Genoa seized Porto Pisano: “Furono allora disfatte le torri ... il fanale e tutte.”

[34] Tronci, *op. cit.* 269-271. For the *Palio*,—the name of the race and the prize of victory, a piece of silk not too much unlike the banners given at a modern battle of Flowers,—see Heywood, *Palio and Ponte*, 1904, p. 12.

Page 88

[35] The girdle was made of silver and jewels and silk to represent the girdle of the B.V.M. It encircled the Duomo—a most splendid and unique thing, only possible, I think, in Pisa. No parsimonious Florentine could have imagined it.

[36] Now in the Museo, room 1. See page 119.

[37] Tronci, *op. cit.* 366.

[38] See Tronci, *op. cit.* 304.

[39] They imprisoned him in Lucca.

[40] Tronci, *op. cit.* p. 404.

[41] Cronaca Sanese in *Muratori*, xv. 177.

[42] Heywood, *Palio and Ponte*, p. 22.

[43] Tronci, *op. cit.* 412.

[44] A pleasing story of how these citizens found Agnello's house in darkness and all sleeping within, of his awakened maid-servant and frightened wife, is told in Marangoni, *Cron. di Pisa*. See Sismondi, ed. Boulting (1906), p. 401.

[45] See Sismondi, *op. cit.* p. 403.

[46] Cf. Sismondi, *op. cit.* p. 557.

[47] Tronci, *op. cit.* p. 18.

[48] Tronci, *op. cit.* p. 453.

[49] The print is dated 1634.

[50] For all things concerning this game and the Palio, see Heywood, *Palio and Ponte*.

[51] Villani, *op. cit.* Bk. iv. 2. The Badia, like that of Firenze, seems rather to have been founded by Ugo's mother, Countess Willa.

[52] Tronci, *op. cit.* p. 9.

[53] It may be as well to explain here that the Pisan Calendar differed not only from our own but from that of other cities of Tuscany. The Pisans reckoned from the Incarnation. The year began, therefore, on 25th March: so did the Florentine and the Sienese year, but they reckoned from a year after the Incarnation. The Aretines, Pistoiese, and Cortonese followed the Pisans.

[54] Tronci, *op. cit.* p. 21.

[55] 104 yards long by 35-1/2 yards wide.

[56] Crowe and Cavalcaselle, *History of Painting in Italy*, new edition, 1903, vol. i. pp. 185, 186.

[57] There is a miracle picture, S. Maria sotto gli Orcagni in the Duomo. Mr. Carmichael, in his book, *In Tuscany*, gives a full account of this picture. See also my *Italy and the Italians*, pp. 117-120.

[58] Crowe and Cavalcaselle, *op. cit.* vol. i. p. 103.

[59] Crowe and Cavalcaselle, *op. cit.* vol. i. p. 109.

[60] See below, p. 134.

[61] See *On the Old Road through France to Florence* (Murray, 1904), in which Mr. Carmichael wrote the Italian part. He has much pleasant information about the bells of Pisa, p. 223.

[62] Was it here, or in the Ospedale dei Trovatelli close to S. Michele in Borgo? cf. Tronci, p. 179.

[63] See p. 95.

[64] Crowe and Cavalcaselle, *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 146, note.

[65] See *Pisa*. da I.B. Supino, 1905, p. 43.

Page 89

[66] See p. 91.

[67] Mr. Carmichael (*On the Old Road through France to Florence*, p. 224) says it must have been worth L30,000 of our money.

[68] Let me refer the reader again to Mr. William Heywood's exhaustive work on Italian mediaeval games, *Palio and Ponte*, Methuen, 1904.

[69] See also F. Tribolati, *Il Gioco del Ponte*, Firenze, 1877, p. 5.

[70] Many of these banners are hung in the great Salone—the first room you enter on the first floor of the Museo.

[71] All the coverings and armour are illustrated in the *Oplomachia Pisana* of Camillo Borghi. (Lucca, 1713.)

[72] There is a rich literature of poems and *Relazioni*, etc., on the *Gioco del Ponte*.

[73] F. Tribolati, *Il Gioco del Ponte*, Firenze, 1877. See also Heywood, *op. cit.* p. 136.

[74] Yet it is said that St. Peter himself came to Pisa from Antioch, and founded the Church of S. Pietro in Grado, and consecrated Pierino first bishop of Pisa; cf. Tronci, *op. cit.* p. 3.

[75] Tronci, *op. cit.* p. 23.

[76] He said palace, and palace it may be, for the baths are a quarter of a mile away.

[77] So a nineteenth-century writer calls it. Leopardi, too, cannot find words enough to express its beauty: "Questo Lung' Arno e uno spettacolo cosi bello cosi ampio cosi magnifico," etc.

[78] It was in S. Sebastiano that Ruggiero condemned Count Ugolino and his sons.

[79] Tronci, *op. cit.* p. 30.

[80] Tronci, *op. cit.* p. 343.

VII. LIVORNO[81]

It was only after many days spent in the Pineta, those pinewoods that go down to the sea at Gombo, where the silent, deserted shore, strewn with sea-shells and whispering with grass, stretches far away to the Carrara hills, that very early one morning I set out for Livorno, that port which has taken the place of the old Porto Pisano,[82] so famous

through the world of old. Leaving Pisa by the Porta a Mare, I soon came to S. Pietro a Grado, a lonely church among the marshes, that once, as I suppose, stood on the seashore. It was here St. Peter, swept out of his course by a storm on his way from Antioch, came ashore before setting out again for Naples, entering Italy first, then, on the shores of Etruria. So the tale goes; but the present church seems to be a building of the twelfth century. Its simple beauty, which the seawind and the sun have kissed for seven hundred years, seems to give character to the whole plain, so ample and green, beyond the wont of Italy; but, indeed, here we are on the threshold of the Maremma, that beautiful, wild, deserted country that man has not yet reclaimed from Death, where the summer is still and treacherous in its loveliness, where in winter for a little while the herdsmen come down with their cattle from the Garfagnana, and the hills musical

Page 90

with love songs. On the threshold of that treacherous summer, as it were, this lonely church stands on guard. Within, she is beautiful, in the old manner, splendid with antique pillars caught about now with iron; but it is perhaps the frescoes, that have faded on the walls till they are scarcely more than the shadows of a thousand forgotten sunsets, that you will care for most. They are the work of Giunta Pisano, or if, indeed, they are not his they are of his school,—a school already decadent, splendid with the beauty that has looked on death and can never be quite sane again. No one, I think, can ever deny the beauty of Giunta's work; it is full of a strange subtilty that is ready to deny life over and over again. He is concerned not with life, but chiefly with religion, and with certain bitter yet altogether lovely colours which evoke for him, and for us too, if we will lend ourselves to their influence, all the misery and pessimism of the end of the Middle Age, its restlessness and ennui, that find consolation only in the memory of the grotesque frailty of the body which one day Jesus will raise up. All the anarchy and discontent of our own time seems to me to be expressed in such work as this, in which ugliness, as we might say, has as much right as beauty. It is, I think, the mistake of much popular criticism in our time to assert that these "primitive" painters were beginners, and could not achieve what they wished. They were not beginners, rather they were the most subtle artists of a convention—and all art is a convention—that was about to die. If one can see their work aright, it is beautiful; but it has lost touch with life, or is a mere satirical comment upon it, that Giotto, with his simplicity, his eager delight in natural things and in man, will supersede and banish. In him, Europe seems to shake off the art and fatality of the East, under whose shadow Christianity had grown up, to be altogether transformed and humanised by Rome, when she at the head really of humanism and art should once more give to the world the thoughts and life of another people full of joy and temperance—things so hard for the Christian to understand. And it is really with such a painter as Giunta Pisano that Christian art pure and simple comes to end. Some divinity altogether different has touched those who came after: Giotto, who is enamoured of life which the Christian must deny; Angelico, whose world is full of a music that is about to become pagan; Botticelli, who has mingled the tears of Mary with the salt of the sea, and has seen a new star in heaven, and proclaimed the birth not of the Nazarene, but the Cyprian.

But it is not such thoughts as these you will find in Livorno, one of the busiest towns in Italy, full of modern business life; material in the manner of the Latin people that by reason of some inherent purity of heart never becomes sordid in our fashion.

Page 91

"There is absolutely nothing to see in Leghorn," says Mr. Hare. Well, but that depends on what you seek, does it not? If you would see a Tuscan city that is absolutely free from the tourist, I think you must go to Livorno. It is true, works of art are not many there; but the statue of Grand Duke Ferdinand, with four Moors in bronze chained to his feet, a work of Piero Jacopo Tacca, made in 1617-1625, is something; though I confess those chained robbers at the feet of a petty tyrant who was as great a robber, he and his forebears, as any among them, are in this age of sentimental liberalism, from which who can escape, a little disconcerting. Ferdinand has his best monument in the city itself, which he founded to take the place of Porto Pisano, that in the course of centuries had silted up. In order to populate the new port, he proclaimed there a religious liberty he denied to his Duchy at large. His policy was splendidly successful. Every sort of outcast made Livorno his home—especially the Jews, for whom Ferdinando had a great respect; but there were there Greeks also, and *nuovi cristiani*, Moors converted to Christianity. These last, I think, indeed, must have been worth seeing; for no doubt Ferdinand's politic grant of religious liberty did not include Moors who had not been "converted to Christianity."

But the great days of Livorno are over; though who may say if a new prosperity does not await her in the near future, she is so busy a place. Livorno la cara, they call her, and no doubt of old she endeared herself to her outcasts. To-day, however, it is to the Italian summer visitor that she is dear. There he comes for sea-bathing, and it is difficult to imagine a more delightful seaside. For you may live on the hills and yet have the sea. Beyond Livorno rises the first high ground of the Maremma, Montenero, holy long ago with its marvellous picture of the Madonna, which, as I know, still works wonders. Here Byron lived, and not far away Shelley wrote the principal part of *The Cenci*.

Passing out by tramway by the Porta Maremmana, you come to Byron's villa, almost at the foot of the hills, on a sloping ground on your right. Entering by the great iron gates of what looks like a neglected park, you climb by a stony road up to the great villa itself, among the broken statues and the stone pines, where is one of the most beautiful views of the Pisan country and seashore, with the islands of Gorgona, Capraja, Elba, and Corsica in the distance. Villa Dupoy, as it was called in Byron's day, is now in the summer months used as a girls' school: and, indeed, it would be easy to house a regiment in its vast rooms, where here and there a seventeenth century fresco is still gorgeous on the walls, and the mirrors are dim with age. From here the walk up to Our Lady of Montenero is delightful; and once there, on the hills above the church, the rolling downs towards Maremma lie before you without a single habitation, almost without a road, a country of heath and fierce rock, desolate and silent, splendid with the wind and the sun.

Page 92

The Church of Madonna lies just under the crest of the hill, and is even to-day a place of many pilgrimages: for the whole place is strewn and hung with thank-offerings, silver hearts, shoes, crutches, and I know not what else, among the pathetic pictures of her kindly works. The picture itself, loaded now with jewellery, is apparently a work of the thirteenth century; but it is said to have been miraculously brought hither from Negroponte. It was found at Ardenza close by, by a shepherd, who carried it to Montenero, where, as I suppose, he lived; but just before he won the top of the hill it grew so heavy he had to set it down. So the peasants built a shrine for it; and the affair getting known, the Church inquired into it, with the result that certainly by the fifteenth century the shrine was in charge of a Religious Order; to-day the monks of the Vallombrosan Benedictines serve the church.

One returns always, I think, with regret from Montenero to Livorno; yet, after all, not with more sadness than that which always accompanies us in returning from the country to any city, howsoever fair and lovely. God made the country; man made the town; and though in Italy both God and man have laboured with joy and done better here than anywhere else in the world, who would not leave the loveliest picture to look once more on the sky, or neglect the sweetest music if he might always hear the sea, or give up praising a statue, if he might always look on his beloved? So it is in Italy, where all the cities are fair; flowers they are among the flowers; yet any Tuscan rose is fairer far than ever Pisa was, and the lilies of Madonna in the gardens of Settignano are more lovely than the City of Flowers: come, then, let us leave the city for the wayside, for the sun and the dust and the hills, the flowers beside the river, the villages among the flowers. For if you love Italy you will follow the road.

FOOTNOTES:

[81] Livorno, in the barbarian dialect of the Genovesi, Ligorno; and hence our word Leghorn. It is excusable that we should have taken St. George from Genoa, but not that we should have stolen her dialect also.

[82] Perhaps, but Bocca d'Arno, that delicious place, is far and far to-day from Livorno.

VIII. TO SAN MINIATO AL TEDESCO

The road from Pisa to Florence, out of the Porta Fiorentina, to-day the greatest gate of the city, passes at first across the Pisan plain, beside Arno though not following it in its wayward and winding course, to Cascina at the foot of those hills behind which Lucca is hidden away: Monti Pisani

“Perche i Pisani veder Lucca non ponno.”

Page 93

And unlike the way through the Pineta to the sea, the road, so often trodden by the victorious armies of Florence, is desolate and sombre, while beside the way to-day a disused tramway leads to Calci in the hills. On either side of this road, so deep in dust, are meadows lined with bulrushes, while there lies a village, here a lonely church. It is indeed a rather sombre world of half-reclaimed marshland that Pisa thus broods over, in which the only landmarks are the far-away hills, the smoke of a village not so far away, or the tower of a church rising among these fields so strangely green. For Pisa herself is soon lost in the vagueness of a world thus delicately touched by sun and cloud, and seemingly so full of ruinous or deserted things like the beautiful great Church of Settimo, whose tower you may see far away in the golden summer weather standing quite alone in a curve of the river; so that you leave the highway and following a little by-road come upon Pieve di S. Cassiano, a basilica in the ancient Pisan manner set among the trees in a shady place, and over the three doors of the facade you find the beautiful work of Biduino da Pisa, as it is said, sculptures in relief of the resurrection of Lazarus, the entry of Christ into Jerusalem, a fight of dragons, and certain subjects from the Bestiaries.

Another lonely church, set, not at the end of a byway by the river, but on the highroad itself, greets you as you enter Cascina. It is the Chiesa della Madonna dell' Acqua, rebuilt in the eighteenth century. In this wide plain there are many churches, some of them of a great antiquity, as S. Jacopo at Zambra and S. Lorenzo alle Corti, and in the hills you may find a place so wonderful as the Certosa di Calci, a monastery founded in 1366, but altered and spoiled in the seventeenth century, and the marvellous Church of S. Giovanni there. Cascina itself is as it were the image of this wide flat country between the hills and the Maremma, where the sun has so much influence and the shadows of the clouds drift over the fields all day long, and the mist shrouds the evening in blue and silver. Desolate and sober enough on a day of rain, when the sun shines this gaunt outpost of Pisa, for it is little more, is as gay as a flower by the wayside. The road runs through it, giving it its one long and almost straight street, while behind the poor houses that have so little to boast of, lies a beautiful old Piazza, with a great palace seemingly deserted on one side and an old tower and a church with a beautiful facade on another. Always a prize of the enemy, Cascina in the Pisan wars fell to Lucca, to the Guelph League, and to Florence. Its old walls, battered long ago, still remain to it, so that from afar, from the Pisan hills, for instance, it looks more picturesque than in fact it proves to be.

Page 94

The high road, Via Pisana, as it is still called, though, indeed, it was more often the way of the Florentines, sometimes almost deserted, sometimes noisy with peasants returning from market, finds the river again at Cascina only to lose it, however, till after a walk of some five miles you come to Pontedera, a wild and miserable place, full of poor and rebellious people, who eye you with suspicion and a sort of envy. Yet in spite of the proclamation of their wretchedness, I think of them now in London, as fortunate. At least upon them the sun will surely shine in the morning, the unsullied infinite night will fall; while for us there is no sun, and in the night the many are too unhappy to remember even that. There in Pontedera they preach their socialism, and none is too miserable to listen; these poor folk have been told they are unhappy, and, indeed, Pontedera is not beautiful. Yet on a market day you may see the whole place transformed. It has an aspect of joy that lights up the dreary street. All day on Friday you may watch them at their little stalls, which litter Via Pisana and make it impassable. You might think you were at a fair, but that a fair in England, at any rate, is not so gay. All along the highway that runs through the town in front of the shops and the inn you see the stalls of the crockery merchants, of the dealers in lace and stuffs, of those who sell macaroni and pasti, and of those who sell mighty umbrellas. And it is then, I think, that Pontedera is at her best; life which ever contrives in Italy to keep something of a gay sanity, disposing for that day at least of the surliness of this people, who are very poor, and far from any great city.

As for me, I left Pontedera with all speed, being intent on Vico Pisano, a fortress built by Filippo Brunellesco for the Republic of Florence, after the fall of the old Pisan Rocca of Verruca, on the hill-top. There, too, if we may believe Villani,[83] the Marchese Ugo founded a monastery. To-day on Monte della Verruca there is nothing remaining of the Rocca, and the monastery is a heap of stones; but in Vico Pisano the fortifications and towers of Brunellesco still stand, battered though they be,—gaunt and bitter towers, their battlements broken, the walls that the engines of old time have battered, hung now with ivy, over which, all silver in the wind, the ancient olive leans.

Here, where the creeping ivy has hidden the old wounds, and the oleanders speak of the living, and the lilies remind us of the dead, let us, too, make peace in our hearts and suffer no more bitterness for the fallen, nor think hardly of the victor. Florence, too, in her turn suffered slavery and oblivion; and from the same cause as her own victims, because she would not be at peace. If Pisa fell, it was just and right; for that she was Ghibelline, and would not make one with her sisters. For this Siena was lopped like a lily on her hills, and Lucca pruned like her own olive trees, and Pistoia gathered in the plain.

Page 95

This Florence stood for the Guelph cause and for the future, yet she too in her turn failed in love, and great though she was, she too was not great enough. One of her sons, seeing her power, dreamed of the unity of Italy, and for this cause followed Cesare Borgia; but she could not compass it, and so fell at last as Pisa fell, as Siena fell, as all must fall who will not be at one. How beautiful these old towers of Vico Pisano look now among the flowers, yet once they were cruel enough: men defended them and thought nothing of their beauty, and time has spoiled them of defence and left only their beauty to be remembered. For the ancients of Pisa have met for the last time; the signory of Florence plots no more; no more will any Emperor with the pride of a barbarian, the mien of a beggar or a thief, cross the Alps, or such an one as Hawkwood was sell his prowess for a bag of silver; and if the ships of war shall ever put out from Genoa, they will be the ships of Italy. For she who slept so long has awakened at last, and around her as she stands on the Capitol, there cluster full of the ancient Latin beauty that can never die, the beautiful cities of the sea, the plain, and the mountain, who have lost life for her sake, to find it in her.

It is a long road of some fifteen miles from Pontedera to S. Miniato al Tedesco: a hot road not without beauty passing through Rotta, own sister to Pontedera, through Castel del Bosco, only a dusty village now, for the castello is gone which guarded the confines of the Republic of Pisa, divided from the Republic of Florence by the Chiecinella, a torrent bed almost without water in the summer heat, while not far away on the southern hills Montopoli thrusts its tower into the sky, keeping yet its ancient Rocca, once in the power of the Bishops of Lucca, but later in the hands of Florence, an answer, as it were, to Castel del Bosco of Pisa in the land where both Pisa and Florence were on guard. There is but little to see at Montopoli, just two old churches and a picture by Cigoli; indeed the place looks its best from afar; and then, since the day is hot, you may spend a pleasanter hour in S. Romano in the old Franciscan church there, which is worth a visit in spite of its modern decorations, and is full of coolness and quiet. It was afternoon when I left S. Romano and caught sight of Castelfranco far away to the north, and presently crossed Evola at Pontevola, and already sunset when I saw the beautiful cypresses of Villa Sonnino and the tower of S. Miniato came in sight. Slowly in front of me as I left Pinocchio a great ox wagon toiled up the hill winding at last under a splendid Piazza fronted with flowers; and it was with surprise and joy that, just as the angelus rang from the Duomo, I came into a beautiful city that, like some forgotten citadel of the Middle Age, lay on the hills curved like the letter S, smiling in the silence while the sun set to the sound of her bells.

And indeed you may go far in Tuscany, covered as it is to-day by the trail of the tourist, before you will find anything so fair as S. Miniato. Some distance from the railway, five miles from Empoli, half-way between Pisa and Florence, it alone seems to have escaped altogether the curiosity of the traveller, for even the few who so wisely rest at Empoli come not so far into the country places.

Page 96

Lying on the hills under the old tower of the Rocca, of which nothing else remains, S. Miniato is itself, as it were, a weather-beaten fortress, that was, perhaps, never so beautiful as now, when no one keeps watch or ward. You may wander into the Duomo and out again into the cloistered, narrow streets, and climbing uphill, pass down into the great gaunt church like a fortress, S. Domenico, with its scrupulous frescoes, and though you will see many wonderful and some delightful things, it will be always with new joy you will return to S. Miniato herself, who seems to await you like some virgin of the centuries of faith, that age has not been able to wither, fresh and rosy as when she first stood on her beautiful hills. Yet unspoiled as she is, Otto I has dwelt with her, she was a stronghold of the Emperors, the fortress of the Germans; Federigo Barbarossa knew her well, and Federigo II has loved her and hated her, for here he spoke with poets and made a few songs, and here he blinded and imprisoned Messer Piero della Vigna, that famous poet and wise man, accusing him of treason.[84] Was it that he envied him his verses or feared his wisdom, or did he indeed think he plotted with the Pope? Piero della Vigna was from Capua, in the Kingdom; very eloquent, full of the knowledge of law, the Emperor made him his chancellor, and indeed gave him all his confidence, so that his influence was very great with a man who must have been easily influenced by his friends. Seeing his power, others about the Emperor, remembering Piero's low condition, no doubt sought to ruin him; and, as it seems, at last in this they were successful, forging letters to prove that the chancellor trafficked with the Pope. It was a time of danger for Frederick; he was easily persuaded of Piero's guilt, and having put out his eyes, he imprisoned him. Driven to despair at the loss of that fair world, Piero dashed his head against the walls of his prison, and so died. Dante meets him among the suicides in the seventh circle of the Inferno.

But the Rocca of S. Miniato, as it is said, having brought death to a poet and housed many Emperors, gave birth at last to the greatest soldier of the fifteenth century, Francesco Sforza himself, he who made himself Duke of Milan and whose statue Leonardo set himself to make, on which the poets carved *Ecce Deus*. A mere fort, perhaps, in its origin, in the days of Federigo II the Rocca must have been of considerable strength, size, and luxury, dominating as it did the road to Florence and the way to Rome: and then even in its early days it was a stronghold of the German foreigner from which he dominated the Latins round about, and not least the people of S. Miniato. Like all the Tuscans, they could not bear the yoke, and they fled into the valley to S. Genesio: soon to return, however, for the people of the plain liked them as little as he of the tower. This exodus is, as it were, commemorated in the dedication of the Duomo to S. Maria e a S. Genesio. The

Page 97

church is not very interesting; some fragments of the old pulpit or *ambone*, where you may see in relief the Annunciation and a coat of arms with a boar and an inscription, are of the thirteenth century. It is, however, in S. Domenico, not far away, that what remains to S. Miniato of her art treasures will be found. Everyone seems to call the church S. Domenico, but in truth it belongs to S. Jacopo and S. Lucia. As in many another Tuscan city, it guards one side of S. Miniato, while S. Francesco watches on the other, as though to befriend all who may pass by. S. Domenico was founded in 1330, but it has suffered much since then. The chapels, built by the greatest families of the place, in part remain beautiful with the fourteenth-century work of the school of Gaddi and of some pupil of Angelico; but it is a work of the fifteenth century by some master of the Florentine school that chiefly delights us. For there you may see Madonna, her sweet, ambiguous face neither happy nor sad, with the Prince of Life in her lap, while on the one side stand S. Sebastian and St. John Baptist, and on the other perhaps S. Jacopo and S. Roch. Below the donors kneel a man and his wife and little daughter, while in the predella you see our Lord's birth, baptism, and condemnation. Altogether lovely, in that eager yet dry manner, a little uncertain of its own dainty humanism, this picture alone is worth the journey to S. Miniato. Yet how much else remains—a tomb attributed to Donatello in this very chapel, a lovely terra-cotta of the Annunciation given to Giovanni della Robbia, and indeed, not to speak of S. Francesco with its spaciousness and delicate light, and the Palazzo Comunale, with its frescoed Sala del Consiglio, there is S. Miniato itself, full of flowers and the wind. Like a city of a dream, at dawn she rises out of the mists of the valley pure and beautiful upon her winding hills that look both north and south; cool at midday and very still, hushed from all sounds, she sleeps in the sun, while her old tower tells the slow, languorous hours; golden at evening, the sunset ebbs through her streets to the far-away sea, till she sinks like some rosy lily into the night that for her is full of familiar silences peopled by splendid dreams. Then there come to her shadows innumerable—Otto I, Federigo Barbarossa, Federigo II, poor blinded Piero della Vigna, singing his songs, and those that we have forgotten. The ruined dream of Germany, the Holy Roman Empire, the resurrection of the Latin race—she has seen them all rise, and two of them she helped to shatter for ever. It is not only in her golden book that she may read of splendour and victory, but in the sleeping valley and the whisper of her olives, the simple song of the husbandman among the corn, the Italian voices in the vineyard at dawn: let her sleep after the old hatred, hushed by this homely music.

FOOTNOTES:

[83] See p. 107.

Page 98

[84] “Io son colui che tenni ambo le chiavi
Del cuor di Federigo e che le volsi
Serrando e disserando sì soavi
Che dal segreto suo quasi ogni uom tolsi.”

IX. EMPOLI, MONTELUPO, LASTRA, SIGNA

It is but four miles down the hillside and through the valley along Via Pisana to Empoli in the plain. And in truth that way, difficult truly at midday—for the dusty road is full of wagons and oxen—is free enough at dawn, though every step thereon takes you farther from the hills of S. Miniato. Empoli, which you come to not without preparation, is like a deserted market-place, a deserted market-place that has been found, and put once more to its old use. Set as it is in the midst of the plain beside Arno on the way to Florence, on the way to Siena, amid the villages and the cornfields, it was the Granary of the Republic of Florence, its very name, may be, being derived from the word Emporium, which in fact it was. Not less important perhaps to-day than of old, its new villas, its strangely busy streets, its cosy look of importance and comfort there in the waste of plain, serve to hide any historical importance it may have, so that those who come here are content for the most part to go no farther than the railway station, where on the way from Pisa or from Florence they must change carriages for Siena. And indeed, for her history, it differs but little from that of other Tuscan towns within reach of a great city. Yet for Empoli, as her Saint willed, there waited a destiny. For after the rout of the Guelphs, and especially of Florence, the head and front of that cause at Montaperti, when in all Tuscany only Lucca remained free, and the Florentine refugees built the loggia in front of S. Friano, there the Ghibellines of Tuscany proposed to destroy utterly and for ever the City of the Lily, and for this cause Conte Giordano and the rest caused a council to be held at Empoli; and so it happened. Now Conte Giordano, Villani tells us, was sent for by King Manfred to Apulia, and there was proclaimed as his vicar and captain, Conte Guido Novello of the Conti Guidi of Casentino, who had forsaken the rest of the family, which stood for the Guelph cause. This man was eager to fling every Guelph out of Tuscany. There were assembled at that council all the cities round about, and the Conti Guidi and the Conti Alberti, and those of Santaflora and the Ubaldini; and these were all agreed that for the sake of the Ghibelline cause Florence must be destroyed, “and reduced to open villages, so that there might remain to her no renown or fame or power.” It was then that Farinata degli Uberti, though a Ghibelline and an exile, rose to oppose this design, saying that if there remained no other, whilst he lived he would defend the city, even with his sword. Then, says Villani, “Conte Giordano, seeing what manner of man he was, and of how great authority, and how the Ghibelline party might be broken up and come to blows, abandoned the design and took new counsel, so that by one good man and citizen our city of Florence was saved from so great fury, destruction, and ruin.” But Florence was ever forgetful of her greatest sons, and Farinata’s praise was not found in her mouth, but in that of her greatest exile, who, finding him in his fiery tomb, wishes him rest.

Page 99

“Deh se riposi mai vostra semenza
Prega io lui.”

To-day, however, in Empoli the long days are unbroken by the whisperings from any council; and as though to mark the fact that all are friends at last, if you come to her at all, you will sleep at the Aquila Nera in the street of the Lily; Guelph and Ghibelline hate no more. And as though to prove to man, ever more mindful of war than peace, that it is only the works of love after all that abide for ever, in Empoli at least scarcely anything remains from the old beloved days save the churches, and, best of all, the pictures that were painted for them.

You pass the Church of S. Maria a Ripa just before you enter the city by the beautiful Porta Pisana, but though you may find some delightful works of della Robbia ware there, especially a S. Lucia, it is in the Collegiata di S. Andrea in the lovely Piazza Farinata degli Uberti, that most of the works have been gathered in some of the rooms of the old college. The church itself is very interesting, with its beautiful facade in the manner of the Badia at Fiesole, where you may see carved on either side of the great door the head of S. Andrea and of St. John Baptist.

In the Baptistry, however, comes your first surprise, a beautiful fresco, a Pieta attributed to Masolino da Panicale, where Christ is laid in the tomb by Madonna and St. John, while behind rises the Cross, on which hangs a scourge of knotted chords. And then in the second chapel on the right is a lovely Sienese Madonna, and a strange fresco on the left wall of men taming bulls.

In the gallery itself a few lovely things have been gathered together, of which certainly the finest are the angels of Botticini, two children winged and crowned with roses, dressed in the manner of the fifteenth century, with purpled skirts and slashed sleeves powdered with flowers, who bow before the S. Sebastian of Rossellino. Two other works attributed to Botticini, certainly not less lovely, are to be found here: an Annunciation in the manner of his master Verrocchio, where Mary sits, a delicate white girl, under a portico into which Gabriele has stolen at sunset and found her at prayer; far away the tall cypresses are black against the gold of the sky, and in the silence it almost seems as though we might overhear the first Angelus and the very message from the angel's lips. And if this is the Annunciation as it happened long ago in Tuscany, in heaven the angels danced for sure, thinking of our happiness, as Botticini knew; and so he has painted those seven angels playing various instruments, while about their feet he has strewn a song of songs. A S. Andrea and St. John Baptist in a great fifteenth-century altar are also given to him, while below you may see S. Andrea's crucifixion, the Last Supper, and Salome bringing the head of St. John Baptist to Herodias at her supper with Herod. Some fine della Robbia fragments and a beautiful relief of the Madonna and

Page 100

Child by Mino da Fiesole are among the rest of the treasures of the Collegiata, where you may find much that is merely old or curious. Other churches there are in Empoli, S. Stefano, for instance, with a Madonna and two angels, given to Masolino, and the marvellously lovely Annunciation by Bernardo Rossellino; and S. Maria di Fuori, with its beautiful loggia, but they will not hold you long. The long white road calls you; already far away you seem to see the belfries of Florence there, where they look into Arno, for the very water at your feet has held in its bosom the fairest tower in the world, whiter than a lily, rosier than the roses of the hills. With this dream, dream or remembrance, in your heart, it is not Empoli with its brown country face that will entice you from the way. And so, a little weary at last for the shadows of the great city, it was with a sort of impatience I trudged the dusty highway, eager for every turn of the road that might bring the tall towers, far and far away though they were, into sight. Somewhat in this mood, still early in the morning, I passed through Pontormo, the birthplace of the sixteenth-century painter Jacopo Carrucci, who has his name from this little town. Two or three pictures that he painted, a lovely font of the fourteenth century in the Church of S. Michele Arcangiolo, called for no more than a halt, for there, still far away before me, were the hills, the hills that hid Florence herself.

It was already midday when I came to the little city of Montelupo at the foot of these hills, and, in front of a beautiful avenue of plane trees, to the trattoria, a humble place enough, and full at that hour of drivers and countrymen, but quite sufficient for my needs, for I found there food, a good wine, and courtesy. Later, in the afternoon, climbing the stony street across Pesa, I came to the Church of S. Giovanni Evangelista, and there in the sweet country silence was Madonna with her Son and four Saints, by some pupil of Sandro Botticelli.

It is not any new vision of Madonna you will see in that quiet country church, full of afternoon sunshine and wayside flowers, but the same half-weary maiden of whom Botticelli has told us so often, whose honour is too great for her, whose destiny is more than she can bear. Already she has been overwhelmed by our praise and petitions; she has closed her eyes, she has turned away her head, and while the Jesus Parvulus lifts his tiny hands in blessing, she is indifferent, holding Him languidly, as though but half attentive to those priceless words which St. John, with the last light of a smile still lingering round his eyes, notes so carefully in his book. Something of the same eagerness, graver, and more youthful, you may see in the figure of St. Sebastian, who, holding three arrows daintily in his hand, has suddenly looked up at the sound of that Divine childish voice. Two other figures, S. Lorenzo and perhaps S. Roch, listen with a sort of intent sadness there under that splendid portico, where Mary sits on a throne, she who was the carpenter's wife, with so little joy or even surprise. Below, in the predella, you may see certain saints' heads, S. Lorenzo giving alms, the death of S. Lorenzo, the risen Christ.

Page 101

[Illustration: BADIA AL SETTIMO]

But though Montelupo possesses such a treasure as this picture, for me at least the fairest thing within her keeping is the old fortress, ruined now, on her high hill, and the view one may have thence. For, following that stony way which brought me to S. Giovanni, I came at last to the walls of an old fortress, that now houses a few peasants, and turning there saw all the Val d'Arno, from S. Miniato far and far away to the west, to little Vinci on the north, where, as Vasari says, Leonardo was born; while below me, beside Arno, rose the beautiful Villa Ambrogiana, with its four towers at the corners; and then on a hill before me, not far away, a little town nestling round another fortress, maybe less dilapidated than Montelupo, Capraja, that goat which caused Montelupo to be built. For in the days when Florence disputed Val d'Arno and the plains of Empoli with many nobles, the Conti di Capraja lorded it here, and, as the Florentines said:

“Per distruggere questa Capra non ci vuol altro che un Lupo.”

To-day Montelupo is but a village; yet once it was of importance not only as a fortress, for that she ceased to be almost when the Counts of Capraja were broken, and certainly by 1203, when Villani tells us that the Florentines destroyed the place because it would not obey the commonwealth; but as a city of art, or at any rate of a beautiful handicraft. Even to-day the people devote themselves to pottery, but of old it was not merely a matter of commerce, but of beauty and craftsmanship.

It was through a noisy gay crowd of these folk, the young men lounging against the houses, the girls talking, talking together, arm in arm, as they went to and fro before them, with a wonderful sweet air of indifference to those who eyed them so keenly and yet shyly too, and without anything of the brutal humour of a northern village, that in the later afternoon I again sought the highway. And before I had gone a mile upon my road the whole character of the way was changed; no longer was I crossing a great plain, but winding among the hills, while Arno, noisier than before, fled past me in an ever narrower bed among the rocks and buttresses of what soon became little more than a defile between the hills. Though the road was deep in dust, there was shadow under the cypresses beside the way, there was a whisper of wind among the reeds beside the river, and the song of the cicale grew fainter and the hills were touched with light; evening was coming.

And indeed, when at last I had left the splendid villa of Antinori far behind, evening came as I entered Lastra, and by chance taking the wrong road, passing under a most splendid ilex, huge as a temple, I climbed the hill to S. Martino a Gangalandi. Standing there in the pure calm light just after sunset, the whole valley of Florence lay before me. To the left stood Signa, piled on her hill like some fortress of the Middle Age; then Arno, like a road of silver,

Page 102

led past the Villa delle Selve to the great mountain Monte Morello, and there under her last spurs lay Florence herself, clear and splendid like some dream city, her towers and pinnacles, her domes and churches shining in the pure evening light like some delectable city seen in a vision far away, but a reality, and seen at last. Very far off she seemed in that clear light, that presently fading fled away across the mountains before the advance of night, that filled the whole plain with its vague and beautiful shadow.

And so, when morning was come, I went again to S. Martino a Gangalandi, but Florence was hidden in light. In my heart I knew I must seek her at once, that even the fairest things were not fair, since she was hidden away. Not without a sort of reluctance I heard Mass in S. Martino, spent a moment before the beautiful Madonna of that place, a picture of the fifteenth century, and looked upon the fortifications of Brunellesco. Everywhere the women sitting in their doorways were plaiting straw, and presently I came upon a whole factory of this craft, the great courtyard strewn with hats of all shapes, sizes, and colours, drying in the sun. Signa, too, across the river as I passed, seemed to be given up to this business. Then taking the road, hot and dusty, I set out—not by Via Pisana, but by the byways, which seemed shorter—for Florence. For long I went between the vines, in the misty morning, all of silver and gold, till I was weary. And at last houses began to strew the way, herds of goats led by an old man in velveteen and a lad in tatters, one herd after another covered me with dust, or, standing in front of the houses, were milked at the doorways, where still the women, their brown legs naked in the sun, plaited the straw. Then at a turning of the way, as though to confirm me in any fears I might have of the destruction of the city I had come so far to see, a light railway turned into the highway between the houses, where already there was not room for two carts to pass. How may I tell my anger and misery as I passed through that endless suburb, the great hooting engine of the train venting its stench, and smoke, and noise into the very windows of the houses, chasing me down the narrow way, round intricate corners, over tiny piazzas, from the very doors of churches. Yet, utterly weary at last, covered with dust, it was in this brutal contrivance that I sought refuge, and after an hour of agony was set down before the Porta al Prato. The bells were ringing the Angelus of midday when I came into Florence.

X. FLORENCE

Page 103

Florence is like a lily in the midst of a garden gay with wild-flowers; a broken lily that we have tied up and watered and nursed into a semblance of life, an image of ancient beauty—as it were the *memento mori* of that Latin spirit which contrived the Renaissance of mankind. As of old, so to-day, she stands in the plain at the foot of the Apennines, that in their sweetness and strength lend her still something of their nobility. Around her are the hills covered with olive gardens where the corn and the wine and the oil grow together between the iris and the rose; and everywhere on those beautiful hills there are villas among the flowers, real villas such as Alberti describes for us, full of coolness and rest, where a fountain splashes in an old courtyard, and the grapes hang from the pergolas, and the corn is spread in July and beaten with the flail. And since the vista of every street in Florence ends in the country, it is to these hills you find your way very often if your stay be long, fleeing from the city herself, perhaps to hide your disappointment, in the simple joy of country life. More and more as you live in Florence that country life becomes your consolation and your delight: for there abide the old ways and the ancient songs, which you will not find in the city. And indeed the great treasure of Florence is this bright and smiling country in which she lies: the old road to Fiesole, the ways that lead from Settignano to Compiobbi, the path through the woods from S. Martino a Mensola, that smiling church by the wayside, to Vincigliata, to Castel di Poggio, the pilgrimage from Bagno a Ripoli to the Incontro. There, on all those beautiful gay roads, you will pass numberless villas whispering with summer, laughing with flowers; you will see the *contadini* at work in the *poderi*, you will hear the *rispetti* and *stornelli* of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries sung perhaps by some love-sick peasant girl among the olives from sunrise till evening falls. And the ancient ways are not forgotten there, for they still reap with the sickle and sing to the beat of the flail; while the land itself, those places “full of nimble air, in a laughing country of sweet and lovely views, where there is always fresh water, and everything is healthy and pure,” of which Leon Alberti tells us, are still held and cultivated in the old way under the old laws by the *contadino* and his *padrone*. This ancient order, quietness, and beauty, which you may find everywhere in the country round about Florence, is the true Tuscany. The vulgarity of the city, for even in Italy the city life has become insincere, blatant, and for the most part a life of the middle class, seldom reaches an hundred yards beyond the *barriera*: and this is a charm in Florence, for you may so easily look on her from afar. And so, if one comes to her from the country, or returns to her from her own hills, it is ever with a sense of loss, of sadness, of regret: she has lost her soul for the sake of the stranger, she has forgotten the splendid past for an ignoble present, a strangely wearying dream of the future.

Page 104

Yet for all her modern ways, her German beer-houses, her English tea-shops, her noisy trams on Lung' Arno, her air as of a museum, her eagerness to show her contempt for the stranger while she sells him her very soul for money, Florence remains one of the most delightful cities of Italy to visit, to live with, to return to again and again. Yet I for one would never live within her walls if I could help it, nor herd with those barbarian, exclamatory souls who in guttural German or cockney English snort or neigh at the beauties industriously pointed out by a loud-voiced cicerone, quoting in American all the appropriate quotations, Browning before Filippo Lippi, Ruskin in S. Croce, Mrs. Browning at the door of S. Felice, Goethe everywhere.

No, I will live a little way out of the city on the hillside, perhaps towards Settignano, not too far from the pine woods, nor too near the gate. And my garden there shall be a vineyard, bordered with iris, and among the vines shall be a garden of olives, and under the olives there shall be the corn. And the yellow roses will litter the courtyard, and the fountain will be full of their petals, and the red roses will strew the paths, and the white roses will fall upon the threshold; and all day long the bees will linger in the passion-flowers by the window when the mulberry trees have been stripped of leaves, and the lilies of Madonna, before the vines, are tall and like ghosts in the night, the night that is blue and gold, where a few fire-flies linger yet, sailing faintly over the stream, and the song of the cicale is the burden of endless summer.

Then very early in the morning I will rise from my bed under the holy branch of olive, I will walk in my garden before the sun is high, I will look on my beloved city. Yes, I shall look over the near olives across the valley to the hill of cypresses, to the poplars beside Arno that tremble with joy; and first I shall see Torre del Gallo and then S. Miniato, that strange and beautiful place, and at last my eyes will rest on the city herself, beautiful in the mist of morning: first the tower of S. Croce, like a tufted spear; then the tower of Liberty, and that was built for pride; and at last, like a mysterious rose lifted above the city, I shall see the dome, the rosy dome of Brunellesco, beside which, like a slim lily, pale, immaculate as a pure virgin, rises the inviolate Tower of the Lowly, that Giotto built for God. Yes, often I shall thus await the Angelus that the bells of all the villages will answer, and I shall greet the sun and be thankful. Then I shall walk under the olives, I shall weigh the promised grapes, I shall bend the ears of corn here and there, that I may feel their beauty, and I shall bury my face in the roses, I shall watch the lilies turn their heads, I shall pluck the lemons one by one. And the maidens will greet me on their way to the olive gardens, the newly-married, hand in hand with her husband, will smile upon me, she who is heavy with

Page 105

child will give me her blessing, and the children will laugh and peep at me from behind the new-mown hay; and I shall give them greeting. And I shall talk with him who is busy in the vineyard, I shall watch him bare-foot among the grapes, I shall see his wise hands tenderly unfold a leaf or gather up a straying branch, and when I leave him I shall hear him say, "May your bread be blessed to you." Under the myrtles, on a table of stone spread with coarse white linen, such we see in Tuscany, I shall break my fast, and I shall spill a little milk on the ground for thankfulness, and the crumbs I shall scatter too, and a little honey that the bees have given I shall leave for them again.

So I shall go into the city, and one will say to me, "The Signore must have a care, for the sun will be hot, in returning it will be necessary to come under the olives." And I shall laugh in my heart, and say, "Have no fear, then, for the sun will not touch me." And how should I but be glad that the sun will be hot, and how should I but be thankful that I shall come under the olives?

And I shall come into the city by Porta alla Croce for love, because I am but newly returned, and presently through the newer ways I shall come to the oldest of all, Borgo degli Albizzi, where the roofs of the beautiful palaces almost touch, and the way is cool and full of shadow. There, amid all the hurry and bustle of the narrow, splendid street, I shall think only of old things for a time, I shall remember the great men who founded and established the city, I shall recall the great families of Florence. Here in this Borgo the Albizzi built their towers when they came from Arezzo, giving the city more than an hundred officers, Priori and Gonfalonieri, till Cosimo de' Medici thrust them out with the help of Eugenius IV. The grim, scornful figure of Rinaldo seems to haunt the old palace still. How often in those September days must he have passed to and fro between his palace and the Bargello close by, the Palace of the Podesta: but the people, fearing they knew not what, barricaded the place so that Rinaldo was persuaded to consult with the Pope in S. Maria Novella. At dawn he dismissed his army, and remained alone. Then the friends of Cosimo in exile went to the Pope and thanked him, thus, as some have thought, surprising him into an abandonment of Rinaldo. However that may be, Rinaldo was expelled, leaving the city with these words, "He is a blind man without a guide, who trusts the word of a Pope." And what figure haunts Palazzo Altovite, the home of that fierce Ghibelline house loved by Frederick II, if not that hero who expelled the Duke of Athens. Palazzo Pazzi and Palazzo Nonfinito at the Canto de' Pazzi where the Borgo degli Albizzi meets Via del Proconsolo, brings back to me that madman who first set the Cross upon the walls of Jerusalem in 1099, and who for this cause was given some stones from Christ's sepulchre by Godfrey de Bouillon, which

Page 106

he brought to Florence and presented to the Republic. They were placed in S. Reparata, which stood where the Duomo now is, and, as it is said, the “new fire” was struck from them every Holy Saturday, and the clergy, in procession, brought that sacred flame to the other churches of the city. And the Pazzi, because of their gift, gave the guard of honour in this procession: and this they celebrated with much pomp among themselves; till at last they obtained permission to build a *carro*, which should be lighted at the door of S. Reparata by some machine of their invention, and drawn by four white oxen to their houses. And even to this day you may see this thing, and to this day the car is borne to their canto. But above all I see before that “unfinished” palace the ruined hopes of those who plotted to murder Lorenzo de’ Medici with his brother at the Easter Mass in the Duomo. Even now, amid the noise of the street, I seem to hear the shouting of the people, *Vive le Palle, Morte ai Pazzi*.

So I shall come into the Proconsolo beside the Bargello, where so many great and splendid people are remembered, and she, too, who is so beautiful that for her sake we forget everything else, Vanna degli Albizzi, who married Lorenzo de’ Tornabuoni, whom Verrocchio carved and Ghirlandajo painted. Then I shall follow the Via del Corso past S. Margherita, close to Dante’s mythical home, into Via Calzaioli, the busiest street of the city, and I shall think of the strange difference between these three great ways, Via del Proconsolo, Via Calzaioli, and Via Tornabuoni, which mark and divide the most ancient city. I shall turn toward Or San Michele, where on St. John’s Day the banners of the guilds are displayed above the statues, and for a little time I shall look again on Verrocchio’s Christ and St. Thomas. Then in this pilgrimage of remembrance I shall pass up Via Calzaioli, past the gay cool *caffè* of Gilli, into the Piazza del Duomo. And again, I shall fear lest the tower may fall like a lopped lily, and I shall wish that Giotto had made it ever so little bigger at the base. Then I shall pass to the right past the Misericordia, where for sure I shall meet some of the *confraternita*, past the great gazing statue of Brunellesco, till, at the top of Via del Proconsolo, I shall turn to look at the Duomo, which, seen from there, seems like a great Greek cross under a dome, that might cover the world. And so I shall pass round the apse of the Cathedral till I come to the door of the Cintola, where Nanni di Banco has marvellously carved Madonna in an almond-shaped glory: and this is one of the fairest things in Florence. And I shall go on my way, past the Gate of Paradise to the open door of the Baptistry, and returning find the tomb of Baldassare Cossa, soldier and antipope, carved by Donatello: and here, in the most ancient church of Florence, I shall thank St. John for my return.

Page 107

Out in the Piazza once more, I shall turn into Borgo S. Lorenzo, and follow it till I come to Piazza di S. Lorenzo, with its bookstalls where Browning found that book, "small quarto size, part print, part manuscript," which told him the story of "The Ring and the Book." There I shall look once more on the ragged, rugged front of S. Lorenzo, and entering, find the tomb of Piero de' Medici, made by Verrocchio, and thinking awhile of those other tombs where Michelangelo hard by carved his Night and Day, Twilight and Dawn, I shall find my way again into the Piazza del Duomo, and, following Via Cerretani, that busy street, I shall come at last into Piazza S. Maria Novella, and there on the north I shall see again the bride of Michelangelo, S. Maria Novella of the Dominicans.

Perhaps I shall rest there a little before Duccio's Madonna on her high altar,[85] and linger under the grave, serene work of Ghirlandajo; but it may be the sky will be too fair for any church to hold me, so that passing down the way of the Beautiful Ladies, and taking Via dei Serpi on my left, I shall come into Via Tornabuoni, that smiling, lovely way just above the beautiful Palazzo Antinori, whence I may see Palazzo Strozzi, but without the great lamp at the corner where the flowers are heaped and there are always so many loungers. Indeed, the whole street is full of flowers and sunshine and cool shadow, and in some way, I know not what, it remains the most beautiful gay street in Florence, where past and present have met and are friends. And then I know if I follow this way I shall come to Lung' Arno,—I may catch a glimpse of it even from the corner of Via Porta Rossa over the cabs, past the Column of S. Trinita.

[Illustration: PONTE VECCHIO]

Presently, in the afternoon, I shall follow Via Porta Rossa, with its old palaces of the Torrigiani (now, Hotel Porta Rossa), and the Davanzati into Mercato Nuovo, where, because it is Thursday, the whole place will be smothered with flowers and children, little laughing rascals as impudent as Lippo Lippi's Angiolini, who play about the Tacca and splash themselves with water. And so I shall pass at last into Piazza della Signoria, before the marvellous palace of the people with its fierce, proud tower, and I shall stand on the spot before the fountains where Humanism avenged itself on Puritanism, where Savonarola, that Ferrarese who burned the pictures and would have burned the city, was himself burned in the fire he had invoked. And I shall look once more on the Loggia de' Lanzi, and see Cellini's young *contadino* masquerading as Perseus, and in my heart I shall remember the little wax figure he made for a model, now in Bargello, which is so much more beautiful than this young giant. So, under the cool cloisters of Palazzo degli Uffizi I shall come at last on to Lung' Arno, where it is very quiet, and no horses may pass, and the trams are a long way off. And I shall lift up my eyes and behold once

Page 108

more the hill of gardens across Arno, with the Belvedere just within the old walls, and S. Miniato, like a white and fragile ghost in the sunshine, and La Bella Villanella couched like a brown bird under the cypresses above the grey olives in the wind and the sun. And something in the gracious sweep of the hills, in the gentle nobility of that holy mountain which Michelangelo has loved and defended, which Dante Alighieri has spoken of, which Gianozzo Manetti has so often climbed, will bring the tears to my eyes, and I shall turn away towards Ponte Vecchio, the oldest and most beautiful of the bridges, where the houses lead one over the river, and the little shops of the jewellers still sparkle and smile with trinkets. And in the midst of the bridge I shall wait awhile and look on Arno. Then I shall cross the bridge and wander upstream towards Porta S. Niccolo, that gaunt and naked gate in the midst of the way, and there I shall climb through the gardens up the steep hill

“... Per salire al monte
Dove siede la chiesa...”

to the great Piazzale, and so to the old worn platform before S. Miniato itself, under the strange glowing mosaics of the facade: and, standing on the graves of dead Florentines, I shall look down on the beautiful city.

Marvellously fair she is on a summer evening as seen from that hill of gardens, Arno like a river of gold before her, leading over the plain lost in the farthest hills. Behind her the mountains rise in great amphitheatres,—Fiesole on the one side, like a sentinel on her hill; on the other, the Apennines, whose gesture, so noble, precise, and splendid, seems to point ever towards some universal sovereignty, some perfect domination, as though this place had been ordained for the resurrection of man. Under this mighty symbol of annunciation lies the city, clear and perfect in the lucid light, her towers shining under the serene evening sky. Meditating there alone for a long time in the profound silence of that hour, the whole history of this city that witnessed the birth of the modern world, the resurrection of the gods, will come to me.

Out of innumerable discords, desolations, hopes unfilled, everlasting hatred and despair, I shall see the city rise four square within her rosy walls between the river and the hills; I shall see that lonely, beautiful, and heroic figure, Matilda the great Countess; I shall suffer the dream that consumes her, and watch Germany humble in the snow. And the Latin cause will tower a red lily beside Arno; one by one the great nobles will go by with cruel alien faces, prisoners, to serve the Lily or to die. Out of their hatred will spring that mongrel cause of Guelph and Ghibelline, and I shall see the Amidei slay Buondelmonte Buondelmonti. Through the year of victories I shall rejoice, when Pistoja falls, when Siena falls, when Volterra is taken, and Pisa forced to make peace. Then in tears I shall see the flight at Monteaperti, I shall hear

Page 109

the thunder of the horses, and with hate in my heart I shall search for Bocca degli Abati, the traitor, among the ten thousand dead. And in the council I shall be by when they plot the destruction of the city, and I shall be afraid: then I shall hear the heroic, scornful words of Farinata degli Uberti, when in his pride he spared Florence for the sake of his birth. And I shall watch the banners at Campaldino, I shall hear the intoxicating words of Corso Donati, I shall look into his very face and read the truth.

And at dawn I shall walk with Dante, and I shall know by the softness of his voice when Beatrice passeth, but I shall not dare to lift my eyes. I shall walk with him through the city, I shall hear Giotto speak to him of St. Francis, and Arnolfo will tell us of his dreams. And at evening Petrarch will lead me into the shadow of S. Giovanni and tell me of Madonna Laura. But it will be a morning of spring when I meet Boccaccio, ah, in S. Maria Novella, and as we come into the sunshine I shall laugh and say, "Tell me a story." And Charles of Valois will pass by, who sent Dante on that long journey; and Henry VII, for whom he had prayed; and I shall hear the trumpets of Montecatini, and I shall understand the hate Uguccione had for Castracani. And I shall watch the entry of the Duke of Athens, and I shall see his cheek flush at the thought of a new tyranny. Then for the first time I shall hear the sinister, fortunate name Medici. Under the banners of the Arti I shall hear the rumour of their names, Silvestro who urged on the Ciompi, Vieri who once made peace; nor will the death of Gian Galeazzo of Milan, nor the tragedy of Pisa, hinder their advent, for I shall see Giovanni di Bicci de' Medici proclaimed Gonfaloniere of the city. Then they will troop by more splendid than princes, the universal bankers, lords of Florence: Cosimo the hard old man, Pater Patriae, the greatest of his race; Piero, the weakling; Lorenzo il Magnifico, tyrant and artist; and over his shoulder I shall see the devilish, sensual face of Savonarola. And there will go by Giuliano, the lover of Simonetta; Piero the exile; Giovanni the mighty pope, Leo X; Giulio the son of Guiliamo, Clement VII; Ippolito the Cardinal, Alessandro the cruel, Lorenzino his assassin, Cosimo l'Invitto, Grand Duke of Tuscany, bred in a convent and mourned for ever.

So they pass by, and their descendants follow after them, even to poor, unhappy, learned Gian Gastone, the last of his race.

And around them throng the artists; yes, I shall see them all. Angelico will lead me into his cell and show me the meaning of the Resurrection. With Lippo Lippi I shall play with the children, and talk with Lucrezia Buti at the convent gate; Ghirlandajo will take me where Madonna Vanna is, and with Baldovinetti I shall watch the dawn. And Botticelli will lead me into a grove apart: I shall see the beauty of those three women who pass, who pass like a season, and are neither glad nor sorry; and with him I shall

Page 110

understand the joy of Venus, whose son was love, and the tears of Madonna, whose Son was Love also. And I shall hear the voice of Leonardo; and he will play upon his lyre of silver, that lyre in the shape of a horse's head which he made for Sforza of Milan; and I shall see him touch the hands of Monna Lisa. And I shall see the statue of snow that Buonarotti made; I shall find him under S. Miniato, and I shall weep with him.

So I shall dream in the sunset. The Angelus will be ringing from all the towers, I shall have celebrated my return to the city that I have loved. The splendour of the dying day will lie upon her; in that enduring and marvellous hour, when in the sound of every bell you may find the names that are in your heart, I shall pass again through the gardens, I shall come into the city when the little lights before Madonna will be shining at the street corners, and the streets will be full of the evening, where the river, stained with fading gold, steals into the night to the sea. And under the first stars I shall find my way to my hillside. On that white country road the dust of the day will have covered the vines by the way, the cypresses will be white half-way to their tops, in the whispering olives the cicale will still be singing; as I pass every threshold some dog will rouse, some horse will stamp in the stable, or an ox stop munching in his stall. In the far sky, marvellous with infinite stars, the moon will sail like a little platter of silver, like a piece of money new from the mint, like a golden rose in a mirror of silver. Long and long ago the sun will have set, but when I come to the gate I shall go under the olives; though I shall be weary I shall go by the longest way, I shall pass by the winding path, I shall listen for the whisper of the corn. And I shall beat at my gate, and one will say *Chi e*, and I shall make answer. So I shall come into my house, and the triple lights will be lighted in the garden, and the table will be spread. And there will be one singing in the vineyard, and I shall hear, and there will be one walking in the garden, and I shall know.

FOOTNOTES:

[85] Alas, this too has now become as nothing and its place knows it no more.—E.H.

XI. FLORENCE

PIAZZA DELLA SIGNORIA AND PALAZZO VECCHIO

In every ancient city of the world, cities that in themselves for the most part have been nations, one may find some spot holy or splendid that instantly evokes an image of that of which it is a symbol,—which sums up, as it were, in itself all the sanctity, beauty, and splendour of her fame, in whose name there lives even yet something of the glory that is dead. It is so no longer; in what confused street or shapeless square shall I find hidden the soul of London, or in what name then shall I sum up the lucid restless life of Paris?

But if I name the Acropolis, all the pale beauty of Athens will stir in my heart; and when I speak the word Capitolium, I seem to hear the thunder of the legions, to see the very face of Caesar, to understand the dominion and majesty of Rome.

Page 111

Something of this power of evocation may still be found in the Piazza della Signoria of Florence: all the love that founded the city, the beauty that has given her fame, the immense confusion that is her history, the hatred that has destroyed her, lingers yet in that strange and lovely place where Palazzo Vecchio stands like a violated fortress, where the Duke of Athens was expelled the city, where the Ciompi rose against the Ghibellines, where Jesus Christ was proclaimed King of the Florentines, where Savonarola, was burned, and Alessandro de' Medici made himself Duke.

It is not any great and regular space you come upon in the Piazza della Signoria, such as the huge empty Place de la Concorde of Paris, but one that is large enough for beauty, and full of the sweet variety of the city; it is the symbol of Florence—a beautiful symbol.

In the morning the whole Piazza is full of sunlight, and swarming with people: there, is a stall for newspapers; here, a lemonade merchant dispenses his sweet drinks. Everyone is talking; at the corner of Via Calzaioli a crowd has assembled, a crowd that moves and seems about to dissolve, that constantly re-forms itself without ever breaking up. On the benches of the loggia men lie asleep in the shadow, and children chase one another among the statues. Everywhere and from all directions cabs pass with much cracking of whips and hallooing. There stand two Carabinieri in their splendid uniforms, surveying this noisy world; an officer passes with his wife, leading his son by the hand; you may see him lift his sword as he steps on the pavement. A group of tourists go by, urged on by a gesticulating guide; he is about to show them the statues in the loggia; they halt under the Perseus. He begins to speak of it, while the children look up at him as though to catch what he is saying in that foreign tongue.

And surely the Piazza, which has seen so many strange and splendid things, may well tolerate this also; it is so gay, so full of life. Very fair she seems under the sunlight, picturesque too, with her buildings so different and yet so harmonious. On the right the gracious beauty of the Loggia de' Lanzi; then before you the lofty, fierce old Palazzo Vecchio; and beside it the fountains play in the farther Piazza. Cosimo I rides by as though into Siena, while behind him rises the palace of the Uguccioni, which Folli made; and beside you the Calzaioli ebbs and flows with its noisy life, as of old the busiest street of the city.

The Palazzo Vecchio, peaceful enough now, but still with the fierce gesture of war stands on one side, facing the Piazza, a fortress of huge stones four storeys high—the last, thrust out from the wall and supported by arches on brackets of stone, as though crowning the palace itself. It stands almost four-square, and above rises the beautiful tower, the highest tower in the city, with a gallery similar to the last storey of the palace, and above

Page 112

a loggia borne by four pillars, from which spring the great arches of the canopy that supports the spire; and whereas the battlements of the palazzo are square and Guelph, those of the tower are Ghibelline in the shape of the tail of the swallow. Set, not in the centre of the square, nor made to close it, but on one side, it was thus placed, it is said, in order to avoid the burned houses of the Uberti, who had been expelled the city. However this may be, and its position is so fortunate that it is not likely to be due to any such chance, Arnolfo di Cambio began it in February 1299, taking as his model, so some have thought, the Rocca of the Conti Guidi of the Casentino, which Lapo his father had built. Under the arches of the fourth storey are painted the coats of the city and its gonfaloni. And there you may see the most ancient device of Florence, the lily argent on a field gules; the united coats gules and argent of Florence and Fiesole in 1010; the coat of Guelph Florence, a lily gules on a field argent; and, among the rest, the coat of Charles of Anjou, the lilies or on a field azure.

[Illustration: LOGGIA DE' LANZI]

On the platform or ringhiera before the great door, the priori watched the greater festas, and made their proclamations, before the Loggia de' Lanzi was built in 1387; and here in 1532 the last Signoria of the Republic proclaimed Alessandro de' Medici first Duke of Florence, in front of the Judith and Holofernes of Donatello, whose warning went unheeded. And indeed, that group, part of the plunder that the people found in Palazzo Riccardi, in the time of Piero de' Medici, who sought to make himself tyrant, once stood beside the great gate of Palazzo Vecchio, whence it was removed at the command of Alessandro, who placed there instead Bandinelli's feeble Hercules and Cacus. Opposite to it Michelangelo's David once stood, till it was removed in our own time to the Accademia, where it looks like a cast.

Over the great door where of old was set the monogram of Christ, you may read still REX REGUM ET DOMINUS DOMINANTIUM, and within the gate is a court most splendid and lovely, built after the design of Arnolfo, and once supported by his pillars of stone, but now the columns of Michelozzo, made in 1450, and covered with stucco decoration in the sixteenth century, form the cortile in which, over the fountain of Vasari, Verrocchio's lovely Boy Playing with the Dolphin ever half turns in his play. Altogether lovely in its naturalism, its humorous grace, Verrocchio made it for Lorenzo Magnifico, who placed it in his gardens at Careggi, whence it was brought here by Cosimo I.

Page 113

Passing through that old palace, up the great staircase into the Salone del Cinquecento, where Savonarola was tried, with the Cappella di S. Bernardo, where he made his last communion, and at last up the staircase into the tower, where he was tortured and imprisoned, it is ever of that mad pathetic figure, self-condemned and self-murdered, that you think, till at last, coming out of the Palazzo, you seek the spot of his awful death in the Piazza. Fanatic puritan as he was, vainer than any Medici, it is difficult to understand how he persuaded the Florentines to listen to his eloquence, spoiled as it must have been for them by the Ferrarese dialect. How could a people who were the founders of the modern world, the creators of modern culture, allow themselves to be baffled by a fanatic friar prophesying judgment? Yet something of a peculiar charm, a force that we miss in the sensual and almost devilish face we see in his portrait, he must have possessed, for it is said that Lorenzo desired his company; and even though we are able to persuade ourselves that it was for other reasons than to enjoy his friendship, we have yet to explain the influence he exercised over Sandro Botticelli and Pico della Mirandola, whose lives he changed altogether. In the midst of a people without a moral sense he appears like the spirit of denial. He was kicking against the pricks, he was guilty of the sin against the light, and whether his aim was political or religious, or maybe both, he failed. It is said he denied Lorenzo absolution, that he left him without a word at the brink of the grave but when he himself came to die by the horrible, barbaric means he had invoked in a boast, he did not show the fortitude of the Magnificent. Full of every sort of rebellion and violence, he made anarchy in Florence, and scoffed at the Holy See, while he was a guest of the one and the officer of the other. His bonfires of "vanities," as he called them, were possibly as disastrous for Florence as the work of the Puritan was for England; for while he burned the pictures, they sold them to the Jews. He is dead, and has become one of the bores of history; and while Americans leave their cards on the stone that marks the place of his burning, the Florentines appear to have forgotten him. Peace to his ashes!

As you enter the Loggia de' Lanzi, gay with children now, once the lounge of the Swiss Guard, whose barracks were not far away, you wonder who can have built so gay, so happy a place beside the fortress of the Signoria. Yet, in truth, it was for the Priori themselves that loggia was built, though not by Orcagna as it is said, to provide, perhaps, a lounge in summer for the fathers of the city, and for a place of proclamation that all Florence might hear the laws they had made. Yes, and to-day, too, do they not proclaim the tombola where once they announced a victory? Even now, in spite of forgotten greatness, it is still a garden of statues. Looking ever

Page 114

over the Piazza stands the Perseus of Cellini, with the head of Medusa held up to the multitude, the sword still gripped in his hand. It is the masterpiece of one who, like all the greatest artists of the Renaissance—Giotto, Orcagna, Leonardo, Michelangelo, Raphael—did not confine himself to one art, but practised many. And though it would be unjust to compare such a man as Cellini with the greatest of all, yet he was great not only as a sculptor and a goldsmith, but as a man of letters and as a man of the world. His Perseus, a little less than a demigod, is indeed not so lovely as the wax model he made for it, which is now in the Bargello; but in the gesture with which he holds out the severed head from him, in the look of secret delight that is already half remorseful for all that dead beauty, in the heroic grace with which he stands there after the murder, the dead body marvellously fallen at his feet, Cellini has proved himself the greatest sculptor of his time. That statue cost him dear enough, as he tells you in his Memoirs, but, as Gautier said, it is worth all it cost.

On the pedestal you may see the deliverance of Andromeda; but the finest of these reliefs has been taken to the Bargello. The only other bronze here is the work of Donatello—a Judith and Holofernes, under the arch towards the Uffizi. It is Donatello's only large bronze group, and was probably designed for the centre piece of a fountain, the mattress on which Holofernes has fallen having little spouts for water. Judith stands over her victim, who is already dead, her sword lifted to strike again; and you may see by her face that she will strike if it be necessary. Beneath you read—"Exemplum salut. publ. cives posuere, MCCCCXV." Poor as the statue appears in its present position, the three bronze reliefs of the base gain here what they must lose in the midst of a fountain, yet even they too are unfortunate. Indeed, very few statues of this sort were made by the sculptors of the Renaissance; for the most part they confined themselves to single figures and to groups in relief: even Michelangelo but rarely attempted the "freestanding group." It is, however, to such a work we come in the splendidly composed Rape of the Sabines by Giovanni da Bologna in the Loggia itself. Spoiled a little by its too laboured detail, its chief fault lies in the fact that it is top-heavy, the sculptor having placed the mass of the group so high that the base seems unsubstantial and unbalanced. Bologna's other group here, Hercules and Nessus, which once stood at the foot of the Ponte Vecchio, is dramatic and well composed, but the forms are feeble and even insignificant. The antique group of Ajax dragging the body of Patrocles, is not a very important copy of some great work, and it is much restored: it was found in a vineyard near Rome.

Page 115

The great fountain which plays beside the Palazzo, where of old the houses of the Uberti stood, is rich and grandiose perhaps, but in some unaccountable way adds much to the beauty of the Piazza. How gay and full of life it is even yet, that splendid and bitter place, that in its beauty and various, everlasting life seems to stand as the symbol of this city, so scornful even in the midst of the overwhelming foreigner who has turned her into a museum, a vast cemetery of art. Only here you may catch something of the old life that is not altogether passed away. Still, in spite of your eyes, you must believe there are Florentines somewhere in the city, that they are still as in Dante's day proud and wise and easily angry, scornful too, a little turbulent, not readily curbed, but full of ambition—great nobles, great merchants, great bankers. Does such an one never come to weep over dead Florence in this the centre of her fame, the last refuge of her greatness, in the night, perhaps, when none may see his tears, when all is hushed that none may mark his sorrow?

[Illustration: WAX MODEL FOR THE PERSEUS IN THE BARGELLO

Benvenuto Cellini

Alinari]

It was past midnight when once more I came out of the narrow ways, almost empty at that hour, when every footfall resounds between the old houses, into the old Piazza to learn this secret. Far away in the sky the moon swung like a censer, filling the place with a fragile and lovely light. Standing there in the Piazza, quite deserted now save for some cloaked figure who hurried away up the Calzaioli, and two Carabinieri who stood for a moment at the Uffizi corner and then turned under the arches, I seemed to understand something of the spirit that built that marvellous fortress, that thrust that fierce tower into the sky;—yes, surely at this hour some long dead Florentine must venture here to console the living, who, for sure, must be gay so sadly and with so much regret.

In the Loggia de' Lanzi the moonlight fell among the statues, and in that fairy light I seemed to see in those ghostly still figures of marble and bronze some strange fantastic parable, the inscrutable prophecy of the scornful past. Gian Bologna's Sabine woman, was she not Florence struggling in the grip of the modern vandal; Cellini's Perseus with Medusa's head, has it not in truth turned the city to stone?

The silence was broken; something had awakened in the Piazza: perhaps a bird fluttered from the battlements of the Palazzo, perhaps it was the city that turned in her sleep. No, there it was again. It was a human voice close beside me: it seemed to be weeping.

I looked around: all was quiet. I saw nothing, only there at the corner a little light flickered before a shrine; and yes, something was moving there, someone who was



weeping. Softly, softly over the stones I made my way to that little shrine of Madonna at the street corner, and I found, ah! no proud and scornful noble mourning over dead Florence, but an old woman, ragged and alone, prostrate under some unimaginable sorrow, some unappeasable regret.

Page 116

Did she hear as of old—that Virgin with narrow half-open eyes and the sidelong look? God, I know not if she heard or no. Perhaps I alone have heard in all the world.

XII. FLORENCE

THE BAPTISTERY—THE DUOMO—THE CAMPANILE—THE OPERA DEL DUOMO

On coming into the Piazza del Duomo, perhaps from the light and space of the Lung' Arno or from the largeness of the Piazza della Signoria, one is apt to think of it as too small for the buildings which it holds, as wanting in a certain spaciousness such as the Piazza of St. Peter at Rome certainly possesses, or in the light of the meadow of Pisa; and yet this very smallness, only smallness when we consider the great buildings set there so precisely, gives it an element of beauty lacking in the great Piazza of Rome and in Pisa too—a certain delicate colour and shadow and a sense of nearness, of homeliness almost; for the shadow of the dome falls right across the city itself every morning and evening. And indeed the Piazza del Duomo of Florence is still the centre of the life of the city, and though to some this may be matter for regret, I have found in just that a sort of consolation for the cabs which Ruskin hated so, for the trams which he never saw; for just these two necessary unfortunate things bring one so often there that of all the cathedrals of Italy that of Florence must be best known to the greatest number of people at all hours of the day. And this fact, evil and good working together for life's sake, makes the Duomo a real power in the city, so that everyone is interested, often passionately interested, in it: it has a real influence on the lives of the citizens, so that nothing in the past or even to-day has ever been attempted with regard to it without winning the people's leave. Yet it is not the Duomo alone that thus lives in the hearts of the Florentines, but the whole Piazza. There they have established their trophies, and set up their gifts, and lavished their treasure. It was built for all, and it belongs to all; it is the centre of the city.

This enduring vitality of a place so old, so splendid, and so beloved, is, I think, particularly manifest in the Church of S. Giovanni Battista, the Baptistery. It is the oldest building in Florence, built probably with the stones from the Temple of Mars about which Villani tells us, and almost certainly in its place; every Florentine child, fortunate at least in this, is still brought there for baptism, and receives its name in the place where Dante was christened, where Ippolito Buondelmonti first saw Dianora de' Bardi, where Donatello has laboured, which Michelangelo has loved.

Page 117

Built probably in the sixth or seventh century, it was Arnolfo di Cambio who covered it with marble in 1288, building also three new doorways where before there had been but one, that on the west side, which was then closed. The mere form, those octagonal walls which, so it is said, the Lombards brought into Italy, go to show that the church was used as a Baptistry from the first, though Villani speaks of it as the Duomo; and indeed till 1550 it had the aspect of such a church as the Pantheon in Rome, in that it was open to the sky, so that the rain and the sunlight have fallen on the very floor trodden by so many generations. Humble and simple enough as we see it to-day before the gay splendour of the new facade of the Duomo, it has yet those great treasures which the Duomo cannot boast, the bronze doors of Andrea Pisano and of Ghiberti.

[Illustration: PIAZZA DEL DUOMO]

Over the south doorway there was placed in the end of the sixteenth century a group by Vincenzo Danti, said to be his best work, the Beheading of St. John Baptist; and under are the gates of Andrea Pisano carved in twenty bronze panels with the story of St. John and certain virtues: and around the gate Ghiberti has twined an exquisite pattern of leaves and fruits and birds, it is strange to find Ghiberti's work thus completing that of Andrea Pisano, who, as it is said, had Giotto to help him, till we understand that originally these southern gates stood where now are the "Gates of Paradise" before the Duomo. Standing there as they used to do before Ghiberti moved them, they won for Andrea not only the admiration of the people, but the freedom of the city. To-day we come to them with the praise of Ghiberti ringing in our ears, so that in our hurry to see everything we almost pass them by; but in their simpler, and, as some may think, more sincere way, they are as lovely as anything Ghiberti ever did, and in comparing them with the great gates that supplanted them, it may be well to remind ourselves that each has its merit in its own fashion. If the doors of Andrea won the praise of the whole city, it was with an ever-growing excitement that Florence proclaimed a public competition, open to all the sculptors of Italy, for the work that remained, those two doors on the north and east. Ghiberti, at that time in Rimini at the court of Carlo Malatesta, at the entreaty of his father returned to Florence, and was one of the two artists out of the thirty-four who competed, to be chosen for the task: the other was Filippo Brunellesco. You may see the two panels they made in the Bargello side by side on the wall. The subject is the Sacrifice of Isaac, and Ghiberti, with the real instinct of the sculptor, has altogether outstripped Brunellesco, not only in the harmony of his composition, but in the simplicity of his intention. Brunellesco seems to have understood this, and, perhaps liking the lad who was but twenty-two years old, withdrew from the contest. However this may be, Ghiberti

Page 118

began the work at once, and finished the door on the north side of the Baptistery in ten years. There, amid a framework of exquisite foliage, leaves, birds, and all kinds of life, he has set the gospel story in twenty panels, beginning with the Annunciation and ending with the Pentecost; and around the gate he has set the four Evangelists and the doctors of the Church and the prophets. Above you may see the group of a pupil of Verrocchio, the Preaching of St. John.

In looking on these beautiful and serene works, we may already notice an advance on the work of Andrea Pisano in a certain ease and harmony, a richness and variety, that were beyond the older master. Ghiberti has already begun to change with his genius the form that has come down to him, to expand it, to break down its limitations so that he may express himself, may show us the very visions he has seen. And the success of these gates with the people certainly confirmed him in the way he was going. In the third door, that facing the Duomo, which Michelangelo has said was worthy to be the gate of Paradise, it is really a new art we come upon, the subtle rhythms and perspectives of a sort of pictorial sculpture, that allows him to carve here in such low relief that it is scarcely more than painting, there in the old manner, the old manner but changed, full of a sort of exuberance which here at any rate is beauty. The ten panels which Ghiberti thus made in his own way are subjects from the Old Testament: the Creation of Adam and Eve, the story of Cain and Abel, of Noah, of Abraham and Isaac, of Jacob and Esau, of Joseph, of Moses on Sinai, of Joshua before Jericho, of David and Goliath, of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. At his death in 1455 they were unfinished, and a host of sculptors, including Brunellesco and Paolo Uccello, are said to have handled the work, Antonio del Pollajuolo being credited with the quail in the lower frame. Over the door stands the beautiful work of Sansovino, the Baptism of Christ.

It is with a certain sense of curiosity that one steps down into the old church; for in spite of every sort of witness it has the air of some ancient temple: nor do the beautiful antique columns which support the triforium deceive us. For long enough now the mosaics of the vault have been hidden by the scaffolding of the restorers; but the beautiful thirteenth-century floor of white and black marble, in the midst of which the font once stood, is still undamaged. The font, which is possibly a work of the Pisani, is on one side, set there, as it is said, because of old the roof of the church was open, and many a winter christening spoiled by rain.[86] It was not, however, till 1571 that the old font, surrounded by its small basins, one of which Dante broke in saving a man from drowning there, was removed from the church by Francesco I, Grand Duke of Tuscany, for the christening of his son.

Page 119

Certain vestiges of the oldest church remain: you may see a sarcophagus, one of those which, before Arnolfo covered the church with marble, stood without and held the ashes of some of the greater families. But the most beautiful thing here is the tomb that Donatello made for Baldassare Cossa, pirate, condottiere, and anti-pope, who, deposed by the Council of Constance (1414), came to Florence, and, as ever, was kindly received by the people. It stands beside the north door. On a marble couch supported by lions, the gilt bronze statue of this prince of adventurers, who grasped the very chair of St. Peter as booty, lies, his brow still troubled, his mouth set firm as though plotting new conquests even in the grave. Below, on the tomb itself, two winged *angiolini* hold the great scroll on which we read the name of the dead man, Johannes Quondam Papa XXIII: to which inscription Martin V, Cossa's successful rival at Constance, is said to have taken exception; but the Medici who had built the tomb answered in Pilate's words to the Pharisees, "What I have written, I have written." The three marble figures in niches at the base may be by Michelozzo, who worked with Donatello, or possibly by Pagano di Lapo, as the Madonna above the tomb almost certainly is.

Coming up once more into the Piazza from that mysterious dim church, dim with the centuries of the history of the city, you come upon two porphyry columns beside the eastern door. They are the gift of Pisa[87] when her ships returned from the Balearic Islands to Florence, who had defended their city from the Lucchesi. The column with the branch of olive in bronze upon it to the north of the Baptistery reminds us of the miracle performed by the body of S. Zenobio in 490. Borne to burial in S. Reparata, the bier is said to have touched a dead olive tree standing on this spot, which immediately put forth leaves: the column commemorates this miracle. So in Florence they remind us of the gods.

In turning now to the Duomo we come to one of the great buildings of the world. Standing on the site of the old church of S. Salvatore, of S. Reparata, it is a building of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, begun in 1298 from the designs of Arnolfo; and it is dedicated to S. Maria del Fiore. Coming to us without the wonderful romantic interest, the mysticism and exaltation of such a church as Notre Dame d'Amiens, without the more resolute and heroic appeal of such a stronghold as the Cathedral of Durham, it is more human than either, the work of a man who, as it were, would thank God that he was alive and glad in the world. And it will never bring us delight if we ask of it all the consummate mystery, awe, and magic of the great Gothic churches of the North. The Tuscans certainly have never understood the Christian religion as we have contrived to do in Northern Europe. It came to them really as a sort of divine explanation of a paganism which entranced but bewildered them.

Page 120

Behind it lay the Roman Empire; and its temples became their churches, its halls of justice their cathedrals, its tongue the only language understood of the gods. It is unthinkable that a people who were already in the twelfth century the possessors of a marvellous decadent art in the painting of the Byzantine school, who, finding again the statues of the gods, created in the thirteenth century a new art of painting, a Christian art that was the child of imperial Rome as well as of the Christian Church, who re-established sculpture and produced the only sculptor of the first rank in the modern world, should have failed altogether in architecture. Yet everywhere we may hear it said that the Italian churches, spoken of with scorn by those who remember the strange, subtle exaltation of Amiens, the extraordinary intricate splendour of such a church as the Cathedral of Toledo, are mere barns. But it is not so. As Italian painting is a profound and natural development from Greek and Roman art, certainly influenced by life, but in no doubt of its parentage; so are the Italian churches a very beautiful and subtle development of pagan architecture, influenced by life not less profoundly than painting has been, but certainly as sure of their parentage, and, as we shall see, not less assured of their intention. Just as painting, as soon as may be, becomes human, becomes pagan in Signorelli and Botticelli, and yet contrives to remain true to its new gods, so architecture as soon as it is sure of itself moves with joy, with endless delight and thanksgiving, towards that goal of the old builders: in such a church as S. Maria della Consolazione outside Todi, for instance,—in such a church as S. Pietro might have been,—and that it is not so, we may remind ourselves, is the fault of that return to barbarism and superstition which Luther led in the North.

What then, we may ask ourselves, were the aim and desire of the Italian builders, which it seems have escaped us for so long? If we turn to the builders of antiquity and seek for their intention in what remains to us of their work, we shall find, I think, that their first aim was before all things to make the best building they could for a particular purpose, and to build that once for all. And out of these two intentions the third must follow; for if a temple, for instance, were both fit and strong it would be beautiful because the purpose for which it was needed was noble and beautiful. Now the first necessity of the basilica, for instance, was space; and the intention of the builder would be to build so that that space should appear as splendid as possible, and to do this and to enjoy it would necessitate, above all things, light,—a problem not so difficult after all in a land like Italy, where the sun is so faithful and so divine. Taking the necessity, then, of the Italian to be much the same as that of the Roman builder when he was designing a basilica,—that is to say, the accommodation of a crowd of people who are to take part in a common solemnity,—we shall find that the intention of the Italian in building his churches is exactly that of the Roman in building his basilica: he desires above all things space and light, partly because they seem to him necessary for the purpose of the church, and partly because he thinks them the two most splendid and majestic things in the world.

Page 121

Well, he has altogether carried out his intention in half a hundred churches up and down Italy: consider here in Florence S. Croce, S. Maria Novella, S. Spirito, and above all the Duomo. Remember his aim was not the aim of the Gothic builder. He did not wish to impress you with the awfulness of God, like the builder of Barcelona; or with the mystery of the Crucifixion, like the builders of Chartres: he wished to provide for you in his practical Latin way a temple where you might pray, where the whole city might hear Mass or applaud a preacher. He did this in his own noble and splendid fashion as well as it could be done. He has never believed, save when driven mad by the barbarians, in the mysterious awfulness of our far-away God. He prays as a man should pray, without self-consciousness and not without self-respect. He is without sentiment; he believes in largeness, grandeur, splendour, and sincerity; and he has known the gods for three thousand years.

What, then, we are to look for in entering such a church as S. Maria del Fiore is, above all, a noble spaciousness and the beauty of just that.[88]

The splendour and nobility of S. Maria del Fiore from without are evident, it might seem, to even the most prejudiced observer; but within, I think, the beauty is perhaps less easily perceived.

One comes through the west doors out of the sunshine of the Piazza into an immense nave, and the light is that of an olive garden,—yes, just that sparkling, golden, dancing shadow of a day of spring in an old olive grove not far from the sea. In this delicate and fragile light the beauty and spaciousness of the church are softened and simplified. You do not reason any longer, you accept it at once as a thing complete and perfect. Complete and perfect—yet surely spoiled a little by the gallery that dwarfs the arches and seems to introduce a useless detail into what till then must have been so simple. One soon forgets so small a thing in the immensity and solemnity of the whole, that seems to come to one with the assurance of the sky or of the hills, really without an afterthought. And indeed I find there much of the strange simplicity of natural things that move us we know not why: the autumn fields of which Alberti speaks, the far hills at evening, the valleys that in an hour will make us both glad and sorry, as the sun shines or the clouds gather or the wind sings on the hills. Not a church to think in as St. Peter's is, but a place where one may pray, said Pius IX when he first saw S. Maria del Fiore: and certainly it has that in common with the earth, that you may be glad in it as well as sorry. It is not a museum of the arts; it is not a pantheon like Westminster Abbey or S. Croce; it is the beautiful house where God and man may meet and walk in the shadow.

Page 122

Yet little though there be to interest the curious, Giovanni Acuto, that Englishman Sir John Hawkwood of the White Company, one of the first of the Condottieri, the deliverer of Pisa, "the first real general of modern times," is buried here. You may see his equestrian portrait by Paolo Uccello over the north-west doorway in his habit as he lived. Having fought against the Republic and died in its service, he was buried here with public honours in 1394. And then in the north aisle you may see the statue called a portrait of Poggio Bracciolini[89] by Donatello. Donatello carved a number of statues, of which nine have been identified, for the Opera del Duomo, three of these are now in the Cathedral: the Poggio, the so-called Joshua in the south aisle, which has been said to be a portrait of Gianozzo Manetti; and the St. John the Evangelist in the eastern part of the nave. The Poggio certainly belongs to the series: it would be delightful if the cryptic writing on the borders of the garment were to prove it to be the Job. The St. John Evangelist is an earlier work than the Poggio; it was begun when Donatello was twenty-two years old, and, as Lord Balcarres says, "it challenges comparison with one worthy rival, the Moses of Michelangelo." It was to have stood on one side of the central door. Something of the wonder of this work in its own time may be understood if we compare it, not with the later work of Michelangelo, but with the statues of St. Mark by Niccolo d'Arezzo, the St. Luke of Nanni di Banco, and the St. Matthew of Bernardo Ciuffagni, which were to stand beside it and are now placed in a good light in the nave, while the work of Donatello is almost invisible in this dark apsidal chapel. Of the other works which Donatello made for the Opera del Duomo, the David is in the Bargello, while the Jeremiah, and Habbakuk, the so-called Zuccone, the Abraham, and St. John Baptist are still on the Campanile.

The octagonal choir screens carved in relief by Baccio Bandinelli, whom Cellini hated so scornfully because he spoke lightly of Michelangelo, will not keep you long; but there behind the high altar is an unfinished Pieta by Michelangelo himself. It is a late work, but in that fallen Divine Figure just caught in Madonna's arms you may see perhaps the most beautiful thing in the church, less splendid but more pitiful than the St. John of Donatello, but certainly not less moving than that severe, indomitable son of thunder. Above, the dome soars into heaven; that mighty dome, higher than St. Peter's, the despair of Michelangelo, one of the beauties of the world. One wanders about the church looking at the bronze doors of the Sagrestia Nuova, or the terra-cottas of Luca della Robbia, always to return to that miracle of Brunellesco's. Not far away in the south aisle you come upon his monument with his portrait in marble by Buggiano. The indomitable persistence of the face! Is it any wonder that, impossible as his dream appeared,

Page 123

he had his way with Florence at last—yes, and with himself too? As you stand at the corner of Via del Proconsolo, and, looking upward, see that immense dome soaring into the sky over that church of marble, something of the joy and confidence and beauty that were immortal in him come to you too from his work. Like Columbus, he conquered a New World. His schemes, which the best architects in Europe laughed at, were treated with scorn by the Consiglio, yet he persuaded them at last. In 1418 he made his designs, and the people, as now, were called upon to vote. Two years went by, and nothing was done; then in 1420 he was elected by the Opera to the post of Provveditore della Cupola, but not alone, for Lorenzo Ghiberti and Battista d'Antonio were elected with him. Still he persisted, and, as the Florentines say, by pretending sickness and leaving the work to Ghiberti, who knew nothing about it and could do nothing without him, in 1421 he won over the Consiglio. He began at once. What his agonies may have been, what profound difficulties he discovered and conquered, we do not know, but by 1434, when Eugenius IV was in Florence and the Duomo was consecrated, his dome was finished, wanting only the lantern and the ball. These he began in 1437, but died too soon to see, for the lantern was not finished till 1458, and it was only in 1471 that Verrocchio cast the bronze ball.[90]

Wandering round to the facade, finished in 1886, it is a careful imitation of fifteenth-century work we see, saved from the mere routine of just that, in its design at any rate, by the vote of the people, who, against the opinion of all the artists in Florence at that time, insisted on the cornice following the basilical form of the tower, refusing to endorse the pointed “tricuspidal” design. It is not, however, in such merely competent work as this that we shall find ourselves interested, but rather in the beautiful door on the north just before the transept, over which, in an almond-shaped glory, Madonna gives her girdle to St. Thomas. Given now to Nanni di Banco, a sculptor of the end of the fourteenth century, whom Vasari tells us was the pupil of Donatello, it long passed as the work of Jacopo della Quercia. Certainly one of the loveliest works of the early Renaissance, it is so full of life and gracious movement, so natural and so noble, that everything else in the Cathedral, save the work of Donatello, is forgotten beside it. Madonna enthroned among the Cherubim in her oval mandorla, upheld by four puissant fair angels, turns with a gesture most natural and lovely to St. Thomas, who kneels to her, his drapery in beautiful folds about him, lifting his hands in prayer. Above, three angels play on pipes and reeds; while in a corner a great bear gnaws at the bark of an oak in full leaf.

Page 124

In turning now to the Campanile, which Giotto began in 1334, on the site of a chapel of S. Zenobio, we come to the last building of the great group. Fair and slim as a lily, as light as that, as airy and full of grace, to my mind at least it lacks a certain stability, so that looking on it I always fear in my heart lest it should fall. It seems to lack roots, as it were, yet by no means to want confidence or force. Can it be that, after all, it would have seemed more secure, more firm and established, if the spire Giotto designed for it had in truth been built? The consummate and supreme artist, architect, sculptor, and painter was not content to design so fair, so undreamed-of a flower as this, but set himself to make the statues and the reliefs that were necessary also. And then has he not built as only a painter could have done, in white and rose and green? He died too soon to see the fairest of his dreams, and it is really to two other artists—Taddeo Gaddi and Francesco Talenti—that the actual work, after the first five storeys—those windows, for instance, that add so much to the beauty of the tower—is owing.[91]

[Illustration: THE MADONNA DELLA CINTOLA

By Nanni di Banco. Duomo, Florence

Alinari]

The reliefs that, set some five-and-twenty feet from the ground, are so difficult to see, are the work of Andrea Pisano, the sculptor of the south gate of the Baptistery. Born at Pontedera, the pupil of Giovanni Pisano, this great and lovable artist has been robbed of much that belongs to him. Vasari tells us—and for long we believed him—that Giotto helped him to design the gate of the Baptistery; and again, that Giotto designed these reliefs for Andrea to carve and found. It might seem impossible to believe that the greatest sculptor then living, fresh from a great triumph, would have consented to use the design of a painter, even though he were Giotto. However this may be, the reliefs really speak for themselves: those on the south side—early Sabianism, house-building, pottery, training horses, weaving, lawgiving, and exploration—are certainly by Andrea; while among the rest the Jubal, the Creation of Man, the Creation of Woman, seem to be his own among the work of his pupils. It is to quite another hand, however, to Luca della Robbia, that the Grammar, Poetry, Philosophy, Astrology, and Music must be given. The genius of Andrea Pisano, at its best in those Baptistery gates, in the panel of the Baptism of our Lord, for instance, or in those marvellous works on the facade of the Duomo at Orvieto, so full of force, vitality, and charm, is, as I think, less fortunate in its expression when he is concerned with such work as these statues of the prophets in the niches on the south wall of the Campanile,—if indeed they be his. Seen as these figures are, beside the large, splendid, realistic work of Donatello, so wonderfully ugly in the Zuccone, so pitiless in the Habakkuk, they are quickly forgotten; but indeed Donatello's work seems to stand alone in the history of sculpture till the advent of Michelangelo.

Page 125

I speak of Donatello elsewhere in this book,[92] but you will find one of his best works among much curious, interesting litter from the Duomo in the Opera del Duomo, the Cathedral Museum in the old Falconieri Palace just behind the apse of the Cathedral. A bust of Cosimo Primo stands over the entrance, and within you find a beautiful head of Brunellesco by Buggiano. It is, however, in a room on the first floor that you will find the great organ lofts, one by Donatello and the other by Luca della Robbia, which I suppose are among the best known works of art in the world. Made for the Cathedral, these galleries for singers seem to be imprisoned in a museum.

The beautiful youths of Luca, the children of Donatello, for all their seeming vigour and joy, sing and dance no more; they are in as evil a case as the Madonnas of the Uffizi, who, in their golden frames behind the glass, under the vulgar, indifferent eyes of the multitude, envy Madonna of the street-corner the love of the lowly. So it is with the beautiful Cantorie made for God's praise by Donatello and Luca della Robbia. Before the weary eyes of the sight-seer, the cold eyes of the scientific critic, in the horrid silence of a museum, amid so much that is dead, here the headless trunk of some saint, there the battered fragments of what was once a statue, some shadow has fallen upon them, and though they keep still the gesture of joy, they are really dead or sleeping. Is it only sleep? Do they perhaps at night, when all the doors of their prisons are barred and their gaolers are gone, praise God in His Holiness, even in such a hell as this? Who knows? They were made for a world so different, for a time that out of the love of God had seen arise the very beauty of the world, and were glad therefor. Ah, of how many beautiful things have we robbed God in our beggary! We have imprisoned the praise of the artists in the museums that Science may pass by and sneer; we have arranged the saints in order, and Madonna we have carefully hidden under the glass, because now we never dream of God or speak with Him at all. Art is dying, Beauty is become a burden, Nature a thing for science and not for love. They are become too precious, the old immortal things; we must hide them away lest they fade and God take them from us: and because we have hidden them away, and they are become too precious for life, and we have killed them because we loved them, we seldom pass by where they are save to satisfy the same curiosity that leads us to any other charnel-house where the dead are exposed.

[Illustration: SINGING BOYS FROM THE CANTORIA OF LUCA DELLA ROBBIA

In Opera del Duomo, Florence

Alinari]

Page 126

Thus they have stolen away the silver altar of the Baptistery, that miracle of the fourteenth-century silversmiths, Betto di Geri, Leonardo di Ser Giovanni, and the rest, that it may be a cause of wonder in a museum. So a flower looks between the cold pages of a botanist's album, so a bird sings in his cage: for life is to do that for which we were created, and if that be the praise of God in His sanctuary, to stand impotently by under the gaze of innumerable unbelievers in a museum is to die. And truly this is a shame in Italy that so many fair and lovely things have been torn out of their places to be catalogued in a gallery. It were a thousand times better that they were allowed to fade quietly on the walls of the church where they were born. It is a vandalism only possible to the modern world in which the machines have ground out every human feeling and left us nothing but a bestial superstition which we call science, and which threatens to become the worst tyranny of all, that we should thus herd together, catalogue, describe, arrange, and gape at every work of art and nature we can lay our hands on. No doubt it brings in, directly and indirectly, an immense revenue to the country which can show the most of such death chambers. Often by chance or mistake one has wandered into a museum—though I confess I never understood in what relation it stood to the Muses—where your scientist has collected his scraps and refuse of Nature, things that were wonderful or beautiful once—birds, butterflies, the marvellous life of the foetus, and such—but that in his hands have died in order that he may set them out and number them one by one. Here you will find a leg that once stood firm enough, there an arm that once for sure held someone in its embrace: now it is exposed to the horror and curiosity of mankind. Well, it is the same with the Pictures and the statues. Why, men have prayed before them, they have heard voices, tears have fallen where they stood, and they have whispered to us of the beauty and the love of God. To-day, herded in thousands, chained to the walls of their huge dungeons, they are just specimens like the dead butterflies which we pay to see, which some scientific critic without any care for beauty will measure and describe in the inarticulate and bestial syllables of some degenerate dialect he thinks is language. Our unfortunate gods! How much more fortunate were they of the older world: Zeus, whose statue of ivory and gold mysteriously was stolen away; Aphrodite of Cnidus, which someone hid for love; and you, O Victory of Samothrace, that being headless you cannot see the curious, peeping, indifferent multitude. Was it for this the Greeks blinded their statues, lest the gods being in exile, they might be shamed by the indifference of men? And now that our gods too are exiled, who will destroy their images and their pictures crowded in the museums, that the foolish may not speak of them we have loved, nor the scientist say, such and such they were, in stature of such a splendour, carved by such a man, the friend of the friend of a fool? But our gods are dead.

Page 127

FOOTNOTES:

[86] I give this story for what it is worth. So far as I know, however, the font was placed in its present position in 1658, more than a hundred years after the church was roofed in. It may, however, have occupied another position before that.

[87] See p. 82.

[88] To compare an Italian church with a French cathedral would be to compare two altogether different things, a fault in logic, and in criticism the unforgivable sin; for a work of art must be judged in its own category, and praised only for its own qualities, and blamed only for its own defects.

[89] Cf. *Donatello*, by Lord Balcarres: Duckworth, 1903, p. 12.

[90] Not the ball we see now, which was struck by lightning and hurled into the street in 1492. Verrocchio's was rather smaller than the present ball.

[91] See Crowe and Cavalcaselle, *History of Painting in Italy*: London, 1903, p. 116, note 4.

[92] See pp. 283-289.

XIII. FLORENCE

OR SAN MICHELE

Or San Michele, S. Michele in Orto, was till the middle of the thirteenth century a little church belonging, as it is said, to the Cistercians, who certainly claimed the patronage of it. About 1260, however, the Commune of Florence began to dispute this right with the Order, and at last pulled down the church, building there, thirty years later, a loggia of brick, after a design by Arnolfo di Cambio, according to Vasari, who tells us that it was covered with a simple roof and that the piers were of brick. This loggia was the corn-market of the city, a shelter, too, for the contadini who came to show their samples and to talk, gossip, and chaffer, as they do everywhere in Italy even to-day. And, as was the custom, they made a shrine of Madonna there, hanging on one of the brick pillars a picture (*tavola*) of Madonna that, as it is said, was the work of Ugolino da Siena. This shrine soon became famous for the miracles Madonna wrought there. "On July 3rd," says Giovanni Villani, writing of the year 1292, "great and manifest miracles began to be shown forth in the city of Florence by a figure of Saint Mary which was painted on a pilaster of the loggia of S. Michele d'Orto, where the corn was sold: the sick were healed, the deformed were made straight, and those who were possessed of devils were delivered from them in numbers." In the previous year the Compagnia di Or San

Michele, called the Laudesi, had been established, and this Company, putting the fame of the miracles to good use, grew rich, much to the disgust of the Friars Minor and the Dominicans. “The Preaching Friars and the Friars Minor likewise,” says Villani, “through envy or some other cause, would put no faith in that image, whereby they fell into great infamy with the people. But so greatly grew the fame of these miracles and the merits of Our Lady, that pilgrims flocked thither from all Tuscany for her festas, bringing divers waxen images because of the wonders, so that a great part of the loggia in front of and around Madonna was filled.” Cavalcanti, too, speaks of Madonna di Or San Michele, likening her to his Lady, in a sonnet which scandalised Guido Orlandi—

Page 128

"Guido an image of my Lady dwells
At S. Michele in Orto, consecrate
And duly worshipped. Fair in holy state
She listens to the tale each sinner tells:
And among them that come to her, who ails
The most, on him the most doth blessing wait.
She bids the fiend men's bodies abdicate;
Over the curse of blindness she prevails,
And heals sick languors in the public squares.
A multitude adores her reverently:
Before her face two burning tapers are;
Her voice is uttered upon paths afar.
Yet through the Lesser Brethren's jealousy
She is named idol; not being one of theirs." [93]

The feuds of Neri and Bianchi at this time distracted Florence; at the head of the Blacks, though somewhat their enemy, was Corso Donati; at the head of the Whites were the Cerchi and the Cavalcanti. After the horrid disaster of May Day, when the Carraja bridge, crowded with folk come to see that strange carnival of the other world, fell and drowned so many, there had been much fighting in the city, in which Corso Donati stood neutral, for he was ill with gout, and angered with the Black party. Robbed thus of their great leader, the Neri were beaten day and night by the Cerchi, who with the aid of the Cavalcanti and Gherardini rode through the city as far as the Mercato Vecchio and Or San Michele, and from there to S. Giovanni, and certainly they would have taken the city with the help of the Ghibellines, who were come to their aid, if one Ser Neri Abati, clerk and prior of S. Piero Scheraggio, a dissolute and worldly man, and a rebel and enemy against his friends, had not set fire to the houses of his family in Or San Michele, and to the Florentine Calimala near to the entrance of Mercato Vecchio. This fire did enormous damage, as Villani tells us, destroying not only the houses of the Abati, the Macci, the Amieri, the Toschi, the Cipriani, Lamberti, Bachini, Buiamonti, Cavalcanti, and all Calimala, together with all the street of Porta S. Maria, as far as Ponte Vecchio and the great towers and houses there, but also Or San Michele itself. In this disaster who knows what became of the miracle picture of Madonna? For years the loggia lay in ruins, till peace being established in 1336, the Commune decided to rebuild it, giving the work into the hands of the Guild of Silk, which, according to Vasari, employed Taddeo Gaddi as architect. The first stone of the new building was laid on July 29, 1337, the old brick piers, according to Villani, being removed, and pillars of stone set up in their stead. [94] In 1339 the Guild of Silk won leave from the Commune to build in each of these stone piers a niche, which later should hold a statue; while above the loggia was built a great storehouse for corn, as well as an official residence for the officers of the market.

[Illustration: OR SAN MICHELE]

Page 129

Nine years later there followed the great plague, of which Boccaccio has left us so terrible an impression. In this dreadful calamity, which swept away nearly two-thirds of the population, the Compagnia di Or San Michele grew very wealthy, many citizens leaving it all their possessions. No doubt very much was distributed in charity, for the Company had become the greatest charitable society in the city, but by 1347, so great was its wealth, that it resolved to build the most splendid shrine in Italy for the Madonna di Or San Michele. The loggia was not yet finished, and after the desolation of the plague the Commune was probably too embarrassed to think of completing it immediately. Some trouble certainly seems to have arisen between the Guild of Silk, who had charge of the fabric, and the Company, who were only concerned for their shrine, the latter, in spite of their wealth, refusing in any way to assist in finishing the building. Whether from this cause or another, a certain suspicion of the Company began to rise in Florence, and Matteo Villani roundly accuses the Capitani della Compagnia of peculation and corruption. However this may be, by 1355 Andrea Orcagna had been chosen to build the shrine of Madonna, which is still to-day one of the wonders of the city. It seems to have been in a sort of recognition of the splendour and beauty of Orcagna's work that the Signoria, between 1355 and 1359, removed the corn-market elsewhere, and thus gave up the whole loggia to the shrine of Madonna. Thus the loggia became a church, the great popular church of Florence, built by the people for their own use, in what had once been the corn-market of the city. The architect of this strange and secular building, more like a palace than a church, is unknown. Vasari, as I have said, speaks of Taddeo Gaddi; others again have thought it the work of Orcagna himself; while Francesco Talenti and his son Simone are said to have worked on it. The question is to a large extent a matter of indifference. What is important here is the fact that it is to the greater Guilds and to the Parte Guelfa that we owe the church itself—that is to say, to the merchants and trades of the city—while the beautiful shrine within is due to a secular Company consisting of some of the greatest citizens, and to a large extent opposed to the regular Orders of St. Dominic and St. Francis. It is, then, as the great church of the *popolo* that we have to consider Or San Michele. Here, because their greatest and most splendid deed, the expulsion of the Duke of Athens, had been achieved on St. Anne's Day, July 26, 1343, they built a chapel to St. Anne, and around the church on every anniversary, above the fourteen niches which hold the statues presented by the seven greater arts, by six of the fourteen lesser arts, and by the Magistrato della Mercanzia, that magistracy which governed all the guilds,[95] their banners are set up even to this day.

Page 130

The great Guild of Wool was already responsible for the Duomo, and it was for this reason, it might seem, that to the Guild of Silk was given the care of Or San Michele; not altogether without jealousy, it might seem, for when they had asked leave to place the image of their saint in one of the niches there, all the other guilds had demanded a like favour, thus in an especial manner marking the place as the Church of the Merchants, the true *popolo*; the great popular shrine of Florence, therefore, since Florence was a city of merchants.

It is on the south side, in the niche nearest to Via Calzaioli, that the Guild of Silk set its statue of St. John the Evangelist by Baccio da Montelupo; next to it is an empty niche belonging to the Guild of Apothecaries and Doctors. Here a Madonna and Child by Simone Ferrucci once stood, but, owing to a rumour current in the seventeenth century, that Madonna sometimes moved her eyes, the statue was placed inside the church, so that the crowd which always collected to see this miracle might no longer stop the way. In the next niche the Furriers placed a statue of St. James by Nanni di Banco, and beyond, the Guild of Linen set up a statue of St. Mark by Donatello. On the west, in the first niche, is S. Lo, the patron of the Furriers, carved by Nanni di Banco, and beyond, St. Stephen, set there by the Guild of Wool and carved by Ghiberti; while next to him stands St. Matthew, set there by the Bankers and carved by Ghiberti, and cast in 1422 by Michelozzo. On the north, Donatello's statue of St. George used to fill the first niche, somewhat shallower than the rest owing to a staircase inside the church, but it was removed to the Bargello for fear of the weather: the beautiful relief, also by Donatello, below the copy, is still in its place, under the St. George of the Armourers. The four statues in the next niche were placed there by the Guilds of Sculptors, Masons, Smiths, and Bricklayers; they are the work of Nanni di Banco. Further, is the St. Philip of the Shoemakers, again by Nanni di Banco, and the St. Peter of the Butchers, by Donatello. On the east stands St. Luke, placed there by the Notaries, and carved by Giovanni da Bologna; the great bronze group of Christ and St. Thomas, the gift of the Magistrato della Mercanzia, the governor of all the guilds; and the St. John Baptist, the gift of the Calimala, and the work of Ghiberti: this last was the first statue placed here—in 1414.

Nanni di Banco, that delightful sculptor of the Madonna della Cintola of the Duomo, has thus four works here at Or San Michele—the S. Lo, the group on the north side, the St. Philip, and the St. James. The St. Philip, and the group which represents the four masons who, being Christians, refused to build a Pagan temple, and were martyred long and long ago, have little merit; and though the S. Lo has a certain force, and the relief below it a wonderful simplicity, they lack altogether the charm of the Madonna della Cintola.

Page 131

Ghiberti has three works here—the St. Stephen, the St. Matthew, and the St. John Baptist, the only sculptures of the kind he ever produced. Full of energy though the St. Stephen may be, it has about it a sort of divine modesty that lends it a charm altogether beyond anything we may find in the St. John Baptist, a figure full of character, nevertheless. It is, however, in the St. Matthew that we see Ghiberti at his best perhaps, in a figure for once full of strength, and altogether splendid.

Donatello, too, had three figures here beside the relief beneath the St. George. The St. Peter on the north side is probably the earliest work done for Or San Michele, and is certainly the poorest. The St. Mark on the south side is, however, a fine example of his earlier manner, with a certain largeness, strength, and liberty about it a frankness, too, in expression so that he has made us believe in the goodness of the Apostle, which, as Michelangelo is reported to have said must have vouched for the truth of what he taught.

The masterpiece, certainly, of these Tuscan sculptures is the bronze group of Christ and St. Thomas by Verrocchio, which I have so loved. All the work of this master is full of eagerness and force: something of that strangeness without which there is no excellent beauty, that later was so characteristic of the work of his pupil Leonardo, you will find in this work also, a subtlety sometimes a little elaborate, that, as I think is but a sort of over-eagerness to express all he has thought to say. Donatello prepared this niche for him at the end of his life it was almost his last work; and Verrocchio, after many years of labour, had thought to place here really his masterpiece, in the church that, more than any other, belonged to the people of the city, that middle class, as we might say, from which he sprang. How perfectly, and yet not altogether without affectation, he has composed that difficult scene, so that St. Thomas stands a little out of the setting, and places his finger—yes, almost as a child might do—in the wounded side of Jesus, who stands majestically fair before him. It is true the drapery is complicated, a little heavy even, but with what care he has remembered everything! Consider the grace of those beautiful folds, the beauty of the hair, the loveliness of the hands: and then, as Burckhardt reminds us, as a piece of work founded and cast in bronze, it is almost inimitable.

* * * * *

Within, the church is strange and splendid. It is as though one stood in a loggia in deep shadow, at the end of the day in the last gold of the sunset; and there, amid the ancient fading glory of the frescoes, is the wonderful shrine that Orcagna made for the picture of Madonna, who had turned the Granary of S. Michele into the Church of the People. Finished in 1359, this tabernacle is the loveliest work of the kind in Italy, an unique masterpiece, and perhaps

Page 132

the most beautiful example of the Italian Gothic manner in existence. Orcagna seems to have been at work on it for some ten years, covering it with decoration and carving those reliefs of the Life of the Virgin in that grand style which he had found in Giotto and learned perhaps from Andrea Pisano. To describe the shrine itself would be impossible and useless. It is like some miniature and magic church, a casquet made splendid not with jewels but with beauty, where the miracle picture of Madonna—not that ancient and wonderful picture by Ugolino da Siena, but a work, it is said, of Bernardo Daddi—glows under the lamps. On the west side, in front of the altar, Orcagna has carved the Marriage of the Virgin and the Annunciation; on the south, the Nativity of Our Lord and the Adoration of the Magi; on the north, the Presentation of the Virgin and her Birth; and on the east, the Purification and the Annunciation of her Death. And above these last, in a panel of great beauty, he has carved the Death of the Virgin, where, among the Apostles crowding round her bed, while St. Thomas—or is it St. John?—passionately kisses her feet, Jesus Himself stands with her soul in His arms, that little Child which had first entered the kingdom of heaven. Above this sorrowful scene you may see the Glory and Assumption of Our Lady in a mandorla glory, upheld by six angels, while St. Thomas kneels below, stretching out his arms, assured at last. It is, as it were, the prototype of the Madonna della Cintola, that exquisite and lovely relief which Nanni di Banco carved later for the north gate of the Duomo, only here all the sweetness that Nanni has seen and expressed seems to be lost in a sort of solemnity and strength.

Between these panels Orcagna has set the virtues Theological and Cardinal, little figures of much force and beauty; and at the corners he has carved angels bearing palms and lilies. Some who have seen this shrine so loaded with ornament, so like some difficult and complicated canticle, have gone away disappointed. Remembering the strength and significance of Orcagna's work in fresco, they have perhaps looked for some more simple thing, and indeed for a less rhetorical praise. Yet I think it is rather the fault of Or San Michele than of the shrine itself, that it does not certainly vanquish any possible objection and assure us at once of its perfection and beauty. If it could be seen in the beautiful spacious transept of S. Croce, or even in Santo Spirito across Arno, that sense as of something elaborate and complicated would perhaps not be felt; but here in Or San Michele one seems to have come upon a priceless treasure in a cave.

FOOTNOTES:

[93] Rossetti's translation of Guido Cavalcanti's Sonnet written in exile.

[94] Franceschini, however, in his record (*L'Oratorio di S. Michele in Orto in Firenze*: P. Franceschini: Firenze, 1892), says that the Tabernacle of Orcagna was built round the old brick pillars. It may well be that the pillar on which the Madonna was painted or was

hung (for it is not clear whether the painting was a panel or a wall painting) was saved while the rest was destroyed.

Page 133

[95] The Parte Guelfa originally set up their statue of St. Louis of Toulouse, carved by Donatello, in the place where now stands the statue of Magistrates, the group of Christ and St. Thomas made by Verrocchio. Eight of the fourteen lesser arts are not represented—namely, the Bakers, the Carpenters, the Leatherworkers, the Saddlers, the Innkeepers, the Vintners, and the Cheesemongers.

XIV. FLORENCE

PALAZZO RICCARDI, AND THE RISE OF THE MEDICI

It is in the Ciompi rising of 1278, that social revolution in which all Florence seems for once to have been interested, that we catch really for the first time the name of Medici. In 1352, Salvestro de' Medici—*non gia Salvestro ma Salvator mundi*, Franco Sacchetti calls him—had led the Florentines against the Archbishop of Milan, and in 1370 he had been chosen Gonfaloniere of Justice. He was filling this office against the wishes of the Parte Guelfa, when, not without his connivance, the Ciompi riot broke out against the magnates, whose power he had sought to break by means of the Ordinances of Justice.

The result of that bloody struggle was really a victory for the Arti Maggiori, the Arti Minori being bribed with promises and thus separated from the populace, who had sided with the Parte Guelfa, which was beaten for ever. The oligarchy was saved, but the struggle between rich and poor was by no means over. Soon the older Guilds seem to lose grip, and we see instead great trusts arising, associations of wealth, and above all, Banking Companies. What was wanting in Florence, as elsewhere in Italy, was some legitimate authority that might have guided the people in their desire for power. As it was, the city became divided into classes, each anxious to gain power at the expense of others, the result being an oligarchy, continually a prey to schism, merely waiting for a despot to declare himself.

Seemingly in the hands of a group of families without any legitimate right, the government was really in the power of one among them, and thus of one man, the head of it, Maso degli Albizzi. Brilliant, clever, and fascinating, Maso ruled with a certain strength and generosity; but Florence was a city of merchants, and between the Scylla of oligarchy and the Charybdis of despotism, was really driven into the latter by her economic position. The Duke Gian Galeazzo of Milan closed the trade routes, and Florence was compelled to fight for her life. Pisa, too, had to be overcome, again for economic reasons, and in 1414 a long war with King Ladislaus brought Cortona into the power of the Republic; but all these wars cost money, and the taxes pressed on the poor, who obtained no advantage from them. Maso's son Rinaldo, who succeeded him before the wars were over, had less ability than his father, and was certainly less beloved; he seems, however, to have been upright and incorruptible. He was,

Page 134

nevertheless, capable of mistakes, and, while engaged in war with Milan, attempted to seize Lucca. At length, when the grumbling of the poor had already gone too far, he readjusted the taxes, and thus alienated the rich also. His own party was divided, he himself heading the more conservative party, which refused to listen to the clamour of the wealthier families for a part in the government, while Niccolo Uzzano, with the more liberal party, would have admitted them. Among these wealthy families excluded from the government was the Medici.

The Medici had been banished after the Ciompi riots, but a branch of the family had returned, and was already established in the affections of the people. To the head of this branch, Giovanni de' Medici, all the enemies of Rinaldo looked with hope. This extraordinary man, who certainly was the founder of the greatness of his house, had long since understood that in such an oligarchy as that of Florence, the wealthiest must win. He had busied himself to establish his name and credit everywhere in Europe. He refused to take any open and active part in the fight that he foresaw must, with patience decide in his favour, but on his death, Cosimo, his elder son, no longer put off the crisis. He opposed Rinaldo for the control of the Signoria, and was beaten, in spite of every sort of bribery and corruption. It fell out that Bernardo Guadagni, whom Rinaldo had made his creature, was chosen Gonfaloniere for the months of September and October 1433. Rinaldo at once went to him and persuaded him that the greatest danger to the State was the wealth of Cosimo, who had inherited vast riches, including some sixteen banks in various European cities, from his father. He encouraged him to arrest Cosimo, and to have no fear, for his friends would be ready to help him, if necessary, with arms. Cosimo was cited to appear before the Balìa, which, much against the wishes of his friends, he did. "Many," says Machiavelli, "would have him banished many executed, and many were silent, either out of compassion for him or apprehension of other people, so that nothing was concluded." Cosimo, however, was in the meantime a prisoner in the Palazzo Vecchio in the Alberghettino tower[96] in the custody of Federigo Malavolti. He could hear all that was said, and the clatter of arms and the tumult made him fear for his life, and especially he was afraid of assassination or poison, so that for four days he ate nothing. This was told to Federigo, who, according to Machiavelli, addressed him in these words: "You are afraid of being poisoned, and you kill yourself with hunger. You have but small esteem of me to believe I would have a hand in any such wickedness; I do not think your life is in danger, your friends are too numerous, both within the Palace and without; if there be any such designs, assure yourself they must take new measures, I will never be their instrument, nor imbrue my hands in the blood of any man, much less of yours, since you have never offended me. Courage, then, feed as you did formerly, and keep yourself alive for the good of your country and friends, and that you may eat with more confidence, I myself will be your taster."

Page 135

[Illustration: THE FLOWER MARKET, FLORENCE]

Now Malavolti one night brought home with him to supper a servant of the Gonfaloniere's called Fargannaccio, a pleasant man and very good company. Supper over, Cosimo, who knew Fargannaccio of old, made a sign to Malavolti that he should leave them together. When they were alone, Cosimo gave him an order to the master of the Ospedale di S. Maria Nuova for 1100 ducats, a thousand for the Gonfaloniere and the odd hundred for himself. On receipt of this sum Bernardo became more moderate, and Cosimo was exiled to Padua. "Wherever he passed," says Machiavelli, "he was honourably received, visited publicly by the Venetians, and treated by them more like a sovereign than a prisoner." Truly the oligarchy had at last produced a despot.

The reception of Cosimo abroad seems to have frightened the Florentines, for within a year a Balia was chosen friendly disposed towards him. Upon this Rinaldo and his friends took arms and proceeded to the Palazzo Vecchio, the Senate ordering the gates to be closed against them; protesting at the same time that they had no thought of recalling Cosimo. At this time Eugenius IV, hunted out of Rome by the populace, was living at the convent of S. Maria Novella. Perhaps fearing the tumult, perhaps bribed or persuaded by Cosimo's friends, he sent Giovanni Vitelleschi to desire Rinaldo to speak with him. Rinaldo agreed, and marched with all his company to S. Maria Novella. They appear to have remained in conference all night, and at dawn Rinaldo dismissed his men. What passed between them no man knows, but early in October 1434 the recall of Cosimo was decreed and Rinaldo with his son went into exile. Cosimo was received, Machiavelli tells us, "with no less ostentation and triumph than if he had obtained some extraordinary victory; so great was the concourse of people, and so high the demonstration of their joy, that by an unanimous and universal concurrence he was saluted as the Benefactor of the people and the Father of his country." Thus the Medici established themselves in Florence. Practically Prince of the Commune, though never so in name, Cosimo set himself to consolidate his power by a judicious munificence and every political contrivance known to him. Thus, while he enriched the city with such buildings as his palace in Via Larga, the Convent of S. Marco, the Church of S. Lorenzo, he helped Francesco Sforza to establish himself as tyrant of Milan, and in the affairs of Florence always preferred war to peace, because he knew that, beggared, the Florentines must come to him. Yet it was in his day that Florence became the artistic and intellectual capital of Italy. Under his patronage and enthusiasm the Renaissance for the first time seems to have become sure of itself. The humanists, the architects, the sculptors, the painters are, as it were, seized with a fury of creation; they discover new forms, and express themselves completely,

Page 136

with beauty and truth. For a moment realism and beauty have kissed one another: for reality is not enough, as Alberti will find some day, it is necessary to find and to express the beauty there also. It was an age that was learning to enjoy itself. The world and the beauty of the world laid bare, partly by the study of the ancients, partly by observation, really almost a new faculty, were enough; that conscious paganism which later, but for the great disaster, might have emancipated the world, had not yet discovered itself; in Cosimo's day art was still an expression of joy, impetuous, unsophisticated, simple. In this world of brief sunshine Cosimo appears to us very delightfully as the protector of the arts, the sincere lover of learning, the companion of scholars. To him in some sort the world owes the revival of the Platonic Philosophy, for the Greek Argyropolis lived in his house, and taught Piero his son and Lorenzo his grandson the language of the Gods. When Gemisthus Pletho came to Florence, Cosimo made one of his audience, and was so moved by his eloquence that he determined to establish a Greek academy in the city on the first opportunity. He was the dear friend of Marsilio Ficino, and he founded the Libraries of S. Marco and of the Badia at Fiesole. The great humanists of his time, Leonardo Bruni, Carlo Marsuppini, Poggio and Niccolo de' Niccoli were his companions, and in his palace in Via Larga, and in his villas at Careggi and Poggio a Caiano, he gathered the most precious treasures, rare manuscripts, and books, not a few antique marbles and jewels, coins and medals and statues, while he filled the courts and rooms, built and decorated by the greatest artists of his time, with the statues of Donatello, the pictures of Paolo Uccello, Andrea del Castagno, Fra Filippo Lippo, and Benozzo Gozzoli. Cosimo, says Gibbon, "was the father of a line of princes whose name and age are almost synonymous with the restoration of learning; his credit was ennobled with fame; his riches were dedicated to the service of mankind; he corresponded at once with Cairo and London, and a cargo of Indian spices and Greek books were often imported in the same vessel." While Burckhardt, the most discerning critic of the civilisation of the Renaissance, tells us that "to him belongs the special glory of recognising in the Platonic philosophy the fairest flower of the ancient world of thought, and of inspiring his friends with the same belief."

Among those who had loved Cosimo so well as to go with him into exile, had been Michelozzo Michelozzi, the architect and sculptor, the pupil of Donatello. Already, Vasari tells us in 1430, Cosimo had caused Michelozzo to prepare a model for a palace at the corner of Via Larga beside S. Giovannino, for one already made by Brunellesco appeared to him too sumptuous and magnificent, and quite as likely to awaken envy among his fellow-citizens as to contribute to the grandeur and ornament of the city, and to his own convenience. The palace which we see to-day at the corner of Via Cavour and Via Gori and call Palazzo Riccardi, was perhaps not begun till 1444, and is certainly somewhat changed and enlarged since Michelozzo built it for Cosimo Vecchio. The windows on the ground floor, for instance, were added by Michelangelo and the Riccardi family, whose name it now bears, and who bought it in 1695 from Ferdinando II, enlarged it in 1715.

Page 137

In 1417, Cosimo, after his marriage with Contessina de' Bardi, had bought and Michelozzo had rebuilt for him the Villa Careggi, where, in the Albizzi conspiracy, he had retired, he said, "to escape from the contests and divisions in the city." It was here that he lay dying when he wrote to Marsilio Ficino to come to him. "Come to us, Marsilio, as soon as you are able. Bring with you your translation of Plato *De Summo Bono*, for I desire nothing so much as to learn the road to the greatest happiness": and there too Lorenzo his grandson turned his face to the wall, when Savonarola came to him in his last hours and bade him give back liberty to Florence.

It is, however, the palace in the Via Larga that recalls to us most vividly the lives and times of these first Medici, Cosimo Vecchio, Piero the gouty, Lorenzo il Magnifico. Michelozzo, Vasari tells us, deserves infinite credit for this building, since it was the first palace built in Florence after modern rules in which the rooms were arranged with a view to convenience and beauty. "The cellars are excavated," he explains, "to more than half their depth under the ground, having four braccia beneath the earth, that is with three above, on account of the lights. There are, besides buttresses, store-rooms, etc., on the same level. In the first or ground floor are two court-yards with magnificent loggia, on which open various saloons, bed-chambers, ante-rooms, writing-rooms, offices, baths, kitchens, and reservoirs, with staircases both for private and public use, all most conveniently arranged. In the upper floors are dwellings and apartments for a family, with all those conveniences proper, not only to that of a private citizen, as Cosimo then was, but sufficient also for the most powerful and magnificent sovereign. Accordingly, in our time, kings, emperors, popes, and whatever of most illustrious Europe can boast in the way of princes, have been most commodiously lodged in this palace, to the infinite credit of the magnificent Cosimo, as well as that of Michelozzo's eminent skill in architecture."

It is not, however, the splendour of the palace, fine as it is, or the memory of Cosimo even, that brings us to that beautiful house to-day, but the work of Donatello in the courtyard, those marble medallions copied from eight antique gems, and the little chapel on the second floor, almost an afterthought you might think, since in a place full of splendidly proportioned rooms, it is so cramped and cornered under the staircase, where Benozzo Gozzoli has painted in fresco quite round the walls, the Journey of the Three Kings, in which Cosimo himself, Piero his son, and Lorenzo his grandson, then a golden-haired youth, ride among the rest, in a procession that never finds the manger at Bethlehem, is indeed not concerned with it, but is altogether occupied with its own light-hearted splendour, and the beauty of the fair morning among the Tuscan hills. Is it the pilgrimage of the Magi to the lowly cot

Page 138

of Jesus that we find in that tiny dark chapel, or the journey of man, awake now on the first morning of spring in quest of beauty? Over the grass scattered with flowers, that gay company passes at dawn by little white towns and grey towers, through woods where for a moment is heard the song of some marvellous bird, past running streams, between hedges of pomegranates and clusters of roses; and by the wayside rise the stone-pine and the cypress, while over all is the far blue sky, full of the sun, full of the wind, which is so soft that not a leaf has trembled in the woods, nor the waters stirred in a single ripple. Truly they are come to Tuscany where Beauty is, and are far from Bethlehem, where Love lies sleeping. There on a mule, a black slave beside his stirrup, rides Cosimo Pater Patriae, and beside him comes Piero his son, attended too, and before them on a white horse stepping proudly, with jewels in his cap, rides the golden-haired Lorenzo, the youngest of the three kings, already magnificent, the darling of this world of hills and streams, which one day he will sing better than anyone of his time. Not thus came the Magi of the East across the deserts to stony Judaea, and though the Emperor of the East be of them, and the Patriarch of Constantinople another, we know it is to the knowledge of Plato they would lead us, and not to the Sedes Sapientiae. And so it is before an empty shrine that those clouds of angels sing; Madonna has fled away, and the children are singing a new song, surely the Trionfo of Lorenzo, it is the first time, perhaps, that we hear it—

Quant' e' bella giovinezza.

Ah, if they had but known how tragically that day would close.

As Cosimo lay dying at Careggi, often closing his eyes, "to use them to it," as he told his wife, who wondered why he lay thus without sleeping, it was perhaps some vision of that conflict which he saw and would fain have dismissed from his mind, already divided a little in its allegiance—who knows—between the love of Plato and the love of Jesus. Piero, his son, gouty and altogether without energy, was content to confirm his political position and to overwhelm the Pitti conspiracy. It is only with the advent of Lorenzo and Giuliano, the first but twenty-one when Piero died, that the spirit of the Renaissance, free for the first time, seems to dance through every byway of the city, and, confronted at last by the fanatic hatred of Savonarola, to laugh in his face and to flee away through Italy into the world.

Born in 1448, Lorenzo always believed that he owed almost everything that was valuable in his life to his mother Lucrezia, of the noble Florentine house of Tornabuoni, which had abandoned its nobility in order to qualify for public office. A poetess herself, and the patron of poets, she remained the best counsellor her son ever had. In his early youth she had watched over his religious education, and in his grandfather's house he had met not

Page 139

only statesmen and bankers, but artists and men of letters. His first tutor had been Gentile Becchi of Urbino, afterwards Bishop of Arezzo; from him he learned Latin, but Argyropolus and Ficino and Landino taught him Greek, and read Plato and Aristotle with him. Nor was this all, for we read of his eagerness for every sort of exercise. He could play calcio and pallone, and his own poems witness his love of hunting and of country life, and he ran a horse often enough in the palii of Siena. He was more than common tall, with broad shoulders, and very active. In colour dark, though he was not handsome, his face had a sort of dignity that compelled respect, but he was shortsighted too, and his nose was rather broad and flat. If he lacked the comeliness of outward form, he loved all beauteous things, and was in many ways the most extraordinary man of his age; his verse, for instance, has just that touch of genius which seems to be wanting in the work of contemporary poets. His love for Lucrezia Donati, in whose honour the tournament of 1467 was popularly supposed to be held, though in reality it was given to celebrate his betrothal with Clarice Orsini, seems to have been merely an affectation in the manner of Petrarch, so fashionable at that time. Certainly the Florentines, for that day at least, wished to substitute a lady of their city for the Roman beauty, and Lorenzo seems to have agreed with them. Like the tournament that Giuliano held later in honour of Simonetta Vespucci, which Poliziano has immortalised, and for which Botticelli painted a banner, this pageant of Lorenzo's, for it was rather a pageant than a fight, was sung, too, by Luca Pulci, and was held in Piazza S. Croce. A rumour of the splendour of the dresses, the beauty and enthusiasm of the scene, has come down to us, together with Lorenzo's own account of the day, and Clarice's charming letter to him concerning it. "To follow the custom," he writes unenthusiastically in his Memoir—"to follow the custom and do as others do, I gave a tournament in Piazza S. Croce at a great cost, and with a considerable magnificence; it seems about 10,000 ducats were spent. Although I was not a great fighter, nor even a very strong hitter, I won the prize, a helmet of inlaid silver, with a figure of Mars as a crest." "I have received your letter, in which you tell me of the tournament where you won the prize," writes Clarice, "and it has given me much pleasure. I am glad you are fortunate in what pleases you and that my prayers are heard, for I have no other wish but to see you happy. Give my respects to my father Piero and my mother Lucrezia, and all who are near to you, and I send, too, my respect to you. I have nothing else to say.—Yours, Clarice de Orsinis." Poor little Clarice, she was married to Lorenzo on June 4, in the following year. "I, Lorenzo, took to wife Clarice, daughter of Signor Jacopo, or rather she was given to me." He writes more coldly, certainly, than he was used

Page 140

to do. The marriage festa was celebrated in Palazzo Riccardi with great magnificence. Clarice, who was tall, slender, and shapely, with long delicate hands and auburn hair, but without great beauty of feature, dressed in white and gold, was borne on horseback through the garlanded way, in a procession of girls and matrons, trumpeters and pipers, all Florence following after to the Palace. There in the loggia above the garden she dined with the newly-married ladies of the city. In the courtyard, round the David of Donatello, some seventy of the greatest among the citizens sat together, while the stewards were all sons of the *grandi*. Piero de' Medici entertained each day some thousand guests, while for their entertainment mimic battles were fought, and in the manner of the time wooden forts were built, defended, and taken by assault, and at night there were dances and songs. Almost immediately after the marriage Lorenzo set out for Milan to visit the new Duke, and stand godfather to his heir. All his way through Prato, Pistoja, Lucca, Pietrasanta Sarzana, Pontremoli to Milan was a triumphal progress. He came home to find his father ailing, and on 2nd December 1469, Piero de' Medici died. He was buried in S. Lorenzo, in a tomb made by Verrocchio.

It was to a great extent owing to the prompt action of Tommaso Soderini that the power of the Medici did not pass away at Piero's death, as that of many another family had done in Florence. The tried friend of that house, Soderini gathered some six hundred of the leading citizens in the convent of S. Antonio, and, as it seems, with the help of the relatives of Luca Pitti, persuaded them that the fortunes of Florence were wrapped up in the Medici. "The second day after my father's death," writes Lorenzo in his Memoir, "although I, Lorenzo, was very young, in fact only in my twenty-first year, the leading men of the city and of the ruling party came to our house to express their sorrow for our misfortune, and to persuade me to take upon myself the charge of the government of the city as my grandfather and father had already done. This proposal being contrary to the instincts of my age, and entailing great labour and danger, I accepted against my will, and only for the sake of protecting my friends and our own fortunes, for in Florence one can ill live in the possession of wealth without control of the government." Thus Lorenzo came to be tyrant of Florence. It was a rule illegitimate in its essence, purchased with gold, and without any outward sign of office. That it would come to be disputed might have seemed certain.

FOOTNOTES:

[96] The Alberghettino was the prison in the great tower.

XV. FLORENCE

SAN MARCO AND SAVONAROLA

Page 141

For there was another spirit, too, moving secretly through the ways of the city, among the crowds that gathered round the Cantastoria of the Mercato Vecchio, or mingled with the wild procession of the carnival, a spirit not of life, but of denial, a little forgetful as yet that the days of the Middle Age were over: and even as one day that joy in the earth and the beauty of world was to pass almost into Paganism, so this mysticism, that was at first like some marvellous fore-taste of heaven, fell into just Puritanism, a brutal political and schismatic hatred in the fanaticism of—let us be thankful for that—a foreigner. “If I am deceived, Christ, thou hast deceived me,” Savonarola will come to say; and amid his cursing and prophecies it is perhaps difficult to catch the words of Pico—“We may rather love God than either know Him or by speech utter Him.” But in Cosimo’s day men had no fear, the day was at the dawn: who could have thought by sunset life would be so disastrous?

[Illustration: CHIOSTRO DI S. MARCO]

Cosimo de’ Medici had a villa near the convent of S. Domenico at Fiesole, where, as it is said, he would often go when Careggi was too far, and the summer had turned the city into a furnace. Here, as we may think, he may well have talked with Fra Angelico, for he would often walk in the cloisters in the evening with the friars, and must have seen and praised the frescoes there. These Dominicans at Fiesole had already sent a colony to Florence, for in June 1435 they had obtained from Pope Eugenius iv, who was then at S. Maria Novella the little church of S. Giorgio across Arno. Seeing the order and comeliness of that convent at Fiesole, Cosimo, on behalf of the magistrates of Florence, presented a petition to the Pope about this time, praying that since he was engaged on a reform of the Religious Orders, which, partly owing to the schism and partly to the plague, were much relaxed, he would suppress the Sylvestrians who dwelt in the old convent of S. Marco, and give it to the Dominicans of Fiesole, who in exchange would give up their convent of S. Giorgio, for in the centre of the city numerous and zealous ministers were needed. Eugenius very gladly agreed to this, and in a Bull of January 1436, S. Marco was given to the Dominican Friars.[97] So they came down from Fiesole in procession, and went through the city accompanied by three bishops, all the clergy, and an immense concourse of people, and Fra Cipriano took possession of S. Marco “in the name of his congregation.” The convent at this time would seem to have been in a deplorable state: in the previous year a fire had destroyed much of it, and the church even was without a roof, so that the friars were obliged to build themselves wooden cells to live in, and to roof the church with timber. When Cosimo heard this he prepared at once to rebuild the convent, and sent Michelozzo to see what could be done. Michelozzo first pulled down the old cloister, leaving only the church and

Page 142

the refectory; and in 1437 began to build the beautiful convent we see to-day, completing it in 1443, at a cost of 36,000 ducats. The church which was then restored has suffered many violations since, and is very different to-day from what it was at the end of the fifteenth century. It was consecrated in 1442, on the feast of the Epiphany, by Pope Eugenius in the presence of his Cardinals. The library, Vasari tells us, was built later. It was vaulted above and below, and had sixty-four bookcases of cypress wood filled with most valuable books, among them later the famous collection of Niccolo Niccoli, whose debts Cosimo paid on condition that he might dispose freely of his books, which were arranged here by Thomas of Sarzana, afterwards Nicholas v. The convent thus completed is "believed to be," says Vasari, "the most perfectly arranged, the most beautiful and most convenient building of its kind that can be found in Italy, thanks to the skill and industry of Michelozzo."

Fra Angelico was nearly fifty years old when his Order took possession of S. Marco. Already he had painted three choir books, which Cosimo so loved that he wished nothing else to be used in the convent, for, as Vasari tells us, their beauty was such that no words can do justice to it. Born in 1387, he had entered the Order of S. Dominic in 1408 at Fiesole. The convent into which he had come had only been founded in 1406, and as with S. Marco later, so with S. Domenico, many disputes as to the property had to be encountered, so that he had early been a traveller, going with the brethren to Foligno and later to Cortona, returning to Fiesole in 1418. Who amid these misfortunes could have been his master? It might seem that in the silence of the sunny cloister in the long summer days of Umbria some angel passing up the long valleys stayed for a moment beside him, so that for ever after he could not forget that vision. And then, who knows what awaits even us too, in that valley where Blessed Angela heard Christ say, "I love thee more than any other woman in the valley of Spoleto"? It is certainly some divinity that we find in those clouds of saints and angels, those marvellously sweet Madonnas, those majestic and touching crucifixions, that with a simplicity and sincerity beyond praise, Angelico has left up and down Italy, and not least in the convent of S. Marco.

Yes, it is a divine world he has dreamed of, peopled by saints and martyrs, where the flowers are quickly woven into crowns and the light streams from the gates of Paradise, and every breeze whispers the sweet sibilant name of Jesus, and there, on the bare but beautiful roads, Christ meets His disciples, or at the convent gate welcomes a traveller, and if He be not there He has but just passed by, and if He has not just passed by He is to come. It is for Him the sun is darkened; to lighten His footsteps the moon shall rise; because His love has lightened the world men go happily, and because He is here the world is a garden. In all that convent of S. Marco you cannot turn a corner but Christ is awaiting you, or enter a room but His smile changes your heart, or linger on the threshold but He bids you enter in, or eat at midday but you see Him on the Cross, and hear, "Take, eat; this is My Body, which was given for you."

Page 143

You enter the cloister, and the first word is Silence; St. Peter Martyr, with finger on lip, seems to utter the first indispensable word of the heavenly life. The second you see over the door of the chapter-house, Discipline and the denial of the body; St. Dominic with a scourge of nine cords is about to give you the difficult book of heavenly wisdom. The third is spoken by Christ Himself; Faith, for He points to the wound in His side. And the fourth Christ speaks too, for none other may utter it; Love, for as a pilgrim He is welcomed by two pilgrims, two Dominican brothers, to their home. Pass into the Refectory and He is there; go into the Capitolo and He is there also, the Prince of life between two malefactors, hanging on a cross for love of the world, and in His face all the beauty and sweetness of the earth have been gathered and purged of their dross, and between His arms is the kingdom of Heaven. In that room the name of Jesus continually vibrates with an intense and passionate life, more wonderful, more beautiful, and more terrible than the tremor of all the sea. And it has brought together in adoration not the world, which cannot hear its music, but those who above the tumult of their hearts have caught some faint far echo of that supernal concord which has bound together this whispering universe: for there beneath the Cross of Jesus are none but saints, Madonna and the two SS. Maries, St. John the Baptist and St. John the Divine, and beside them kneel the founders of the Religious Orders St. Dominic, the founder of the preaching friars, St. Jerome the father of monasticism, St. Francis the little poor man, St. Bernard who spoke with Madonna, S. Giovanni Gualberto the founder of Vallombrosa, St. Peter Martyr who was wounded for Christ's sake. Above him stands St. Thomas Aquinas the angelic doctor, St. Romuald the founder of Camaldoli St. Benedict who overthrew the temples, St. Augustine who has spoken of the City of God, S. Alberto di Vercelli the founder of the Carmelites. And on the other side, beside St. John Baptist, St. Mark the patron of the convent kneels with his open Gospel, St. Laurence stands with his gridiron, and behind him come the two other Medici saints, S. Cosmo and S. Damiano.

Pass into the dormitories, and in every cell you enter Jesus is there before you; on the threshold the angel announces His advent, and little by little, scene by scene, you are involved in the beauty and the tragedy of His life. You see Him transfigured (No. 6), you see Him buffeted (No. 7), you see Him rise from the tomb (No. 8), and you see Him in glory crowning Madonna (No. 9), or as a youth presented in the Temple (No. 11). Many times you come upon Him crucified (15-23), once John baptizes Him in Jordan (24), or Madonna and St. John the Divine weep over Him dead (26). Here He bears His Cross (28), there descends into Hades (31), preaches to the people (32), is betrayed by Judas (33), agonises in the Garden (34), gives

Page 144

us His Body to eat, His Blood to drink (35), is nailed to the Cross (36); crucified (37), and again adored as a Child by the Magi (38), speaks with Mary in the garden (1), is buried (2); the angel announces His birth (3), He is crucified (4), and born in Bethlehem (5). It is the rosary of Jesus that we tell, consisting of the glorious and sorrowful mysteries of His life and death. It is the spirit of Christianity that we see here, blossoming everywhere, haphazard like the wild flowers that are the armies of spring. As Benozzo Gozzoli has expressed with an immense good fortune, the very spirit of the Renaissance at its birth almost, the spirit and the joy of youth, so Angelico with as simple an eagerness and a more sure sincerity has expressed here the very spirit of Christianity,—He that loseth his life shall gain it: take no thought for your life.

[Illustration: THE CRUCIFIXION

By Fra Angelica. S. Marco, Florence

Alinari]

It was here, then, amid all this mystical and heavenly beauty, that first S. Antonino and later Savonarola sought to oppose the “new religion of love and beauty” which had already filled Florence with a new joy. At first, certainly, that new joy seemed not unfriendly to the mysterious and heavenly beauty of the Christian ideal. It is not till later, when both have been a little spoiled by love, that there seems to have been any antagonism between them. It is true that it was only with reluctance that S. Antonino accepted the Arch-bishopric of Florence, but this seems rather to have been owing to humility, the most beautiful characteristic of a beautiful nature, than to any perception that he might have to oppose that new spirit fostered so carefully, and indeed so unwittingly, by Cosimo de’ Medici, his benefactor. Born of Florentine parents in 1389, the son of a notary, Antonino, at the age of sixteen, had entered the convent of S. Domenico at Fiesole, not without a severe test of his steadfastness, for Fra Domenico made him learn the whole of Gratian’s decree by heart before he would admit him to the Order. Later, he became priest, wrote his *Summa Theologicae*, and was called by Eugenius, who loved him, to the General Council in Florence in 1439; while there he was made Prior of the Convent of S. Marco. Having set his Congregation in order, and, as such a man was bound to do, endeared himself to the Florentines, he set out for other convents, not in Tuscany only, but in Naples, which needed his presence. He was absent for two years. During that time the See of Florence became vacant, and Eugenius, to the great joy of the city, appointed Antonino Archbishop. Surprised and troubled that he should have been thought of for such a dignity, he set out to hide himself in Sardinia, but, being prevented, came at last to Siena, whence he wrote to the Pope begging him to change his mind, saying that he was old, sick and unworthy. How little he knew Eugenius, the on altogether inflexible

Page 145

will in all that time, so full of trouble for the Church! The Pope sent him to S. Domenico at Fiesole and told the Florentines their Archbishop was at their gates. So, with Cosimo de' Medici at their head, they went out to meet him, but he refused to enter the city till Eugenius threatened him with excommunication. He was consecrated Archbishop of Florence in March 1446 borne in procession from S. Piero down Borgo degli Albizzi to the Duomo.[98] As a boy, it is said, he would pray before the Madonna of Or San Michele, and, indeed, in his Chronicle he defends his Order against the charges of scepticism as to the miracles worked there, with a certain eloquence. Many are the stories told of him, and Poccetti has painted the story of his life round the first cloister of S. Marco, where he was buried in May 1459. S. Antonino was a saint and a theologian, not a politician or an historian. Certainly he did not foresee the tragedy that was already opening, and that was to end, not in the lenten fires of Piazza Signoria, nor even in the death of Savonarola, but in the siege of Florence, the establishment of the House of Medici, the tombs of S. Lorenzo. How often in those days Cosimo would walk with him and Fra Angelico in the cloisters on a summer night, after listening may be to Marsilio Ficino or to the vague and wonderful promises of Argyropolis. "To serve God is to reign," Antonino told him, not without a certain understanding of those restless ambitions which at that time seemed to promise the city nothing but good. And then, was it not Cosimo who had rebuilt the convent, was it not Cosimo who had built S. Lorenzo and S. Spirito too, by the hand of Michelozzo?

Antonino was not a politician; the *Chronicon Domini Antonini Archipraesulis Florentini* is the work rather of a theologian than of an historian: the friend of Leonardo Bruni, or at least well acquainted with his work, he cared rather for charity than for learning; and it was as the father of the poor that Florence loved him. He lived by love. And in those days of uncertain fortune, amid the swift political changes of the time, there were many whom, doubtless, he saved from degradation or suicide. I poveri vergognosi—the poor who are ashamed, it was these he first took under his protection. We read of him sending for twelve men of all classes and various crafts, and, laying the case before them, refounded a charity—*Provveditori dei poveri vergognosi*, which soon became in the mouth of Florence *I Buonomini di S. Martino*, the good men of S. Martin, for the society had its headquarters in the Church S. Martino; and, was not S. Martino himself, as it were, the first of this company?

Page 146

Born in Ferrara in 1452, the grandson of a famous doctor of Padua, Girolamo Savonarola had entered the Dominican Order at Bologna when he was twenty-two years old, finding the world but a wretched place, and the wickedness of men more than he could bear. Something of this strange and almost passionate pessimism remained with him his whole life long. In 1481 he had been sent to the convent of S. Marco, in Florence, when Lorenzo de' Medici had been at the head of affairs for some twelve years. The Pazzi conspiracy, in which Giuliano de' Medici lost his life, had come in 1478, and Lorenzo was fixed more firmly than ever in the affections of the people. Simonetta had been borne like a dead goddess through the streets of the city to burial; Lorenzo was already busy with those carnival songs which, as some thought, were written to corrupt the people: the Renaissance had come. "Gladius Domini super terram cite et velociter," thought Savonarola, unable to understand that life from which he had fled into the cloister. It was the first voice that had been raised against the resurrection of the Gods, but at that moment Martin Luther was lying in his mother's arms, while his father worked in the mines at Eisleben: the Reaction was already born.

On a Latin city such as Florence was, Savonarola at first made little or no impression; too often the friars had prophesied evil for no cause, wandering through every little city in Italy denouncing the Signori. It was in San Gimignano, even to-day the most medieval of Tuscan cities, a place of towers and winding narrow ways, that Savonarola first won a hearing; and so it was not till nine years after his first coming to her that Florence seems to have listened to his prophecy, when, in August 1490, in S. Marco he began to preach on the Revelation of St. John the Divine. It was a programme half political, half spiritual, that he suggested to those who heard him, the reformation of the Church and the fear of a God who had been forgotten but who would not forget. In the spring of the year following, so great were the crowds who flocked to hear his half-political discourses that he had to preach in the Duomo. There unmistakably we are face to face with a political agitator. "God intends to punish Lorenzo Magnifico,—yes, and his friends too"; and when, a little later, he was made prior of S. Marco, he refused to receive Lorenzo in the house his grandfather had built. In the following year Lorenzo died; Savonarola, as the tale goes, refusing him absolution unless he would restore liberty to the people of Florence. Consider the position. How could Lorenzo restore that which he had never stolen away, that which had, in truth, never had any real existence? He was without office, without any technical right to government, merely the first among the citizens of what, in name at least, was a Republic. If he was a tyrant, he ruled by the will of the people, not by divine right, a thing unknown among the Signori of Italy, nor by

Page 147

the will of the Pope, nor by the will of the Emperor, but by the will of Florence. Yet Savonarola, the Ferrarese, whether or no he refused him absolution, did not hesitate to denounce him, with a wild flood of eloquence and fanatic prophecy worthy of the eleventh century. "Leave the future alone," Lorenzo had counselled him kindly enough: it was just that he could not do, since for him the present was too disastrous. And the future?—the future was big with Charles VIII and his carnival army, gay with prostitutes, bright with favours, and behind him loomed the fires of Piazza della Signoria.

The peace of Italy is dead, the Pope told his Cardinals, when in the spring of 1492 Lorenzo passed away at Careggi It was true. In September 1494, Charles VIII, on his way to Naples, came into Italy, was received by Ludovico of Milan at Asti, while his Switzers sacked Rapallo. Was this, then, the saviour of Savonarola's dreams? "It is the Lord who is leading those armies," was the friar's announcement. Amid all the horror that followed, it is not Savonarola that we see to-day as the hero of a situation he had himself helped to create, but Piero Capponi, who, Piero de' Medici having surrendered Pietrasanta and Sarzana, stood for the Republic. On 9th November Piero and Giuliano his brother fled out of Porta di S. Gallo, while Savonarola with other ambassadors went to meet the King. A few days later, on 17th November 1494, at about four o'clock in the afternoon, Pisa in the meantime having revolted, Charles entered Florence[99] with Cardinal della Rovere, the soldier and future Pope, and in his train came the splendour and chivalry of France, the Scotch bowmen, the Gascons, and the Swiss. "Viva la Francia!" cried the people, and Charles entered the Duomo at six o'clock in the evening, down a lane of torches to the high altar. And coming out he was conducted to the house of Piero de' Medici, the people crying still all the time "Viva la Francia!" The days passed in feasting and splendour, Charles began to talk of restoring the Medici, nor were riots infrequent in Borgo Ognissanti; in Borgo S. Frediano the Switzers and French pillaged and massacred, and were slain too in return. Florence, always ready for street fighting, was, as we may think, too much for the barbarians. On 24th November the treaty was signed, an indemnity being paid by the city, but the rioting did not cease. Landucci gives a very vivid account of it. Even the King himself was not slow to pillage: he was discontented with the indemnity offered, and threatened to loot the city. "*Io faro dare nelle trombe*," said he; Piero Capponi was not slow to answer, "*E noi faremo dare nello campane*"—and we will sound our bells. The King gave in, and Florence was saved. On 26th November he heard Mass for the last time in S. Maria del Fiore, and on the 28th he departed—*si parti el Re di Firenze dopo desinare, e ando albergo alla Certosa e tutta sua gente gli ando dietro e innanzi, che poche ce ne rimase*, says Landucci thankfully.

Page 148

Then the city, free from this rascal, who carried off what he could of the treasures of Cosimo and Lorenzo, turned not to Piero Capponi but to another foreigner, Girolamo Savonarola. The political eagerness of this friar now came to the point of action. He set up a Greater Council, which in its turn elected a Council of Eighty; he refused to call a parliament, since he told them that "parliament had ever stolen the sovereignty from the people." Then, on the 1st of April, he said that the Virgin Mary had revealed to him that the city would be more glorious, rich, and powerful than ever before, and, as Landucci says, "*La maggiore parte del popolo gli credeva.*" He also said that the Greater Council was the creation of God, and that whoever should attempt to change it would be eternally damned. Nor was this all. If it were right and splendid for Florence to be free, free as she always had been from the domination of any other city, so it was for revolted Pisa. Yet this fanatic Ferrarese told the people that he had had a vision in which the Blessed Virgin had told him that Florence should make treaty with France, and thus regain Pisa. This was on the return of the King from Naples with Piero de' Medici in his train. However, he met the King at Poggibonsi, told him Florence was his friend, that God desired him to spare it, and with other tales succeeded in keeping Charles out of the city. This, as it seems to me, is the one good deed Savonarola did for Florence.

But the people still believed in him, though he turned the whole life of the city into a sort of religious carnival. Now, if Lorenzo had kept the people quiet with songs, Savonarola was equally successful with hymns. "Viva Cristo e la Vergine Maria, nostra regina," shouted the people,—merchants, friars, women, and children dancing before the crucifix with olive boughs in their hands. "On 27th March 1496, which was Palm Sunday, Fra Girolamo made a procession of children with olive branches in their hands and crowns of olive on their heads and all bore, too, a red cross. There were some five thousand boys, and a great number of girls all dressed in white, then after came all the Ufici, and all the guilds, and then all the men, and after all the women of the city. There never was so great a procession," says Landucci. Indeed, there was not a man nor a woman who did not join the company. "It was a holy time, but it was short," says Landucci again, whose own children were among "these holy and blessed companies."

Short indeed! The Italian League had been formed against France; only Florence and Ferrara remained outside. If it were politics that had taken Savonarola so high, it was to them he owed his fall. He denounced all Italy, and not least Alexander VI, the vicious but very capable Pope. When he began to denounce Rome he signed his own death; her hour was not yet come. "I announce to you, Italy and Rome, the Lord will come out of His place.... I tell you, Italy and Rome, the Lord will tread you down. I have commanded penance, yet you are worse and worse.... Soon all priests, friars, bishops, cardinals, and great masters shall be trampled down." It was a brave denunciation, and if it were unjust, what was justice to one who had made Jesus King of Florence and established himself as His Vicegerent.

Page 149

The Pope excommunicated him: the factions in Florence—the Arrabbiati, the Compagnacci, the Palleschi—rejoiced; yet the people he had led so long seemed inclined to support him. Then came the plague, and then the discovery of a plot to bring back Piero. Well, Savonarola began to preach again; but he was beaten. Many would not go to hear him, of whom Landucci was one, because of the excommunication.[100] And at last Savonarola himself seems to have seen the end. “If I am deceived, Christ Thou hast deceived me,” he says and at last he challenged the fire to prove it. It was too much for the Signoria; they agreed. It was the Franciscans he had to meet; whether or no they meant to persist with the “trial by fire” we shall never know, but when, on 7th April 1498, the fire was lighted in Piazza della Signoria, it was Savonarola who refused. A few minutes later, amid the uproar, a deluge of rain put out the flames. Savonarola’s last chance was gone. The people hounded him back to S. Marco, and but for the Guards of the Signoria he would have been torn in pieces. On 8th April, which was Palm Sunday, in the evening, the attack that had been threatening all day began: through the church, through the cloisters the fight raged, while the whole city was in the streets. At last Savonarola and Fra Domenico, his friend, gave themselves up to the guard, really for protection, and were lodged in Palazzo Vecchio. There the Signoria tortured them, with another friar, Silvestro, and at last from Savonarola even they seem to have dragged some sort of admission. What such a confession was worth, drawn from the poor mangled body of a broken man, one can well imagine; but that mattered nothing to the wild beasts he had taught to roar, who now had him at their mercy. The effect of this on the city seems to have been very great. “We had thought him to be a prophet,” writes Luca Landucci simply, “and he confessed he was not a prophet, that he had not from God the things he preached.... And I was by when this was read, and I was astonished, bewildered, amazed.... Ah, I expected Florence to be, as it were, a New Jerusalem, ... and I heard the very contrary.”

The Signoria which tortured Savonarola was presently replaced by another; and though, like its predecessor, it too refused to send him to Rome, it went about to compass his death. Again they tortured him; then on the 23rd May, the gallows having been built over night in the Piazza, they killed him with his companions, afterwards burning their bodies. “They wish to crucify them,”[101] cried one in the crowd; and indeed, the scaffold seems to have resembled a cross. Was it Florence herself perhaps who hung there?

FOOTNOTES:

[97] Not without protest, for the Sylvestrians appealed to the schismatic counsel at Basle, but got no good by it; and a whole series of lawsuits followed.

[98] See p. 256.

[99] Cf. L. Landucci, *Diario Fiorentino* (Sansoni, 1883), p. 80.

Page 150

[100] It would be wrong to conclude that Savonarola attacked the faith of the Catholic Church. He never did. He protested himself a faithful Catholic to the last. He was a puritan and a politician, and it was on these two counts that he fought the Papacy.

[101] Landucci, *op. cit.* p. 176.

XVI. FLORENCE

S. MARIA NOVELLA

If Florence built the Baptistery, the Duomo, and the Campanile for the glory of the whole city, that there might be one place, in spite of all the factions, where without difference all might enter the kingdom of heaven, one temple in which all the city might wait till Jesus passed by, one tower which should announce the universal Angelus, she built other churches too, more particular in their usefulness, less splendid in their beauty, but not less necessary in their hold on the life of the city, or their appeal to us to-day. You may traverse the city from east to west without forsaking the old streets, and a little fantastically, perhaps, find some hint in the buildings you pass of that old far-away life, so restless and so fragile, so wanting in unity, and yet, as it seems to us, with but one really profound intention in all its work, the resurrection of life among men. In the desolate but beautiful Piazza of S. Maria Novella, at the gates of the old city, you find a Dominican convent, and before it the great church of that Order, S. Maria Novella herself, the bride of Michelangelo. Then, following Via dei Fossi, you enter the old city at the foot of the Carraja bridge, following Via di Parione past an old Medici palace into Via Porta Rossa and so into Via Calzaioli, where you came upon that strange and beautiful church so like a palace, Or San Michele, built by the merchants, the Church of the Guilds of the city. Passing thence into Piazza Signoria, and so into Via de' Gondi, in the Proconsolo you find the Church of the great monastic Order the Badia of the Benedictines, having passed on your way Palazza Vecchio, the Palace of the Republic, afterwards of the Medici; and the Bargello, the Palace of the Podesta, afterwards a prison; coming later through Borgo de' Greci to the Church of S. Croce, the convent of the Franciscans. Thus, while beyond the old west gate of the city there stood the house of the Dominicans, the Franciscans built their convent on the east, just without the city; and between them in the heart of Florence dwelt the oldest Order of all, the Benedictines, busy with manuscripts. Again, if the tower of authority throws its shadow over the Bargello, it is the tower of liberty that rises over Palazzo Vecchio, and the whole tragedy of the beautiful city seems to be expressed for us in the fact that while the one became a prison the other came to house the gaoler.

Page 151

So this city of warm brick, with its churches of marble, its old ways, its palaces of stone, its convents at the gates, comes to hold for us, as it were, the very dream of Italy, the dream that was too good to last, that was so soon to be shattered by the barbarian. Yet in that little walk through the narrow winding ways from the west to the east of the city, all the eloquence and renown, the strength and beauty of Italy seem to be gathered for you, as in a nosegay you may find all the beauty of a garden. And of all the broken blossoms that you may find by the way, not one is more fragrant and fair than the sweet bride of Michelangelo, S. Maria Novella.

Standing in a beautiful Piazza, itself the loveliest thing therein, dressed in the old black and white habit, it dreams of the past: it is full of memories too, for here Boccaccio one Tuesday morning, just after Mass in 1348, amid the desolation of the city, found the seven beloved ladies of the *Decamerone* talking of death; here Martin V, and Eugenius IV, fugitives from the Eternal City, found a refuge; here Beata Villana confessed her sins; here Vanna Tornabuoni prayed and the Strozzi made their tombs. Full of memories—and of what else, then, but the past can she dream? For her there is no future. Her convent is suppressed, the great cloister has become a military gymnasium. What has she, then, in common with the modern world, with the buildings of Piazza Vittorio Emmanuele, for instance?—the past is all that we have left her.

[Illustration: S. MARIA NOVELLA]

Begun in 1278, as some say, from the design of Fra Ristoro and Fra Sisto, the facade, one of the most beautiful in the world, is really the fifteenth-century work of Leon Alberti working to the order of Giovanni Rucellai—you may see their blown sail everywhere—with that profound and unifying genius which involved everything he touched in a sort of reconciliation, thus prophesying to us of Leonardo da Vinci. For Alberti has here very fortunately made the pointed work of the Middle Age friends with Antiquity, Antiquity seen with the eyes of the Renaissance, full of a new sort of eagerness and of many little refinements. In the facade of his masterpiece, the Tempio Malatestiano at Rimini, that beautiful unfinished temple where the gods of Greece seem for once to have come to the cradle of Jesus with something of the wonder of the shepherds who left their flocks to worship Him, Leon Alberti has taken as his model the arch of Augustus, that still, though broken, stands on the verge of the city in the Flaminian Way; but as though aware at last of the danger of any mere imitation of antiquity such as that, he has here contrived to express the beauty of Roman things, just what he himself had really felt concerning them, and has combined that very happily with the work of the age that was just then passing away; thus, as it were, creating for us one of the most perfect buildings of the fifteenth century, very characteristic too, in its strange beauty, as of the dead new risen. And then how subtly he has composed this beautiful facade, so that somehow it really adds to the beauty of the Campanile, with its rosy spire, in the background.

Page 152

Within, the church is full of a sort of twilight, in which certainly much of its spaciousness is lost; those chapels in the nave, for instance, added by Vasari in the sixteenth century have certainly spoiled it of much of its beauty. Built in the shape of a tau cross—a Latin cross that is almost tau, in old days it was divided, where still there is a step across the nave into two parts, one of which was reserved for the friars, while the other was given to the people. There is not much of interest in this part of the church: a crucifix over the great door, attributed to Giotto; a fresco of the Holy Trinity, with Madonna and St. John, by Masaccio, that rare strong master; the altar, the fourth in the right aisle, dedicated to St. Thomas of Canterbury,—almost nothing beside. It is in the south transept, where a flight of steps leads to the Rucellai Chapel, that we came upon one of the most beautiful and mysterious things in the city, the Madonna, so long given to Cimabue, but now claimed for Duccio of Siena.[102]

Vasari describes for us very delightfully the triumph of this picture, when, so great was the admiration of the people for it that “it was carried in solemn procession, with the sound of trumpets and other festal demonstrations, from the house of Cimabue to the church,—he himself being highly rewarded and honoured for it”; while, as he goes on to tell us, when Cimabue was painting it, in a garden as it happened near the gate of S. Pietro, King Charles of Sicily, brother of St. Louis, saw the picture, and praising it, “all the men and women of Florence hastened in great crowds to admire it, making all possible demonstrations of delight. The inhabitants of the neighbourhood, rejoicing in this occurrence, ever after called that place Borgo Allegri,”—the name it bears to this day. However reluctant we may be to find Vasari, that divine gossip, at fault, it might seem that Cimabue’s Triumph is a fable, or if, indeed, it happened, was stolen, for the Rucellai Madonna is apparently the work of Duccio the Sienese.[103] Of the works of Cimabue not one remains to us; we do not know, we have certainly no means of knowing, whether he was, as Ghiberti tells us, a painter in the old Greek manner, or whether, as Vasari suggests, he was the true master of Giotto, in that to him was owing the impulse of life which we find so moving in Giotto’s work. And then Vasari, it seems, is wrong in his account of Borgo Allegri, for that place was named not after happiness, the happiness of that part of the city in their great neighbour, but from a family who in those days lived thereabout and bore that name.

Page 153

It is, however, of comparatively little importance who painted the picture. The controversy, which is not yet finished, serves for the most part merely to obscure the essential fact that here is the picture still in its own place, and that it is beautiful. Very lovely, indeed, she is, Madonna of Happiness, and still at her feet the poor may pray, and still on her dim throne she may see day come and evening fall. Far up in the obscure height she holds Christ on her knees. Perhaps you may catch the faint dim loveliness of her face in the early dawn amid the beauty of the angels kneeling round her throne when the light steals through the shadowy windows across the hills; or perhaps at evening in the splendour of some summer sunset you may see just for a moment the whiteness of her delicate hands; but she is secret and very far away, she has withdrawn herself to hear the prayers of the poor in spirit who come when the great church is empty, when the tourists have departed, when the workmen have returned to their homes. And beside her in that strange, mysterious place Beata Villana sleeps, where the angels draw back the curtain, in a tomb by Desiderio da Settignano. She was not of the great company whose names we falter at our altars and whisper for love over and over again in the quietness of the night; but of those who are weary. Born to a wealthy Florentine merchant, Andrea di Messer Lapo by name, little Vanna went her ways with the children, yet with a sort of naive sincerity after all, so that when she heard Saint Catherine praised or Saint Francis, she believed it and wished to be of that company; but the world, full of glamour and laughter in those days, and now too, caught her by the waist and bore her away, in the person of a noble youth of the Benintendi, who loved her well enough; yet it was love she loved rather than her husband; and life calling sweetly enough down the long narrow streets, she followed, yes, till she was a little weary. So she would question her beauty, and, looking in her glass, see not herself but the demon love that possessed her; and again in another mirror she found a devil, she said, like a faun prick-eared and with goat's feet, peering at her with frightening eyes. So she stripped off her fair gay dresses, and took instead the rough hair-shirt, and came at evening across the Piazza to confess in S. Maria Novella; and gave herself to the poor, and forgot the sun till weary she fled away. Her grandson, as it is said, built this tomb to her memory, and they wrote above, Beata Villana.

It is always with reluctance, I think, that one leaves that dim chapel of the Rucellai, and yet how many wonderful things await us in the church. In the second chapel of the transept, the Chapel of Filippo Strozzi, who is buried behind the altar, Filippino Lippi, the son of Fra Lippo, the pupil of Botticelli, has painted certain frescoes,—a little bewildering in their crowded beauty, it is true, but how good after all in their liveliness, their light

Page 154

and shadow, the pleasant, eager faces of the women—where St. John raises Drusiana from the grave, or St. Philip drives out the Dragon of Hierapolis; while above St. John is martyred, and St. Philip too. But it is in the choir behind the high altar, where for so long the scaffolding has prevented our sight, that we come upon the simple serious work of Domencio Ghirlandajo, whom all the critics have scorned. Born in 1449, the pupil of Alessio Baldovinetti, Ghirlandajo is not a great painter perhaps, but rather a craftsman, a craftsman with a wonderful power of observation, of noting truly the life of his time. He seems to have asked of art rather truth than beauty. Almost wholly, perhaps, without the temperament of an artist, his success lies in his gift for expressing not beauty but the life of his time, the fifteenth century in Florence, which lives still in all his work. Consider, then, the bright facile mediocre work of Benozzo Gozzoli, not at its best, in the Campo Santo of Pisa, remember how in the dark chapel of the Medici palace he lights up the place almost as with a smile, in the gay cavalcade that winds among the hills. There is much fancy there, much observation too; here a portrait, there a gallant fair head, and the flowers by the wayside. Well, it is in much the same way that Ghirlandajo has painted here in the choir of S. Maria Novella. He has seen the fashions, he has noted the pretty faces of the women, he has watched the naive homely life of the Medici ladies, for instance, and has painted not his dreams about Madonna, but his dreams of Vanna Tornabuoni, of Clarice de' Medici, and the rest. And he was right; almost without exception his frescoes are the most interesting and living work left in Florence. He has understood or divined that one cannot represent exactly that which no longer exists; and it is to represent something with exactitude that he is at work. So he contents himself very happily with painting the very soul of his century. It is a true and sincere art this realistic, unimpassioned, impersonal work of Ghirlandajo's, and in its result, for us at any rate, it has a certain largeness and splendour. Consider this "Birth of the Virgin." It is full of life and homely observation. You see the tidy dusted room where St. Anne is lying on the bed, already, as in truth she was, past her youth, but another painter would have forgotten it. She is just a careful Florentine housewife, thrifty too, not flurried by her illness, for she has placed by her bedside, all ready for her need, two pomegranates and some water. Then, again, they are going to wash the little Mary. She lies quite happily sucking her fingers in the arms of her nurse, the basin is in the middle of the floor, a servant has just come in briskly, no doubt as St. Anne has always insisted, and pours the water quickly into the vessel. It is not difficult to find all sorts of faults, of course, as the critics have not hesitated to do. That perspective, for instance, how good it is:

Page 155

almost as good as Verrocchio's work,—and those dancing *angiolini*; yes, Verrocchio might have thought of them himself. But the lady in the foreground, how unmoved she seems; it is as though the whole scene had been arranged for the sake of her portrait; and, indeed it is a portrait, for the richly dressed visitor is Ginevra de' Benci, who stands too in the fresco of the Birth of St. John. Again in the fresco of the angel appearing to Zacharias in the Temple, there are some thirty portraits of famous Florentines, painted with much patience, and no doubt with an extraordinary truth of likeness. In the left corner you may see Marsilio Ficino dressed as a priest; Gentile de' Becchi turns to him, while Cristoforo Landini in a red cloak stands by, and Angelo Poliziano lifts up his hands.

Does one ever regret, I wonder, after looking at these realistic fifteenth-century works, that the frescoes of Orcagna—for he painted the whole choir—were destroyed in a storm, it is said, in 1358. Fragments of his work, however, we are told, remained for more than a hundred years, till, indeed, Ghirlandajo was employed to replace them. We find his work, however, sadly damaged it is true, and really his perhaps only in outline, in the Strozzi chapel here, the lofty chapel of north transept, where he has painted on the wall facing the entrance the Last Judgment, while to the left you may see Paradise, to the right the Inferno. The pupil of Giotto and of Andrea Pisano, Orcagna is the most important artist of his time, the one vital link in the chain that unites Masolino with Giotto. He was a universal artist, practising as an architect and goldsmith no less than as a painter. In the Last Judgment in this chapel he seems not only to have absorbed the whole art of his time, but to have advanced it; for to the grandeur and force of his work he added a certain visionary loveliness that most surely already foretells Beato Angelico. If in the Paradise and the Inferno we are less moved by the greatness of his achievement, we remind ourselves how terribly they have suffered from damp, from neglect, from the restorer. In the altar-piece itself we have perhaps the only "intact painting" of his remaining to us, and splendid as it is in colour and form, it lacks something of the rhythm of the frescoes that like some slow and solemn chant fill the chapel with their sincere unforgettable music.

As you pass, beckoned by a friar, into the half-ruined cloisters below S. Maria Novella, you come on your right into a little alley of tombs, behind which, on the wall, you may find two bits of fresco by Giotto, the Meeting of S. Joachim and S. Anna at the Golden Gate, and the Birth of the Virgin. On your left you pass into the Chiostro Verde, where Paolo Uccello has painted scenes from the Old Testament in a sort of green monotone, for once without enthusiasm. Above you and around you rises the old convent and the great tower; there, in the far corner, perhaps

Page 156

a friar plays with a little cat, here a pigeon flutters under the arches about the little ruined space of grass, the meagre grass of the south, where now and then the shadow of a white cloud passes over the city, whither who knows. For a moment in that silent place you wonder why you have come, you feel half inclined to go back into the church, when shyly the friar comes towards you, and, leading you round the cloister, enters the Cappellina degli Spagnuoli.

How much has been written in praise of the frescoes in the Spanish chapel of S. Maria Novella, where Eleonora of Toledo, the wife of Grand Duke Cosimo, used to hear Mass; yet how disappointing they are. In so simple a building, some great artist, you might think, in listening to Ruskin, had really expressed himself, his thoughts about Faith and the triumph of the Church. But the work which we find there is the work of mediocrities, poor craftsmen too, the pupils and imitators of the Sienese and Florentine schools of their time, having nothing in common with the excellent work of Taddeo Gaddi, the beautiful work of Simone Martini of Siena. These figures, so pretty and so ineffectual, which have been labelled here the Triumph of St. Thomas Aquinas, there the Triumph of the Church, have no existence for us as painting; they have passed into literature, and in the pages of Ruskin have found a new beauty that for the first time has given them some semblance of life.

FOOTNOTES:

[102] Mysterious no longer. For in the autumn of 1907 the chapel was destroyed by fools and the Madonna—just an old panel picture after all—set up in the cold daylight (1908).

[103] Crowe and Cavalcaselle, *op. cit.* vol. i, 187.

XVII. FLORENCE

S. CROCE

The Piazza di S. Croce, in which stands the great Franciscan church of Florence, is still almost as it was in the sixteenth century when the Palazzo del Borgo on the southern side was painted in fresco by the facile brush of Passignano; but whatever charm so old and storied a place might have had for us, for here Giuliano de' Medici fought in a tournament under the eyes of La Bella Simonetta, and here, too, the Giuoco del Calcio was played, it is altogether spoiled and ruined, not only by the dishonouring statue of Dante, which for some unexplained reason has here found a resting-place, but by the

crude and staring facade of the church itself, a pretentious work of modern Italy, which lends to what was of old the gayest Piazza in the city, the very aspect of a cemetery.

Page 157

Not long before the end of the thirteenth century, a little shrine of St. Anthony stood where now we may see the great Church of S. Croce, in the midst of the marshes, as it is said, that waste land which in the Middle Age seems to have surrounded every city in Italy. It belonged, as did the land round about, to a certain family called Altafronte, who appear to have presented it to the friars of the neighbouring convent of Franciscans just outside Porta S. Gallo. St. Francis being dead, and the strictness of his rule relaxed, the first stone of the great Church of S. Croce was laid on Holy Cross Day, 1297. Arnolfo, the architect of the Duomo, was the first builder here, till later Giotto was appointed. The church itself is in the form of a tau cross, the eastern end on both sides of the choir consisting of twelve chapels scarcely less deep than the choir and tiny apse, itself a chapel of St. Anthony. The wide and spacious nave, with two aisles, could doubtless hold half the city, as perhaps it did when Fra Francesco of Montepulciano preached here in the early years of the sixteenth century just after the death of Savonarola. And indeed the very real beauty of the church consists in just that splendour of space and light which so few seem to have cared for, but which seems to me certainly in Italy the most precious thing in the world. And then S. Croce is really the Pantheon, as it were, of the city; the golden twilight of S. Maria Novella even would seem too gloomy for the resting-place of heroes. Already before the sixteenth century it had been here that Florence had set up the banners of those she delighted to honour. And though Cosimo I destroyed them when he let Vasari so unfortunately have his way with the church, some remembrance of the glory that of old hung about her seems to have lingered, for here Michelangelo was buried, under a heavy monument by Vasari, and close by Vittorio Alfieri lies in a tomb carved by Canova at the request of the Duchess of Albany. Not far away you come upon the grave of Niccolo Machiavelli, the statesman, and beside it the monument erected to his memory in the eighteenth century. And then here too you find the beautiful tomb of Leonardo Bruni, one of the first great scholars of the modern world, and secretary to the Republic, who died in 1443. It is the masterpiece of Bernardo Rossellino (1409-1464), achieved at the end of the early Renaissance, and forming the very style of such things for those sculptors who came after him. It is true that the lunette of Madonna is a little feeble and without life, though some have given it falsely to Verrocchio, and the two angioloni bearing the arms have little force; but the tomb itself is a thing done once and for all, and the figure of the dead poet is certainly the masterpiece of a man who was perhaps the first sculptor in marble of his time. If we compare it for a moment with the lovely Annunciation of Donatello (1386-1466) on the other side of the gateway, where for once that

Page 158

strong and fearless artist seems to have contented himself with beauty, we shall understand better the achievement of Rossellino; and though it were difficult to imagine a more lovely thing than that Annunciation set there by the Cavalcanti, with the winged wreath of Victory beneath it to commemorate their part in the victory of Florence over Pisa in 1406, as a piece of architecture Rossellino's work is as much better than this earlier design of Donatello's as in every other respect his work falls below it. Covered with all sorts of lovely ornament, the frame supports an elaborate and splendid cornice on which six children stand, three grouped on either side, playing with garlands. And within the frame, as though seen through some magic doorway, Madonna, about to leave her prayers, has been stopped by the message of the angel, who has not yet fallen on his knees. It is as though one had come upon the very scene itself suddenly at sunset on some summer day.

If the tomb of Leonardo Bruni is the masterpiece of Bernardo Rossellino, the tomb of Carlo Marsuppini, the humanist, Bruni's successor as secretary to the Republic, placed in the north aisle exactly opposite, is no less the masterpiece of another of Donatello's friends, Desiderio da Settignano (1428-1464). Standing as they were to do, face to face across the church, no doubt Desiderio was instructed to follow as closely as might be the general design of Rossellino. On a rich bed Marsuppini lies, a figure full of sweetness and strength, while under is the carved tomb, supported by the feet of lions, and borne by a winged shell. On either side two children bear his arms, figures so naive and lovely that, as it seems to me, Luca della Robbia in his happiest moment might have thought of them almost in despair. Above, under a splendid canopy of flowers and fruit, in a tondo, severe and simple, is Madonna with Our Lord, and on either side an angel bows half-smiling, half-weeping, while without stand two youths of tender age, slender and full of grace, but strong enough to bear the great garland of fruits with lovely and splendid gestures of confidence and expectancy. Before the tomb in the pavement is a plaque of marble also from the hand of Desiderio, and here Gregorio Marsuppini, Carlo's father, lies: other similar works of his you may find here and there in the church.

Scattered through the two aisles and the nave are many modern monuments and tablets to famous Italians, Dante who lies at Ravenna, Galileo, Alberti, Mazzini, Rossini, and the rest; they have but little interest. It is not only in the aisles, however, that we find the work of the Florentine sculptors. Galileo Galilei, an ancestor of the great astronomer, is buried in the nave at the west end, under a carved tombstone enthusiastically praised by Ruskin. And then on the first pillar on the right we find the work of Bernardo Rossellino's youngest brother Antonio (1427-1478), who, under the influence of Desiderio

Page 159

da Settignano, has carved there a relief of Madonna and Child, surrounded by a garland of cherubim lovely and fair. Antonio Rossellino's work is scattered all over Tuscany, in Prato, in Empoli, in Pistoja, and we shall find it even in such far-away places as Naples and Forli. His masterpiece, however, the beautiful tomb of the Cardinal of Portugal, is in the Church of S. Miniato al Monte, of which I shall speak later.

It was another and younger pupil of Desiderio's, Benedetto da Maiano (1442-1497), who made the beautiful pulpit to the order of that Pietro Mellini, whose bust, also from his hand, is now in the Bargello. It is the most beautiful pulpit in all Italy, splendid alike in its decoration and its construction. It seems doubtful whether the pulpit itself is not earlier than the five reliefs of the life of St. Francis which surround it—The Confirmation of the Order by the Pope, the Test by Fire before the Sultan, the Stigmata, the Death of St. Francis, and the Persecution of the Order. These were carved in 1474, and for the life and charm which they possess are perhaps Benedetto's finest work. In the beautiful niches below he has set some delightful statuettes, representing Faith, Hope, Charity, Fortitude, and Justice.

Passing now into the south transept, we come to the great chapel of the Blessed Sacrament, with its spoiled frescoes of the stories of St. John Baptist, St. John the Divine, St. Nicholas and St. Anthony; while here, too, is the tomb of the Duchess of Albany, who was the wife of the Young Pretender, and who loved Alfieri the poet, whose monument, as we have seen, she caused Canova to make.

The south transept ends in the Baroncelli Chapel, which "between the close of December 1332 and the first days of August 1338," Taddeo Gaddi painted in fresco. [104] Giotto died in 1337, and Taddeo, who had served under him, seems to have been content to carry on his practice without bringing any originality of his own to the work. What Taddeo could assimilate of Giotto's manner he most patiently reproduced, so that his work, never anything but a sort of imitation, threatens to overwhelm in its own mediocrity much of the achievement of his master. The beautiful and sincere work of Giotto in him degenerates into a mannerism, a mannerism that the people of his own day seem to have appreciated quite as much as the living work of Giotto himself. Taddeo, trained by his master in the Giottesque manner, became its most patient champion, and practising an art that was in his hands little better than a craft, he finds himself understood, and when Giotto is not available very naturally takes his place. Here in S. Croce, a church in which Giotto himself had worked, we find Taddeo's work everywhere: over the door of the Sacristy he painted Christ and the Doctors; in the Cappella di S. Andrea, the stories of St. Peter and St. Andrew; in the Bellacci chapel, too, and above all in this the chapel of the Baroncelli family. But when Giotto, being long dead, other and newer painters arose, Taddeo's work, out of fashion at last, suffered the oblivion of whitewash, sharing this fate with some of the best work in Italy: so that there is to-day but little left of it in S. Croce save these frescoes, where he has painted, not

without a certain vigour and almost a gift for composition, the story of the Blessed Virgin.

Page 160

Close by, without the chapel, is a very beautiful monument the school of Niccolo Pisano; passing this and entering the great door of the Sacristy, we come into a corridor and thence into the Sacristy itself, which Vasari covered with whitewash. Built in the fourteenth century, it is divided into two parts by a grating of exquisitely wrought iron of the same period. Behind this grating is the Rinuccini chapel, painted in fresco by a pupil of Taddeo Gaddi, Giovanni da Milano, in whose work we may discern, in spite of the rigid convention of his master, something sincere, a lightness and grace and even perhaps a certain reliance on Nature, which the authority of Giotto had spoiled for Taddeo himself. It is the stories of the Blessed Virgin and of St. Mary Magdalen that he has set himself to tell, with an infinite detail that a little confuses his really fine and sincere work. Repainted though they be, something of their original beauty may still be found there, their simplicity and homely realism.

At the end of the corridor is the chapel which Cosimo de' Medici, Pater Patriae caused Michelozzo to build for his delight. Over the altar is one of the loveliest works of the della Robbia school, a Madonna and Child, between St. Anthony of Padua, St. Elizabeth of Hungary, St. John Baptist, St. Laurence, St. Louis of Toulouse, and St. Francis; while on the wall is a later work of the same school, after a work by Verrocchio, where Madonna holds her Son in her arms; and opposite is another work by a Tuscan sculptor, a Tabernacle, by Mino da Fiesole (1431-1484), who certainly has loved the gracious marbles of Desiderio da Settignano. The picture of the Coronation of the Virgin beside this Tabernacle, once the altar-piece of the Baroncelli Chapel, a genuine work of Giotto's, as it is thought, is tender in feeling and magnificent in arrangement and composition. Full of a grave earnestness and full of ardent life,—mark the eagerness of those clouds of Saints,—it is worthy of the painter of the tribune of the Lower Church at Assisi.

Returning now to the church itself, we begin our examination of those twelve chapels, which with the choir form the eastern end of S. Croce. The first three chapels have little interest, but the two nearest the choir, Cappella Peruzzi and Cappella Bardi, were both painted in fresco by Giotto, his work there being among the best of his paintings.

The Peruzzi Chapel was built by the powerful family that name, who had already done much for S. Croce, when about 1307 they employed Giotto to decorate these walls with frescoes of the story of St. John Baptist and St. John the Divine. In 1714, the new Vasari tells us,[105] and, indeed, we may read as much on the floor of the chapel itself, Bartolommeo di Simone Peruzzi caused the place to be restored, and it was then, as we may suppose, that the work of Giotto was covered with whitewash. It was in 1841 that the Dance of Herodias was discovered, and the whitewash not very carefully, perhaps, removed, and by 1863 the rest of the frescoes here were brought to light. In their original brightness they formed probably "the finest series of frescoes which Giotto ever produced"; but the hand of the restorer has spoiled them utterly, so that only the shadow of their former beauty remains, amid much that is hard or unpleasing.

Page 161

On the left we see the story of St. John Baptist; above, the Angel announces to Zacharias the birth of a son; and, with I know not what mastery of his art, Giotto tells us of it with a simplicity and perfection beyond praise. If we consider the work merely as a composition, it is difficult to imagine anything more lovely; and then how beautiful and full of life is the angel who has entered so softly into the Holy of Holies, not altogether without dismay to the high priest, who, busy swinging his censer before the altar, has suddenly looked up and seen a vision. Below, we see the Birth of St. John Baptist, where Elizabeth is a little troubled, it may be, about her dumb husband, to whom the child has been brought. An old man with an eager and noble gesture seems to argue with Zacharias, holding the child the while by the shoulder, and Zacharias writes the name on his knee. Below this again is the Dance of Herodias, the first of these frescoes to be uncovered and ruined in the process. But even yet, in the perfect grouping of the figures, the splendour of the viol player, the frightened gaze of the servants, we may still see the very hand of Giotto.

But it is in the frescoes on the right wall that Giotto is seen at his highest: it is the story of St. John the Divine; above he dreams on Patmos, below he raises Drusiana at the Gate of Ephesus, and is himself received into heaven. Damaged though they be, there is nothing in all Italian art more fundamental, more simple, or more living than these frescoes. It is true that the Dream of St. John is almost ruined, and what we see to-day is very far from being what Giotto painted, but in the Raising of Drusiana and in the Ascension of St. John we find a grandeur and force that are absent from painting till Giotto's time, and for very many years after his death. The restorer has done his best to obliterate all trace of Giotto's achievement, especially in the fresco of Drusiana, but in spite of him we may see here Giotto's very work, the essence of it at any rate, its intention and the variety of his powers of expressing himself.

The chapel nearest the choir was built by Ridolfo de' Bardi, it is said, sometime after 1310,[106] and it was for him that Giotto painted there the story of St. Francis; while on the ceiling he has painted the three Franciscan virtues, Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience, and in the fourth space has set St. Francis in Glory, as he had done in a different manner at Assisi.

After the enthusiastic pages of Ruskin,[107] to describe these frescoes, beautiful still, in spite of their universal restoration, would be superfluous. It will be enough to refer the reader to his pages, and to add the subjects of the series. Above, on the left wall, St. Francis renounces his father, while below he appears to the brethren at Arles, and under this we see his death. On the left above, Pope Honorius gives him his Rule, and below, he challenges the pagan priests to the test of the fire before the Sultan, and appears to Gregory IX, who had thought to deny that he received the Stigmata. Beside the window Giotto has painted four great Franciscans, St. Louis of Toulouse, St. Clare, St. Louis of France, and St. Elizabeth of Hungary. All these frescoes in the Bardi Chapel are much more damaged by restoration than those in Cappella Peruzzi.

Page 162

In the choir, behind the high altar, Agnolo Gaddi, one of the two sons of Taddeo, has painted, with a charm and brightness of colour that hide the poor design, the story of the Holy Cross. It was at the request of Jacopo degli Alberti that Agnolo painted these eight frescoes, where the angel gives a branch of the Tree of Life from Eden to Seth, whom Adam, feeling his death at hand, had sent on this errand. Seth returns, however, only to find Adam dead, and the branch is planted on his grave. Then in the course of ages that branch grows to a tree, is hewn down, and, as the Queen of Sheba passes on her way to King Solomon, the carpenters are striving to cut this wood for the Temple, but they reject it and throw it into the Pool of Bethesda. And this rejected tree was at length hewn into the Cross of Our Lord. Then comes Queen Helena to seek that blessed wood, and finding the three crosses, and in ignorance which was that of Our Lord, commands that the dead body of a youth which is borne by shall be touched with them all, one after another. So they find the True Cross, for at its touch the dead rises from his bier. Then they bear the cross before the Queen: till presently it is lost to Chosroes, King of Persia, who took Jerusalem "in the year of Our Lord six hundred and fifteen," and bare away with him that part of the Holy Cross which St. Helena had left there. So he made a tower of gold and of silver, crusted with precious stones, and set the Cross of Our Lord before him, and commanded that he should be called God. Then Heraclius, the Emperor, went out against him by the river of Danube, and they fought the one with the other upon the bridge, and agreed together that the victor should be prince of the whole Empire: and God gave the victory to Heraclius, who bore the Cross into Jerusalem. So Agnolo Gaddi has painted the story in the choir of S. Croce.

In the chapels on the north side of the choir there is but little of interest. And then one is a little weary of frescoes. If we return to the south aisle and pass through the door between the Annunciation of Donatello and the tomb of Leonardo Bruni, we shall come into the beautiful cloisters of Arnolfo, where there will be sunshine and the soft sky. Here, too, is the beautiful Cappellone that Brunellesco built for the Pazzi family, whose arms decorate the porch. Under a strange and beautiful dome, which, as Burckhardt reminds us, Giuliano da Sangallo imitated in Madonna delle Carceri at Prato, Brunellesco has built a chapel in the form almost of a Greek cross. And without, before it, he has set, under a vaulted roof, a portico borne by columns, interrupted by a round arch. It is the earliest example, perhaps, of the new Renaissance architecture. Very fair and surprising it is with its frieze of angels' heads by Donatello, helped perhaps by Desiderio da Settignano. Within, too, you come upon Donatello's work again, in the Four Evangelists in the spandrels, and below them the Twelve Apostles.

Page 163

Walking in the cloisters, you find the great ancient refectory of the convent itself, which has here been turned into a museum, while another part of it is used as a barracks; and indeed the finest cloister of the Early Renaissance, one of the loveliest works of Brunellesco, has also been given up to the army of Italy. The museum contains much that, in its removal here or dilapidation, has lost nearly all its interest. The beautiful fresco of St. Eustace, said to be the work of Andrea Castagno, is yet full of delight, while here and there amid these old crucifixes, tabernacles, and frescoes, by pupils of Giotto long forgotten, something will charm you by its sincerity or naive beauty, so that you will forget, if only for a moment, the destruction that has befallen all around you; the convent that once housed S. Bernardino of Siena, now noisy with conscripts, the library housed in another convent, Dominican once, that like this has become a museum and public monument of vandalism and rapacity.

FOOTNOTES:

[104] Cf. Crowe and Gavalcaselle, *op. cit.* vol. ii. p. 124.

[105] Crowe and Cavalcaselle, *op. cit.* vol. ii. p. 77.

[106] Crowe and Cavalcaselle, *op. cit.* vol. ii. p. 81.

[107] *Mornings in Florence*, by John Ruskin.

XVIII. FLORENCE

S. LORENZO

Something of the eager, restless desire for beauty, for antique beauty, so characteristic of the fifteenth century—for the security and strength of just that, may be found in S. Lorenzo and S. Spirito, those two churches which we owe to the genius of Brunellesco, and in them we seem to find the negation, as it were, of the puritan spirit, of all that the Convent of S. Marco had come to mean: as though when, one day at dawn, the peasants ploughing in some little valley in the hills, had come upon the gleaming white body of the witch Venus, in burning the precious statue which had lain so long in the earth, they had not been able altogether to destroy the spirit, free at last, which in the cool twilight had escaped them to wander about the city. It is the spirit of Rome you come upon in S. Lorenzo, the old Rome of the Basilicas, that were but half Christian after all, and, still in ruin, seem to remember the Gods.

A church has stood where S. Lorenzo stands certainly since pagan times, for at the beginning of the fourth century, one Giuliana, who had three daughters but no son, vowed a church to St. Laurence if he would grant her a son; and a son being born to her she founded S. Lorenzo, and called the child Laurence for praise. St. Ambrose is said

to have come from Milan to consecrate the place, bringing with him certain relics, the bones of S. Agnola and S. Vitale, victims of the pagans which he had found in Bologna; while for sixty years, till 490, the body of S. Zenobio lay here. In those

Page 164

days, and until the last years of the eleventh century, S. Lorenzo stood without the walls, and when Cosimo came back to Florence, the old church, which had fallen into decay, was already being rebuilt, Giovanni di Bicci de' Medici, with others, having given the work to Brunellesco. Filippo Brunellesco, however, had got no farther, it seems, than the Sagrestia Vecchia when he died, while Antonio Manetti, who succeeded him as architect, changed somewhat his design. The church was consecrated at last in 1461, some three years before the death of Cosimo, who lies before the high altar.

It is really as the resting-place of the Medici that we have come to consider S. Lorenzo, for here lie not only Giovanni di Bicci and Piccarda, the parents of Cosimo Pater Patriae, and Cosimo himself, but Piero and Giovanni his sons, while in the new sacristy lie Giuliano and Lorenzo il Magnifico his grandsons, and their namesakes Giuliano Duc de Nemours and Lorenzo Due d'Urbino; and in the Cappella dei Principi, built in 1604 by Matteo Nigetti, lie the Grand Dukes from Cosimo I to Cosimo III, the rulers of Florence and Tuscany from the sixteenth to the beginning of the eighteenth centuries.

The church itself is in the form of a Latin cross, consisting of nave and aisles and transepts, the nave being covered with a flat coffered ceiling, though the aisles are vaulted. Along the aisles are square chapels, scarcely more than recesses, and above the great doors is a chapel supported by pillars, a design of Michelangelo, who was to have built the facade for Leo X, but, after infinite thought and work in the marble mountains, the Pope bade him abandon it in 1519. For many years a single pillar, the only one that ever came to Florence of all those hewn for the church in Pietrasanta, lay forlorn in the Piazza.

Those chapels that flank the aisles have to-day but little interest for us, here and there a picture or a piece of sculpture, but nothing that will keep us for more than a moment from the chapels of the transept, the work of Desiderio da Settignano, of Verrocchio, and, above all, of Donatello. It is all unaware to the tomb of this the greatest sculptor, and in many ways the most typical artist, Florence ever produced, that we come, when, standing in front of the high altar, we read the inscription on that simple slab of stone which marks the tomb of Cosimo Vecchio; for Donatello lies in the same vault with his great patron. A modern monument in the Martelli Chapel, where the beautiful Annunciation by Lippo Lippi hangs under a crucifix by Cellini, in the left transept, commemorates him; but he needs no such reminder here, for about us is his beautiful and unforgettable work: not perhaps the two ambones, which he only began on his return from Padua when he was sixty-seven years old, and which were finished by his pupils Bertoldo and Bellano, but the work in the old sacristy built in 1421 by Brunellesco. How rough is the modelling

Page 165

in the ambone reliefs, as though really, as Bandinelli has said, the sight of the old sculptor was failing; and yet, in spite of age and the intervention of his pupils, how his genius asserts itself in a certain rhythm and design in these tragic panels, where, under a frieze of dancing *putti*,—loves or angels I know not,—of bulls and horses, he has carved the Agony in the Garden, Christ before Pilate, and again before Caiaphas, the Crucifixion, the Deposition, in the southern ambone; while in the northern we find the Descent into Hades, where John Baptist welcomes our Lord, who draws forth Adam, and, as Dante records, Abel too, and Noah, Moses, Abraham, and David, Isaac and Jacob and his sons, not without Rachel, *E altri molti, e fecegli beati*, the Resurrection and the Ascension, the Maries at the Tomb, the Pentecost. It is another and very different work you come upon in the Cantoria, which, lovely though it be, seems to be rather for a sermon than for singing, so cold it is, and yet full enough of his perfect feeling for construction, for architecture. It has a rhythm of its own, but it is the rhythm of prose, not of poetry.

The old sacristy, which is full of him—for indeed all the decorative work seems to be his—is one of the first buildings of the Renaissance, the beautiful work of Filippo Brunelleschi. Covered by a polygonal dome, the altar itself stands under another dome, low and small; and everywhere Donatello has added beauty to beauty, the two friends for once combining to produce a masterpiece, though not, as it is said, without certain differences between them. “Donatello undertook to decorate the sacristy of S. Lorenzo in stucco for Cosimo de’ Medici,” Vasari tells us. “In the angles of the ceiling he executed four medallions, the ornaments of which were partly painted in perspective, partly stories of the Evangelists[108] in basso-relievo. In the same place he made two doors of bronze in basso-relievo of most exquisite workmanship: on these doors he represented the apostles, martyrs, and confessors, and above these are two shallow niches, in one of which are S. Lorenzo and S. Stefano; in the other, S. Cosimo and S. Damiano.” The sacristy, according to Vasari, was the first work proceeded with in the church. Cosimo took so much pleasure in it that he was almost always himself present, and such was his eagerness, that while Brunellesco built the sacristy, he made Donatello prepare the ornaments in stucco, “with the stone decorations of the small doors and the doors of bronze.” And it is in these bronze doors that, as it seems to me, you have Donato at his best, full of energy and life, yet never allowing himself for a moment to forget that he was a sculptor, that his material was bronze and had many and various beauties of its own, which it was his business to express. There are two doors, one on each side of the altar, and these doors are made in two parts, and each part is divided into five panels. With

Page 166

a loyalty and apprehension of the fitness of things really beyond praise, Donatello has here tried to do nothing that was outside the realm of sculpture. It was not for him to make the Gates of Paradise, but the gates of a sacristy in S. Lorenzo. His work is in direct descent from the work of the earliest Italian sculptors, a legitimate and very beautiful development of their work within the confines of an art which was certainly sufficient to itself. Consider, then, the naturalism of that figure who opens his book on his knees so suddenly and with such energy; or again, the exquisite reluctance of him who in the topmost panel turns away from the preaching of the apostle. Certainly here you have work that is simple, sincere, full of life and energy, and is beautiful just because it is perfectly fitting and without affectation.[109] In one of the two small rooms which are on each side of the sacristy, having the altar between them, Brunellesco by Cosimo's orders made a well. Here, Vasari tells us later, Donato placed a marble lavatory, on which Andrea Verrocchio also worked; but the Lavabo we find there to-day seems very doubtfully Donatello's.

In the centre of the sacristy itself, Vasari tells us, Cosimo caused the tomb of his father Giovanni to be made beneath a broad slab of marble, supported by four columns; and in the same place he made a sepulchre for his family, wherein he separated the tombs of the men from those of the women. But again this work too seems, in spite of Vasari, to belong rather uncertainly to Donatello. It is very rare to find a detached tomb in Italy, and rarer still to find it under a table, where it is very difficult to see it properly, and the care and beauty that have been spent upon it might seem to be wasted. It is perhaps rather Buggiano's hand than Donato's we see even in so beautiful a thing as this, which Donatello may well have designed. The beautiful bust of S. Lorenzo over the doorway is, however, the authentic work of Donato himself. Full of eagerness, S. Lorenzo looks up as though to answer some request, and to grant it.

The splendid porphyry sarcophagus set in bronze before a bronze screen of great beauty, by Verocchio, is certainly one of the finest things here. Every leaf and curl of the foliage seem instinct with some splendid life, seem to tremble almost with the fierceness of their vitality. There lie Giovanni and Piero de' Medici, the uncle and father of Lorenzo il Magnifico. Close by you may see a relief of Cosimo Vecchio, their father.

The cloisters, where Lorenzo walked often enough, are beautiful, and then from them one passes so easily into the Laurentian Library, founded by Cosimo Vecchio, and treasured and added to by Piero and Lorenzo il Magnifico, but scattered and partly destroyed by the vandalism and futile stupidity of Savonarola and his puritans in 1494. Savonarola, however, was a cleverer demagogue than our Oliver (it is well to remember that he was a Dominican), for he persuaded

Page 167

the Signoria to let him have such of the MSS. as he could find for the library of S. Marco. The honour of such a person is perhaps not worth discussing, but we may remind ourselves what Cosimo had done for S. Marco, and how he had built the library there. In 1508 the friars turned these stolen goods into money, selling them back to Cardinal Giovanni de' Medici, who was soon to be Leo X, who carried them to Rome. Cardinal Giulio de' Medici, later Clement VII, presented Leo's collection to the Laurentian Library, which he had bidden Michelangelo to rebuild. This was interrupted by the unfortunate business of 1527, and it was not till Cosimo I came that the library was finished. Perhaps the most precious thing here is the Pandects of Justinian, taken by the Pisans from Amalfi in 1135, and seized by the Florentines when they took Pisa in 1406. Amalfi prized these above everything she possessed, Pisa was ready to defend them with her life, Florence spent hundreds of thousands of florins to possess herself of them—for in them was thought to lie the secret of the law of Rome. Who knows what Italy, under the heel of the barbarian, does not owe to these faded pages, and through Italy the world? They were, as it were, the symbol of Latin civilisation in the midst of German barbarism. Here too is that most ancient Virgil which the French stole in 1804. Here is Petrarch's Horace and a Dante transcribed by Villani; and, best of all, the only ancient codex in the world of what remains to us of Aeschylus, of what is left of Sophocles. It is in such a place that we may best recognise the true greatness of the abused Medici. Tyrants they may have been, but when the mob was tyrant it satisfied itself with destroying what they with infinite labour had gathered together for the advancement of learning, the civilisation of the world. What, then, was that Savonarola whom all have conspired to praise, whose windy prophecies, whose blasphemous cursings men count as so precious? In truth in his fashion he was but a tyrant too—a tyrant, and a poor one, and therefore the more dangerous, the more disastrous. To the Medici we owe much of what is most beautiful in Florence—the loveliest work of Botticelli, of Brunellesco, of Donatello, of Lippo Lippi, of Michelangelo, and the rest, to say nothing of such a priceless collection of books and MSS. as this. Is, then, the work of Marsilio Ficino nothing, the labours of a thousand forgotten humanists? What do we owe to Savonarola? He burnt the pictures which to his sensual mind suggested its own obscenity; he stole the MSS., and no doubt would have destroyed them too, to write instead his own rhetorical and extraordinary denunciations of what he did not understand. Who can deny that when he proposed to give freedom to Florence he was dreaming of a new despotism, the despotism, if not of himself, of that Jesus whom he believed had inspired him, and on whom he turned in his rage? That he was brave we know, but so was Cataline; that he believed

Page 168

in himself we like to believe, and so did Arius of Alexandria; that he carried the people with him is certain, and so did they who crucified Jesus; but that he was a turbulent fellow, a puritan, a vandal, a boaster, a wind-bag, a discredited prophet, and a superstitious failure, we also know, as he doubtless did at last, when the wild beast he had roused had him by the throat, and burnt him in the fire he had invoked. His political ideas were beneath contempt; they were insincere, as he proved, and they were merely an excuse for riot. He bade, or is said to have bidden, Lorenzo restore her liberty to Florence. When, then, had Florence possessed this liberty, of which all these English writers who sentimentalise over this unique and unfortunate Ferrarese traitor speak with so much feeling and awe? Florence had never possessed political liberty of any sort whatever; she was ruled by the great families, by the guilds, by an oligarchy, by a despot. She was never free till she lost herself in Italy in 1860. Socially she was freer under the Medici than she was before or has been since.[110] In the production of unique personalities a sort of social freedom is necessary, and Florence under the earlier Medici might seem to have produced more of such men than any other city or state in the history of the world, saving Athens in the time of the despot Pericles. The happiest period in the history of Athens was that in which he was master, even as the greatest and most fortunate years in the history of the Florentine state were those in which Cosimo, Piero, and Lorenzo ruled in Florence. And when at last Lorenzo died, the Pope saw very clearly that on that day had passed away "the peace of Italy." It is to the grave of this great and unique man you come when leaving the cloisters of S. Lorenzo, and passing round the church into Piazza Madonna, you enter the Cappella Medicea, and, ascending the stairs on the left, find again on the left the new sacristy, built in 1519 by Michelangelo. Lorenzo lies with his murdered brother Giuliano, who fell under the daggers of the Pazzi on that Easter morning in the Duomo, between the two splendid and terrible tombs of his successors, under an unfinished monument facing the altar; a beautiful Madonna and Child, an unfinished work by Michelangelo, and the two Medici Saints, S. Damian by Raffaello da Montelupo, and S. Cosmas by Montorsoli. It is not, however, this humble and almost nameless grave that draws us to-day to the Sagrestia Nuova, but the monument carved by Michelangelo for two lesser and later Medici: Giuliano, Duc de Nemours, who died in 1516, and Lorenzo, Duc d'Urbino, who died in 1519. When Lorenzo il Magnifico died at Careggi in April 1492, he left seven children: Giovanni, who became Leo X; Piero, who succeeded him and went into exile; Giuliano, who returned; Lucrezia, who married Giacomo Salviati, and was grandmother of Cosimo I; Contessina, who married Piero Ridolfi; Maddalena, who married Francesco Cibo;

Page 169

and Maria, whom Michelangelo is said to have loved. Lorenzo's successor, Piero, did not long retain the power his father had left him; he was vain and impetuous, and, trying to rule without the Signoria, placed Pisa and Livorno in the hands of Charles VIII of France, who was on his carnival way to Naples. Savonarola chased him out, and sacked the treasures of his house. He died in exile. It was his brother Giuliano who returned, Savonarola being executed in 1512. Giuliano was a better ruler than his brother, but he behaved like a despot till his brother Giovanni became Pope, when he resigned the government of Florence to his nephew Lorenzo, the son of Piero, and while he became Gonfaloniere of Rome and Archbishop, Lorenzo became Duke of Urbino and father of Catherine de' Medici of France. It is this Giuliano and Lorenzo de Medici that Michelangelo has immortalised with an everlasting gesture of sorrow and contempt. On the right is the tomb of Giuliano, and over it he sits for ever as a general of the Church; on the left is Lorenzo's dust, coffered in imperishable marble, over which he sits plotting for ever. The statues that Michelangelo has carved there have been called Night and Day, Twilight and Dawn; but indeed these names, as I have said, are far too definite for them: they are just a gesture of despair, of despair of a world which has come to nothing. They are in no real sense of the word political, but rather an expression, half realised after all, of some immense sadness, some terrible regret, which has fallen upon the soul of one who had believed in righteousness and freedom, and had found himself deceived. It is not the house of Medici that there sees its own image of despair, but rather Florence, which had been content that such things should be. Some obscure and secret sorrow has for a moment overwhelmed the soul of the great poet in thinking of Florence, of the world, of the hearts of men, and as though trying to explain to himself his own melancholy and indignation, he has carved these statues, to which men have given the names of the most tremendous and the most sweet of natural things—Night and Day, Twilight and Dawn; and even as in the Sistine Chapel Michelangelo has thought only of Life,—of the Creation of Man, of the Judgment of the World, which is really the Resurrection,—so here he has thought only of Death, of the death of the body, of the soul, and of the wistful life of the disembodied spirit that wanders disconsolate, who knows where?—that sleeps uneasily, who knows how long?

FOOTNOTES:

[108] Not of the Evangelists, but of St. John: the medallions are the Four Evangelists.

[109] See *Donatello*, by Lord Balcarres, p. 136 (London, 1904), where a long comparison is made of the doors of Donatello, Ghiberti, and Luca della Robbia.

[110] Even politically, too, as Guicciardini tells us.

XIX. FLORENCE

Page 170

CHURCHES NORTH OF ARNO: OGNISSANTI—S. TRINITA—SS. APOSTOLI—S. STEFANO—BADIA—S. PIERO—S. AMBROGIO—S. MARIA MADDALENA DE' PAZZI—ANNUNZIATA—OSPEDALE DEGLI INNOCENTI—LO SCALZO—S. APOLLONIA—S. ONOFRIO—S. SALVI

To pass through Florence for the most part by the old ways, from church to church, is too often like visiting forgotten shrines in a museum. Something seems to have been lost in these quiet places; it is but rarely after all that they retain anything of the simplicity which once made them holy. To their undoing, they have been found in possession of some beautiful thing which may be shown for money, and so some of them have ceased altogether to exist as churches or chapels or convents; you find yourself walking through them as through a gallery, and if you should so far forget yourself as to uncover your head, some official will eagerly nudge you and say, "It is not necessary for the signore to bare his head: here is no longer a church, but a public monument." A public monument! But indeed, as we know, the Italian "public" is no longer capable of building anything that is beautiful. If it is a bridge they need, it is not such a one as the Trinita that will be built, but some hideous structure of iron, as in Pisa, Venice, and Rome. If it is a monument they wish to carve, they will destroy numberless infinitely precious things, and express themselves as vulgarly as the Germans could do, as in the monument of Vittorio Emmanuele at Rome, which is founded on the ruined palaces of nobles, the convents of the poor. If it is a Piazza they must make, they are no longer capable of building such place as Piazza Signoria, but prefer a hideous and disgusting clearing, such as Piazza Vittorio Emmanuele in Florence. How often have I sat at the little cafe there on the far side of the square, wondering why the house of Savoy should have brought this vandalism from Switzerland. Nor is this strange monarchy content with broken promises and stolen dowries; in its grasping barbarism it must rename the most famous and splendid ways of Italy after itself: thus the Corso of Rome has become Corso Umberto Primo, and we live in daily expectation that Piazza Signoria of Florence will become Piazza Vittorio Emmanuele II. If that has not yet befallen, it is surely an oversight; the Government has been so busy renaming Roman places—the Villa Borghese, for instance—that Florence has so far nearly escaped. Not altogether, however: beyond the Carraja bridge, just before the Pescaia in the Piazza Manin, is the suppressed convent (now a barracks) of the Humiliati, that democratic brotherhood which improved the manufacture of wool almost throughout Italy. What has the Venetian Jew, Daniel Manin, to do with them? Yet he is remembered by means of a bad statue, while the Humiliati and the Franciscans are forgotten: yet for sure they did more for Florence than he. But no doubt it would be difficult to remind oneself tactfully of those one has robbed,

Page 171

and a Venetian Jew looks more in place before a desecrated convent than S. Francis would do. Like the rest of Italy, Florence seems always to forget that she had a history before 1860; yet here at least she should have remembered one of her old heroes, for in the convent garden Giano della Bella, who fought at Campaldino, and was anti-clerical too and hateful to the Pope, the hero of the Ordinances of Justice, used to walk with his friends. *Perisca innanzi la citta, say I, che tante opere rie si sostengano*. By this let even Venetian Jews, to say nothing of Switzer princes, know how they are like to be remembered when their little day is over.

[Illustration: OGNISSANTI]

It was in 1256 that the Humiliati founded here in Borgo Ognissanti the Church of S. Caterina, and carved their arms, a woolpack fastened with ropes, over the door. Originally founded by certain Lombard exiles in Northern Germany, the Humiliati were at first at any rate a lay brotherhood, which had learned in exile the craft of weaving wool. Such wool as was to be had in Tuscany, a land of olives and vines, almost without pasture, was poor enough, and it seems to have been only after the advent of the Humiliati that the great Florentine industry began to assert itself, foreign wools being brought in a raw state to the city and sold, dressed and woven into cloth, in all the cities of Europe and the East. This brotherhood, however, in 1140 formed itself into a Religious Order under a Bull of Innocent III, and though from that time the brethren seem no longer to have worked at their craft themselves, they directed the work of laymen whom they enrolled and employed, busying themselves for the most part with new inventions and the management of what soon became an immense business. Their fame was spread all over Italy, for, as Villari tells us,[111] “wherever a house of their Order was established, the wool-weaving craft immediately made advance,” so that in 1239 the Commune of Florence invited them to establish a house near the city, as they did in S. Donato a Torri, which was given them by the Signoria. By 1250 we read that the Guild Masters were already grumbling at their distance from the city, so that they removed to S. Lucia sul Prato, under promise of exemption from all taxes; and in 1256 they founded a church and convent in Borgo Ognissanti. The Church of S. Lucia sul Prato still stands, but the Humiliati were robbed of it in 1547 by Cosimo I, who, strangely enough, had taken the old convent of S. Donato a Torri from the friars who had acquired it, in order to build a fortification, and now wished to give them the Church of S. Lucia sul Prato. It is said that the friars began to build their convent, but four years later abandoned the work, removing to S. Jacopo on the other side Arno. However this may be, the Franciscans certainly succeeded the Humiliati in their convent in Borgo Ognissanti about this time, and in 1627 they rebuilt S. Caterina, renaming it S. Salvatore. To-day there is but little worth seeing in this seventeenth-century church,—a St. Augustine by Botticelli, a St. Jerome and two large frescoes by Domenico Ghirlandajo,—but in the old refectory of the convent, which has now become a barracks, is Domenico Ghirlandajo’s fresco of the Last Supper.

Page 172

Passing from Ognissanti down the Borgo to Piazza Ponte alla Carraja, you come to the great palace built by Michelozzo for the Ricasoli family: it is now the Hotel New York. Thence you turn into Via di Parione behind the palace, where at No. 7 you pass the Palazzo Corsini, coming at last into Via Tornabuoni, where at the corner is the Church of S. Trinita facing the Piazza.

This beautiful and very ancient church stands on the site of an oratory of S. Maria dello Spasimo, destroyed, as it is said, in the tenth century. It was built by the monks of Vallombrosa, and was therefore in the hands of Benedictines. Here, in the Cappella Sassetti, Domenico Ghirlandajo has painted the Life of S. Francis; but it is not with his commonplace treatment, often irrelevant enough, of a subject which Giotto had already used with genius, that we are concerned, but perhaps with the fresco above the altar, and certainly with the marvellous portraits of Sassetti and Nera Cosi his wife, on either side. Here in this portrait for once Ghirlandajo seems to have escaped from the limitations of his cleverness, and to have really expressed himself so that his talent becomes something more than talent, is full of life and charm, and only just fails to convince us of his genius.

Many another delightful or surprising thing may be found in the old church, which has more than once suffered from restoration. In a chapel in the right aisle Lorenzo Monaco has painted the Annunciation, while, close by, you may see a beautiful altar by Benedetto da Rovezzano. Over the high altar is the crucifix which bowed to S. Giovanni Gualberto, who forbore to slay his brother's murderer; but the chief treasure of the church is the tomb in the left transept of Benozzo Federighi, Bishop of Fiesole, by Luca della Robbia. It was in the year 1450 that Luca finished his most perfect work in marble—begun and finished, as it is said, within the year—the tomb of Bishop Federighi. And here, as one might almost expect, remembering his happy expressive art in many a terra-cotta up and down in Italy, he has thought of death almost with cheerfulness, not as oblivion, but as just sleep after labour. Amid a profusion of natural things—fruits, garlands, grapes—the old man lies half turned towards us, at rest at last. Behind him Luca has carved a Pieta, and beneath two angels unfold the name of the dead man. The tomb was removed hither from S. Francesco di Paolo.

Passing now under the Column of the Trinita across the Piazza between the two palaces, Bartolini Salimbeni and Buondelmonte on the left, and Palazzo Spini on the right, you come into Borgo Santi Apostoli, where, facing the Piazzetta del Limbo, is the little church de' Santi Apostoli, which, if we may believe the inscription on the facade, was founded by Charlemagne and consecrated by Turpin before Roland and Oliver. However that may be, it is, with the exception of the Baptistery, the oldest church on this side Arno,

Page 173

and already existed outside the first walls of the city. Within, the church is beautiful, and indeed Brunellesco is reported by Vasari to have taken it as a model for S. Lorenzo and S. Spirito. In the sacristy lies the stone which Mad Pazzi brought from Jerusalem, and from which the Easter fire is still struck in the Duomo; while in the chapel to the left of the high altar is a beautiful Tabernacle by the della Robbia, and a monument to Otto Altoviti by Benedetto da Rovezzano. The Altoviti are buried here, and their palace, which Benedetto built for them, is just without to the south.

This Borgo SS. Apostoli and the Via Lambertesca which continues it are indeed streets of old palaces and towers. Here the Buondelmonti lived, and the Torre de' Girolami, where S. Zanobi is said to have dwelt, still stands, while Via Lambertesca is full of remembrance of the lesser guilds. Borgo SS. Apostoli passes into Via Lambertesca at the corner of Por S. Maria, where of old the great gate of St. Mary stood in the first walls, and the Amidei had their towers. It must have been just here the Statue of Mars was set, under the shadow of which Buondelmonte was murdered so brutally; and thus, as Bandello tells us, following Villani, began the Guelph and Ghibelline factions in Florence.

Just out of Via Lambertesca, on the left, is the little Church of S. Stefano and S. Cecilia —S. Cecilia only since the end of the eighteenth century, when that church was destroyed in Piazza Signoria; but S. Stefano, *ad portam ferram*, since the thirteenth century at any rate. This church seems to have been confused by many with the little Santo Stefano, still, I think, a parish church, though now incorporated with the abbey buildings, of the Badia. You pass out of Via Lambertesca by Via de' Lanzi, coming thus into Piazza Signoria; then, passing Palazzo Uguccione, you take Via Condotta to the right, and thus come into Via del Proconsolo at the Abbey gate.

Here in this quiet Benedictine house one seems really to be back in an older world, to have left the noise and confusion of to-day far behind, and in order and in quiet to have found again the beautiful things that are from of old. The Badia, dedicated to S. Maria Assunta, was founded in 978 by Countess Willa, the mother of Ugo of Tuscany,[112] and was rebuilt in 1285 by Arnolfo di Cambio. The present building is, however, almost entirely a work of the seventeenth century, though the beautiful tower was built in 1328. Here still, however, in spite of rebuilding, you may see the tomb of the Great Marquis by Mino da Fiesole. "It was erected," says Mr. Carmichael, "at the expense of the monks, not of the Signoria.... Ugo died in 1006, on the Feast of St. Thomas the Apostle, December 21, and every year on that date a solemn requiem for the repose of his soul is celebrated in the Abbey Church. His helmet and breast-plate are always laid upon the catafalque. In times past—down to 1859, I think—a young Florentine used

Page 174

on this occasion to deliver a panegyric on the Great Prince. I have heard ... that the mass is no longer celebrated. That is not so; but since the city has ceased to care about it, it takes place quietly at seven in the morning, instead of with some pomp at eleven. Then again, it is said that the monks have allowed the panegyric to drop. That too is not the case; it was not they but the Florentines who were pledged to this pious office, and it is the laity alone who have allowed it to fall into desuetude."

[Illustration: VIA POR. S. MARIA]

Even here we cannot, however, escape destruction and forgetfulness. The monastery has been turned into communal schools and police courts; the abbot has become a parish priest, and his abbey has been taken from him; there are but four monks left. But in the steadfast, unforgetful eyes of that Church which has already outlived a thousand dynasties, and beside whom every Government in the world is but a thing of yesterday, the Abbot of S. Maria is abbot still, and no parish priest at all. It is not, however, such things as this that will astonish the English or American stranger, whose pathetic faith in "progress" is the one touching thing about him. He has come here not to think of deprived Benedictines, or to stand by the tomb of Ugo, of whom he never heard, but to see the masterpiece of Filippino Lippi, the Madonna and St. Bernard, with which a thousand photographs have already made him familiar. Painted in 1480, when Filippino was still, as we may suppose, under the influence of Botticelli, it was given by Piero del Pugliese to a church outside Porta Romana, and was removed here in 1529 during the siege.

Passing down Via della Vigna Vecchia, you come at last to the little Church of S. Simone, which the monks of the Badia built about 1202, in their vineyards then, and just within the second walls. At the beginning of the fourteenth century it became a parish church, but was only taken from them at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Within, there is an early picture of Madonna, which comes from the Church of S. Piero Maggiore, now destroyed. You may reach the Piazza di S. Piero (for it still bears that name) if you turn into Via di Mercatino. Here the bishops of Florence were of old welcomed to the city and installed in the See. Thither came all the clergy of the diocese to take part in a strange and beautiful ceremony. Attached to the church was a Benedictine convent, whose abbess seems to have represented the diocese of Florence. There in S. Piero the Archbishop came to wed her, and thus became the guardian of the city. The church is destroyed now, and, as we have seen, all the monks and nuns have departed; the Government has stolen their dowries and thrust them into the streets. Well might the child, passing S. Felice, cry before this came to pass, O bella Liberta! But S. Piero was memorable for other reasons too beside this mystic marriage. There lay Luca della Robbia, Lorenzo di Credi, Mariotto

Page 175

Albertinelli, Piero di Cosimo: where is their dust to-day? As we look at their work in the galleries and churches, who cares what has happened to them, or whether such graves as theirs are rifled or no? Yet not one of them but has done more for Italy than Vittorio Emmanuele; not one of them, O Italia Nuova, but is to-day filling your pockets with gold, while he is nothing in the Pantheon; yet their graves are rifled and forgotten, and him you have placed on the Capitol.

It is to another Benedictine convent you come down Via Pietrapiana, past Borgo Allegri, whence the Florentines say they bore Cimabue's Madonna in triumph to S. Maria Novella. It is a pity, truly, that it is not his picture that is in the Rucellai Chapel to-day, and that the name of the Borgo does not come from that rejoicing, but from the Allegri family, who here had their towers. Yet here Cimabue lived, and Ghiberti and Antonio Rossellino. Who knows what beauty has here passed by?

The Benedictine Church and Convent at end of Via Pietrapiana is dedicated to S. Ambrogio. It was the first convent of nuns built in Florence, and dates certainly from the eleventh century. Like the rest, it has been suppressed, and indeed destroyed. To-day it is nothing, having suffered restoration, beside the other violations. Within, Verrocchio was buried, and in the Cappella del Miracolo, where in the thirteenth century a priest found the chalice stained with Christ's blood, is the beautiful altar by Mino da Fiesole. The church is full of old frescoes by Cosimo Rosselli, Raffaellino del Garbo, and such, and is worth a visit, if only for the work of Mino and the S. Sebastian of Leonardo del Tasso.

It is to another desecrated Benedictine convent you come when, passing through Via dei Pilastrati and turning into Via Farina, you come at last in Via della Colonna to S. Maria Maddalena de' Pazzi. This too is now a barracks and a school. It was not, however, the nuns who commissioned Perugino to paint for them his masterpiece, the Crucifixion, in the refectory, but some Cistercian monks who had acquired the convent in the thirteenth century. Perugino was painting there in 1496. More than a hundred years later, Pope Urban VIII, who had some nieces in the Carmelite Convent on the other side Arno, persuaded the monks to exchange their home for the Carmine. S. Maria Maddalena de' Pazzi, who was born Lucrezia, had died in 1607, and later been canonised, so that when the nuns moved here they renamed the place after her. The body of S. Maria Maddalena de' Pazzi, however, no longer lies in this desecrated convent, for the little nuns have carried it away to their new home in Piazza Savonarola. There in that place, always so full of children, certain Florentine ladies have nobly built a little church and quiet house, where those who but for them might have been in the street may still innocently pray to God.

Page 176

There, in 1496, as I have said, Perugino finished the fresco of the Crucifixion that he had begun some years before in the chapter-house of the old S. Maria Maddalena. In almost perfect preservation still, this fresco on the wall of that quiet and empty room is perhaps the most perfect expression of the art of Perugino—those dreams of the country and of certain ideal people he has seen there; Jesus and His disciples, Madonna and Mary Magdalen, sweet, smiling, and tearful ghosts passing in the sunshine, less real than the hills, all perhaps that the world was able to bear by way of remembrance of those it had worshipped once, but was beginning to forget. And here at last, in this fresco, the landscape has really become of more importance than the people, who breathe there so languidly. The Crucifixion has found something of the expressiveness, the unction of a Christian hymn, something of the quiet beauty of the Mass that was composed to remind us of it; already it has passed away from reality, is indeed merely a memory in which the artist has seen something less and something more than the truth.

Divided into three compartments, we see through the beautiful round arches of some magic casement, as it were, the valleys and hills of Italy, the delicate trees, the rivers and the sky of a country that is holy, which man has taken particularly to himself. And then, as though summoned back from forgetfulness by the humanism of that landscape where the toil and endeavour of mankind is so visible in the little city far away, the cultured garden of the world, a dream of the Crucifixion comes to us, a vision of all that man has suffered for man, summed up, as it were, naturally enough by that supreme sacrifice of love; and we see not an agonised Christ or the brutality of the priests and the soldiers, but Jesus, who loved us, hanging on the Cross, with Mary Magdalen kneeling at his feet, and on the one side Madonna and St. Bernard, and on the other St. John and St. Benedict. And though, in a sort of symbolism, Perugino has placed above the Cross the sun and the moon eclipsed, the whole world is full of the serene and perfect light of late afternoon, and presently we know that vision of the Crucifixion will fade away, and there will be left to us only that which we really know, and have heard and seen, the valleys and the hills, the earth from which we are sprung.

There are but six figures in the whole picture, and it is just this spaciousness, perhaps, earth and sky counting for so much, that makes this work so delightful. For it is not from the figures at all that we receive the profoundly religious impression that this picture makes upon all who look unhurriedly upon it; but from the earth and sky, where in the infinite clear space God dwells, no longer hanging upon a Cross tortured by men who have unthinkably made so terrible a mistake, but joyful in His heaven, moving in every living thing He has made; visible only in the invisible wind that passes over the streams suddenly at evening, or subtly makes musical the trees at dawn, walking as of old in His garden, where one day maybe we shall meet Him face to face.

Page 177

Turning down Via di Pinti to the left, and then to the right along Via Alfani, we pass another desecrated monastery in S. Maria degli Angioli, once a famous house of the monks of Camaldoli. This monastery has suffered many violations, and is scarcely worth a visit, perhaps, unless it be to see the fresco of Andrea del Castagno in the cloister, and to remind ourselves that here, in the fifteenth century, Don Ambrogio Traversari used to lecture in the humanities, a cynical remembrance enough to-day.

If we take the second street to the right, Via de' Servi, we shall come at once into the beautiful Piazza della Santissima Annunziata. Before us is the desecrated convent of the Servites, now turned into a school, and the Church of SS. Annunziata itself, now the most fashionable church in Florence. On the left and right are the beautiful arcades of Brunellesco, decorated by the della Robbia; the building on the left is now used for private houses, that on the right is the Ospedale degli Innocenti. The equestrian statue was made by Giovanni da Bologna, and represents Ferdinando I.

The Order of Servites, whose church and convent are before us, was originally founded by seven Florentines of the Laudesi, that Compagnia di S. Michele in Orto which built Madonna a shrine by the art of Orcagna in Or S. Michele, as we have seen. "I Servi di Maria" they were called, and, determined to quit a worldly life, they retired to a little house where now S. Croce stands; and later, finding that too near the city, went over the hills of Fiesole beyond Pratolino, founding a hermitage on Monte Senario. And I, who have heard their bells from afar at sunset, why should I be sorry that they are no longer in the city. Well, on Monte Senario, be sure, they lived hardly enough on the charity of Florence, so that at last they built a little rest-house just without the city, where SS. Annunziata stands to-day. But in those days Florence was full of splendour and life; it had no fear of the Orders, and even loved them, giving alms. Presently the Servi di Maria were able to build not a rest-house only, but a church and a convent, and then they who served Madonna were not forgotten by her, for did she not give them miraculously a picture of her Annunciation, so beautiful and full of grace that all the city flocked to see it? Thus it used to be. To-day, as I have said, SS. Annunziata is the fashionable church of Florence. The ladies go in to hear Mass; the gentlemen lounge in the cloister and await them. It is not quite our way in England, but then the sun is not so kind to us. It is true that on any spring morning you may see the cloister filled with laughing lilies to be laid at Madonna's feet; but who knows if she be not fled away with her Servi to Monte Senario? Certainly those bells were passing glad and very sweet, and they were ringing, too, the Angelus.

However that may be, a committee, we are told, of which Queen Margherita is patron here, "renders a programme of sacred music, chiefly Masses from the ancient masters, admirably executed." It is comforting to our English notions to know that "The subscribers have the right to a private seat in the choir, and the best society of Florence is to be met there."

Page 178

And then, here are frescoes by Cosimo Rosselli, Andrea del Sarto, under glass too, a Nativity of Christ by Alessio Baldovinetti, not under glass, which seems unfair; and what if they be the finest work of Andrea, since you cannot see them. Within, the church is spoiled and very ugly. On the left is the shrine of Madonna, carved by Michelozzo, to the order of Piero de' Medici, decorated with all the spoils of the Grand Dukes. Ah no, be sure Madonna is fled away!

Passing out of the north transept, you come into the cloisters. Here is, I think, Andrea's best work, the Madonna del Sacco, and the tomb of a French knight slain at Campaldino.

Passing out of the SS. Annunziata into S. Maria degli Innocenti, we come to a beautiful picture by Domenico Ghirlandajo in the great altarpiece, the Adoration of the Magi, painted in 1488. Though scarcely so lovely as the Adoration of the Shepherds in the Accademia, perhaps spoiled a little by over cleaning and restoration, it is one of the most simple and serene pictures in Florence. The predella to this picture is in the Ospedale; it represents the Marriage of the Virgin, the Presentation in the Temple, the Baptism and Entombment of Our Lord. There, too, is a replica of the Madonna of Lippo Lippi in the Uffizi.

The Ospedale degli Innocenti was founded in 1421 by the Republic, urged thereto by that Leonardo Bruni who is buried in S. Croce in the tomb by Rossellino. It appears to have been already open in 1450, and was apparently under the government of the Guild of Silk, for their arms are just by the door. It is said to have been the first of its kind in Europe; originally meant for the reception of illegitimate children—Leonardo da Vinci, for instance—it is to-day ready to receive any poor little soul who has come unwanted into the world; it cares for more than a thousand of such every year.

Passing out of Piazza degli SS. Annunziata through Via di Sapienza into Piazza di S. Marco, we pass the desecrated convent of the Dominicans, where Savonarola, Fra Antonino, and Fra Angelico lived, now a museum on the right; and passing to the right into Via Cavour, come at No. 69 to the Chiostro dello Scalzo. This is a cloister belonging to the Brotherhood of St. John, which was suppressed in the eighteenth century. The Brotherhood of St. John seems to have come about in this way. When Frate Elias, who succeeded S. Francesco as Minister of the Franciscan Order, began to rule after his own fashion, the Order was divided into two parts, consisting of those who followed the Rule and those who did not. The first were called Observants, the second Conventuals. The Osservanti, or Observants, remained poor, and observed all the fasts; perhaps their greatest, certainly their most widely known Vicar-General was S. Bernardino of Siena. In France the Osservanti were known as the Recollects, and the reform there having been introduced by John de la Puebla, a Spaniard, about 1484, these brethren were known as the Brotherhood of John, or Discalced Friars. In Italy they were called Riformati. All this confusion is now at an end, for Leo XIII, in the

Constitution "Felicitate quadam," in 1897 joined all the Observants into one family, giving them again the most ancient and beautiful of their names, the Friars Minor.

Page 179

Here, where these little poor men begged or prayed, Andrea del Sarto was appointed to paint in grisaille scenes from the life of John the Baptist. They have been much injured by damp, and in fact are not altogether Andrea's work.

Returning down Via Cavour, if we turn into Via Ventisette Aprile we come to two more desecrated convents,—that of S. Caterina, now the Comando Militare, and facing it, S. Appolonia, now a magazine for military stores.

Here, in the refectory of the latter convent, where Michelangelo is said to have had a niece, and for this cause to have built the nuns a door, is the fresco of the Last Supper by Andrea del Castagno; while on the walls are some portraits, brought here from the Bargello, of Farinata degli Uberti, Niccolo Acciaiuoli, and others.

In another suppressed convent, S. Onofrio in Via Faenza, not far away (turn to the left down Via di S. Reparata, and then to the right into Via Guelfa), is another Last Supper, supposed to be the work of a pupil of Perugino,—Morelli says Giannicolo Manni, who painted the miracle picture of Madonna in the Duomo of Perugia.

Another picture of the Last Supper—this by Andrea del Sarto—may be found in another desecrated monastery, founded in 1048 by the Vallombrosans, the second monastery of the congregation, S. Salvi, just without the Barriera towards Settignano. It was in front of this monastery that Corso Donati was killed in 1307. He was buried by the monks in the church, and four years later his body was borne away to Florence by his family. This monastery is now turned into houses, and the refectory with the Andrea del Sarto is become a national monument. Like many another desecrated church, convent, or religious house, the Government, as at S. Marco, Chiostro dello Scalzo, and S. Onofrio, charges you twenty-five centesimi to see their stolen goods.

FOOTNOTES:

[111] Villari, *History of Florence*, London, 1905: p. 318.

[112] The best account of this abbey I ever read in English is contained in a book full of similar good things, good English, and good pictures, called *The Old Road through France to Florence*, written by H.W. Nevins and Montgomery Carmichael, and illustrated by Hallam Murray (Murray, London, 1904).

XX. FLORENCE

OLTR'ARNO

The Sesto Oltr'arno, the Quartiere di S. Spirito as it was called later, was never really part of the city proper, but rather a suburb surrounded, as Florence itself was, by wall

and river. The home for the most part of the poor, though by no means without the towers and palaces of the nobles, it seems always to have lent itself readily enough to the hatching of any plot against the Government of the day. Here in 1343 the nobles made their last stand, here the signal was given for the Ciompi rising, and here

Page 180

Luca Pitti built his palace to outdo the Medici. If you cross Arno by the beautiful bridge of S. Trinita, the first street to your left will be Borgo S. Jacopo, the first palace that of the Frescobaldi, whom the Duke of Athens brought into Florence after their exile. This palace, as well as the Church of S. Jacopo close by, where Giano della Bella's death was plotted, were given in 1529 to the Franciscans of S. Salvatore, whose convent had suffered in the siege. S. Jacopo, which still retains a fine romanesque arcade, was originally a foundation of the eleventh century. It seems to have been entirely rebuilt for the friars and the palace turned into a convent in 1580, and again to have suffered restoration in 1790. Close by is a group of old towers, still picturesque and splendid. Turning thence back into Via Maggio, and passing along Via S. Spirito and Via S. Frediano, you come at last on the left into Piazza del Carmine, before the great church of that name. The church of the Carmine and the monastery now suppressed of the Carmelites across Arno were originally built in 1268, with the help of the great families whose homes were in this part of the city,—the Soderini, the Nerli, the Serragli; it remained unfinished for more than two centuries, and in 1771 it was unhappily almost wholly destroyed by fire, only the sacristy and the Brancacci Chapel escaping. Famous now because there Fra Lippo Lippi lived, and there Masolino and Masaccio painted, it is in itself one of the most meretricious and worthless buildings of the eighteenth century, full of every sort of flamboyant ornament and insincere, uncalled-for decoration; and yet, in spite of every vulgarity, how spacious it is, as though even in that evil hour the Latin genius could not wholly forget its delight in space and light. It is then really only the Brancacci Chapel in the south transept that has any interest for us, since there, better than anywhere else, we may see the work of two of the greatest masters of the first years of the Quattrocento.

[Illustration: PONTE VECCHIO]

Masolino, according to Mr. Berenson, was born in 1384, and died after 1423, while his pupil Masaccio was born in 1401, and died, one of the youngest of Florentine painters, in 1428. Here in the Brancacci Chapel it might seem difficult to decide what may be the work of Masolino and what of his pupil, and indeed Crowe and Cavalcaselle have denied that Masolino worked here at all. Later criticism, however, interested in work that marks a revolution in Tuscan painting, has made it plain that certain frescoes here are undoubtedly from his hand, and Mr. Berenson gives him certainly the Fall of Adam, the Raising of Tabitha, and the Miracle at the Golden Gate, above on the right, as well as the Preaching of St. Peter, above to the left on the altar wall. Masaccio's work is more numerous, consisting of the Expulsion from the Temple and the Payment of the Tribute, above on the right, part of the fresco below the last; St. Peter Baptizing,

Page 181

above to the left on the altar wall, as well as the two frescoes, St. Peter and St. John healing the Sick, and St. Peter and St. John giving Alms, below on either side of the altar. The rest of the frescoes, the St. Paul visiting St. Peter in Prison, below on the left, part of the fresco next to it, the Liberation of St. Peter opposite, and the St. Peter and St. Paul before Nero, and the Crucifixion of St. Peter, below on the right, are the work of Filippino Lippi.

Masolino da Panicale of Valdelsa was, according to Vasari, a pupil of Lorenzo Ghiberti, and had been in his younger days a very good goldsmith. He was the best among those who helped Ghiberti in the labours of the doors of S. Giovanni, but when about nineteen years of age he seems to have devoted himself to painting, forsaking the art of the goldsmith, and placing himself under Gherardo della Starnina, the first master of his day. He is said to have gone to Rome, and some works of his in S. Clemente would seem to prove this story; but finding his health suffer from the air of the Eternal City, he returned to Florence, and began to paint here in the Church of S. Maria del Carmine, the figure of S. Piero beside the "Chapel of the Crucifixion," which was destroyed in the fire of 1771. This S. Piero, Vasari tells us, was greatly commended by the painters of the time, and brought Masolino the commission for painting the Chapel of the Brancacci family in the same church. Among the rest mentioned by Vasari, he speaks of the Four Evangelists on the roof here, which have now been ruined by over-painting and restoration. A man of an admirable genius, his study and fatigues, Vasari tells us, so weakened him that he was always ailing, till he died at the age of thirty-seven. Yet in looking on his work to-day, beside that of Masaccio, one thinks less, I fancy, of his "study and fatigues," of his structure and technique, than of the admirable beauty of his work. Consider then those splendid young men in the Raising of Tabitha, who pass by almost unconcerned, though one has turned his head to see; the sheer loveliness of Eve and Adam, really for the first time born again here naked and unashamed; or the easy and beautiful gesture of the angel, who bids them begone out of the gate of Paradise. In Masaccio's work you will find a more splendid style, the real majesty of the creator, a strangely sure generalisation and expression; but in Masolino's work there still lingers something of the mere beauty of Gentile da Fabriano, the particular personal loveliness of things which you may know he has touched with a caress or seen always with joy.

Page 182

Masaccio was born at Castello S. Giovanni, on the way to Arezzo. He was the son of a notary, Ser Giovanni di Simone Guidi, called della Scheggia, and his first labours in art, Vasari tells us, were begun at the time when Masolino was working at this chapel in the Carmine. He had evidently been much impressed by the work of Donato, and, indeed, something of the realism of sculpture has passed into his work, in the St. Peter Baptizing, for instance, where he who stands by the side of the pool, awaiting his turn, has much of the reality of a statue. And then with a magical sincerity Masaccio has understood the mere discomfort of such a delay in the cool air, and a shiver seems about to pass over that body, which is as real to us as any figure in the work of Michelangelo. Or again, in the fresco of the Tribute Money, how real and full of energy these people are,—the young man with his back to us, who has been interrupted; Jesus Himself, who has just interposed; Peter, who is protesting. How full of a real majesty is this composition, admirably composed, too, and original even in that. Here, it might seem, we have the end of merely decorative painting, the beginning of realism, of the effect of reality, and it is therefore with surprise we see so facile a master as Filippino Lippi set to finish work of such elemental and tremendous genius. How pretty his work seems beside these realities.

Coming out into the Piazza again, and turning to the left down Via S. Frediano, you come almost at once, on the right, to the Church of S. Frediano in Castello. You may enter it from Lung' Arno, but it would scarcely be worth a visit, for it is a late seventeenth-century building, save that in the convent may still be found the cell of S. Maria Maddalena de' Pazzi; for it was this convent that the Carmelite nuns exchanged with the Cistercians for the house in Via di Pinti, called to-day S. Maria Maddalena de' Pazzi, where Perugino painted his beautiful fresco of the Crucifixion.

Just across the way is the Mercato di S. Frediano and the suppressed monastery of the Camaldolese, now a school; and by this way you come to Porta S. Frediano, by which Charles VIII of France entered Florence and Rinaldo degli Albizzi left it. The whole of this quarter is given up to the poor and to the Madonna of the street corner, for here her children dwell, the outcasts and refuse of civilisation who work that we may live. It is always with reluctance, in spite of the children that I come by this way, so that if possible I always return by Lung' Arno, past Torrino di S. Rosa and the barracks of S. Friano and the grain store of Cosimo III, past the houses of the Soderini to Ponte alla Carraia, which fell on Mayday 1304, sending so many to that other world they had come out to see, and so past the house of Piero Capponi, the hero of 1494 who kept the Medici at bay, and threatened Charles VIII in the council; then turning down Via Coverelli one comes to Santo Spirito.

Page 183

It was the Augustinian Hermits who, coming to Florence about 1260, bought a vineyard close to where Via Maggio, an abbreviation of Via Maggiore, now is, from the Vellati family. Here they built a monastery and a church, and dedicated them to the Santo Spirito, so that when the city was divided into quartieri this Sestiere d'Oltrarno became Quartiere di S. Spirito. In 1397, as it is said, they determined to rebuild the place on a bigger scale, and to this end appointed Brunellesco their architect. The church was begun in 1433, and was burned down in 1471, during the Easter celebrations, which were particularly splendid in that year owing to the visit of Galeazzo Maria Sforza. It was rebuilt, however, in the next twenty years from the designs of Brunellesco, and is to-day the most beautiful fifteenth-century church in Florence, full of light and sweetness, very spacious, too, and with a certain fortunate colour about it that gives it an air of cheerfulness and serenity beyond anything of the kind to be found in the Duomo or S. Lorenzo. And then, the Florentines have been content to leave it alone,—at any rate, so far as the unfinished facade is concerned. It is in the form of a Latin cross, and suggests even yet in some happy way the very genius of the Latin people in its temperance and delight in the sun and the day. The convent, it is true, has been desecrated, and is now a barracks; most of the altars have been robbed of their treasures; but the church itself remains to us a very precious possession from that fifteenth century, which in Italy certainly was so fortunate, so perfect a dawn of a day that was a little disappointing, and at evening so disastrous.

Of the works of art remaining in the nave, that spacious nave where one could wander all day long, only the copy of Michelangelo's *Pieta* in St. Peter's will, I think, detain us for more than a moment. What is left to us of that far-away flower-like beauty of fifteenth-century painting and sculpture will be found in the great transept, that makes of the church a cross of light, a temple of the sun. Here, amid many works of that time given to Fra Lippo Lippi, Botticelli, Ghirlandajo, Donatello, and others, in the south transept there is a *Madonna with the family of de' Nerli* by Filippino Lippi, and in the Capponi Chapel a fine portrait of Neri Capponi, while in the next chapel Perugino's *Vision of St. Bernard*, now in Berlin, used to stand. Here, too, is a *Statue of St. Sebastian*, nearly always invisible, said to be from the hand of Donatello; in the choir is a *Madonna enthroned* by Lorenzo di Credi. The sacristy is beautiful, built by Giovanni da Sangallo, and the cloisters now spoiled are the work of Ammanati. And then, here Niccolo Niccoli is buried, that great book-collector and humanist; while the barbarians are represented, if only by the passing figure of Martin Luther, not then forsworn, who is said to have preached here on his way to Rome. It is strange to think that these beautiful pillars have heard his rough eloquence, an eloquence that was so soon to destroy the spirit that had conceived them.

Page 184

Close by in Piazza S. Spirito is Palazzo Guadagni, built for Ranieri Dei at the end of the fifteenth century by Cronaca. It was not, however, till 1684 that the Guadagni family came into possession of it. Bernardo Guadagni, it will be remembered, was Gonfaloniere of Justice when Cosimo de' Medici was expelled the city in 1433. Passing this palace and turning to the right into Via Mazzetta, you pass at the corner the Church of S. Felice, which has been so often a refuge,—for at first the Sylvestrians had it, and held it till the fourteenth century, when it passed to the Camaldolese, from whom it passed again to a congregation of Dominican nuns and became a sort of refuge for women who had fled away from their husbands. Within, you may find a few old pictures, a Giottesque Crucifixion, and a Madonna and Saints, a fifteenth-century work. Then, turning into Via Romana, you come, past the gardens of S. Piero in Gattolino, to the Porta Romana, the great gate of the Via Romana, the way to Rome, and before you is the Hill of Gardens, and behind you is the garden of the Pitti Palace, Giardino di Boboli, and farther still, across Via Romana, the Giardino Torrigiani.

The Boboli Gardens, with their alley ways of ilex, their cypresses and broken statues, their forgotten fountains, are full of sadness—

“Tout en chantant sur le mode mineur,
L’amour vainqueur et la vie opportune,
Ils n’ont pas l’air de croire a leur bonheur,
Et leur chanson se mele au clair de lune,

“Au calme clair de lune triste et beau,
Qui fait rever les oiseaux dans les arbres,
Et sangloter d’extase les jets d’eau,
Les grands jets d’eau sveltes parmi les marbres.”

But the gardens of the Viale are in spring, at any rate, full of the joy of roses, banks, hedges, cascades of roses, armsful of them, drowsy in the heat and heavy with sweetness.

“I’mi trovai, fanciulle, un bel mattino
Di mezzo maggio, in un verde giardino.”

[Illustration: THE BOBOLI]

And if it be not the very place of which Poliziano sang in the most beautiful verses he ever wrote, certainly to-day there is nothing more lovely in Florence in spring, and in autumn too, than this Hill of Gardens. In autumn too; for then the way that winds there about the hills is an alley of gold, strewn with the leaves of the plane-trees that the winds have scattered in countless riches under your feet; that whisper still in golden beauty over your head. There, as you walk in spring, while the city unfolds herself before you, a garden of roses in which a lily has towered, or in the autumn afternoons

when she is caught in silver mist, a city of fragile and delicate beauty, that is soon lost in the twilight, you may see Florence as she remains in spite of every violation, Citta dei Fiori, Firenze la Bella Bellissima, the sweet Princess of Italy. And, like the way of life, this road among the flowers ends in a graveyard, the graveyard of S. Miniato al Monte, under which nestles S. Salvatore, that little brown bird among the cypresses, over the grey olives.

Page 185

The story of S. Miniato makes one of the more quiet chapters of Villani. "Our city of Florence,"[113] he tells you, returning from I know not what delightful digression, "was ruled long time under the government and lordship of the Emperors of Rome, and oft-times the Emperors came to sojourn in Florence, when they were journeying into Lombardy and into Germany and into France to conquer provinces. And we find that Decius the Emperor, in the first year of his reign, which was in the year of Christ 270, was in Florence, the treasure-house and chancery of the empire, sojourning there for his pleasure; and the said Decius cruelly persecuted the Christians wheresoever he could hear of them or find them out, and he heard tell how the blessed S. Miniato was living as a hermit, near to Florence, with his disciples and companions, in a wood which was called Arisbotto di Firenze, behind the place where now stands his church, above the city of Florence. This blessed Miniato was first-born son to the King of Armenia, and having left his kingdom for the faith of Christ, to do penance and to be far away from his kingdom, he went over-seas to gain pardon at Rome, and then betook himself to the said wood, which was in those days wild and solitary, forasmuch as the city of Florence did not extend, and was not settled beyond Arno but was all on this side,—save only there was one bridge across Arno, not, however, where the bridges now are. And it is said by many that it was the ancient bridge of the Fiesolans which led from Girone to Candegghi, and this was the ancient and direct road and way from Rome to Fiesole and to go into Lombardy and across the mountains. The said Emperor Decius caused the said blessed Miniato to be taken, as his story narrates. Great gifts and rewards were offered him, as to a king's son, to the end he should deny Christ; and he, constant and firm in the faith, would have none of his gifts, but endured divers martyrdoms. In the end the said Decius caused him to be beheaded, where now stands the Church of S. Candida alla Croce at Gorgo; and many faithful followers of Christ received martyrdom in this place. And when the head of the blessed Miniato had been cut off, by a miracle of Christ, with his hands he set it again upon his trunk, and on his feet passed over Arno, and went up the hill where now stands his church, where at that time there was a little oratory in the name of the blessed Peter the Apostle, where many bodies of holy martyrs were buried. And when S. Miniato was come to that place, he gave up his soul to Christ, and his body was there secretly buried by the Christians; the which place, by reason of the merits of the blessed S. Miniato, was devoutly venerated by the Florentines after they were become Christians, and a little church was built there in his honour. But the great and noble church of marble which is there now in our times, we find to have been built later by the zeal of the venerable Father Alibrando, Bishop and citizen of Florence in

Page 186

the year of Christ 1013, begun on the 26th day of April, by the commandment and authority of the Catholic and holy Emperor, Henry II of Bavaria, and of his wife, the holy Empress Gunegonda, which was reigning in those times; and they presented and endowed the said church with many rich possessions in Florence and in the country, for the good of their souls, and caused the said church to be repaired and rebuilt of marble, as it is now. And they caused the body of the blessed Miniato to be translated to the altar, which is beneath the vaulting of the said church, with much reverence and solemnity, by the said bishop and the clergy of Florence, with all the people, both men and women of the city of Florence; but afterwards the said church was completed by the commonwealth of Florence, and the stone steps were made which lead down by the hill; and the consuls of the Art of the Calimala were put in charge of the said work of S. Miniato, and were to protect it."

Thus far Villani: to-day S. Miniato, the church, and the great palace built in 1234 by Andrea Mozzi, Bishop of Florence, come to us with memories, not of S. Miniato alone, that somewhat shadowy martyr of so long ago, but of S. Giovanni Gualberto also, of the Benedictines too, and of the Olivetans, of the siege of 1529, when Michelangelo fortified the place in defence of Florence, saving the tower from destruction, as it is said, by swathing it in mattresses; of Cosimo I, who from here held the city in leash. It is the most beautiful of the Tuscan-Romanesque churches left to us in Florence; built in 1013 in the form of a basilica, with a great nave and two aisles, the choir being raised high above the rest of the church on twenty-eight beautiful red ancient pillars, over a crypt where, under the altar, S. Miniato sleeps through the centuries. The fading frescoes of the aisles, the splendour and quiet of this great and beautiful church that has guarded Florence almost from the beginning, that has seen Buondelmonte die at the foot of the Statue of Mars, that has heard the voice of Dante and watched the flight of Corso Donati, have a peculiar fascination, almost ghostly in their strangeness, beyond anything else to be found in the city. And if for the most part the church is so ancient as to rival the Baptistry itself, the Renaissance has left there more than one beautiful thing. For between the two flights of steps that lead out of the nave into the choir, Michelozzo built in 1448, for Piero de' Medici a chapel to hold the crucifix, now in S. Trinita, which bowed to S. Giovanni Gualberto when he forgave his brother's murderer, [114] and in the left aisle is the chapel, built in 1461 by Antonio Rossellino, where the young Cardinal Jacopo of Portugal lies in one of the loveliest of all Tuscan tombs, and there Luca della Robbia has placed some of his most charming terracottas, and Alessio Baldovinetti has painted in fresco. In all Tuscany there is nothing more lovely than that tomb carved in 1467 by Antonio Rossellino for the

Page 187

body of the young Cardinal, but twenty-six years old when he died, “having lived in the flesh as though he were freed from it, an Angel rather than a man.” Over the beautiful sarcophagus, on a bed beside which two boy angels wait, the young Cardinal sleeps, his delicate hands folded at rest at last. Above, two angels kneel, about to give him the crown of glory which fadeth not away, and Madonna, borne from heaven by the children, comes with her Son to welcome him home. There, in the most characteristic work of the fifteenth century, you find man still thinking about death, not as a trance out of which we shall awaken to some terrible remembrance, but as sleep, a sweet and fragile slumber, that has something of the drooping of the flowers about it, in a certain touching beauty and regret that is never bitter, but, like the ending of a song or the close of a fair day of spring, that rightly, though not without sadness, passes into silence, into night, in which shine only the eternal stars.

It is strange that of all the difficult hills of Italy, it is the steep way hither from Porto S. Niccola, of old, in truth Via Crucis, that comes into Dante’s mind when, in the Twelfth Purgatorio, he sees the ascent to the second cornice, where is purged the sin of envy. Something of the immense sadness of that terrible hill seems to linger to-day about the Monti alle Croci: it is truly a hill of the dead, over which hovers, pointing the way, some angel

“la creatura bella
Bianco vestita, e nella faccia quale
Per tremolando mattutina Stella.”

The Convent of S. Salvatore—S. Francesco al Monte, as it was called of old—was built in 1480 after a design by Cronaca. Hesitating among the cypresses on the verge of the olives gardens, Michelangelo called it La bella Villanella, and truly in its warm simplicity and shy loveliness it is just that, a beautiful peasant girl among the vines in a garden of olives. But she has been stripped of her treasures, her trinkets of silver, her pretty gold chains, her gown of taffetas, her kerchief of silk (do you not remember the verses of Lorenzo), and all these you will find to-day, fading out of use in the Uffizi, where, in a palace that has become a museum, they are most out of place: thus they have robbed the peasants for the sake of the gold of the tourists, the sterile ejaculations of the critics.

It is well not to return to the city by the tramway, which rushes through the trees of the Viale Michelangelo like I know not what hideous and shrieking beast of prey, but to wander down towards the Piazzale, and then, just before you came to it, on your left, by S. Salvatore, to go down to Porta S. Miniato, that “gap in the wall,” and then to pass by the old wall itself up the hill to Porta di S. Giorgio among the olives between the towers under the Belvedere. It is the most beautiful of all the gates of the city, little, too, and still keeps its fresco of the fourteenth century.

Page 188

FOOTNOTES:

[113] Villani, *Cronica*, l. i. c. 57, translated by R.E. Selfe. Constable, 1906.

[114] See p. 363.

XXI. FLORENCE

THE BARGELLO

If Arnolfo di Cambio is the architect not only of the Duomo but of the Palazzo Vecchio, and if Orcagna conceived the delicate beauty of the Loggia de' Lanzi, it is, if we may believe Vasari, partly to Arnolfo and partly to Agnolo Gaddi that we owe Bargello, that palace so like a fortress, at the corner of Via del Proconsolo and Via Ghibellina. Begun in the middle of the thirteenth century for the Capitano del Popolo, it later became the Palace of the Podesta, passing at last, under the Grand Dukes, to the Bargello, the Captain of Justice, who turned it barbarously enough into a prison, dividing the great rooms, as it is said, into cells for his prisoners. To-day it is become the National Museum, where all that could be gathered of the work of the Tuscan sculptors is housed and arranged in order.

Often as I wander through those rooms or loiter in the shadow under the cloisters of the beautiful courtyard, perhaps the most lovely court in Tuscany, the remembrance of that old fierce life which desired beauty so passionately and was so eager for every superiority, comes to me, and I ask myself how the dream which that world pursued with so much simplicity and enthusiasm can have led us at last to the world of to-day, with its orderly disorder, its trams and telegraphs and steam-engines, its material comfort which, how strangely, we have mistaken for civilisation. In all London there is no palace so fine as this old prison, nor a square so beautiful as Piazza della Signoria. Instead of Palazzo Pitti (so much more splendid is our civilisation than theirs) we are content with Buckingham Palace, and instead of Palazzo Riccardi we have made the desolate cold ugliness of Devonshire House. Our craftsmen have become machine-minders, our people, on the verge of starvation, as we admit, without order, with restraint, without the discipline of service, having lost the desire of beauty or splendour, have become serfs because they are ignorant and fear to die. And it is we who have claimed half the world and thrust upon it an all but universal domination. In thus bringing mankind under our rule, it is ever of our civilisation that we boast, that immense barbarism which in its brutality and materialism first tried to destroy the Latin Church and then the Latin world, which alone could have saved us from ourselves. Before our forests were cleared here in Italy they carved statues, before our banks were founded here in Italy they made the images of the gods, and in those days there was happiness, and men for joy made

beautiful things. And to-day, half dead with our own smoke, herded together like wild beasts, slaves of our own inventions, ah,

Page 189

blinded by our unthinkable folly, before the statues that they made, before the pictures that they painted, before the palaces that they built, in the churches where they still pray, stupefied by our own stupidity, brutalised by our own barbarism, we boast of a civilisation that has already made us ridiculous, and of which we shall surely die. Here in the Bargello, the ancient palace of the Podesta of a Latin city, let us be silent and forget our madness before the statues of the Gods, the images of the great and beautiful people of old.

Tuscan sculpture, that of all the arts, save architecture, was the first to rise out of the destruction with which the barbarians of the North had overwhelmed the Latin world, came to its own really in the fifteenth century. After the beautiful convention of Byzantium had passed away, and Gruamone and Adeodatus had carved at Pistoja, Biduinus at S. Cassiano, Robertus at Lucca, Bonamicus and Bonannus at Pisa, and Guido da Como again at Pistoja, in the work of Niccolo Pisano at Pisa we come upon the first thought of the Renaissance, the reliefs of the pulpit in the Baptistery, in which the Middle Age seems to have passed over the work of Antiquity almost like a caress. In these panels of the pulpit at Pisa, where Madonna masquerades as Ariadne and the angel speaks with the gesture of Hermes, some sentiment of a new sweetness in the world seems to lurk amid all the naive classicism, finding expression at last in such a thing, for instance, as the divine figure of Virtue in the pulpit of the Duomo of Siena, in which some have thought to find French influence, the work of the artists of Chartres and Rheims, visible enough, one might think, in the work of Niccolo's son Giovanni Pisano, whose ivory Statue of Madonna is to-day perhaps the greatest treasure of the sacristy of the Duomo at Pisa.

Niccolo Pisano was from Apulia. He may well have seen the beautiful fragments of Greek and Roman art scattered over the South before he came to Pisa, yet there may, too, be more truth in Vasari's tale than we are sometimes willing to admit, so that in the northern city beside Arno it may well have been with a sort of delight he came upon the art of the ancients, asleep in the beautiful Campo Santo of Pisa, and awakened it, yes, almost with a kiss.

It is, however, in the work of his pupils Giovanni Pisano and Arnolfo Fiorentino[115] that Tuscan sculpture begins to throw off the yoke of antiquity and to express itself. Fra Guglielmo, another pupil of Niccolo's, in his work at Perugia more nearly preserves the manner of his master, though always inferior to him in beauty and force: but in the work of Arnolfo which remains to us chiefly in the tomb of Cardinal de Braye in S. Domenico at Orvieto, and in the Tabernacle of S. Paolo Fuori at Rome, and more especially in the work of Giovanni Pisano in the pulpit for the Duomo of Pisa, now in the Museo, for instance, we may see the beginnings of that new Tuscan sculpture which in Andrea Pisano and Andrea Orcagna was to make the work of Nanni di Banco, of Ghiberti and

Donatello possible, and through them to inspire the art of all the sculptors of the fifteenth century, that is to say of the Renaissance itself.

Page 190

Here in the Bargello it is chiefly that art of the fifteenth century that we see in all its beauty and realism: and though for the proper understanding of it some knowledge of its derivation might seem to be necessary, a knowledge not to be had in the Museo itself, it is really a new impulse in sculpture, different from, though maybe directed by, that older art which we come upon, and may watch there, in its dawn and in its splendour, till with Bandinelli and the pupils of Michelangelo it loses itself in a noisy grandiosity, a futile gesticulation.

Realism, I said in speaking of the character of this fifteenth century work, and indeed it is just there that we come upon the very thought of the time. Sculpture is no longer content with mere beauty, it has divined that something is wanting, yes, even in the almost miraculous work of Niccolo Pisano himself; is it only an expression of character, of the passing moment, of movement that is lacking, or something comprising all these things—some indefinable radiance which is very life itself? It is this question which seems to have presented itself to the sculptors of the fifteenth century: and their work is their answer to it.

For even as the philosophers and alchemists had sought so patiently for life, for the very essence of it, through all the years of the Middle Age, so art now set out in search of it, the greatest treasure of all, and seems to have found it at last, not hardly or hidden away in some precipitous place of stones, or among the tombs, but as a little child playing among the flowers.

The great masters of the Middle Age had set themselves to express in stone or colour the delicate beauty of the soul, its terror, too, in the loneliness of the world, where only as it were by chance it might escape everlasting death. The subtle beauty and pathos of their art has escaped our eyes filled as they are with the marvellous work of Greece, unknown till our own time, the splendid and joyful work of the Renaissance, the mysterious and lovely work of our own day: it remains, nevertheless, a consummate and exquisite art in its dawn, in its noon, in its decadence, but it seeks to express something we have forgotten, and its secret is for the most part altogether hidden from us. It is from this art, as beautiful in its expression of itself as that of Greece, that Niccolo Pisano turns away, not to Nature, but to Antiquity. The movement which followed, producing while it continued almost all that is to-day gathered in the Bargello, together with much else that is still happily where it was born, is as it were an appeal from Antiquity to Life, to Nature. In the simplicity and impulse of this movement, so spontaneous, so touching, so full of a sense of beauty, which sometimes, though not often, becomes prettiness, the art of sculpture, awakened at last from the mysticism of the Middle Age, seems to look back with longing to the antique world, which it would fain claim as its brother, and after a little moment in the sun falls again into a sort of mysticism, a new kingdom of the spirit with Michelangelo, and of the senses merely with Sansovino and Giovanni da Bologna.

Page 191

Really Tuscan in its birth, the art of the Quattrocento became at last almost wholly Florentine, a flower of the Val d'Arno or of the hills about it, where even to-day at Settignano, at Fiesole, at Majano, at Rovezzano, you may see the sculptors at work in an open bottega by the roadside, the rough-hewn marble standing here and there in many sizes and shapes, the chips and fragments strewing the highway.

In the twilight of this new dawn of the love of nature, perhaps the first figure we may descry is Piero di Giovanni Tedesco (1386-1402), who carved the second south door of the Duomo about 1398, where amid so many lovely natural things, the fig leaf and the oak leaf and the vine, you may see the lion and the ox, the dog and the snail, and man too; little fantastic children peeping out from the foliage, or blowing through musical reeds, or playing with a kitten, tiny naked creatures full of life and gladness.

The second door north of the Duomo was carved by Niccolo di Piero d'Arezzo, who was still working more than forty years after Tedesco's death; but his best work, for we pass by his Statue of St. Mark in the chapel of the apex of the Duomo, is the little Annunciation over the niche of the St. Matthew of Or San Michele. In his work on the gate of the Duomo, however, he was assisted by his pupil Nanni di Banco, who, born in the fourteenth century, died in 1420; and in his work, and in that of Jacopo della Quercia, a Sienese, and a much greater man, we see the very dawn itself.

Nanni di Banco, Vasari tells us, was a man who "inherited a competent patrimony, and one by no means of inferior condition." He goes on to say that Nanni was the pupil of Donatello, and though in any technical sense that seems to be untrue, it may well be that he sought Donato's advice whenever he could, for he seems to have practised his art for love of it, and may well have recognised the genius of Donatello, who probably worked beside him. He too worked at Or San Michele, where he carved the St. Philip, the delightful relief under the St. George of Donatello, the Four Saints, which seem to us so full of the remembrance of antiquity, and the S. Eligius with its beautiful drapery, a little stupid still, or sleepy is it, with the mystery of the Middle Age that after all was but just passing away. Something of this sleepiness seems also to have overtaken the St. Luke, that tired figure in the Duomo; and so it is with a real surprise that we come at last upon the best work of Nanni's life, "the first great living composition of the Renaissance," as Burckhardt says, the Madonna della Cintola over Niccolo d'Arezzo's door of the Duomo. Even with all the work of Ghiberti, of Donatello even, to choose from, that relief of Madonna in an almond-shaped glory, stretching out her hands among the cherubim, with a gesture so eager and so moving to St. Thomas, who kneels before her, remains one of the most beautiful works of that age, and one of the loveliest in all Tuscany.

Page 192

There follows Ciuffagni (1381-1457), that poor sculptor working in his old age amid much that was splendid and strange at Rimini, where Lorenzo Ghiberti (1378-1455) had painted in his youth. For all his genius, Ghiberti, that euphuist, did not influence those who came after him as Donatello did. His work, inspired by the past, by Andrea Pisano, for instance, is full of the lost beauty of the Middle Age, the old secrets of the Gothic manner. His solution of the problem before him, a problem of movement, of character, of life, is to make the relief as purely picturesque as possible; with him sculpture almost passes into painting, using not without charm the perspective of a picture the mere seeming of just that, but losing how profoundly, much of the nobility, the delight of pure form, the genius peculiar to sculpture. As an artist pure and simple, as a master of composition, he may well have no superior, for the fantasy and beauty of his work, its complexity, too, are almost unique, and entirely his own; but in simplicity, and in a certain sense of reality, he is wanting, so that however delightful his work may be, those "gates of Paradise," for instance, that Michelangelo praised, it seems to be complete in itself, to suggest nothing but the wonderful effect one may get by using the means proper to one art for expression in another, as though one were to write a book that should have the effect upon one of an opera, to allow the strange rhythm and sensuous beauty of Tristan and Isolde, for instance, to disengage itself from pages which were full of just musical words.

Ghiberti's gift for composition, as well as his failure to understand, or at least to satisfy the more fundamental needs of his art, may be seen very happily in those two panels now in the Bargello, which he and Brunellesco made in the competition for the gates of the Baptistry. Looking on those two panels, where both artists have carved the Sacrifice of Isaac, you see Ghiberti at his best, the whole interest not divided, as it is in Brunellesco's panel, between the servants and the sacrifice, but concentrated altogether upon that scene which is about to become so tragical. Yet with what energy Brunellesco has conceived an act that in his hands seems really to have happened. How swiftly the angel has seized the hand of Abraham; how splendidly he stands, the old man who is about to kill his only son for the love of God. And then consider the beauty of Isaac, that naked body which in Brunellesco's hands is splendid with life, really living and noble, with a truth and loveliness far in advance of the art of his time. Ghiberti has felt none of the joy of a creation such as this; his Isaac is sleepy, a little surprised and altogether docile; he has not sprung up from his knees as in Brunellesco's panel, but looks up at the angel as though he had never understood that his very life was at stake. Yet it was in those gates which, Brunellesco, as it is said, retiring from the contest, the Opera then gave

Page 193

into his hands, that we shall find the best work of Ghiberti. There it is really the art of Andrea Pisano that he takes as a master, and with so fair an example before him produces as splendid a thing as he ever accomplished, simpler too, and it may be more sincere, though a little lacking in expressiveness and life. All the rest of his work seems to me to be lacking in conviction, to be frankly almost an experiment. His Statue of St. John Baptist, his St. Matthew and St. Stephen, too, at Or San Michele, different though they are, and with six years between each of them, seem alike in this, that they are, while splendid in energy, wanting in purpose, in intention: he never seems sufficiently sure of himself to convince us. His reliquary in bronze containing the ashes of S. Zenobius in the apse of the Duomo, is difficult to see, but it is in the manner of the gates of Paradise. It was not to the disciples of Ghiberti that the future belonged, but to those who have studied with Brunellesco. His crucifix in S. Maria Novella, his Evangelists in the Pazzi Chapel, are among the finest work of that age, full of life and the remembrance of it in their strength and beauty.

It is, however, in the art of a contemporary that the new age came at last to its own—in the work of Donatello. In his youth he had worked for the Duomo and for Or San Michele side by side with Nanni di Banco, who may perhaps pass as his master. Of Donatello's life we know almost nothing. If we seek to learn something of him, it must be in his works of which so many remain to us. We know, however, that he was the intimate friend of Brunellesco, and that it was with him he set out for Rome soon after this great and proud man had withdrawn from the contest with Ghiberti for the Baptistery gates. Donatello was to visit Rome again in later life, but on this first journey that he made with Brunellesco for the purposes of study, he must have become acquainted with what was left of antiquity in the Eternal City. It was too soon for that enthusiasm for antiquity, which later overwhelmed Italian art so disastrously, to have arisen. When Donatello returned about a year later to Florence to work for the Opera del Duomo, it is not any classic influence we find in his statues, but rather the study of nature, an extraordinary desire to express not beauty, scarcely ever that, but character. His work is strong, and often splendid, full of energy, movement, and conviction, but save now and then, as in the S. Croce Annunciation, for instance, it is not content with just beauty.

Of his work for the Duomo and the Campanile, I speak elsewhere; it will be sufficient here to note the splendour of the St. John the Divine in the apse of the Duomo, which, as Burckhardt has divined, already suggests the Moses of Michelangelo. The destruction of the unfinished facade has perhaps made it more difficult to identify the figures he carved there, but whether the Poggio of the Duomo, for instance, be Job or no, seems after all to matter very little, since that statue itself, be its subject what it may, remains to us.

Page 194

In his work at Or San Michele, in the St. Peter, in the St. Mark, so like the St. John the Divine and in the St. George, here in the Bargello, we see his progress, and there in that last figure we find just that decision and simplicity which seem to have been his own, with a certain frankness and beauty of youth which are new in his work.

[Illustration: ST. JOHN THE DIVINE

By Donatello. Duomo, Florence

Alinari]

There are some ten works by the master in the Bargello, together with numerous casts of his statues and reliefs in other parts of Italy, so that he may be studied here better than anywhere else. Looking thus on his work more or less as a whole, it is a new influence we seem to divine for the first time in the marble David, a little faintly, perhaps, but obvious enough in the St. George, a Gothic influence that appears very happily for once, in work that almost alone in Italy seems to need just that, well, as an excuse for beauty. That marble statue of David was made at about the same time as the St. John the Divine, for the Duomo too, where it was to stand within the church in a chapel there in the apse. A little awkward in his half-shy pose, the young David stands over the head of Goliath, uncertain whether to go or stay. It is a failure which passes into the success, the more than success of the St. George, which is perhaps his masterpiece. Made for the Guild of Armourers, from the first day on which it was set up it has been beloved. Michelangelo loved it well, and Vasari is enthusiastic about it, while Bocchi, writing in 1571,[116] devotes a whole book to it. In its present bad light—for the light should fall not across, but from in front and from above, as it did once when it stood in its niche at Or San Michele—it is not seen to advantage, but even so, the life that seems to move in the cold stone may be discerned. With a proud and terrible impetuosity St. George seems about to confront some renowned and famous enemy, that old dragon whom once he slew. Full of confidence and beauty he gazes unafraid, as though on that which he is about to encounter before he moves forward to meet it. Well may Michelangelo have whispered “March!” as he passed by, it is the very order he awaits, the whisper of his own heart. It is in this romantic and beautiful figure that, as it seems to me, that new Gothic influence may be most clearly discerned. M. Reymond, in his learned and pleasant book on Florentine sculpture, has pointed out the likeness which this St. George of Donatello bears to the St. Theodore of Chartres Cathedral, and though it is impossible to deny that likeness, it seems at first almost as impossible to explain it. It is true that many Italians were employed in France in the building of the churches; it is equally true that Michelozzo, the friend and assistant of Donato, was the son of a Burgundian; but it seems as unlikely that an Italian artist, inspired

Page 195

by the French style, returned from France to work in Florence, as that Michelozzo was born with a knowledge of the northern manner which he never practised. An explanation, however, offers itself in the fact that the Religious Orders, those internationalists, continually passed from North to South, from East to West, from monastery to monastery, and that they may well have brought with them certain statues in ivory of Madonna or the Saints, in which such an one as Donatello could have found the hint he needed. That such statues were known in Italy is proved not only by their presence in this museum, but by the ivory Madonna of Giovanni Pisano in the sacristy of the Duomo at Pisa.

The Marzocco which stood of old on the Ringhiera before the Palazzo Vecchio might seem to be a work of this period, for it is only saved by a kind of good fortune from failure. It is without energy and without life, but in its monumental weight and a certain splendour of design it impresses us with a sort of majesty as no merely naturalistic study of a lion could do. If we compare it for a moment with the heraldic shield in Casa Martelli, where Donato has carved in relief a winged griffin rampant, cruel and savage, with all the beauty and vigour of Verrocchio, we shall understand something of his failure in the Marzocco, and something, too, of his success. In that heavy grotesque and fantastic Lion of the Bargello some suggestion of the monumental art of Egypt seems to have been divined for a moment, but without understanding.

In the Casa Martelli, too, you may find a statue of St. John Baptist, a figure fine and youthful and melancholy, with the vague thoughts of youth, really the elder brother as it were of the child of the Bargello, who bears his cross like a delicate plaything, unaware of his destiny. That figure, so full of mystery, seems to have haunted Donatello all his life, and then St. John Baptist was the patron of Florence and presided over every Baptistery in Italy; yet it is always with a particular melancholy that Donatello deals with him, as though in his vague destiny he had found as it were a vision. The child of the Bargello passes into the boy of the Casa Martelli, that lad who maybe has heard a voice sweet enough as yet while wandering by chance on the mountains, sandalled and clad in camel's hair. We see him again as the chivalrous youth of the Campanile, the dedicated, absorbed wanderer of the Bargello, the haggard, emaciated prophet of the Friars' Church at Venice, and at last as the despairing and ancient seer of Siena, a voice that is only a voice weary of itself, crying unheeded in the wilderness. And, as it seems to me in all these figures, which in themselves have so little beauty, it is rather a mood of the soul that Donatello has set himself to express than any delight. He has turned away from physical beauty, in which man can no longer believe, using the body refined almost to the delicacy and transparency of a shell, in which the soul may shine,

Page 196

or at least be seen, in all its moods of happiness or terror. That weary figure who, unconscious of his cross, unconscious of the world, absorbed in his own destiny, in the scroll of his fate, trudges through the wilderness without a thought of the way, is as far from the ideal abstract beauty of the Greeks as from the romantic splendour of Gothic art. Only with him the soul has lost touch with particular things, even as the beauty of the Greeks was purged of all the accidents and feeling that belonged alone to the individual. Like a ghost he passes by, intent on some immortal sorrow; he is like a shadow on a day of sun, a dark cloud over the moon, the wind in the desert. And in a moment, we knew not why, our hearts are restless suddenly, we know not why, we are unhappy, we know not why, we desire to be where we are not, or only to forget.

So in the bronze David now in the Bargello we seem to see youth itself dreaming after the first victory of all the conquests to come, while a smile of half-conscious delight, is passing from the lips; tyranny is dead. It is the first nude statue of the Renaissance made for Cosimo de' Medici before his exile. For Cosimo, too, the Amorino was made that study of pure delight, where we find all the joy of the children of the Cantoria, but without their unction and seriousness. And then in the portrait busts the young Gattamelata, and the terra-cotta of Niccolo da Uzzano, we may see Donatello's devotion to mere truthfulness without an afterthought, as though for him Truth were beauty in its loyalty, at any rate, to the impression of a moment that for the artist is eternity.

His marvellous equestrian statue of Gattamelata is in Padua, his tomb and reliefs and statues lie in many an Italian city, but here in the Bargello we have enough of his work to enable us to divine something at least of his secret. And this seems to me to have been Donatello's intention in the art of sculpture: his figures are like gestures of life, of the soul, sometimes involuntary and full of weariness, sometimes altogether joyful, but always the expression of a mood of the soul which is dumb, that in its agony or delight has in his work expressed itself by means of the body, so that, though he never carves the body for its own sake, or for the sake of beauty, he is as faithful in his study of it for the sake of the truth, as he is in his study of those moods of the soul which through him seem for the first time to have found an utterance. His life was full of wanderings; beside the journey to Rome with Brunellesco he went to Siena to make the tomb in the Duomo there of Bishop Pecci of Grosseto, and in 1433, when Cosimo de' Medici went into exile, he was again in Rome, and even in Naples. Returning to Florence after no long time, in 1444, he went to Padua, where he worked in S. Antonio and made the equestrian statue that was the wonder of the world. On his return to Florence, an old man, a certain decadence may be found in his work, so that his reliefs in S.

Page 197

Lorenzo are not altogether worthy of him, are perhaps the work of a man who is losing his sight and is already a little dependent on his pupils. One of these, Bertoldo di Giovanni, who died in 1491, has left us a beautiful relief of a battle, now in the Bargello, and later we catch a glimpse of him in the garden of Lorenzo's villa directing the studies in art of a number of young people, among whom was the youthful Michelangelo. But of the real disciples of Donatello, those who, without necessarily being his pupils, carried his art a step farther, we know nothing. His influence seems to have died with him. Tuscan art after his death, and even before that, had already set out on another road than his.

Something of that expressiveness, that *intimite*, which Pater found so characteristic of Luca della Robbia, seems to have inspired all the sculptors of the fifteenth century save Donatello himself. Not vitality merely, but a wonderful sort of expressiveness—it is the mood of all their work. It is perhaps in Luca della Robbia and his school that we first come upon this strange sweetness, which is really a sort of clairvoyance, as it were, to the passing aspect of the world, of men, of the summer days that go by so fast, bringing winter behind them. What the Greeks had striven to attain, that naturalness in sculpture, as though the god were really about to breathe and put out its hand, that wonderful vagueness of Michelangelo akin to nature, by which he attained the same life giving effect, a something more than mere form, bloomed in Luca's work like a new wild flower. Expression, life, the power to express the spirit in marble and terra-cotta, these are what he really discovered, and not the mere material of his art, that painted earthenware, as Vasari supposes.

Of his two great works in marble, the tomb of Benozzo Federighi, Bishop of Fiesole, at San Miniato, and the Cantoria for the Duomo, of his bronze doors for the sacristy there, and his work on the Campanile, I speak elsewhere; but here in the Bargello, and all over Tuscany too, you may see those terra-cotta reliefs of Madonna, of the Annunciation, of the Birth of our Lord, painted first just white, and then blue and white, and later with many colours which are peculiar to him and his school—could such flower-like things have been born anywhere but in Italy?—and then, if you take them away they fade in the shadows of the North.

Among the first to give Luca commissions for this exquisite work in clay was Piero de' Medici. For him Luca decorated a small book-lined chamber in the great Medici palace that Cosimo had built. His work was for the ceiling and the pavement, the ceiling being a half sphere. For the hot summer days of Italy, when the streets are a blaze of light and the sun seems to embrace the city, this terra-cotta work with its cool whites and blues, was particularly delightful bringing really, as it were, something of the cool morning sea, the soft sky, into a place

Page 198

confined and shut in, so that where they were, coolness and temperance might find a safe retreat. And it was in such work as this that he found his fame. Andrea della Robbia, his nephew, the best artist of his school, follows him, and after come a host of artists, some little better than craftsmen, who add colour to colour, till Luca's blue and white has been almost lost amid the greens and yellows and reds which at last altogether spoil the simplicity and beauty of what was really as delicate as a flower peeping out from the shadow into the sun and the rain.

But of one of the pupils of Luca, Agostino di Duccio, 1418-81(?), something more remains than these fragile and yet hardy works in terra-cotta. He has carved in marble with something of Luca's gentleness at Perugia and Rimini. He left Florence, it is said, in 1446, after an accusation of theft, returning there to carve the lovely tabernacle of the Ognissanti. It is said that he had tried unsuccessfully to deal with that block of marble which stood in the Loggia dei Lanzi, and from which Michelangelo unfolded the David. Two panels attributed to him remain in the Bargello, a Crucifixion and a Pieta, which scarcely do him justice. The last sculptor of the first half of the fifteenth century, his best work seems to me to be at Rimini, where he worked for Sigismondo Malatesta in the temple Alberti had built in that fierce old city by the sea.

It is with the second half of the fifteenth century that the art contrived for the delight of private persons, for the decoration of palaces, of chapels, and of tombs, begins. Already Donatello had worked for Cosimo de' Medici, and had made portrait busts, and, as it might seem, the work of Luca della Robbia was especially suited for private altars or oratories, or the cool rooms of a people which had not yet divided its religion from its life. And then, in Florence at any rate, all the great churches were finished, or almost finished; it was necessary for the artist to find other patrons. Among those workers in metal who had assisted Ghiberti when he cast the reliefs of his first baptistery gate was the father of a man who had with his brother learned the craft of the goldsmiths. His name was Antonio Pollajuolo. Born in 1429, he was the pupil of his father and of Paolo Uccello, learning from the latter the art of painting, which he practised, however, like a sculptor, his real triumph being, in that art at any rate, one of movement and force. His best works in sculpture seem to me to be his tombs of Sixtus IV and Innocent VII in S. Pietro in Rome; but here in the Bargello you may see the beautiful bust in terra-cotta of a young condottiere in a rich and splendid armour, and a little bronze group of Hercules and Antaeus. In the Opera del Duomo his silver relief of the Birth of St. John Baptist is one of the finest works of that age; but his art is seen at its highest in that terra-cotta bust here in the Bargello, perhaps a sketch for a bronze, where he has expressed the infinite confidence and courage of one of those captains of adventure, who, with war for their trade, carried havoc up and down Italy.

Page 199

It is, however, in the work of another goldsmith—or at least the pupil of one, whose name he took—that we find the greatest master of the new age, Andrea Verrocchio. Born in 1435, and dead in 1488, he was preoccupied all his life with the fierce splendour of his art, the subtle sweetness that he drew from the strength of his work. The master, certainly, of Lorenzo di Credi and Leonardo, and finally of Perugino also, he was a painter as well as a sculptor; and though his greatest work was achieved in marble and bronze, one cannot lightly pass by the Annunciation of the Uffizi, or the Baptism of the Accademia. Neglected for so long, he is at last recognised as one of the greatest of all Italian masters of the Renaissance.

The pupil of a goldsmith practising the craft of a founder, he cast the sacristy gates of the Duomo for Luca della Robbia. In sculpture he appears to have studied under Donatello, though his work shows little of his influence; and working, as we may suppose, with his master in S. Lorenzo, he made the bronze plaque for the tomb of Cosimo there before the choir, and the monument of Piero and Giovanni de' Medici beside the door of the sacristy. It was again for Lorenzo de' Medici that he made the exquisite Child and Dolphin now in the court of Palazzo Vecchio, and the statue of the young David now in Bargello. The subtle grace and delight of this last seem not uncertainly to suggest the strange and lovely work of Leonardo da Vinci. There for the first time you may discern the smile that is like a ray of sunshine in Leonardo's shadowy pictures. More perfect in craftsmanship and in the knowledge of anatomy than Donatello, Verrocchio here, where he seems almost to have been inspired by the David of his master, surpasses him in energy and beauty, and while Donatello's figure is involved with the head of Goliath, so that the feet are lost in the massive and almost shapeless bronze, Verrocchio's David stands clear of the grim and monstrous thing at his feet. Simpler, too, and less uncertain is the whole pose of the figure, who is in no doubt of himself, and in his heart he has already "slain his thousands."

In the portrait of Monna Vanna degli Albizi, the Lady with the Nosegay, Verrocchio is the author of the most beautiful bust of the Renaissance. She fills the room with sunshine, and all day long she seems to whisper some beloved name. A smile seems ever about to pass over her face under her clustering hair, and she has folded her beautiful hands on her bosom, as though she were afraid of their beauty and would live ever in their shadow.

[Illustration: THE LADY WITH THE NOSEGAY (VANNA TORNABUONI?)

In the Bargello. Andrea Verrocchio

Alinari]

Page 200

In two reliefs of Madonna and Child, one in marble and one in terra-cotta, you find that strange smile again, not, as with Leonardo, some radiance of the soul visible for a moment on the lips, but the smile of a mother happy with her little son. In the two Tornabuoni reliefs that we find here too in the Bargello, it is not Verrocchio's hand we see; but in the group of Christ and St. Thomas at Or San Michele, and in the fierce and splendid equestrian statue of Bartolomeo Colleoni at Venice, you see him at his best, occupied with a subtle beauty long sought out, and with an expression of the fierce ardour and passion that consumed him all his life. He touches nothing that does not live with an ardent splendour and energy of spirit because of him. If he makes only a leaf of bronze for a tomb, it seems to quiver under his hands with an inextinguishable vitality.

Softly beside him, untouched by the passion of his style, grew all the lovely but less passionate works of the sculptors in marble, the sweet and almost winsome monuments of the dead. Bernardo Rossellino, born in 1409, his elder by more than twenty years, died more than twenty years before him, in 1464, carving, among other delightful things, the lovely Annunciation at Empoli, the delicate monument of Beata Villana in S. Maria Novella, and creating once for all, in the tomb of Leonardo Bruni in S. Croce, the perfect pattern of such things, which served as an example to all the Tuscan sculptors who followed, till Michelangelo hewed the great monuments in the Sacristy of S. Lorenzo. His brother Antonio, born in 1427, worked with him at Pistoja certainly in the tomb of Filippo Lazzari in S. Domenico, surpassing him as a sculptor, under the influence of Desiderio da Settignano. His finest work is the beautiful tomb in S. Miniato of the young Cardinal of Portugal, who died on a journey to Florence. In that strange and lovely place there is nothing more beautiful than that monument under the skyeey work of Luca della Robbia, before the faintly coloured frescoes of Alessio Baldovinetti. Under a vision of Madonna borne by angels from heaven, where two angels stoop, half kneeling, on guard, the young Cardinal sleeps, supported by two heavenly children, his hands—those delicate hands—folded in death. Below, on a frieze at the base of the tomb, Antonio has carved all sorts of strange and beautiful things—a skull among the flowers over a garland harnessed to two unicorns; angels too, youthful and strong, lifting the funeral vases. At Naples, again, he carved the altar of the Cappella Piccolomini in S. Maria at Montoliveto. Here in the Bargello some fragments of beautiful things have been gathered—a tabernacle with two adoring angels, a little St. John made in 1477 for the Opera, a relief of the Adoration of the Shepherds, another of Madonna in an almond-shaped glory of cherubim, and, last of all, the splendid busts of Matteo Palmieri and Francesco Sassetti; but his masterpiece in pure sculpture is the S. Sebastian in the Collegiata at Empoli, a fair and youthful figure without the affectation and languor that were so soon to fall upon him.

Page 201

Perhaps the greatest of these sculptors in marble, whose works, as winsome as wild flowers, are scattered over the Tuscan hills, was Desiderio da Settignano, born in 1428. He had worked with Donatello in the Pazzi Chapel, and his tabernacle in the chapel of the Blessed Sacrament in S. Lorenzo is one of the most charming things left in that museum of Tuscan work. Of his beautiful tomb of Carlo Marsuppini in S. Croce I speak elsewhere: it is worthy of its fellows—Bernardo Rossellino's tomb of Leonardo Bruni in the same church, and the tomb of the Cardinal of Portugal by Antonio Rossellino at S. Miniato. Desiderio has not the energy of Rossellino or the passionate ardour of Verrocchio. He searches for a quiet beauty full of serenity and delight. His work in the Bargello is of little account. The bust of a girl (No. 198 in the fifth room on the top floor) is but doubtfully his: Vasari speaks only of the bust of Marietta Strozzi, now in Berlin. He died in 1464, and his work, so rare, so refined and delicate in its beauty, comes to its own in the perfect achievement of Benedetto da Maiano, born in 1442, who made the pulpit of S. Croce, the ciborium of S. Domenico in Siena. It was for Pietro Mellini that he carved the pulpit of S. Croce, and here in the Bargello we may see the bust he made of his patron. In his youth he had carved in wood and worked at the intarsia work so characteristic a craft of the fifteenth century; but on bringing some coffers of this work to the King of Hungary, Vasari relates that he found they had fallen to pieces on the voyage, and ever after he preferred to work in marble. Having acquired a competence, of this work too he seems to have tired, devoting himself to architectural work—porticos, altars, and such—buying an estate at last outside the gate of Prato that is towards Florence; dying in 1497.

It is with a prolific master, Mino da Fiesole, the last pupil, according to Vasari, of Desiderio da Settignano, that the delicate and flower-like work of the Tuscan sculptors may be said to pass into a still lovely decadence. His facile work is found all over Italy. The three busts of the Bargello are among his earliest and best works—the Piero de' Medici, the Giuliano de' Medici, and the small bust of Rinaldo della Luna. There, too, are two reliefs from his hand, and some tabernacles which have no great merit. A relief of the Madonna and Child is a finer achievement in his earlier manner, and in the Duomo of Fiesole there remains a bust of the Bishop, Leonardo Salutati, while in the same chapel, an altar and relief, from his hand, seem to prove that it was only a fatal facility that prevented him from becoming as fine an artist as Benedetto da Maiano.

Page 202

With Andrea Sansovino, born in 1460, we come to the art of the sixteenth century, very noble and beautiful, at any rate in its beginning, but so soon to pass into a mere affectation. The pupil, according to Vasari, of Antonio Pollaiuolo, Sansovino's work is best seen in Rome. Here in Florence he made in his youth the altar of the Blessed Sacrament in the left transept of S. Spirito, and in 1502 the Baptism of Christ, over the eastern gates of the Baptistery, but this was finished by another hand. And there followed him Benedetto da Rovezzano, whose style has become classical, the sculptor of every sort of lovely furniture,—mantelpieces, tabernacles, and such,—yet in his beautiful reliefs of the life of S. Giovanni Gualberto you see the work of the sixteenth century at its best, without the freshness and delicate charm of fifteenth-century sculpture, but exquisite enough in its perfect skill, its real achievement.

There follows Michelangelo (1475-1564). It is with a sort of surprise one comes face to face with that sorrowful, heroic figure, as though, following among the flowers, we had come upon some tragic precipice, some immense cavern too deep for sight. How, after the delight, the delicate charm of the fifteenth century, can I speak of this beautiful, strong, and tragic soul? It might almost seem that the greatest Italian of the sixteenth century has left us in sculpture little more than an immortal gesture of despair, of despair of a world which he has not been content to love. His work is beautiful with the beauty of the mountains, of the mountains in which he alone has found the spirit of man. His figures, half unveiled from the living rock, are like some terrible indictment of the world he lived in, and in a sort of rage at its uselessness he leaves them unfinished, and it but half expressed;—an indictment of himself too, of his own heart, of his contempt for things as they are. Yet in his youth he had been content with beauty—in the lovely Pieta of S. Pietro, for instance, where, on the robe of Mary, alone in all his work he has placed his name; or in the statue of Bacchus, now here in the Bargello, sleepy, half drunken with wine or with visions, the eyelids heavy with dreams, the cup still in his hand. But already in the David his trouble is come upon him; the sorrow that embittered his life has been foreseen, and in a sort of protest against the enslavement of Florence, that nest where he was born, he creates this hero, who seems to be waiting for some tyranny to declare itself. The Brutus, unfinished as we say, to-day in the Bargello, he refused to touch again, since that city which was made for a thousand lovers, as he said, had been enjoyed by one only, some Medici against whom, as we know, he was ready to fight. If in the beautiful relief of Madonna we find a sweetness and strength that is altogether without bitterness or indignation, it is not any religious consolation we find there, but such comfort rather as life may give when in a moment of

Page 203

inward tragedy we look on the stars or watch a mother with her little son. What secret and immortal sorrow and resentment are expressed in those strange and beautiful figures of the tombs in the Sacristy of S. Lorenzo! The names we have, given them are, as Pater has said, too definite for them; they suggest more than we know how to express of our thoughts concerning life, so that for once the soul of man seems there to have taken form and turned to stone. The unfinished Pieta in the Duomo, it is said, he carved for his own grave: like so much of his great, tragical work, it is unfinished, unfinished though everything he did was complete from the beginning. For he is like the dawn that brings with it noon and evening, he is like the day which will pass into the night. In him the spirit of man has stammered the syllables of eternity, and in its agony of longing or sorrow has failed to speak only the word love. All things particular to the individual, all that is small or of little account, that endures but for a moment, have been purged away, so that Life itself may make, as it were, an immortal gesticulation, almost monstrous in its passionate intensity—a mirage seen on the mountains, a shadow on the snow. And after him, and long before his death, there came Baccio Bandinelli and the rest, Cellini the goldsmith, Giovanni da Bologna, and the sculptors of the decadence that has lasted till our own day. With him Italian art seems to have been hurled out of heaven; henceforth his followers stand on the brink of Pandemonium, making the frantic gestures of fallen gods.

[Illustration: "LA NOTTE"

From Tomb of Giulinto de' Medici. Michelangelo

Anderson]

FOOTNOTES:

[115] It seems necessary to note that probably Arnolfo Fiorentino and Arnolfo di Cambio are not the same person. Cf. Crowe and Cavalcaselle, *op. cit.* vol. i. p. 127, note 4.

[116] Eccellenza della Statua di S. Giorgio di Donatello: Marescotti, 1684.

XXII. FLORENCE

ACCADEMIA

Florentine art, that had expressed itself so charmingly, and at last so passionately and profoundly, in sculpture, where design, drawing, that integrity of the plastic artist, is everything, and colour almost nothing at all, shows itself in painting, where it is most characteristic, either as the work of those who were sculptors themselves, or had at

least learned from them—Giotto, Orcagna, Masaccio, the Pollaiuoli, Verrocchio, and Michelangelo—or in such work as that of Fra Angelico, Fra Lippo Lippi, Botticelli, and Leonardo, where painting seems to pass into poetry, into a canticle or a hymn, a Trionfo or some strange, far-away, sweet music. The whole impulse of this art lies in the intellect rather than in the senses, is busied continually in discussing life rather than in creating

Page 204

it, in discussing one by one the secrets of movement, of expression; always more eager to find new forms for ideas than to create just life itself in all its splendour and shadow, as Venice was content to do. Thus, while Florence was the most influential school of art in Italy, her greatest sons do not seem altogether to belong to her: Leonardo, a wanderer all his life, founds his school in Milan, and dies at last in France; Michelangelo becomes almost a Roman painter, the sculptor, the architect in paint of the Sistine Chapel; while Andrea del Sarto appears from the first as a foreigner, the one colourist of the school, only a Florentine in this, that much of his work is, as it were, monumental, composing itself really—as with the Madonna delle Arpie or the great Madonna and Saints of the Pitti, for instance—into statuesque groups, into sculpture. So if we admit that Leonardo and Michelangelo were rather universal than Florentine, the most characteristic work of the school lies in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, in the work of Giotto, so full of great, simple thoughts of life; in that of the Pollaiuoli, so full of movement; but most of all perhaps in the work of Angelico, Lippo Lippi, and Botticelli, where the significance of life has passed into beauty, into music.

The rise of this school, so full of importance for Italy, for the world, is very happily illustrated in the Accademia della Belle Arti; and if the galleries of the Uffizi can show a greater number of the best works of the Florentine painters, together with much else that is foreign to them; if the Pitti Palace is richer in masterpieces, and possesses some works of Raphael's Florentine period and the pictures of Fra Bartolomeo and Andrea del Sarto, as well as a great collection of the work of the other Italian schools, it is really in the Accademia we may study best the rise of the Florentine school itself, finding there not only the work of Giotto, his predecessors and disciples, but the pictures of Fra Angelico, of Verrocchio, of Filippo Lippi, of Botticelli, the painters of that fifteenth century which, as Pater has told us, "can hardly be studied too much, not merely for its positive results in the things of the intellect and the imagination, its concrete works of art, its special and prominent personalities with their profound aesthetic charm, but for its general spirit and character, for the ethical qualities of which it is a consummate type."

The art of the Sculptors had been able to free itself from the beautiful but sterile convention of the Byzantine masters earlier than the art of Painting, because it had found certain fragments of antiquity scattered up and down Southern Italy, and in such a place as the Campo Santo of Pisa, to which it might turn for guidance and inspiration. No such forlorn beauty remained in exile to renew the art of painting. All the pictures of antiquity had been destroyed, and though in such work as that of the Cavallini and

Page 205

their school at Assisi there may be found a faint memory of the splendour that had so unfortunately passed away, it is rather the shadow of the statues we find there—in the Abraham of the upper church of S. Francesco, for instance—than the more lyrical and mortal loveliness of the unknown painters of Imperial Rome. Yet it is there, in that lonely and beautiful church full of the soft sweet light of Umbria, that Giotto perhaps learned all that was needed to enable him not only to recreate the art of painting, but to decide its future in Italy.

Here in the Accademia in the Sala dei Maestri Toscani you may see an altarpiece that has perhaps come to us from his hands, amid much beautiful languid work that is still in the shadow of the Middle Age, or that, coming after him, has almost failed to understand his message, the words of life which may everywhere be found in his frescoes in Assisi, in Florence, in Padua, spoiled though they be by the intervention of fools, the spoliation of the vandals.

Those strange and lovely altarpieces ruthlessly torn from the convents and churches of Tuscany still keep inviolate the secret of those who, not without tears, made them for the love of God: once for sure they made a sunshine in some shadowy place. Hung here to-day in a museum, just so many specimens that we number and set in order, they seem rude and fantastic enough, and in the cold light of this salone, crowded together like so much furniture, they have lost all meaning or intention. They are dead, and we gaze at them almost with contempt; they will never move us again. That rude and almost terrible picture of Madonna and Saints with its little scenes from the life of our Lord, stolen from the Franciscan convent of S. Chiara at Lucca, what is it to us who pass by? Yet once it listened for the prayers of the little nuns of S. Francis, and, who knows, may have heard the very voice of Il Poverello. That passionate and dreadful picture of St. Mary Magdalen covered by her hair as with a robe of red gold, does it move us at all? Will it explain to us the rise of Florentine painting? And you, O learned archaeologist, you, O scientific critic, you, O careless and curious tourist, will it bring you any comfort to read (if you can) the inscription—

“Ne desperetis, vos qui peccare soletis
Exemplo meo vos reperate Deo.”

Those small pictures of the life of St. Mary, which surround her still with their beauty, do you even know what they mean? And if you do, are they any more to you than an idle tale, a legend, which has lost even its meaning? No, we look at these faint and far-off things merely with curiosity as a botanist looks through his albums, like one who does not know flowers.

Page 206

Then there is the great Ancona (102) from S. Trinita attributed to Cimabue about which the critics have been so eloquent, till under their hands Cimabue has vanished into a mere legend; and Madonna too, is she now any more than a tale that is told? Beside it you find another Madonna (103) from Ognissanti which they agree together is really from the hand of Giotto, though with how much intervention and repainting; but they confess too that there is little to be learnt from it, since Giotto may be seen to better advantage and more truly himself in his frescoes, which yet remain in the churches as of old. And it is for this we have robbed the lowly and stolen away the images of their gods.

It is a lesser because a merely imitative art that you see in the work of Taddeo Gaddi and the Madonna and Child with six saints of his son Agnolo, or the Entombment ascribed to Taddeo but really the work of an inferior painter, Niccolo di Pietro Gerini from Or San Michele. Yet those twelve scenes from the lives of Christ and St. Francis are lovely enough; and in the Crucifixion there (112) we seem to see the work of a master. A host of painters, "the Giottoesques," as we may call them, followed: Puccio Capanna, Buffalmacco, Francesco da Volterra, Stefano Fiorentino, the grandson of Giotto, Giotto, and Spinello Aretino, all of whom were painting about the middle of the fourteenth century in Giotto's manner but without his genius, or any true understanding of his art. The gradual passing of this derivative work, the prophecy of such painters as Masolino, Masaccio, and Fra Angelico may be found in the work of Orcagna, of Antonio Veneziano, and Starnina, and possibly too in the better-preserved paintings of Lorenzo Monaco of the order of S. Romuald of Camaldoli, in the Annunciation (143), for instance, here in this very room.

Andrea Orcagna was born about 1308. He was a man of almost universal genius, but his altarpiece in S. Maria Novella is nearly all that remains to us of his painting, and splendid though it be, has been perhaps spoiled by a later hand than his. In the Accademia here there is a Vision of St. Bernard (No. 138), faint, it is true, but still soft and charming in colour, while in the Uffizi there is in the corridor an altarpiece with St. Matthew in the midst that is certainly partially his own. Nothing at all remains to us of the work of Starnina, the master of Masolino, and thus we lose the link which should connect the art of Giotto and the Giottoesques with the art of Masolino and Angelico.[117] It was about the same time as Starnina was painting in the chapel of S. Girolamo at the Carmine that Lorenzo Monaco was working in the manner of Agnolo Gaddi. His work is beautiful by reason of its delicacy and gentleness, but it is so completely in the old manner that Vasari gives his altarpiece of the Annunciation now here in the Accademia (No. 143) to Giotto, praising that master for the tremulous sweetness of Madonna as she shrinks before the Announcing Angel just about to alight from heaven. It is a very different scene you come upon in his altarpiece in S. Trinita, where Gabriel, his beautiful wings furled, has already fallen on his knees, and our Lord Himself, still among the Cherubim, speeds the Dove to Mary, who has looked up from her book suddenly in an ecstasy.

Page 207

[Illustration: THE ADORATION OF THE SHEPHERDS

By Domenico Ghirlandajo, Accademia

Anderson]

No work that we possess of the fourteenth century, save Giotto's, prepares us for the frescoes of Masolino: they must be sought in the Brancacci Chapel of the Carmine. But of the work of Masaccio his pupil, though his best work remains in the same place, there may be found here in the Accademia an early altarpiece of Madonna and Child with St. Anne (Sala III, No. 70). Born in 1401, dying when he was but twenty-seven years of age, he recreated for himself that reality in painting which it had been the chief business of Giotto to discover. Influenced by Donatello, his work is almost as immediate as that of sculpture. Impressive and full of an energy that seems to be life itself, his figures have almost the sense of reality. "I feel," says Mr. Berenson, "that I could touch every figure, that it would yield a definite resistance ... that I could walk round it." There follow Paolo Uccello, whose work will be found in the Uffizi, and Andrea del Castagno, who painted the equestrian portrait of Niccolo da Tolentino in the Duomo, and the frescoes in S. Apollonia.

Thus we come really into the midst of the fifteenth century, to the work of Fra Angelico, Fra Lippo Lippi, and Botticelli, which we have loved so much.

It is really the Middle Age, quite expressed for once, by one who, standing a little way off perhaps, could almost scorn it, that we come upon in Gentile da Fabriano's picture, on an easel here, of the Adoration of the Shepherds. It is one of the loveliest of all early Umbrian pictures, full of a new kind of happiness that is about to discover the world. And if with Gentile we seem to look back on the Middle Age from the very dawn of the Renaissance, it is the Renaissance itself, the most simple and divine work it achieved in its earliest and best days, that we see in the work of Fra Angelico. One beautiful and splendid picture, the Descent from the Cross, alas! repainted, stands near Gentile's Adoration, among several later pictures, of which certainly the loveliest is a gentle and serene work by Domenico Ghirlandajo, an Adoration of the Shepherds; but the greater part of Angelico's work to be found here is in another room. There, in many little pictures, you may see the world as Paradise, the very garden where God talked with Adam. Or he will tell us the story of S. Cosmas and S. Damian, those good saints who despised gold, so that with their brethren they were cast into a furnace, but the beautiful bright flames curled and leaped away from them as at the breath of God, licking feverishly at the persecutors, who with iron forks try to thrust the faggots nearer, while one hides from the heat of the fire behind his shield, and another, already dead, is consumed by the flames. Above in a gallery of marble, decked with beautiful rugs and hangings of needlework, the sultan looks on astonished amid his courtiers.

Page 208

Or it is the story of our Lord he tells us: how in the evening Mary set out from Nazareth mounted on a mule, her little son in her arms, Joseph following afoot, with a pipkin for the fire in the wilderness, and a *fiasco* of wine lest they be thirsty, a great stick over his shoulder for the difficult way, and a cloak too, for our Lady. Or it is the Annunciation he shows us: how in the dawn of that day of days, his bright wings still tremulous with flight, Gabriel fell like a snowflake in the garden, in the silence of the cypresses between two little loggias, light and fair, where Madonna was praying; far and far away in the faint clear sky the Dove hovers, that is the Spirit of God, the Desire of all Nations. Or it is Hosanna he sings, when Christ rides under the stripped palms into Jerusalem, while the people strew the way with branches. Or again he will tell us of Paradise, beneath whose towers, in a garden of wild flowers, the saints dance with the angels, crowned with garlands, in the light that streams through the gates of heaven from the throne of God.

How may we rightly speak of such a man, who in his simplicity has seen angels on the hills of Tuscany, the flowers and trees of our world scattered in heaven? Truly his master is unknown, for, as perhaps he was too simple to say, St. Luke taught him in an idle hour, after the vision of the Annunciation, when he was tired of writing the Magnificat of Mary: and Angelico was his only pupil. That such things as these could come out of the cloister is not so marvellous as that, since they grew there, we should have suppressed the convents and turned the friars away. For just as the lily of art towered first and broke into blossom on the grave of St. Francis, so here in the convent of S. Marco of the Dominicans was one who for the first time seems to have seen the world, the very byways and hills of Tuscany, and dreamed of them as heaven.

It was another friar who was, as it were, to people that world, a little more human perhaps, a little less than Paradise, which Angelico had seen; to people it at least with children, little laughing rascals from the street corner, caught with a soldo and turned into angels. Another friar, but how different. The story, so romantic, so full of laughter and tears, that Vasari has told us of Fra Lippo Lippi, is one of his best known pages; I shall not tell it again. Four little panels painted by him are here in this room, beside the work of Fra Angelico. While not far away you come upon two splendid studies by Perugino of two monks of the Vallombrosa, Dom Biagio Milanese and Dom Baldassare, the finest portraits he ever painted, and in some sort his most living work.[118] Four other works by Perugino may also be found here,—the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, a *Pieta*, and the Agony in the Garden in the Sala di Perugino, a Crucifixion in the Sala di Botticelli. The Assumption was painted at Vallombrosa late in the year 1500, and is

Page 209

a fine piece of work in Perugino's more mannered style. Above, God the Father, in a glory of cherubim with a worshipping angel on either side, blesses Madonna, who in mid-heaven gazes upward, seated on a cloud, in a mandorla of cherubs, surrounded by four angels playing musical instruments, while two others are at her feet following her in her flight; below, three saints, with St. Michael, stand disconsolate. In the Pieta, painted much earlier, where the dead Christ lies on His Mother's knees, while an angel holds the head of the Prince of Life on his shoulders, and Mary Magdalen weeps at his feet, and two saints, St. John and St. Joseph, perhaps, watch beside Him, there might seem to be little to hold us or to interest us at all; the picture is really without life, just because everything is so unreal, and if we gather any emotion there, it will come to us from the soft sky, full of air and light, that we see through a splendid archway, or from a tiny glimpse of the valley that peeps from behind Madonna's robe. And surely it was in this valley, on a little hill, that, as we may see in another picture here, Christ knelt; yes, in the garden of the world, while the disciples slept, and the angel brought Him the bitter cup. Not far away is Jerusalem, and certain Roman soldiers and the priests; but it is not these dream-like figures that attract us, but the world that remains amid all interior changes still the same, and, for once in his work, those tired men, really wearied out, who sleep so profoundly while Christ prays. In the Crucifixion all the glamour, the religious impression that, in Perugino's work at least, space the infinite heaven of Italy, the largeness of her evening earth, make on one, is wanting, and we find instead a mere insistence upon the subject. The world is dark under the eclipsed sun and moon, and the figures are full of affectation. Painted for the convent of St. Jerome, it was necessary to include that saint and his lion, that strangely pathetic and sentimental beast, so full of embarrassment, that looks at one so wearily from many an old picture in the galleries of the world. If something of that clairvoyance which created his best work is wanting here, it has vanished altogether in that Deposition which Filippino Lippi finished, and instead of a lovely dream of heaven and earth, one finds a laboured picture full of feats of painting, of cleverness, and calculated arrangement. This soft Umbrian world of dreamy landscape, which we find in Perugino's pictures, is like a clearer vision of the land we already descry far off with Fra Angelico, where his angels sing and his saints dance for gladness.

It is a different and a more real life that you see in the work of Fra Lippo Lippi. Realism, it is the very thought of all Florentine work of the fifteenth century. Seven pictures by the Frate have been gathered in this gallery,—the Madonna and Child Enthroned, the St. Jerome in the Desert, a Nativity, a Madonna adoring Her Son, and the great Coronation of the Virgin, the Archangel Gabriel and the Baptist, and a Madonna and St. Anthony.

Page 210

Here in the Accademia you may see Lucrezia Buti, that pale beauty whom he loved, very fair and full of languor and sweetness. She looks at you out of the crowd of saints and angels gathered round the feet of Madonna, whom God crowns from His throne of jasper. Behind her, looking at her always, Lippo himself comes—*iste perfecit opus*,—up the steps into that choir where the angels crowned with roses lift the lilies, as they wait in some divine interval to sing again Alleluia. And for this too he should be remembered, for his son was Filippino Lippo and his pupil Sandro Botticelli.

The Accademia possesses some five pictures by Botticelli,—the Coronation of the Virgin and its predella (Nos. 73, 74), the Madonna with saints and angels (No. 85), the Dead Christ (No. 157), the Salome (No. 161), and the Primavera (No. 80). The Coronation is from the Convent of S. Marco, and seems to have been painted after Botticelli had fallen under the strange, unhappy influence of Savonarola; much the same might be said of the Madonna with saints and angels, where his expressiveness, that quality which in him was genius, seems to have fallen almost into a mannerism, a sort of preconceived attitude; and certainly here, where such a perfect thing awaits us, it is rather to the Spring we shall turn at once than to anything less splendid.

The so-called Primavera was painted for Lorenzo de' Medici, and in some vague way seems to have been inspired by Poliziano's verses in praise of Giuliano de' Medici and Bella Simonetta—

"Candida e ella, e Candida la vesta,
Ma pur di rose e fior dipinta e d'erba:
Lo innanellato crin dell' aurea testa
Scende in la fronte umilmente superba.
Ridele attorno tutta la foresta,
E quanto puo sue cure disacerba.
Nell' atto regalmente e mansueta;
E pur col ciglio le tempeste acqueta." [119]

Here at last we see the greatest, the most personal artist of the fifteenth century really at his best, in that fortunate moment of half-pensive joy which was so soon to pass away. How far has he wandered, and through what secret forbidden ways, from the simple thoughts of Angelico, the gay worldly laughter of Lippo Lippi. On that strange adventurous journey of the soul he has discovered the modern world, just our way of looking at things, as it were, with a sort of gift for seeing in even the most simple things some new and subtle meaning. And then, in that shadowy and yet so real kingdom in which, not without a certain timidity, he has ventured so far, he has come upon the very gods in exile, and for him Venus is born again from the foam of the sea, and Mars sleeping in a valley will awake to find her beside him, not as of old full of laughter, disdain, and joy; but half reconciled, as it were, to sorrow, to that change which has come upon her so that men now call her Mary, that name in which bitter and sweet are mingled together.

Page 211

With how subtly pensive a mien she comes through the spring woods here in the Primavera, her delicate hand lifted half in protest, half in blessing of that gay and yet thoughtful company,—Flora, her gown full of roses, Spring herself caught in the arms of Aeolus, the Graces dancing a little wistfully together, where Mercurius touches indifferently the unripe fruit with the tip of his caduceus, and Amor blindfold points his dart, yes almost like a prophecy of death.... What is this scene that rises so strangely before our eyes, that are filled with the paradise of Angelico, the heaven of Lippo Lippi. It is the new heaven, the ancient and beloved earth, filled with spring and peopled with those we have loved, beside whose altars long ago we have hushed our voices. It is the dream of the Renaissance. The names we have given these shadowy beautiful figures are but names, that Grace who looks so longingly and sadly at Hermes is but the loveliest among the lovely, though we call her Simonetta and him Giuliano. Here in the garden of the world is Venus's pleasure-house, and there the gods in exile dream of their holy thrones. Shall we forgive them, and forget that since our hearts are changed they are changed also? They have looked from Olympus upon Calvary; Dionysus, who has borne the youngest lamb on his shoulders, has wandered alone in the wilderness and understood the sorrow of the world; even that lovely, indifferent god has been crucified, and she, Venus Aphrodite, has been born again, not from the salt sea, but in the bitterness of her own tears, the tears of Madonna Mary. It is thus Botticelli, with a rare and personal art, expresses the very thought of his time, of his own heart, which half in love with Pico of Mirandola would reconcile Plato with Moses, and since man's allegiance is divided reconcile the gods. You may discern something, perhaps, of the same thought, but already a little cold, a little indifferent in its appeal, in the Adoration of the Shepherds which Luca Signorelli painted, now in the Uffizi, where the shepherds are fair and naked youths, the very gods of Greece come to worship the Desire of all Nations. But with Botticelli that divine thought is altogether fresh and sincere. It is strange that one so full of the Hellenic spirit should later have fallen under the influence of a man so singularly wanting in temperance or sweetness as Savonarola. One pictures him in his sorrowful old age bending over the *Divina Commedia* of Dante, continually questioning himself as to that doctrine of the Epicureans, to wit, that the soul dies with the body; at least, one reads that he abandoned all labour at his art, and was like to have died of hunger but for the Medici, who supported him.[120]

[Illustration: "THE THREE GRACES FROM THE PRIMAVERA"]

By Sandro Botticelli. *Accademia*

Anderson]

FOOTNOTES:

[117] Cf. Crowe and Cavalcaselle, *History of Painting in Italy*, 1903, vol. ii. p. 290.

Page 212

[118] For a full consideration of these and other works of Perugino, Gentile da Fabriano, and the Umbrian masters, see my *Cities of Umbria*.

[119] Poliziano, Stanza I, str. 43, 44, 46, 47 68, 72, 85, 94; and Alberti, *Opere Volgari, Della Pittura*, Lib. III (Firenze, 1847).

[120] Of the work of Verrocchio in this gallery, the Baptism of Christ, in which Leonardo is said, I think mistakenly, to have painted an angel in the left hand kneeling at the feet of Jesus, I speak in the chapter on the Uffizi.

XXIII. FLORENCE

THE UFFIZI

If it is difficult to speak with justice and a sense of proportion of the Accademia delle Belle Arti, how may I hope to succeed with the Uffizi Gallery, where the pictures are infinitely more varied and numerous. It might seem impossible to do more than to give a catalogue of the various works here gathered from royal and ducal collections, from many churches, convents, and monasteries, forming, certainly, with the gallery of the Pitti Palace, the finest collection of the Italian schools of painting in the world. And then in this palace, built for Cosimo I, by Giorgio Vasari, the delightful historian of the Italian painters, you may find not only paintings but a great collection of sculpture also, a magnificent collection of drawings and jewels, together with the Archives, the Biblioteca Nazionale, which includes the Palatine and the Magliabecchian Libraries. It will be best, then, seeing that a whole lifetime were not enough in which to number such treasures, to confine ourselves to a short examination of the sculpture, which is certainly less valuable to us than to our fathers, and to a brief review, hardly more than a personal impression, of the Italian pictures, which are its chiefest treasure.

Of the rooms in which are hung the portraits of painters, those unfortunate self-portraits in which some of the greatest painters have not without agony realised their own ugliness, exhibiting themselves in the pose that they have hoped the world would mistake for the very truth, I say nothing. It is true, the older men, less concerned perhaps at staring the word in the face, are not altogether unfortunate in their self-revelation; but consider the portrait of Lord Leighton by himself,—it must have been painted originally as a signboard for Burlington House, for the summer exhibition of the Academy there, as who should say to a discerning public: Here you may have your fill of the impudent and blatant commonplace you love so much. And if such a thing is really without its fellow in these embarrassing rooms, where Raphael, Leonardo, Titian, and Velasquez are shouted down by some forgotten German, some too well remembered English painter, it is but the perfect essence of the whole collection, as though for once Leighton had really understood what was required of him and had done his marvellous best.

Page 213

It is on the top floor of this palace of Cosimo I, after passing the busts of the lords and dukes of the Medici family, that one enters the gallery itself, which, running round three sides of a parallelogram, opens into various rooms of all shapes and sizes. It was Francesco I, second Grand Duke of Tuscany, who began to collect here the various works of art which his predecessors had gathered in their villas and palaces. To this collection Cardinal Ferdinando de' Medici, his brother, added, on his succession to the Grand-Dukedom, the treasures he had collected in the villa which he had built in Rome, and which still bears the name of his house. To Cosimo II, it might seem, we owe the covered way from this Palazzo degli Uffizi across Ponte Vecchio to the Palazzo Pitti, while Ferdinand II began the collection of those self-portraits of the painters of which I have spoken. Inheriting, as he did through his wife, Vittoria della Rovere, the treasures of Urbino, he brought them here, while it is to his son, Cosimo III, that we owe the presence of Venus de' Medici, which had been dug up in the gardens of Hadrian's villa, and bought by Ferdinando I when he was Cardinal. Most of the Flemish pictures were brought here by Anna, the sister of Gian Gastone, and daughter of Cosimo III, when she returned a widow to Florence from the North. The house of Lorraine also continued to enrich the gallery, which did not escape Napoleon's generals. They took away many priceless pictures, all of which we were not able to force them to restore, though we spent some L30,000 in the attempt. We were, however, able to send back to Italy the Venus de' Medici, which Napoleon had thought to marry to the Apollo Belvedere.

As may be supposed, the Gallery of the Uffizi, gathered as it has thus been from so many sources, is as various as it is splendid. It is true that it possesses no work by Velasquez, and if we compare it with such collections as those of the National Gallery or the Louvre, we shall find it a little lacking in proportion as a gallery of universal art. It is really as the chief storehouses of Italian painting that we must consider both it and the Pitti Palace. And both for this reason, and because under its director, Signor Corrado Ricci, a new and clearer arrangement of its contents is being carried out, I have thought it better to speak of the pictures in no haphazard fashion, but, as is now becoming easy, under their respective schools, as the Florentine, the Sienese, the Umbrian, the Venetian, thus suggesting an unity which till now has been lacking in the gallery itself.

I. THE FLORENTINE SCHOOL

Page 214

Florentine painting in the fourteenth century may be seen to best advantage in the churches of Florence and in the Accademia delle Belle Arti, for here in the Uffizi there is nothing from Giotto's or Orcagna's hand, though the work of their schools is plentiful. In the first long gallery, among certain Sienese pictures of which I speak elsewhere, you may find these works; and there, too, like antique jewels slumbering in the accustomed sunlight, you come upon the tabernacles and altar-pieces of Don Lorenzo Monaco, monk of the Angeli of Florence, as Vasari calls him, the pupil of Agnolo Gaddi, who has most loved the work of the Sienese. Lorenzo was of the Order of Camaldoli, and belonged to the monastery of the Angeli, which was founded in 1295 by Fra Guittone d'Arezzo, himself of the Military Order of the Virgin Mother of Jesus, whose monks were called Frati Gaudenti, the Joyous Brothers. Born about 1370, seventeen years before Angelico, and dying in 1425, his works, full of an ideal beauty that belongs to some holy place, are altogether lost in the corridors of a gallery. Those works of his, the Virgin and St. John, both kneeling and holding the body of our Lord (40), dated 1404; the Adoration of the Magi (39), or the triptych (41), where Madonna is in the midst with her little Son standing in her lap, while two angels stand in adoration, and St. John Baptist and St. Bartholemew, St. Thaddeus and St. Benedict, wait on either side, was painted in 1410, and was brought here from the subterranean crypt of S. Maria of Monte Oliveto, not far away. Another triptych (1309), the Coronation of the Virgin, in the Sala di Lorenzo Monaco, is perhaps his masterpiece. In the midst is the Coronation of our Lady, surrounded by a glory of angels, while on either side stand ten saints, and on the frames are angels, cherubs, saints, and martyrs, scattered like flowers. Painted in 1413 for the high altar of the Monastery of the Angels, it was lost on the suppression of the Order, and only found about 1830 at the Badia di S. Pietro at Cerreto, in Val d'Elsa. Though it has doubtless suffered from repainting, for we read of a restoration in 1866, it remains, lovely and exquisite beyond any other work of the master.

Fra Angelico may well have been the pupil of Lorenzo Monaco. Here in the Uffizi are two of his works, the great Tabernacle (17), with its predella (1294), and the great Coronation of the Virgin (1290), with its predelle (1162 and 1178). The Tabernacle was painted in 1433 for the Arte de' Linaioli, which paid a hundred and ninety gold florins for it. It is an early work, but such an one as in Florence at any rate, only Fra Angelico could have achieved. Within the doors is the Virgin herself, with Christ standing on her knee between two saints, surrounded by twelve angels of heavenly beauty playing on various instruments of music. In the doors themselves are St. John Baptist and St. Mark while outside are St. Peter and St. Jerome. In the predella St. Peter preaches at Rome, St. Mark writes his Gospel, the Kings come to adore Jesus in Bethlehem, and St. Mark is martyred. The whole is like some marvellous introit for St. Mark's day, in which the name of Mary has passed by.

Page 215

The Coronation of the Virgin (1290) is like a litany of the saints and of the Virgin herself, chanted in antiphon, ending in the simpler splendour of Magnificat, sung to some Gregorian tone full of gold, of faint blues as of a far-away sky, of pale rose-colours as of roses fading on an altar in the sunlight, and the candles of white are more spotless than the lily is. Amidst a glory of angels, the piping voices of children, she in whose name all the flowers are hidden is crowned Queen of Angels by the Prince of Life. This marvellous dead picture lived once in S. Maria Nuova; its predelle have been torn away from it, but may be found here, nevertheless, in the Birth of St. John Baptist (1162) and the Spozalizio (1178).

It is to a painter less mystical, but not less visionary, that we come in the work of Paolo Uccello, the great "Battle" (52), of which two variants exist, one in the Louvre, the other, the most beautiful of the three, in the National Gallery. It is, as some have thought, a picture of the Battle of S. Egidio, where Braccio da Montone made Carlo Malatesta and his nephew Galeotto prisoners in 1416. Splendid as it is, something has been lost to us by restoration. Paola Uccello, the friend of Donatello and of Brunellesco, was all his life devoted to the study of perspective. Many marvellous drawings in which he traced that baffling vista, of which he was wont to exclaim when, labouring far into the night, his wife poor soul, would entreat him to take rest and sleep: "Ah, what a delightful thing is this perspective." And then, much beautiful work of his has perished. It was on this art he staked his life. "What have you there that you are shutting up so close?" Donatello said to him one day when he found him alone at work on the Christ and St. Thomas, which he had been commissioned to paint over the door of the church dedicated to that saint in the Mercato Vecchio. "Thou shalt see it some day,—let that suffice thee," Uccello answered. "And it chanced," says Vasari, "that Donato was in the Mercato Vecchio buying fruit one morning when he saw Paolo Uccello, who was uncovering his picture." Saluting him courteously, therefore, his opinion was instantly demanded by Paolo, who was anxiously curious to know what he would say of the work. But when Donato had examined it very minutely, he turned to Paolo and said: "Why, Paolo, thou art uncovering thy picture just at the very time when thou shouldst be shutting it up from the sight of all." These words wounded Paolo so grievously that he would no more leave his house, but shut himself up, devoting himself only the more to the study of perspective, which kept him in poverty and depression to the day of his death.

Page 216

Paolo had been influenced, it is said, by Domenico Veneziano, who in his turn was influenced by the work of Masolino and Masaccio. Nothing is known of the birthplace of this painter, who appears first at Perugia, and was the master of Piero della Francesca. His work is very rare; in Florence there are two heads of saints in the Pitti, and Mr. Berenson speaks of a fresco of the Baptist and St. Francis in S. Croce. Here in the Uffizi, however, we have a Madonna and four Saints (1305) from his hand, formerly in the Church of S. Lucia de' Magnoli in the Via de' Bardi. It is a very splendid work, and certainly his masterpiece; something of Piero della Francesca's later work may perhaps be discerned there, in a certain force and energy, a sort of dry sweetness in the faint colouring that he seems to have loved. The Virgin is enthroned, and in her lap she holds our Lord; on the left stands St. John Baptist and S. Francis, on the right St. Nicholas and S. Lucia.

In the only work by Filippo Lippi in the Uffizi, the beautiful Madonna and Child (1307) that has been so much beloved, we come again to a painter who has been influenced by Masaccio, and thought at least to understand and perhaps transform the work of Lorenzo Monaco and Fra Angelico. It is once more in the work of his pupil, Botticelli, that we find some of the chief treasures of the gallery. There are some nine works here by Sandro,—the Birth of Venus (39), the Madonna of the Magnificat (1269 bis), the Madonna of the Pomegranate (1269), the Judith and Holofernes (1158), the Calumny (1182), the Adoration of the Magi (1286), and a Madonna and Child, a Portrait of Piero de' Medici (1154), and St. Augustine (1179).

Painted for Pierfrancesco de' Medici, the Birth of Venus is perhaps the most beautiful, the most expressive, and the most human picture of the Quattrocento. She is younger than the roses which the south-west wind fling at her feet, the roses of earth to the Rose of the sea. Not yet has the Shepherd of Ida praised her, nor Adon refused the honey of her throat; not yet has Psyche stolen away her joy, nor Mars rolled her on a soldier's couch amid the spears and bucklers; for now she is but a maid, and she cometh in the dawn to her kingdom dreaming over the sea. If we compare her for a moment with the Madonna of the Magnificat, with the Mary of the Pomegranate, she seems to us more virgin than the Virgin herself; less troubled by a love in which all the sorrow and desire of the world have found expression, less weary of the prayers that will be hers no less than Mary's. How wearily and with what sadness Madonna writes Magnificat, or dreams of the love that even now is come into her arms! Is it that, as Pater has thought, the honour is too great for her, that she would have preferred a humbler destiny, the joy of any other mother of Israel? Who is she, this woman of divine and troubling beauty that masquerades as Venus, and with Christ in her arms is so sad and

Page 217

unhappy. Tradition tells us that he was Simonetta, the mistress of Giuliano de' Medici, who, dying still in her youth, was borne through Florence with uncovered face to her grave under the cypresses. Whoever she may be, she haunts all the work of Botticelli, who, it might seem, loved her as one who had studied Dante, and, one of the company of the Platonists of Lorenzo's court, might well love a woman altogether remote from him. As Venus she is a maid about to step for the first time upon the shores of Cypris, and her eyes are like violets, wet with dew that have not looked on the sun; her bright locks heavy with gold her maid has caught about her, and the pale anemones have kissed her breasts, and the scarlet weeds have kissed her on the mouth. As Mary, her destiny is too great for her, and her lips tremble under the beauty of the words she is about to utter; the mystical veils about her head have blinded her, her eyelids have fallen over her eyes, and in her heart she seems to be weeping. But it is another woman not less mysterious who, as Judith, trips homeward so lightly in the morning after the terrible night, her dreadful burden on her head and in her soul some too brutal accusation. Again you may see her as Madonna in a picture brought here from S. Maria Nuova, where she would let Love fall, she is so weary, but that an angel's arm enfolds Him.

[Illustration: THE BIRTH OF VENUS

By Sandro Botticelli. Uffizi Gallery

Anderson]

In the Calumny you see a picture painted from the description Alberti had given in his treatise on painting of the work of Apelles. "There was in this picture," says Alberti, "a man with very large ears, and beside him stood two women; one was called Ignorance, the other Superstition. Towards him came Calumny. This was a woman very beautiful to look upon, but with a double countenance (*ma pareva nel viso troppo astuta*). She held in her right hand a lighted torch, and with the other hand she dragged by the hair a young man (*uno garzonotto*), who lifted his hands towards heaven. There was also a man, pale, *brutto*, and gross, ... he was guide to Calumny, and was called Envy. Two other women accompanied Calumny, and arranged her hair and her ornaments, and one was Perfidy and the other Fraud. Behind them came Penitence, a woman dressed in mourning, all ragged. She was followed by a girl, modest and sensitive, called Truth."^[121]

The Birth of Venus was the first study of the nude that any painter had dared to paint; but profound as is its significance, Florentine painting was moving forward by means less personal than the genius, the great personal art of Botticelli. Here in the Uffizi you may see an Annunciation (56) of Baldovinetti (1427-99), in which something of that strangeness and beauty of landscape which owed much to Angelico, and more perhaps

in its contrivance to Paolo Uccello, was to come to such splendour in the work of Verrocchio

Page 218

and Leonardo. Baldovinetti's pupil, Piero Pollaiuoli (1443-96), the younger brother of Antonio (1429-98), whose work in sculpture is so full of life, was, with his brother's help and guidance, giving to painting some of the power and reality of movement which we look for in vain till his time. In a picture of St. James, with St. Vincent and St. Eustace on either side (1301), you may see Piero's work, the fine, rather powerful than beautiful people he loved. It is, however, in the work of one whom he influenced, Andrea Verrocchio, the pupil of Donatello and Baldovinetti, that, as it seems to me, what was best worth having in his work comes to its own, expressed with a real genius that is always passionate and really expressive. The Baptism in the Accademia, a beautiful but not very charming work, perhaps of his old age, received, Vasari tells us, some touches from the brush of Leonardo, and for long the Annunciation of the Uffizi (1286) passed as Leonardo's work. Repainted though it is, in almost every part (the angel's wings retain something of their original brightness), this Annunciation remains one of the loveliest pictures in the gallery, full of the eagerness and ardour of Verrocchio. In a garden at sunset, behind the curiously trimmed cypresses under a portico of marble, Madonna sits at her *prie dieu*, a marvellously carved sarcophagus of marble, while before her Gabriel kneels, holding the lilies, lifting his right hand in blessing. The picture comes from the Church of Monte Oliveto, not far away.

[Illustration: THE ANNUNCIATION

By Andrea Verrocchio, Uffizi Gallery

Anderson]

Verrocchio was the master of Lorenzo di Credi and of Leonardo, while, as it is said, Perugino passed through his bottega. There are many works here given to Lorenzo, who seems to have been a better painter than he was a sculptor: the Madonna and Child (24), the Annunciation (1160), the Noli me Tangere (1311), and above all, the Venus (3452), are beautiful, but less living than one might expect from the pupil of Verrocchio. Verrocchio's true pupil, if we may call him a pupil of any master at all who was an universal genius, wayward and altogether personal in everything he did, was Leonardo da Vinci. Of Leonardo's rare work (Mr. Berenson finds but nine paintings that may pass as his in all Europe) there is but one example in the Uffizi, and that is unfinished. It is the Adoration of the Magi (1252), scarcely more than a shadow, begun in 1478. Leonardo was a wanderer all his life, an engineer, a musician, a sculptor, an architect, a mathematician, as well as a painter. This Adoration is the only work of his left in Tuscany, and there are but three other paintings from his hand in all Italy. Of these, the fresco of the Last Supper, at Milan, has been restored eight times, and is about to suffer another repainting; while of the two pictures in Rome, the St. Jerome of the Vatican is unfinished, and the Profile of a Girl, in the possession of Donna Laura

Minghetti, is “not quite finished” either, Mr. Berenson tells us. It is to the Louvre that we must go to see Leonardo’s work as a painter.

Page 219

Tuscan painting at its best, its most expressive, in the work of Botticelli, fails to convince us of sincerity in the work of his pupil Filippino Lippi, the son of Fra Filippo. Of all his pictures here in the Uffizi, the two frescoes—the portrait of himself (286), the portrait of an old man (1167), the Adoration of the Magi (1217), painted in 1496, the Madonna and Saints (1268), painted in 1485, it is rather the little picture of Madonna adoring her Son (1549) that I prefer, for a certain sweetness and beauty of colour, before any of his more ambitious works. Ghirlandajo too, that sweet and serene master, is not so lovely here as in the Adoration of the Shepherds at the Accademia. In his so-called Portrait of Perugino (1163),^[122] the Adoration of the Magi (1295), and the Madonna and Child with Saints and Angels (1297), his work seems to lack sincerity, in all but the first, at any rate, to be the facile work of one not sufficiently convinced of the necessity for just that without which there is no profound beauty.

But the age was full of misfortune; it was necessary, perhaps, to pretend a happiness one did not feel. Certainly in the strangely fantastic work of Pier di Cosimo, the Rescue of Andromeda (1312), for instance, there is nothing of the touching sincerity and beauty of his Death of Procris, now in the National Gallery, which remains his one splendid work. His pupil Fra Bartolommeo, who was later so unfortunately influenced by Michelangelo, may be seen here at his best in a small diptych (1161); in his early manner, his Isaiah (1126) and Job (1130), we see mere studies in drapery and anatomy. His most characteristic work is, however, in the Pitti Gallery, where we shall consider it.

Much the same might be said of his partner Albertinelli, and his friend Andrea del Sarto, whom again we shall consider later in the Pitti Palace. It will be sufficient here to point out his beautiful early Noli me Tangere (93), The Portrait of his Wife (188), the Portrait of Himself (280), the Portrait of a Lady, with a Petrarch in her hands (1230), and the Madonna dell' Arpie (1112), that statuesque and too grandiose failure that is so near to success.

Michelangelo, that Roman painter—for out of Rome there are but two of his works, and one of these, the Deposition in the National Gallery, is unfinished—has here in the Uffizi a very splendid Holy Family (1139), splendid perhaps rather than beautiful, where in the background we may see the graceful nude figures which Luca Signorelli had taught him to paint there. Luca Signorelli, born in Cortona, the pupil of Piero della Francesca, passes as an Umbrian painter, and indeed his best work may be found there. But he was much influenced by Antonio Pollaiuolo, and is altogether out of sympathy with the mystical art of Umbria. Here in the Uffizi are two of his early works, the Holy Family (1291) and a Madonna and Child (74), where, behind the Virgin holding her divine Son in her lap, you may see four naked shepherds, really the first of their race. This picture was painted for Lorenzo de' Medici, and doubtless influenced Michelangelo when he painted his Holy Family for Messer Angelo Doni, who haggled so badly over his bargain.

Page 220

It is really the decadence, certainly prophesied in the later work of Andrea del Sarto, that we come to in the work of that pupil of his, who was influenced by what he could understand of the work of Michelangelo. Jacopo Pontormo's work almost fails to interest us to-day save in his portraits. The Cosimo I (1270), the Cosimo dei Medici (1267), painted from some older portrait, the Portrait of a Man (1220), have a certain splendour, that we find more attenuated but still living in the work of his pupil Bronzino, who also failed to understand Michelangelo. Fine though his portraits are, his various insincere and badly coloured compositions merely serve to show how low the taste of the time—the time of the end of the Republic—had fallen.

Thus we have followed very cursorily, but with a certain faithfulness nevertheless, the course of Florentine Art. With the other schools of Italy we shall deal more shortly.

II. THE SIENESE SCHOOL

It is as a divine decoration that Sienese art comes to us in the profound and splendid work of Duccio di Buoninsegna, the delicate and lovely work of Simone Martini, the patient work of the Lorenzetti. The masterpiece, perhaps, of Duccio is the great Rucellai Madonna of S. Maria Novella. There is none of his work in the Uffizi; but one of the most beautiful paintings in the world, the Annunciation of Simone Martini (23), from the Church of S. Ansano in Castelvechio, is in the first Long Gallery here. On a gold ground under three beautiful arches, in the midst of which the Dove hovers amid the Cherubim, Gabriel whispers to the Virgin the mysterious words of Annunciation. In his hand is a branch of olive, and on his brow an olive crown. Madonna, a little overwhelmed by the marvel of these tidings, draws back, pale in her beauty, the half-closed book of prayer in her hands, catching her robe about her; between them is a vase of campanulas still and sweet. Who may describe the colour and the delicate glory of this work? The hand of man can do no more; it is the most beautiful of all religious paintings, subtle and full of grace. Simone was the greatest follower of Duccio. Born in 1284, in 1324 he married Vanna di Memmo, and his brother, Lippo Memmi, sometimes assisted him in his work. Lippo's hand cannot be discerned in the Annunciation—none but Simone himself could have achieved it; but the two saints, who stand one on either side, are his work, as well as the four little figures in the frame.

Of the other early Sienese painters, only Pietro and Ambrogio Lorenzetti are represented in the Uffizi. The first, by a Madonna (15) and a Thebaid; the second (16), in the two predella pictures for the altar-piece of S. Procolo, Sassetta, the best of the Sienese Quattrocento painters, is absent, and Vecchietta is only represented by a predella picture (47); it is not till we came to Sodoma, whose famous St. Sebastian (1279) suggests altogether another kind of art, a sensuous and sometimes an almost hysterical sort of ecstasy, as in the Swooning Virgin or the Swoon of St. Catherine at Siena, that we find Sienese painting again.

Page 221

III. THE UMBRIAN SCHOOL[123]

Influenced in the beginning by the Sienese, the Umbrian school of painting remained almost entirely religious. The Renaissance passed it by as in a dream, and although in the work of Perugino you find a wonderful and original painter, a painter of landscape too, it is rather in the earlier men, Ottaviano Nelli, whose beautiful work at Gubbio is like a sunshine on the wall of S. Maria Nuova; Gentile da Fabriano, whose Adoration of the Magi is one of the treasures of the Accademia delle Belle Arti; of Niccolo da Foligno, and of Bonfigli whose flower-like pictures are for the most part in the Pinacoteca at Perugia, than in Perugino, or Pinturicchio, or Raphael, that you come upon the most characteristic work of the school.

There was no Giotto, no Duccio even, in Umbria. Painting for its own sake, or for the sake of beauty or life, never seems to have taken root in that mystical soil; it is ever with a message of the Church that she comes to us, very simply and sweetly for the most part, it is true, but except in the work of Piero della Francesca, who was not really an Umbrian at all, and in that of his pupil Melozzo da Forli, the work of the school is sentimental and illustrative, passionately beautiful for a moment with Gentile da Fabriano; clairvoyant almost in the best work of Perugino; most beloved, though maybe not most lovely, in the marvellous work of Raphael, who, Umbrian though he be, is really a Roman painter, full of the thoughts of a world he had made his own.

Here, in the Uffizi, Gentile da Fabriano is represented by parts of an altar-piece, four isolated saints, St. Mary Magdalen, St. Nicholas of Bari, St. John Baptist, and St. George. It is rather in the beautiful work of Piero della Francesca, and of Signorelli, in the rare and lovely work of Melozzo da Forli, in the sweet and holy work of Perugino, the perfect work of Raphael, that Umbria is represented in the Uffizi, than in the mutilated altar-piece of Gentile da Fabriano.

Piero della Francesca was born about 1416 at the little town of Borgo San Sepolcro, just within the borders of Tuscany towards Arezzo.[124] He was a great student of perspective, a friend of mathematicians, of Fra Luca Paccioli, for instance, who later became the friend of Leonardo da Vinci. His work has force, and is always full of the significance of life. Influenced by Paolo Uccello, founding his work on a really scientific understanding of certain laws of vision, of drawing, his work seems to have been responsible for much that is so splendid in the work of Signorelli and Perugino. Nor is he without a faint and simple beauty, which is altogether delightful in his pictures in the National Gallery, for instance the Nativity and the Baptism of our Lord. Here, in the Uffizi, are two portraits from his hand—Count Federigo of Urbino, and his wife Battista Sforza (1300), painted in 1465. Splendid and full of confidence, they are the work

Page 222

of a man who is a consummate draughtsman, and whose drawing here, at any rate, is a thing of life. On the back of these panels Piero has painted an allegory, or a trionfo, whose meaning no one has yet read. The Uffizi has lately been enriched by a work of his pupil, that rare painter, Melozzo da Forlì. Two panels of the Annunciation, very beautiful in Colour and full of something that seems strange, coming from that Umbrian country, so mystical and simple, hang now with the portraits of Piero. Nor is the work of Melozzo da Forlì's pupil, Marco Palmezzano, whose facile work litters the Gallery of Forlì, wanting, for here is a Crucifixion (1095) from his hand, certainly one of his more important pictures.

Pietro Vanucci, called Il Perugino, was born about 1446 at Castel della Pieve, some twenty-six miles from Perugia. The greatest master of the Umbrian School, for we are content to call Raphael a Roman painter, his work, so sweet and lovely at its best, is at its worst little better than a repetition of his own mannerisms. Here, in the Uffizi, however, we have four of his best works—the three great portraits, Francesco delle Opere (287), Alessandro Braccesi (1217), and the Portrait of a Lady (1120), long given to Raphael, but which Mr. Berenson assures us is Perugino's; and the Madonna and Child of the Tribuna, painted in 1493. The Francesco delle Opere was perhaps his first portrait, full of virility beyond anything else in his work, save his own portrait at Perugia. For many years this picture, owing, it might seem, to a mistake of the Chevalier Montalvo, was supposed to represent Perugino himself, so that the picture was hung in the Gallery of the Portraits of Painters. At last an inscription was discovered on the back of the picture, which reads as follows: *1494, D'Luglio Pietro Perugino Pinse Franco Delopa.*

Francesco delle Opere was a Florentine painter, the brother of Giovanni delle Corniole. He died at Venice, and it may well be that it was at Venice that Perugino first met him. Perugino's picture shows us Francesco, a clean-shaven and young person, holding a scroll on which is written, "Trineta Deum;" the portrait is a half-length, and the hands are visible. In the background is a characteristic country of hill and valley under the deep serene sky, the light and clear golden air that we see in so much of his work. The Portrait of a Lady (1120), long given to Raphael, comes to the Uffizi from the Grand Ducal Villa of Poggio a Caiano; it was supposed to be the portrait of Maddalena Strozzi, wife of Angela Doni. The portrait shows us a young woman, in a Florentine dress of the period, while around her neck is a gold chain, from which hangs a little cross. The Portrait of a Young Man (1217) is painted on wood, and is life size.

Page 223

The Madonna and Child, with two Saints, was painted in 1493 for the Church of S. Domenico at Fiesole, and was placed in the Uffizi by the Grand Duke Peter Leopold in 1756. Madonna sits a little indifferent on a throne under an archway, holding the Child, who turns towards St. John Baptist as he gazes languidly on the ground; while St. Sebastian, a beautiful youth, stands on the other side, looking upwards, and though the arrows have pierced his flesh, he is still full of affected grace, and is so occupied with his prayers that he has not noticed them. On the base of the throne, Perugino has written his name, *Petrus Perusinus Pinxit, An. 1493*. It is in such a work as this that Perugino is really least great. Painted to order, as we may think, it is so full of affectation, of a kind of religiosity, that there is no room left for sincerity. And yet how well he has composed this picture after all, so that there is no sense of crowding, and the sun and sky are not so far away. Is it perhaps that in an age that has become suspicious of any religious emotion we are spoiled for such a picture as this, finding in what it may be was just a natural expression of worship to the simple Friars of S. Domenico long ago, all the ritualism and affectation in which we should find it necessary to hide ourselves before we might approach her, as she seemed to them, a Queen enthroned, *causa nostrae Laetitiae*, between two saints whose very names we find it difficult to remember? How often in our day has Perugino been accused of insincerity, yet it was not so long ago when he lived. Almost all his life he was engaged in painting for the Church those things which were most precious in her remembrance. If men found him insincere, it is strange that among so much that was eager and full of sincerity his work was able to hold its own. His pupil Raphael, that most beloved name, is represented here in the Uffizi only by the Madonna del Cardellino (1129); for the other works attributed to him in the Tribuna are not his. The picture is in his early manner, and was painted about 1548. It has, like so much of Raphael's work, suffered restoration; and indeed these compositions from his hand no longer hold us as they used to do, whether because of that repainting or no, I know not. It is as a portrait painter we think of Raphael to-day, and as the painter of the Stanze at Rome; and therefore I prefer to speak of him with regard to his work in the Pitti Gallery rather than here. With him the Umbrian School passed into the world.

IV. THE VENETIAN SCHOOL

Page 224

Nearly all the Venetian pictures were bought in 1654 by Cardinal Leopoldo de' Medici from Messer Paolo del Sera, a Florentine merchant in Venice. More truly representative of the Renaissance, its humanism and splendour, than any other school of painting in Italy, the earlier works of that great Venetian School are not seen to advantage in the Uffizi. There is nothing here by Jacopo Bellini, nothing by his son Gentile; nor any work from the hands of Antonio or Bartolommeo Vivarini, or Antonello da Messina, who apparently introduced oil painting into Venice. It is not till we come to Giovanni Bellini, born about 1430, that we find a work of the Quattrocento in the delightful but puzzling Allegory (631), where Our Lady sits enthroned beside a lagoon in a strange and lovely landscape of rocks and trees; while beside her kneels St. Catherine of Alexandria, and again, St. Catherine of Siena; farther away stand St. Peter and St. Paul, while below children are playing with fruit and a curious tree; on the other side are Job and St. Sebastian, while in the background you may see the story of the life of St. Anthony. This mysterious picture certainly stands alone in Giovanni Bellini's work, and suggests the thoughts at least of Mantegna; and while it is true that Giovanni had worked at Padua, one is surprised to come upon its influence so late in his life.[125]

The influence of the Bellini is to be found in almost all the great painters of Venice in the Cinquecento. We come upon it first in the work of Vittore Carpaccio, of which there is but a fragment here, the delicate little picture, the Finding of the True Cross (583 *bis*); while in two works attributed to Bissolo and Cima da Conegliano (584, 564 *bis*), we see too the influence of Bellini.

If Carpaccio was the greatest pupil of Gentile Bellini, in Giorgione we see the first of those marvellous painters who were taught their art by his brother Giovanni. Giorgio Barbarelli, called Giorgione, was born at Castelfranco, a little town in the hills not far from Padua, in 1478. Three of his rare works—there are scarcely more than some fifteen in the world—are here in the Uffizi, the two very early pictures—but all his works were early, for he died in 1510—the Trial of Moses (621), and the Judgment of Solomon (630), and the beautiful portrait of a Knight of Malta (622). Giorgione was the dayspring of the Renaissance in Venice. His work, as Pater foretold of it, has attained to the condition of Music. And though in the portrait of the Knight of Malta, for instance, we have to admit much repainting, something of the original glamour still lingers, so that in looking on it even to-day we may see to how great a place the painters of Venice had been called. It is in the work of his fellow-pupil and Titian that the great Venetian treasure of the Uffizi lies. In the Madonna with St. Anthony (633) we have a picture in Giorgione's early manner, and a later, but still early work, in the Flora (626). The two

Page 225

portraits, Eleonora Gonzaga and Francesco Maria della Rovere, Duke and Duchess of Urbino, were painted in Venice in 1536 or 1538, and came into the Uffizi with the other Urbino pictures, with the Venus of Urbino (1117), for instance, where Titian has painted the Bella of the Pitti Palace naked on a couch, a little dog at her feet, and in her hand a chaplet of roses. In the background two maids search for a gown in a great chest under a loggia. This picture, first mentioned in a letter of 1538, was painted for Duke Guidobaldo della Rovere. The Venus with the little Amor (1108) appears to have been painted about 1545. It is not from Urbino. Dr. Gronau thinks it may be identical with the Venus “shortly described in a book of the Guardaroba of Grand Duke Cosimo II in the year 1621.” The Portrait of Bishop Beccadelli (1116) was painted in July 1552, and is signed by Titian. It was bought, with the other Venetian pictures, by Cardinal Leopoldo de’ Medici in 1654. I say nothing of Titian here: preferring to speak of him in dealing with his more various and numerous work in the Pitti Palace. Other pupils of Giovanni Bellini, beside Giorgione and Titian, are found here—Palma Vecchio for instance—in a poor picture of Judith with the Head of Holofernes (619); Rondinelli in a Portrait of a Man (354) and a Madonna and two Saints (384); Sebastiano del Piombo in the Farnesina (1123), long given to Raphael, and the Death of Adonis (592). All these men, whose work is so full of splendour, came under the influence of Giorgione after passing through Bellini’s bottega. Nor did Lorenzo Lotto, the pupil of Alvise Vivarini, escape the authority of that serene and perfect work, whose beauty lingered so quietly over the youth of the greatest painter of Italy, Tiziano Vecelli: his Holy Family (575) seems to be a work of Giorgione himself almost, that has suffered some change; that change was Lotto.

Titian’s own pupils, Paris Bordone, Tintoretto, and Schiavone, may also be found here; the first in a Portrait of a Young Man (607), full of confidence and force. Tintoretto has five works here, beside the portrait of himself (378): the Bust of a Young Man (577), the Portrait of Admiral Vernier (601), the Portrait of an Old Man (615), the Portrait of Jacopo Sansovino (638), and a Portrait of a Man (649). His portraits are full of an immense splendour; they sum up often rhetorically enough all that was superficial in the subject, representing him as we may suppose he hardly hoped to see himself. Without the subtle distinction of Titian’s art, or the marvellous power of characterisation and expression that he possessed with the earlier men, Tintoretto’s work is noble, and almost lyrical in its confidence and beauty. In his day Venice seems to have been the capital of the world, peopled by a race of men splendid and strong, beside whom the men of our time, even the best of them, seem a little vulgar, a little wanting in dignity and life.

Two pictures by Paolo Veronese, the early Martyrdom of S. Giustina (589), and the Holy Family and St. Catherine (1136), bring the period to a close. It is a different school of painting altogether that we see in the Piazzetta of Canaletto (1064), perhaps the last picture painted by a Venetian in the gallery.

Page 226

THE NORTHERN SCHOOLS

Andrea Mantegna was born, not at Padua, where his greatest work is to be found—three frescoes in the Eremitani—but at Vicenza. Here in the Uffizi, however, we have two works of his middle period, certainly among the best, if not the most beautiful, of his easel pictures. In one we see Madonna and Child in a rocky landscape, where there are trees and flowers (1025); the other is a triptych (1111), one of the many priceless things to be found here. In the midst you may see the Three Kings at the feet of Jesus Parvulus in his Mother's arms, while on one side Mantegna has painted the Presentation in the Temple, and on the other the Resurrection. Long ago this marvellous miniature, that even to-day seems to shine like a precious stone, was in the possession of the Gonzagas of Mantua, from whom it is supposed the Medici bought it.

Five male portraits by the Bergamesque master Moroni are to be found here. One (360) is said to be a portrait of himself, though it certainly bears no resemblance to the portrait at Bergamo. I cannot forbear from mentioning the Portrait of a Scholar, which seems to me one of his best works. Moroni was born at Bondo, not far from Albino, in 1525. It is probable that Moretto, who, as Morelli suggests, was a Brescian by birth, though his parents originally came from the same valley as Moroni, Valle del Serio, was his master. Moretto is, I think, a greater painter than Moroni, though perhaps we are only beginning to appreciate the latter.

Three pictures here are from the hand of Correggio: the early small panel of Madonna and Child with Angels (1002), once ascribed to Titian, a naive and charming little work; the Repose in Egypt (1118), grave and beautiful enough, but in some way I cannot explain a little disappointing; and the Madonna adoring her little Son (1134), which is rather commonplace in colour, though delightful in conception.

It might seem impossible within the covers of one book to do more than touch upon the enormous wealth of ancient art in the possession of almost every city in Italy; and here in Florence, more than anywhere else, I know my feebleness. If these few notes, for indeed they are nothing more, serve to group the pictures hung in the Uffizi into Schools, to win a certain order out of what is already less a chaos than of old, to give to the reader some idea almost at a glance of what the Uffizi really possesses of the various schools of Italian painting, they will have served their purpose.[126]

Of the sculpture, too, I say nothing. Vastly more important and beloved of old than to-day, when the work of the Greeks themselves has come into our hands, and above all the Greek work of the fifth century B.C., there is not to be found in the Uffizi a single marble of Greek workmanship, and but few Roman works that are still untampered with. For myself, I cannot look with pleasure on a Roman Venus patched by the Renaissance, for I have seen the beauty of the Melian Aphrodite; and there are certain

things in Rome, in Athens, in London, which make it for ever impossible for us to be sincere in our worship at this shrine.

Page 227

FOOTNOTES:

[121] Alberti, *Opere Volgari* (Firenze, 1847), vol. iv. p. 75.

[122] Mr. Berenson calls it a Portrait of Perugino, though for long it passed as a Portrait of Verrocchio by Lorenzo di Credi.

[123] For a full account of the Umbrian school see my *Cities of Umbria*.

[124] In 1416, Borgo S. Sepolcro was not just within the borders of Tuscany of course, as it is to-day, but just without: it was part of the Papal State till Eugenius IV sold it to Florence.

[125] Mr. Berenson calls the picture An Allegory of the Tree of Life, and adds that it is certainly a late work of Giovanni.

[126] Of the Flemish, Dutch, German, and French pictures here I intend to say no more than to name a few among them. The most valuable foreign picture in Florence for the student of Italian art is Van der Goes' (1425-82) great triptych (1525) of the Adoration of the Shepherds, with the Family of the donor Messer Portinari, agent of the Medici in Bruges. In the same sala are two Memlings (703, 778), and a Roger van der Weyden (795). Two Holbeins, the Richard Southwell (765), and Sir Thomas More (799), are in the German room; while Duerer's noble and lovely Adoration of the Magi (1141) is still in the Tribuna, and his portrait of his Father (766) is with the other German pictures in the German room. Some too eloquent works of Rubens hang apart, while here and there you may see a Vandyck—Lord John and Lord Bernard Stuart (1523), for instance, or Jean de Montfort (1115), a little pensive and proud amid the splendour of Italy.

XXIV. FLORENCE

THE PITTI GALLERY

During the last years of Cosimo de' Medici, Luca Pitti, that rare old knight, sometime Gonfaloniere of Justice, thought to possess himself of the state of Florence, and to this end, besides creating a new Balìa against the wishes of Cosimo, distributed, as it is said, some 20,000 ducats in one day, so that the whole city came after him in flocks, and not Cosimo, but he, was looked upon as the governor of Florence. "So foolish was he in his own conceit, that he began two stately and magnificent houses," Machiavelli tells us, "one in Florence, the other at Rusciano, not more than a mile away: but that in Florence was greater and more splendid than the house of any other private citizen whatsoever. To finish this latter, he baulked no extraordinary way, for not only the citizens and better sort presented him and furnished him with what was necessary for it, but the common people gave him all of their assistance; besides, all that were banished

or guilty of murder, felony, or any other thing which exposed them to punishment, had sanctuary at that house provided they would give him their labour.”

Page 228

Now, when Cosimo was dead, and Piero de' Medici the head of that family, Niccolo Soderini was made Gonfaloniere of Justice, and thinking to secure the liberty of the city he began many good things, but perfected nothing, so that he left that office with less honour than he entered into it. This fortified Piero's party exceedingly, so that his enemies began to resent it and work together to consider how they might kill him, for in supporting Galeazzo Maria Sforza to the Dukedom of Milan—which his father Francesco, just dead, had stolen for himself—they saw, or thought they saw, the way in which Piero would deal if he could with Florence. Thus the Mountain, as the party of his enemies was called, leaned threatening to crush him more surely every day. But Piero, who lay sick at Careggi, armed himself, as did his friends, who were not few in the city. Now the leaders of his enemies were Luca Pitti, Dietosalvi Neroni, Agnolo Acciaiuoli, and most courageous of all, Niccolo Soderini. He, taking arms, as Piero had done, and followed by most of the people of his quarter, went one morning to Luca's house, entreating him to mount and ride with him to Palazzo Vecchio for the security of the Senate, who, as he said, were of his side. "To do this," said he, "is victory." But Luca had no mind for this game, for many reasons,—for one, he had already received promises and rewards from Piero; for another, he had married one of his nieces to Giovanni Tornabuoni,—so that, instead of joining him, he admonished Soderini to lay aside his arms and return quietly to his house. In the meantime the Senate, with the magistrates, had closed the doors of Palazzo Vecchio without appearing for either side, though the whole city was in tumult. After much discussion, they agreed, since Piero could not be present, for he was sick, to go to him in his palace, but Soderini would not. So they set out without him; and arrived, one was deputed to speak of the tumult, and to declare that they who first took arms were responsible; and that understanding Piero was the man, they came to be informed of his design, and to know whether it were for the advantage of the city. Piero made answer that not they who first took arms were blameworthy, but they who gave occasion for it: that if they considered their behaviour towards him, their meetings at night, their subscriptions and practices to defeat him, they would not wonder at what he had done; that he desired nothing but his own security, and that Cosimo and his sons knew how to live honourably in Florence, either with or without a Balia. Then, turning on Dietosalvi and his brothers, who were all present, he reproached them severely for the favours they had received from Cosimo, and the great ingratitude which they had returned; which reprimand was delivered with so much zeal, that, had not Piero himself restrained them, there were some present who would certainly have killed them. So he had it his own way, and presently new senators

Page 229

being chosen and another gonfaloniere, the people were called together in the Piazza and a new Balia was created, all of Piero's creatures. This so terrified "the Mountain" that they fled out of the city, but Luca Pitti remained, trusting in Giovanni Tornabuoni and the promises of Piero. Now mark his fall. He quickly learned the difference betwixt victory and misfortune, betwixt honour and disgrace. His house, which formerly was thronged with visitors and the better sort of citizens, was now grown solitary and unfrequented. When he appeared abroad in the streets, his friends and relations were not only afraid to accompany him, but even to own or salute him, for some of them had lost their honours for doing it, some their estates, and all of them were threatened. The noble structures which he had begun were given over by the workmen, the good deeds requited with contumely, the honours he had conferred with infamy and disgrace. For many persons, who in the day of his authority had loaded him with presents, required them again in his distress, pretending they were but loans and no more. Those who before had cried him to the skies, cursed him down as fast for his ingratitude and violence; so that now, when it was too late, he began to repent himself that he had not taken Soderini's advice and died honourably, seeing that he must now live with dishonour.

So far Machiavelli. The unfinished, half-ruinous palace, designed in 1444 by Brunellesco, was a century later sold by the Pitti, quite ruined now, to Eleonora, the wife of Grand Duke Cosimo, and was finished by Ammanati. The great wings were added later. In May 1550, Cosimo I entered Palazzo Pitti as his Grand-Ducal residence. To-day it is the King of Italy's Palace in Florence.

The Galleria Palatina is a gallery of the masterpieces of the high Renaissance, formed by the Grand Dukes, who brought here from their own villas and from the Uffizi the greatest works in their possession. Like other Italian galleries, it suffered from Napoleon's generals; but though sixty or more pictures were taken to Paris, they all seem to have been returned. Here the Grand Dukes gathered ten pictures by Titian eight by Raphael, as well as two, the Madonna del Baldacchino and the Vision of Ezekiel, which he designed, ten by Andrea del Sarto, six by Fra Bartolommeo, two lovely Peruginos, two splendid portraits by Ridolfo Ghirlandajo, four portraits by Tintoretto, several pictures by Rubens, two portraits, one of himself, by Rembrandt, a magnificent Vandyck, and many lesser pictures. In the royal apartments, among other interesting or beautiful things, is Botticelli's Pallas and the Centaur, painted, as some have thought, to celebrate Lorenzo's return from Naples in 1480. It is, then, rather as a royal gallery than as a museum that we must consider the Galleria Palatina, a more splendid if less catholic Salon Carre, the Tribuna of Italian painting. It is strange that, among all the beautiful and splendid

Page 230

pictures with which the Grand Dukes surrounded themselves, there is not one from the hand of Leonardo, nor one that Michelangelo has painted. And then, of the many here that pass under the name of Botticelli, only the Pallas and the Centaur in the royal apartments seems to be really his; so that when we look for the greatest pictures of the Florentine school, we must be content with the strangely unsatisfactory work of Andrea del Sarto, often lovely enough it is true, but as often insincere, shallow, not at one with itself, and certainly a stranger here in Florence.

The work of Andrea del Sarto, as we are assured, might but for his tragic story have been so splendid; but in truth that sentimental and pathetic tale neither excuses nor explains his failure, if failure it be. He is the first artist who has worked badly because he loved a woman. He was born in 1456, and became the pupil of Piero di Cosimo. There in that fantastic bottega he must have met Fra Bartolommeo, who later influenced him so deeply. Nor was Michelangelo, or at least his grand and tremendous art, without its effect upon one so easily moved, so subject to every passing mood, as Andrea. Yet he never seems to have expressed just himself, save in those tragic portraits of himself and of his wife, of which there are three here in the Pitti (188, 280, 1176). He has been called the faultless painter, and indeed he seems to be incapable of fault, to be really a little effeminate, a little vague, bewildered by the sculpture of Michelangelo, the confusion of art in Florence, the advent of the colourists, of whom here in Tuscany he is perhaps the chief. It is no intellectual passion you find in that soft, troubled work, where from every picture Lucrezia del Fede looks out at you, posing as Madonna or Magdalen or just herself, and even so, discontented, unhappy, unsatisfactory because she is too stupid to be happy at all. If she were Andrea's tragedy, one might think that even without her his life could scarcely have been different. If we compare, here in the Pitti Gallery, the two pictures of the Annunciation from his hand, we shall see how completely the enthusiasm of his early work is wanting in his later pictures. Something, some divine energy, seems to have gone out of his life, and ever after he is but trying to revive or to counterfeit it. Now and then, as in the Disputa (172), which marks the very zenith of his art, he is almost a great painter, but the Madonna with six Saints (123), painted in 1524, is already full of repetitions,—the kneeling figures in the foreground, for instance, that we find again in the Deposition (58) painted in the same year. Nor in the Assumption (225) painted in 1526, nor in the later picture (191) of 1531, is there any significance, energy, or beauty: they are arrangements of draperies, splendid luxurious pictures without sincerity or emotion. It is not fair to judge him by the St. John Baptist, which has suffered too much from restoration to be

Page 231

any longer his work. Thus it is at last as the painter of the Annunziata and the Scalzo that we must think of him, which, full of grandiose and heavy forms and draperies though they are, still please us better than anything else he achieved, save the great Last Supper of S. Salvi and the portraits of himself and his wife. As a Florentine painter he seems ever among strangers: it is as an exiled Venetian, one who had been forced by some irony of circumstances to forego his birthright in that invigorating and worldly city, which might have revealed to him just the significance of life which we miss in his pictures, that he appears to us; a failure difficult to explain, a weak but beautiful nature spoiled by mediocrity.

Fra Bartolommeo was another Florentine who seems, for a moment at any rate, to have been bewildered by the influence of Michelangelo, but as a profound conviction saved him from insincerity, so his splendid sensuality preserved his work from sentimentalism. Born about 1475 at Savignano, not far from Prato, his father sent him to Florence, placing him in the care of Cosimo Rosselli, according to Vasari, but more probably, as we may think, under Piero di Cosimo. Here he seems to have come under the influence of Leonardo, and to have been friends with Mariotto Albertinelli. The great influence of his life, however, was Fra Girolamo Savonarola, whom he would often go to S. Marco to hear. Savonarola was preaching as ever against vanities,—that is to say, pictures, statues, verses, books: things doubtless anathema to one whose whole future depended upon the amount of interest he could awaken in himself. At this time, it seems, Savonarola was asserting his conviction that “in houses where young maidens dwelt it was dangerous and improper to retain pictures wherein there were undraped figures.” It seems to have been the custom in Florence at the time of the Carnival to build cabins of wood and furze, and on the night of Shrove Tuesday to set them ablaze, while the people danced around them, joining hands, according to ancient custom, amid laughter and songs. This Savonarola had denounced, and, winning the ear of the people for the moment, he persuaded those who were wont to dance to bring “pictures and works of sculpture, many by the most excellent masters,” and to cast them into the fire, with books, musical instruments, and such. To this pile, Vasari tells us, Bartolommeo brought all his studies and drawings which he had made from the nude, and threw them into the flames; so also did Lorenzo di Credi and many others, who were called Piagnoni, among them, no doubt, Sandro Botticelli. The people soon tired, however, of their new vanity, as they had done of the beautiful things they had destroyed at his bidding, and, the party opposed to Savonarola growing dangerous, Bartolommeo with others shut themselves up in S. Marco to guard Savonarola. Fra Girolamo’s excommunication, torture, and death, which followed soon after, seem finally to

Page 232

have decided the gentle Bartolommeo to assume the religious habit, which he did not long after at S. Domenico in Prato. Later we find him back in Florence in the Convent of S. Marco, where he is said to have met Raphael and to have learned much from him of the art of perspective. However that may be, he continued to paint there in S. Marco really—saving a journey to Rome where he came under the influence of Michelangelo, a visit to S. Martino in Lucca, and his journey to Venice in 1506—for the rest of his life, being buried there at last in 1517.

Six pictures from his hand hang to-day in the Pitti,—a Holy Family (256), the beautiful Deposition (64), an Ecce Homo in fresco (377), the Marriage of St. Catherine, painted in 1512 (208), a St. Mark, painted in 1514 (125), and Christ and the Four Evangelists, painted in 1516 (159). The unpleasing “Madonna appearing to St. Bernard,” painted in 1506, now in the Accademia, was his first work after he became a friar.

Here, in the Pitti, Bartolommeo is not at his best; for his earlier and more delicate manner, so full of charm and a sort of daintiness, one must go to Lucca, where his picture of Madonna with St. Stephen and St. John Baptist hangs in the Duomo. The grand and almost pompous works in Florence, splendid though they may be in painting, in composition, in colour, scarcely move us at all, so that it might almost seem that in following Savonarola he lost not the world only but his art also, that refined and delicate art which comes to us so gently in his earliest pictures. Something passionate and pathetic, truly, may be found in the Pieta here, together with a certain dramatic effectiveness that is rare in his work. With what an effort, for instance, has St. John lifted the body of his Master from the great cross in the background, how passionately Mary Magdalen has flung herself at His feet; yet the picture seems to be without any real significance, without spirituality certainly, only another colossal group of figures that even Michelangelo has refused to carve.

[Illustration: PIETA

By Fra Bartolomeo. Pitti Gallery

Anderson]

On coming to the work of Raphael, to the work of Titian, we find the great treasure of the Pitti Gallery, beside which the rest is but a background: it is for them really, after all, that we have come here.

Raphael Sanzio, the “most beloved name in the history of painting,” was born at Urbino in 1483. The pupil first of his father maybe, though Giovanni died when his son was but eleven years old, and later of Timoteo Viti, we hear of Raphael first in the bottega of the greatest of the Umbrian painters, Perugino, at Perugia. Two works of Perugino hang to-

day in the Pitti Gallery, the Madonna and Child (219) and the Entombment (164), painted in 1495, for the nuns of S. Chiara. Vasari has much to say of the latter, relating how Francesco del Pugliare offered to give them three times as much as they had

Page 233

paid Perugino for the picture, and to cause another exactly like it to be executed for them by the same hand; but they would not consent, because Pietro had told them he did not think he could equal the one they possessed. It is really Umbria itself we see in that lovely work, which has impressed Bartolommeo so profoundly, the Lake of Trasimeno, surrounded by villages that climb the hills just as Perugino has painted the little city in this picture. And it is in this mystical and smiling country, where the light is so soft and tender, softer than on any Tuscan hills, that the most perfect if not the greatest painter of the Renaissance grew up. You may find some memory of that beautiful land of hills and quiet valleys even in his latest work, after he had learned from every master, and summed up, as it were, the whole Renaissance in his achievement. But in four pictures here in the Pitti, it is the influence of Florence you find imposing itself upon the art of Umbria, transforming it, strengthening it, and suggesting it may be, the way of advance. Something of the art of Pietro you see in the portraits of Madallena Doni (59), Angelo Doni (61), and La Donna Gravida (229), something so akin to the Francesco delle Opere of the Uffizi that it would not be surprising to find the Madallena Doni, at any rate, attributed to Perugino. Yet superficial though they be in comparison with the later portraits, they mark the patient endeavour of his work in Florence, the realism that this city, so scornful of *forestieri*, was forcing upon him as it had already done on Perugino, who in the Francesco, the Bracessi, and the two monks of the Accademia, touches life itself, perhaps, only there in all his work. It is the influence of Florence we seem to find too in the simplicity of the Madonna del Granduca (178). Here is a picture certainly in the manner of Perugino, but with something lost, some light, some beatitude, yet with something gained also, if only in a certain measure of restraint, a real simplicity that is foreign to that master. And then, if we compare it with the Madonna della Sedia (151), which is said to have been painted on the lid of a wine cask, we shall find, I think, that however many new secrets he may learn Raphael never forgot a lesson. It is Perugino who has taught him to compose so perfectly, that the space, small or large, of the picture itself becomes a means of beauty. How perfectly he has placed Madonna with her little Son, and St. John praying beside them, so that until you begin to take thought you are not aware how difficult that composition must have been, and indeed you never remember how small that *tondo* really is. How eagerly these easel pictures of Madonna have been loved, and yet to-day how little they mean to us; some virtue seems to have gone out of them, so that they move us no longer, and we are indeed a little impatient at their fame, and ready to accuse Raphael of I know not what insincerity or dreadful facility. Yet we have only to look at

Page 234

the portraits to know we are face to face with one of the greatest and most universal of painters. Consider, then, *La Donna Velata* (245), or the *Pope Julius II* (79), or the *Leo X with the two Cardinals* (40), how splendid they are, how absolutely characterised and full of life, life seen in the tranquillity of the artist, who has understood everything, and with whom truth has become beauty. In the *Leo X with the Cardinals*, Giulio de' Medici and Lorenzo dei Rossi, how tactfully Raphael has contrived the light and shadow so that the fat heavy face of the Pope is not over emphasised, and you discern perfectly the beauty of the head, the delicacy of the nostrils, the clever, sensual, pathetic, witty mouth. And the hands seem to be about to move, to be a little tremulous with life, to be on the verge of a gesture, to have only just become motionless on the edge of the book. It is in these portraits that the art of Raphael is at its greatest, becomes universal, achieves immortality.

There remains to be considered the splendid ever-living work of Titian. The early work of the greatest painter of Italy, of the world, greatest in the variety, number, and splendour of his pictures, is represented in the Pitti, happily enough by one of the most lovely of all Italian paintings, the *Concert* (185), so long given to Giorgione. A monk in cowl and tonsure touches the keys of a harpsichord, while beside him stands an older man, a clerk and perhaps a monk too, who grasps the handle of a viol; in the background, a youthful, ambiguous figure, with a cap and plume, waits, perhaps on some interval, to begin a song. Yet, indeed, that is not the picture, which, whatever its subject may be, would seem to be more expressive than any other in the world. Some great joy, some great sorrow, seems about to declare itself. What music does he hear, that monk with the beautiful sensitive hands, who turns away towards his companion? Something has awakened in his soul, and he is transfigured. Perhaps for the first time, in some rhythm of the music, he has understood everything, the beauty of life which passeth like a sunshine, now that it is too late, that his youth is over and middle age is upon him. His companion, on the threshold of old age, divines his trouble and lays a hand on his shoulder quietly, as though to still the tumult of his heart. Like a vision youth itself, ambiguous, about to possess everything, waits, like a stranger, as though invoked by the music, on an interval that will never come again, that is already passed.

If Titian is really the sole painter of this picture, how loyal he has been to his friend, to that new spirit which lighted Venetian art as the sun makes beautiful the world. But indeed one might think that, even with Morelli, Crowe, and Cavalcaselle, and Berenson against us, not to name others who have done much for the history of painting in Italy, we might still believe, not altogether without reason, that Giorgione

Page 235

had some part in the Concert, which, after all, passed as his altogether for two hundred and fifty years; was bought, indeed, as his in 1654, only seventy-eight years after Titian's death, by Cardinal Leopoldo de' Medici from Paolo del Sera, the Florentine collector in Venice. That figure of a youth, ambiguous in its beauty—could any other hand than Giorgone's have painted it; does it ever appear in Titian's innumerable masterpieces at all? Dying as he did at the age of thirty-three, Giorgone must have left many pictures unfinished, which Titian, his friend and disciple almost, may well have completed, and even signed, in an age when works, almost wholly untouched by a master, were certainly sold as his.

Titian's other pictures here, with the exception of the Head of Christ (228) and the Magdalen (67), are portraits, all, save the so-called Tommaso Mosti, painted certainly before 1526, of his great middle period. The Magdalen comes from Urbino, where Vasari saw it in the Guardaroba of the great palace. The quality of the picture is one of sheer colour; there is here no other "subject" than a beautiful nude woman,—it is called a Magdalen because it is not called a Venus. Consider, then, the harmony of the gold hair and the fair flesh and the blue of the sky: it is a harmony in gold and rose and blue.

The earliest of the great portraits is the Ippolito de' Medici (201); it was painted in Venice in October 1532.[127] Vasari saw this picture in the Guardaroba of Cosimo I. It is a half-length portrait of a distinguished man, still very young, that we see. The Cardinal is not dressed as a Churchman, but as a grandee of Hungary. In the sad and cunning face we seem to foresee the fate that awaited him at Gaeta scarcely three years later, where he was imprisoned and poisoned. The beautiful dull red of the tunic reminds one of the unforgettable red of the cloth on the table beside which Philip II stands in the picture in the Prado. From this profound and almost touching portrait we come to the joy of the Bella (18). It is a hymn to Physical Beauty. There is nothing in the world more splendid or more glad than this portrait, perhaps of Eleonora Gonzaga, Duchess of Urbino. How often Titian has painted her!—once as it might seem as the Venus of the Tribune (1117), and again in her own character in the portrait now in the Uffizi (599), where certainly she is not so fair as she we see here as Bella and there as Venus. If this, indeed, be the Duchess of Urbino, then the Venus is also her portrait, for the Bella is described in the list of fine pictures which were brought to Florence in 1631 as a portrait of the same person we know as the Venus of the Tribune. But the first we hear of the Bella is in a letter of the Duke of Urbino in 1536, while the portrait in the Uffizi of Eleonora Gonzaga was painted in Venice in that year; and since the Duchess is certainly an older woman than the Bella, we must conclude either that the Bella

Page 236

was painted many years earlier, which seems impossible, or that it is not a portrait of Eleonora Gonzaga. And, indeed, the latter conclusion seems likely, for who can believe that the Duke would have cared for a nude portrait of his wife as Venus? It seems probable that the Bella is a portrait of his mistress rather than his wife, a mistress whom, since she was so fair, he did not scruple to ask Titian to paint as Venus herself. A harmony in blue and gold, Dr. Gronau calls the picture; adding that, "in spite of its faults or of the restorations which have made it a mere shadow of its former splendour, it remains an immortal example of what the art of the Renaissance at its zenith regarded as the ideal of feminine beauty."

If it is beauty and joy we find in the Bella, it is a profound force and confidence that we come upon in the portrait of Aretino painted before 1545,—and life above all. Here is one of the greatest blackguards of history, the "Scourge of Princes," the blackmailer of Popes, the sensualist of the *Sonnetti Lussuriosi*, the witty author of the *Ragionamenti*. We seem to see his vulgarity, his immense ability, his splendour, and his baseness, and to understand why Titian was wise enough to take him for his friend. What energy, almost bestial in its brutality, you find in those coarse features and over-eloquent lips, and yet the head is powerful, really intellectual too, though without any delicacy or fineness. Aretino himself presented this portrait to Cosimo I in October 1545, inexplicably explaining that the rendering of the dress was not perfect.[128]

In another portrait of about the same time, the Young Englishman (92), we have Titian at his best. The extraordinarily beautiful English face, fulfilled with some incalculable romance, is to me at least by far the most delightful portrait in Florence. One seems to understand England, her charm, her fascination, her extraordinary pride and persistence, in looking at this picture of one of her sons. All the tragedy of her kings, the adventure to be met with on her seas, the beauty and culture of Oxford, and the serenity of her country places, come back to one fresh and unsullied by memories of the defiling and trumpery cities that so lately have begun to destroy her. Who this beautiful figure may be we know not, nor, indeed, where the picture may have come from; for if it comes from Urbino it is not well described in the inventory of 1631.

After looking upon such a work as this, the Philip II (200), fine though it is, and only less splendid than the Madrid picture, the Portrait of a Man (215), both painted in Augsburg in 1548, and even the lovely portrait of Giulia Varana, Duchess of Urbino, in the royal apartments, seem to lose something of their splendour. Yet if we compare them with the work of Raphael or Tintoretto, they assuredly possess an energy and a vitality that even those masters were seldom able to express. For Titian seems to have

Page 237

created life with something of the ease and facility of a natural force; to have desired always Beauty as the only perfect flower of life; and while he was not content with the mere truth, and never with beauty divorced from life, he has created life in such abundance that his work may well be larger than the achievement of any two other men, even the greatest in painting; yet in his work, in the work that is really his, you will find nothing that is not living, nothing that is not an impassioned gesture reaching above and beyond our vision into the realm of that force which seems to be eternal.

FOOTNOTES:

[127] Gronau, *Titian* (London, 1904), p. 291, where Dr. Gronau suggests it may belong to the following year; see also p. 104.

[128] Cf. *Lettere di Pietro Aretino* (1609), vol. iii. p. 238.

XXV. TO FIESOLE AND SETTIGNANO

How weary one grows of the ways of a city,—yes, even in Florence, where every street runs into the country and one may always see the hills and the sky! But even in Athens, when they built the Parthenon, often, I think, I should have found my way into the olive gardens and vineyards about Kephisos: so to-day, leaving the dead beauty littered in the churches, the palaces, the museums, the streets of Florence, very often I seek the living beauty of the country, the whisper of the poplars beside Arno, the little lovely songs of streams. And then Florence is a city almost without suburbs;[129] at the gate you find the hills, the olive gardens bordered with iris, the vineyards hedged with the rose.

Many and fair are the ways to Fiesole: you may go like a burgess in the tram, or like a lord in a coach, but for me I will go like a young man by the bye ways, like a poor man on my feet, and the dew will be yet on the roses when I set out, and in the vineyards they will be singing among the corn—

“Fiorin fiorello,
La mi’ Rosina ha il labbro di corallo
E l’occhietto suo sembra un gioiello.”

And then, who knows what awaits one on the way?

“E quando ti riscontro per la via
Abbassi gli occhi e rassembri una dea,
E la fai consumar la vita mia.”

Of the ways to Fiesole, one goes by Mugnone and one by S. Gervasio, but it will not be by them that I shall go, but out of Barriera delle Cure; and I shall pass behind the gardens of Villa Palmieri, whither after the second day of the *Decamerone* Boccaccio's fair ladies and gay lords passed from Poggio Gherardo by a little path "but little used, which was covered with herbs and flowers, that opened under the rising sun, while they listened to the song of the nightingales and other birds." Thus between the garden walls I shall come to S. Domenico.

Page 238

S. Domenico di Fiesole is a tiny village half way up the hill of Fiesole, and on one side of the way is the Dominican convent, and on the other the Villa Medici, while in the valley of Mugnone is an abbey of Benedictines, the Badia di Fiesole, founded in 1028. The convent of Dominican friars, where Fra Angelico and S. Antonino, who was the first novice here, lived, and Cosimo de' Medici walked so often, looking down on Florence and Arno there in the evening, was founded in 1405. Suppressed in the early part of the nineteenth century, the convent was despoiled of its frescoes, but in 1880 it was bought back by the Dominicans, so that to-day it is fulfilling its original purpose as a religious house. The church too has suffered many violations, and to-day there are but two frescoes left of all the work Angelico did here,—a triptych in a chapel, a Madonna and Saints restored by Lorenzo di Credi, and a Crucifixion in the sacristy. Of old, Perugino's Baptism now in the Uffizi hung here, but that was taken by Grand Duke Leopold, who gave in exchange Lorenzo di Credi's picture; but the French stole Angelico's Coronation of the Virgin, now in the Louvre, and gave nothing in return, so that of all the riches of this little place almost nothing remains, only (and this is rare about Florence at any rate) the original owners are in possession, and you may hear Mass here very sweetly.

It is down a lane, again between garden walls, that you must go to the Badia, once the great shrine of the Fiesolans, but since the eleventh century an abbey of Benedictines, where S. Romolo once upon a time lay in peace, till, indeed, the oratory not far from the church was stupidly destroyed. The Badia itself was rebuilt in the fifteenth century for Cosimo de' Medici, by the hand, as it is said, of Brunellesco. Here in the loggia that looks over the city the Platonic Academy often met, so that these very pillars must have heard the gentle voice of Marsilio Ficino, the witty speech of the young Lorenzo, the beautiful words of Pico della Mirandola, the laughter of Simonetta, the footsteps of Vanna Tornabuoni. It was, however, not for the Benedictines but for the Augustinians that Cosimo rebuilt the place, giving them, indeed, one of the most beautiful convents in Italy, and one of the loveliest churches too, a great nave with a transept under a circular vaulting, while the facade is part really of the earlier building, older it may be than S. Miniato or the Baptistery itself, as we now see it; and there the pupils of Desiderio da Settignano have worked and Giovanni di S. Giovanni has painted, while Brunellesco is said to have designed the lectern in the sacristy. Later, Inghirami set up his printing press here, while in the church Giovanni de' Medici in 1452 was made Cardinal, and in the convent Giuliano, the Due de Nemours, died in 1516. Returning from this quiet and beautiful retreat to S. Domenico, one may go very well on foot, though not otherwise, by the old road to Fiesole, still between the garden

Page 239

walls; but then, who would go by the new way, noisy with the shrieking of the trams, while by the old way you may tread in the footsteps of the Bishops of Fiesole? They would rest on the way from Florence at Riposo de' Vescovi, and leave their coach at S. Domenico. By the old way, too, you pass Le Tre Pulzelle, the hostel of the Three Maidens, or at least the place where it stood, and where Leo X stayed in 1516. Farther, too, is the little church of S. Ansano, where there is a host of fair pictures, and then suddenly you are in the great Piazza, littered with the booths of the straw-plaiters, in the keen air of Fiesole, among a ruder and more virile people, who look down on Florence all day long.

[Illustration: COSTA S. GEORGIO]

And indeed, whatever the historians may say, scorning wise tales of old Villani, the Fiesolani are a very different people from the Florentines; and whether Atlas, with Electra his wife, born in the fifth degree from Japhet son of Noah, built this city upon this rock by the counsel of Apollinus, midway between the sea of Pisa and Rome and the Gulf of Venice, matters little. The Fiesolani are not Florentines, people of the valley, but Etruscans, people of the hills, and that you may see in half an hour any day in their windy piazzas and narrow climbing ways. Rough, outspoken, stark men little women keen and full of salt, they have not the assured urbanity of the Florentine, who, while he scorns you in his soul as a barbarian, will trade with you, eat with you, and humour you, certainly without betraying his contempt. But the Fiesolano is otherwise; quarrelsome he is, and a little aloof, he will not concern himself overmuch about you, and will do his business whether you come or go. And I think, indeed, he still hates the Fiorentino, as the Pisan does, as the Sienese does, with an immortal, cold, everlasting hatred, that maybe nothing will altogether wipe out or cause him to forget. All these people have suffered too much from Florence, who understood the art of victory as little as she understood the art of empire. From the earliest times, as it might seem, Florence, a Roman foundation after all, hated Fiesole, which once certainly was an Etruscan city. Time after time she destroyed it, generally in self-defence. In 1010, for instance, Villani tells us that "the Florentines, perceiving that their city of Florence had no power to rise much while they had overhead so strong a fortress as the city of Fiesole, one night secretly and subtly set an ambush of armed men in divers parts of Fiesole. The Fiesolani, feeling secure as to the Florentines, and not being on their guard against them, on the morning of their chief festival of S. Romolo, when the gates were open and the Fiesolani unarmed, the Florentines entered into the city under cover of coming to the festa; and when a good number were within, the other armed Florentines which were in ambush secured the gates; and on a signal made to Florence, as had been

Page 240

arranged, all the host and power of the Florentines came on horse and on foot to the hill, and entered into the city of Fiesole, and traversed it, slaying scarce any man nor doing any harm, save to those who opposed them. And when the Fiesolani saw themselves to be suddenly and unexpectedly surprised by the Florentines, part of them which were able fled to the fortress, which was very strong, and long time maintained themselves there. The city at the foot of the fortress having been taken and over run by the Florentines, and the strongholds and they which opposed themselves being likewise taken, the common people surrendered themselves on condition that they should not be slain nor robbed of their goods; the Florentines working their will to destroy the city, and keeping possession of the bishop's palace. Then the Florentines made a covenant, that whosoever desired to leave the city of Fiesole and come and dwell in Florence might come safe and sound with all his goods and possessions, or might go to any place which pleased him, for the which thing they came down in great numbers to dwell in Florence, whereof there were and are great families in Florence. And when this was done, and the city was without inhabitants and goods, the Florentines caused it to be pulled down and destroyed, all save the bishop's palace and certain other churches and the fortress, which still held out, and did not surrender under the said conditions."

Fifteen years later we read again: "In the year of Christ 1125 the Florentines came with an army to the fortress of Fiesole, which was still standing and very strong, and it was held by certain gentlemen *cattani* which had been of the city of Fiesole, and thither resorted highwaymen and refugees and evil men, which sometimes infested the roads and country of Florence; and the Florentines carried on the siege so long that for lack of victuals the fortress surrendered, albeit they would never have taken it by storm, and they caused it to be all cast down and destroyed to the foundations, and they made a decree that none should ever dare to build a fortress again at Fiesole."[130]

Now whether Villani is strictly right in his chronicle matters little or nothing. We know that Fiesole was an Etruscan city, that with the rise of Rome, like the rest, she became a Roman colony; all this too her ruins confirm. With the fall of Rome, and the barbarian invasions, she was perfectly suited to the needs of the Teutonic invader. What hatred Florence had for her was probably due to the fact that she was a stronghold of the barbarian nobles, and the fact that in 1010, as Villani says, the Fiesolani were content to leave the city and descend to Florence, while the citadel held out and had to be dealt with later, goes to prove that the fight was rather between the Latin commune of Florence and the pirate nobles of Fiesole than between Florence and Fiesole itself. Certainly with the destruction of the alien power at Fiesole the city of Florence gained every immediate security; the last great fortress in her neighbourhood was destroyed.

Page 241

To-day Fiesole consists of a windy Piazza, in which a campanile towers between two hills covered with houses and churches and a host of narrow lanes. In the Piazza stands the Duomo, founded in 1028 by Bishop Jacopo Bavaro, who no doubt wished to bring his throne up the hill from the Badia, where of old it was established. Restored though it is, the church keeps something of its old severity and beauty, standing there like a fortress between the hills and between the valleys. It is of basilica form, with a nave and aisles flanked by sixteen columns of sandstone. As at S. Miniato, the choir is raised over a lofty crypt. There is not perhaps much of interest in the church, but over the west door you may see a statue of S. Romolo, while in the choir in the Salutati Chapel there is the masterpiece of Mino da Fiesole, the tomb of Bishop Salutati, who died in 1465, and opposite a marble reredos of Madonna between S. Antonio and S. Leonardo, by the same master. The beautiful bust of Bishop Leonardo over his tomb is an early work, and the tomb itself is certainly among the most original and charming works of the master. If the reredos is not so fine, it is perhaps only that with so splendid a work before us we are content only with the best of all.

But it is not to see a church that we have wandered up to Fiesole, for in the country certainly the churches are less than an olive garden, and the pictures are shamed by the flowers that run over the hills. Lounging about this old fortress of a city, one is caught rather by the aspect of natural things—Val d'Arno, far and far away, and at last a glimpse of the Apennines; Val di Mugnone towards Monte Senario, the night of cypresses about Vincigliata, the olives of Maiano—than by the churches scattered among the trees or hidden in the narrow ways that everywhere climb the hills to lose themselves at last in the woodland or in the cornlands among the vines. You wander behind the Duomo into the Scavi, and it is not the Roman Baths you go to see or the Etruscan walls and the well-preserved Roman theatre: you watch the clouds on the mountains, the sun in the valley, the shadows on the hills, listen to a boy singing to his goats, play with a little girl who has slipped her hand in yours looking for soldi, or wonder at the host of flowers that has run even among these ruins. Even from the windows of the Palazzo Pretorio, which for some foolish reason you have entered on your way to the hills, you do not really see the statues and weapons of these forgotten Etruscan people, but you watch the sun that has perhaps suddenly lighted up the Duomo, or the wind that, like a beautiful thought, for a moment has turned the hills to silver. Or if it be up to S. Francesco you climb, the old acropolis of Fiesole, above the palace of the bishop and the Seminary, it will surely be rather to look over the valley to the farthest hills, where Val di Greve winds towards Siena, than to enter a place which, Franciscan though it be, has nothing to show half so fair as this laughing country, or that Tuscan cypress on the edge of that grove of olives.

Page 242

That love of country life, no longer characteristic of the Florentines, which we are too apt to consider almost wholly English, was long ago certainly one of the most delightful traits of the Tuscan character; for Siena was not behind Florence in her delight in the life of the villa.[131] It is perhaps in the Commentaries of Pius II that a love of country byways, the lanes and valleys about his home, through which, gouty and old, he would have himself carried in a litter, is expressed for the first time with a true understanding and appreciation of things which for us have come to mean a good half of life. No such lovely descriptions of scenery may be found perhaps in any Florentine writer before Lorenzo Magnifico, unless indeed it be in the verse of Sacchetti. Yet the Florentine burgess of the fifteenth century, the very man whose simple and hard common-sense got him wealth, or at least a fine competence, and, as he has told us, a good housewife, and made him one of the toughest traders in Europe, would become almost a poet in his country house. Old Agnolo Pandolfini, talking to his sons, and teaching them his somewhat narrow yet wholesome and delightful wisdom, continually reminds himself of those villas near Florence, some like palaces,—Poggio Gherardo for instance,—some like castles,—Vincigliata perhaps,—“in the purest air, in a laughing country of lovely views, where there are no fogs nor bitter winds, but always fresh water and everything pure and healthy.” Certainly Cosimo de’ Medici was not the first Florentine to retire from the city perhaps to Careggi, perhaps to S. Domenico, perhaps farther still; for already in Boccaccio’s day we hear the praise of country life,—his description of Villa Palmieri, for instance, when at the end of the second day of the *Decamerone* those seven ladies and their three comrades leave Poggio Gherardo for that palace “about two miles westward,” whither they came at six o’clock of a Sunday morning in the year 1348. “When they had entered and inspected everything, and seen that the halls and rooms had been cleaned and decorated, and plentifully supplied with all that was needed for sweet living, they praised its beauty and good order, and admired the owner’s magnificence. And on descending, even more delighted were they with the pleasant and spacious courts, the cellars filled with choice wines, and the beautifully fresh water which was everywhere round about.... Then they went into the garden, which was on one side of the palace and was surrounded by a wall, and the beauty and magnificence of it at first sight made them eager to examine it more closely. It was crossed in all directions by long, broad, and straight walks, over which the vines, which that year made a great show of giving many grapes, hung gracefully in arched festoons, and being then in full blossom, filled the whole garden with their sweet smell, and this, mingled with the odours of the other flowers, made so sweet a perfume that they seemed to be in the

Page 243

spicy gardens of the East. The sides of the walks were almost closed with red and white roses and with jessamine so that they gave sweet odours and shade not only in the morning but when the sun was high, so that one might walk there all day without fear. What flowers there were there how various and how ordered, it would take too long to tell, but there was not one which in our climate is to be praised, which was not to be found there abundantly. Perhaps the most delightful thing therein was a meadow in the midst, of the finest grass and all so green that it seemed almost black, all sprinkled with a thousand various flowers, shut in by oranges and cedars, the which bore the ripe fruit and the young fruit too and the blossom, offering a shade most grateful to the eyes and also a delicious perfume. In the midst of this meadow there was a fountain of the whitest marble marvellously carved, and within—I do not know whether artificially or from a natural spring—it threw so much water and so high towards the sky through a statue which stood there on a pedestal, that it would not have needed more to turn a mill. The water fell back again with a delicious sound into the clear waters of the basin, and the surplus was carried away through a subterranean way into little waterways most beautifully and artfully made about the meadow, and afterwards ran into others round about, and so watered every part of the garden; it collected at length in one place, whence it had entered the beautiful garden, turning two mills, much to the profit, as you may suppose, of the signore, and pouring down at last in a stream clear and sweet into the valley.”

If this should seem a mere pleasaunce of delight, the vision of a poet, the garden of a dream, we have only to remember how realistically and simply Boccaccio has described for us that plague-stricken city, scarcely more than a mile away, to be assured of its truthfulness: and then listen to Alberti—or old Agnolo Pandolfini, is it?—in his *Trattato del Governo della Famiglia*, one of the most delightful books of the fifteenth century. He certainly was no poet, yet with what enthusiasm and happiness he speaks of his villa, how comely and useful it is, so that while everything else brings labour, danger, suspicion, harm, fear, and repentance, the villa will bring none of these, but a pure happiness, a real consolation. Yes, it is really as an escape from all the care and anxiety of business, of the wool or silk trade, which he praised so much, that he loves the country. “*La Villa*, the country, one soon finds, is always gracious, faithful, and true; if you govern it with diligence and love, it will never be satisfied with what it does for you, always it will add [**Transcriber’s Note: undecipherable] to recompense. In the spring the villa gives you continual delight; green leaves, flowers, odours, songs and in every way makes you happy and jocund: all smiles on you and promises a fine harvest, filling

Page 244

you with good hope, delight, and pleasure. Yes indeed, how courteous is the villa! She gives you now one fruit, now another, never leaving you without some of her own joy. For in autumn she pays you for all your trouble, fruit out of all proportion to your merit, recompense, and thanks; and how willingly and with what abundance—twelve for one: for a little sweat, many barrels of wine, and for what is old in the house, the villa will give you new, seasoned, clear, and good. She fills the house the winter long with grapes, both fresh and dry, with plums, walnuts, pears, apples, almonds, filberts, giuggiole, pomegranates, and other wholesome fruits, and apples fragrant and beautiful. Nor in winter will she forget to be liberal; she sends you wood, oil, vine branches, laurels, junipers to keep out snow and wind, and then she comforts you with the sun, offering you the hare and the roe, and the field to follow them....” Nor are the joys of summer less, for you may read Greek and Latin in the shadow of the courtyard where the fountains splash, while your girls are learning songs and your boys are busy with the contadini, in the vineyards or beside the stream. It is a spirit of pure delight, we find there in that old townsman, in country life, simple and quiet, after the noise and sharpness of the market-place. And certainly, as we pass from Fiesole down the new road where the tram runs, turning into the lanes again just by Villa Galetta, on our way to Maiano, we may fancy we see many places where such a life as that has always been lived, and, as I know, in some is lived to-day. Everywhere on these hills you find villas, and every villa has a garden, and every garden has a fountain, where all day long the sun plays with the slim dancing water and the contadine sing of love in the vineyards.

Maiano itself is but a group of such places, among them a great villa painted in the manner of the seventeenth century, spoiled a little by modernity. You can leave it behind, passing into a lane behind Poggio Gherardo, where it is roses, roses all the way, for the podere is hedged with a hedge of roses pink and white, where the iris towers too, streaming its violet banners. Presently, as you pass slowly on your way—for in a garden who would go quickly?—you come upon the little church of S. Martino a Mensola, built, as I think indeed, so lovely it is, by Brunellesco, on a little rising ground above a shrunken stream, and that is Mensola on her way to Arno. She lags for sure, because, lost in Arno, she will see nothing again so fair as her own hills.

[Illustration: OUTSIDE THE GATE]

Page 245

S. Martino a Mensola is very old, for it is said that in the year 800 an oratory stood here, dedicated to S. Martino, and that il Beato Andrea di Scozia, Blessed Andrew of Scotland, then archdeacon to the bishopric of Fiesole, rebuilt it and endowed a little monastery, where he went to live with a few companions, taking the rule of St. Benedict. Carocci tells us that about 1550 it passed from the Benedictines to certain monks who already had a house at S. Andrea in Mercato Vecchio of Florence. In 1450 the monastery returned to Benedictines, coming into the possession of the monks of the Badia. Restored many times, the church was rebuilt in the fifteenth century, it may well be by Brunellesco; the portico, restored in 1857, was added in the sixteenth century. Within, the church is charming, having a nave and two aisles, with four small chapels and a great one, which belonged to the Zati family. And then, not without a certain surprise, you come here upon many pictures still in their own place, over the altars of what is now a village church. Over the high altar is a great ancona divided into many compartments: the Virgin with our Lord, S. Maria Maddalena, S. Niccolo, St. Catharine of Alexandria, S. Giuliano, S. Amerigo of Hungary, S. Martino, S. Gregorio, S. Antonio, and the donor, Amerigo Zati. Carocci suggests Bernardo Orcagna as the painter; whoever he may have been, this altarpiece is beautiful, and the more beautiful too since it is in its own place. In the Gherardi Chapel there is an Annunciation given to Giusto d'Andrea, while in another is a Madonna and Saints by Neri di Bicci. In the chapel of the Cecchini there is a fine fifteenth-century work attributed to Cosimo Rosselli. The old monastery is to-day partly the canonica and partly a villa. Following the stream upwards, we pass under and then round the beautiful Villa I Tatti that of old belonged to the Zati family whose altarpiece is in S. Martino, and winding up the road to Vincigliata, you soon enter the cypress woods. All the way to your left Poggio Gherardo has towered over you, Poggio Gherardo where the two first days of the *Decamerone* were passed. How well Boccaccio describes the place: "On the top of a hill there stood a palace which was surrounded by beautiful gardens, delightful meadows, and cool springs, and in the midst was a great and beautiful court with galleries, halls, and rooms which were adorned with paintings...." Not far away, Boccaccio himself lived on the podere of his father. You come to it if you pass out of the Vincigliata road by a pathway down to Frassignaja, a little stream which, in its hurry to reach Mensola, its sister here, leaps sheer down the rocks in a tiny waterfall. This is the "shady valley" perhaps where in the evening the ladies of the *Decamerone* walked "between steep rocks to a crystal brook which poured down from a little hill, and there they splashed about with bare hands and feet, and talked merrily with one another." Crossing this

Page 246

brook and following the path round the hillside, where so often the nightingale sings, you pass under a little villa by a stony way to Corbignano, and there, in what may well be the oldest house in the place, at the end of the street, past the miraculous orange tree, just where the hill turns out of sight, you see Boccaccio's house, Casa di Boccaccio, as it is written; and though the old tower has become a loggia, and much has been rebuilt, you may still see the very ancient stones of the place jutting into the lane, where the water sings so after the rain, and the olives whisper softly all night long, and God walks always among the vines.

Turning then uphill, you come at last to a group of houses, and where the way turns suddenly there is the Oratorio del Vannella, in the parish of Settignano: it is truly just an old wayside tabernacle, but within is one of the earliest works, a Madonna and Child, of Botticelli, whose father had a podere hereabout. If you follow where the road leads, and turn at last where you may, past the cemetery, you come to Settignano, founded by Septimus Severus or by the Settimia family, it matters little which, for its glory now lies with Desiderio the sculptor, who was born, it seems, at Corbignano, and Antonio and Bernardo Rossellino, who were born here. There is no other village near Florence that has so smiling a face as Settignano among the gardens. There is little or nothing to see, though the church of S. Maria has a lovely terra-cotta of Madonna with Our Lord between two angels in the manner of the della Robbia; but the little town is delightful, full of stonecutters and sculptors, still at work in their shops as they were in the great days of Michelangelo. Far away behind the hill of cypresses Vincigliata still stands on guard, on the hilltop Castel di Poggio looks into the valley of Ontignano and guards the road to Arezzo and Rome. Here there is peace; not too far from the city nor too near the gate, as I said: and so to Firenze in the twilight.

NOTE.—*I have said little of the country places about Florence, Settimo, the Certosa in Val d'Ema, the Incontro and such, because there seemed to be too much to say, and I wanted to treat of them in a book that should be theirs only. See my Country Walks Round Florence (Methuen, 1908).*

FOOTNOTES:

[129] This perhaps is open to criticism: there is a huge suburb of course towards Prato, the other barriere are still fairly in the country.

[130] Villani, *Cronica*, translated by R.E. Selfe (London, 1906), pp. 71-3, 97.

[131] Cf. Fortini and Sermini for instance. See Symonds' *New Italian Sketches* (Tauchnitz Ed.), p. 37.



XXVI. VALLOMBROSA AND THE CASENTINO, CAMALDOLI AND LA VERNA

I. VALLOMBROSA

Page 247

There are many ways that lead from Florence to Vallombrosa—by the hills, by the valley, and by rail—and the best of these is by the valley, but the shortest is by rail, for by that way you may leave Florence at noon and be in your inn by three; but if you go by road you must set out at dawn, so that when evening falls you may hear the whispering woods of the rainy valley Vallis Imbrosa at your journey's end. That is a pleasant way that takes you first to Settignano out of the dust of Via Aretina by the river. Thence you may go by the byways to Compiobbi, past Villa Gamberaja and Terenzano, among the terraced vines and the old olives, coming to the river at last at Compiobbi, as I said, just under Montacuto with its old castle, now a tiny village, on the road to the Incontro, that convent on the hilltop where, as it is said, St. Francis met St. Dominic on the way to Rome. The Via Aretina, deep in dust that has already whitened the cypresses, passes through Compiobbi on its way southward and west; but for me I will cross the river, and go once more by the byways through the valley now, where the wind whispers in the poplars beside Arno, and the river passes singing gently on its way. It is a long road full of the quiet life of the country—here a little farm, there a village full of children; a vineyard heavy with grapes, where a man walks leisurely, talking to his dog, the hose on his shoulders; a little copse that runs down to the stones of Arno, where a little girl sits spinning with her few goats, singing softly some endless chant; a golden olive garden among the corn, where there is no sound but the song of the cicale that sing all day long. And there are so many windings, and though the road leaves the river, it seems always to be returning, always to be bidding good-bye: sometimes it climbs high up above the stream, which just there is very still, sleeping in the shadow under the trees; sometimes it dips quite down to the river bank, a great stretch of dusty shingle across which the stream passes like a road of silver. Slowly in front of me a great flat-bottomed boat crossed the river with two great white oxen. And then at a turning of the way a flock of sheep were coming on in a cloud of dust, when suddenly, at a word from the shepherd who led them, they crossed the wide beach to drink at the river, while he waited under the trees by the roadside. There were trees full of cherries too, so full that in the sunshine they seemed to dance for joy, clothed all in scarlet, so red, so ripe was the fruit. Presently I came upon an old man high up in a tree gathering them in a great basket, and since I was thirsty I asked him for drink, and since I was hungry I asked him for food. He climbed down the great ladder, coming towards me kindly enough, and drew me into the shadow. "Eat as you will, signore, and quench your thirst," said he, as he lifted a handful of the shining fruit, a handful running over, and offered it to me. And he stayed with me and gave me his conversation.

Page 248

So I dined, and when I had finished, "Open that great sack of yours," said he, "and I will send you on your way," but I would not. Just then four others came along in the sun, and on their heads were great bags of leaves, and he bade them come and eat in the shade. Then said I, "What are those leaves that you have there, and what are you going to do with them?" And they laughed, making answer that they were silk. "Silk?" said I. "Silk truly," said they, "since they are the leaves of the mulberry on which the little worm lives that presently will make it." So I went on my way with thanks, thinking in my heart: Are we too then but leaves for worms, out of which, as by a miracle will pass the endless thread of an immortal life?

So I came to Pontassieve, crossing the river again where the road begins to leave it. There is nothing good to say of Pontassieve, which has no beauty in itself, and where folk are rough and given to robbery. A glance at the inn—for so they call it—and I passed on, glad in my heart that I had dined in the fields. A mile beyond the town, on the Via Aretina, the road of the Consuma Pass leaves the highway on the left, and by this way it is good to go into Casentino; for any of the inns in the towns of the valley will send to Pontassieve to meet you, and it is better to enter thus than by railway from Arezzo. However, I was for Vallombrosa; so I kept to the Aretine way. I left it at last at S. Ellero, whence the little railway climbs up to Saltino, passing first through the olives and vines, then through the chestnuts, the oaks, and the beeches, till at last the high lawns appeared, and evening fell at the last turn of the mule path over the hill as I came out of the forest before the monastery itself, almost like a village or a stronghold, with square towers and vast buildings too, fallen, alas! from their high office, to serve as a school of forestry, an inn for the summer visitor who has fled from the heat of the valleys. And there I slept.

It is best always to come to any place for the first time at evening or even at night, and then in the morning to return a little on your way and come to it again. Wandering there, out of the sunshine, in the stillness of the forest itself, with the ruin of a thousand winters under my feet, how could I be but angry that modern Italy—ah, so small a thing!—has chased out the great and ancient order that had dwelt here so long in quietness, and has established after our pattern a utilitarian school, and thus what was once a guest-house is now a pension of tourists. But in the abbey itself I forgot my anger, I was ashamed of my contempt of those who could do so small a thing. This place was founded because a young man refused to hate his enemy; every stone here is a part of the mountain, every beam a tree of the forest, the forest that has been renewed and destroyed a thousand times, that has never known resentment, because it thinks only of life. Yes, this is no place for hatred; since he who founded it loved his enemies, I also will let them pass by, and since I too am of that company which thinks only of life, what is the modern world to me with its denial, its doubt, its contemptible materialism, its destruction, its misery? Like winter, it will flee away before the first footsteps of our spring.

Page 249

It was S. Giovanni Gualberto who founded the Vallombrosan Order and established here an abbey, whose daughter we now see. Born about the year 1000, he was the son of Gualberto dei Visdomini, Signore of Petroio in Val di Pesa, of the great family who lived in St. Peter's Gate in Florence, and were, according to Villani, the patrons of the bishopric. In those days murder daily walked the streets of every Tuscan city, and so it came to pass that before Giovanni was eighteen years old his brother Ugo had been murdered by one of that branch of his own house which was at feud with Gualberto. Urged on by his father, who, we may be sure, did not spare himself or his friends in seeking revenge, Giovanni was ever on the watch for his enemy, his brother's murderer; and it chanced that as he came into Florence on Good Friday morning in 1018, just before he got to S. Miniato al Monte, at a turning of that steep way he came upon him face to face suddenly in the sunlight. Surely God had delivered him into his hands! Giovanni was on horseback with his servant, and then the hill was in his favour; the other was alone. Seeing he had no chance, for the steel was already cold on his jumping throat, he sank on his knees, and, crossing his arms in the form of Holy Cross, he prayed hard to the Lord Jesus to save his soul alive. Hearing that blessed, beautiful name in the stillness of that morning, when all the bells are silent and the very earth hushed for Christ's death, Giovanni could not strike, but instead lifted up his enemy and embraced him, saying, "I give you not your life only, but my love too for ever. Pray for me that God may pardon my sin." So they went on their way; but Giovanni, when he came to the monastery of S. Miniato of the Benedictines, stole into the church and prayed before the great Crucifix,[132] begging God to pardon him; and while he prayed thus, the Christ miraculously bowed his head, "as it were to give him a token how acceptable was this sacrifice of his resentment."

How little that sacrifice seems to us! But it was a great, an unheard-of thing in those days. And for this cause, maybe, Giovanni proposed to remain with the monks, to be received as a novice among them, and to forsake the world for ever. And they received him. Now when Gualberto heard it, he was first very much astonished and then more angry, so that he went presently to take Giovanni out of that place; but he would not, for before his father he cut off his hair and clothed himself in a habit which he borrowed. Then, seeing his purpose, his father let him alone. So for some four years Giovanni lived a monk at S. Miniato; when, the old Abbot dying, his companions wished to make him their Abbot, but he would not, setting out immediately with one companion to search for a closer solitude. And to this end he went to Camaldoli to consult with S. Romualdo; but even there, in that quiet and ordered place, he did not seem to have found what he sought. So he set out

Page 250

again, not without tears, coming at last, on this side of Casentino, upon this high valley, Acqua Bella, as it was then called, because of its brooks. It belonged, with all the forest, to the Contessa Itta dei Guidi, the Abbess of S. Ellero, who gladly presented Giovanni with land for his monastery, and that he built of timber. Nor was he alone, for he had found there already two hermits, who agreed to join him; so under the rule of St. Benedict the Vallombrosan Order was founded.[133] Of S. Giovanni's work in Florence, of his fight with Simony and Nicolaitanism, this is no place to speak. He became the hero of that country; yet such was his humility that he never proceeded further than minor orders, and, though Abbot of Vallombrosa, was never a priest. He founded many houses, S. Salvi among them, while his monks were to be found at Moscetta, Passignano, and elsewhere in Tuscany and Umbria; while his Order was the first to receive lay brothers who, while exempt from choir and silence, were employed in "external offices." It was in July 1073 that he fell sick at Passignano, and on the 12th of that month he died there. Pope Celestine III enrolled him among the saints in 1193. After S. Giovanni's death the Order seems to have flourished by reason of the bequests of the Countess Matilda.

There is but little of interest in the present buildings at Vallombrosa, which date from the seventeenth century; nor does the church itself possess anything of importance, unless it be the relic of S. Giovanni enshrined in a casquet of the sixteenth century, a work of Paolo Soliano.

About three hundred feet above the monastery is the old Hermitage—the *Celle*—now an hotel. Here those who sought solitude and silence found their way, and indeed it seems to have been a spot greatly beloved, for a certain Pietro Migliorotti of Poppi passed many years there, and refused to think of it as anything but a little paradise; thus it was called Paradisino, the name which it bears to-day. Far and far away lies Florence, with her beautiful domes and towers, and around you are the valleys, Val d'Arno, Val di Sieve, while behind you lies the strangest and loveliest of all, Val di Casentino, hidden in the hills at the foot of the great mountain, scattered with castles, holy with convents; and there Dante has passed by and St. Francis, and Arno is continually born in the hills. And indeed, delightful as the woods of Vallombrosa are, with their ruined shrines and chapels, their great delicious solitude, their unchangeable silence under everything but the wind, that valley-enclosed Clusendinum calls you every day; perhaps in some strange smile you catch for a moment in the sunshine on the woods, or in the aspect of the clouds; it will not be long before you are compelled to set out on your way to seek

"Li ruscelletti, che dei verdi colli
Del Casentin discendon giuso in Arno."

II. OF THE WAY TO THE CASENTINO

Page 251

And the path lies through the woods. You make your way under the mountain towards S. Miniato in Alpe, leaving it at Villa del Lago for a mule-track, which leads you at last to Consuma and the road from Pontassieve. The way is beautiful, and not too hard to find, the world about you a continual joy. If you start early, you may breakfast at Consuma (though it were better, perhaps, to carry provisions), for it is but two and a half hours from Vallombrosa. Once at Consuma, the way is easy and good. You climb into the pass, and in another three hours you may be in Romena, Pratovecchio, or Stia. But there are other ways, too, of which the shortest is that by the mountains from Vallombrosa to Montemignajo—that lofty, ruined place; and the loveliest, that from Vallombrosa to Raggiola of the forests; but there be rambles, pilgrimages, paths of delight unknown to any but those who hide for long in the forests of Vallombrosa. Your tourist knows them not; he will go by rail from S. Ellero to Arezzo, and make his way by train up the valley to Stia; your traveller will walk from Vallombrosa to Consuma, where Giuseppe Marari of Stia will send a *vettura* to meet him. For myself I go afoot, and take a lift when I can, and a talk with it, and this is the happiest way of all to travel. Thus those who are young and wise will set out, putting Dante in their knapsack and Signor Beni's little book[134] in their pocket, and with these two, a good stick, a light heart, and a companion to your liking, the Casentino is yours. And truly there is no more delightful place in which to spend a Tuscan summer. The Pistoiese mountains are fine; the air is pure there, the woods lovely with flowers; but they lack the sentimental charm of Casentino. The Garfagnana, again, cannot be bettered if you avoid such touristry as Bagni di Lucca; but then Castelnuovo is bare, and though Barga is fine enough, Piazza al Serchio is a mere huddle of houses, and it is not till you reach Fivizzano on the other side of the pass that you find what you want. In Casentino alone there is everything—mountains, rivers, woods, and footways, convents and castles. And then where is there a better inn than Albergo Amadori of Bibbiena, unless, indeed, it be the unmatched hostelry at Fivizzano?

As for inns, in general they are fair enough; though none, I think, so good as the Amadori. You may sleep and eat comfortably at Stia, either at Albergo Falterona or Albergo della Stazione Alpina. At Pratovecchio there is Albergo Bastieri; at Poppi the Gelati pension; at Bibbiena the Amadori, as I say. These will be your centres, as it were. At La Verna you may sleep for one night—not well, but bearably; at Camaldoli, very well indeed in summer; and then, wherever you may be, you will find a fine courtesy, for rough though they seem, these peasants and such, are of the Latin race, they understand the amenities. Saints have been here, and poets: these be no Teutons, but the good Latin people of the Faith; they will give you greeting and welcome.



Page 252

III. STIA AND MONTE FALTERONA

Stia is a picturesque little city with a curious arcaded Piazza, a church that within is almost beautiful; yet it is certainly not for anything to be found there that one comes to so ancient and yet so disappointing a place, but because from thence one may go most easily to Falterona to see the sun rise or to find out the springs of Arno, or to visit Porciano, S. Maria delle Grazie, Papiano, and the rest in the hills that shut in this little town at the head of the long valley.

Through the great endless sheepfolds you go to Falterona where the girls are singing their endless chants all day long guarded by great sheep-dogs, not the most peacable of companions. All the summer long these pastures nourish the sheep, poor enough beasts at the best. One recalls that in the great days the Guild of Wool got its material from Flanders and from England, because the Tuscan fleece was too hard and poor. Through these lonely pastures you climb with your guide, through forests of oak and chestnut, by many a winding path, not without difficulty, to the steeper sides of the mountain covered with brushwood, into the silence where there is no voice but the voice of the streams. Here in a cleft, under the very summit of Falterona, Arno rises, gushing endlessly from the rock in seven springs of water, that will presently gather to themselves a thousand other streams and spread through Casentino:

“Botoli trova poi, venendo giuso
Ringhiosi piu che non chiede lor possa
Ed, a lor, disdegnosa, torce il muso”

at the end of the valley.

Climbing above that sacred source to the summit of Falterona itself, you may see, if the dawn be clear, the Tyrrhene sea and the Adriatic, the one but a tremor of light far and far away, the other a sheet of silver beyond the famous cities of Romagna. It is from this summit that your way through Casentino should begin.

It was there I waited the dawn. For long in the soft darkness and silence I had watched the mountains sleeping under the few summer stars. Suddenly the earth seemed to stir in her sleep, in every valley the dew was falling, in all forests there was a rumour, and among the rocks where I lay I caught a flutter of wings. The east grew rosy; out of the mysterious sea rose a golden ghost hidden in glory, till suddenly across the world a sunbeam fell. It touched the mountains one by one; higher and higher crept the tremulous joy of light, confident and ever more confident, opening like a flower, filling the world with gladness and light. It was the dawn: out of the east once more had crept the beauty of the world.

Page 253

Then in that clear and joyful hour God spread out all the breadth of Italy before me: the plains, the valleys, and the mountains. Far and far away, shining in the sun, Ravenna lay, and lean Rimini and bartered Pesaro. There, the mountains rose over Siena, in that valley Gubbio slept, on that hill stood S. Marino, and there, like a golden angel bearing the Annunciation of Day, S. Leo folded her wings on her mountain. Southward, Arezzo smiled like a flower, Monte Amiata was already glorious; northward lay a sea of mountains, named and nameless, restless with light, about to break in the sun. While to the west Florence lay sleeping yet in the cusp of her hills, her towers, her domes, perfect and fresh in the purity of dawn that had renewed her beauty.

It was an altogether different impression, an impression of sadness, of some tragic thing, that I received when at evening I stood above the Castle of Porciano on a hill a little way off, and looked down the valley. It was not any joyful thing that I saw, splendid though it was, but the ruined castles, blind and broken, of the Counts Guidi: Porciano itself, like a jagged menace, rises across Arno, which is heard but not seen; farther, on the crest of a blue hill, round which evening gathers out of the woods, rises the great ruin of Romena like a broken oath; while farther still, far away on its hill in a fold of the valley, Poppi thrusts its fierce tower into the sky, a cruel boast that came to nothing. They are but the ghosts of a forgotten barbarism these gaunt towers of war; they are nothing now, less than nothing, unreconciled though they be with the hills; they have been crumbling for hundreds of years: one day the last stone will fall. For around them is life; the children of Stia, laughing about the fountain, will never know that their ancestors went in fear of some barbarian who held Porciano by murder and took toll of the weak. These shepherd girls, these *contadini* and their wives and children, they have outlived the Conti Guidi, they have outlasted the greatest of the lords; like the flowers, they run among the stones without a thought of that brutal greatness that would have enslaved them if it could. Not by violence have they conquered, but by love; not by death, but by life. It is just this which I see round every ruin in the Casentino. Force, brute force, is the only futile thing in the world. Why has La Verna remained when Romena is swept away, that strong place, when Porciano is a ruin, when the castle of Poppi is brought low, but that life which is love has beaten hate, and that a kiss is more terrible than a thousand blows.

Page 254

Yes, as one wanders about these hills where life itself is so hard a master, it is just that which one understands in almost every village. You go to S. Maria delle Grazie—Vallombrosella, they call it, since it was a daughter of the monastery of Vallombrosa—and there in that beautiful fifteenth-century church you still find the simple things of life, of love; work of the della Robbia; pictures, too, cheerful flowerlike things, with Madonna like a rose in the midst. Well, not far away across Arno, where it is little, the ruins of Castel Castagnajo and of Campo Lombardo are huddled, though Vallucciole, that tiny village, is laughing with children. It is the same at Romena, where the church still lives, though the castle is ruined. You pass to Pratovecchio; it is the same story, ruins of the Guidi towers, walls, fortifications; but in the convent church of the Dominican sisters they still sing Magnificat:

Deposuit potentes de sede: et exaltavit humiles.

So on the road to Poppi you come to Campaldino, where Dante fought, where Corso Donati saved the day, where Buonconte fell, and died with the fog in his throat in the still morning air after the battle. Well, that famous field is now a vineyard; you may see the girls gathering the grapes there any morning in early October. Where the horses of the Aretines thundered away, the great patient oxen draw the plough; or a man walks, singing beside his wife, her first-born in her arms. It is the victory of the meek; here, at least, they have inherited the earth. And Certomondo, as of old, sings of our sister the earth. Poppi again—ah, but that fierce old place, how splendid it is, it and its daughter! Like all the rest of these Guidi strongholds, the Rocca of Poppi stands on a hill; it can be seen for miles up and down the valley: and indeed the whole town is like a fortress on a hill, subject only to the ever-changing sky, the great tide of light ebbing and flowing in the valley between the mountains. Poppi is the greatest of the Guidi fortresses; built by Arnolfo, it has much of the nobility of its daughter the Palazzo Vecchio of Florence. Of all these castles it is the only one that is not a ruin. It is true it has been restored, But you may still find frescoes on its walls in the chapel and in the great hall, work, it is said, of Jacopo da Casentino: and then it has one of the loveliest courtyards in Italy.

It is from Poppi one may go very easily in a summer day to Camaldoli, some eight miles or so to the north-west, where the valley comes up in a long arm into the mountains. On that lovely road you pass many an old ruin of the Guidi before you come at last to that monastery of the Camaldolese Order “so beloved of Dante,” which was confiscated with the rest in 1866. The monks now hire their own house from the Government, which has let out their hospice for an hotel. About an hour above the monastery, among the pine trees, is the Sacro Eremo, the Holy Hermitage, where in some twenty separate cells the Hermits of Camaldoli live; for, as their arms go to show, the Order is divided into two parts, consisting of monks who live in community, and hermits who live alone.

Page 255

S. Romuald, the founder of the Order, of the family of the Dukes of Ravenna called Honesti, was born in that city in 956. He seems to have grown up amid a certain splendour, and to have been caught by it, but by a love of nature no less; so that often when he was hunting, and found a beautiful or lonely place in the woods away from his companions, he would almost cry out, "How happy were the old hermits, who lived always in such places!" The romance of just that: it seems to have struck him from the first. Not long after, when he was but twenty years old, his father, deciding a dispute with a relation by fighting, fell, and Romuald, who had been compelled to witness this dreadful scene, was so overwhelmed by the result that he retired for a time to the Benedictine Monastery at Classis, not far from Ravenna. After some difficulties had been disposed of, for he was his father's heir, he spent seven years in that monastery; but his sincerity does not appear to have pleased certain of the fathers, so that we find him at last obliged to retire to Venice, where, in fulfilment of his earliest wishes, he placed himself under the guidance of Marinus, a hermit. After many years, in which he seems to have gone to Spain, he returned at last, and took up his hermit life in a marsh near Classis, where the monks of his old monastery sought him, and with the help of Otho III made him their Abbot. This office, however, he did not long retain, for he found it useless to try to reform them. He seems to have wandered about, famous all over Italy, founding many houses, but the most famous of all is this house of Camaldoli, which he founded in 1009. The land was given him by a certain Conte Maldolo, it is said, an Aretine, by whose name the place was ever after known, Campus Maldoli; while another gift, Campus Arrabile, the gift of the same man, is that place where the Hermitage stands. There, in Camaldoli, Romuald built a monastery, "and by several observances he added to St. Benedict's rule, gave birth to a new Order, in which he united the cenobite and eremetical life." It is said that it was after a vision, in which he saw his monks mounting up into heaven dressed in white, that he changed their habit from black to white—the habit they still wear.

Whether it be that the hills and valley are indeed more lovely here than anywhere else in Casentino, and that the monks and the hermits lure some indefinable sweet charm to the place, I know not; yet I know that I, who came for a day, stayed a month, returning here again and again from less lovely, less quiet places. Camaldoli is one of the loveliest places in Tuscany in which to spend a summer. Here are mountains, woods, streams, valleys, a monastery, and a hermitage; to desire more might seem churlish, to be content with less when these may be had in quiet, stupid.

IV. BIBBIENA, LA VERNA

Page 256

Some eight miles away down the valley, enclosed above a coil of Arno, stands Bibbiena, just a little Tuscan hill city with a windy towered Piazza in which a great fountain plays, and all about the tall cypresses tower in the sun among the vineyards and the corn. Here Cardinal Bibbiena, the greatest ornament of the court of Urbino, was born, of no famous family, but of the Divizi. It is not, however, any memory of so famous and splendid a person that haunts you in these stony streets, but the remembrance rather of a greater if humbler humanist, St. Francis of Assisi. You may see work of the della Robbia in the Franciscan church of S. Lorenzo in the little city, but it is La Verna which to-day overshadows Bibbiena, La Verna where St. Francis nearly seven hundred years ago received the Stigmata from Our Lord, and whence he was carried down to Assisi to die. The way thither is difficult but beautiful: you climb quite into the mountains, and there in a lonely and stony place rises the strange rock, set with cypress and with fir, backed by marvellous great hills.

“Mons in quo beneplacitum est Deo habitare in eo.”

It was on the morning of the 14th September 1224, in the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, that Francesco Bernadone received the Stigmata of Christ's passion while keeping the Lent of St. Michael Archangel on this strange and beautiful mountain. “Ye must needs know,” says the author of the *Fioretti*, “that St. Francis, being forty and three years of age in the year 1224, being inspired of God, set out from the valley of Spoleto for to go into Romagna with brother Leo his companion: and as they went they passed by the foot of the castle of Montefeltro; in the which castle there was at that time a great company of gentlefolk.... Among them a wealthy gentleman of Tuscany, by name Orlando da Chiusi of Casentino, who by reason of the marvellous things which he had heard of St. Francis, bore him great devotion and felt an exceeding strong desire to see him and to hear him preach. Coming to the castle St. Francis entered in and came to the courtyard, where all that great company of gentlefolk was gathered together, and in fervour of spirit stood up upon a parapet and began to preach.... And Orlando, touched in the heart by God through the marvellous preaching of St. Francis ... drew him aside and said, ‘O Father, I would converse with thee touching the salvation of my soul.’ Replied St. Francis: ‘It pleaseth me right well; but go this morning and do honour to thy friends who have called thee to the feast, and dine with them, and after we will speak together as much as thou wilt.’ So Orlando got him to the dinner; and after he returned to St. Francis and ... set him forth fully the state of his soul. And at the end this Orlando said to St. Francis, ‘I have in Tuscany a mountain most proper for devotion, the which is called the Mount La Verna, and is very lonely and right well fitted for whoso may wish to do penance in a place remote

Page 257

from man, or whoso may desire to live a solitary life; if it should please thee, right willingly would I give it to thee and thy companions for the salvation of my soul.' St. Francis hearing this liberal offer of the thing that he so much desired, rejoiced with exceeding great joy; and praising and giving thanks first to God and then to Orlando, he spake thus: 'Orlando, when you have returned to your house, I will send you certain of my companions, and you shall show them that mountain; and if it shall seem to them well fitted for prayer and penitence, I accept your loving offer even now.' So Orlando returned to Chiusi, the which was but a mile distant from La Verna.

"Whenas St. Francis had returned to St. Mary of the Angels, he sent one of his companions to the said Orlando ... who, desiring to show them the Mount of La Verna, sent with them full fifty men-at-arms to defend them from the wild beasts of the forest; and thus accompanied, these brothers climbed up the mountain and searched diligently, and at last they came to a part of the mountain that was well fitted for devotion and contemplation, for in that part there was some level ground, and this place they chose out for them and for St. Francis to dwell therein; and with the help of the men-at-arms that bore them company, they made a little cell of branches of trees; and so they accepted, in the name of God, and took possession of, the Mount of La Verna, and of the dwelling-place of the brothers on the mountain, and departed and returned to St. Francis. And when they were come unto him, they told him how, and in what manner, they had taken a place on the mountain ... and, hearing these tidings, St. Francis was right glad, and praising and giving thanks to God, he spake to these brothers with joyful countenance, and said, 'My sons, our forty days' fast of St. Michael the Archangel draweth near: I firmly believe that it is the will of God that we keep this fast on the Mount of Alvernia, which, by divine decree, hath been made ready for us to the end, that to the honour and glory of God, and of His mother, the glorious Virgin Mary, and of the holy Angels, we may, through penance, merit at the hands of Christ the consolation of consecrating this blessed mountain.' Thus saying, St. Francis took with him Brother Masseo da Marignano of Assisi ... and Brother Angelo Tancredi da Rieti, the which was a man of very gentle birth, and in the world had been a knight; and Brother Leo, a man of exceeding great simplicity and purity, for the which cause St. Francis loved him much. So they set out. 'And on the first night they came to a house of the brothers, and lodged there. On the second night, by reason of the bad weather, and because they were tired, not being able to reach any house of the brothers, or any walled town or village, when the night overtook them and bad weather, they took refuge in a deserted and dismantled church, and there laid them down to rest.' But St. Francis spent the

Page 258

night in prayer. 'And in the morning his companions, being aware that, through the fatigues of the night which he had passed without sleep, St. Francis was much weakened in body and could but ill go on his way afoot, went to a poor peasant of these parts, and begged him, for the love of God, to lend his ass for Brother Francis, their Father, that could not go afoot. Hearing them make mention of Brother Francis, he asked them: 'Are ye of the brethren of the brother of Assisi, of whom so much good is spoken?' The brothers answered 'Yes,' and that in very truth it was for him that they asked for the sumpter beast. Then the good man, with great diligence and devotion, made ready the ass and brought it to St. Francis, and with great reverence let him mount thereon, and they went on their way, and he with them behind his ass. And when they had gone on a little way, the peasant said to St. Francis, 'Tell me, art thou Brother Francis of Assisi?' Replied St. Francis, 'Yes.' 'Try, then,' said the peasant, 'to be as good as thou art by all folk held to be, seeing that many have great faith in thee; and therefore I admonish thee, that in thee there be naught save what men hope to find therein.' Hearing these words, St. Francis thought no scorn to be admonished by a peasant, and said not within himself, 'What beast is this doth admonish me?' as many would say nowadays that wear the habit, but straightway threw himself from off the ass upon the ground, and kneeled down before him and kissed his feet, and then humbly thanked him for that he had deigned thus lovingly to admonish him. Then the peasant, together with the companions of St. Francis, with great devotion lifted him from the ground and set him on the ass again, and they went on their way.... As they drew near to the foot of the rock of Alvernia itself, it pleased St. Francis to rest a little under the oak that was by the way, and is there to this day; and as he stood under it, St. Francis began to take note of the situation of the place and the country around. And as he was thus gazing, lo! there came a great multitude of birds from divers parts, the which, with singing and flapping of their wings, all showed joy and gladness exceeding great, and came about St. Francis in such fashion, some settled on his head, some on his shoulders, and some on his arms, some in his lap and some round his feet. When his companions and the peasant marvelled, beholding this, St. Francis, all joyful in spirit, spake thus unto them: 'I believe, brethren most dear, that it is pleasing unto Our Lord Jesus Christ that we should dwell in this lonely mountain, seeing that our little sisters and brothers, the birds, show such joy at our coming.' So they went on their way and came to the place the companions had first chosen."

It is not in any other words than those of the writer of the *Fioretti* that we should care to read of that journey.

Page 259

“Arrived there not long after, Orlando and his company came to visit Francis, bringing with them bread and wine and other victuals; and St. Francis met him gladly and gave him thanks for the holy mountain. Then Orlando built a little cell there, and that done, ‘as it was drawing near to evening and it was time for them to depart, St. Francis preached unto them a little before they took leave of him.’ Ah, what would we not give just for a moment to hear his voice in that place to-day? There, in this very spot, angels visited him, which said, when he, thinking upon his death, wondered what would become of ‘Thy poor little family’ after his death, ‘I tell thee, in the name of God, that the profession of the Order will never fail until the Day of Judgment, and there will be no sinner so great as not to find mercy with God if, with his whole heart, he love thine Order.’

“Thereafter, as the Feast of the Assumption of Our Lady drew near, St. Francis sought how he might find a place more solitary and secret, wherein he might the more solitary keep the forty days’ fast of St. Michael the Archangel, which beginneth with the said Feast of the Assumption.... And as they searched, they found, on the side of the mountain that looks towards the south, a lonely place, and very proper for his purpose; but they could not win there because in front there was a horrid and fearful cleft in a huge rock; wherefore with great pains they laid a piece of wood over it as a bridge, and got across to the other side. Then St. Francis sent for the other brothers and told them how he was minded to keep the forty days’ fast of St. Michael in that lonely place; and therefore he besought them to make him a little cell there, so that no cry of his could be heard of them. And when the cell was made, St. Francis said to them: ‘Go ye to your own place and leave me here alone, for, with the help of God, I am minded to keep the fast here without disturbance or distraction, and therefore let none of you come unto me, nor suffer any lay folk to come to me. But Brother Leo, thou alone shalt come to me once a day with a little bread and water, and at night once again at the hour of Matins; and then shalt thou come to me in silence, and when thou art at the bridgehead thou shalt say: “Domine, labia mea operies,” and if I answer thee, cross over and come to the cell, and we will say Matins together; and if I answer thee not, then depart straightway.’ And so it was. But there came a morning when St. Francis made him no answer, and, contrary to St. Francis’s desire, but with the very best of intentions, dear little brother Leo crossed the bridge over the chasm, which you may see to this day, and entered into St. Francis’s cell. There he found him in ecstasy, saying, ‘Who art Thou, O most sweet, my God? What am I, most vile worm, and Thine unprofitable servant?’ Again and again brother Leo heard him repeat these words, and wondering thereat, he lifted his eyes to the sky, and saw there

Page 260

among the stars, for it was dark, a torch of flame very beautiful and bright, which, coming down from the sky, rested on St. Francis's head. So, thinking himself unworthy to behold so sweet a vision, he softly turned away for to go to his cell again. And as he was going softly, deeming himself unseen, St. Francis was aware of him by the rustling of the leaves under his feet. Surely, even to the most doubtful, that sound of the rustling leaves must bring conviction. Then St. Francis explains to brother Leo all that this might mean.

“And as he thus continued a long time in prayer, he came to know that God would hear him, and that so far as was possible for the mere creature, so far would it be granted him to feel the things aforesaid.... And as he was thus set on fire in his contemplation on that same morn, he saw descend from heaven a Seraph with six wings resplendent and aflame, and as with swift flight the Seraph drew nigh unto St. Francis so that he could discern him, he clearly saw that he bore in him the image of a man crucified; and his wings were in such guise displayed that two wings were spread above his head, and two were spread out to fly, and other two covered all his body. Seeing this, St. Francis was sore adread, and was filled at once with joy and grief and marvel. He felt glad at the gracious look of Christ, who appeared to him so lovingly, and gazed on him so graciously; but, on the other hand, seeing Him crucified upon the cross, he felt immeasurable grief for pity's sake.... Then the whole mount of Alvernia appeared as though it burned with bright shining flames that lit up all the mountains and valleys round as though it had been the sun upon the earth; whereby the shepherds that were keeping watch in these parts, seeing the mountains aflame, and so great a light around, had exceeding great fear, according as they afterwards told unto the brothers, declaring that this flame rested upon the mount of Alvernia for the space of an hour and more. In like manner at the bright shining of this light, which through the windows lit up the hostels of the country round, certain muleteers that were going into Romagna arose, believing that the day had dawned, and saddled and laded their beasts; and going on their way, they saw the said light die out and the material sun arise. In the seraphic vision, Christ, the which appeared to him, spake to St. Francis certain high and secret things, the which St. Francis in his lifetime desired not to reveal to any man; but after his life was done he did reveal them, as it set forth below; and the words were these: ‘Knowest thou,’ said Christ, ‘what it is that I have done unto thee? I have given thee the Stigmata that are the signs of My Passion, to the end that thou mayest be My standard-bearer. And even as in the day of My death I descended into hell and brought out thence all souls that I found there by reason of these My Stigmata: even so do I grant to thee that every year on the day of thy death thou shalt go to Purgatory,

Page 261

and in virtue of thy Stigmata shalt bring out thence all the souls of thy three Orders,—to wit, Minors, Sisters, Continents,—and likewise others that shall have had a great devotion for thee, and shalt lead them unto the glory of Paradise, to the end that thou mayest be confirmed to Me in death as thou art in life.’ Then this marvellous image vanished away, and left in the heart of St. Francis a burning ardour and flame of love divine, and in his flesh a marvellous image and copy of the Passion of Christ. For straightway in the hands and feet of St. Francis began to appear the marks of the nails in such wise as he had seen them in the body of Jesus Christ the crucified, the which had shown Himself to him in the likeness of a Seraph; and thus his hands and feet appeared to be pierced through the middle with nails, and the heads of them were in the palms of his hands and the soles of his feet outside the flesh, and their points came out in the back of his hands and of his feet, so that they seemed bent back and rivetted in such a fashion that under the bend and rivetting which all stood out above the flesh might easily be put a finger of the hand as a ring; and the heads of the nails were round and black. Likewise in the right side appeared the image of a wound made by a lance, unhealed, and red and bleeding, the which afterwards oftentimes dropped blood from the sacred breast of St. Francis, and stained with blood his tunic and his hose. Wherefore his companions, before they knew it of his own lips, perceiving nevertheless that he uncovered not his hands and feet, and that he could not put the soles of his feet to the ground ... knew of a surety that in his hands and feet, and likewise in his side, he bore the express image and similitude of Our Lord Jesus Christ crucified.” On the day after the feast of St. Michael, St. Francis left La Verna never to return.

* * * * *

It was with a certain hesitation that I first came to La Verna, as though something divine that was hidden in the life of the Apostle of Humanity might be lost for me in the mere realism of his sacred places. But it was not so. In Italy, it might seem even to-day, St. Francis is not a stranger, and, in fact, I had got no farther than the Cappella degli Uccelli before I seemed to understand everything, and in a place so lonely as this to have found again, yes, that Jesus whom I had lost in the city.

On a high precipitous rock on the top of the mountain you come to the convent itself, through a great court, il Quadrante, under a low gateway. The buildings are of the end of the fifteenth century, simple, and with a certain country beauty about them, strong and engaging. In the dim corridors the friars pass you on their way to church at all hours of the day, smiling faintly at you, whom they, in their simple way, receive without question as a friend. It is for St. Francis you have come: it is enough. You pass into the Cappella della Maddalena, where

Page 262

the angel appeared to S. Francesco promising such great things, and it is with a certain confidence you remind yourself, yes, it is true, the Order still lives, here men still speak S. Francesco's name and pray to God. And there, as it is said, Jesus Himself spoke with him, and he wrote the blessing for Frate Leone. Then you enter the Chiesina, the first little church of the Mountain that St. Francis may have built with his own hands, and that S. Bonaventura certainly enlarged; and thus into the great Church of S. Maria Assunta, built in 1348 by the Conte di Pietramala, with its beautiful della Robbias. Coming out again, you pass along the covered way into the Cappella della Stigmata, built in 1263 by the Conte Simone da Battifolle, where behind the high altar is the great Crucifixion by one of the della Robbia. Next to this chapel is the Cappella della Croce, where of old the cell stood in which St. Francis kept the Lent of St. Michael. Close by are the Oratories of S. Antonio di Padua and S. Bonaventura, where they prayed and worked. Below the Chapel of the Stigmata is the Sasso Spicco, whence the devil hurled one of the brethren. For during that Lent, "Francis leaving his cell one day in fervour of spirit, and going aside a little to pray in a hollow of the rock, from which down to the ground is an exceeding deep descent and a horrible and fearful precipice, suddenly the devil came in terrible shape, with a tempest and exceeding loud roar, and struck at him for to push him down thence. St. Francis, not having where to flee, and not being able to endure the grim aspect of the demon, he turned him quickly with hands and face and all his body pressed to the rock, commending himself to God and groping with his hands, if perchance he might find aught to cling to. But as it pleased God, who suffereth not His servants to be tempted above that they are able to bear, suddenly by a miracle the rock to which he clung hollowed itself out in fashion as the shape of his body.... But that which the demon could not do then unto St. Francis ... he did a good while after the death of St. Francis unto one of his dear and pious brothers, who was setting in order some pieces of wood in the self-same place, to the end that it might be possible to cross there without peril, out of devotion to St. Francis and the miracle that was wrought there. On a day the demon pushed him, while he had on his head a great log that he wished to set there, and made him fall down thence with the log upon his head. But God, that had preserved and delivered St. Francis from falling, through his merits delivered and preserved his pious brother from the peril of his fall; for the brother, as he fell, with exceeding great devotion commanded himself in a loud voice to St. Francis, and straightway he appeared unto him, and, catching him, set him down upon the rocks without suffering him to feel a shock or any hurt." Can it have been this "pious brother" who wrote the *Fioretti*? Everywhere you go in La Verna you feel that S. Francesco has been before you; and where there is no tradition to help you, surely you will make one for yourself. Can he who loved everything that had life have failed to love, too, that world he saw from La Penna—



Page 263

“Nel crudo sasso, intra Tevere ed Amo”

—Casentino and its woods and streams, Val d’Arno, Val di Tevere, the hills of Perugia, the valleys of Umbria, the lean, wolfish country of the Marche, the rugged mountains of Romagna. There, on the summit of La Verna, you look down on the broken fortresses of countless wars, the passes through which army after army, company upon company, has marched to victory or fled in defeat; every hill-top seems to bear some ruined Rocca, every valley to be a forgotten battlefield, every stream has run red with blood. All is forgotten, all is over, all is done with. The victories led to nothing; the defeats are out of mind. In the midst of the battle the peasant went on ploughing his field; somewhere not far away the girls gathered the grapes. All this violence was of no account; it achieved nothing, and every victory was but the tombstone of an idea. Here, on La Verna, is the only fortress that is yet living in all Tuscany of that time so long ago. It is a fortress of love. The man who built it had flung away his dagger, and already his sword rusted in its scabbard in that little house in Assisi; he conquered the world by love. His was the irresistible and lovely force, the immortal, indestructible confidence of the Idea, the Idea which cannot die. If he prayed in Latin, he wrote the first verses of Italian poetry. Out of his tomb grew the rose of the Renaissance, and filled the world with its sweetness. He was the son of a burgess in Assisi, and is now the greatest saint in our heaven. With the sun he loved his name has shone round the world, and there is no land so far off that it has not heard it. And we, who loot upon the ruined castles of the Conti Guidi, are here because of him, and speak with his brothers as we gaze.

V. A RIVEDERLA

Slowly, as the summer waned, I made my way up through the Casentino, once more past the strongholds and the little towns. Now and then on my way I met the herds, already setting out for the winter pastures of Maremma. The grapes were plucking or gathered in, and everywhere there were songs.

“Come volete faccia che non pianga,
Sapendo che da voi devo partire?
E tu, bello, in Maremma, ed io ’n montagna!
Chesta partenza mi fara morire.”

So I came once more over Falterona, down to Castagno, that mountain village where Andrea del Castagno, the follower of Masaccio, was born, to S. Godenzo, between two streams, where Dante knew the castle of the Guidi, and where Conte Tegrino of Porciano received Henry VII. Here, at last, I was in the very footsteps of Dante; for in the church there, in the choir set high above the old crypt, he signed the deed of alliance between the Guidi and the Ubaldini on 8th June 1302, “Actum in choro Sancti Gaudentii de pede Alpium.”

Nothing remains of the place as it was in those days, I suppose, save the church, and that has been for the most part rebuilt; but the choir stands, so that we may say here, on 8th June 1302, Dante took quill and signed and spoke with his fellow-exiles.

Page 264

Thence I followed the way to Dicomano by Sieve, at the foot of the Consuma, and then up stream to Borgo S. Lorenzo, the capital of the Mugello, and so by the winding road above the valley under the hills to Fiesole, to Florence, wrapped in rain, through which an evening sun was breaking.

FOOTNOTES:

[132] Now in S. Trinita in Firenze.

[133] Mr. Montgomery Carmichael (*On the Old Road, etc.*, p. 293), quoting from Don Diego de' Franchi (*Historia del Patriarcha S. Giovangualberto*, p. 77: Firenze, 1640), says that S. Romuald and S. Giovanni Gualberto vowed eternal friendship between their Orders, "and for a long time, if a Camaldolese was visiting Vallombrosa, he would take off his own and put on a Vallombrosan habit as a symbol that the monks of the two Orders were brothers."

[134] *Guida Illustrata del Casentino da C. Beni*: Firenze, 1889. This perhaps the best guide-book in the Tuscan language, is certainly the best for the Casentino. Those who cannot read it must fall back on the charming and delightful book by Miss Noyes, *The Casentino and its Story*: Dent, 1905. It is too good a book to be left useless in its heavy bulky form. Perhaps Miss Noyes will give us a pocket edition.

XXVII. PRATO

Prato is like a flower that has fallen by the wayside that has faded in the dust of the way. She is a little rosy city, scarcely more than a castello, full of ruined churches; and in the churches are ruined frescoes, ruined statues, broken pillars, spoiled altars. You pass from one church to another—from S. Francesco, with its facade of green and white, its pleasant cloister and old frescoes, to La Madonna delle Carceri, to S. Niccolo da Tolentino, to S. Domenico—and you ask yourself, as you pass from one to another, what you have come to see: only this flower fallen by the wayside.

But in truth Prato is the child of Florence, a rosy child among the flowers—in the country, too, as children should be. Her churches are small. What could be more like a child's dream of a church than La Madonna delle Carceri? And the Palazzo Pretorio—it is a toy palace wonderfully carved and contrived, a toy that has been thrown aside. In the Palazzo Comunale the little daughter of Florence has gathered all her broken treasures: here a discarded Madonna, there a Bambino long since forgotten; flowers, too, flowers of the wayside, faded now, such as a little country girl will gather and toss into your vettura at any village corner in Tuscany; a terra-cotta of Luca della Robbia, and that would be a lily; a Madonna by Nero di Bicci, and that might have been a rose; a few panels by Lippo Lippi, and they were from the convent garden. In Via S. Margherita



you come still upon a nosegay of such country blossoms, growing still by the wayside —Madonna with St. Anthony, S. Margherita, S. Costanza, and S. Stefano about her, painted by Filippino Lippo, a very lovely shrine, such as you cannot find in Florence, but which Prato seems glad to possess, on the way to the country itself.

Page 265

And since Prato is a child, there are about her many children; mischievous, shy, joyful little people, who lurk round the coppersmiths, or play in the old churches, or hide about the corridors of Palazzo Comunale. And so it is not surprising that the greatest treasures of Prato are either the work of children—the frescoes, for instance, of Lippo Lippi and Lucrezia Buti in the Duomo—or the presentment of them, yes, in their happiest moments; some dancing, while others play on pipes, or with cymbals full of surprising sweetness, in the open-air pulpit of Donatello; a pulpit from which five times every year a delightful and wonderful thing is shown, not without its significance, too, in this child-city of children—Madonna's Girdle, the Girdle of the Mother of them all, shown in the open air, so that even the tiniest may see.

The Duomo itself, simple and small, so that you may not lose your way there, however little you may be, was built in 1317, though a church has stood there apparently since about 750, while the facade, all in ivory and green, is a work of the fifteenth century. Donatello's pulpit, for which a contract was made in 1425 which named Michelozzo with him as one of those *industriosi maestri* intent on the work, is built into the south-west corner of the church overlooking the Piazza. Almost a complete circle in form, it is separated, unfortunately we may think, into seven panels divided by twin pilasters, where on a mosaic ground groups, crowds almost, of children dance and play and sing. It is the very spirit of childhood you see there, a naive impetuosity that occasionally almost stumbles or forgets which way to turn; and if these panels have not the subtler rhythm of the Cantoria at Florence, they are more frankly just children's work, so that any day you may see some little maid of Prato gazing at those laughing babies, babies who dance really not without a certain awkwardness and simplicity, as though they were her own brothers, as indeed they are. Under the pulpit, Michelozzo has forged in bronze a relief of one face of a capital, where other children gaze with all the serious innocence of childhood at the pleasant world of the Piazza.

Passing under the terra-cotta of Madonna with St. Stephen and St. Laurence, made by Andrea della Robbia in 1489, you enter the church itself, a little dim and mysterious, and full of wonderful or precious things, those pillars, for instance, of green serpentine or the Sacra Cintola, the very Girdle of Madonna herself, in its own chapel there on the left behind the beautiful bronze screen of Bruno di Ser Lapo. There, too, you will always find a group of children, and surely it was for them that Agnolo Gaddi painted those frescoes of the life of Madonna and the gift of her Girdle to St. Thomas. For it seems that doubting Thomas was doubting to the last; he alone of all the saints was the least a child. How they wonder at him now, for first he could not believe that Jesus was

Page 266

risen from the dead, when the flowers rise, when the spring like Mary wanders to-day in tears in the garden. Was she not, indeed, the spring, who at break of day stood trembling on the verge of the garden, looking for the sun, the sun that had been dead all winter long? "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him." After all, is it not the cry of our very hearts often enough at Easter, when the summer for which we have waited too long seems never to be coming at all? It came at last, and St. Thomas, like to us maybe, but unlike the children, would not believe it till he had touched the very dayspring with his hands, and felt the old sweetness of the sunshine. And so, when the sun was set and the world desolate, Madonna too came to die, and was received into heaven amid a great company of angels, and they were the flowers, and there she is eternally. Now, when all this came to pass, St. Thomas was not by, and when he came and saw Winter in the world he would not believe that Madonna was dead, nor would he be persuaded that she was crowned Queen of Angels in heaven. And Mary, in pity of his sorrow, sent him by the hands of children "the girdle with which her body was girt,"—just a strip of the blue sky sprinkled with stars,— "and therefore he understood that she was assumpt into heaven." And if you ask how comes this precious thing in Prato, I ask where else, then, could it be but in this little city among the children, where the promise of Spring abides continually, and the Sun is ever in their hearts. Ah, Rose of the world, dear Lily of the fields, you will return; like Spring you will come from that heaven where you are, and in every valley the flowers will run before you and the poppies will stray among the corn, and the proud gladiolus will bow its violet head; then on the hillside I shall hear again the silver laughter of the olives, and in the wide valleys I shall hear all the rivers running to the sea, and the sweet wind will wander in the villages, and in the walled cities I shall find the flowers, and I too, with the children, shall wait on the hills at dawn to see you pass by with the Sun in your arms because it is spring—*Stella Matutina, Causa nostrae laetitiae*.

It was a certain lad of Prato, Michele by name, who, wandering in the wake of the great army in Palestine in 1096 at evening, by one of the wells of the desert, kissed the little daughter of a great priest, who gave him the Girdle of Madonna for love. Returning to Prato with this precious thing, and having nowhere to hide it, he put it, as a child might do, under his bed, and every night the angels for fear mounted guard about it. He died, and it came into the hands of a certain Uberto, a priest of the city; then, one tried to steal it, but he was put to death, and after, the Girdle was placed in the Duomo in a casket of ivory in a chapel of marble between the pillars of serpentine and lamps of gold. And Andrea Pisano carved a statue of Madonna, and they dressed her in

Page 267

silk and placed her on an altar, in which lay hidden the promise of spring. Then Ridolfo Ghirlandajo painted a fresco over the west door, of Madonna with her Girdle, and indeed they did all they knew in honour of their treasure: so that Mino da Fiesole and Rossellino made a pulpit and set it there in the nave, and there, too, you may see Madonna giving her Girdle to St. Thomas, and St. Stephen, the boy martyr, stoned to death, and other remembrances. In the south transept Benedetto da Maiano carved a Madonna and Child, while his brothers carved a Pieta; but it is not such work as this which calls you to the Duomo to-day, but certainly the Girdle itself, which, however, you can only see on certain occasions.[135] And then there is the work of those two children, Fra Lippo Lippi and the little girl who ran away from her convent for love of him, Lucrezia Buti; for though it was Lippo Lippi who painted, it was Lucrezia who served him for model, and since with him painting, for the first time perhaps, came to need life to inspire it, Lucrezia has her part in his work which it would be ungenerous to ignore.

Filippo Lippi was born in 1406 in a by-street of Florence called Ardiglione, behind the convent of the Carmelites, where he painted his first frescoes. His mother, poor soul, died in giving him life, and his father died too before he was three years old. For some time he lived in the care of a certain Mona Lapaccia, his aunt, who hardly brought him up till he was eight years old, when, as Vasari tells us, no longer able to support the burden of his maintenance, she took him to the Carmelites, who promised to make a friar of him. Florence was at the moment of its all too brief spring, in which painting and sculpture were to grow almost like flowers at every street corner, with a delicate beauty that is characteristic of wild flowers, which yet are hardy enough in reality. Reality, it is just that which is so touching in the work of this naive, observant painter, whose work has much of the beauty of a folk-song, one of those *rispetti* which on every Tuscan hill you may hear any summer day above the song of the cicale. He went about, like the child he was his whole life long, looking at things out of curiosity, and remembering them for love. His adventures, those marvellous adventures of his childhood so carefully related by Vasari,—his capture by pirates on the beach of Ancona, his sojourn in Barbary, his escape hardly won by the astonishment of his art, are tales which, whether true or not, have a real value for us because they are indicative of his life, his view of the world: his life was in itself so daring, so delightful an adventure, that nothing that could have happened to him can seem marvellous beside it. For he has for the first time in Italy seen the things we have seen, and loved them: the children at the street corner, the flowers by the wayside, the girls grouped in a doorway looking sideways up the street, a mother

Page 268

nursing her little struggling son. In 1421 he had taken the habit, and then Masaccio had come to the convent to paint in the Brancacci Chapel, and Fra Filippo watched him, helping him perhaps, certainly fired by his work, till he who had played in the streets of Florence decided that he must be a painter. It is characteristic of his whole method that from the very beginning the cloister was too strait for him; he had the passion for seeing things, people, the life of the city, of strange cities too, for we hear of him vaguely in Naples, but soon in Florence again, where he painted in S. Ambrogio for the nuns the Coronation of the Virgin, now in the Accademia. It was this picture which Cosimo came upon, and, finding the painter, took him into his house. And truly, it was something very different from the holy work of Angelico, a painter Cosimo loved so well, that he found in that picture of the Coronation. That Virgin, was she Queen of Angels or some Florentine girl?—and then those angels, are they not the very children of the City of Flowers? But Lippo was not content; he who had found the convent too narrow for him in his insatiable desire for life, was not likely to be content with any burgher's palace. Cosimo ordered pictures, Lippo laughed in the streets, so they locked him in, and he knotted the sheets of the bed together and let himself out of the window, and for days he lived in the streets. So Cosimo let him alone, "labouring to keep him at his work by kindness," understanding, perhaps that it was a child with whom he had to deal, a child full of the wayward impulses of children, the naive genius of youth, the happiness of all that;—the passions, too, a passion, in Filippo's case, for kisses. He was never far from a girl's arms; and then how he has painted them, shy, roguish, wanton daughters of Florence, with their laughing, obstinate, kicking babies, half laughing, half smiling, altogether serious too, while Lippo paints them with a kiss for payment.

He spent some months in Prato with his friend Fra Diamante, who had been his companion in novitiate. The nuns of S. Margherita commissioned him to paint a picture for their high altar, and it was while at work there that he caught sight of Lucrezia Buti. "Fra Filippo," says Vasari, "having had a glance at the girl, who was very beautiful and graceful, so persuaded the nuns that he prevailed upon them to permit him to make a likeness of her for the figure of their Virgin." The picture, now in Paris, was finished, not before Filippo had fallen in love with Lucrezia and she with him, so that he led her away from the nuns; and on a certain day, when she had gone forth to do honour to the Cintola, he bore her from their keeping. "Take us the foxes, the little foxes that spoil the vineyards; for our vineyards have tender grapes."

Vasari tells us that Lucrezia never returned, but remained with Filippo, bearing him a son,—that Filippino "who eventually became a most excellent and very famous painter like his father."



Page 269

And it is said that not Lucrezia alone was involved in that adventure, for she had a sister not less lovely than herself, called Spinetta; she also fled away, and this again brought disgrace on the nuns, so that the Pope himself was compelled to interfere, for they were all living in Prato, not in disgrace but happily, children in a city of children. Cosimo, however, befriended them, and would laugh till the tears came in telling the tale, till Pius II, not altogether himself guiltless of the love of women, at his request unfrocked Filippo and authorised his union with Lucrezia. However this may be, and however strange it may seem, this wolf, who had stolen the lamb from the fold of Holy Church, was engaged by the Duomo authorities in this very city of the theft to paint in fresco there in the choir the story of St. John Baptist and of St. Stephen. It is a masterpiece. As we look to-day on the faded beauty of his work, it is with surprise we ask ourselves why he has signed the fresco of the death of St. Stephen, for instance, *Frater Filippus*; surely he was *frater* no longer, but *Sponsus*. He worked for four years at those frescoes, Fra Diamante coming from Florence to help him. He was a child, and the children of Prato understood him—the Medici too; for when the work in Prato was finished, Piero de' Medici roused himself to find him work, again in a church, the Duomo of Spoleto, where he has painted very sweetly the Annunciation, the Adoration of the Shepherds, the Coronation of the Virgin. Could these things have happened in any other city save Prato, or to any other than a child in the days not so long before Savonarola was burned? No; Fra Lippo played among the children of Italy, and has told us of them with simplicity and sweetness,—little stumbling fellows of the house doors, the laughing children about the fountains, the slim, pale girls who walk arm-in-arm, smiling faintly, in every Tuscan city at sunset, the flowers by the wayside, the shepherds of the hills. And he has made Jesus in the image of his little son; and Madonna is but Lucrezia Buti, whom he kissed into the world. You may see them to-day if you will go to Prato.

FOOTNOTES:

[135] The occasions are Christmas Day, Easter Day, May 1, August 15, and September 8.

XXVIII. PISTOJA

If St. Francis of Assisi dreamed his whole life long of the resurrection of love among men, and in the valleys of Umbria went about like a second Jesus doing good, with an immense love in his heart singing his *Laudes Creaturarum* by the wayside; Dante Alighieri, the greatest poet of his country, might almost seem to have been overwhelmed with hatred, a hatred which is perhaps but the terrible reverse of an intolerable love, but which is an impeachment, nevertheless, not only of his own time, of the cities of his country, but of himself too, for while he thus sums up the

Page 270

Middle Age and judges it, he is himself its most marvellous child, losing himself at last in one of its ideals. St. Francis of Assisi, concerned only with humanity, has by love contrived the Renaissance of man, assured as he was by the love of God, His delight in us His creatures. But for Dante, bitter with loneliness, wandering in the Hell, the Purgatory, the Paradise of his own heart, any such wide and overwhelming love might seem to have been impossible. Imprisoned in the adamant of his personality, he has little but hatred and contempt for the world he knew so well. How scornful he is! Some secret sorrow seems to have burnt up the wells of sweetness in his nature, from which he once drew a love for all mankind. He seems to have gone about hating people, so that if he speaks of Florence it is with a passionate enmity, if of Siena with scorn, Pisa has only his contempt, Arezzo is to him abominable and beastly. He has judged his country as God Himself will not judge it, and he kept his anger for ever. And since the great Florentine can bring himself to bid Florence

“Godi, Fiorenza poi che sei sì grande
Che per mare, e per terra batti l’ali,
E per l’Inferno il tuo nome si spande,”

it is not wonderful that Pistoja is lost in his scorn. Coming upon Vanni Fucci continually consumed by the adder, he hears him say

“Ahi Pistoja, Pistoja, che non stanzi
D’incenerarti, sì che piu non duri
Poi che in mal far lo seme tuo avanzi?”

“O Giustizia di Dio, quanto e severa,...” yet Dante’s will beggar it.

The origin of Pistoja is obscure. Some ascribe its foundation to the Boian Gauls, some to the Romans; however that may be, it was here in Pistoria, as the city was then called, that the army of the Republic came up with Cataline, and defeated him and slew him in B.C. 62. There follows an impenetrable silence, unbroken till, by the will of the Countess Matilda, Tuscany passed, not without protest as we know, to the Pope, when Pistoja seems to have vindicated its liberty in 1117, its commune contriving her celebrated municipal statutes. In 1198 she made one of the Tuscan League against the empire, and in the first year of the thirteenth century she had extended her power over the neighbouring strongholds from Fucecchio to the Arno. After the death of Frederic II, in 1250, she became Guelph with the greater part of Tuscany, and in 1266 took part with Charles of Anjou and fought on his side at Benevento under the Pistojesse captains, Giovanni and Corrado da Montemagno. About this time we first hear the name Cancellieri, Cialdo de’ Cancellieri being Potesta. At Campaldino the Pistojesse fought under Corso Donati, and turned the battle against the Aretines; and it was under the Potesta Giano della Bella in 1294[136] that the Priore of the twelve *anziani*, established

after Campaldino, was named Gonfaloniere of Justice. Villani gives us a vivid picture of Pistoja in 1300.

Page 271

“In these times,” says the prince of Florentine chroniclers, “the city of Pistoja being in happy and great and good estate, among the other citizens there was one family very noble and puissant, not, however, of very ancient lineage, which was called Cancellieri, born of Ser Cancelliere, which was a merchant and gained much wealth, and by his two wives had many sons, which, by reason of their riches, all became knights and men of worth and substance, and from them were born many sons and grandsons, so that at this time they numbered more than one hundred men in arms, rich and puissant and of many affairs; and indeed, not only were they the leading citizens of Pistoja, but they were among the more puissant families of Tuscany. There arose among them, through their exceeding prosperity, and through the suggestion of the devil, contempt and enmity, between them which were born of one wife and them which were born of the other; and the one took the name of the Black Cancellieri, and the other of the White, and this grew until they fought together, but it was not any great affair. And one of those on the side of the White Cancellieri, having been wounded, they on the side of the Black Cancellieri, to the end they might be at peace and concord with them, sent him which had done the injury and handed him over to the mercy of them which had received it, that they should take amend, and vengeance for it at their will; they on the side of the White Cancellieri, ungrateful and proud, having neither pity nor love, cut off the hand of him which had been commended to their mercy on a horse-manger. By which sinful beginning not only was the house of Cancellieri divided, but many violent deaths arose thereupon, and all the city of Pistoja was divided, for some held with one part and some with the other, and they called themselves the Whites and the Blacks, forgetting among themselves the Guelph and Ghibelline parties; and many civil strifes and much peril and loss of life arose therefore in Pistoja....” The Whites seem to have been little more than Ghibellines, to which party they presently allied themselves, when Andrea Gherardini was captain. This party soon got the upper hand in Pistoja, thus bringing down the hatred of the Lucchesi and the Fiorentini; a cruel siege and pillage—touchingly described by Dino Campagni—following in 1305. Exiled, the Whites thronged to the banner of Uguccione, and helped to win the battle of Montecatini in 1305. This done, Uguccione became tyrant of Pistoja till Castruccio Castracani flung him out, and by the will of Lewis of Bavaria became himself tyrant of the city, defeating the Florentines again in 1325. In his absence the Florentines besieged Pistoja again three years later, and took it; the fortunate death of Castruccio confirming them in their conquest, which thus became the vassal of the Lily.

Such in brief is the story of Pistoja; but if we look a little more closely into the mere confusion of those wars, two facts will perhaps emerge clearly, and help us to understand the position.

Page 272

Florence, a city of merchants, was the last power in Italy to make war for the pleasure of fighting, yet in turn she conquered every city in Tuscany, save Lucca alone.[137] What can have been the overmastering necessity that drove her on so bloody a path? Certainly not a love of empire, for she, who was so unfortunate in the art of government, was not likely to lust for dominion. Like all the Florentine wars, that which at last brought Pisa under her yoke was a war on behalf of the guilds of Florence, a war of merchants. Florence humbled Pisa because Pisa held the way to the sea, she brought Arezzo and Siena low and bought Cortona because they stood on the roads to Rome, whose banker she was.[138] And did not Pistoja guard the way to the north, to Bologna, to Milan, to Flanders, and England, whence came the wool that was her wealth?[139] Thus in those days as to-day, war was not a game which one might play or not as one pleased, but the inexorable result of the circumstances of life. When Bologna closed the passes, Florence was compelled to fight or to die; when Pisa taxed Florentine merchandise she signed her own death.

On the other hand, the passionate desire of Pistoja was to be free. Liberty—it was the dream of her life; not the liberty of the people, but the essential liberty of the State, of the city. So she was Ghibelline because Florence was Guelph. All her life long she feared lest Florence should eat her up: that death was ever before her eyes. This and this alone is the cause of the hate of the great Florentine: he hated Florence with an intolerable love because she thrust him out; he hated Pisa, Arezzo, Siena, and Pistoja because they feared or rivalled Florence, and would not be reconciled. His dream of an Italy united under a foreign Emperor, the ghost of the Roman Empire, remained a dream, noble and yet ignoble too. For it is for this that we may accuse him of a lack of clairvoyance, a real failure to appreciate the future, which in the innumerable variety of her cities gave Italy an intellectual life less sustained and clear than the intellectual life of Greece, but more spiritual and more various. In Italy Antiquity and Hebraism became friends, to our undoubted benefit, to the gain of the whole world.

But little is left in the smiling, gracious city to-day to recall those bitter quarrels so long ago. Pistoja, beyond any other Tuscan town perhaps, is full of grace, and gives one always, as it were, a smiling salutation. La Ferrignosa she was called of old, but it is the last title that fits her now, for the clank of her irons has long been silent, and nothing any longer disturbs the quiet of her days. S. Atto is her saint, and it is by his street that you enter the city, walled still, coming at last into the Piazza Cino, Cino da Pistoja, one of the sweetest and least fortunate of Tuscan poets. Turning thence into Via Cavour, you come to S. Giovanni Evangelista, once without the walls, but now not far from the middle

Page 273

of the city, really the earliest of her churches, a Lombard building of about 1160, the facade decorated somewhat in the Pisan manner with rows of pillars, while over the gates is a relief of the Last Supper, by Gruamonte, whom some have thought to be the architect of the church. Within is the beautiful pulpit of Fra Guglielmo, disciple of Niccolo Pisano, and there on the east he has carved the Annunciation and the Birth of Jesus; on the north, the Washing of the Disciples' Feet, the Crucifixion, the Deposition, and Christ in Hades; while on the west is the Ascension and the Death of the Virgin. And just as at Bologna, in the tomb of St. Dominic, Fra Guglielmo's work is but an inferior copy of the style of his master, so here in this pulpit, built most probably in 1270, we find just Niccolo's work spoiled, in a mere repetition, feeble, and without any of the devotional spirit we might expect in the work of a friar. Beside it, near the next altar, is a very beautiful group in glazed terra-cotta, in the manner of the della Robbia, by Fra Paolino. The holy water basin supported by figures of the Virtues is a much-injured work by Giovanni Pisano.

Following Via Cavour, past Palazzo Panciatichi-Cellesi, through Via Francesco Magni, into Piazza del Duomo, you are in the midst of all that was most splendid in Pistoja of old: the Duomo, with its old fortified tower, Torre del Potesta, which still carries the arms of those captains; the Baptistery, high above the way, designed by Andrea Pisano, with its open-air pulpit and broken sculptures; the magnificent Palazzo del Comune; and opposite, the not less splendid Palazzo Pretorio, the palace of the Podesta. Of old the Piazza was less spacious, but in 1312 it was enlarged, and later, too, the palace of the Capitano, on the north, was destroyed. Here every Wednesday they still hold the corn-market, and every Saturday a market of stuffs, silks, and tissues.

It was S. Romolo who first brought the gospel to Pistoja, and the tradition is that he converted a temple built by the Romans to the God Mars into a church, on the spot where now the Duomo stands,[140] and indeed in 1599 certain inscriptions were found, and the capitals of some Roman columns. It is generally thought that a church was built here in the early part of the fifth century, dedicated to St. Martin of Tours, on whose day Stilicho, that Roman general who was by birth a Vandal, gained a victory over Radaugasius and his army of some 400,000 Goths, who had ravaged the country as far as Florence in 406. However this may be, in 589 the church was finally rebuilt, and certainly re-dedicated to S. Zenone, the Bishop of Verona, who, so it was said, had saved the Pistoiese from the floods by breaking through the Gonfolina Pass, that narrow defile beyond Signa through which the Arno flows, with the Ombrone in her bosom, into the Empolese. After being dedicated at various times to many saints, in 1443 it was given to S. Zenone,

Page 274

whose name it still bears. The present church is for the most part a work of the twelfth century, and certainly not the work of Niccolo Pisano. The facade, like the rest of the church, has suffered an unfortunate restoration. The marble loggia is a work of the fifteenth century, and the two statues are, one of S. Jacopo, by Scarpellino, the other of S. Zenone, by Andrea Vacca. The beautiful terra-cotta over the great door of Madonna and Child with Angels, and the roof above, are the work of Andrea della Robbia. The frescoes of the story of S. Jacopo are fourteenth-century work of Giovanni Balducci the Pisan.

The splendid and fierce Campanile, still called Torre del Potesta, stood till about the year 1200, alone, a stronghold of the city. Giovanni Pisano converted it to its present form in 1301.

Within, the church has been greatly spoiled. The monument to Cino da Pistoja, poet and professor, was decreed in 1337 by the Popolo Pistoiese, and was moved about the church from one place to another, till in 1839 it was erected in its present position. There you may see him lecturing to his students, and one of them is a woman; can it be that Selvaggia whom he loved?

“Ay me, alas! the beautiful bright hair ...”

“Weep, Pistoja,” says Petrarch, in not the least musical of his perfect sonnets, in celebrating the death of his master—

“Pianga Pistoia e i cittadin perversi
Che perdut’ hanno sì dolce vicino;
E rallegres’ il ciel or’ ello e gito.”

Dante, who exchanged sonnets with Cino and rallied him about his inconstancy, calls the Pistoiese worthy of the Beast[141] who dwelt among them; Petrarch calls them *i cittadin perversi*; the truth being that the Neri were in power and had exiled “il nostro amoroso messer Cino.”

Close by, against the west wall, is the great font of Andrea Ferrucci, the disciple of Bernardo Rossellino, with five reliefs of the story of St. John Baptist. Opposite Cino’s monument is the tomb of Cardinal Fortiguerra. For long this disappointing monument, so full of gesticulation, passed as the work of Verrocchio; it is to-day attributed rather to Lorenzetto, his disciple.

Passing up the north aisle, we enter at last the Cappella del Sacramento, under whose altar St. Felix, the Pistoiese, sleeps, while on the south wall hangs one of the best works of Lorenzo di Credi, Madonna with Jesus in her arms, and St. John Baptist and S.



Zenone on either side. Opposite is the bust of Bishop Donato de' Medici, by Antonio Rossellino. The little crypt under the high altar is scarcely worth a visit, but the great treasure of the church, the silver frontal of the high altar, is now to be found in the Cappella della Citta, and over it, in a chest within the reredos, is the body, still uncorrupted, of S. Atto, Bishop of Pistoja, who died in 1155. The silver frontal, certainly the finest in Italy, with its wings and reredos of silver and enamel, was removed from the

Page 275

high altar in 1786. It is the work of Andrea di Puccio di Ognibene, the Pistoiese goldsmith: it was finished in 1316. It is carved with fifteen stories from the New Testament, and with many statues of prophets and pictures of saints. Of the two wings, that on the left, consisting of stories from the Old Testament, with the Nativity, the Presentation and the Marriage of the Virgin, is the work of Pietro of Florence—it was finished about 1357; that on the right, carved in 1371 by Leonardo di Ser Giovanni, consists of the story of St. James and the finding of his body at Campostella. All the guide-books tell you that it was this treasure that Vanni Fucci stole on Shrove Tuesday in 1292, but, as I suppose, since this altar was not begun till 1314, it must have been the earlier treasure which this replaced. Vanni Fucci is famous because of his encounter with Dante in Hell.

“Vanni Fucci am I called,

Not long since rained down from Tuscany
To this dire gullet. Me the bestial life
And not the human pleased, mule that I was,
Who in Pistoja found my worthy den.”

Dante tell us—

“I did not mark
Through all the gloomy circles of the abyss,
Spirit that swelled so proudly 'gainst his God.”[142]

It is in Pistoja better almost than anywhere else in Italy that these early sculptors—men who were at work here before Niccolo Pisano came from Apulia—may be studied. Rude enough as we may think, they are yet in their subtle beauty, if we will but look at them, the marvellous product of a time which many have thought altogether barbarous. Consider, then, the reliefs over the door of S. Giovanni Fuorcivitas, or the sculptures on the facade of S. Bartolommeo in Pantano, the work of Rodolfinus and Guido Bigarelli of Como: they are all works of the twelfth century, and it is, as I think, no naive beginning we see, but the last hours of an art that is already thousands of years old, about to be born again in the work of Pisano. And indeed we may trace very happily the rise of Tuscan sculpture in Pistoja. Though she possesses no work of Niccolo himself, his influence is supreme in the pulpit of S. Giovanni Fuorcivitas, and it is the beautiful work of his son Giovanni we see in the great pulpit of S. Andrea, where you enter by a door carved in 1166 by Gruamonte with the Adoration of the Magi. Unlike the work of Fra Guglielmo in S. Giovanni, the pulpit of S. Andrea is hexagonal, and there Giovanni has carved in high relief the Birth of Our Lord, the Adoration of the Magi, the Murder of the Innocents, the Crucifixion, and the Last Judgment. They were carved in 1301, before Giovanni began the Pisan pulpit now in the Museo in that city. And if we see here the first impulse of the Gothic, the Romantic spirit, in Italian art, as in Niccolo's work we

have seen the classic inspiration, it is the far result of these panels that we may discover in the terra-cotta frieze on

Page 276

the vestibule of the Ospedale del Ceppo. That is a work of the sixteenth century, and thus the fifteenth-century work, ever present with us in Florence, is missing here. It is not, however, to any member of the della Robbia clan that we owe this beautiful work, I think, but to some unknown sculptor with whom Buglioni may have worked. For the seven reliefs representing works of Charity and divided by figures of the Virtues are of a surprising splendour, a really classic beauty, and Burckhardt wishes to compare them with the frescoes of Andrea del Sarto and his companions rather than with the sculpture of that time.

One wanders about this quiet, alluring city, where the sculptures are scattered like flowers on every church porch and municipal building, without the weariness of the sightseer. One day you go by chance to S. Francesco al Prato, a beautiful and spacious church in a wilderness of Piazza, built in 1294. And there suddenly you come upon the little flowers of St. Francis, faded and fallen—here a brown rose, there a withered petal; here a lily broken short, there a nosegay drooped and dead: and you realise that here you are face to face with something real which has passed away, and so it is with joy you hurry out into the sun, which will always shine with splendour and life, the one thing perhaps that, if these dead might rise from their tombs in S. Francesco, they would recognise as a friend, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

Other churches too there are in Pistoja: S. Piero Maggiore, where, as in Florence, so here, the Bishop, coming to the city, was wedded in a lovely symbol to the Benedictine Abbess—there too are the works of Maestro Bono the sculptor; S. Salvatore, which stands in the place where, as it is said, they buried Cataline; S. Domenico, where you may find the beautiful tombs of Andrea Franchi and of Filippo Lazzari the humanist—this made by Rossellino in 1494. Pistoja is a city of churches; one wanders into them and out again always with new delight; and indeed, they lend a sort of gravity to a place that is light-hearted and alluring beyond almost any other in this part of Tuscany certainly. Thinking thus of her present sweetness, one is glad to find that one poet at least has thought Dante too hard with men. It is strange that it should be Cino who sings—

“This book of Dante’s, very sooth to say,
Is just a poet’s lovely heresy,
Which by a lure as sweet as sweet can be
Draws other men’s concerns beneath its sway;
While, among stars’ and comets’ dazzling play,
It beats the right down, let’s the wrong go free,
Shows some abased, and others in great glee,
Much as with lovers is Love’s ancient way.
Therefore his vain decrees, wherein he lied,
Fixing folks’ nearness to the Fiend their foe,



Must be like empty nutshells flung aside.
Yet through the vast false witness set to grow,
French and Italian vengeance on such pride
May fall, like Antony's on Cicero." [143]



Page 277

FOOTNOTES:

[136] Cf. Dino Campagni, *Cronica Fiorentina*, Book 1, p. 62. When appointed Podesta of Pistoja, Giano rather raised strife than pacified the factions. Cf. also Villari, *History of Florence*, p. 445.

[137] Strictly speaking, she never conquered Siena; Charles V did that.

[138] In the Middle Age, Cortona and Arezzo were not on the road to Rome, but so far as Florence was concerned, Siena, her holding that she acquired these cities to keep Via Aretina open. Cf. Repetti, v. 715.

[139] That Pistoja was not on the great Via Francesca goes for nothing, she threatened it.

[140] There is a most excellent little book, *Nuova Guida di Pistoja*, by Cav. Prof. Giuseppe Tigri (Pistoja, 1896), which I strongly recommend to the reader's notice. I wish to acknowledge my debt to it. Unlike so many guides, it is full of life itself, and makes the city live for us also.

[141] Bestia, probably a nickname of Vanni Fucci's; cf. *Inferno*, xxiv, 125.

[142] *Inferno*, xxiv. 125, 126; xxv. 13, 14.

[143] "Cino impugns the verdicts of Dante's *Commedia*," a sonnet translated by D.G. Rossetti.

Note.—No English writers have written well of Pistoja, for first they always write from a Florentine point of view, and then they quit too soon. I plead guilty too. The key-note to Pistoja is given in that saying of Macchiavelli's, that the Florentine people "per fuggire il nome di crudele lascio distruggere Pistoia." *Il Principe*, cap. xvii. Cf. also *Discorsi* iii. 27. It is, of course, all a matter of Panciatichi and Cancellieri. Cf. *Zdekauer Statuti Pistoiesi dei Secoli xii. e xiii.*

XXIX. LUCCA

Who that has ever seen the Pistoiese the Val di Lima, the country of S. Marcello, the Val di Reno, the country about Pracchia, does not love it—the silent ways through the chestnut woods, the temperance of the hill country after the heat of the cities, the country ways after the ways of the town? And there are songs there too. But to-day my way lies through the valley, Val di Nievole, towards Lucca, lost in the plain at the gate of the Garfagnana. Serravalle, with its old gateway and high Rocca, which fell to Castruccio Castracani; Monsummano, far on the left, with its old church in the valley;



Montecatini, with its mineral springs; Buggiano, and Pescia with its mulberries, where the Church of S. Francesco hides and keeps its marvellous portrait of S. Francesco—these are the towns at the foot of the mountains that I shall pass before I turn into the plain between the island hills and come at last to Lucca, Lucca l'Ombrosa, round whose high ramparts that have stood a thousand sieges now in whispering ranks there stand the cool planes of the valley, the shadowy trees that girdle the city with a cintola of green and gold.

Page 278

Lucca is the city of a great soldier, of one of the most charming of Tuscan sculptors, and of Santa Zita. Lucca l'Ombrosa I call her, but she is the city of light too—Luce, light; it is the patriotic derivation of her name. For One came to her with a star in His bosom, the Star of Bethlehem, that heralded the sweet dawn which crept through the valleys and filled them with morning; so Lucca was the first city in Italy, as they say, to receive the light of the gospel.

The foundation of this city, which alone of all the cities of Tuscany was to keep in some sort her independence till Napoleon wrested it from her, is obscure. She was not Etruscan, but possibly a Ligurian settlement that came into the power of Rome about 200 B.C., and by 56 B.C. we have certain news of her, for it was here that Caesar, Pompeius, and Crassus formed the triumvirate. Overwhelmed by the disasters that befell the Empire, we hear something of her in the sixth century, when S. Frediano came from Ireland, from Galway, and after a sojourn in Rome became a hermit in the Monti Pisani, till in 565 John III made him Bishop of Lucca. It seems to have been about this time that Lucca began to be of importance, after the fall of the Lombard rule, governed by her own Dukes. And then the Bishops of Lucca, those Bishop Counts who governed her so long, had a jurisdiction which extended to the confines of the Patrimony of St. Peter. The same drama no doubt was played in Lucca as in Pisa or Florence, a struggle betwixt nobles of foreign descent and the young commune of the Latin population. We find Lucca on the papal side in 1064, but in 1081 she joins the Emperor with Siena and Ferrara; but for the most part after Pisa became Ghibelline Lucca was Guelph, for her friends were the enemies of Pisa. Thus the fight went on, a fight really of self-preservation, of civic liberty as it were, each city prizing its ego above every consideration of justice or unity.

It was the fourteenth century that gave Lucca her great captain, Castruccio Castracani, the hero of Machiavelli's remarkable sketch, the sketch perhaps for the Prince. It is strange that Machiavelli should have cared to write of the only two men who might in more favourable circumstances have forged a kingdom out of various Republics, Lordships, Duchies, and Marquisates of the peninsula, Castruccio degli Intelminelli and Cesare Borgia.

It seems, to follow the virile yet subtle tale of Machiavelli, that at the end of the thirteenth century there was born out of the family of Castracani one Antonio, who, entering himself into Orders, was made a Canon of S. Michele in Lucca, and was even called Messer Antonio. He had for sister a widow of Buonaccorso Cinami, who at the death of her husband had come to live with him, resolved to marry no more. Now behind the house where he lived, Messer Antonio, good man, had a vineyard, and it happened one morning about sunrise that Donna Dianora (for that was the

Page 279

sister's name) walking in the vineyard to gather herbs for a salad (as women frequently do), heard a rustling under the leaves, and turning toward it she fancied it cried, and going towards it she saw the hands and face of a child, which, tumbling up and down in the leaves, seemed to call for relief. Donna Dianora, partly astonished and partly afraid, took it up very tenderly, carried it home, washed it, and having put it in clean clothes, presented it to Messer Antonio. "*Eccololi!*" says she, "and what will Messere do with this?" "Dianora," says he, with a gasp, "Dianora...!" "No, it is not," says she, fluttering suddenly with rage, "and I'll thank you, Messer Antonio," and that she said for spite, "I'll thank you to keep your lewd thoughts to yourself," says she, "and for the fine ladies, fine ladies," says she, "that come to see you at S. Michele," and she fell to weeping, holding the child in her arms. "I that might have had little hands (*manine*) under my chin many's the time if Buonaccorso had not died so old." And she carried the child out of his sight. Then Messer Antonio later, when he understood the case, being no less affected with wonder and compassion than his sister before him, debated with himself what to do, and presently concluded to bring the little fellow up; for, as he said, "I, Antonio, am a priest, and my sister hath no children." So he christened the child Castruccio after his own father, and Dianora looked to him as carefully as if he had been her own. Now Castruccio's graces increased with his years, and therefore in his heart Messer Antonio designed him for a priest; but Dianora would not have it so, and indeed he showed as yet but little inclination to that kind of life, which was not to be wondered at, his natural disposition, as Dianora said, tending quite another way. For though he followed his studies, when he was scarce fourteen years old he began to run after the soldiers and knights, and always to be wrestling and running, and soon he troubled himself very little with reading, unless it were such things as might instruct him for war. And Messer Antonio was sore afflicted.

Now the great house in Lucca at that time was Guinigi, and Francesco was then head of it. Ah! a handsome gentleman, rich too, who had borne arms all his life long under the Visconti of Milan. With them he had fought for the Ghibellines till the Lucchesi looked upon him as the very life of that party. This Francesco was used to walk in Piazza S. Michele, where one day he watched Castruccio playing among his companions. Seeing his strength and confidence, he called him to him, and asked him if he did not prefer a gentleman's family, where he could learn to ride the great horse and exercise his arms, before the cloister of a churchman. Guinigi had only to look at him to see which way his heart jumped, so not long after he made a visit to Antonio and begged Castruccio of him in so pressing and yet so civil a manner, that Antonio, finding he could not master the natural inclinations of the lad, let him go.

Page 280

Often after that, Dianora and Antonio too, seeing him ride by in attendance on Francesco, would admire with what address he sat his horse, with what grace he managed his lance, with what comeliness his sword; and indeed scarce any of his age dare meet him at the *Barriere*. He was about eighteen years old when he made his first campaign. For the Guelphs had driven the Ghibellines out of Pavia, and Visconti sought the help of his friends, among them of Francesco Guinigi. Francesco gave Castruccio a company of foot, and marched with him to help Visconti: and Castruccio won such reputation in that fight, that his name galloped through Lombardy, and when he returned to Lucca the whole city had him in respect.

Not long after, Guinigi fell sick; in truth he was about to die. Seeing, then, that he had a son scarcely thirteen years old, called Pagolo, he gave him into Castruccio's charge, begging him to show the same generosity to his son as he had received from him. And all this Castruccio promised.

Now the head of the Guelph party in Lucca was a certain Signor Giorgio Opizi, who hoped when Francesco was dead to get the city into his power, so that when he saw Castruccio so well thought of and so strong, he began to speak secretly of a new tyranny, by which he meant the growing favour of Castruccio. Pisa at this time was under the government of Uguccione della Faggiuola of Arezzo, whom the Pisans had chosen as their captain, but who had made himself their lord. He had befriended certain Ghibellines banished from Lucca, and therefore Castruccio entered into secret treaty with him in order that these exiles might be restored. So he furnished in Lucca the Tower of Honour, which was in his charge, in case he might have to defend it. He met Uguccione on the night appointed, between Lucca and the hills towards Pisa, and, agreeing with him, Uguccione marched on the city to St. Peter's Gate and set fire to it, while he attacked another on the other side of the town. Meanwhile, his friends within the city ran about in the night calling *To your arms*, and filled the streets with confusion; so that Uguccione easily entered, and, having seized the city, caused all the Opizi to be murdered as well as all the Guelphs he could find. Nor did he stop there, for he exiled one hundred of the best families, who immediately fled to Florence and Pistoja. The Florentines, seeing the Guelph power tottering, put an army in the field, and met the Pisans and Lucchesi at Montecatini. There followed the memorable battle called after that place, in which the Florentines lost some ten thousand men.[144] This was in 1315. Now whether, as Villani says, Uguccione won that battle, or, as Machiavelli asserts, was sick, so that the honour fell to Castruccio, there was already of necessity much jealousy between the two captains; for certainly Castruccio had not called on Uguccione to make him Lord of Lucca, nor had Uguccione obeyed that call for mere love of Castruccio.

Page 281

He therefore, being returned to Pisa, sent his son Nerli to seize Lucca and kill Castruccio, but the lad bungled it: when Uguccione himself set out to repair this, he found the city ready, demanding the release of Castruccio, whom Nerli had imprisoned. Seeing, then, the mood of the city, and that he had but four hundred horse with him, he was compelled to agree to this. And at once Castruccio, who was in no wise daunted, assembled his friends and flung Uguccione out of Lucca. Meantime the Pisans had themselves revolted, so that this tyrant was compelled to retire into Lombardy.

It was now that Castruccio saw his opportunity. He got himself chosen Captain-General of all the Lucchese forces for a twelvemonth, and began to reduce the surrounding places near and far which had come under the rule of Uguccione. The first of these to be attacked was Sarzana in Lunigiana. But first he agreed with Pisa, who in hatred of Uguccione sent him men and stores. Sarzana proved very strong, so that before he won it he was compelled to build a fortress beyond the walls, which we may see to this day. Thus Sarzana was taken, and later Massa, Carrara, and Avenza easily enough, until the whole of Lunigiana was in his power, even Fosdinovo, and later Remoli, and that was to secure his way to Lombardy. Then he returned to Lucca, and was received with every sort of joy.

About this time Ludovic of Bavaria came into Italy seeking the Imperial Crown, and Castruccio went to meet him with 500 horse, leaving Pagolo Guinigi his Deputy in Lucca. Ludovic received him with much kindness, making him Lord of Pisa and his vicar in all Tuscany: and thus Castruccio became the head of the Ghibelline party both in Lombardy and Tuscany. But Castruccio's aim went higher yet, for he hoped not only to be vicar but master indeed of Tuscany, and to this end he made a league with Matteo Visconti of Milan; and seeing that Lucca had five gates, he divided the country into five parts, and to every part he set a captain, so that presently he could march with 20,000 men beside the Pisans. Now the Florentines were already busy in Lombardy against Visconti, who besought Castruccio to make a diversion. This he readily did, taking Fucecchio and S. Miniato al Tedesco. Then hearing of trouble in Lucca, he returned and imprisoned the Poggi, who had risen against him; an old and notable family, but he spared them not. Meanwhile Florence retook S. Miniato; and Castruccio, not caring to fight while he was insecure at home, made a truce carefully enough, that lasted two years.

He now set himself first to make Lucca secure, and for this he built a fortress in the city; and then to possess himself of Pistoja—for he even thought thereby to gain a foothold in Florence herself—and for this he entered into correspondence secretly with both the Neri and the Bianchi there. These two factions did not hesitate to use the enemy of their city to help their ambitions, so that while the Bianchi

Page 282

expected him at one gate, the Neri waited at the other, the one receiving Guinigi and the other Castruccio himself with their men into the city. Not content with thus winning Pistoja, he thought to control the city of Rome also, which he did in the name of the Emperor, the Pope being in Avignon; and this done, he went through the city with two devices embroidered on his coat: the one before read, "He is as pleaseth God," and that behind, "And shall be what God will have him." Now the Florentines were furious at the cunning breach of their truce by which Castruccio had got himself Pistoja; so, while he was in Rome, they determined to capture the place: which they did one night by a ruse, destroying all Castruccio's party. And when he heard it, Castruccio came north in great anger. But at first the Florentines were too quick for him: they got together all of the Guelph league, and before Castruccio was back again, held Val di Nievole. Seeing their greatness—for they were 40,000 in number, while he on his return could muster but 12,000 men at most—he would not meet them in the plain, nor in the Val di Pescia, but resolved to draw that great army into the narrow ways of Serravalle, where he could deal with them. Now Serravalle is a Rocca not on the road but on the hillside above, and the way down into the valley is rather strait than steep till you come to the place where the waters divide: so strait that twenty men abreast take up all the way. That Rocca belonged to a German lord called Manfredi, whose throat Castruccio cheerfully cut. The Florentines, who were eager not only to hold all Val di Nievole but to carry the war away from Pistoja towards Lucca, knew nothing of Serravalle having fallen to Castruccio, so on they came in haste, and encamped above it, hoping to pass the straits next day. There Castruccio fell upon them about midnight, putting all to confusion. Horse and foot fell foul upon one another, and both upon the baggage. There was no way left for them but to run, which they did helter-skelter in the plain of Pistoja, where each man shifted for himself. But Castruccio followed them even to Peretola at the gates of Florence, carrying Pistoja and Prato on the way; there he coined money under their walls,[145] while his soldiers insulted over the conquered; and to make his triumph more remarkable, nothing would serve the turn but naked women must run Corsi on horseback under the very walls of the city. And to deliver their city from Castruccio, the Florentines were compelled to send to the King of Naples, and to pay him annual tribute.

But Castruccio's business was always spoiled by revolt, and this time it was Pistoja which rose, and later Pisa. Then the Guelphs raised a great army—30,000 foot and 10,000 horse it was—and after a little, while Castruccio was busy with Pisa, they seized Lastra, Signa, Montelupo, Empoli, and laid siege to S. Miniato: this in May 1328. Castruccio, in no wise discomposed, thought at last

Page 283

Tuscany was in his grasp; therefore he went to Fucecchio and entrenched himself with 20,000 foot and 4000 horse, leaving 5000 foot in Pisa with Guinigi. Fucecchio is a walled city on the other side of Arno opposite S. Miniato. There Castruccio waited; nor could he have chosen better, for the Florentines could not attack him without fording the river from S. Miniato, which they had taken, and dividing their forces. This they were compelled to do, and Castruccio fell upon and beat them, leaving some 20,000 of them dead in the field, while he lost but fifteen hundred. Nevertheless, that proved to be his last fight, for death found him at the top of his fortune; riding into Fucecchio after the battle, he waited a-horseback to greet his men at the great gate of the place which is still called after him. Heated as he was with the fight, it was the evening wind that slew him; for he fell into an ague, and, neglecting it, believing himself sufficiently hardened, it presently killed him, and Pagolo Guinigi ruled in his stead, but without his fortune.

Following that strangely successful career, that for Macchiavelli at any rate seemed like a promise of the Deliverer that was to come, the first of modern historians gives us many of Castruccio's sayings set down at haphazard, which bring the man vividly before us. Thus when a friend of his, seeing him engaged in an amour with a very pretty lass, blamed him that he suffered himself to be so taken by a woman—"You are deceived, signore," says Castruccio, "she is taken by me." Another desiring a favour of him with a thousand impertinent and superfluous words—"Hark you, friend," says Castruccio, "when you would have anything of me, for the future send another man to ask it." Something of his dream of dominion may be found in that saying of his when one asked him, seeing his ambition, how Caesar died, and he answered, "Would I might die like him!" Blamed for his severity, perhaps over the Poggi affair, one said to him that he dealt severely with an old friend—"No," says he, "you are mistaken; it was with a new foe." Something of his love for Uguccione—who certainly hated him, but whom he held in great veneration—may be found in his answer to that man who asked him if for the salvation of his soul he never thought to turn monk. "No," says he, "for to me it will be strange if Fra Nazarene should go to Paradise and Uguccione della Faggiuola to Hell." And Macchiavelli says that what was most remarkable was that, "having equalled the great actions of Scipio and Philip, the father of Alexander, he died as they did, in the forty-fourth year of his age, and doubtless he would have surpassed them both had he found as favourable dispositions at Lucca as one of them did in Macedon and the other in Rome." Just there we seem to find the desire of the sixteenth century for unity that found expression in the deeds of Cesare Borgia, the Discorsi of Niccolo Macchiavelli.

[Illustration: THE TOMB OF ILARIA DEL CARETTO

Page 284

By Jacopo della Quercia. Duomo, Lucca

Brogi]

The rest of the history of Lucca is a sort of unhappy silence, out of which from time to time rise the cry of Burlamacchi, a fool, yes, but a hero, the howling of the traitors, the whisper of feeble conspiracies, the purr of an ignoble prosperity, till in 1805 Napoleon came and made her his prey.

II

But to-day Lucca is like a shadowy pool hidden behind the Pisan hills, like a forgotten oasis in the great plain at the foot of the mountains, a pallid autumn rose, smiling subtly among the gardens that girdle her round about with a sad garland of green, a cincture of silver, a tossing sea of olives. However you come to her, you must pass through those delicate ways, where always the olives whisper together, and their million leaves, that do not mark the seasons, flutter one by one to the ground; where the cicale die in the midst of their song, and the flowers of Tuscany scatter the shade with the colours of their beauty. In the midst of this half-real world, so languidly joyful, in which the sky counts for so much, it is always with surprise you come upon the tremendous perfect walls of this city—walls planted all round with plane-trees, so that Lucca herself is hidden by her crown—a crown that changes as the year changes, mourning all the winter long, but in spring is set with living emeralds, a thousand and a thousand points of green fire that burst into summer's own coronet of flame-like leaves, that fades at last into the dead and sumptuous gold of autumn.

It is by Porta S. Pietro that we enter Lucca, coming by rail from Pistoja, and from Pisa too, then crossing La Madonnina and Corso Garibaldi by Via Nazionale, we come almost at once into Piazza Giglio, where the old Palazzo Arnolfi stands—a building of the sixteenth century that is now Albergo Universo. Thence by the Via del Duomo, past S. Giovanni, we enter the Piazza S. Martino, that silent, empty square before the Duomo. The little Church of S. Giovanni that we pass on the way is the old cathedral, standing on the site of a pagan temple, and rebuilt by S. Frediano in 573, after the Lombards had destroyed the first Christian building. The present church dates, in part at least, from the eleventh century, and the three white pillars of the nave are from the Roman building; but the real interest of the church lies in its Baptistry—Lombard work dug out of the earth which had covered it, the floor set in a waved pattern of black and white marble, while in the midst is the great square font in which the people of Lucca were immersed for baptism. Little else remains of interest in this the most ancient church in Lucca—only a fresco of Madonna with St. Nicholas and others, a fifteenth-century work in the north transept, and a beautiful window of the end of the sixteenth century in the Baptistry itself.

Page 285

All that is best in Lucca, all that is sweetest and most naive, may be found in the beautiful Duomo, which Pope Alexander II consecrated in 1070,—Pope Alexander II, who had once been Bishop of Lucca. *Non e finito*, the sacristan, himself one of the most delightful and simple souls in this little forgotten city, will tell you—it is not finished; and indeed, the alteration that was made in the church in the early part of the fourteenth century—when the nave was lengthened and the roof raised—was never completed; and you may still see where, through so many centuries, that which was so well begun has awaited a second S. Frediano.

It is, however, the facade that takes you at once by its ancient smiling aspect, its three great unequal arches, over which, in three tiers, various with beautiful columns, rise the open galleries we have so loved at Pisa. Built, as it is said, in 1204 by Guidetto, much work remains in that beautiful frontispiece to one of the most beautiful churches in Italy that is far older than itself: the statue of S. Martino, the patron, for instance; that labyrinth, too, on the great pier to the right; and perhaps the acts of St. Martin carved between the doors, and below them three reliefs of the months, where in January you see man sitting beside the fire; in February, as is most right, fishing in the Serchio; in March, wisely pruning his trees; in April, sowing his seed; in May, plucking the spring flowers; in June, cutting the corn; in July, beating it out with the flail—the flail that is used to-day in every country place in Tuscany; in August, plucking the fruits; in September, treading the wine-press; in October, storing the wine; in November, ploughing; and in December, for the festa killing a pig. Over the door to the left is the earliest work, as it is said, of Nicolo Pisano, and beneath it an Adoration of the Magi, in which some have found the hand of Giovanni, his son; while above the great door itself Our Lord is in glory, with the Twelve Apostles beneath, and Madonna herself in the midst. Not far away, to the north beside the church, the rosy Campanile towers over Lucca, calling city and country too, to pray at dawn and at noon and at evening.

Within, the church is of a great and simple beauty; in the form of a Latin cross, divided into three naves by columns supporting round arches, over which the triforium passes across the transepts, lighted by beautiful Gothic windows: the glass is certainly dreadful, but far away in the choir the windows are filled still with the work of the old masters.

The most beautiful and the most wonderful treasure that the church holds, that Lucca itself can boast of, is the great tomb in the north transept, carved to hold for ever the beautiful Ilaria del Caretto, the wife of Paolo Guinigi, whose tower still blossoms in the spring, since she has sat there. It is the everlasting work of Jacopo della Quercia, the Sienese. On her bed of marble the young Ilaria

Page 286

lies, like a lily fallen on a rock of marble, and in her face is the sweet gravity of all the springs that have gone by, and in her hand the melody of all the songs that have been sung; her mouth seems about to speak some lovely affirmation, and her body is a tower of ivory. Can you wonder that the sun lingers here softly, softly, as it steps westward, or that night creeps over her, kissing her from head to foot slowly like a lover? Who was the vandal who robbed so great and noble a thing as this of the relief of dancing children which was found in the Bargello in 1829, and returned here only in 1887?

It is, however, the work of another man, a Lucchese too, that fills the Duomo and Lucca itself with a sort, of lyric sweetness in the delicate and almost fragile sculpture of Matteo Civitali. In the south transept he has carved the monument to Pietro da Noceto, the pupil of Pope Nicholas V, and close by, the tomb of Domenico Bertini, his patron, while in the Cappella del Sacramento are two angels from his hands, kneeling on either side the tabernacle. It was he who built the marble parapet, all of red and white, round the choir, the pulpit, and the Tempietto in the nave, gilded and covered with ornaments to hold the Volto Santo, setting there the beautiful statue of St. Sebastian, which we look at to-day with joy while we turn away from that strange and marvellous shrine of the holy face of Jesus which we no longer care to see. Yet one might think that crucifix strange and curious enough for a pilgrimage, beautiful, too, as it is, with the lost beauty of an art as subtle and lovely as the work of the Japanese. "It is really," says Murray, "a work of the eleventh century"; but the Lucchesi will not have it so, for they tell you that it was carved at the bidding of an angel by Nicodemus, and that he, unable to finish his work, since his memory was too full of the wonder of the reality, returning to it one day, perhaps to try again, found it miraculously perfect. At his death it passed into the hands of certain holy men, who, to escape from the fury of the iconoclasts, hid it, till in 782 a Piedmontese bishop found it by means of a vision, and put it aboard ship and abandoned it to the sea. So the tale runs. Cast hither and thither in the waves, the ship at last came ashore at Luna, where the Bishop of Lucca was staying in the summer heat. So, led by God, he would have borne it to Lucca; but the people of Luna, who had heard of its sanctity, objecting, it was placed in a cart drawn by two white oxen, and, as it had been abandoned to the sea, so now it was given to the world. But the oxen, which in fact came from the fields of Lucca, returned thither, to the disgust of the people of Luna, and to the great and holy joy of the Bishop of Lucca, as we may imagine. Such is the tale; but the treasure itself is a crucifix of cedar wood of a real and strange beauty. Whether it be European work or Asiatic I know not, nor does it matter much, since it is beautiful. Dante, who spent some time in Lucca, and there loved the gentle Gentucca, whose name so fortunately chimed with that of the city, speaks of the Volto Santo in *Inferno*, xxi. 48, when in the eighth circle of Hell, over the lake of boiling pitch, the devils cry—

Page 287

“... Qui non ha luogo il Santo Volto:
Qui si nuota altrimenti che nel Serchio.”

Matteo Civitali, the one artist of importance that Lucca produced, was born in 1435. He remains really the one artist, not of the territory of Florence, who has worked in the manner of the fifteenth-century sculptors of that city. His work is everywhere in Lucca, —here in the Duomo, in S. Romano, in S. Michele, in S. Frediano, and in the Museo in Palazzo Mansi. Certainly without the strength, the constructive ability that sustains even the most delicate work of the Florentines, he has yet a certain flower-like beauty, a beauty that seems ever about to pass away, to share its life with the sunlight that ebbs so swiftly out of the great churches where it is; and concerned as it is for the most part with the tomb, to rob death itself of a sort of immortality, to suggest in some faint and subtle way that death itself will pass away and be lost, as the sun is lost at evening in the strength of the sea. The sentiment that his work conveys to us of a beauty fragile at best, and rather exquisite than splendid, lacks, perhaps, a certain originality and even freshness; yet it preserves very happily just the beauty of flowers, of the flowers that grow everywhere about his home in the slowly closing valleys, the tender hills that lead to Castelnuovo of the Garfagnana, to Barga above the Bagni di Lucca. More and more as you linger in Lucca it is his work you seek out, caught by its sweetness, its delicate and melancholy joy, its strangeness too, as though he had desired to express some long thought-out, recondite beauty, and, half afraid to express himself after all, had let his thoughts pass over the marble as the wind passes over the sand between the Pineta and the sea. It is a beauty gone while we try to apprehend it that we find in his work, and though at last we may tire of this wayward and delicate spirit, while we shall ever return with new joy to the great and noble figure of the young Ilaria del Caretto or to the serene Madonna of Ghirlandajo, hidden in the Sacristy, yet we shall find ourselves seeking for the work of Matteo Civitali as for the first violets of the spring, without a thought of the beauty that belongs to the roses that lord it all the summer long.

It is a Madonna of Civitali that greets you at the corner of the most characteristic church of Lucca, S. Michele. There, under the great bronze S. Michele, whose wings seem to brood over the city, you come upon that strange fantastic and yet beautiful facade which Guidetto built in 1188. Just Pisan work you think, but lacking a certain simplicity and sincerity even, that you find certainly in the Duomo. But if it be true that this facade was built in 1188, and that the facade of the Duomo of Pisa was built in 1250, and even that of S. Paolo a Ripa d'Arno there, in 1194, Guidetto's work here in Lucca is the older, and the Pisan master has made but a difficult simplification, perhaps, of this very work.

Page 288

A difficult simplification!—simplicity being really the most difficult achievement in any art, so that though it seem so easy it is really hard to win. Guidetto seems to have built here at S. Michele as a sort of trial for the Duomo, which is already less like an apparition. And if the facade of S. Michele has not the strength or the naturalness of that, leading as it does to nothing but poverty in the midst of which still abides a mutilated work by a great Florentine, Fra Lippo Lippi, it is because Guidetto has gradually won to that difficult simplicity from such a strange and fantastic dream as this.

[Illustration: THE TOMB OF THE MARTYR S. ROMANO IN S. ROMANO, LUCCA

Matteo Civitali

Alinari]

It is quite another sort of beauty we see when, passing through the deserted, quiet streets, we come to S. Frediano, just within the Porta S. Maria, on the north side of the city. Begun by Perharlt, the Lombard, in 671, with the stones of the amphitheatre, whose ruins are still to be seen hard by, it stood without the city till the great wall was built in the twelfth century, the apse being set where formerly the great door had stood, and the marvellously impressive facade taking the place of the old apse. Ruined though it be by time and restoration, that mosaic of Our Lord amid the Apostles and Angels still surprises us with a sudden glory, while the Campanile that rises still where of old the door stood is one of the most beautiful in Italy. Within, the church has suffered too from change and restoration. Once of basilical form, it is now spoiled by the chapels that thrust themselves into the nave, but cannot altogether hide the nobility of those ancient pillars or the simplicity of the roof. A few beautiful ancient things may still be found there. The font, for instance, with its rude sculptures, that has been forsaken for a later work by Niccolo Civitali, the nephew of Matteo; the Assumption, carved in wood by that master behind the pulpit; the lovely reliefs of Madonna and Child with Saints, by Jacopo della Quercia, in the Cappella del Sacramento; or the great stone which, as it is said, S. Frediano, that Irishman, lifted into a cart.

But it is not of S. Frediano we think in this dark and splendid place, though the stone of his miracle lies before us, but of little S. Zita, patron of housemaids, little S. Zita of Lucca, born in 1211. "Anziani di Santa Zita," the devil calls the elders of Lucca in the eighth circle of Hell; but in her day, indeed, she had no such fame as that. She was born at Montesegradi, a village of the Lucchese, and was put to service at twelve years of age, in the family of the Fantinelli, whose house was close to this church, where now she has a chapel to herself at the west end of the south aisle, with a fine Annunciation of the della Robbia. To think of it!—but in those days it was different; it would puzzle Our Lord to find a S. Zita among our housemaids of to-day.

Page 289

For hear and consider well the virtues of this pearl above price, whose daughters, alas! are so sadly to seek while she dusts the Apostles' chairs in heaven. She was persuaded that labour was according to the will of God, nor did she ever harbour any complaint under contradictions, poverty, hardships; still less did she ever entertain the least idle, inordinate, or worldly desire! She blessed God for placing her in a station where she was ever busy, and where she must perpetually submit her will to that of others. "She was even very sensible of the advantages of her state, which afforded all necessaries of life without engaging her in anxious cares, ... she obeyed her master and mistress in all things, ... she rose always hours before the rest of the family, ... she took care to hear Mass every morning before she was called upon by the duties of her station, in which she employed the whole day with such diligence and fidelity that she seemed to be carried to them on wings, and studied to anticipate them!" Is it any wonder her fellow-servants hated her, called her modesty simplicity, her want of spirit servility? Ah, we know that spirit, we know that pride, S. Zita, and for those wings that bore you, for that thoughtfulness and care, S. Zita, we should be willing to pay you quite an inordinate wage! Nor would your mistress to-day be prepossessed against you as yours was, neither would your master be "passionate," and he would see you, S. Zita, without "transports of rage." Your biographer tells us that it is not to be conceived how much you had continually to suffer in that situation. Unjustly despised, overburdened, reviled, and often beaten, you never repined nor lost patience, but always preserved the same sweetness in your countenance, and abated nothing of your application to your duties. Moreover, you were willing to respect your fellow-servants as your superiors. And if you were sent on a commission a mile or two, in the greatest storms, you set out without delay, executed your business punctually, and returned often almost drowned, without showing any sign of murmuring. And at last, S. Zita, they found you out, they began to treat you better, they even thought so well of you that a single word from you would often suffice to check the greatest transports of your master's rage; and you would cast yourself at the feet of that terrific man, to appease him in favour of others. And all these and more were your virgin virtues, lost, gone, forgotten out of mind, by a world that dreams of no heavenly housemaid save in Lucca where you lived, and where they still keep your April festa, and lay their nosegays on your grave.

So I passed in Lucca from church to church, finding here the body of a little saint, there the tomb of a soldier, or the monument of some dear dead woman. In S. Francesco, that desecrated great mausoleum that lies at the end of the Via di S. Francesco not far from the garden tower of Paolo Guinigi, I came upon the humble grave of Castruccio Castracani. In S. Romano, at the other end of the city behind the Palazzo Provinciale, it was the shrine of that S. Romano who was the gaoler of S. Lorenzo I found, a tomb with the delicate flowerlike body of the murdered saint carved there in gilded alabaster by Matteo Civitali.

Page 290

It is chiefly Civitali's work you seek in the Museo in Palazzo Provinciale, for, fine as the work of Bartolommeo is in two pictures to be found there, it is for something more of the country than that you are to come to Lucca. There, in a Madonna Assunta carved in wood and plaster, and daintily painted as it seems he loved to do, you have perhaps the most charming work that has come from his bottega. He was not a great sculptor, but he had seen the vineyards round about, he had wandered in the little woods at the city gates, he had watched the dawn run down the valleys, and the wind that plays with the olives was his friend. He has loved all that is delicate and lovely, the wings of angels, the hands of children, the long blown hair of St. John in his Death of the Virgin, the eyelids that have fallen over the eyes. He is full of grace, and his virtues seem to me to be just those which Lucca herself possesses. Hidden away between the mountains, between the plains and the sea, she achieved nothing, or almost nothing. Castracani for a moment forced her into the pell-mell of awakened Italy, but with his death, and certainly with the fall of the House of Guinigi, she returned to herself, to her own quiet heart, which was enough for her. This one sculptor is almost her sole contribution to Italian art, but she was content that his works should scatter her ways, and that hidden away in her churches his shy flowers should blossom. Civitali and S. Zita, they are the two typical Lucchesi; they sum up a city composed of such as Giovanni Arnolfini and his wife, whom Van Eyck painted, that great bourgeoisie which made Italy without knowing it, and, unconcerned while the great men and the rabble fought in the wars or lost their lives in a petty revolution, were eager only to be let alone, that they might continue their labour and gather in wealth. And of them history is silent, for they made her.

FOOTNOTES:

[144] See p. 94 et seq.

[145] This coining of money was as much as to prove that he had a sort of sovereign right over their territory.

XXX. OVER THE GARFAGNANA

So in the long August days, that are so fierce in the city, I sought once more the hills, the hills that are full of songs, those songs which in Italy have grown with the flowers and are full of just their wistful beauty, their expectancy and sweetness.

“Fiorin di grano,
Lasciatemi cantar, che allegra sono,
Ho rifatto la pace col mio damo.”

There in the Garfagnana, as I wandered up past Castelnuovo to the little village of Piazza al Serchio, and then through the hills to Fivizzano, that wonderful old town in a

cup of the mountains, I heard the whole drama of love sung by the “vaghe montanine pastorelle” in the chestnut woods or on the high lawns where summer is an eternal spring.



Page 291

“O rosa! O rosa! O rosa gentillina!
Quanto bella t’ha fatta la tua mamma!
T’ha fatto bella, poi t’ha messo un fiore;
T’ha messo alla finestra a far l’amore.
T’ha fatto bella e t’ha messo una rosa:
T’ha messo alla finestra a far la sposa.”

sings the young man one morning as he passes the cottage of his beloved, and she, scarcely fourteen, goes to her mother, weeping perhaps—

“Mamma, se non mi date il mio Beppino,
Vo’ andar pel mondo, e mai piu vo’ tornare.
Se lo vedessi quanto gli e bellino,
O mamma, vi farebbe innamorare.
E’ porta un giubboncin di tre colori,
E si chiama Beppino Ruba—cori:
E’ porta un giubboncin rosso incarnato,
E si chiama Beppino innamorato:
E’ porta un giubboncin di mezza lana;
Quest’ e Beppino, ed io son la sua dama.”

Then the *damo* comes to serenade his mistress—

“Vengo di notte e vengo appassionato,
Vengo nell’ora del tuo bel dormire.
Se ti risveglio, faccio un gran peccato
Perche non dormo, e manco fo dormire.
Se ti risveglio, un gran peccato faccio:
Amor non dorme, e manco dormir lascia.”

And she, who doubtless has heard it all in her little bed, sings on the morrow—

“Oh, quanto tempo l’ho desiderato
Un damo aver che fosse sonatore!
Eccolo qua che Dio me l’ha mandato
Tutto coperto di rose e viole;
Eccolo qua che vien pianin pianino,
A capo basso, e suona il violino.”

Then they sing of Saturday and Sunday—

“Quando sara sabato sera, quando?
Quando sara domenica mattina,
Che vedro l’amor mio spasseggiando,



Che vedro quella faccia pellegrina,
Che vedro quel bel volto, e quel bel viso,
O fior d'arancio colto in paradiso!
Che vedro quel bel viso e quel bel volto,
O fior d'arancio in paradiso colto!"

So all the summer long they play at love; but with October Beppino must go to the Maremma with the herds, and she thinks over this as the time draws near—

"E quando io penso a quelle tante miglia,
E che voi, amor mio, l'avete a fare,
Nelle mie vene il sangue si rappiglia,
Tutti li sensi miei sento mancare;
E li sento mancare a poco a poco,
Come la cera in sull'ardente foco:
E li sento mancare a dramma, a dramma,
Come la cera in sull'ardente fiamma."

Or again, with half a sob—

"Come volete faccia che non pianga
Sapendo che da voi devo partire?
E tu bello in Maremma ed io 'n montagna!
Chesta partenza mi fara morire...."

And at last she watches him depart, winding down the long roads—

"E vedo e vedo e non vedo chi voglio,
Vedo le foglie di lontan tremare.
E vedo lo mio amore in su quel poggio,
E al piano mai lo vedo calare.
O poggio traditor, che ne farete?
O vivo o morto me lo renderete.
O poggio traditor, che ne farai?
O vivo o morto me lo renderai."

Page 292

Then she dreams of sending a letter in verses, which recall, how closely, the Swallow song of “The Princess”—

“O Rondinella che passi monti e colli,
Se trovi l'amor mio, digli che venga;
E digli: son rimasta in questi poggi
Come rimane la smarrita agnella.
E digli: son rimasta senza nimo
Come l'albero secco senza 'l cimo.
E digli: son rimasta senza damo,
Come l'albero secco senza il ramo.
E digli: son rimasta abbandonata
Come l'erbetta secca in sulle prata.”

At length she sends a letter with the help of the village scrivener, and in time gets an answer—

“Salutatemi, bella, lo scrivano;
Non lo conosco e non so chi si sia.
A me mi pare un poeta sovrano
Tanto gli e sperto nella poesia ...”

Signor Tigri in his excellent collection of *Canti Toscani*, from which I have quoted, gives some examples too of these letters and their replies, but they are too long to set down here.

With spring the lover returns. You may see the girls watching for the lads any day of spring in those high far woods through which the roads wind down to the plains.

“Eccomi, bella, che son gia venuto
Che li sospiri tuoi m'hanno chiamato,
E tu credevi d'avermi perduto,
Dal ben che ti volevo son tornato.
Quando son morto, mi farai un gran pianto;
Dirai: e morto chi mi amava tanto!
Quando son morto, un gran pianto farai,
Padrona del mio cor sempre sarai.”

Then in the early summer days the promises are given, and long and long before autumn the good priest marries Beppino to his Annuziatina, and doubtless they live happy ever after in those quiet and holy places.

It is into this country of happiness you come, a happiness so vaguely musical, when, leaving Lucca in the summer heat, you climb into the Garfagnana. For to your right



Bagni di Lucca lies under Barga, with its church and great pulpit; and indeed, the first town you enter is Borgo a Mozzano by Serchio; then, following still the river, you come to Galliciano, and then by a short steep road to Castelnuovo di Garfagnana at the foot of the great pass. The mountains have clustered round you, bare and threatening, and though you be still in the woods it is their tragic nudity you see all day long, full of the disastrous gestures of death, that can never change or be modified or recalled. It is under these lonely and desolate peaks that the road winds to Piazza al Serchio.

Castelnuovo is a little city caught in a bend of Serchio, which it spans by a fantastic high bridge that leaps across the shrunken torrent. A mere huddle of mediaeval streets and piazzas in an amphitheatre of mountains, its one claim on our notice is that here is a good inn, kept by a strange tragical sort of man with a beautiful wife, the only sunshine in that forbidding place. She lies there like a jewel

Page 293

among the inhuman rocks, and Serchio for ever whispers her name. Here too, doubtless, came Ariosto, most serene of poets, when in 1522 he was sent to suppress an insurrection in the Garfagnana. But even Ariosto will not keep you long in Castelnovo, since she whom he would certainly have sung, and whose name you will find in his poem, cannot hold you there. So you follow the country road up stream, a laughing, leaping torrent in September, full of stones longing for rain, towards Camporgiano.

It is very early in the morning maybe, as you climb out of the shadow and receive suddenly the kiss of the morning sun over a shoulder of the great mountains, a kiss like the kiss of the beloved. From the village of Piazza al Serchio, where the inn is rough truly but *pulito*, it is a climb of some six chilometri into the pass, where you leave the river, then the road, always winding about the hills, runs level for four miles, and at last drops for five miles into Fivizzano. All the way the mountains stand over you frighteningly motionless and threatening, till the woods of Fivizzano, that magical town, hide you in their shadow, and evening comes as you climb the last hill that ends in the Piazza before the door of the inn.

Here are hospitality, kindness, and a welcome; you will get a great room for your rest, and the salone of the palace, for palace it is, for your sojourn, and an old-fashioned host whose pleasure is your comfort, who is, as it were, a daily miracle. He it will be who will make your bed in the chamber where Grand Duke Leopold slept, he will wait upon you at dinner as though you were the Duke's Grace herself, and if your sojourn be long he will make you happy, and if your stay be short you will go with regret. For his pride is your delight, and he, unlike too many more famous Tuscans, has not forgotten the past. Certainly he thinks it not altogether without glory, for he has carved in marble over your bed one of those things which befell in his father's time. Here it is—

“Qui stette per tre giorni
Nel Settembre del MDCCCXXXII
Leopoldo Il Granduca di Toscana
E i fratelli Cojari da Fivizzano
L'immagine dell' Ottimo Principi vi possero
Perche rimanesse ai posterì memoria
Che la loro casa fu nobilitata
Dalle presenza dell' ospite augusto.”

But nature had ennobled the House of Cojari already. There all day long in the pleasant heat the fountain of Cosimo in plays in the Piazza outside your window, cooling your room with its song. And, indeed, in all Tuscany it would be hard to find a place more delightful or more lovely in which to spend the long summer that is so loath to go here in the south. Too soon, too soon the road called me from those meadows and shadowy

ways, the never-ending whisper of the woods, the sound of streams, the song of the mountain shepherd girls, the quiet ways of the hills.

Page 294

It was an hour after sunrise when I set out for Fosdinovo of the Malaspina, for Sarzana, for Spezia, for England. The way lies over the rivers Aulella and Bardine, through Soliero in the valley, through Ceserano of the hills. Thence by a way steep and dangerous I came into the valley of Bardine, only to mount again to Tendola and at last to Foce Cuccu, where on all sides the valleys filled with woods fell away from me, and suddenly at a turning of the way I spied out Fosdinovo, lordly still on its bastion of rock, guarding Val di Magra, looking towards Luna and the sea.

Little more than an eyrie for eagles, Fosdinovo is an almost perfect fortress of the Middle Age. It glowers in the sun like a threat over the ways that now are so quiet, where only the bullocks dragging the marble from Carrara pass all day long from Massa to Spezia, from the valley to the sea.

It was thence for the first time for many months I looked on a land that was not Tuscany. Already autumn was come in that high place; a flutter of leaves and the wind of the mountains made a sad music round about the old walls, which had heard the voice of Castruccio Castracani, whose gates he had opened by force. And then, as I sat there above the woods towards evening, from some bird passing overhead there fell a tiny feather, whiter than snow, that came straight into my hand. Was it a bird, or my angel, whose beautiful, anxious wings trembled lest I should fall in a land less simple than this?

INDEX

Adeodatus
Agostino di Duccio
Alberti, Leon
Albertinelli
Alessi, Galeazzo
Angelico, Beato
Apuan Alps
Arcola
Arnolfo di Cambio
Arnolfo Fiorentino
Avenza

Bagni di Lucca
Baldovinetti
Bandinelli
Barga
Bartolommeo, Frate
Bellini, Giovanni
Benedetto da Maiano



Benedetto da Rovezzano

Benozzo, Gozzoli

Bertoldo di Giovanni

Bibbiena

Biduino

Boccaccio

Bonannus

Borgo a Mozzano

Borgo S. Lorenzo

Botticelli

Bracco, Passo di

Brunellesco

Buggiano

Byron

Calci

Camaldoli

Camogli

Campaldino

Capraja

Carpaccio

Carrara

S. Andrea

Quarries

Cascina

Casentino

Bibbiena

Camaldoli

Campaldino

Campo Lombardo

Castel Castagnajo

Falterona

La Verna

Poppi

Porciano

Pratovecchio

Romena

Stia

The way to

Vallombrosella

Vallucciole

Castagno

Castagno, Andrea del

Castel del Bosco

Castelfranco

Castelnuovo di Garfagnana

Castelnuovo di Magra



Castracani, Castruccio
Cellini, Benvenuto
Cervara
Chiavari
Children in Italy
Cimabue
Cino da Pistoja
Ciuffagni
Civitali, Matteo
Columbus
Consuma Pass
Corbignano
Correggio
Corsica
Country Life, Love of
Crusades

Dante
Desiderio da Settignano
Dicomano
Donatello
Doria, the
Duccio of Siena



Page 295

Empoli
Evelyn's approach to Genoa

Faggiuola, Uguccione della
Falterona
Ferrucci, Andrea
Fiesole

S. Ansano
Badia
S. Domenico
Duomo
S. Francesco
Palazzo Pretorio
Scavi
The way to
View from

Fivizzano
Florence

Albizzi, the
S. Antonino
Beata Villana
Boboli gardens
Bocca degli Abati
Bridges
Buondelmonti
Campaldino
Campanile, the
Capponi, Piero
Charles VIII. in
Churches—
S. Ambrogio
SS. Annunziata
SS. Apostoli
S. Appolonia
Badia
Baptistery
Carmine
S. Caterina
Chostro dello Scalzo
S. Croce
Chapels
Choir
Cloisters



Museo
Sacristy
S. Donato a Torri
Duomo
Best aspect of
Character of
Nave, aspect of
S. Felice
S. Frediano in Castello
S. Jacopo
S. Lorenzo
Laurentian library
New Sacristy
Old Sacristy
S. Lucia sul Prato
S. Marco
S. Maria degli Angioli
S. Maria degli Innocenti
S. Maria Maddalena de' Pazzi
S. Maria Novella
Chapels
Facade
S. Miniato
Misericordia
Ognissanti
S. Onofrio
Or San Michele
S. Piero Maggiore
S. Piero Scheraggio
S. Salvatore
S. Salvi
S. Simone
S. Spirito
S. Stefano
S. Trinita
Corso Donati
Duke of Athens
Farinata degli Uberti
Gates—
Porta Alla Croce
S. Frediano
S. Giorgio
S. Miniato
S. Niccola
Romana
Guilds



Humiliati
Laudesi
Liberty in Florence
Loggia de' Lanzi
Lung'Arno
Marsilio Ficino
Medici, the—
 Alessandro
 Cosimo
 Cosimo I.
 Ferdinando II.
 Gian Gastone
 Giovanni
 Giovanni di Bicci
 Giulio
 Guiliano
 Ippolito
 Lorenzino
 Lorenzo
 Piero
 Piero the exile
 Salvestro
Mercato Nuovo
Montaperti
Monte Senario
Museums—
 Accademia
 Bargello, the
 Opera del Duomo
 Pitti Palace
 Uffizi
 The curse of
Neri and Bianchi
Niccolo Uzzano
Oltr'Arno
Ospedale degli Innocenti
Palazzi—
 Albizzi
 Altoviti
 Antinori
 Bargello, see Museums
 Bartolini Salimbeni
 Buondelmonte
 Corsini
 Davanzati
 Falconieri, see Opera del Duomo, under Museums

Frescobaldi
Guadagni
Nonfinito
Pazzi
del Podesta, see Bargello
Riccardi

Page 296

Cappella
Ricasoli
Spini
Strozzi
Torrighiani
Uffizi, see under Museums
Uguccione
Vecchio
Pazzi
Piazzas—
SS. Annunziata
S. Croce
Duomo
Limbo
S. Lorenzo
S. Maria Novella
S. Piero
Signoria
S. Trinita
Vittorio Emanuele
Pico della Mirandola
Pitti, the family of
Savonarola
Soderini
Streets—
delle Belle Donne
Borgo Allegri
Borgo degli Albizzi
Borgo SS. Apostoli
Borgo S. Jacopo
Borgo S. Lorenzo
Calzaioli
Cerretani
Corso
Lambertesca
Maggio
Por S. Maria
Porta Rossa
Proconsolo
dei Serpi



Tornabuoni
Viale dei Colli
Foce La (di Spezia)
Foce La (di Carrara)
Fosdinovo

Gaddi, Agnolo
Gaddi, Taddeo
Garfagnana Pass
Genoa
A living city
Acqua Sole
Alfonso of Aragon
Approach to
Arcades
Bank of S. George
Boccanegra, Doge
Guglielmo
Boucicault
Briglia, the
Castelletto, the
Catino, the
Cemetery
Charles V and
Churches—
S. Agostino
S. Ambrogio
Duomo (S. Lorenzo)
S. Fruttuoso
S. Giovanni di Pre
S. Maria di Castello
S. Matteo
S. Siro
S. Stefano
Columbus
Cross of S. George
Crusades
Doria, the
Doria, Andrea
Embriaco
Tower of
Godfrey of Bouillon
Grimaldi
History of
Libro d'Oro
Loggia dei Banchi



Moors, expedition against

Palaces—

Adorno

Balbi

Bianco

Cambiaso

Carega

della Casa

Doria

Doria, Giorgio

Ducale

Durazzo Pallavicini

Gambaro

Giorgio Doria

Municipale

Negrone

Pallavicini

Parodi

Rosso

Serra

Spinola (via Garibaldi)

Spinola (S. di S. Catrina)

della Università

Piazzas—

Banchi

Deferrari

Fontane Marose

Sarzana

Pictures in Genoa—

Botticelli(?)

David (Gerard)

Domenichino

Guido Reni

Luca Cambiasi

Moretto

Murillo

Ribera

Rubens

Ruysdael

Tintoretto

Vandyck

Veronese

Zurbaran

Porta S. Andrea

Ramparts

Sforza, the



Slums of
Streets—
 Arcades
 Balbi
 Cairolì
 Garibaldi
 Salita di S. Caterina
 Strada degli Orefici
Towers
Vandyck in
Visconti in
War with Pisa
War with Venice
Gentile da Fabriano
Gerini Niccola di Pietro
Gherardesca Conte Ugolino della
Ghiberti
Ghirlandajo
Giorgione
Giotto
Giovanni da Bologna
Gruamone
Guelph and Ghibelline
Guglielmo, Fra
Guidi, Conti
Guido da Como



Page 297

Humiliati

Inghirami
Italy, approach to

Jacopo della Quercia
Janus

Lastra
Laudesi
Laurentian Library
La Verna
Leonardo
Lerici
Lippi (Fra Lippo)
Lippi, Filippino
Livorno

Monte Nero
Lorenzetti, the
Lorenzo di Credi

Lucca
Castruccio Castracane
Churches—
Duomo
S. Francesco
S. Frediano
S. Giovanni
S. Michele in Borgo
S. Romano
Matteo Civitali
Museo
Walls
S. Zita

Luna
Lunigiana

Magni, Villa
Magra, the
Maiano
Malaspina
Manetti, Gianozzo
Mantegna
Marco Polo
Martini, Simone



Masaccio
Masolino
Massa
Matilda Contessa
Meloria, battle of
Melozzo da Forli
Michelangelo
Michelozzo
Mino da Fiesole
Monaco, Lorenzo
Monsummano
Montecatini
Montenero
Montelupo
Montignoso
Moretto
Moroni

Nanni di Banco
Neri and Bianchi
Nervi
Niccola
Niccolo d'Arezzo
Nicholas V

Ognibene
Oratorio della Vannella
Orcagna

Pandolfini, Agnolo
Paris Bordone
Perugino, Pietro
Pescia
Piazza al Serchio
Piero della Francesco
Piero di Cosimo
Piero di Giovanni Tedesco
Pietro a Grado, S.
Pineta di Pisa
Pineta di Viareggio
Ponocchio
Pisa
 Agnello, Doge
 Amalfi
 Archbishop Peter
 Assumption, Feast of, in
 Balearic Islands



Benozzo Gozzoli
Bergolini and Raspanti
S. Bernard in
Borgo, The
Campagna di S. Michele
Campanile
Campo Santo
Casa dei Trovatelli
Castruccio Castracane
Churches—
 S. Anna
 Baptistery
 S. Caterina
 Duomo
 S. Francesco
 S. Frediano
 Madonna della Spina
 S. Maria Maddalena
 S. Martino
 S. Michele in Borgo
 S. Niccola
 S. Paolo al Orto
 S. Paolo a Ripa
 S. Pierino
 S. Pietro a Grado
 S. Ranieri
 S. Sepolcro
 S. Sisto
 S. Stefano
Cintola del Duomo
Corsica
Cosimo I
Crusades
Divisions in Twelfth Century
Donatello
Etruscan Pisa
Florence
Galileo
Gambacorti
Genoa
Gentile da Fabriano
Gherardesca, Ugolino della
Guelph and Ghibelline
Guglielmo, Frate
History of
Knights of S. Stephen



Loggia dei Banchi
Lucca
Lung' Arno
Martini, Simone
Meloria
Montaperti
Montecatini
Montefeltro, Guido di
Museo
Palaces—
 Agostini
 Anziani
 dei Cavalieri
 del Comune
 del Consiglio
 Conventuale
 Gambacorti
 del Granduca
 Lanfreducci
 del Podesta
Palermo
Palio and Ponte
Piazzas—
 dei Cavalieri
 del Duomo
 di S. Francesco
 di S. Paolo

Page 298

Pisano Giovanni
Pisano, Giunta
Pisano, Niccolo
Ponte di Mezzo
Ponte Solferino
Porta Aurea
Porto Pisano
Roman Pisa
Salerno
Torre Guelfa
Tower of Hunger
"Triumph of Death"
Uguccione della Faggiuola
University
Visconti
Pistoia
Churches—
 S. Andrea
 Baptistery
 S. Bartolommeo
 S. Domenico
 Duomo
 S. Francesco al Prato
 S. Giovanni Evangelista
 S. Piero Maggiore
 S. Salvatore
Origin of Pistoia
Palazzo del Comune
Palazzo Pretorio
Torre del Podesta
Poggio Gherardo
Pollaiuolo, Ant.
Pontassieve
Pontedera
Pontevola
Pontormo
Poppi
Porciano
Porto Pisano
Portofino



Portovenere
Prisons, position of

Rapallo
Raphael
Recco
Riviera di Levante
Robbia della
Robbia Luca della
Romana
Rossellino, Antonio
Rossellino, Bernardo
Rotta
Ruta

S. Domenico di Fiesole
S. Ellero
S. Francesco
S. Fruttuoso
S. Giovanni Gualberto
S. Godenzo
S. Marcello
S. Margherita
S. Martino a Mensola
S. Michele di Pagana
S. Miniato al Tedesco
S. Romano
S. Romualdo
S. Terenzano
Sacchetti
Saltino
Sansovino, Andrea
Sarto, Andrea del
Sarzana
Savonarola
Schiavone
Serchio
Serravalle
Sestri Levante
Settignano
Shelley
Simone Martini
South, Praise of the
Spezia
Stagi, Stagio



Starnina
Stia

Tintoretto
Titian
Torano
Tuscany, entrance to
Tuscany, the road to

Uccello, Paolo

Val di Lima
Val di Nievole
Val di Reno
Vallombrosa
Vallombrosella
Vandyck
Vasari
Veronese
Verrocchio
Verruca
Viareggio
Vicopisano
Villa Palmieri
Vincigliata