CHAPTER XIV

THE BARGELLO

Plastic art—Blood-soaked stones—The faithful artists—Michelangelo—Italian custodians—The famous Davids—Michelangelo's tondo—Brutus—Benedetto da Rovezzano—Donatello's life-work—The S. George—Verrocchio—Ghiberti and Brunelleschi and the Baptistery doors—Benvenuto Cellini—John of Bologna—Antonio Pollaiuolo—Verrocchio again—Mino da Fiesole—The Florentine wealth of sculpture—Beautiful ladies—The della Robbias—South Kensington and the Louvre.

BEFORE my last visit but one to Florence, plastic art was less attractive to me than pictorial art. But now I am not sure. At any rate when, here in England, I think of Florence, as so often I do, I find myself visiting in imagination the Bargello before the Uffizi. Pictures in any number can bewilder and dazzle as much as they delight. The eye tires. And so, it is true, can a multiplicity of antique statuary such as one finds at the Vatican or at the Louvre; but a small collection of Renaissance work, so soft and human, as at the Bargello, is not only joy-giving but refreshing too. The soft contours soothe as well as enrapture the eye. the tenderness of the Madonnas, the gentleness of the Florentine ladies and youths, as Verrocchio and Mino da Fiesole, Donatello, and Pollaiuolo moulded them, calm one where the perfection of Phidias and Praxiteles excites. Hence the very special charm of the Bargello, whose plastic treasures are compara-

tively few and picked, as against the heaped profusion of paint in the Uffizi and the Pitti. It pairs off rather with the Accademia, and has this further point in common with that choicest of galleries, that Michelangelo's chisel is represented in both.

The Bargello is at the corner of the Via Ghibellina in the narrow Via del Proconsolo—so narrow that if you take one step off the pavement a tram may easily sweep you into eternity; so narrow also that the real dignity of the Bargello is never to be properly seen, and one thinks of it rather for its inner court and staircase and its strong tower than for its massive façades. Its history is soaked in blood. It was built in the middle of the thirteenth century as the residence of the chief magistrate of the city, the Capitano del popolo, or Podestà, first appointed soon after the return of the Guelphs in 1251, and it so remained, with such natural Florentine vicissitudes as destruction by mobs and fire, for four hundred years, when, in 1574, it was converted into a prison and place of execution and the head-quarters of the police, and changed its name from the Palazzo del Podestà to that by which it is now known, as called after the Bargello, or chief of the police.

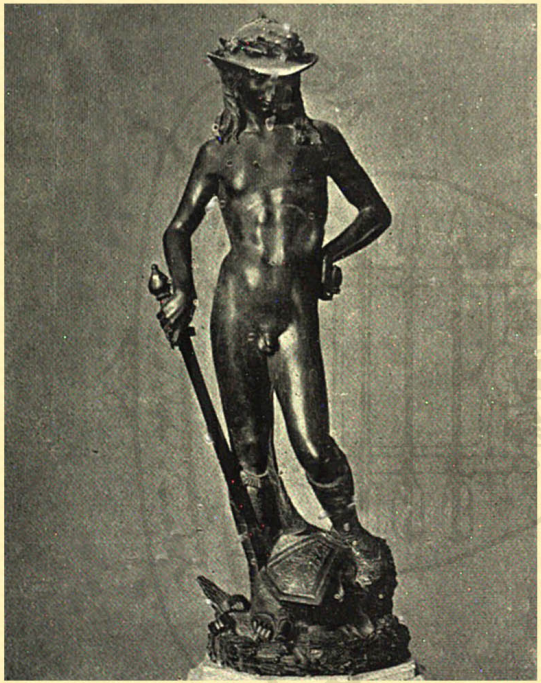
It is indeed fortunate that no rioters succeeded in obliterating Giotto's fresco in the Bargello chapel, which he painted probably in 1300, when his friend Dante was a Prior of the city. Giotto introduced the portrait of Dante which has drawn so many people to this little room, together with portraits of Corso Donati, and Brunetto Latini, Dante's tutor. Whitewash covered it for two centuries. Dante's head has been restored.

It was in 1857 that the Bargello was again converted, this time to its present gracious office of preserving the very flower of Renaissance plastic art.

Passing through the entrance hall, which has a remarkable collection of Medicean armour and weapons, and in which (I have read but not seen) is an oubliette under one of the great pillars, the famous court is gained and the famous staircase. Of this court what can I say? Its quality is not to be communicated in words; and even the photographs of it that are sold have to be made from pictures, which the assiduous Signor Giuliani, among others, is always so faithfully painting, stone for stone. One forgets all the horrors that once were enacted here—the execution of honourable Florentine patriots whose only offence was that in their service of this proud and beautiful city they differed from those in power; one thinks only of the soft light on the immemorial walls, the sturdy graceful columns, the carved escutcheons, the resolute steps, the spaciousness and stern calm of it all.

In the colonnade are a number of statues, the most famous of which is perhaps the "Dying Adonis" which Baedeker gives to Michelangelo but the curator to Vincenzo di Rossi; an ascription that would annoy Michelangelo exceedingly, if it were a mistake, since Rossi was a pupil of his enemy, the absurd Bandinelli. Mr. W. G. Waters, in his "Italian Sculptors," considers not only that Michelangelo was the sculptor, but that the work was intended to form part of the tomb of Pope Julius. In the second room opposite the main entrance across the courtyard, we come however to Michelangelo authentic and supreme, for here are his small David, his Brutus, his Bacchus, and a tondo of the Madonna and Child.

According to Baedeker, the Bacchus and the David revolve. Certainly they are on revolving stands, but to say that they revolve is to disregard utterly the character of the Italian official. A catch holds each in its place, and



DAVID

FROM THE BRONZE STATUE BY DONATELLO IN THE BARGELLO

DAVID

FROM THE BRONZE STATUE BY VERROCCHIO IN THE BARGELLO

any effort to release this or to induce the custodian to release it is equally futile. "Chiuso" (closed), he replies, and that is final. Useless to explain that the backs of statues can be beautiful as the front; that one of the triumphs of great statuary is its equal perfection from every point; that the revolving stand was not made for a joke but for a serious purpose. "Chiuso," he replies. The museum custodians of Italy are either like this—jaded figures of apathy—or they are enthusiasts. To each enthusiast there are ninety-nine of the other, who sit in a kind of stupor and watch you with sullen suspicion, as they clear their throats as no gentleman should. The result is that when one meets the enthusiasts one remembers them.

The fondness of sculptors for David as a subject is due to the fact that the Florentines, who had spent so much of their time under tyrants and so much of their blood in resisting them, were captivated by the idea of this stripling freeing his compatriots from Goliath and the Philistines David, as I have said in my remarks on the Piazza della Signoria, stood to them, with Judith, as a champion of liberty. He was alluring also on account of his youth, so attractive to Renaissance sculptors and poets, and the Florentines' admiration was not diminished by the circumstance that his task was a singularly light one, since he never came to close quarters with his antagonist at all and had the Lord of Hosts on his side. A David of mythology, Perseus, another Florentine hero, a stripling with what looked like a formidable enemy, also enjoyed supernatural assistance.

David appealed to the greatest sculptors of all—to Michelangelo, to Donatello, and to Verrocchio; and Michelangelo made two figures, one of which is here and the other at the Accademia, and Donatello two figures,

both of which are here, so that, Verrocchio's example being also here, very interesting comparisons are possible.

Personally I put Michelangelo's smaller David first; it is the one in which, apart from its beauty, you can best believe. His colossal David seems to me one of the most glorious things in the world; but it is not David; not the simple, ruddy shepherd lad of the Bible. This David could obviously defeat anybody. Donatello's little graceful David in the Bargello is the most charming creature you ever saw, but it had been far better to call him something else. Both he and Verrocchio's David, in the same room, are young tournament nobles rather than shepherd lads who have slung a stone at a Philistine bully. I see them both—but particularly perhaps Verrocchio's—in the intervals of strife most acceptably holding up a lady's train, or lying at her feet reading one of Boccaccio's stories; neither could ever have watched a flock. Both are in bronze. Donatello's second David, in marble, near the more famous one, has more reality; but I would put Michelangelo's smaller one first. And what beautiful marble it is!

One point which both Donatello's and Verrocchio's David emphasizes is the gulf that was fixed between the Biblical and religious conception of the youthful psalmist and that of these sculptors of the Renaissance. One can, indeed, never think of Donatello as a religious artist. Serious, yes, but not religious, or at any rate not religious in the too common sense of the word, in the sense of appertaining to a special reverential mood distinguished from ordinary moods of dailiness. His David, as I have said, is a comely, cultured boy, who belongs to the very flower of chivalry and romance. Verrocchio is akin to him, but he has less radiant mastery. Donatello's David might be the

young lord; Verrocchio's, his page. Here we see the new spirit, the Renaissance, at work, for though religion called it into being and the Church continued to be its patron, it rapidly divided into two halves, and while the painters were bringing all their genius to glorify sacred history, the scholars were endeavouring to humanize it. In this task they had no such allies as the sculptors, and particularly Donatello, who, always thinking independently and vigorously, was their best friend. Donatello's David fought also more powerfully for the modern spirit (had he known it) than ever he could have done in real life with such a large sword in such delicate hands; for by being the first nude statue of a Biblical character, he made simpler the way to all humanists (see opposite page 178).

Michelangelo was not often tender. Profoundly sad he could be: indeed his own head, in bronze, at the Accademia, might stand for melancholy and bitter world-knowledge; but seldom tender; yet the Madonna and Child in the circular bas-relief in this ground-floor room have something very nigh tenderness, and a greatness that none of the other Italian sculptors, however often they attempted this subject, ever reached. The head of Mary in this relief is, I think, one of the most beautiful things in Florence, none the less so for the charming head-dress which the great austere artist has given her. The Child is older than is usual in such groups, and differs in another way, for tiring of a reading lesson, He has laid His arm upon the book: a pretty touch.

Michelangelo's Bacchus, an early work, is opposite. It is a remarkable proof of his extraordinary range that the same little room should contain the David, the Madonna, the Brutus, and the Bacchus. In David one can believe, as I have said, as the young serious stalwart

of the Book of Kings. The Madonna, although perhaps a shade too intellectual—or at any rate more intellectual and commanding than the other great artists have accustomed us to think of her—has a sweet gravity and power and almost domestic tenderness. The Brutus is powerful and modern and realistic; while Bacchus is steeped in the Greek spirit, and the little faun hiding behind him is the very essence of mischief. Add to these the fluid vigour of the unfinished relief of the Martyrdom of S. Andrew, No. 126, and you have five examples of human accomplishment that would be enough without the other Florentine evidences at all—the Medici chapel tombs and the Duomo Pietà.

The inscription under the Brutus says: "While the sculptor was carving the statue of Brutus in marble, he thought of the crime and held his hand"; and the theory is that Michelangelo was at work upon this head at Rome when, in 1537, Lorenzino de' Medici, who claimed to be a modern Brutus, murdered Alessandro de' Medici. But it might easily have been that the sculptor was concerned only with Brutus the friend of Cæsar and revolted at his crime. The circumstance that the head is unfinished matters nothing. Once seen it can never be forgotten.

Although Michelangelo is, as always, the dominator, this room has other possessions to make it a resort of visitors. At the end is a fireplace from the Casa Borgherini, by Benedetto da Rovezzano, which probably has not an equal, although the *pietra serena* of which it is made is a horrid hue; and on the walls are fragments of the tomb of S. Giovanni Gualberto at Vallombrosa, designed by the same artist but never finished. Benedetto (1474-1556) has a peculiar interest to the English in having come to England in 1524 at the bidding of Cardinal

Wolsey to design a tomb for that proud prelate. On Wolsey's disgrace, Henry VIII decided that the tomb should be continued for his own bones; but the sculptor died first and it was unfinished. Later Charles I cast envious eyes upon it and wished to lie within it; but circumstances deprived him too of the honour. Finally, after having been despoiled of certain bronze additions, the sarcophagus was used for the remains of Nelson, which it now holds, in St. Paul's crypt. The Borgherini fireplace is a miracle of exquisite work, everything having received thought, the delicate traceries on the pillars not less than the frieze. The fireplace is in perfect condition, not one head having been knocked off, but the Gualberto reliefs are badly damaged, yet full of life. The angel under the saint's bier in No. 104 almost moves.

In this room look also at the beautiful blades of barley on the pillars in the corner close to Brutus, and the lovely frieze by an unknown hand above Michelangelo's Martyrdom of S. Andrew, and the carving upon the two niches for statues on either side of the door.

The little room through which one passes to the Michelangelos may well be lingered in. There is a gravely fine floor-tomb of a nun to the left of the door—No. 20—which one would like to see in its proper position instead of upright against the wall; and a stone font in the middle which is very fine. There is also a beautiful tomb by Giusti da Settignano, and the iron gates are worth attention.

From Michelangelo let us ascend the stairs, past the splendid gates, to Donatello; and here a word about that sculptor, for though we meet him again and again in Florence (yet never often enough) it is in the upper room in the Bargello that he is enthroned. Of Donatello there is

nothing known but good, and good of the most captivating variety. Not only was he a great creative genius, equally the first modern sculptor and the sanest, but he was himself tall and comely, open-handed, a warm friend, humorous and of vigorous intellect. A hint of the affection in which he was held is obtained from his name Donatello, which is a pet diminutive of Donato—his full style being Donato d'Niccolò di Betto Bardi. Born in 1386, four years before Fra Angelico and nearly a century after Giotto, he was the son of a well-to-do wool-comber who was no stranger to the perils of political energy in these times. Of Donatello's youth little is known, but it is almost certain that he helped Ghiberti with his first Baptistery doors, being thirteen when that sculptor began upon them. At sixteen he was himself enrolled as a sculptor. It was soon after this that, as I have said in the first chapter, he accompanied his friend Brunelleschi, who was thirteen years his senior, to Rome; and returning alone he began work in Florence in earnest, both for the cathedral and campanile and for Or San Michele. In 1425 he took into partnership Michelozzo, and became, with him, a protégé of Cosimo de' Medici, with whom both continued on friendly terms for the rest of their lives. In 1433 he was in Rome again, probably not sorry to be there since Cosimo had been banished and had taken Michelozzo with him. On the triumphant return of Cosimo in 1434 Donatello's most prosperous period began; for he was intimate with the most powerful man in Florence, was honoured by him, and was himself at the useful age of forty-four.

Of Donatello as an innovator I have said something above, in considering the Florentine Davids, but he was also the inventor of that low relief in which his school worked, called *rilievo stiacciato*, of which there are some excellent

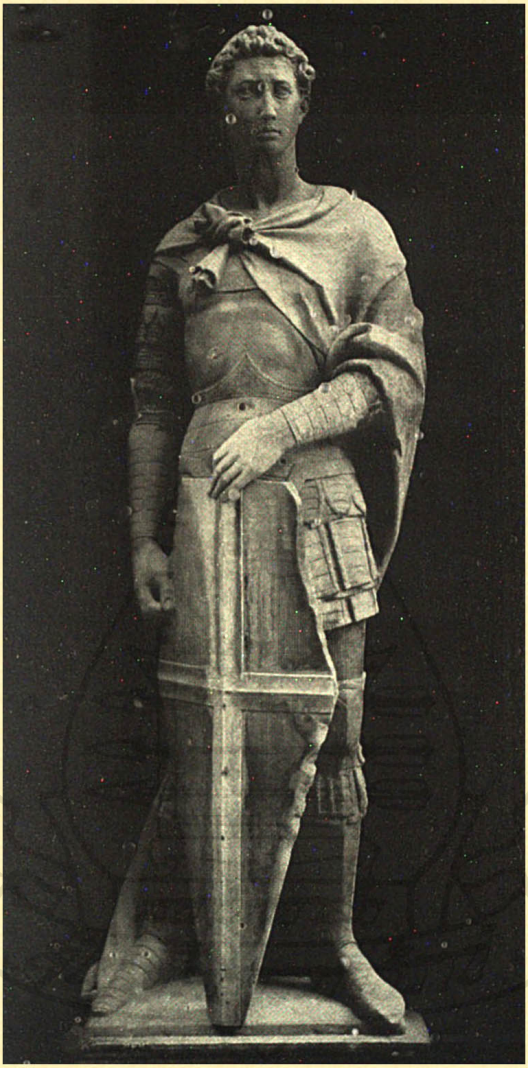
examples at South Kensington. In Ghiberti's high relief, breaking out often into completely detached figures, he was also a master, as we shall see at S. Lorenzo. But his greatest claim to distinction is his psychological insight allied to perfect mastery of form. His statues were not only the first really great statues since the Greeks, but are still (always leaving Michelangelo on one side as abnormal) the greatest modern examples judged upon a realistic basis. Here in the Bargello, in originals and in casts, he may be adequately appreciated; but to Padua his admirers must certainly go, for the bronze equestrian statue of Gattamelata is there. Donatello was painted by his friend Masaccio at the Carmine, but the fresco has perished. He is to be seen in the Uffizi portico, although that is probably a fancy representation; and again on a tablet in the wall opposite the apse of the Duomo. The only contemporary portrait (and this is very doubtful) is in a picture in the Louvre given to Uccello—a serious, thoughtful, bearded face with steady, observant eyes: one of five heads, the others being Giotto, Manetti, Brunelleschi, and Uccello himself.

Donatello, who never married, but lived for much of his life with his mother and sister, died at a great age, cared for both by Cosimo de' Medici and his son and successor Piero. He was buried with Cosimo in S. Lorenzo. Vasari tells us that he was free, affectionate, and courteous, but of a high spirit and capable of sudden anger, as when he destroyed with a blow a head he had made for a mean patron who objected to its very reasonable price. "He thought," says Vasari, "nothing of money, keeping it in a basket suspended from the ceiling, so that all his workmen and friends took what they wanted without saying anything." He was as careless of dress as great artists have ever been, and of a handsome robe which Cosimo gave him he com-

plained that it spoiled his work. When he was dying his relations affected great concern in the hope of inheriting a farm at Prato, but he told them that he had left it to the peasant who had always toiled there, and he would not alter his will.

The Donatello collection in the Bargello has been made representative by the addition of a cast of the equestrian statue of Gattemelata at Padua, which is, I suppose, next to Verrocchio's Bartolommeo Colleoni at Venice, the finest equestrian statue that exists. Of the originals, first, in bronze, is the David, of which I have already spoken, and first, in marble, the S. George. This George is just such a resolute, clean, warlike idealist as one dreams him. He would kill a dragon, it is true; but he would eat and sleep after it and tell the story modestly and not without humour. By a happy chance the marble upon which Donatello worked had light veins running through it just where the head is, with the result that the face seems to possess a radiance of its own. This statue was made for Or San Michele, where it used to stand until 1891, when the present bronze replica that takes its place was made. The spirited marble frieze underneath it at Or San Michele is the original and has been there for centuries. It was this S. George whom Ruskin took as the head and inspiration of his Saint George's Guild (see opposite page).

The David is interesting not only in itself but as being the first isolated statue of modern times. It was made for Cosimo de' Medici, to stand in the courtyard of the Medici palace (now the Riccardi), and until that time, since antiquity, no one had made a statue to stand on a pedestal and be observable from all points. Hitherto modern sculptors had either made reliefs or statues for niches. It was also the first nude statue of modern times; and once again



ST. GEORGE

FROM THE MARBLE STATUE BY DONATELLO IN THE BARGELLO

(A bronze replica is in the original niche with Donatello's original relief beneath it, in the wall of Or San Michele)

one has the satisfaction of recognizing that the first was the best. At anyrate, no later sculptor has made anything more charming than this figure, or more masterly within its limits.

Verrocchio's David, of which I have already spoken, is a wholly charming boy, a little nearer life perhaps than Donatello's, although not so radiantly distinguished. It illustrates the association of Verrocchio and Leonardo as clearly as any of the paintings do; for the head is sheer Leonardo. At the Palazzo Vecchio we saw Verrocchio's boy with the dolphin—that happy bronze lyric—and outside Or San Michele his Christ and S. Thomas, in Donatello and Michelozzo's niche, with the flying cherubim beneath. But as with Donatello, so with Verrocchio, one must visit the Bargello to see him, in Florence, most intimately. For here are not only his David, which once known can never be forgotten and is as full of the Renaissance spirit as anything ever fashioned, whether in bronze, marble, or paint, but certain other wonderfully beautiful things to which we shall come, and, that being so, I would like here to say a little about their author.

Verrocchio is a nickname, signifying the true eye. Andrea's real name was de' Cioni; he is known to fame as Andrea of the true eye, and since he had acquired this style at a time when every eye was true enough, his must have been true indeed. It is probable that he was a pupil of Donatello, who in 1435, when Andrea was born, was forty-nine, and in time he was to become the master of Leonardo: thus are the great artists related. The history of Florentine art is practically the history of a family; one artist leads to the other—the genealogy of genius. The story goes that it was the excellence of the angel contributed by Leonardo to his master's picture of the Baptism of Christ

(at the Accademia) which decided Verrocchio to paint no more, just as Ghiberti's superiority in the relief of Abraham and Isaac drove Brunelleschi from sculpture. If this be so, it accounts for the extraordinarily small number of pictures by him. Like many artists of his day Verrocchio was also a goldsmith, but he was versatile above most, even when versatility was a habit, and excelled also as a musician. Both Piero de' Medici and Lorenzo employed him to design their tournament costumes; and it was for Lorenzo that he made this charming David and the boy and the dolphin. His greatest work of all is the bronze equestrian statue of Bartolommeo Colleoni in Venice, the finest thing of its kind in the world, and so glorious and exciting indeed that every city should have a cast of it in a conspicuous position just for the good of the people. It was while at work upon this that Verrocchio died, at the age of fifty-three. His body was brought from Venice by his pupil Lorenzo di Credi, who adored him, and was buried in S. Ambrogio in Florence. Lorenzo di Credi painted his portrait, which is now in the Uffizi—a plump, undistinguished-looking little man.

After the S. George and the bronze David, the two most memorable things are the adorable bronze Amorino in its quaint little trousers—or perhaps not Amorino at all, since it is trampling on a snake, which such little sprites did not do—and the coloured terra-cotta bust called Niccolò da Uzzano, so like life as to be after a while disconcerting. The sensitiveness of the mouth can never have been excelled. The other originals include the gaunt John the Baptist with its curious little moustache, so far removed from the Amorino and so admirable a proof of the sculptor's vigilant thoughtfulness in all he did; the relief of the infant John, one of the most animated of the

heads (the Baptist at all periods of his life being a favourite with this sculptor); three bronze heads, of which those of the Young Gentleman and the Roman Emperor remain most clearly in my mind. But the authorship of the Roman Emperor is very doubtful. And lastly, at the top of the stairs, the glorious Marzocco—the lion from the front of the Palazzo Vecchio, firmly holding the Florentine escutcheon against the world. Florence has other Donatellos—the Judith in the Loggia de' Lanzi, the figures on Giotto's campanile, the Annunciation in S. Croce, and above all the cantoria in the Museum of the Cathedral; but this room holds most of his strong sweet genius. Here (for there are seldom more than two or three persons in it) you can be on terms with him.

In the large Donatello room are the extremely interesting rival bronze reliefs of Abraham sacrificing Isaac, which were made by Ghiberti and Brunelleschi as trials of skill to see which would win the commission to design the new gates of the Baptistery, as I have told earlier. Six competitors entered for the contest; but Ghiberti's and Brunelleschi's efforts were alone considered seriously. A comparison of these two reliefs proves that Ghiberti, at any rate, had a finer sense of grouping. He filled the space at his disposal more easily and his hand was more fluent; but there is a very engaging vivacity in the other work, the realistic details of which are so arresting as to make one regret that Brunelleschi had for sculpture so little time. In S. Maria Novella is that crucifix in wood which he carved for his friend Donatello, but his only other sculptured work in Florence is the door of his beautiful Pazzi chapel in the cloisters of S. Croce. Of Ghiberti's Baptistery gates I have said more elsewhere. Enough here to add that the episode of Abraham and Isaac does not occur in them.

After the Donatellos we should see the other Renaissance sculpture. But first the Carrand collection of ivories, pictures, jewels, carvings, vestments, plaquettes, and *objets d'art*, bequeathed to Florence in 1888. Everything here is good and worth examination. Among the outstanding things is a plaquette, No. 393, a Satyr and a Bacchante, attributed to Donatello, under the title "Allegory of Spring," which is the work of a master and a very riot of mythological imagery. The neighbouring plaquettes, many of them of the school of Donatello, are all beautiful.

Other works not by Donatello in the large Donatello room are Sansovino's exquisite Bacchus in marble, Cellini's Ganymede in bronze, a Madonna and Child by Michelozzo, and another version of the same eternally appealing group by Verrocchio. In one of the corners is the bronze head of an old, placid, shrewd woman executed from a death mask, which the photographers call Contessina de' Bardi, wife of Cosimo de' Medici. It has now no attribution, but is the work of no ordinary hand.

In the little room across the landing, opposite the large Donatello saloon, is a Cassa Reliquiaria by Ghiberti, below a fine relief by Bertoldo, Michelangelo's master in sculpture, representing a battle between the Romans and the Barbarians; cases of exquisite bronzes; heads of Apollo and two babies, over the crucifixion by Bertoldo; and below these a case of medals and plaquettes, every one a masterpiece.

The adjoining room is apportioned chiefly to Cellini. Here we may see models for his Perseus in bronze and wax and also for the relief of the rescue of Andromeda, under the statue; his Cosimo I, with the wart (omitted by Bandinelli in the head downstairs, which pairs with Michelangelo's Brutus); and various smaller works. But

BUST OF A BOY (SOMETIMES CALLED THE BOY CHRIST)
BY LUCA OR ANDREA DELLA ROBBIA IN THE BARGELLO

personally I find that Cellini will not do in such near proximity to Donatello, Verrocchio, and their gentle followers. He was, of course, far later. He was not born (in 1500) until Donatello had been dead thirty-four years, Mino da Fiesole sixteen years, Desiderio da Settignano thirty-six years, and Verrocchio twelve years. He thus did not begin to work until the finer impulses of the Renaissance were exhausted.

On the landing outside will be found the famous Mercury, as light as air, of John of Bologna which every statuary shop in the world has in miniature. Giovanni da Bologna, although he, it is true, was even later (1524-1608), I find more sympathetic; while Landor boldly proclaimed him superior to Michelangelo. His "Mercury," in the middle of the room, which one sees counterfeited in all the statuary shops of Florence, is truly very nearly light as air. If ever bronze floated, this figure does. His cherubs and dolphins are very skilful and merry; his turkey and eagle and other animals indicate that he had humility. John of Bologna is best known at Florence by his Rape of the Sabines and Hercules and Nessus in the Loggia de' Lanzi; but the Boboli gardens have a fine group of Oceanus and river gods by him in the midst of a lake.

Before leaving this room look at the relief of Christ in glory (No. 35), on the end wall, by Jacopo Sansovino, a rival of Michelangelo, which is most admirable, and at the case of bronze animals by Pietro Tacca, John of Bologna's pupil, who made the famous boar (a copy of an ancient marble) at the Mercato Nuovo and the reliefs for the pediment of the statue of Cosimo I (by his master) in the Piazza della Signoria.

Before we look at the della Robbias, which are in the two large rooms upstairs, let us finish with the marble and

terra-cotta statuary in the two smaller rooms to the left as one passes through the first della Robbia room. In the first of them we find Verrocchio again, with a bust of Piero di Lorenzo de' Medici (whom Botticelli painted in the Uffizi holding a medal in his hand) and a most exquisite Madonna and Child in terra-cotta from S. Maria Nuova. (This is on a hinge, for better light, but the official skies will fall if you touch it.) Here also is the bust of a young warrior by Antonio Pollaiuolo (1429-1498) who was Verrocchio's closest rival and one of Ghiberti's assistants for the second Baptistery doors. His greatest work is at Rome, but this bust is indescribably charming, and the softness of the boy's contours is almost of life. It is sometimes called Giuliano de' Medici. Other beautiful objects in the room are the terra-cotta Madonna and Child by Andrea Sansovino (1460-1529), Pollaiuolo's pupil, which is as radiant although not so domestically lovely as Verrocchio's; the bust by Benedetto da Maiano (1442-1497) of Pietro Mellini, that shrewd and wrinkled patron of the Church who presented to S. Croce the famous pulpit by this sculptor; an ancient lady in coloured terra-cotta, who is thought to represent Monna Tessa, the nurse of Dante's Beatrice; and certain other works by that delightful and prolific person Ignoto Fiorentino, who here, and in the next room, which we now enter, is at his best.

This next priceless room is chiefly memorable for Verrocchio and Mino da Fiesole. We come to Verrocchio at once, on the left, where his relief of the death of Francesca Pitti Tornabuoni (on a tiny bed only half as long as herself) may be seen. This poor lady, who died in childbirth, was the wife of Giovanni Tornabuoni, and he it was who employed Ghirlandaio to make the frescoes in the choir of

MADONNA AND CHILD

FROM THE RELIEF BY VERROCCHIO IN THE BARGELLO

S. Maria Novella. (I ought, however, to state that Miss Cruttwell, in her monograph on Verrocchio, questions both the subject and the artist.) Close by we have two more works by Verrocchio—No. 180, a marble relief of the Madonna and Child, the Madonna's dress fastened by the prettiest of brooches, and She herself possessing a dainty sad head and the long fingers that Verrocchio so favoured, which we find again in the famous "Gentildonna" (No. 181) next it—that Florentine lady with flowers in her bosom, whose contours are so exquisite and who has such pretty shoulders.

Near by is the little eager S. John the Baptist as a boy by Antonio Rossellino (1427-1478), and on the end wall the same sculptor's circular relief of the Madonna adoring, in a border of cherubs. In the middle is the masterpiece of Jacopo Sansovino (1486-1570): a Bacchus, so strangely like a genuine antique, full of Greek lightness and grace. And then we come back to the wall in which the door is, and find more works from the delicate hand of Mino da Fiesole, whom we in London are fortunate in being able to study as near home as at the Victoria and Albert Museum. Of Mino I have said more both at the Badia and at Fiesole. But here I might remark again that he was born in 1431 and died in 1484, and was the favourite pupil of Desiderio da Settignano, who was in his turn the favourite pupil of Donatello.

In the little church of S. Ambrogio we have seen a tablet to the memory of Mino, who lies there, not far from the grave of Verrocchio, whom he most nearly approached in feeling, although their ideal type of woman differed in everything save the slenderness of the fingers. The Bargello has both busts and reliefs by him, all distinguished and sensitive and marked by Mino's profound refinement.

The Madonna and Child in No. 232 are peculiarly beautiful and notable both for high relief and shallow relief, and the Child in No. 193 is even more charming. For delicacy and vivacity in marble portraiture it would be impossible to surpass the head of Rinaldo della Luna; and the two Medicis are wonderfully real. Everything in Mino's work is thoughtful and exquisite, while the unusual type of face which so attracted him gives him freshness too.

This room and that next it illustrate the wealth of fine sculptors which Florence had in the fifteenth century, for the works by the unknown hands are in some cases hardly less beautiful and masterly than those by the known. Look, for example, at the fleur-de-lis over the door; at the Madonna and Child next it, on the right; at the girl's head next to that; at the baby girl at the other end of the room and at the older boy, her pendant. But one does not need to come here to form an idea of the wealth of good sculpture. The streets alone are full of it. Every palace has beautiful stone-work and an escutcheon which often only a master could execute—as Donatello devised that for the Palazzo Pazzi in the Borgo degli Albizzi. On the great staircase of the Bargello, for example, are numbers of coats of arms that could not be more beautifully designed and incised.

In the room leading from that which is memorable for Pollaiuolo's youth in armour is a collection of medals by all the best medallists, beginning, in the first case, with Pisanello. Here are his Sigismondo Malatesta, the tyrant of Rimini, and Isotta his wife; here also is a portrait of Leon Battista Alberti, who designed and worked on the cathedral of Rimini as well as upon S. Maria Novella in Florence. On the other side of this case is the medal commemorating the Pazzi conspiracy. In other cases are pretty Italian

ladies, such as Julia Astalla, Lucrezia Tornabuoni, with her hair in curls just as in Ghirlandaio's frescoes, Costanza Rucellai, Leonora Altoviti, Maria Foliziano, and Maria de' Mucini.

And so we come to the della Robbias, without whose joyous, radiant art Florence would be only half as beautiful as she is. Of these exquisite artists Luca, the uncle, born in 1400, was by far the greatest. Andrea, his nephew, born in 1435, came next, and then Giovanni. Luca seems to have been a serious, quiet man who would probably have made sculpture not much below his friend Donatello's had not he chanced on the discovery of a means of colouring and glazing terra-cotta. Examples of this craft are seen all over Florence both within doors and out, as the pages of this book indicate, but at the Bargello is the greatest number of small pieces gathered together. I do not say there is anything here more notable than the Annunciation attributed to Andrea at the Spedale degli Innocenti, while of course, for most people, his putti on the façade of that building are the della Robbia symbol; nor is there anything finer than Luca's work at Impruneta; but as a collection of sweetness and gentle domestic beauty these Bargello reliefs are unequalled, both in character and in volume. Here you see what one might call Roman Catholic art—that is, the art which at once gives pleasure to simple souls and symbolizes benevolence and safety—carried out to its highest power. Tenderness, happiness, and purity are equally suggested by every relief here. Had Luca and Andrea been entrusted with the creation of the world it would be a paradise. And, as it is, it seems to me impossible but that they left the world sweeter than they found it. Such examples of affection and solicitude as they were continually bringing to the popular visior must have engendered kindness.

As regards the work of the two, the experts do not always agree. Herr Bode, for example, who has studied the della Robbias with passionate thoroughness, gives the famous head of the boy, which is in reproduction one of the best-known works of plastic art, to Luca (see opposite page 190); but the Bargello director says Andrea. In Herr Bode's fascinating monograph, "Florentine Sculptors of the Renaissance," he goes very carefully into the differences between the uncle and the nephew, master and pupil. In all the groups, for example, he says that Luca places the Child on the Madonna's left arm, Andrea on the right. In the second room I have marked particularly and reproduced in this volume one by Luca, which is a deeper relief than usual, and the Madonna not adoring but holding and delighting in one of the most adorable of Babies. Observe in the reproduction of this relief, on the opposite page, how the Mother's fingers sink into the child's flesh. Luca was the first sculptor to notice that. No. 31 is the lovely Madonna of the Rose Bower. But nothing gives me more pleasure than the boy's head of which I have just spoken.

One curious thing that one notes about della Robbia pottery is its inability to travel. It was made for the church and it should remain there. Even in the Bargello, where there is an ancient environment, it loses half its charm; while in an English museum it becomes hard and cold. But in a church to which the poor carry their troubles, with a dim light and a little incense, it is perfect, far beyond painting in its tenderness and symbolic value. I speak of course of the Madonnas and altar-pieces. When the della Robbias worked for the open air—as in the façade of the Children's Hospital, or at the Certosa, or in the Loggia di San Paolo, opposite S. Maria Novella, where one may see the beautiful meeting of S. Francis and S. Dominic, by

MADONNA AND CHILD

FROM THE RELIEF BY LUCA DELLA ROBBIA IN THE BARGELLO

Andrea—they seem, in Italy, to have fitness enough; but it would not do to transplant any of these reliefs to an English façade. There was once, I might add, in Florence a Via della Robbia, but it is now the Via Nazionale. I suppose this injustice to the great potters came about in the eighteen-sixties, when popular political enthusiasm led to every kind of similar re-naming.

In the room leading out of the second della Robbia room is a collection of vestments and brocades bequeathed by Baron Giulio Franchetti, where you may see, dating from as far back as the sixth century, designs that for beauty and splendour and durability put to shame most of the stuffs now woven; but the top floor of the Museo Archeologico in the Via della Colonna is the chief home in Florence of such treasures.

There are other beautiful things in the Bargello of which I have said nothing—a gallery of mediaeval bells most exquisitely designed, from famous steeples; cases of carved ivory; and many of such treasures as one sees at the Cluny in Paris. But it is for its courtyard and for the Renaissance sculpture that one goes to the Bargello, and returns again and again to the Bargello, and it is for these that one remembers it.

On returning to London the first duty of every one who has drunk deep of delight in the Bargello is to visit that too much neglected treasure-house of our own, the Victoria and Albert Museum at South Kensington. There may be nothing at South Kensington as fine as the Bargello's finest, but it is a priceless collection and is superior to the Bargello in one respect at any rate, for it has a relief attributed to Leonardo. Here also is an adorable Madonna and laughing Child, beyond anything in Florence for sheer gaiety if not mischief, which the South Kensington authori-

ties call a Rossellino but Herr Bode a Desiderio da Settignano. The room is rich too in Donatello and in Verrocchio, and altogether it makes a perfect footnote to the Bargello. It also has within call learned gentlemen who can give intimate information about the exhibits, which the Bargello badly lacks. The Louvre and the Kaiser Friedrich Museum in Berlin—but particularly the Kaiser Friedrich since Herr Bode, who had such a passion for this period, became its director—have priceless treasures, and in Paris I have had the privilege of seeing the little but exquisite collection formed by M. Gustave Dreyfus, dominated by that mirthful Italian child which the Bargello authorities consider to be by Donatello, but Herr Bode gives to Desiderio. At the Louvre, in galleries on the ground floor gained through the Egyptian sculpture section and opened very capriciously, may be seen the finest of the prisoners from Michelangelo's tomb for Pope Julius; Donatello's youthful Baptist; a Madonna and Children by Agostino di Duccio, whom we saw at the Museum of the Cathedral; an early coloured terra-cotta by Luca della Robbia. and No. 316, a terra-cotta Madonna and Child without ascription, which looks very like Rossellino.

In addition to originals there are at South Kensington casts of many of the Bargello's most valuable possessions, such as Donatello's and Verrocchio's Davids, Donatello's Baptist and many heads, Mino da Fiesole's best Madonna, Pollaiuolo's Young Warrior, and so forth; so that to loiter there is most attractively to recapture something of the Florentine feeling.