CHAPTER VII

OR SAN MICHELE AND THE PALAZZO VECCHIO

The little Bigallo—The Misericordia—Or San Michele—Andrea Orcagna—The Tabernacle—Old Glass—A company of stone saints—Donatello's S. George—Dante conferences—The Guilds of Florence—The Palazzo Vecchio—Two Towers—Bandinelli's group—The Marzocco—The Piazza della Signoria—Orcagna's Loggia—Cellini and Cosimo—The Perseus—Verrocchio's dolphin—The Great Council Hall—Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo's cartoons—Bandinelli's malice—The Palazzo Vecchio as a home—Two cells and the bell of independence.

LET us now proceed along the Via Calzaioli (which means street of the stocking-makers), running away from the Piazza del Duomo to the Piazza della Signoria. The fascinatingly pretty building at the corner, opposite Pisano's Baptistery doors, is the Bigallo, in the loggia of which foundling children used to be displayed in the hope that passers-by might pity them sufficiently to make them presents or even adopt them; but this custom continues no longer. The Bigallo was designed, it is thought, by Orcagna, and it is worth the minutest study.

The Company of the Bigallo, which is no longer an active force, was one of the benevolent societies of old Florence. But the greatest of these societies, still busy and merciful, is the Misericordia, whose head-quarters are just across the Via Calzaioli, in the piazza, facing the campanile, a company of Florentines pledged at a moment's notice, no

THE PALAZZO VECCHIO

matter on what they may be engaged, to assist in any charitable work of necessity. Chiefly they carry ambulances to the scenes of accident and perform the last offices for the dead in the poorer districts. When on duty they wear black robes and hoods with masks. Their headquarters comprise a chapel, with an altar by Andrea della Robbia, and a statue of the patron saint of the Misericordia, S. Sebastian. But their real patron saint is their founder, a common porter named Pietro Borsi. In the thirteenth century it was the custom for the porters and loafers connected with the old market to meet in a shelter here and pass the time away as best they could. Borsi, joining them, was distressed to find how unprofitable were the hours, and he suggested the formation of a society to be of some real use, the money to support it to be obtained by fines in payment for oaths and blasphemies. A litter or two were soon bought and the machinery started. The name was the Company of the Brothers of Mercy. That was in 1240 to 1250. To-day no Florentine is too grand to take his part, and at the head of the porter's band of brethren is the King.

Passing along the Via Calzaioli we come on the right to a noble square building with statues in its niches—Or San Michele, which stands on the site of the chapel of San Michele in Orto. San Michele in Orto, or more probably in Horreo (meaning either in the garden or in the granary), was once part of a loggia used as a corn market, in which was preserved a picture by Ugolino da Siena representing the Virgin, and this picture had the power of working miracles. Early in the fourteenth century the loggia was burned down but the picture was saved (or quickly replaced), and a new building on a much larger and more splendid scale was made for it, none other than Or

San Michele, the chief architect being Taddeo Gaddi, Giotto's pupil and later the constructor of the Ponte Vecchio. Where the picture then was, I cannot say—whether inside the building or out—but the principal use of the building was to serve as a granary. After 1348, when Florence was visited by that ravaging plague which Boccaccio describes in such gruesome detail at the beginning of the "Decameron" and which sent his gay company of ladies and gentlemen to the Villa Palmieri to take refuge in story telling, and when this sacred picture was more than commonly busy and efficacious, it was decided to apply the enormous sums of money given to the shrine from gratitude in beautifying the church still more, and chiefly in providing a casket worthy of holding such a pictorial treasure. Hence came about the noble edifice of to-day.

A man of universal genius was called in to execute the tabernacle: Andrea Orcagna, a pupil probably of Andrea Pisano, and also much influenced by Giotto, whom though he had not known he idolized, and one who, like Michelangelo later, was not only a painter and sculptor but an architect and a poet. Orcagna, or, to give him his right name, Andrea di Cione, for Orcagna was an abbreviation of Arcagnolo, flourished in the middle of the fourteenth century. Among his best-known works in painting are the Dantesque frescoes in the Strozzi chapel at S. Maria Novella, and that terrible allegory of Death and Judgment in the Campo Santo at Pisa, in which the gay riding party come upon the three open graves. Orcagna put all his strength into the tabernacle of Or San Michele, which is a most sumptuous, beautiful and thoughtful shrine, yet owing to the darkness of the church is almost invisible. Guides, it is true, will emerge from the gloom and hold lighted tapers to it, but a right conception of it is impos-

sible. The famous miraculous picture over the altar is notable rather for its properties than for its intrinsic beauty; it is the panels of the altar, which contain Orcagna's most exquisite work, representing scenes in the life of the Virgin, with emblematical figures interspersed, that one wishes to see. Only the back, however, can be seen really well, and this only when a door opposite to it—in the Via Calzaioli—is opened. It should always be open, with a grille across it, that passers-by might have constant sight of this almost unknown Florentine treasure. It is in the relief of the death of the Virgin on the back that—on the extreme right—Orcagna introduced his own portrait. The marble employed is of a delicate softness, and Orcagna had enough of Giotto's tradition to make the Virgin a reality and to interest Her, for example as a mother in the washing of Her Baby, as few painters have done, and in particular, as, according to Ruskin, poor Ghirlandaio could not do in his fresco of the birth of the Virgin Herself. It was Orcagna's habit to sign his sculpture "Andrea di Cione, painter," and his paintings "Andrea di Cione, sculptor," and thus point his versatility. By this tabernacle, by his Pisan fresco, and by the designs of the Loggia de' Lanzi and the Bigallo (which are usually given to him), he takes his place among the most interesting and various of the forerunners of the Renaissance.

Within Or San Michele you learn the secret of the stoned-up windows which one sees with regret from without. Each, or nearly each, has an altar against it. What the old glass was like one can divine from the lovely and sombre top lights in exquisite patterns that are left; that on the centre of the right wall of the church, as one enters, having jewels of green glass as lovely as any I ever saw. But blues, purples, and reds predominate.

The tabernacle apart, the main appeal of Or San Michele is the statuary and stone-work of the exterior; for here we find the early masters at their best. The building being the head-quarters of the twelve Florentine guilds, the statues and decorations were commissioned by them. It is as though our City companies should unite in beautifying the Guildhall. Donatello is the greatest artist here, and it was for the Armourers that he made his S. George, which stands now, as he carved it in marble, in the Bargello, but has a bronze substitute in its original niche, below which is a relief of the slaying of the dragon from Donatello's chisel. Of this glorious S. George more will be said later. But I may remark now that in its place here it instantly proves the modernity and realistic vigour of its sculptor. Fine though they be, all the other statues of this building are conventional; they carry on a tradition of religious sculpture such as Niccolò Pisano respected, many years earlier, when he worked at the Pisan pulpit. But Donatello's S. George is new and is as beautiful as a Greek god, with something of real human life added.

Donatello (with Michelozzo) also made the exquisite border of the niche in the Via Calzaioli façade, in which Christ and S. Thomas now stand (see opposite page 72). He was also to have made the figures but was busy elsewhere, and they fell to Verrocchio, of whom also we shall have much to see and say at the Bargello, and to my mind they are the most beautiful of all. The John the Baptist (made for the Cloth-dealers), also on this façade, is by Ghiberti of the Baptistery gates. On the façade of the Via de' Lamberti is Donatello's superb S. Mark (for the Joiners), which led to Michelangelo's criticism that he had never seen a man who looked more virtuous, and if S. Mark were really like that he would believe all his words. "Why

don't you speak to me?" he also said to this statue, as Donatello had said to the Zuccone. Higher on this façade is Luca della Robbia's famous arms of the Silk-weavers, one of the perfect things. Luca also made the arms of the Guild of Merchants, with its Florentine fleur-de-lis in the midst. For the rest, Ghiberti's S. Stephen, and Ghiberti and Michelozzo's S. Matthew, on the entrance wall, are the most remarkable. The blacksmith's relief is very lively and the blacksmith's saint a noble figure.

The little square reliefs let into the wall at intervals are often charming, and the stone-work of the windows is very lovely. In fact, the four walls of this fortress church are almost inexhaustible. Within, its vaulted roof is so noble, its proportions so satisfying. One should often sit quietly here, in the gloom, and do nothing.

The little building just across the way was the Guild House of the Arte della Lana, or Wool-combers, and is now the head-quarters of the Italian Dante Society, who hold a conference every Thursday in the large room over Or San Michele, gained by the flying buttress-bridge. The dark picture on the outer wall is the very Madonna to which, when its position was at the Mercato Vecchio, condemned criminals used to pray on their way to execution.

Before we leave Or San Michele and the Arte della Lana, a word on the guilds of Florence is necessary, for at a period in Florentine history between, say, the middle of the thirteenth century and the beginning of the fifteenth, they were the very powerful controllers of the domestic affairs of the city; and it is possible that it would have been better for the Florentines had they continued to be so. For Florence was essentially mercantile and the guilds were composed of business men; and it is natural that business men should know better than noblemen what a

business city needed. They were divided into major guilds, chief of which were the woollen merchants—the Arte della Lana—and the silk merchants—the Calimala—and it was their pride to put their riches at the city's service. Thus, the Arte della Lana had charge of the building of the cathedral. Each of the major guilds provided a Prior, and the Priors elected the Signoria, who governed the city. It is one of the principal charges that is brought against Cosimo de' Medici that he broke the power of the guilds.

Returning to the Via Calzaioli, and turning to the right, we come very quickly to the Piazza della Signoria, and see before us, diagonally across it, the Loggia de' Lanzi and the Palazzo Vecchio, with the gleaming, gigantic figure of Michelangelo's David against the dark gateway. This, more than the Piazza del Duomo, is the centre of Florence.

The Palazzo Vecchio was for centuries called the Signoria, being the home of the Gonfalonier of Florence and the Signoria who assisted his councils. It was begun by Arnolfo, the architect of the Duomo and S. Croce, at the end of the thirteenth century, that being, as we have seen, a period of great prosperity and ambition in Florence, but many alterations and additions were made—by Michelozzo, Cronaca, Vasari, and others—to bring it to what it now is. After being the scene of many riots, executions, and much political strife and dubiety, it became a ducal palace in 1532, and is now a civic building and show-place. In the old days the Palazzo had a ringhiera, or platform, in front of it, from which proclamations were made. To know what this was like one has but to go to S. Trinità on a very fine morning and look at Ghirlandaio's fresco of the granting of the charter to S. Francis. The scene, painted in 1485, includes not only the Signoria but the Loggia de' Lanzi

(then the Loggia dell' Orcagna)—both before any statues were set up.

Every façade of the Palazzo Vecchio is splendid. I cannot say which I admire more—that which one sees from the Loggia de' Lanzi, with its beautiful coping of corbels, at once so heavy and so light, with coloured escutcheons between them, or that in the Via de' Gondi, with its fine jumble of old brickwork among the stones. The Palazzo Vecchio is one of the most resolute and independent buildings in the world; and it had need to be strong, for the waves of Florentine revolt were always breaking against it. The tower rising from this square fortress has at once grace and strength and presents a complete contrast to Giotto's campanile; for Giotto's campanile is so light and delicate and reasonable and this tower of the Signoria so stern and noble. There is a difference as between a beautiful woman and a powerful man. In the functions of the two towers —the dominating towers of Florence—is a wide difference also, for the campanile calls to prayer, while for years the sombre notes of the great Signoria bell—the Vacca—rang out only to bid the citizens to conclave or battle or to sound an alarm.

It was this Vacca which (with others) the brave Piero Capponi threatened to ring when Charles VIII wished, in 1494, to force a disgraceful treaty on the city. The scene was the Medici Palace in the Via Larga. The paper was ready for signature and Capponi would not sign. "Then I must bid my trumpets blow," said Charles. "If you sound your trumpets," Capponi replied, "we will ring our bells;" and the King gave way, for he knew that his men had no chance in this city if it rose suddenly against them.

But the glory of the Palazzo Vecchio tower—after its proportions—is that brilliant inspiration of the architect

which led him, so to speak, to begin again by setting the four columns on the top of the solid portion. These pillars are indescribably right: so solid and yet so light, so powerful and yet so comely. Their duty was to support the bells, and particularly the Vacca, when he rocked his gigantic weight of green bronze to and fro to warn the city. Seen from a distance the columns are always beautiful; seen close by they are each a tower of comfortable strength. And how the wind blows through them from the Apennines!

The David on the left of the Palazzo Vecchio main door is only a copy. The original stood there until 1873, when, after three hundred and sixty-nine years, it was moved to a covered spot in the Accademia, as we shall there see and learn its history. If we want to know what the Palazzo Vecchio looked like at the time David was placed there, a picture by Piero di Cosimo in our National Gallery tells us, for he makes it the background of his portrait of Ferrucci, No. 895.

On the left of the David is Donatello's Judith, which gives me less pleasure than any of his work, both in the statue and in the relief. It was commissioned for Cosimo de' Medici, who placed it in the courtyard or garden of the Medici palace—Judith, like David, by her brave action against a tyrant, being a champion of the Florentine republic. In 1495, after Cosimo's worthless grandson Piero de' Medici had been expelled from Florence and the Medici palace sacked, the statue was moved to the front of the Palazzo Vecchio, where the David now is, and an inscription placed on it describing it as a warning to all enemies of liberty. This position being needed for Michelangelo's David, in 1506, Judith was moved to the Loggia. It is now back nearly in its earlier didactic position.

The group on the right represents Hercules and Cacus,[1] and is by Baccio Bandinelli (1485-1560), a coarse and offensive man, jealous of most people and particularly of Michelangelo, to whom, but for his displeasing Pope Clement VII, the block of marble from which the Hercules was carved would have been given. Bandinelli in his delight at obtaining it vowed to surpass that master's David, and those who want to know what Florence thought of his effort should consult the amusing and malicious pages of Cellini's Autobiography. On its way to Bandinelli's studio the block fell into the Arno, and it was a joke of the time that it had drowned itself to avoid its fate at the sculptor's hands. Even after he had half done it, there was a moment when Michelangelo had an opportunity of taking over the stone and turning it into a Samson, but the siege of Florence intervened, and eventually Bandinelli had his way and the hideous thing now on view was evolved.

The lion at the left end of the façade is also a copy, the original by Donatello being in the Bargello, close by; but the pedestal is Donatello's original. This lion is the Marzocco, the legendary guardian of the Florentine republic, and it stood here for four centuries and more, superseding one which was kissed as a sign of submission by thousands of Pisan prisoners in 1364. The Florentine fleur-de-lis on the pediment is very beautiful. The same lion, as a vane, may be seen in iron on his staff at the top of the Palazzo Vecchio tower, and again on the Bargello, bravely flourishing his lily against the sky.

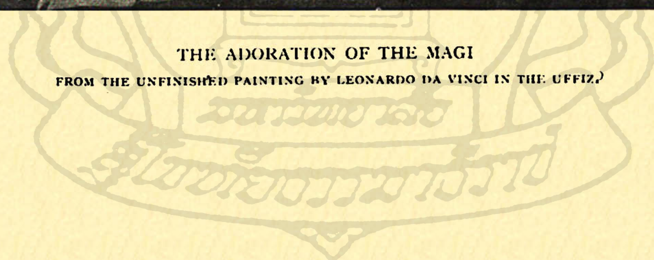
[1] Cacus, the son of Vulcan and Medusa, was a famous robber who breathed fire and smoke and laid waste Italy. He made the mistake, however, of robbing Hercules of some cows, and for this Hercules strangled him.

The great fountain with its bronze figures at this corner is by Bartolommeo Ammanati, a pupil of Bandinelli, and the statue of Cosimo I is by Gian Bologna, who was the best of the post-Michelangelo sculptors and did much good work in Florence, as we shall see at the Bargello and in the Boboli Gardens. He studied under Michelangelo in Rome. Though born a Fleming and called a Florentine, his great fountain at Bologna, which is really a fine thing, has identified his fame with that city. Had not Ammanati's design better pleased Cosimo I, the Bologna fountain would be here, for it was designed for this piazza. Gian's best-known work is the Flying Mercury in the Bargello, which we have seen, on mantelpieces and in shop windows, everywhere; but what is considered his masterpiece is over there, in the Loggia de' Lanzi, the very beautiful building on the right of the Palazzo, the "Rape of the Sabines," a group which, to me, gives no pleasure. The bronze reliefs under the Cosimo statue—this Cosimo being, of course, far other than Cosimo de' Medici, Father of his Country: Cosimo I of Tuscany, who insisted upon a crown and reigned from 1537 to 1575—represents his assumption of rule on the death of Alessandro in 1537; his triumphant entry into Siena when he conquered it and absorbed it; and his reception of the rank of Grand Duke. Of Cosimo (whom we met in Chapter V) more will be said when we enter the Palazzo Vecchio.

Between this statue and the Loggia de' Lanzi is a bronze tablet let into the paving which tells us that it was on this very spot, in 1498, that Savonarola and two of his companions were put to death. The ancient palace on the Duomo side of the piazza is attributed in design to Raphael, who, like most of the great artists of his time, was also an architect and was the designer of the Palazzo

THE ADORATION OF THE MAGI

FROM THE UNFINISHED PAINTING BY LEONARDO DA VINCI IN THE UFFIZI



Pandolfini in the Via San Gallo, No. 74. The Palazzo we are now admiring for its blend of massiveness and beauty is the Uguccione, and anybody who wishes may probably have a whole floor of it to-day for a few shillings a week. The building which completes the piazza on the right of us, with coats of arms on its façade, is now given to the Board of Agriculture and has been recently restored. It was once a Court of Justice. The great building at the opposite side of the piazza, where the trams start, is a good example of modern Florentine architecture based on the old: the Palazzo Landi, built in 1871 and now chiefly an insurance office. In London we have a more attractive though smaller derivative of the great days of Florentine building, in Standen's wool shop in Jermyn Street.

The Piazza della Signoria has such riches that one is in danger of neglecting some. The Palazzo Vecchio, for example, so overpowers the Loggia de' Lanzi in size as to draw the eye from that perfect structure. One should not allow this to happen; one should let the Palazzo Vecchio's solid nobility wait awhile and concentrate on the beauty of Orcagna's three arches. Coming so freshly from his tabernacle in Or San Michele we are again reminded of the versatility of the early artists.

This structure, originally called the Loggia de' Priori or Loggia d'Orcagna, was built in the fourteenth century as an open place for the delivery of proclamations and for other ceremonies, and also as a shelter from the rain, the last being a purpose it still serves. It was here that Savonarola's ordeal by fire would have had place had it not been frustrated. Vasari also gives Orcagna the four symbolical figures in the recesses in the spandrels of the arches. The Loggia, which took its new name from the Swiss lancers, or lanzi, that Cosimo I kept there—he being a

fearful ruler and never comfortable without a bodyguard —is now a recognized place of siesta. A barometer and thermometer are almost the only novelties that a visitor from the sixteenth century would notice.

The statuary is both old and new; for here are genuine antiques once in Ferdinand I's Villa Medici at Rome, and such modern masterpieces as Cellini's Perseus, and Gian Bologna's two muscular and restless groups. The best of the antiques is the Woman Mourning, the fourth from the end on the left, which is a superb creation.

Cellini's Perseus will not quite do, I think, after Donatello and Verrocchio; but few bronzes are more famous, and certainly of none has so vivacious and exciting a story been written as Cellini's own, setting forth his disappointments, mortifications, and pride in connexion with this statue. Cellini, whatever one may think of his veracity, is a diverting and valuable writer, and the picture of Cosimo I which he draws for us is probably very near the truth. We see him haughty, familiar, capricious, vain, impulsive, clear-sighted, and easily flattered; intensely pleased to be in a position to command the services of artists and very unwilling to pay. Cellini was a blend of lackey, child, and genius. He left Francis I in order to serve Cosimo and never ceased to regret the change. The Perseus was his greatest accomplishment for Cosimo, and the narrative of its casting is terrific and not a little like Dumas. When it was uncovered in its present position all Florence flocked to the Loggia to praise it; the poets placed commendatory sonnets on the pillars, and the sculptor peacocked up and down in an ecstasy of triumph. Then, however, his troubles once more began, for Cosimo had the craft to force

Cellini to name the price, and we see Cellini in an agony between desire for enough and fear lest if he named enough he would offend his patron.

The whole book is a comedy of vanity and jealousy and Florentine vigour, with Courts as a background. It is good to read it; it is good, having read it, to study once again the unfevered resolute features of Donatello's S. George. Cellini himself we may see among the statues under the Uffizi and again in the place of honour (as a goldsmith) in the centre of the Ponte Vecchio. Looking at the Perseus and remembering Donatello, one realizes that what Cellini wanted was character. He had temperament enough but no character. Perseus is superb, and one doesn't care a fig for it.

A few years ago an investigator made the discovery, which had been awaiting the seeing eye for centuries, that the back of Perseus' helmet forms the face and beard of a man. The conjecture is that Cellini intended this as a portrait of himself. Be that as it may, it is curious.

On entering the Palazzo Vecchio we come instantly to one of the most charming things in Florence—Verrocchio's fountain—which stands in the midst of the courtyard. This adorable work—a little bronze Cupid struggling with a spouting dolphin—was made for Lorenzo de' Medici's country villa at Careggi and was brought here when the palazzo was refurnished for Francis I, Cosimo I's son and successor, and his bride, Joanna of Austria, in 1565. Nothing could better illustrate the accomplishment and imaginative adaptability of the great craftsmen of the day than the two works of Verrocchio that we have now seen: the Christ and S. Thomas at Or San Michele, in Donatello and Michelozzo's niche, and this exquisite fountain

splashing water so musically. Notice the rich decorations of the pillars of this courtyard and the rich colour and power of the pillars themselves. The half-obliterated frescoes of Austrian towns on the walls were made to prevent Joanna from being homesick, but were more likely, one would guess, to stimulate that malady. In the left corner is the entrance to the old armoury, now empty, with openings in the walls through which pieces might be discharged at various angles on any advancing host. The groined ceiling could support a pyramid.

The Palazzo Vecchio's ground floor is a series of thoroughfares in which people are passing continually amid huge pillars and along dark passages; but our way is up the stone steps immediately to the left on leaving the courtyard where Verrocchio's child eternally smiles, for the steps take us to that vast hall designed by Cronaca for Savonarola's Great Council, which was called into being for the government of Florence after the luckless Piero de' Medici had been banished in 1494. Here much history was made. As to its structure and its architect, Vasari, who later was called in to restore it, has a deal to say, but it is too technical for us. It was built by Simone di Pollaiuolo, who was known as Il Cronaca (the Chronicler) from his vivid way of telling his adventures. Cronaca (1454-1508), who was a personal friend and devotee of Savonarola, drew up his plan in consultation with Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo (although then so young: only nineteen or twenty) and others. Its peculiarity is that it is one of the largest rooms in existence without pillars. From the foot of the steps to the further wall I make it fifty-eight paces, and thirty wide; and the proportions strike the eye as perfect. The wall behind the steps is not at right angles with the

others—and this must be as peculiar as the absence of pillars.

Once there were to be paintings here by the greatest of all, for masters no less than Leonardo and Michelangelo were commissioned to decorate it, each with a great historical painting: a high honour for the youthful Michelangelo. The loss of these works is one of the tragedies of art. Leonardo chose for his subject the battle of Anghiari, an incident of 1440, when the Florentines defeated Piccinino and saved their Republic from the Milanese and Visconti. But both the cartoon and the fresco have gone for ever, and our sense of loss is not diminished by reading in Leonardo's Thoughts on Painting the directions which he wrote for the use of artists who proposed to paint battles: one of the most interesting and exciting pieces of writing in the literature of art. Michelangelo's work, which never reached the wall of the room as Leonardo's had done, was completed as a cartoon in 1504 to 1506. The subject was also military: an incident in the long and bitter struggle between Florence and Pisa, when Sir John Hawkwood (then in the pay of the Pisans, before he came over finally to the Florentines) attacked a body of Florentines who were bathing in the river. While it was in progress all the young artists came to Sant' Onofrio to study it, as they and its creator had before flocked to the Carmine, where Masaccio's frescoes had for three-quarters of a century been object-lessons to students.

What became of the cartoon is not definitely known, but Vasari's story is that Bandinelli, the sculptor of the Hercules and Cacus outside the Palazzo, who was one of the most diligent copyists of the cartoon after it was placed in a room in this building, had the key of the door counterfeited, and, obtaining entrance during a moment of tumult, destroyed the picture. The reasons given are: (1,

and a very poor one) that he desired to own the pieces; (2) that he wished to deprive other and rival students of the advantage of copying it; (3) that he wanted Leonardo to be the only painter of the Palazzo to be considered; and (4, and sufficient) that he hated Michelangelo. At this time Bandinelli could not have been more than eighteen. Vasari's story is uncorroborated.

Leonardo's battle merely perished, being done in some fugitive medium; and the walls are now covered with the works of Vasari himself and his pupils and do not matter, while the ceiling is a muddle of undistinguished paint. There are many statues which also do not matter; but at the raised end is Leo X, son of Lorenzo the Magnificent, and the first Medici Pope, and at the other a colossal modern statue of Savonarola, who was in person the dominating influence here for the years between 1494 and 1497; who is to many the central figure in the history of this building; and whose last night on earth was spent with his companions in this very room. But to him we come in the chapter on S. Marco.

Many rooms in the Palazzo are to be seen only on special occasions, but the great hall is always accessible. Certain rooms upstairs, mostly with rich red and yellow floors, are also visible daily, all interesting; but most notable is the Salle de Lys, with its lovely blue walls of lilies, its glorious ceiling of gold and roses, Ghirlandaio's fresco of S. Zenobius, and the perfect marble doorway containing the wooden doors of Giuliano and Benedetto da Maiano, with the heads of Dante and Petrarch in intarsia. Note the figures of Charity and Temperance in the doorway and the charming youthful Baptist.

In Eleanor of Toledo's dining-room there are some rich and elaborate green jugs which I remember very clearly

and also the ceiling of her workroom with its choice of Penelope as the presiding genius. Both Eleanor's chapel and that in which Savonarola prayed before his execution are shown.

But the most popular room of all with visitors—and quite naturally—is the little boudoiresque study of Francis I, with its voluptuous ladies on the ceiling and the secret treasure-room leading from it, while on the way, just outside the door, is a convenient oubliette into which to push any inconvenient visitor.

The loggia, which Mr. Morley has painted from the Via Castellani (see opposite page 118), is also always accessible, and from it one has one of those pleasant views of warm roofs in which Florence abounds.

One of the most attractive of the smaller rooms usually on view is that one which leads from the lily-room and contains nothing but maps of the world: the most decorative things conceivable, next to Chinese paintings. Looking for Sussex on the English map, I found Winchelsey, Battel, Rye, Lewes, Sorham, Arônde, and Cicestra.

From the map-room a little room is gained where the debates in the Great Council Hall might be secretly overheard by interested eavesdroppers, but in particular by Cosimo I. A part of the cornice has holes in it for this purpose, but on regaining the hall itself I found that the disparity in the pattern was perfectly evident even to my eye, so that every one in those suspicious days must have been aware of the listener.

The tower should certainly be ascended—not only for the view and to be so near the bells and the pillars, but also for historic associations. After a little way we come to the cell where Cosimo de' Medici, later to be the Father of his Country, was imprisoned, before that exile which

ended in recall and triumph in 1433. This cell, although not exactly "a home from home," is possible. What is to be said of that other, some thousands of steps (as it seems) higher, where Savonarola was kept for forty days, varied only by intervals of torture? For Savonarola's cell, which is very near the top, is nothing but a recess in the wall with a door to it. It cannot be more than five feet wide and eight feet long, with an open loophole to the wind. If a man were here for forty days and then pardoned his life would be worth very little. A bitter eyrie from which to watch the city one had risked all to reform. What thoughts must have been his in that trap! What reviews of policy! What illuminations as to Florentine character!