

Here are the grand cathedral, "Il Duomo," and other fine churches, rich in works of art; palaces and libraries famed for their rare contents; galleries of painting and statuary, the work of the world's masters; collections of bronzes, gems, and mosaics, all combining to throw their charm over the visitor, and to furnish an almost unexhaustible source of pleasure and profit.

But again we turn—for are not all these but evidences of the cunning hand, the giant intellect, the divinely-breathed soul—and Florence holds up before us a long list of illustrious names, whose claim to celebrity the world acknowledges in its familiarity with them. Suffice it to name four: Dante, "Il Divino Poeta," as the Florentines call him; Michael Angelo, under whose chisel cold, shapeless marble grew into forms of grandeur and beauty; Quorenzo, "the magnificent," greatest of Medici, beneath whose fostering hand arts and literature had a noble development; and Jerome Savonarola, the brave reformer and eloquent preacher.

Having chosen the latter as the subject of this sketch, we shall proceed, not forgetting the merits of the noble company in which he is found, to unfold some of the reasons why he is to be considered worthy of such a high place in the record.

Though his name is inseparably connected with Florence, he was born at Ferrara, Sept. 21, 1452. The child of noble parents, he received a liberal education at home, and became thoroughly versed in the philosophy both of the Schoolmen and of Ancient Greece; but moved by a strong inclination towards asceticism, he withdrew from secular affairs, and entered a convent of the Dominican Order at Bologna.

Having completed his studies, he made his first appearance as a preacher at Florence, in 1482, only to meet with a decided failure.

Seven years later he was called to the pulpit of San Marco, and, having in the meantime overcome most of the defects that had told so strongly against his first efforts, his ability and enthusiasm carried all before them.