

FROM A MANUSCRIPT IN FLORENCE

I. How S. Francis appeared unto Brother Leo

ON a time, when S. Francis had already passed away from this life, there came unto Brother Leo a longing to see that sweet father whom in life he had loved so tenderly, and through this longing he strove beyond his wont to afflict his body with prayer and fastings, and besought God with great fervour, to fulfil his desire. While he was thus kindled in that prayer, S. Francis appeared unto him all glorious with wings and with claws of gold upon his hands and feet, like an eagle. And Brother Leo being all refreshed and consoled with this so marvellous an apparition, said wondering: "Wherefore, my Father most worshipful, hast thou appeared unto me in a form so marvellous?" Replied S. Francis: "Among the other graces that the divine pity hath given and granted me, are these wings, so that being summoned I may straightway succour the devout ones of this holy Order in their needs and tribulations, and bear their souls and those of my brothers, as it were flying, unto the heavenly glory: and these claws so great and strong and gilded have been given to me against the devil, against the persecutors of my Religious,