

FRA ANGELICO.

Part of a Lecture on "Some Painters of Florence," delivered
before the Art Association of Montreal, by Robert
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On the site of the ruined temple of a Pagan goddess, in the church of Santa Maria Sopra Minerva, in Rome, there is a shadowed passage near the lofty chancel, into the old gray walls of which the lordly monuments of several great princes of the Church are set. Among these, though not of them, is a long tablet, upon which is carven in low relief the worn and emaciated figure of a man. He lies clad in the habit of St. Dominic, with the cowl drawn over the melancholy head, the ordered folds of his dress disposed in quiet simple lines, and his hands meekly placed, as by one whose desires were fulfilled. Accompanying this is an epitaph composed by Pope Nicholas the Fifth, in which the artist whose fame it commemorates, is compared, in the laudatory manner of the time, with Apelles the Greek. This monument marks the burial place of a painter of Florence, Fra Giovanni Angelico, called *il Beato*, or the blessed. He died in a monastery adjoining the church, about four hundred and forty years ago.

Before this worn effigy, the mind is naturally led to reflect on the changes in religious faith and hope since Angelico's death. We recall the story of his life, his character and the spirit of the age in which his work was produced; then turn to regard the vast spaces of the great church, gray with the stains of time, dark, melancholy and silent, with altars deserted, from which the cold figures of martyrs and saints stretch their appealing arms in vain to the hollow aisles where multitudes no longer kneel.

The difference is hard to realize between the world of thought and religious feeling to-day and that of the period when Angelico wrought. Nevertheless, those who wish in