

of chance and change! Farther on we pass the house, with iron gratings and small bull's-eye glass, in which Dante, "*Il divino poeta*," as the inscription reads, was born, A.D. 1265.

There, at the end of this street, rises one of the most remarkable groups of buildings in the world—the Duomo, Giotto's Tower, and the Baptistry. The first was begun in 1294. It is a noble specimen of Italian gothic of black and white marble, fretted with exquisite carving and tracery. From its great carved pulpit, like a king upon his throne, Savonarola swayed the sceptre of his eloquence over the awe-struck souls of the people of Florence. Its mighty dome, added in 1420-34, surpasses in size even that of St. Peter's at Rome, and is the more daring, as the earlier achievement. Its interior is covered with gigantic mosaics of the *Inferno*, *Purgatory*, and *Paradise*; hideous figures of satyr-headed devils are torturing the lost in the flames with pitchforks—a dreadful and repulsive sight. The guide whispered against the wall, and I distinctly heard what he said on the opposite side of the dome. From the lantern, nearly four hundred feet in air, a magnificent view of the city at our feet, the far-winding Arno, and the engirdling hills, is enjoyed. In the square below is a statue of Brunelleschi, the architect of the dome, gazing upward with a look of triumph at his realized design. Here, too, is preserved a stone seat on which Dante used to sit and gaze with admiration on the scene, on summer evenings, six hundred years ago.

The Campanile, or Giotto's Tower, is an exquisite structure, rising, more and more ornate as it climbs, to a height of three hundred feet, enriched with carvings of the seven cardinal virtues, the seven works of mercy, the seven Beatitudes, and the seven Sacraments. Notwithstanding its beauty, it has yet a look of incompleteness, the spire of the original design having never been finished.

"In the old Tuscan town stands Giotto's tower,
The City of Florence blossoming in stone,—
A vision, a delight, and a desire,—
The builder's perfect and centennial flower,
That in the night of ages bloomed alone,
But wanting still the glory of the spire."

Opposite the Duomo is the still older Baptistry, venerable with the time-stains of seven, or perhaps eight, hundred years. Here are the famous bronze doors of Ghiberti, on which he expended the labours of forty years, worthy, said Michael Angelo, to be the gates of Paradise. They represent, in high relief—the figures