

and it was not until we entered the narrow valley of the "golden Arno" that enthusiasm revived. By this time the shades of evening were closing about us, and as we looked on the hills that encompass Florence, we awoke to the consciousness that we were indeed approaching "*Firenze la Bella*" at once one of the most beautiful cities in Italy, and most classic—a city of art and science, literature and philosophy, history, poetry and romance. "The fairest city on earth," it has been called, "itself a poem and a picture." Its population is about 150,000, or including its environs, 250,000. Dante, "the divine poet," Petrarch, the first scholar of his time, Boccaccio, the most distinguished of Italian novelists, Galileo, "one of the greatest geniuses that ever enlightened humanity," Michael Angelo, the celebrated painter, sculptor, and architect, Americus Vespucci, the navigator, from whom our continent derived its name, "Lorenzo the Magnificent," and the long line of the Medici are among those who have given imperishable fame to Florence.

We found comfortable quarters in the Hotel Cavour, close to the Duomo and other public buildings. The Duomo, or cathedral of *Santa Maria del Fiore*, i.e. "of the flower," was founded in A.D. 1298, and designed to be the largest edifice in Italy. It was not completed until several centuries later, by Brunelleschi, who was the architect of the dome, 140 feet in diameter, inside, and upwards of 100 feet high. The church is 500 feet long and 310 feet through the transepts, the nave being 128 feet wide and 153 feet high. Compared with these figures, our average modern Protestant churches are mere pigmies. Even the R.C. churches of Notre Dame, Montreal, and St. Patrick's, New York—probably the two largest in America—come far short of being one half the size of the Duomo of Florence. Though not to be compared with St. Peter's, in Rome, either in size or internal splendour, it is in some respects more imposing. The exterior is covered with alternate layers of white and black marble highly embellished with sculptures. One's first impression of the interior is disappointing—A heavy dull gloomy expanse it seems—but as the eye becomes accustomed to the "dim religious light" that streams through its large rich stained-glass windows, it grows upon you until its solemn grandeur becomes almost

overpowering. The Baptistery that stands near it is similar in its style of architecture, but differs from it in its costly internal adornments of marble and fresco. The doors, three in number, are so exquisitely wrought in bronze, that Michael Angelo said of them they were "fit to be the gates of Paradise." In this building every R.C. child born in Florence is baptized. The Campanile or detached belfry, is itself a marvel of beauty, 42 feet square and nearly 300 feet high. The church of Santa Croce is 460 feet long and is also a splendid building—the Westminster Abbey of Florence—surpassingly rich in its monumental statuary. Here are the splendid tombs of Michael Angelo and Galileo, adorned with emblematic figures. The latter is represented with his telescope in one hand, the other resting on a globe, and on the pedestal you read,—*Hic bene quiescat*, "He sleeps well." This was the man who gave the world the telescope, the microscope, and the thermometer; the man who first detected the diurnal motion of the earth, whose brilliant discoveries were rewarded by persecution and imprisonment; who was made to say before the court of the Inquisition,—“I abjure, curse and detest the error and heresy of the motion of the earth, and promise never more in future to say or assert anything, verbally or in writing, importing that the sun is the centre of the world, and immovable; and that the earth is not the centre of the world and moveable.” “But it moves, notwithstanding,” the astronomer was heard to mutter as he rose from his knees, and for this saying he was condemned to suffer imprisonment for an indefinite period, and, since he had appealed to the Bible, to recite once a week, for three years, the seven penitential psalms! Florence erected this monument over his remains 100 years after his death. Dante in his lifetime fared no better at the hands of his countrymen than Galileo. He was driven into exile, died a mendicant, and was buried in Ravenna. Yet see this magnificent monument to "the Prince of Poets," and that splendid statue out in the square, erected 544 years after his death—the idol of all Italy to-day. Of a truth, "The world moves"—slowly. There are 170 churches in Florence, and many of them besides those just named, are well worthy a visit. The *Santa Annunziata* is large and very rich in its adornments; that of *San Lorenzo* contains