

## INTRODUCTION

**F**OR which reason this work was so great a marvel among the people of that time, nothing better than it having been seen heretofore, that it was carried from the house of Cimabue to the Church with much festivity, to the sound of trumpets, in most solemn procession, and he was greatly rewarded and honoured therefor.'

Vasari, in this well-known passage, tells of Cimabue and the Madonna, which now hangs in the Rucellai chapel in S. Maria Novella, a story which a Sieneſe chronicle and certain contemporary documents relate of Duccio the ſon of Buoninſegna and the great altar-piece from which our illuſtrations are taken. Much has been written about the Rucellai Madonna, but fortunately we are not concerned here with the higher criticism of Italian Art. All the critics do not yet admit that the Madonna which Vasari ſays Cimabue painted is really the work of Duccio; but about the great altar-piece, the Maſteſta, at Siena, there is fortunately no doubt.