



Piazza della Signoria.—This fine square, the old heart of the city, has served as the scene of many historic festivals and dramas, both acted and real. Here Fra Girolamo Savonarola was burnt for heresy, and the Piazza can be seen in many of the old prints that are so familiar a sight in Florence shops. One side of the Piazza is occupied by the great Gothic pile of the Palazzo Vecchio, the Town Hall, dating from 1298, whose finely decorated rooms are rapidly resuming their normal appearance. Next to the Palazzo is the Loggia dei Lanzi, built a hundred years later. Here stands one of the most famous statues in the world, Benvenuto Cellini's bronze *Perseus with the head of Medusa*. These loggie, or open vaulted halls, are quite a feature of this part of Italy.

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Museo di S. Marco.—Go straight down the Via Ricasoli from the Cathedral till you come to the Piazza San Marco and continue along the Via Lamarmora down the side of the San Marco. Here you will see a little door with a bell to summon the custodian. It is a modest entrance to such riches, for this building was a convent and here lived Fra Angelico, and the rooms and cells are decorated by him and his pupils in great profusion. There is a famous crucifixion, and many other pictures in which Fra Angelico's gift for colour and for por-

traiture make the walls a joy to look at. His pupils never attained the stature of their master. The custodian is a true enthusiast.

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Or San Michele, a massive three-storied church and warehouse in the Via dei Calzaioli, has one of the loveliest exteriors in the city, with its graceful Gothic tracery and the statues erected by the old guilds of their patron saints. Note in the centre of the facade, Christ with the doubting Thomas by Verrocchio, with Ghiberti's John the Baptist on the left. On the South side is Donatello's St. Mark and on the west or entrance side Ghiberti's SS. Matthew and Stephen and Donatello's SS. George and Peter.

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The Arte della Lana is opposite the west side of the Or San Michele. A delightful example of Florentine Gothic, it was erected by the weavers as a guild-house, although now mainly occupied by shops. These old guilds were a mixture of trade union and professional association and were both rich and powerful in the society of their day. Their patronage of the best, and of course most expensive, artists is a measure of their standing.