

greater richness of English lyric poetry, Galileo, Leonardo da Vinci, Donatello, the Della Robbias, Brunelleschi, who built the first great cupola in Europe and set its octagonal wonder on the Cathedral of Florence, Michelangelo, and, above all, Dante, all are Tuscans of Tuscany and Florence. But so were Sophocles, Euripides, and Plato and Phidias Greeks, and they live on, even though all that is left of their Athens is the Acropolis and a few temples. Scholars, when they go to Athens, must rebuild the city in their imagination and from their knowledge.

No such effort is necessary in Florence. This city (population 354,975, compared with Auckland's 223,700) contains within its walls almost all the milestones of our

modern painting, sculpture, architecture, and handicrafts. Any tourist, learned or not, notices that at once. At every corner he finds something to delight the eye, even if it is but the intricate ironwork of a gate leading to a garden or some lovely ceramics or the fine damask of a hanging curtain in some palace or a piece of furniture, copied again and again all over Europe.

When Ruskin had lived beside Giotto's campanile in Florence for a time he wrote: "I have lived beside it many a day and looked upon it from my windows by sunlight and moonlight . . . that bright, smooth, sunny surface of glowing jasper, those spiral shafts and fairy traceries, so white, so faint, so crystalline . . . that serene height of mountain alabaster coloured like the morning cloud and chased like a seashell."

The man who built it was, like so many of the great Florentines and like so few artists since, a great painter also and a poet. Michelangelo sculpted, painted, built, and wrote sonnets. Leonardo painted and also wrote and experimented in the science of ballistics. Most of the Tuscan painters both frescoed in tempera and painted in oil on canvas and wood. Many sculpted as well. Ghiberti, who built the wonderful bronze doors of the Baptistery in Florence, spent forty years, according to Vasari, working on them and then died. Nothing like them has ever been made by the hand of man since, although Europe is full of bronze relief work of one kind and another. Michelangelo said of them that they were worthy to be the gates of Paradise.

For painters the city has always been a place of pilgrimage. Masaccio's frescoes in the Carmine Church were the first paintings in Europe to master the art of raising the figure from the flat, and the disposition of his light and shadow, the whole colouring, and composition in these paintings are still an inspiration to any one who paints or who likes painting.

Over on the other side of the Arno near the main railway-station is the Church of Santa Maria Novella, with its unique frescoes by Paolo Uccello in the



Judith. Detail from the second bronze door of the Baptistery in Florence. By Lorenzo Ghiberti.