

present conducted. They show that when capitalists and workmen rise above the narrow prejudices of their class they can, with a little patience, solve those problems which generations of militant industrialism could not settle. They show to what extent workmen are at present capable of industrial co-operation, and tend to moderate the extravagant notions of those who hold that a co-operative commonwealth is within measurable distance of realization. If, as so many think, we are to reach that stage some day, we cannot do better in the meantime than study the working of the co-partnership system.

THOMAS SCANLON.

EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE

ITALY.

Florence, July 12, 1906.—Mr. Howells has written nothing more delightful than the Florentine Mosaic in his little book on Tuscan Cities, which I bought yesterday, and could not put away until I had read the last of the 137 pages on Florence. When I had finished it I felt that I should like to tell him with what delight I had followed the charming touches with which he passes through the mazes of the streets and palaces and memories of Florence. No one who is not so good a democrat as he, could possibly appreciate with insight and proper intelligence the history of the Florentines; for Florence perhaps came nearer at one period to the point of realizing some approach to the democratic idea than had ever been known in history. "I was with them," he says, "all through that dim turmoil of wars, martyrdoms, pestilences, heroisms and treasons for a thousand years, feeling their increasing purpose of municipal freedom and hatred of one-man power." How Florence maintained her independence and established her democracy, and thus laid the foundation for her great achievements in letters and arts, is one of the greatest chapters in all history.

Another great chapter, one that has not yet been satisfactorily written, is the failure of the Florentine attempt. For it failed utterly—not indeed in the results upon the minds of her great producers whose works are a possession forever, but as a government it failed utterly. "What is certain," says Mr. Howells, "is that the one-man power, forbidden and resisted from the first in Florence, was at last to possess itself of the fierce and jealous city." Here were a people, who for a thousand years had constantly before their minds the ideal of a government of the people by the people for the people, who during this time, in spite of all the strifes and treasons and cruelties, continued to advance in wealth, and even more in noble arts; and yet the collapse came.

Neither Mr. Howells nor any of the historians can be said to have given a satisfactory explanation. Mr. Howells says: "It appears that if there had been no foreign interference, the one-man power would never have been fastened on Florence." By which he seems to mean foreign interference of a

political nature, and this explanation is not satisfactory because the people would have been able to resist what external pressure there was, had not there come a change within themselves. Nor is it a satisfactory explanation to dismiss the fact, as some historians do, with the commonplace assertion that Florence is but another instance of the folly of the democratic experiment. The truest and deepest explanation seems to me to be implied in the sermons of Florence's great preacher and prophet, Savonarola.

From the year 1490 to 1498 Savonarola preached to the people of Florence such sermons as have rarely been heard in any place or age. By this time the new learning, the renaissance of the classical spirit, was spreading its influence far and wide. The council of Florence, called for the purpose of uniting the Eastern and Western branches of the church, had been held in 1439, and had brought to the city many Eastern ecclesiastics who were full of Greek literature and Greek philosophy. Cosimo de' Medici in this same century had established a new Platonic Academy, where men of light and leading met to spin anew the threads of sweet philosophy. And even before this time, by various means, the influence of classical learning, classical art, and classical philosophy had been gradually permeating and upsetting the unquestioning faith and fervor of medievalism. The powerful restraints of religion were gradually relaxing, and this relaxation began to show itself in the manners and morals of the people.

We are not speaking here of the advantages that came with the Renaissance, nor of its scientific importance, but of its inevitable effects upon religion and art. This effect was most keenly felt by Savonarola, and so, as an eloquent writer has expressed it, "in 1490 a spiritual tempest burst over the gay, pleasure-loving people of Florence, and the cry of faith raised by one mighty voice came to drown the intellectual speculations, the dilettante appreciations of philosophy and culture." We can see from his words how Savonarola feared the encroachments and influences of the "new" learning. "Have not Aristotle and Plato," he cries, "been preached to you from this pulpit? Worse than that, has not Ovid been quoted to you from here? Tell me, is this the place to preach Ovid to you, or to exhort you to the Christian life? O would that I might persuade you to turn away from earthly things and follow after things eternal."

May it not be that in this preaching of Savonarola, narrow though it may be accused of being, we may catch a glimpse of the ultimate cause of the decline of Florence's democratic strength? Is it not true that, in its ultimate effects, the paganism of the classical influence tended among the masses of the people to relax their moral nature and to promote an enervating sensuousness and love of pleasure? Savonarola's preaching could not check the inevitable trend of influences and events, and under the Medici, who sweetened their tyranny by the promotion of the fine arts, how surely can be traced in the great art productions of the period the struggle that ensued between soul and sense.

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It is the representation of this struggle that forms one of the supreme features of the ever-abiding and

world-famous interest that students of humanity and art find, as nowhere else, in these wonderful galleries of Florence. It is impossible to think of Florence without thinking of art. It was an essential part of the life of the people—not a thing for millionaires, aristocracy, and private galleries. The best of it was done in and for the churches where all men saw and felt it. In Santa Maria Novella there still hangs a picture of which the story is told that it created such enthusiasm that the whole people turned out and bore it in triumphal procession from the painter's shop to the church.

It is not easy for us to-day to understand such a scene, because for us art has become a thing apart. We think of it in connection with some rich man's collection or some art institute. It has not been so with these Florentines. Art was a part of their life; they loved to do beautiful things and to do all things beautifully. And this feeling must have been a common possession, for one is amazed at the number of great artists that have been born and done their work here; and these artists have been men of the people, sons of blacksmiths, tanners, and wool-dealers, not the products of schools. When one goes through these galleries in Florence and studies these greatest pictures that have ever been painted, he is looking at work that was done here by the men born and brought up in the next street, and this can be said of no other galleries in the world.

And when we say that these pictures, the product of the people of Florence, are the greatest that have ever been painted, it means that these men have expressed in most beautiful and impressive manner the highest thoughts and feelings and enthusiasms and aspirations of humanity. It means also to the student that they tell the history of the human spirit in its many struggles, and especially in its supreme struggle between the delights of the soul and the delights of the flesh. Nowhere else, as was suggested above, can this struggle, and the effort to conciliation between the two, be seen and studied so vividly as in the art galleries of Florence. One can follow from period to period the growing effect of the Renaissance, see the increase of knowledge, the truer anatomy, the more shapely form, the gradually more sensuous pose, and then a corresponding loss. "Sit," says Grant Allen, speaking of the later pictures in one of the halls of the Belle Arti, "sit in front of them and then look through the open door at the great Ghirlandajo, if you wish to measure the distance that separates the 15th from the later 16th and 17th centuries." The great problem of modern art is, with the new light of the new centuries, to get back to something of the spirit of that 15th century, and there are signs of promise.

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In almost every street of the old part of Florence the visitor finds some tablet set in the wall of an ancient building to tell its connection with a name that has become familiar in history, literature, or art. On Tuesday I went to the house where Dante was born in 1265, and then a few paces across a very small square to the little Church of San Martino, where he was married, not to Beatrice Portinari but to Gemma Donati. In the Church of Ognis-

santi you may see the round tablet that marks the grave of Amerigo Vespucci, and also his picture painted with many others in one of the sacred scenes along the wall. You may go to the Monastery of San Marco, and see Savonarola's cell and the cross that went with him wherever he preached, and in the square in front of the Signoria a busy life goes on over the bronze medallion that tells the spot where, on the 23d of May, 1498, "per iniqua sentenza," as the inscription reads, he was hanged and burned. You may go to the house of Michael Angelo, and near San Miniato you may stand on the fortifications which he built in 1529, and by the same car you may go on to the Torre del Gallo, which Galileo is said to have used as an observatory. These are but the beginning of the great associations which the visitor meets with in Florence; and to say a word about some of the beautiful and interesting buildings of Florence one would know where to begin—with Giotto's marvelous tower, as beautiful in every detail as it is in its completeness—but he would not know where to stop.

The people of Florence seem to have carried down, and on through time, into what are called the little things of life, something of the fine art spirit of their great history. The attentive visitor must be struck with what Mr. Howells nicely calls the "democracy of good looks which one sees in no other land," and with what he also mentions as the "union of grace with sympathy" which one finds here. What the people of our northern States observe in New Orleans, a universal courtesy, is found here even more generally. If you ask a Florentine where some place is, when he cannot tell you himself, he will go with you around the corner to somebody who can. If it be raining in torrents, with no prospect of clearing, and you ask him about the weather, he will predict you sunshine within the hour. It is impossible not to love Florence and the Florentines; and this afternoon, as I stood on the height by San Miniato and looked over the city, and down the lovely valley of the Arno, and across to the higher height of Fiesole, and around towards Milton's Vallombrosa, I could not but wonder why all the world did not migrate in a body and come to live in Florence.

J. H. DILLARD.

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DIRECT LEGISLATION AND A CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION IN MICHIGAN.

Grand Rapids, Mich., July 29.—The coming election of members of the legislature in this State will be exceptionally important; for the next legislature is to provide for a convention to revise the State Constitution. This was demanded by a large majority of the people, to whom the question was submitted at the election held April 2, 1906. The work of the convention will be submitted to the people for final adoption.

The present Constitution was adopted in 1850 and can be amended only by the concurrence of two-thirds of all the members in each house of the legislature, followed by the approval of the people at a general election. The demand is now made and will undoubtedly be vigorously urged, that the peo-