The Autobiography of Benvenuto Cellini by Benvenuto Cellini

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This etext was produced by Norman Wolcott.

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famous of all time, was translated by John Addington Symonds (1840-1893). Cellini lived from 1500-1571. This version is in ISO Latin1 with 8 bit accents, and is also supplied in a single file HTML version.]

The Autobiography of
Benvenuto Cellini

Translated By
John Addington Symonds
Introductory Sonnet

THIS tale of my sore-troubled life I write,
To thank the God of nature, who conveyed
My soul to me, and with such care hath stayed
Life glory virtue measureless hath made
Such grace worth beauty be through me displayed
That few can rival, none surpass me quite.
Only it grieves me when I understand

As erst I came, WELCOME to go one day,
Here in the Flower of this fair Tuscan land.

Introductory Note

AMONG the vast number of men who have thought fit to write down the history of their own lives, three or four have achieved masterpieces
these extraordinary documents, and unsurpassed by any of them, that the autobiography of Benvenuto Cellini takes its place.

those which produced its chief competitors for first place in its class.

diary the daily events of his life for his sole satisfaction and with no intention that any one should read the cipher in which they were recorded. But Cellini wrote that the world might know, after he was dead, what a fellow he had been; what great things he had attempted, and verily has a semblance of merit, if so be they are men of truth and good

he had done many things of merit, he had no manner of doubt. His repute was great in his day, and perhaps good in the sense in which he meant goodness; as to whether he was a man of truth, there is still dispute among scholars. Of some misrepresentations, some suppressions of damaging facts, there seems to be evidence only too good-a man with avoided being guilty of such--; but of the general trustworthiness of his record, of the kind of man he was and the kind of life he led, there is no reasonable doubt.

to 1562; the scene is mainly in Italy and France. Of the great events of the time, the time of the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation, of the strife of Pope and Emperor and King, we get only glimpses. The leaders in these events appear in the foreground of the picture only when they come into personal relations with the hero; and then not
mainly as statesmen or warriors, but as connoisseurs and patrons of art.

Such an event as the Sack of Rome is described because Benvenuto himself fought in it.

Much more complete is the view he gives of the artistic life of the time. It was the age of Michelangelo, and in the throng of great artists which then filled the Italian cities, Cellini was no inconsiderable figure. Michelangelo himself he knew and adored. Nowhere can we gain a better idea than in this book of the passionate enthusiasm for the creation of beauty which has bestowed upon the Italy of the Renaissance its greatest glory.

Very vivid, too, is the impression we receive of the social life of the sixteenth century; of its violence and licentiousness, of its zeal for fine craftsmanship, of its abounding vitality, its versatility and its idealism. For Cellini himself is an epitome of that century. This man who tells here the story of his life was a murderer and a braggart, insolent, sensual, inordinately proud and passionate; but he was also a worker in gold and silver, rejoicing in delicate chasing and subtle modelling of precious surfaces; a sculptor and a musician; and, as all who read his book must testify, a great master of narrative. Keen as was splendor of his exploits and achievements, he had little idea that lad of fourteen, while he went about his work.

The autobiography was composed between 1558 and 1566, but it brings the
been somewhat more peaceful. In 1565 he married Piera de Salvadore Parigi, a servant who had nursed him when he was sick; and in the care of his children, as earlier of his sister and nieces, he showed more tenderness than might have been expected from a man of his boisterous nature. He died at Florence, May 13, 1571, and was buried in The Church of the Annunziata in that city.

Autobiography of Benvenuto Cellini

ALL men of whatsoever quality they be, who have done anything of excellence, or which may properly resemble excellence, ought, if they are persons of truth and honesty, to describe their life with their own hand; but they ought not to attempt so fine an enterprise till they have passed the age of forty. This duty occurs to my own mind now that I am travelling beyond the term of fifty-eight years, and am in Florence, the city of my birth. Many untoward things can I remember, such as happen to all who live upon our earth; and from those adversities I am now more free than at any previous period of my career-nay, it seems to me that I enjoy greater content of soul and health of body than ever I did in bygone years. I can also bring to mind some pleasant goods and some inestimable evils, which, when I turn my thoughts backward, strike terror in me, and astonishment that I should have reached this age of
fifty-eight, wherein, thanks be to God, I am still travelling prosperously forward.

II

IT is true that men who have laboured with some show of excellence, have already given knowledge of themselves to the world; and this alone ought to suffice them; I mean the fact that they have proved their manhood and achieved renown. Yet one must needs live like others; and so in a work like this there will always be found occasion for natural bragging, which is of divers kinds, and the first is that a man should let others know he draws his lineage from persons of worth and most ancient origin.

I am called Benvenuto Cellini, son of Maestro Giovanni, son of Andrea, son of Cristofano Cellini; my mother was Madonna Elisabetta, daughter to Stefano Granacci; both parents citizens of Florence. It is found written in chronicles made by our ancestors of Florence, men of old time and of credibility, even as Giovanni Villani writes, that the city of Florence was evidently built in imitation of the fair city of Rome; and certain remnants of the Colosseum and the Baths can yet be traced. These things are near Santa Croce. The Capitol was where is now the Old Market. The Rotonda is entire, which was made for the temple of Mars, and is now dedicated to our Saint John. That thus is was, can very well be seen, and cannot be denied, but the said buildings are much smaller than those concert with some noble Romans, who, when Fiesole had been stormed and taken, raised a city in this place, and each of them took in hand to
erect one of these notable edifices.

who was called Fiorino of Cellino, which is a village about two miles
distant from Monte Fiascone. Now this Fiorino took up his quarters under
the hill of Fiesole, on the ground where Florence now stands, in order
to be near the river Arno, and for the convenience of the troops. All
those soldiers and others who had to do with the said captain, used then
called Fiorino, as also because the place he had chosen for his quarters
was by nature very rich in flowers. Upon the foundation of the city,
and given by circumstance, and seeing furthermore that flowers
themselves bring good augury, he appointed the name of Florence for the
town. He wished besides to pay his valiant captain this compliment; and
he loved him all the more for having drawn him from a very humble place,
and for the reason that so excellent a man was a creature of his own.
The name that learned inventors and investigators of such etymologies
adduce, as that Florence is flowing at the Arno, cannot hold; seeing
that Rome is flowing at the Tiber, Ferrara is flowing at the Po, Lyons
is flowing at the Saone, Paris is flowing at the Seine, and yet the
names of all these towns are different, and have come to them by other
ways. [1]

Thus then we find; and thus we believe that we are descended from a man
of worth. Furthermore, we find that there are Cellinis of our stock in
Ravenna, that most ancient town of Italy, where too are plenty of gentle
folk. In Pisa also there are some, and I have discovered them in many
parts of Christendom; and in this state also the breed exists, men
devoted to the profession of arms; for not many years ago a young man,
called Luca Cellini, a beardless youth, fought with a soldier of
experience and a most valorous man, named Francesco da Vicorati, who had
frequently fought before in single combat. This Luca, by his own valour,
with sword in hand, overcame and slew him, with such bravery and
stoutness that he moved the folk to wonder, who were expecting quite the
contrary issue; so that I glory in tracing my descent from men of valour.

As for the trifling honours which I have gained for my house, under the
well-known conditions of our present ways of living, and by means of my
art, albeit the same are matters of no great moment, I will relate these
in their proper time and place, taking much more pride in having been
born humble and having laid some honourable foundation for my family,
than if I had been born of great lineage and had stained or overclouded
that by my base qualities. So then I will make a beginning by saying how
it pleased God I should be born.

Note 1. He is alluding to the name 'Fluenzia,' which some antiquaries of
his day thought to have been the earliest name of the city, derived from
its being near 'Arno Fluente.' I have translated the word 'fluente' in

own derivation from the name of his supposed ancestor.

III
lived like little lords, in retirement, however, on account of the then
contending factions. They were all men devoted to arms and of notable
bravery. In that time one of their sons, the younger, who was called
Cristofano, roused a great feud with certain of their friends and
neighbours. Now the heads of the families on both sides took part in it,
and the fire kindled seemed to them so threatening that their houses
were like to perish utterly; the elders upon this consideration, in
concert with my own ancestors, removed Cristofano; and the other youth
with whom the quarrel began was also sent away. They sent their young
man to Siena. Our folk sent Cristofano to Florence; and there they
bought for him a little house in Via Chiara, close to the convent of S.
Orsola, and they also purchased for him some very good property near the
Ponte a Rifredi. The said Cristofano took wife in Florence, and had sons
and daughters; and when all the daughters had been portioned off, the
Via Chiara with some other trifles fell to the share of one of the said
sons, who had the name of Andrea. He also took wife, and had four male
children. The first was called Girolamo, the second Bartolommeo, the
third Giovanni, who was afterwards my father, and the fourth Francesco.
This Andrea Cellini was very well versed in architecture, as it was then
practised, and lived by it as his trade. Giovanni, who was my father,
paid more attention to it than any of the other brothers. And since
Vitruvius says, amongst other things, that one who wishes to practise
that art well must have something of music and good drawing, Giovanni,
when he had mastered drawing, began to turn his mind to music, and
together with the theory learned to play most excellently on the viol
and the flute; and being a person of studious habits, he left his home
but seldom.

They had for neighbour in the next house a man called Stefano Granacci, who had several daughters, all of them of remarkable beauty. As it pleased God, Giovanni noticed one of these girls who was named Elisabetta; and she found such favour with him that he asked her in marriage. The fathers of both of them being well acquainted through their close neighbourhood, it was easy to make this match up; and each thought that he had very well arranged his affairs. First of all the two good old men agreed upon the marriage; then they began to discuss the dowry, which led to a certain amount of friendly difference; for Andrea of all Italy to boot, and if I had wanted earlier to have him married, I could have procured one of the largest dowries which folk of our rank reasons on your side; but here am I with five daughters and as many sons, and when my reckoning is made, this is as much as I can possibly girl and not their money. Ill luck to those who seek to fill their pockets by the dowry of their wife! As you have boasted that I am a fellow of such parts, do you not think that I shall be able to provide for my wife and satisfy her needs, even if I receive something short of the portion you would like to get? Now I must make you understand that Andrea Cellini, who was a man of rather awkward temper, grew a trifle angry; but after a few days Giovanni took his wife, and never asked for other portion with her.
They enjoyed their youth and wedded love through eighteen years, always greatly desiring to be blessed with children. At the end of this time doctors. Later on she was again with child, and gave birth to a girl, whom they called Cosa, after the mother of my father. [1] At the end of two years she was once more with child; and inasmuch as those longings to which pregnant women are subject, and to which they pay much attention, were now exactly the same as those of her former pregnancy, they made their minds up that she would give birth to a female as before, and agreed to call the child Reparata, after the mother of my mother. It happened that she was delivered on a night of All Saints, following the feast-day, at half-past four precisely, in the year 1500. [2] The midwife, who knew that they were expecting a girl, after she had washed the baby and wrapped it in the fairest white linen, came softly the unexpected male child. Joining together the palms of his old hands, the persons who were there asked him joyfully what name the child should at Holy Baptism, and by it I still am living with the grace of God.

Note 2. The hour is reckoned, according to the old Italian fashion, from sunset of one day to sunset of the next-twenty-four hours.
ANDREA CELLINI was yet alive when I was about three years old, and he had passed his hundredth. One day they had been altering a certain conduit pertaining to a cistern, and there issued from it a great scorpion unperceived by them, which crept down from the cistern to the ground, and slank away beneath a bench. I saw it, and ran up to it, and laid my hands upon it. It was so big that when I had it in my little hands, it put out its tail on one side, and on the other thrust forth both its mouths. [1] They relate that I ran in high joy to my father, who was also in the house, ran up when he heard my screams, and in his stupefaction could not think how to prevent the venomous animal from killing me. Just then his eyes chanced to fall upon a pair of scissors; and so, while soothing and caressing me, he cut its tail and mouths off. Afterwards, when the great peril had been thus averted, he took the occurrence for a good augury.

When I was about five years old my father happened to be in a basement-chamber of our house, where they had been washing, and where a good fire of oak-logs was still burning; he had a viol in his hand, and
was playing and singing alone beside the fire. The weather was very
cold. Happening to look into the fire, he spied in the middle of those
most burning flames a little creature like a lizard, which was sporting
in the core of the intensest coals. Becoming instantly aware of what the
thing was, he had my sister and me called, and pointing it out to us
children, gave me a great box on the ears, which caused me to howl and
weep with all my might. Then he pacified me good-humouredly, and spoke
that you have done, but only to make you remember that that lizard which
you see in the fire is a salamander, a creature which has never been

he kissed me and gave me some pieces of money.

Note 1. The word is 'bocche,' so I have translated it by 'mouths.' But
Cellini clearly meant the gaping claws of the scorpion.

V

MY father began teaching me to play upon the flute and sing by note; by
notwithstanding I was of that tender age when little children are wont
to take pastime in whistles and such toys, I had an inexpressible
dislike for it, and played and sang only to obey him. My father in those
times fashioned wonderful organs with pipes of wood, spinets the fairest
and most excellent which then could be seen, viols and lutes and harps
of the most beautiful and perfect construction. He was an engineer, and
had marvellous skill in making instruments for lowering bridges and for
working mills, and other machines of that sort. In ivory he was the
first who wrought really well. But after he had fallen in love with the
woman who was destined to become my mother—perhaps what brought them
together was that little flute, to which indeed he paid more attention
than was proper—he was entreated by the fifers of the Signory to play in
their company. Accordingly he did so for some time to amuse himself,
until by constant importunity they induced him to become a member of
liking for him, perceived later on that he was devoting himself wholly
to the fife, and was neglecting his fine engineering talent and his
beautiful art. [1] So they had him removed from that post. My father
took this very ill, and it seemed to him that they had done him a great
despite. Yet he immediately resumed his art, and fashioned a mirror,
about a cubit in diameter, out of bone and ivory, with figures and
foliage of great finish and grand design. The mirror was in the form of
a wheel. In the middle was the looking-glass; around it were seven
circular pieces, on which were the Seven Virtues, carved and joined of
ivory and black bone. The whole mirror, together with the Virtues, was
placed in equilibrium, so that when the wheel turned, all the Virtues
moved, and they had weights at their feet which kept them upright.
Possessing some acquaintance with the Latin tongue, he put a legend in

Rota sum: semper, quoquo me verto, stat Virtus.

A little while after this he obtained his place again among the fifers.
Although some of these things happened before I was born, my familiarity
with them has moved me to set them down here. In those days the
musicians of the Signory were all of them members of the most honourable trades, and some of them belonged to the greater guilds of silk and wool; [2] and that was the reason why my father did not disdain to follow this profession, and his chief desire with regard to me was always that I should become a great performer on the flute. I for my part felt never more discontented than when he chose to talk to me about this scheme, and to tell me that, if I liked, he discerned in me such aptitudes that I might become the best man in the world.

Note 1. The Medici here mentioned were Lorenzo the Magnificent, and his son Pietro, who was expelled from Florence in the year 1494. He never returned, but died in the river Garigliano in 1504.

Note 2. In the Middle Ages the burghers of Florence were divided into industrial guilds called the Greater and the Lesser Arts. The former took precedence of the latter, both in political importance and in social esteem.

VI

AS I have said, my father was the devoted servant and attached friend of the house of Medici; and when Piero was banished, he entrusted him with many affairs of the greatest possible importance. Afterwards, when the magnificent Piero Soderini was elected, and my father continued in his office of musician, Soderini, perceiving his wonderful talent, began to employ him in many matters of great importance as an engineer. [1] So
long as Soderini remained in Florence, he showed the utmost good-will to
my father; and in those days, I being still of tender age, my father had
me carried, and made me perform upon the flute; I used to play treble in
concert with the musicians of the palace before the Signory, following
my notes: and a beadle used to carry me upon his shoulders. The
Gonfalonier, that is, Soderini, whom I have already mentioned, took much
pleasure in making me chatter, and gave me comfits, and was wont to say
do not wish him to practise any art but playing and composing; for in
this profession I hope to make him the greatest man of the world, if God

Thus some time passed, until the Medici returned. [2] When they arrived,
the Cardinal, who afterwards became Pope Leo, received my father very
kindly. During their exile the scutcheons which were on the palace of
the Medici had had their balls erased, and a great red cross painted
over them, which was the bearing of the Commune. [3] Accordingly, as
soon as they returned, the red cross was scratched out, and on the
scutcheon the red balls and the golden field were painted in again, and
finished with great beauty. My father, who possessed a simple vein of
poetry, instilled in him by nature, together with a certain touch of
prophecy, which was doubtless a divine gift in him, wrote these four
verses under the said arms of the Medici, when they were uncovered to
the view:-

These arms, which have so long from sight been laid
Beneath the holy cross, that symbol meek,
Now lift their glorious glad face, and seek

This epigram was read by all Florence. A few days afterwards Pope Julius
against the expectation of everybody. He reigned as Leo X, that generous
and great soul. My father sent him his four prophetic verses. The Pope
sent to tell him to come to Rome; for this would be to his advantage.
But he had no will to go; and so, in lieu of reward, his place in the
as Gonfalonier. [4] This was the reason why I commenced goldsmith; after
which I spent part of my time in learning that art, and part in playing,
much against my will.

Note 1. Piero Soderini was elected Gonfalonier of the Florentine
Republic for life in the year 1502. After nine years of government, he
was banished, and when he died, Machiavelli wrote the famous sneering
297.

(afterwards Pope Leo X), came back through the aid of a Spanish army,
after the great battle at Ravenna.

Note 4. Cellini makes a mistake here. Salviati married a daughter of
have no record of his appointment to the office of Gonfalonier.

VII

WHEN my father spoke to me in the way I have above described, I entreated him to let me draw a certain fixed number of hours in the day; all the rest of my time I would give to music, only with the view of too base in comparison with what I had in my own mind. My good father, driven to despair by this fixed idea of mine, placed me in the workshop goldsmith from Pinzi di Monte, and a master excellent in that craft. [1] He had no distinction of birth whatever, but was the son of a charcoal-seller. This is no blame to Bandinello, who has founded the honour of the family-if only he had done so honestly! However that may be, I have no cause now to talk about him. After I had stayed there some days, my father took me away from Michel Agnolo, finding himself unable to live without having me always under his eyes. Accordingly, much to my discontent, I remained at music till I reached the age of fifteen. If I were to describe all the wonderful things that happened to me up to that time, and all the great dangers to my own life which I ran, I should astound my readers; but, in order to avoid prolixity, and having very much to relate, I will omit these incidents.

known commonly as Marcone the goldsmith. He was a most excellent craftsman and a very good fellow to boot, high-spirited and frank in all
his ways. My father would not let him give me wages like the other apprentices; for having taken up the study of this art to please myself, he wished me to indulge my whim for drawing to the full. I did so willingly enough; and that honest master of mine took marvellous delight in my performances. He had an only son, a bastard, to whom he often gave his orders, in order to spare me. My liking for the art was so great, or, I may truly say, my natural bias, both one and the other, that in a few months I caught up the good, nay, the best young craftsmen in our business, and began to reap the fruits of my labours. I did not, however, neglect to gratify my good father from time to time by playing on the flute or cornet. Each time he heard me, I used to make his tears fall accompanied with deep-drawn sighs of satisfaction. My filial piety often made me give him that contentment, and induce me to pretend that I enjoyed the music too.

as will appear in the ensuing pages, was born in 1487, and received the honour of knighthood from Clement VII and Charles V. Posterity has are coarse, pretentious, and incapable of giving pleasure to any person of refined intelligence.

VIII

AT that time I had a brother, younger by two years, a youth of extreme boldness and fierce temper. He afterwards became one of the great father of Duke Cosimo. [1] The boy was about fourteen, and I two years
older. One Sunday evening, just before nightfall, he happened to find
himself between the gate San Gallo and the Porta a Pinti; in this
quarter he came to duel with a young fellow of twenty or thereabouts.
They both had swords; and my brother dealt so valiantly that, after
having badly wounded him, he was upon the point of following up his
advantage. There was a great crowd of people present, among whom were
for their own man, they put hand to their slings, a stone from one of
which hit my poor brother in the head. He fell to the ground at once in
a dead faint. It so chanced that I had been upon the spot alone, and
without arms; and I had done my best to get my brother out of the fray
would have it, he fell, as I have said, half dead to earth. I ran up at
once, seized his sword, and stood in front of him, bearing the brunt of
several rapiers and a shower of stones. I never left his side until some
brave soldiers came from the gate San Gallo and rescued me from the
raging crowd; they marvelled much, the while, to find such valour in so
young a boy.

Then I carried my brother home for dead, and it was only with great
difficulty that he came to himself again. When he was cured, the Eight,
who had already condemned out adversaries and banished them for a term
of years, sent us also into exile for six months at a distance of ten
so we took leave of our poor father; and instead of giving us money, for
he had none, he bestowed on us his blessing. I went to Siena, wishing to
look up a certain worthy man called Maestro Francesco Castoro. On
another occasion, when I had run away from my father, I went to this
trade until my father sent for me back. Francesco, when I reached him,
recognised me at once, and gave me work to do While thus occupied, he
placed a house at my disposal for the whole time of my sojourn in Siena.
Into this I moved, together with my brother, and applied myself to
labour for the space of several months. My brother had acquired the
rudiments of Latin, but was still so young that he could not yet relish
the taste of virtuous employment, but passed his time in dissipation,

Note 1. Cellini refers to the famous Giovanni delle Bande Nere, who was
killed in an engagement in Lombardy in November 1526, by the Imperialist
troops marching to the sack of Rome. His son Cosimo, after the murder of
Duke Alessandro, established the second Medicean dynasty in Florence.

Note 2. The Eight, or Gli Otto, were a magistracy in Florence with
cognizance of matters affecting the internal peace of the city.

IX

recalled to Florence at the entreaty of my father. [1] A certain pupil

that he ought to send me to Bologna, in order to learn to play well from
a great master there. The name of this master was Antonio, and he was in

that, if he sent me there he would give me letters of recommendation and
support. My father, dying with joy at such an opportunity, sent me off;
and I being eager to see the world, went with good grace.
When I reached Bologna, I put myself under a certain Maestro Ercole del Piffero, and began to earn something by my trade. In the meantime I used to go every day to take my music lesson, and in a few weeks made considerable progress in that accursed art. However I made still greater in my trade of goldsmith; for the Cardinal having given me no assistance, I went to live with a Bolognese illuminator who was called Scipione Cavalletti (his house was in the street of our Lady del Baraccan); and while there I devoted myself to drawing and working for one Graziadio, a Jew, with whom I earned considerably.

At the end of six months I returned to Florence, where that fellow return. To please my father, I went to his house and played the cornet and the flute with one of his brothers, who was named Girolamo, several years younger than the said Piero, a very worthy young man, and quite the contrary of his brother. On one of those days my father came to

profit if he devotes himself to the goldsmiths trade than to this same opinion as Piero, that he flew into a rage and cried out at him:

cherished wish; you are the man who had me ousted from my place at the palace, paying me back with that black ingratitude which is the usual recompense of great benefits. I got you promoted, and you have got me cashiered; I taught you to play with all the little art you have, and you are preventing my son from obeying me; but bear in mind these words
of prophecy: not years or months, I say, but only a few weeks will pass

of men, when they grow old, go mad at the same time; and this has
happened to you. I am not astonished at it, because most liberally have
you squandered all your property, without reflecting that your children
had need of it. I mind to do just the opposite, and to leave my children
tell you further that you are bad, and that your children will be mad

Thereupon we left the house, muttering words of anger on both sides. I
together, I told him I was quite ready to take vengeance for the insults
heaped on him by that scoundrel, provided he permit me to give myself up
good draughtsman; but for recreation, after such stupendous labours, and
for the love of me who am your father, who begat you and brought you up
and implanted so many honourable talents in you, for the sake of
recreation, I say, will not you promise sometimes to take in hand your

excellent parts as I possessed would be the greatest vengeance I could
take for the insults of his enemies.

Not a whole month had been completed after this scene before the man
Pierino happened to be building a vault in a house of his, which he had
in the Via dello Studio; and being one day in a ground-floor room above
the vault which he was making, together with much company around him, he
fell to talking about his old master, my father. While repeating the
words which he had said to him concerning his ruin, no sooner had they
escaped his lips than the floor where he was standing (either because
the vault had been badly built, or rather through the sheer mightiness
of God, who does not always pay on Saturday) suddenly gave way. Some of
the stones and bricks of the vault, which fell with him, broke both his
legs. The friends who were with him, remaining on the border of the
broken vault took no harm, but were astounded and full of wonder,
especially because of the prophecy which he had just contempuously
repeated to them. When my father heard of this, he took his sword, and
went to see the man. There, in the presence of his father, who was

Piero, my dear pupil, I am sorely grieved at your mischance; but if you
remember it was only a short time ago that I warned you of it; and as

Shortly afterwards, the ungrateful Piero died of that illness. He left a
wife of bad character and one son, who after the lapse of some years
came to me to beg for alms in Rome. I gave him something, as well
because it is my nature to be charitable, as also because I recalled
with tears the happy state which Pierino held when my father spake those
succour from his own virtuous sons. Of this perhaps enough is now said;
but let none ever laugh at the prognostications of any worthy man whom
he has wrongfully insulted; because it is not he who speaks, nay, but
the very voice of God through him.

Note 1. This Cardinal and Pope was Giulio, a natural son of Giuliano,
conspiracy, year 1478. Giulio lived to become Pope Clement VII., to
suffer the sack of Rome in 1527, and to make the concordat with Charles
V. at Bologna in 1529-30, which settled for three centuries the destiny
of Italy. We shall hear much more of him from Cellini in the course of
this narrative.

X

ALL this while I worked as a goldsmith, and was able to assist my good
father. His other son, my brother Cecchino, had, as I said before, been
to make me, the elder, a great musician and composer, and him, the
younger, a great and learned jurist. He could not, however, put force
upon the inclinations of our nature, which directed me to the arts of
design, and my brother, who had a fine and graceful person, to the
profession of arms. Cecchino, being still quite a lad, was returning

Medici. On the day when he reached home, I happened to be absent; and
he, being in want of proper clothes, sought out our sisters, who,
unknown to my father, gave him a cloak and doublet of mine, both new and
of good quality. I ought to say that, beside the aid I gave my father
and my excellent and honest sisters, I had bought those handsome clothes
out of my own savings. When I found I had been cheated, and my clothes
taken from me, and my brother from whom I should have recovered them was
gone, I asked my father why he suffered so great a wrong to be done me,
seeing that I was always ready to assist him. He replied that I was his
good son, but that the other, whom he thought to have lost, had been
found again; also that it was a duty, nay, a precept from God Himself,
that he who hath should give to him who hath not; and that for his sake
I ought to bear this injustice, for God would increase me in all good
things. I, like a youth without experience, retorted on my poor
afflicted parent; and taking the miserable remnants of my clothes and
money, went toward a gate of the city. As I did not know which gate
would start me on the road to Rome, I arrived at Lucca, and from Lucca
reached Pisa.

When I came to Pisa (I was about sixteen years of age at the time), I
stopped near the middle bridge, by what is called the Fish-stone, at the
shop of a goldsmith, and began attentively to watch what the master was
about. [1] He asked me who I was, and what was my profession. I told him
that I worked a little in the same trade as his own. This worthy man
bade me come into his shop, and at once gave me work to do, and spoke as

he dwelt respectably with his handsome wife and children. Thinking of
the grief which my good father might be feeling for me, I wrote him that
I was sojourning with a very excellent and honest man, called Maestro
Ulivieri della Chiostra, and was working with him at many good things of
beauty and importance. I bade him be of good cheer, for that I was bent
on learning, and hoped by my acquirements to bring him back both profit
and honour before long. My good father answered the letter at once in

were not for the honour of our family, which above all things I regard,
I should immediately have set off for you; for indeed it seems like
being without the light of my eyes, when I do not see you daily, as I
used to do. I will make it my business to complete the training of my
household up to virtuous honesty; do you make it yours to acquire
excellence in your art; and I only wish you to remember these four
simple words, obey them, and never let them escape your memory:
In whatever house you be,

Note 1. The Fish-stone, or Pietra del Pesce, was the market on the quay where the fish brought from the sea up the Arno to Pisa used to be sold.

XI

THIS letter fell into the hands of my master Ulivieri, and he read it then, my Benvenuto, your good looks did not deceive me, as a letter from your father which has come into my hands gives me assurance, which proves him to be a man of notable honesty and worth. Consider yourself

While I stayed at Pisa, I went to see the Campo Santo, and there I found many beautiful fragments of antiquity, that is to say, marble sarcophagi. In other parts of Pisa also I saw many antique objects, which I diligently studied whenever I had days or hours free from the labour of the workshop. My master, who took pleasure in coming to visit me in the little room which he had allotted me, observing that I spent all my time in studious occupations, began to love me like a father. I made great progress in the one year that I stayed there, and completed several fine and valuable things in gold and silver, which inspired me with a resolute ambition to advance in my art.
My father, in the meanwhile, kept writing piteous entreaties that I should return to him; and in every letter bade me not to lose the music he had taught me with such trouble. On this, I suddenly gave up all wish to go back to him; so much did I hate that accursed music; and I felt as though of a truth I were in paradise the whole year I stayed at Pisa, where I never played the flute.

At the end of the year my master Ulivieri had occasion to go to Florence, in order to sell certain gold and silver sweepings which he had; [1] and inasmuch as the bad air of Pisa had given me a touch of company, back to Florence. There my father received him most affectionately, and lovingly prayed him, unknown by me, not to insist on taking me again to Pisa. I was ill about two months, during which time my father had me most kindly treated and cured, always repeating that it seemed to him a thousand years till I got well again, in order that he might hear me play a little. But when he talked to me of music, with his fingers on my pulse, seeing he had some acquaintance with medicine and Latin learning, he felt it change so much if he approached that topic, that he was often dismayed and left my side in tears. When I perceived how greatly he was disappointed, I bade one of my sisters bring me a flute; for though the fever never left me, that instrument is so easy that it did not hurt me to play upon it; and I used it with such dexterity of hand and tongue that my father coming suddenly upon me, blessed me a thousand times, exclaiming that while I was away from him I had made great progress, as he thought; and he begged me to go forwards, and not to sacrifice so fine an accomplishment.
Note 1. I have translated 'spazzature' by 'sweepings.' It means all


WHEN I had recovered my health, I returned to my old friend Marcone, the worthy goldsmith, who put me in the way of earning money, with which I helped my father and our household. About that time there came to Florence a sculptor named Piero Torrigiani; [1] he arrived from England, where he had resided many years; and being intimate with my master, he daily visited his house; and when he saw my drawings and the things young men as I can; for I have undertaken to execute a great work of my king, and want some of my own Florentines to help me. Now your method of working and your designs are worthy rather of a sculptor than a goldsmith; and since I have to turn out a great piece of bronze, I will splendid person and a most arrogant spirit, with the air of a great soldier more than a sculptor, especially in regard to his vehement gestures and his resonant voice, together with a habit he had of knitting his brows, enough to frighten any man of courage. He kept talking every day about his gallant feats among those beasts of Englishmen.

In course of conversation he happened to mention Michel Agnolo Buonarroti, led thereto by a drawing I had made from a cartoon of that
This cartoon was the first masterpiece which Michel Agnolo exhibited, in proof of his stupendous talents. He produced it in competition with another painter, Lionardo da Vinci, who also made a cartoon; and both were intended for the council-hall in the palace of the Signory. They represented the taking of Pisa by the Florentines; and our admirable Lionardo had chosen to depict a battle of horses, with the capture of some standards, in as divine a style as could possibly be imagined. Michel Agnolo in his cartoon portrayed a number of foot-soldiers, who, the season being summer, had gone to bathe in Arno. He drew them at the very moment the alarm is sounded, and the men all naked run to arms; so splendid in their action that nothing survives of ancient or of modern art which touches the same lofty point of excellence; and as I have already said, the design of the great Lionardo was itself most admirably beautiful. These two cartoons stood, one in the palace of the Medici, the other in the hall of the Pope. So long as they remained intact, they were the school of the world. Though the divine Michel Agnolo in later life finished that great chapel of Pope Julius, [3] he never rose half-way to the same pitch of power; his genius never afterwards attained to the force of those first studies.

Note 1. Torrigiani worked in fact for Henry VIII., and his monument to Henry VII. still exists in the Lady Chapel of Westminster Abbey. From England he went to Spain, where he modelled a statue of the Virgin for a great nobleman. Not receiving the pay he expected, he broke his work to pieces; for which act of sacrilege the Inquisition sent him to prison, where he starved himself to death in 1522. Such at least is the legend of his end.
Note 2. The cartoons to which Cellini here alludes were made by Michel Angelo and Lionardo for the decoration of the Sala del Gran Consiglio in the Palazzo Vecchio at Florence. Only the shadows of them remain to this

Note 3. The Sistine Chapel in the Vatican.

XIII

NOW let us return to Piero Torrigiani, who, with my drawing in his hand, into the Church of the Carmine, to learn drawing from the chapel of there; and one day, among others, when he was annoying me, I got more angry than usual, and clenching my fist, gave him such a blow on the nose, that I felt bone and cartilage go down like biscuit beneath my

[2] These words begat in me such hatred of the man, since I was always gazing at the masterpieces of the divine Michel Agnolo, that although I felt a wish to go with him to England, I now could never bear the sight of him.

All the while I was at Florence, I studied the noble manner of Michel Agnolo, and from this I have never deviated. About that time I contracted a close and familiar friendship with an amiable lad of my own
of Filippo, and grandson of Fra Lippo Lippi, that most excellent painter. [3] Through intercourse together, such love grew up between us that, day or night, we never stayed apart. The house where he lived was still full of the fine studies which his father had made, bound up in several books of drawings by his hand, and taken from the best antiquities of Rome. The sight of these things filled me with passionate enthusiasm; and for two years or thereabouts we lived in intimacy. At that time I fashioned a silver bas-relief of the size of a little were then worn as large as that. I carved on it a knot of leaves in the antique style, with figures of children and other masks of great beauty. This piece I made in the workshop of one Francesco Salimbene; and on its being exhibited to the trade, the goldsmiths praised me as the best young craftsman of their art.

There was one Giovan Battista, surnamed Il Tasso, a wood-carver, precisely of my own age, who one day said to me that if I was willing to go to Rome, he should be glad to join me. [4] Now we had this conversation together immediately after dinner; and I being angry with my mother; and if I had cash enough to take me to Rome, I would not turn back to lock the door of that wretched little workshop I call Florence I had money enough in my pockets to bring us both to Rome. Talking thus and walking onwards, we found ourselves at the gate San Piero Gattolini without noticing that we had got there; whereupon I without either you or me noticing that we were there; and now that I am
more about them till we reached Rome. So we tied our aprons behind our backs, and trudged almost in silence to Siena. When we arrived at Siena, Tasso said (for he had hurt his feet) that he would not go farther, and have enough left to go forward; you ought indeed to have thought of this on leaving Florence; and if it is because of your feet that you shirk the journey, we will find a return horse for Rome, which will deprive not answer, I took my way toward the gate of Rome. When he knew that I was firmly resolved to go, muttering between his teeth, and limping as well as he could, he came on behind me very slowly and at a great distance. On reaching the gate, I felt pity for my comrade, and waited speak of us to-morrow, if, having left for Rome, we had not pluck to get a pleasant fellow, he began to laugh and sing; and in this way, always singing and laughing, we travelled the whole way to Rome. I had just nineteen years then, and so had the century.

When we reached Rome, I put myself under a master who was known as Il Firenzuola. His name was Giovanni, and he came from Firenzuola in Lombardy, a most able craftsman in large vases and big plate of that kind. I showed him part of the model for the clasp which I had made in of his journeymen, a Florentine called Giannotto Giannotti, who had been Florentines who know something, and you are one of those who know before he went to Rome, we often went to draw together, and had been very intimate comrades. He was so put out by the words his master flung at him, that he said he did not recognise me or know who I was;
friend-for have we not been together in such and such places, and drawn, and ate, and drunk, and slept in company at your house in the country? I master, because I hope my hands are such that without aid from you they

Note 1. The Chapel of the Carmine, painted in fresco by Masaccio and some other artist, possibly Filippino Lippi, is still the most important monument of Florentine art surviving from the period preceding Raphael.

Note 2. The profile portraits of Michel Angelo Buonarroti confirm this story. They show the bridge of his nose bent in an angle, as though it had been broken.

Note 3. Fra Filippo Lippi was a Carmelite monk, whose frescoes at Prato and Spoleta and oil-paintings in Florence and elsewhere are among the most genial works of the pre-Raphaelite Renaissance. Vasari narrates his love-adventures with Lucrezia Buti, and Robert Browning has drawn a Filippino, was also an able painter, some of whose best work survives in the Strozzi Chapel of S. Maria Novella at Florence, and in the Church of S. Maria Sopra Minerva at Rome.

Note 4. Tasso was an able artist, mentioned both by Vasari and Pietro his opinion on the work of other craftsmen.
WHEN I had thus spoken, Firenzuola, who was a man of hot spirit and you ashamed to treat a man who has been so intimate a comrade with you

He gave me a very fine piece of silver plate to work on for a cardinal. It was a little oblong box, copied from the porphyry sarcophagus before the door of the Rotonda. Beside what I copied, I enriched it with so many elegant masks of my invention, that my master went about showing it through the art, and boasting that so good a piece of work had been turned out from his shop. [1] It was about half a cubit in size, and was so constructed as to serve for a salt-cellar at table. This was the first earning that I touched at Rome, and part of it I sent to assist my good father; the rest I kept for my own use, living upon it while I went about studying the antiquities of Rome, until my money failed, and I had to return to the shop for work. Battista del Tasso, my comrade, did not stay long in Rome, but went back to Florence.

After undertaking some new commissions, I took it into my head, as soon as I had finished them, to change my master; I had indeed been worried into doing so by a certain Milanese, called Pagolo Arsago. [2] My first master, Firenzuola, had a great quarrel about this with Arsago, and abused him in my presence; whereupon I took up speech in defence of my new master. I said that I was born free, and free I meant to live, and
that there was no reason to complain of him, far less of me, since some few crowns of wages were still due to me; also that I chose to go, like a free journeyman, where it pleased me, knowing I did wrong to no man. My new master then put in with his excuses, saying that he had not asked me to come, and that I should gratify him by returning with Firenzuola. To this I replied that I was not aware of wronging the latter in any way, and as I had completed his commissions, I chose to be my own master and not the man of others, and that he who wanted me must beg me of

him of the money he owed me. He laughed me in the face; on which I said that if I knew how to use my tools in handicraft as well as he had seen, I could be quite as clever with my sword in claiming the just payment of my labour. While we were exchanging these words, an old man happened to come up, called Maestro Antonio, of San Marino. He was the chief among

had to say, which I took good care that he should understand, he immediately espoused my cause, and bade Firenzuola pay me. The dispute waxed warm, because Firenzuola was an admirable swordsman, far better than he was a goldsmith. Yet reason made itself heard; and I backed my cause with the same spirit, till I got myself paid. In course of time Firenzuola and I became friends, and at his request I stood godfather to one of his children.

Note 2. The Italian is ‘sobbillato,’ which might be also translated ‘inveigled’ or ‘instigated.’ But Varchi, the contemporary of Cellini,
gives this verb the force of using pressure and boring on until somebody
is driven to do something.

XV

I WENT on working with Pagolo Arsago, and earned a good deal of money,
the greater part of which I always sent to my good father. At the end of
myself once more under Francesco Salimbene, with whom I earned a great
deal, and took continual pains to improve in my art. I renewed my
intimacy with Francesco di Filippo; and though I was too much given to
pleasure, owing to that accursed music, I never neglected to devote some
hours of the day or night to study. At that time I fashioned a silver
three inches broad, which used to be made for brides, and was executed
in half relief with some small figures in the round. It was a commission
from a man called Raffaello Lapaccini. I was very badly paid; but the
honour which it brought me was worth far more than the gain I might have
justly made by it. Having at this time worked with many different
persons in Florence, I had come to know some worthy men among the
goldsmiths, as for instance, Marcone, my first master; but I also met
with others reputed honest, who did all they could to ruin me, and
robbed me grossly. When I perceived this, I left their company, and held
them for thieves and black-guards. One of the goldsmiths, called
Giovanbattista Sogliani, kindly accommodated me with part of his shop,
finished several pretty pieces, and made good gains, and was able to
give my family much help. This roused the jealousy of the bad men among
my former masters, who were called Salvatore and Michele Guasconti. In
the guild of the goldsmiths they had three big shops, and drove a
thriving trade. On becoming aware of their evil will against me, I
complained to certain worthy fellows, and remarked that they ought to
have been satisfied with the thieveries they practised on me under the
cloak of hypocritical kindness. This coming to their ears, they
threatened to make me sorely repent of such words; but I, who knew not
what the colour of fear was, paid them little or no heed.

XVI

IT chanced one day that I was leaning against a shop of one of these
men, who called out to me, and began partly reproaching, partly
bullying. I answered that had they done their duty by me, I should have
spoken of them what one speaks of good and worthy men; but as they had
done the contrary, they ought to complain of themselves and not of me.
While I was standing there and talking, one of them, named Gherardo
Guasconti, their cousin, having perhaps been put up to it by them, lay
in wait till a beast of burden went by. [1] It was a load of bricks.
When the load reached me, Gherardo pushed it so violently on my body
that I was very much hurt. Turning suddenly round and seeing him
laughing, I struck him such a blow on the temple that he fell down,
stunned, like one dead. Then I faced round to his cousins, and said:

wanted to make a move upon me, trusting to their numbers, I, whose blood

of you comes out of the shop, let the other run for the confessor,
frightened them that not one stirred to help their cousin. As soon as I
had gone, the fathers and sons ran to the Eight, and declared that I had
assaulted them in their shops with sword in hand, a thing which had
never yet been seen in Florence. The magistrates had me summoned. I
appeared before them; and they began to upbraid and cry out upon
me-partly, I think, because they saw me in my cloak, while the others
were dressed like citizens in mantle and hood; [2] but also because my
adversaries had been to the houses of those magistrates, and had talked
with all of them in private, while I, inexperienced in such matters, had
not spoken to any of them, trusting in the goodness of my cause. I said
that, having received such outrage and insult from Gherardo, and in my
fury having only given him a box on the ear, I did not think I deserved
such a vehement reprimand. I had hardly time to finish the word box,
before Prinzivalle della Stufa, [3] who was one of the Eight,

simplicity of this poor young man, who has accused himself of having
given a box on the ear, under the impression that this is of less
importance than a blow; whereas a box on the ear in the New Market
carries a fine of twenty-five crowns, while a blow costs little or
nothing. He is a young man of admirable talents, and supports his poor
family by his labour in great abundance; I would to God that our city

'appostare' has the double meaning of lying in wait and arranging

burden to pass by.'
Note 2. Varchi says that a man who went about with only his cloak or cape by daytime, if he were not a soldier, was reputed an ill-liver. The Florentine citizens at this time still wore their ancient civil dress of the long gown and hood called ‘lucco.’

Note 3. This man was an ardent supporter of the Medici, and in 1510 organized a conspiracy in their favour against the Gonfalonier Soderini.

XVII

AMONG the magistrates were some Radical fellows with turned-up hoods, who had been influenced by the entreaties and the calumnies of my opponents, because they all belonged to the party of Fra Girolamo; and these men would have had me sent to prison and punished without too close a reckoning. [1] But the good Prinzivalle put a stop to that. So they sentenced me to pay four measures of flour, which were to be given as alms to the nunnery of the Murate. [2] I was called in again; and he ordered me not to speak a word under pain of their displeasure, and to perform the sentence they had passed. Then, after giving me another sharp rebuke, they sent us to the chancellor; I muttering all the while, with laughter. The chancellor bound us over upon bail on both sides; but only I was punished by having to pay the four measures of meal. Albeit just then I felt as though I had been massacred, I sent for one of my cousins, called Maestro Annibale, the surgeon, father of Messer Librodoro Librodori, desiring that he should go bail for me. [3] He
refused to come, which made me so angry, that, fuming with fury and
swelling like an asp, I took a desperate resolve. At this point one may
observe how the stars do not so much sway as force our conduct. When I
reflected on the great obligations which this Annibale owed my family,
my rage grew to such a pitch that, turning wholly to evil, and being
also by nature somewhat choleric, I waited till the magistrates had gone
to dinner; and when I was alone, and observed that none of their
officers were watching me, in the fire of my anger, I left the palace,
ran to my shop, seized a dagger and rushed to the house of my enemies,
who were at home and shop together. I found them at table; and Gherardo,
who had been the cause of the quarrel, flung himself upon me. I stabbed
him in the breast, piercing doublet and jerkin through and through to
the shirt, without however grazing his flesh or doing him the least harm
in the world. When I felt my hand go in, and heard the clothes tear, I
thought that I had killed him; and seeing him fall terror-struck to
threw themselves upon their knees, screaming out for mercy with all
their might; but I perceiving that they offered no resistance, and that
he was stretched for dead upon the ground, thought it too base a thing
to touch them. I ran storming down the staircase; and when I reached the
street, I found all the rest of the household, more than twelve persons;
one of them had seized an iron shovel, another a thick iron pipe, one
had an anvil, some of them hammers, and some cudgels. When I got among
them, raging like a mad bull, I flung four or five to the earth, and
fell down with them myself, continually aiming my dagger now at one and
now at another. Those who remained upright plied both hands with all
their force, giving it me with hammers, cudgels, and anvil; but inasmuch
as God does sometime mercifully intervene, He so ordered that neither
they nor I did any harm to one another. I only lost my cap, on which my
adversaries seized, though they had run away from it before, and struck
at it with all their weapons. Afterwards, they searched among their dead
and wounded, and saw that not a single man was injured.

Note 1. Cellini calls these magistrates 'arronzinati cappuccetti,' a
term corresponding to our Roundheads. The democratic or anti-Medicean
party in Florence at that time, who adhered to the republican principles
of Fra Girolamo Savonarola, distinguished themselves by wearing the long
tails of their hoods twisted up and turned round their heads. Cellini
shows his Medicean sympathies by using this contemptuous term, and by
the honourable mention he makes of Prinzivalle della Stufa

Note 2. A convent of closely immured nuns.

Note 3. The word I have translated 'massacred' above is 'assassinato.'
It occurs frequently in Italian of this period, and indicates the
extremity of wrong and outrage.

XVIII

I WENT off in the direction of Santa Maria Novella, and stumbling up
against Fra Alessio Strozzi, whom by the way I did not know, I entreated
this good friar for the love of God to save my life, since I had
committed a great fault. He told me to have no fear; for had I done
every sin in the world, I was yet in perfect safety in his little cell.

After about an hour, the Eight, in an extraordinary meeting, caused one of the most dreadful bans which ever were heard of to be published against me, announcing heavy penalties against who should harbour me or know where I was, without regard to place or to the quality of my protector. My poor afflicted father went to the Eight, threw himself upon his knees, and prayed for mercy for his unfortunate young son. Thereupon one of those Radical fellows, shaking the crest of his twisted hood, stood up and addressed my father with these insulting words: [1]

came to visit me, together with a young man of my own age, called Pierro di Giovanni Landi—we loved one another as though we had been brothers.

Under his mantle the lad carried a first-rate sword and a splendid coat of mail; and when they found me, my brave father told me what had happened, and what the magistrates had said to him. Then he kissed me on the forehead and both eyes, and gave me his hearty blessing, saying:

the sword and armour, he helped me with his own hands to put them on.

tears; and when he had given me ten golden crowns, I bade him remove a few hairs from my chin, which were the first down of my manhood. Frate Alessio disguised me like a friar and gave me a lay brother to go with me. [3] Quitting the convent, and issuing from the city by the gate of
Prato, I went along the walls as far as the Piazza di San Gallo. Then I ascended the slope of Montui, and in one of the first houses there I found a man called Il Grassuccio, own brother to Messer Benedetto da man. Then we mounted two horses, which were waiting there for us, and went by night to Siena. Grassuccio returned to Florence, sought out my father, and gave him the news of my safe escape. In the excess of his joy, it seemed a thousand years to my father till he should meet the member of the Eight who had insulted him; and when he came across the

Note 1. 'Un di queli arrovellati scotendo la cresto dello arronzinato called at Florence 'Arrabbiati' or 'Arrovellati.' In the days of Savonarola this nickname had been given to the ultra-Medicean party or Palleschi.

Note 2. 'Lanciotti.' There is some doubt about this word. But it clearly means men armed with lances, at the disposal of the Signory.

Note 3. 'Un converso,' an attendant on the monks.

Note 4. Benedetto da Monte Varchi was the celebrated poet, scholar, and historian of Florence, better known as Varchi. Another of his brothers was a physician of high repute at Florence. They continued throughout
AT Siena I waited for the mail to Rome, which I afterwards joined; and when we passed the Paglia, we met a courier carrying news of the new Pope, Clement VII. Upon my arrival in Rome, I went to work in the shop of the master-goldsmith Santi. He was dead; but a son of his carried on the business. He did not work himself, but entrusted all his commissions to a young man named Lucagnolo from Iesi, a country fellow, who while proportioned, and was a more skilful craftsman than any one whom I had met with up to that time; remarkable for facility and excellent in design. He executed large plate only: that is to say, vases of the utmost beauty, basons, and such pieces. [1] Having put myself to work there, I began to make some candelabra for the Bishop of Salamanca, a Spaniard. [2] They were richly chased, so far as that sort of work admits. A pupil of Raffaello da Urbino called Gian Francesco, and commonly known as Il Fattore, was a painter of great ability; and being on terms of friendship with the Bishop, he introduced me to his favour, so that I obtained many commissions from that prelate, and earned considerable sums of money. [3]

and sometimes in the house of Agostino Chigi of Siena, which contained many incomparable paintings by the hand of that great master Raffaello. [4] This I did on feast-days, because the house was then inhabited by when they saw young men of my sort coming to study in their palaces.
lady as courteous as could be, and of surpassing beauty-came up to me
one day, looked at my drawings, and asked me if I was a sculptor or a
painter; to whom I said I was a goldsmith. She remarked that I drew too
well for a goldsmith; and having made one of her waiting-maids bring a
lily of the finest diamonds set in gold, she showed it to me, and bade
me value it. I valued it at 800 crowns. Then she said that I had very
nearly hit the mark, and asked me whether I felt capable of setting the
stones really well. I said that I should much like to do so, and began
before her eyes to make a little sketch for it, working all the better
because of the pleasure I took in conversing with so lovely and
agreeable a gentlewoman. When the sketch was finished, another Roman
lady of great beauty joined us; she had been above, and now descending
to the ground-floor, asked Madonna Porzia what she was doing there. She
this time acquired a trifle of assurance, mixed, however, with some

reaching me the lily, told me to take it away; and gave me besides

jewel after the fashion you have sketched, and keep for me the old gold

Porzia replied that virtues rarely are at home with vices, and that if I
did such a thing, I should strongly belie my good looks of an honest

the drawing I was making, which was a copy of a Jove by Raffaello. When
I had finished it and left the house, I set myself to making a little
model of wax, in order to show how the jewel would look when it was
completed. This I took to Madonna Porzia, whom I found with the same
Roman lady. Both of them were highly satisfied with my work, and treated
me so kindly that, being somewhat emboldened, I promised the jewel
should be twice as good as the model. Accordingly I set hand to it, and
in twelve days I finished it in the form of a fleur-de-lys, as I have
said above, ornamenting it with little masks, children, and animals,
exquisitely enamelled, whereby the diamonds which formed the lily were
more than doubled in effect.

Note 1. Cellini calls this ‘grosseria.’

Note 2. Don Francesco de Bobadilla. He came to Rome in 1517, was shut up
with Clement in the castle of S. Angelo in 1527, and died in 1529, after
his return to Spain.

Note 3. This painter, Gio. Francesco Penni, surnamed Il Fattore, aided
Raphael in his Roman frescoes and was much beloved by him. Together with
Giulio Romano he completed the imperfect Stanze of the Vatican.

Note 4. Cellini here alludes to the Sistine Chapel and to the Villa
Farnesina in Trastevere, built by the Sienese banker, Agostino Chigi. It
was here that Raphael painted his Galatea and the whole fable of Cupid
and Psyche.

XX

WHILE I was working at this piece, Lucagnolo, of whose ability I have
before spoken, showed considerable discontent, telling me over and over again that I might acquire far more profit and honour by helping him to execute large plate, as I had done at first. I made him answer that, whenever I chose, I should always be capable of working at great silver pieces; but that things like that on which I was now engaged were not commissioned every day; and beside their bringing no less honour than large silver plate, there was also more profit to be made by them. He time that you have finished that work of yours, I will make haste to have finished this vase, which I took in hand when you did the jewel; and then experience shall teach you what profit I shall get from my very glad indeed to enter into such a competition with so good a craftsman as he was, because the end would show which of us was mistaken. Accordingly both the one and the other of us, with a scornful smile upon our lips, bent our heads in grim earnest to the work, which both were now desirous of accomplishing; so that after about ten days, each had finished his undertaking with great delicacy and artistic skill.

into which he flung away bits of bone and the rind of divers fruits, while eating; an object of ostentation rather than necessity. The vase was adorned with two fine handles, together with many masks, both small and great, and masses of lovely foliage, in as exquisite a style of elegance as could be imagined; on seeing which I said it was the most beautiful vase that ever I set eyes on. Thinking he had convinced me, and carried it to the Pope, who was very well pleased with it, and ordered at once that he should be paid at the ordinary rate of such
large plate. Meanwhile I carried mine to Madonna Porzia, who looked at
it with astonishment, and told me I had far surpassed my promise. Then
she bade me ask for my reward whatever I liked; for it seemed to her my
desert was so great that if I craved a castle she could hardly
recompense me; but since that was not in her hands to bestow, she added
laughing that I must beg what lay within her power. I answered that the
greatest reward I could desire for my labour was to have satisfied her
ladyship. Then, smiling in my turn, and bowing to her, I took my leave,
saying I wanted no reward but that. She turned to the Roman lady and
time she had no will to bestow on him that favour.

When I came back to the shop, Lucagnolo had the money for his vase in a
leave things as they were till the next day, because I hoped that even
as my work in its kind was not less excellent than his, so I should be
able to show him quite an equal price for it.

XXI

ON the day following, Madonna Porzia sent a major-domo of hers to my
shop, who called me out, and putting into my hands a paper packet full
of money from his lady, told me that she did not choose the devil should
have his whole laugh out: by which she hinted that the money sent me was
not the entire payment merited by my industry, and other messages were
added worthy of so courteous a lady. Lucagnolo, who was burning to
compare his packet with mine, burst into the shop; then in the presence
of twelve journeymen and some neighbours, eager to behold the result of
three or four times, while he poured his money on the counter with a
great noise. They were twenty-five crowns in giulios; and he fancied
that mine would be four or five crowns 'di moneta.' [1] I for my part,
stunned and stifled by his cries, and by the looks and smiles of the
bystanders, first peeped into my packet; then, after seeing that it
contained nothing but gold, I retired to one end of the counter, and,
keeping my eyes lowered and making no noise at all, I lifted it with
both hands suddenly above my head, and emptied it like a mill hopper.
[2] My coin was twice as much as his; which caused the onlookers, who
had fixed their eyes on me with some derision, to turn round suddenly to
what with jealousy and what with shame, Lucagnolo would have fallen dead
upon the spot; and though he took the third part of my gain, since I was
a journeyman (for such is the custom of the trade, two-thirds fall to
the workman and one-third to the masters of the shop), yet inconsiderate
envy had more power in him than avarice: it ought indeed to have worked
art and those who taught it him, vowing that thenceforth he would never
work at large plate, but give his whole attention to those brothel
gewgaws, since they were so well paid. Equally enraged on my side, I
answered, that every bird sang its own note; that he talked after the
fashion of the hovels he came from; but that I dared swear that I should
succeed with ease in making his lubberly lumber, while he would never be
successful in my brothel gewgaws. [3] Thus I flung off in a passion,
telling him that I would soon show him that I spoke truth. The bystanders openly declared against him, holding him for a lout, as indeed he was, and me for a man, as I had proved myself.

Note 1. 'Scudi di giuli' and 'scudi di moneta.' The 'giulio' was a silver coin worth 56 Italian centimes. The 'scudi di moneta' was worth 10 'giulios.' Cellini was paid in golden crowns, which had a much higher value. The 'scuda' and the 'ducato' at this epoch were reckoned at [7] 'lire,' the 'lira' at 20 'soldi.'

Note 2. The packet was funnel-shaped, and Cellini poured the coins out from the broad end.

Note 3. The two slang phrases translated above are 'bordellerie' and 'coglienerie.'

XXII

NEXT day, I went to thank Madonna Porzia, and told her that her ladyship had done the opposite of what she said she would; for that while I wanted to make the devil laugh, she had made him once more deny God. We both laughed pleasantly at this, and she gave me other commissions for fine and substantial work.

Meanwhile, I contrived, by means of a pupil of Raffaello da Urbino, to
get an order from the Bishop of Salamanca for one of those great
water-vessels called 'acquereccia,' which are used for ornaments to
place on sideboards. He wanted a pair made of equal size; and one of
them he entrusted to Lucagnolo, the other to me. Giovan Francesco, the
painter I have mentioned, gave us the design. [1] Accordingly I set hand
with marvellous good-will to this piece of plate, and was accommodated
with a part of his workshop by a Milanese named Maestro Giovan Piero
della Tacca. Having made my preparations, I calculated how much money I
should need for certain affairs of my own, and sent all the rest to
assist my poor father.

It so happened that just when this was being paid to him in Florence, he
stumbled upon one of those Radicals who were in the Eight at the time
when I got into that little trouble there. It was the very man who had
abused him so rudely, and who swore that I should certainly be sent into
the country with the lances. Now this fellow had some sons of very bad
happen to anybody, especially to men of choleric humour when they are in
the right, even as it happened to my son; but let the rest of his life
bear witness how virtuously I have brought him up. Would God, for your
well-being, that your sons may act neither worse nor better toward you
than mine do to me. God rendered me able to bring them up as I have

music at times, in order that I might not lose the fine accomplishment
which he had taught me with such trouble. The letter so overflowed with
expressions of the tenderest fatherly affection, that I was moved to
tears of filial piety, resolving, before he died, to gratify him amply
with regard to music. Thus God grants us those lawful blessings which we
ask in prayer, nothing doubting.

Note 1. That is, Il Fattore. See above, p. 34.

XXIII

as help, whom I had taken at the entreaty of friends, and half against
my own will, to be my workman. He was about fourteen years of age, bore
the name of Paulino, and was son to a Roman burgess, who lived upon the
income of his property. Paulino was the best-mannered, the most honest,
and the most beautiful boy I ever saw in my whole life. His modest ways
and actions, together with his superlative beauty and his devotion to
hold. This passionate love led me oftentimes to delight the lad with
music; for I observed that his marvellous features, which by complexion
wore a tone of modest melancholy, brightened up, and when I took my
cornet, broke into a smile so lovely and so sweet, that I do not marvel
at the silly stories which the Greeks have written about the deities of
heaven. Indeed, if my boy had lived in those times, he would probably
have turned their heads still more. [1] He had a sister, named Faustina,
more beautiful, I verily believe, than that Faustina about whom the old
books gossip so. Sometimes he took me to their vineyard, and, so far as
welcomed me as a son-in-law. This affair led me to play more than I was
used to do.
It happened at that time that one Giangiacomo of Cesena, a musician in
playing soprano with my cornet in some motets of great beauty selected
by them for that occasion. Although I had the greatest desire to
finish the vase I had begun, yet, since music has a wondrous charm of
its own, and also because I wished to please my old father, I consented
to join them. During eight days before the festival we practised two
hours a day together; then on the first of August we went to the
Belvedere, and while Pope Clement was at table, we played those
carefully studied motets so well that his Holiness protested he had
never heard music more sweetly executed or with better harmony of parts.
He sent for Giangiacomo, and asked him where and how he had procured so
excellent a cornet for soprano, and inquired particularly who I was.

Pope expressed his wish to have me in his service with the other
for certain that you will get him, for his profession, to which he
devotes himself assiduously, is that of a goldsmith, and he works in it
miraculously well, and earns by it far more than he could do by
that I find him possessor of a talent more than I expected. See that he
obtains the same salary as the rest of you; and tell him from me to join
my service, and that I will find work enough by the day for him to do in

When Giangiacomo left the Pope, he came to us, and related in detail all
that the Pope had said; and after dividing the money between the eight

whether I ought to accept the invitation, inasmuch as I could not but
suffer if I abandoned the noble studies of my art. The following night
my father appeared to me in a dream, and begged me with tears of

engagement. Methought I answered that nothing would induce me to do so.

In an instant he assumed so horrible an aspect as to frighten me out of

fright, to have myself inscribed. Then I wrote to my old father, telling
him the news, which so affected him with extreme joy that a sudden fit

answer to my letter, he told me that he too had dreamed nearly the same

as I had.

them still more off the hinges.

Note 3. The Camera Apostolica was the Roman Exchequer.

XXIV

think that everything would prosper with me to a glorious and honourable

end. Accordingly, I set myself with indefatigable industry to the
completion of the vase I had begun for Salamanca. That prelate was a very extraordinary man, extremely rich, but difficult to please. He sent daily to learn what I was doing; and when his messenger did not find me at home, he broke into fury, saying that he would take the work out of my hands and give it to others to finish. This came of my slavery to that accursed music. Still I laboured diligently night and day, until, when I had brought my work to a point when it could be exhibited, I submitted it to the inspection of the Bishop. This so increased his desire to see it finished that I was sorry I had shown it. At the end of three months I had it ready, with little animals and foliage and masks, as beautiful as one could hope to see. No sooner was it done than I sent it by the hand of my workman, Paulino, to show that able artist Lucagnolo, of whom I have spoken above. Paulino, with the grace and

Benvenuto bids me say that he has sent to show you his promises and your given, Lucagnolo took up the vase, and carefully examined it; then he artist, and that I beg him to be willing to have me for a friend, and

marvellous lad caused me the greatest joy; and then the vase was carried to Salamanca, who ordered it to be valued. Lucagnolo took part in the valuation, estimating and praising it far above my own opinion.

God that I will take as long in paying him as he has lagged in making all Spain and every one who wished well to it.

Amongst other beautiful ornaments, this vase had a handle, made all of one piece, with most delicate mechanism, which, when a spring was
touched, stood upright above the mouth of it. While the prelate was one
day ostentatiously exhibiting my vase to certain Spanish gentlemen of
room, began roughly to work the handle, and as the gentle spring which
moved it could not bear his loutish violence, it broke in his hand.
Aware what mischief he had done, he begged the butler who had charge of
mend, and promised to pay what price he asked, provided it was set to
rights at once. So the vase came once more into my hands, and I promised
to put it forthwith in order, which indeed I did. It was brought to me
returned, all in a sweat, for he had run the whole way, Monsignor having
again asked for it to show to certain other gentlemen. [1] The butler,
him, said that I did not mean to be so quick. The serving-man got into
such a rage that he made as though he would put one hand to his sword,
while with the other he threatened to break the shop open. To this I put
a stop at once with my own weapon, using therewith spirited language,
your master, that I want the money for my work before I let it leave
fell to praying me, as one prays to the Cross, declaring that if I would
only give it up, he would take care I should be paid. These words did
not make me swerve from my purpose; but I kept on saying the same thing.
At last, despairing of success, he swore to come with Spaniards enough
to cut me in pieces. Then he took to his heels; while I, who inclined to
believe partly in their murderous attack, resolved that I would defend
myself with courage. So I got an admirable little gun ready, which I
carrying on this debate in my own mind, a crowd of Spaniards arrived,
led by their major-domo, who, with the headstrong rashness of his race, bade them go in and take the vase and give me a good beating. Hearing these words, I showed them the muzzle of my gun, and prepared to fire, breaks into houses and shops in our city of Rome? Come as many of you clapped spurs to the jennet he was riding, and took flight headlong. The commotion we were making stirred up all the neighbours, who came crowding round, together with some Roman gentlemen who chanced to pass, words had the effect of frightening the Spaniards in good earnest. They withdrew, and were compelled by the circumstances to relate the whole affair to Monsignor. Being a man of inordinate haughtiness, he rated the members of his household, both because they had engaged in such an act of violence, and also because, having begun, they had not gone through with it. At this juncture the painter, who had been concerned in the whole matter, came in, and the Bishop bade him go and tell me that if I did not bring the vase at once, he would make mincemeat of me; [2] but if I brought it, he would pay its price down. These threats were so far from terrifying me, that I sent him word I was going immediately to lay my case before the Pope.

In the meantime, his anger and my fear subsided; whereupon, being guaranteed by some Roman noblemen of high degree that the prelate would not harm me, and having assurance that I should be paid, I armed myself with a large poniard and my good coat of mail, and betook myself to his palace, where he had drawn up all his household. I entered, and Paulino
followed with the silver vase. It was just like passing through the
Zodiac, neither more nor less; for one of them had the face of the lion,
another of the scorpion, a third of the crab. However, we passed onward
to the presence of the rascally priest, who spouted out a torrent of
such language as only priests and Spaniards have at their command. In
return I never raised my eyes to look at him, nor answered word for
word. That seemed to augment the fury of his anger; and causing paper to
be put before me, he commanded me to write an acknowledgment to the
effect that I had been amply satisfied and paid in full. Then I raised
my head, and said I should be very glad to do so when I had received the
were flung about; but at last the money was paid, and I wrote the
receipt. Then I departed, glad at heart and in high spirits.

Note 1. The Italians reckoned time from sundown till sundown, counting
nightfall. One hour of the night was one hour after nightfall, and so
forth. By this system of reckoning, it is clear that the hours varied
with the season of the year; and unless we know the exact month in which
an event took place, we cannot translate any hour into terms of our own
system.

XXV

WHEN Pope Clement heard the story—he had seen the vase before, but it
was not shown him as my work—he expressed much pleasure and spoke warmly in my praise, publicly saying that he felt very favourably toward me.

This caused Monsignor Salamanca to repent that he had hectored over me; and in order to make up our quarrel, he sent the same painter to inform me that he meant to give me large commissions. I replied that I was willing to undertake them, but that I should require to be paid in heartily. Cardinal Cibo was in the presence, and the Pope narrated to him the whole history of my dispute with the Bishop. [1] Then he turned to one of his people, and ordered him to go on supplying me with work for the palace. Cardinal Cibo sent for me, and after some time spent in agreeable conversation, gave me the order for a large vase, bigger than many others of the Holy College, especially Ridolfi and Salviati; they all kept me well employed, so that I earned plenty of money.

Madonna Porzia now advised me to open a shop of my own. This I did; and I never stopped working for that excellent and gentle lady, who paid me exceedingly well, and by whose means perhaps it was that I came to make a figure in the world.

I contracted close friendship with Signor Gabbriello Ceserino, at that time Gonfalonier of Rome, and executed many pieces for him. One, among the rest, is worthy of mention. It was a large golden medal to wear in the hat. I engraved upon it Leda with her swan; and being very well pleased with the workmanship, he said he should like to have it valued, in order that I might be properly paid. Now, since the medal was executed with consummate skill, the valuers of the trade set a far
higher price on it than he had thought of. I therefore kept the medal, and got nothing for my pains. The same sort of adventures happened in briefly by, lest they hinder me from telling things of greater importance.

Note 1. Innocenzio Cibo Malaspina, Archbishop of Genoa, and nephew of of arts and letters.

Note 2. Marco Cornaro was a brother of Caterina, the Queen of Cyprus. He Giovanni Salviati, the son of Jacopo mentioned above, was also a nephew of Leo X, who gave him the hat in 1517.

XXVI

SINCE I am writing my life, I must from time to time diverge from my profession in order to describe with brevity, if not in detail, some incidents which have no bearing on my career as artist. On the morning nation, painters, sculptors, goldsmiths, amongst the most notable of whom was Rosso and Gainfrancesco, the pupil of Raffaello. [1] I had invited them without restraint or ceremony to the place of our meeting, and they were all laughing and joking, as is natural when a crowd of men come together to make merry on so great a festival. It chanced that a light-brained swaggering young fellow passed by; he was a soldier of Rienzo da Ceri, who, when he heard the noise that we were making, gave
vent to a string of opprobrious sarcasms upon the folk of Florence. [2]

I, who was the host of those great artists and men of worth, taking the insult to myself, slipped out quietly without being observed, and went up to him. I ought to say that he had a punk of his there, and was going on with his stupid ribaldries to amuse her. When I met him, I asked if he was the rash fellow who was speaking evil of the Florentines. He

our swords with spirit; but the fray had hardly begun when a crowd of persons intervened, who rather took my part than not, hearing and seeing that I was in the right.

On the following day a challenge to fight with him was brought me, which I accepted very gladly, saying that I expected to complete this job far quicker than those of the other art I practised. So I went at once to confer with a fine old man called Bevilacqua, who was reputed to have been the first sword of Italy, because he had fought more than twenty serious duels and had always come off with honour. This excellent man was a great friend of mine; he knew me as an artist and had also been concerned as intermediary in certain ugly quarrels between me and others. Accordingly, when he had learned my business, he answered with a would come out with honour, because through all the years that I have consented to be my second, and we repaired with sword in hand to the appointed place, but no blood was shed, for my opponent made the matter up, and I came with much credit out of the affair. [3] I will not add further particulars; for though they would be very interesting in their own way, I wish to keep both space and words for my art, which has been
my chief inducement to write as I am doing, and about which I shall have only too much to say.

The spirit of honourable rivalry impelled me to attempt some other masterpiece, which should equal, or even surpass, the productions of that able craftsman, Lucagnolo, whom I have mentioned. Still I did not on this account neglect my own fine art of jewellery; and so both the one and the other wrought me much profit and more credit, and in both of them I continued to produce things of marked originality. There was at that time in Rome a very able artist of Perugia named Lautizio, who worked only in one department, where he was sole and unrivalled throughout the world. [4] You must know that at Rome every cardinal has a seal, upon which his title is engraved, and these seals are made just with a great many ornamental figures. A well-made article of the kind fetches a hundred, or more than a hundred crowns. This excellent workman, like Lucagnolo, roused in me some honest rivalry, although the art he practised is far remote from the other branches of gold-smithery, and consequently Lautizio was not skilled in making anything but seals. I gave my mind to acquiring his craft also, although I found it very difficult; and, unrepelled by the trouble which it gave me, I went on zealously upon the path of profit and improvement.

There was in Rome another most excellent craftsman of ability, who was a Milanese named Messer Caradosso. [5] He dealt in nothing but little chiselled medals, made of plates of metal, and such-like things. I have seen of his some paxes in half relief, and some Christs a palm in length
wrought of the thinnest golden plates, so exquisitely done that I esteemed him the greatest master in that kind I had ever seen, and envied him more than all the rest together. There were also other masters who worked at medals carved in steel, which may be called the models and true guides for those who aim at striking coins in the most perfect style. All these divers arts I set myself with unflagging industry to learn.

I must not omit the exquisite art of enamelling, in which I have never known any one excel save a Florentine, our countryman, called Amerigo. [6] I did not know him, but was well acquainted with his incomparable masterpieces. Nothing in any part of the world or by craftsman that I have seen, approached the divine beauty of their workmanship. To this branch too I devoted myself with all my strength, although it is extremely difficult, chiefly because of the fire, which, after long time and trouble spent in other processes, has to be applied at last, and not unfrequently brings the whole to ruin. In spite of its great difficulties, it gave me so much pleasure that I looked upon them as recreation; and this came from the special gift which the God of nature bestowed on me, that is to say, a temperament so happy and of such excellent parts that I was freely able to accomplish whatever it pleased me to take in hand. The various departments of art which I have described are very different one from the other, so that a man who excels in one of them, if he undertakes the others, hardly ever achieves the same success; whereas I strove with all my power to become equally versed in all of them: and in the proper place I shall demonstrate that I attained my object.
the Guilds went in procession with pageants through the city. Of the Florentine painter, Il Rosso, or Maitre Roux, this is the first mention by Cellini. He went to France in 1534, and died an obscure death there in 1541.

Note 2. This Rienzo, Renzo, or Lorenzo da Ceri, was a captain of adventurers or Condottiere, who hired his mercenary forces to paymasters. He defended Crema for the Venetians in 1514, and conquered Urbino for the Pope in 1515. Afterwards he fought for the French in the Italian wars. We shall hear more of him again during the sack of Rome.

Note 3. The Italian, 'restando dal mio avversario,' seems to mean that duel at a certain point.

particulars about this artist.

Note 5. His real name was Ambrogio Foppa. The nickname Caradosso is said to have stuck to him in consequence of a Spaniard calling him some excellent medallion portraits by his hand.
AT that time, while I was still a young man of about twenty-three, there raged a plague of such extraordinary violence that many thousands died of it every day in Rome. Somewhat terrified at this calamity, I began to take certain amusements, as my mind suggested, and for a reason which I will presently relate. I had formed a habit of going on feast-days to the ancient buildings, and copying parts of them in wax or with the pencil; and since these buildings are all ruins, and the ruins house innumerable pigeons, it came into my head to use my gun against these birds. So then, avoiding all commerce with people, in my terror of the

he and I went out alone into the ruins; and oftentimes we came home laden with a cargo of the fattest pigeons. I did not care to charge my gun with more than a single ball; and thus it was by pure skill in the art that I filled such heavy bags. I had a fowling-piece which I had made myself; inside and out it was as bright as any mirror. I also used to make a very fine sort of powder, in doing which I discovered secret processes, beyond any which have yet been found; and on this point, in order to be brief, I will give but one particular, which will astonish good shots of every degree. This is, that when I charged my gun with powder weighing one-fifth of the ball, it carried two hundred paces point-blank. It is true that the great delight I took in this exercise bid fair to withdraw me from my art and studies; yet in another way it gave me more than it deprived me of, seeing that each time I went out shooting I returned with greatly better health, because the open air was a benefit to my constitution. My natural temperament was melancholy, and
while I was taking these amusements, my heart leapt up with joy, and I found that I could work better and with far greater mastery than when I spent my whole time in study and manual labour. In this way my gun, at the end of the game, stood me more in profit than in loss.

It was also the cause of my making acquaintance with certain hunters after curiosities, who followed in the track [1] of those Lombard peasants who used to come to Rome to till the vineyards at the proper season. While digging the ground, they frequently turned up antique medals, agates, chrysoprases, cornelians, and cameos; also sometimes jewels, as, for instance, emeralds, sapphires, diamonds, and rubies. The peasants used to sell things of this sort to the traders for a mere trifle; and I very often, when I met them, paid the latter several times as many golden crowns as they had given giulios for some object. Independently of the profit I made by this traffic, which was at least tenfold, it brought me also into agreeable relations with nearly all the cardinals of Rome. I will only touch upon a few of the most notable and the rarest of these curiosities. There came into my hands, among many other fragments, the head of a dolphin about as big as a good-sized ballot-bean. Not only was the style of this head extremely beautiful, but nature had here far surpassed art; for the stone was an emerald of such good colour, that the man who bought it from me for tens of crowns sold it again for hundreds after setting it as a finger-ring. I will mention another kind of gem; this was a magnificent topaz; and here art equalled nature; it was as large as a big hazel-nut, with the head of Minerva in a style of inconceivable beauty. I remember yet another precious stone, different from these; it was a cameo, engraved with
Hercules binding Cerberus of the triple throat; such was its beauty and the skill of its workmanship, that our great Michel Agnolo protested he had never seen anything so wonderful. Among many bronze medals, I obtained one upon which was a head of Jupiter. It was the largest that had ever been seen; the head of the most perfect execution; and it had on the reverse side a very fine design of some little figures in the same style. I might enlarge at great length on this curiosity; but I will refrain for fear of being prolix.

Note 1. 'Stavano alle velette.' Perhaps 'lay in wait for.'

XXVIII

AS I have said above, the plague had broken out in Rome; but though I must return a little way upon my steps, I shall not therefore abandon the main path of my history. There arrived in Rome a surgeon of the highest renown, who was called Maestro Giacomo da Carpi. [1] This able man, in the course of his other practice, undertook the most desperate cases of the so-called French disease. In Rome this kind of illness is very partial to the priests, and especially to the richest of them. When, therefore, Maestro Giacomo had made his talents known, he professed to work miracles in the treatment of such cases by means of certain fumigations; but he only undertook a cure after stipulating for his fees, which he reckoned not by tens, but by hundreds of crowns. He was a great connoisseur in the arts of design. Chancing to pass one day before my shop, he saw a lot of drawings which I had laid upon the
counter, and among these were several designs for little vases in a capricious style, which I had sketched for my amusement. These vases were in quite a different fashion from any which had been seen up to that date. He was anxious that I should finish one or two of them for him in silver; and this I did with the fullest satisfaction, seeing they exactly suited my own fancy. The clever surgeon paid me very well, and yet the honour which the vases brought me was worth a hundred times as never seen anything more beautiful or better executed.

No sooner had I finished them than he showed them to the Pope; and the next day following he betook himself away from Rome. He was a man of much learning, who used to discourse wonderfully about medicine. The Pope would fain have had him in his service, but he replied that he would not take service with anybody in the world, and that whoso had need of him might come to seek him out. He was a person of great sagacity, and did wisely to get out of Rome; for not many months afterwards, all the patients he had treated grew so ill that they were a hundred times worse off than before he came. He would certainly have been murdered if he had stopped. He showed my little vases to several persons of quality; amongst others, to the most excellent Duke of Ferrara, and pretended that he had got them from a great lord in Rome, by telling this nobleman that if he wanted to be cured, he must give him those two vases; and that the lord had answered that they were antique, and besought him to ask for anything else which it might be convenient for him to give, provided only he would leave him those; but, according to his own account, Maestro Giacomo made as though he would not undertake the cure, and so he got them.
I was told this by Messer Alberto Bendedio in Ferrara, who with great
ostentation showed me some earthenware copies he possessed of them. [2]
Thereupon I laughed, and as I said nothing, Messer Alberto Bendedio, who
are you? And I tell you that during the last thousand years there has
caring to deprive them of so eminent a reputation, kept silence, and
admired them with mute stupefaction. It was said to me in Rome by many
great lords, some of whom were my friends, that the work of which I have
been speaking was, in their opinion of marvellous excellence and genuine
antiquity; whereupon, emboldened by their praises, I revealed that I had
made them. As they would not believe it, and as I wished to prove that I
had spoken truth, I was obliged to bring evidence and to make new
drawings of the vases; for my word alone was not enough, inasmuch as
Maestro Giacomo had cunningly insisted upon carrying off the old
drawings with him. By this little job I earned a fair amount of money.

Note 1. Giacomo Berengario da Carpi was, in fact, a great physician,
surgeon, and student of anatomy. He is said to have been the first to
use mercury in the cure of syphilis, a disease which was devastating
Italy after the year 1495. He amassed a large fortune, which, when he
died at Ferrara about 1530, he bequeathed to the Duke there.

Note 2. See below, Book II. Chap. viii., for a full account of this
incident at Ferrara.
THE PLAGUE went dragging on for many months, but I had as yet managed to keep it at bay; for though several of my comrades were dead, I survived in health and freedom. Now it chanced one evening that an intimate comrade of mine brought home to supper a Bolognese prostitute named Faustina. She was a very fine woman, but about thirty years of age; and she had with her a little serving-girl of thirteen or fourteen. Faustina belonging to my friend, I would not have touched her for all the gold in the world; and though she declared she was madly in love with me, I remained steadfast in my loyalty. But after they had gone to bed, I stole away the little serving-girl, who was quite a fresh maid, and woe to her if her mistress had known of it! The result was that I enjoyed a very pleasant night, far more to my satisfaction than if I had passed it with Faustina. I rose upon the hour of breaking fast, and felt tired, for I had travelled many miles that night, and was wanting to take food, when a crushing headache seized me; several boils appeared on my left arm, together with a carbuncle which showed itself just beyond the palm of the left hand where it joins the wrist. Everybody in the house was in a panic; my friend, the cow and the calf, all fled. Left alone there with my poor little prentice, who refused to abandon me, I felt stifled at the heart, and made up my mind for certain I was a dead man.

Just then the father of the lad went by, who was physician to the might be, the doctor came up at once, and when he had felt my pulse, he
saw and felt what was very contrary to his own wishes. Turning round to

father, this man my master is worth far more than all the cardinals in

consent to treat you. But of one thing only I warn you, that if you have

the sores are so new, and have not yet begun to stink, and that the

remedies will be taken in time, you need not be too much afraid, for I

away, a very dear friend of mine, called Giovanni Rigogli, came in, who

fell to commiserating my great suffering and also my desertion by my

come too close, since it was all over with me. Only I besought him to be

so kind as to take a considerable quantity of crowns, which were lying

in a little box near my bed, and when God had thought fit to remove me

from this world, to send them to my poor father, writing pleasantly to

him, in the way I too had done, so far as that appalling season of the

plague permitted. [4] My beloved friend declared that he had no

intention whatsoever of leaving me, and that come what might, in life or

death, he knew very well what was his duty toward a friend. And so we

went on by the help of God: and the admirable remedies which I had used

began to work a great improvement, and I soon came well out of that

dreadful sickness.

The sore was still open, with a plug of lint inside it and a plaster

above, when I went out riding on a little wild pony. He was covered with

hair four fingers long, and was exactly as big as a well-grown bear;
indeed he looked just like a bear. I rode out on him to visit the painter Rosso, who was then living in the country, toward Civita

keep quiet. I stayed in that place about a month, with much content and gladness, enjoying good wines and excellent food, and treated with the greatest kindness by the Count; every day I used to ride out alone along the seashore, where I dismounted, and filled my pockets with all sorts of pebbles, snail shells, and sea shells of great rarity and beauty.

On the last day (for after this I went there no more) I was attacked by a band of men, who had disguised themselves, and disembarked from a Moorish privateer. When they thought that they had run me into a certain passage, where it seemed impossible that I should escape from their hands, I suddenly mounted my pony, resolved to be roasted or boiled alive at that pass perilous, seeing I had little hope to evade one or the other of these fates; [5] but, as God willed, my pony, who was the same I have described above, took an incredibly wide jump, and brought me off in safety, for which I heartily thanked God. I told the story to the Count; he ran to arms; but we saw the galleys setting out to sea.
The next day following I went back sound and with good cheer to Rome.

Note 1. Probably Domenico Iacobacci, who obtained the hat in 1517.
Note 3. 'Quanto.' Perhaps we ought to read 'quando-when?'

had died of the plague. But I think the version in my sense is more true

Note 5. 'i. e.,' to escape either being drowned or shot.

XXX

THE PLAGUE had by this time almost died out, so that the survivors, when company. This led to the formation of a club of painters, sculptors, and goldsmiths, the best that were in Rome; and the founder of it was a sculptor with the name of Michel Agnolo. [1] He was a Sienese and a man of great ability, who could hold his own against any other workman in that art; but, above all, he was the most amusing comrade and the heartiest good fellow in the universe. Of all the members of the club, he was the eldest, and yet the youngest from the strength and vigour of his body. We often came together; at the very least twice a week. I must not omit to mention that our society counted Giulio Romano, the painter, and Gian Francesco, both of them celebrated pupils of the mighty Raffaello da Urbino.
After many and many merry meetings, it seemed good to our worthy president that for the following Sunday we should repair to supper in his house, and that each one of us should be obliged to bring with him his crow (such was the nickname Michel Agnolo gave to women in the club), and that whoso did not bring one should be sconced by paying a supper to the whole company. Those of us who had no familiarity with women of the town, were forced to purvey themselves at no small trouble and expense, in order to appear without disgrace at that distinguished feast of artists. I had reckoned upon being well provided with a young woman of considerable beauty, called Pantasilea, who was very much in love with me; but I was obliged to give her up to one of my dearest friends, called Il Bachiacca, who on his side had been, and still was, over head and ears in love with her. [2] This exchange excited a certain great affection which she bore me. In course of time a very serious incident grew out of this misunderstanding, through her desire to take revenge for the affront I had put upon her; whereof I shall speak hereafter in the proper place.

Well, then, the hour was drawing nigh when we had to present ourselves before that company of men of genius, each with his own crow; and I was still unprovided; and yet I thought it would be stupid to fail of such a madcap bagatelle; [3] but what particularly weighed upon my mind was that I did not choose to lend the light of my countenance in that illustrious sphere to some miserable plume-plucked scarecrow. All these considerations made me devise a pleasant trick, for the increase of merriment and the diffusion of mirth in our society.
Having taken this resolve, I sent for a stripling of sixteen years, who lived in the next house to mine; he was the son of a Spanish coppersmith. This young man gave his time to Latin studies, and was very diligent in their pursuit. He bore the name of Diego, had a handsome figure, and a complexion of marvellous brilliancy; the outlines of his head and face were far more beautiful than those of the antique Antinous: I had often copied them, gaining thereby much honour from the works in which I used them. The youth had no acquaintances, and was therefore quite unknown; dressed very ill and negligently; all his affections being set upon those wonderful studies of his. After bringing which I had caused to be laid out. He readily complied, and put them on at once, while I added new beauties to the beauty of his face by the elaborate and studied way in which I dressed his hair. In his ears I placed two little rings, set with two large and fair pearls; the rings were broken; they only clipped his ears, which looked as though they had been pierced. Afterwards I wreathed his throat with chains of gold and rich jewels, and ornamented his fair hands with rings. Then I took him in a pleasant manner by one ear, and drew him before a great looking-glass. The lad, when he beheld himself, cried out with a burst whom until this day I never asked for any kind of favour; but now I only beseech Diego to do me pleasure in one harmless thing; and it is this-I want him to come in those very clothes to supper with the company of honest, virtuous, and wise, checked his enthusiasm, bent his eyes to the ground, and stood for a short while in silence. Then with a sudden move
I wrapped his head in a large kind of napkin, which is called in Rome a summer-cloth; and when we reached the place of meeting, the company had already assembled, and everybody came forward to greet me. Michel Agnolo had placed himself between Giulio and Giovan Francesco. I lifted the veil from the head of my beauty; and then Michel Agnolo, who, as I have already said, was the most humorous and amusing fellow in the world, bow down, while he, on his knees upon the floor, cried out for mercy, are the angels of paradise! for though they are called angels, here voice he added:

Upon this my charming creature laughed, and lifted the right hand and gave him a papal benediction, with many pleasant words to boot. So Michel Agnolo stood up, and said it was the custom to kiss the feet of the Pope and the cheeks of angels; and having done the latter to Diego, the boy blushed deeply, which immensely enhanced his beauty.

When this reception was over, we found the whole room full of sonnets, which every man of us had made and sent to Michel Agnolo, My lad began to read them, and read them all aloud so gracefully, that his infinite
charms were heightened beyond the powers of language to describe. Then
followed conversation and witty sayings, on which I will not enlarge,
for that is not my business; only one clever word must be mentioned, for
it was spoken by that admirable painter Giulio, who, looking round with
meaning [4] in his eyes on the bystanders, and fixing them particularly
Agnolo, your nickname of crow very well suits those ladies to-day,
though I vow they are somewhat less fair than crows by the side of one

When the banquet was served and ready, and we were going to sit down to
table, Giulio asked leave to be allowed to place us. This being granted,
he took the women by the hand, and arranged them all upon the inner
side, with my fair in the centre; then he placed all the men on the
outside and me in the middle, saying there was no honour too great for
my deserts.; As a background to the women, there was spread an espalier
of natural jasmines in full beauty, [5] which set off their charms, and
describe the effect. Then we all of us fell to enjoying the abundance of
concert of delightful music, voices joining in harmony with instruments;
and forasmuch as they were singing and playing from the book, my beauty
begged to be allowed to sing his part. He performed the music better
than almost all the rest, which so astonished the company that Giulio
and Michel Agnolo dropped their earlier tone of banter, exchanging it
for well-weighed terms of sober heartfelt admiration.

After the music was over, a certain Aurelio Ascolano, [6]remarkable for
his gift as an improvisatory poet, began to extol the women in choice
phrases of exquisite compliment. While he was chanting, the two girls
who had my beauty between them never left off chattering. One of them
related how she had gone wrong; the other asked mine how it had happened
with her, and who were her friends, and how long she had been settled in
Rome, and many other questions of the kind. It is true that, if I chose
to describe such laughable episodes, I could relate several odd things
since they form no part of my design, I pass them briefly over. At last
the conversation of those loose women vexed my beauty, whom we had
christened Pomona for the nonce; and Pomona, wanting to escape from
their silly talk, turned restlessly upon her chair, first to one side
and then to the other. The female brought by Giulio asked whether she
felt indisposed. Pomona answered, yes, she thought she was a month or so
with a child; this gave them the opportunity of feeling her body and
discovering the real sex of the supposed woman. Thereupon they quickly
withdrew their hands and rose from table, uttering such gibing words as
are commonly addressed to young men of eminent beauty. The whole room
rang with laughter and astonishment, in the midst of which Michel
Agnolo, assuming a fierce aspect, called out for leave to inflict on me
the penance he thought fit. When this was granted, he lifted me aloft
for having played so fine a trick. Thus ended that most agreeable
supper-party, and each of us returned to his own dwelling at the close
of day.

Note 1. This sculptor came to Rome with his compatriot Baldassare
Peruzzi, and was employed upon the monument of Pope Adrian VI., which he
executed with some help from Tribolo.
Note 2. There were two artists at this epoch surnamed Bachiacca, the
twin sons of Ubertino Verdi, called respectively Francesco and Antonio.
Francesco was an excellent painter of miniature oil-pictures; Antonio
the first embroiderer of his age. The one alluded to here is probably
Francesco.

supper-party or the 'cornacchia.'

Note 4. 'Virtuosamente.' Cellini uses the word 'virtuoso' in many
senses, but always more with reference to intellectual than moral
qualities. It denotes genius, artistic ability, masculine force, &c.

Note 5. 'Un tessuto di gelsumini naturali e bellissimi. Tessuto' is
properly something woven, a fabric; and I am not sure whether Cellini
does not mean that the ladies had behind their backs a tapestry
representing jasmines in a natural manner.

IT would take too long to describe in detail all the many and divers
pieces of work which I executed for a great variety of men. At present I
need only say that I devoted myself with sustained diligence and industry to acquiring mastery in the several branches of art which I enumerated a short while back. And so I went on labouring incessantly at all of them; but since no opportunity has presented itself as yet for describing my most notable performances, I shall wait to report them in their proper place before very long. The Sienese sculptor, Michel Agnolo, of whom I have recently been speaking, was at that time making the monument of the late Pope Adrian. Giulio Romano went to paint for the Marquis of Mantua. The other members of the club betook themselves in different directions, each to his own business; so that our company of artists was well-nigh altogether broken up.

About this time there fell into my hands some little Turkish poniards; the handle as well as the blade of these daggers was made of iron, and so too was the sheath. They were engraved by means of iron implements with foliage in the most exquisite Turkish style, very neatly filled in with gold. The sight of them stirred in me a great desire to try my own skill in that branch, so different from the others which I practiced; and finding that I succeeded to my satisfaction, I executed several pieces. Mine were far more beautiful and more durable than the Turkish, and this for divers reasons. One was that I cut my grooves much deeper and with wider trenches in the steel; for this is not usual in Turkish work. Another was that the Turkish arabesques are only composed of arum leaves a few small sunflowers; [1] and though these have a certain grace, they do not yield so lasting a pleasure as the patterns which we use. It is true that in Italy we have several different ways of designing foliage; the Lombards, for example, construct very beautiful
patterns by copying the leaves of briony and ivy in exquisite curves, which are extremely agreeable to the eye; the Tuscans and the Romans make a better choice, because they imitate the leaves of the acanthus, divers wavy lines; and into these arabesques one may excellently well insert the figures of little birds and different animals, by which the good taste of the artist is displayed. Some hints for creatures of this sort can be observed in nature among the wild flowers, as, for instance, in snap-dragons and some few other plants, which must be combined and developed with the help of fanciful imaginings by clever draughtsmen. Such arabesques are called grotesques by the ignorant. They have obtained this name of grotesques among the moderns through being found in certain subterranean caverns in Rome by students of antiquity; which caverns were formerly chambers, hot-baths, cabinets for study, halls, and apartments of like nature. The curious discovering them in such places (since the level of the ground has gradually been raised while they have remained below, and since in Rome these vaulted rooms are commonly called grottoes), it has followed that the word grotesque is applied to the patterns I have mentioned. But this is not the right term for them, inasmuch as the ancients, who delighted in composing monsters out of goats, cows, and horses, called these chimerical hybrids by the name of monsters; and the modern artificers of whom I speak, fashioned from the foliage which they copied monsters of like nature; for these the proper name is therefore monsters, and not grotesques. Well, then, I designed patterns of this kind, and filled them in with gold, as I have mentioned; and they were far more pleasing to the eye than the Turkish.

It chanced at that time that I lighted upon some jars or little antique
urns filled with ashes, and among the ashes were some iron rings inlaid with gold (for the ancients also used that art), and in each of the rings was set a tiny cameo of shell. On applying to men of learning, they told me that these rings were worn as amulets by folk desirous of abiding with mind unshaken in any extraordinary circumstance, whether of good or evil fortune. Hereupon, at the request of certain noblemen who were my friends, I undertook to fabricate some trifling rings of this kind; but I made them of refined steel; and after they had been well engraved and inlaid with gold, they produced a very beautiful effect; and sometimes a single ring brought me more than forty crowns, merely in payment for my labour.

It was the custom at that epoch to wear little golden medals, upon which every nobleman or man of quality had some device or fancy of his own engraved; and these were worn in the cap. Of such pieces I made very many, and found them extremely difficult to work. I have already mentioned the admirable craftsman Caradosso, who used to make such ornaments; and as there were more than one figure on each piece, he asked at least a hundred gold crowns for his fee. This being so—not, however, because his prices were so high, but because he worked so slowly—I began to be employed by certain noblemen, for whom, among other things, I made a medal in competition with that great artist, and it had four figures, upon which I had expended an infinity of labour. These men of quality, when they compared my piece with that of the famous Caradosso, declared that mine was by far the better executed and more beautiful, and bade me ask what I liked as the reward of my trouble; for since I had given them such perfect satisfaction, they wished to do the
like by me. I replied that my greatest reward and what I most desired
was to have rivalled the masterpieces of so eminent an artist; and that
if their lordships thought I had, I acknowledged myself to be most amply
rewarded. With this I took my leave, and they immediately sent me such a
very liberal present, that I was well content; indeed there grew in me
so great a spirit to do well, that to this event I attributed what will
afterwards be related of my progress.

Note 1. 'Gichero,' arum maculatum, and 'clizia,' the sunflower.

XXXII

I SHALL be obliged to digress a little from the history of my art,
unless I were to omit some annoying incidents which have happened in the
course of my troubled career. One of these, which I am about to
describe, brought me into the greatest risk of my life. I have already
which happened owing to the woman whom I mentioned, Pantasilea, the one
who felt for me that false and fulsome love. She was furiously enraged
because of the pleasant trick by which I brought Diego to our banquet,
and she swore to be revenged on me. How she did so is mixed up with the
history of a young man called Luigi Pulci, who had recently come to
Rome. He was the son of one of the Pulcis, who had been beheaded for
incest with his daughter; and the youth possessed extraordinary gifts
for poetry together with sound Latin scholarship; he wrote well, was
graceful in manners, and of surprising personal beauty; he had just left
the service of some bishop, whose name I do not remember, and was
thoroughly tainted with a very foul disease. While he was yet a lad and living in Florence, they used in certain places of the city to meet together during the nights of summer on the public streets; and he, ranking among the best of the improvisatori, sang there. His recitations were so admirable, that the divine Michel Agnolo Buonarroti, that prince of sculptors and of painters, went, wherever he heard that he would be, with the greatest eagerness and delight to listen to him. There was a man called Piloto, a goldsmith, very able in his art, who, together with myself, joined Buonarroti upon these occasions. [1] Thus acquaintance sprang up between me and Luigi Pulci; and so, after the lapse of many years, he came, in the miserable plight which I have mentioned, to make him. Moved to compassion by his great talents, by the love of my fatherland, and by my own natural tenderness of heart, I took him into my house, and had him medically treated in such wise that, being but a youth, he soon regained his health. While he was still pursuing his cure, he never omitted his studies, and I provided him with books according to the means at my disposal. The result was that Luigi, recognising the great benefits he had received from me, oftentimes with words and tears returned me thanks, protesting that if God should ever put good fortune in his way, he would recompense me for my kindness. To this I replied that I had not done for him as much as I desired, but only what I could, and that it was the duty of human beings to be mutually serviceable. Only I suggested that he should repay the service I had rendered him by doing likewise to some one who might have the same need of him as he had had of me.

The young man in question began to frequent the Court of Rome, where he
soon found a situation, and enrolled himself in the suite of a bishop, a man of eighty years, who bore the title of Gurgensis. [2] This bishop had a nephew called Messer Giovanni: he was a nobleman of Venice; and the said Messer Giovanni made show of marvellous attachment to Luigi as familiar to himself as his own flesh blood. Luigi having talked of me, and of his great obligations to me, with Messer Giovanni, the latter expressed a wish to make my acquaintance. Thus then it came to pass, that when I had upon a certain evening invited that woman Pantasilea to supper, and had assembled a company of men of parts who were my friends, just at the moment of our sitting down to table, Messer Giovanni and Luigi Pulci arrived, and after some complimentary speeches, they both remained to sup with us. The shameless strumpet, casting her eyes upon perceiving which, when the supper had come to an agreeable end, I took Luigi aside, and conjured him, by the benefits he said he owed me, to not give that woman the least thought; but for your sake I should be vowed and prayed to God, that, if ever he but spoke with her, he might upon the moment break his neck. I think the poor lad swore this oath to God with all his heart, for he did break his neck, as I shall presently relate. Messer Giovanni showed signs too evident of loving him in a dishonourable way; for we began to notice that Luigi had new suits of silk and velvet every morning, and it was known that he abandoned himself altogether to bad courses. He neglected his fine talents, and pretended not to see or recognise me, because I had once rebuked him, and told him he was giving his soul to foul vices, which would make him break his neck, as he had vowed.
Note 1. Piloto, of whom we shall hear more hereafter, was a prominent figure in the Florentine society of artists, and a celebrated practical joker. Vasari says that a young man of whom he had spoken ill murdered insight into this curious Bohemia of the sixteenth century.

Note 2. Girolamo Balbo, of the noble Venetian family, Bishop of Gurck, in Carinthia.

XXXIII

NOW Messer Giovanni bought his favourite a very fine black horse, for which he paid 150 crowns. The beast was admirably trained to hand, so that Luigi could go daily to caracole around the lodgings of that prostitute Pantasilea. Though I took notice of this, I paid it no attention, only remarking that all things acted as their nature prompted; and meanwhile I gave my whole mind to my studies. It came to pass one Sunday evening that we were invited to sup together with the Sienese sculptor, Michel Agnolo, and the time of the year was summer. Bachiacca, of whom I have already spoken, was present at the party; and he had brought with him his old flame, Pantasilea. When we were at table, she sat between me and Bachiacca; but in the very middle of the banquet she rose, and excused herself upon the pretext of a natural need, saying she would speedily return. We, meanwhile, continued talking very agreeably and supping; but she remained an unaccountably long time
absent. It chanced that, keeping my ears open, I thought I heard a sort of subdued tittering in the street below. I had a knife in hand, which I was using for my service at the table. The window was so close to where I sat, that, by merely rising, I could see Luigi in the street, together from the window, and took Luigi by the cape; and certainly I should then have killed him with the knife I held, but that he was riding a white horse, to which he clapped spurs, leaving his cape in my grasp, in order to preserve his life. Pantasilea took to her heels in the direction of a neighbouring church. The company at supper rose immediately, and came down, entreating me in a body to refrain from putting myself and them to inconvenience for a strumpet. I told them that I should not have let myself be moved on her account, but that I was bent on punishing the infamous young man, who showed how little he regarded me. Accordingly I would not yield to the remonstrances of those ingenious and worthy men, but took my sword, and went alone toward Prati: the house where we were supping, I should say, stood close to the Castello gate, which led to Prati. [1] Walking thus upon the road to Prati, I had not gone far before the sun sank, and I re-entered Rome itself at a slow pace. Night had fallen; darkness had come on; but the gates of Rome were not yet shut.

the intention, if Luigi Pulci were there, of doing something to the discontent of both. When I heard and saw that no one but a poor servant-girl called Canida was in the house, I went to put away my cloak and the scabbard of my sword, and then returned to the house, which
stood behind the Banchi on the river Tiber. Just opposite stretched a
garden belonging to an innkeeper called Romolo. It was enclosed by a
thick hedge of thorns, in which I hid myself, standing upright, and
waiting till the woman came back with Luigi. After keeping watch awhile
there, my friend Bachiacca crept up to me; whether led by his own
suspicions or by the advice of others, I cannot say. In a low voice he

injure that poor girl; she at least has erred in no wise in this

poor gossip was suddenly taken ill with the colic, and withdrew to ease
himself apart; indeed, he could not buy obey the call. There was a
glorious heaven of stars, which shed good light to see by. All of a
sudden I was aware of the noise of many horses; they were coming toward
me from the one side and the other. It turned out to be Luigi and
Pantasilea, attended by a certain Messer Benvegnato of Perugia, who was
chamberlain to Pope Clement, and followed by four doughty captains of
Perugia, with some other valiant soldiers in the flower of youth;
altogether reckoned, there were more than twelve swords. When I
understood the matter, and saw not how to fly, I did my best to crouch
into the hedge. But the thorns pricked and hurt me, goading me to
madness like a bull; and I had half resolved to take a leap and hazard

blow descended on the shoulder of Luigi; but the satyrs who doted on
him, had steeled his person round with coats of mail and such-like
villainous defences; still the stroke fell with crushing force. Swerving
aside, the sword hit Pantasilea full in nose and mouth. Both she and
Luigi grovelled on the ground, while Bachiacca, with his breeches down
to heels, screamed out and ran away. Then I turned upon the others
boldly with my sword; and those valiant fellows, hearing a sudden
commotion in the tavern, thought there was an army coming of a hundred
men; and though they drew their swords with spirit, yet two horses which
had taken fright in the tumult cast them into such disorder that a
couple of the best riders were thrown, and the remainder took to flight.
I, seeing that the affair was turning out well, for me, ran as quickly
as I could, and came off with honour from the engagement, not wishing to
tempt fortune more than was my duty. During this hurly-burly, some of
the soldiers and captains wounded themselves with their own arms; and
his mule. One of the servants also, who had drawn his sword, fell down
together with his master, and wounded him badly in the hand. Maddened by
the pain, he swore louder than all the rest in his Perugian jargon,
captains who were with him (braver perhaps than the others, but with
less aplomb, as being but a youth) to seek me out. The fellow came to
visit me in the place of my retirement; that was the palace of a great
Neapolitan nobleman, who had become acquainted with me in my art, and
had besides taken a fancy to me because of my physical and mental
aptitude for fighting, to which my lord himself was personally well
inclined. So, then, finding myself made much of, and being precisely in
my element, I gave such answer to the captain as I think must have made
him earnestly repent of having come to look me up. After a few days,
when the wounds of Luigi, and the strumpet, and the rest were healing,
this great Neapolitan nobleman received overtures from Messer
ratify a peace between me and Luigi and the soldiers, who had personally
no quarrel with me, and only wished to make my acquaintance. Accordingly
my friend the nobleman replied that he would bring me where they chose
to appoint, and that he was very willing to effect a reconciliation. He
stipulated that no words should be bandied about on either side, seeing
that would be little to their credit; it was enough to go through the
form of drinking together and exchanging kisses; he for his part
undertook to do the talking, and promised to settle the matter to their
honour. This arrangement was carried out. On Thursday evening my
protector took me to the house of Messer Benvegnato, where all the
soldiers who had been present at that discomfiture were assembled, and
already seated at table. My nobleman was attended by thirty brave
fellows, all well armed; a circumstance which Messer Benvegnato had not
anticipated. When we came into the hall, he walking first, I following,
you, I and Benvenuto, whom I love like my own brother; and we are ready
and his catchpoles should give me no trouble. Then we made peace, and I
returned to my shop, where I could not stay an hour without that
Neapolitan nobleman either coming to see me or sending for me.

Meanwhile Luigi Pulci, having recovered from his wound, rode every day
upon the black horse which was so well trained to heel and bridle. One
day, among others, after it had rained a little, and he was making his
the horse upon him. His right leg was broken short off in the thigh; and
thus the vow he registered so heartily to Heaven. Even so may it be seen
that God keeps account of the good and the bad, and gives to each one what he merits.

Note 1. The Porta Castello was the gate called after the Castle of S. Angelo. Prati, so far as I can make out, was an open space between the Borgo and the Bridge of S. Angelo. In order to get inside Rome itself, house were in the quarter of the Bianchi, where are now the Via Giulia

XXXIV

THE WHOLE world was now in warfare. [1] Pope Clement had sent to get disturbances in Rome, that it was ill living in open shops. [2] On this account I retired to a good snug house behind the Banchi, where I worked for all the friends I had acquired. Since I produced few things of much importance at that period, I need not waste time in talking about them. I took much pleasure in music and amusements of the kind. On the death Jacopo Salviati, dismissed the five bands he had engaged; and when the Constable of Bourbon knew there were no troops in Rome, he pushed his army with the utmost energy up to the city. The whole of Rome upon this flew to arms. I happened to be intimate with Alessandro, the son of Piero del Bene, who, at the time when the Colonnese entered Rome, had requested me to guard his palace. [3] On this more serious occasion, therefore, he prayed me to enlist fifty comrades for the protection of the said house, appointing me their captain, as I had been when the
Colonnesi came. So I collected fifty young men of the highest courage, and we took up our quarters in his palace, with good pay and excellent appointments.

begged me to go with him to reconnoitre. So we went with one of the stoutest fellows in our Company; and on the way a youth called Cecchino della Casa joined himself to us. On reaching the walls by the Campo Santo, we could see that famous army, which was making every effort to enter the town. Upon the ramparts where we took our station several young men were lying killed by the besiegers; the battle raged there desperately, and there was the densest fog imaginable. I turned to nothing to be done here; you see the enemies are mounting, and our men

where I saw the thickest and most serried troop of fighting men, I aimed exactly at one whom I remarked to be higher than the rest; the fog prevented me from being certain whether he was on horseback or on foot. Then I turned to Alessandro and Cecchino, and bade them discharge their arquebuses, showing them how to avoid being hit by the besiegers. When we had fired two rounds apiece, I crept cautiously up to the wall, and observing among the enemy a most extraordinary confusion, I discovered afterwards that one of our shots had killed the Constable of Bourbon; and from what I subsequently learned, he was the man whom I had first noticed above the heads of the rest. [4]

Quitting our position on the ramparts, we crossed the Campo Santo, and
of Santo Agnolo, we got with the greatest difficulty to the great gate
of the castle; for the generals Renzo di Ceri and Orazio Baglioni were
wounding and slaughtering everybody who abandoned the defence of the
walls. [5] By the time we had reached the great gate, part of the foemen
had already entered Rome, and we had them in our rear. The castellan had
ordered the portcullis to be lowered, in order to do which they cleared
a little space, and this enabled us four to get inside. On the instant

the Papal household, and forced me to abandon Alessandro, which I had to
do, much against my will. I ascended to the keep, and at the same
instant Pope Clement came in through the corridors into the castle; he
had refused to leave the palace of St. Peter earlier, being unable to
believe that his enemies would effect their entrance into Rome. [6]
Having got into the castle in this way, I attached myself to certain
pieces of artillery, which were under the command of a bombardier called
Giuliano Fiorentino. Leaning there against the battlements, the unhappy
man could see his poor house being sacked, and his wife and children
outraged; fearing to strike his own folk, he dared not discharge the
cannon, and flinging the burning fuse upon the ground, he wept as though
his heart would break, and tore his cheeks with both his hands. [7] Some
of the other bombardiers were behaving in like manner; seeing which, I
took one of the matches, and got the assistance of a few men who were
not overcome by their emotions. I aimed some swivels and falconets at
points where I saw it would be useful, and killed with them a good
number of the enemy. Had it not been for this, the troops who poured
into Rome that morning, and were marching straight upon the castle,
might possibly have entered it with ease, because the artillery was
doing them no damage. I went on firing under the eyes of several
cardinals and lords, who kept blessing me and giving me the heartiest
couragement. In my enthusiasm I strove to achieve the impossible; let
it suffice that it was I who saved the castle that morning, and brought
the other bombardiers back to their duty. [8] I worked hard the whole of
that day; and when the evening came, while the army was marching into
Rome through the Trastevere, Pope Clement appointed a great Roman
nobleman named Antonio Santacroce to be captain of all the gunners. The
first thing this man did was to come to me, and having greeted me with
the utmost kindness, he stationed me with five fine pieces of artillery
on the highest point of the castle, to which the name of the Angel
specially belongs. This circular eminence goes round the castle, and
surveys both Prati and the town of Rome. The captain put under my orders
enough men to help in managing my guns, and having seen me paid in
advance, he gave me rations of bread and a little wine, and begged me to
go forward as I had begun. I was perhaps more inclined by nature to the
profession of arms than to the one I had adopted, and I took such
pleasure in its duties that I discharged them better than those of my
own art. Night came, the enemy had entered Rome, and we who were in the
castle (especially myself, who have always taken pleasure in
extraordinary sights) stayed gazing on the indescribable scene of tumult
and conflagration in the streets below. People who were anywhere else
but where we were, could not have formed the least imagination of what
it was. I will not, however, set myself to describe that tragedy, but
will content myself with continuing the history of my own life and the
circumstances which properly belong to it.

Note 1. War had broken out in 1521 between Charles V and Francis I,
which disturbed all Europe and involved the States of Italy in serious complications. At the moment when this chapter opens, the Imperialist army under the Constable of Bourbon was marching upon Rome in 1527.

Note 2. These troops entered Rome in October 1526. They were disbanded in March, 1527.

Note 3. Cellini here refers to the attack made upon Rome by the great Ghibelline house of Colonna, led by their chief captain, Pompeo, in September 1526. They took possession of the city and drove Clement into the Castle of S. Angelo, where they forced him to agree to terms favouring the Imperial cause. It was customary for Roman gentlemen to hire bravi for the defence of their palaces when any extraordinary disturbance was expected, as, for example, upon the vacation of the Papal Chair.

Note 4. All historians of the sack of Rome agree in saying that Bourbon was shot dead while placing ladders against the outworks near the shop Cellini mentions. But the honour of firing the arquebuse which brought him down cannot be assigned to any one in particular. Very different stories were current on the subject. See Gregorovius, 'Stadt Rom.,' vol. viii. p. 522.

Note 5. For Renzo di Ceri see above. Orazio Baglioni, of the semi-princely Perugian family, was a distinguished Condottiere. He subsequently obtained the captaincy of the Bande Nere, and died fighting
near Naples in 1528. Orazio murdered several of his cousins in order to acquire the lordship of Perugia. His brother Malatesta undertook to defend Florence in the siege of 1530, and sold the city by treason to Clement.

Note 6. Giovio, in his Life of the Cardinal Prospero Colonna, relates how he accompanied Clement in his flight from the Vatican to the castle. While passing some open portions of the gallery, he threw his violent mantle and cap of a Monsignore over the white stole of the Pontiff, for fear he might be shot at by the soldiers in the streets below.

Note 7. The short autobiography of Raffaello da Montelupo, a man in many narrative. It is one of the most interesting pieces of evidence regarding what went on inside the castle during the sack of Rome. Montelupo was also a gunner, and commanded two pieces.

castle would have been taken.

XXXV

DURING the course of my artillery practice, which I never intermitted through the whole month passed by us beleaguered in the castle, I met with a great many very striking accidents, all of them worthy to be related. But since I do not care to be too prolix, or to exhibit myself
outside the sphere of my profession, I will omit the larger part of them, only touching upon those I cannot well neglect, which shall be the fewest in number and the most remarkable. The first which comes to hand is this: Messer Antonio Santacroce had made me come down from the Angel, in order to fire on some houses in the neighbourhood, where certain of our besiegers had been seen to enter. While I was firing, a cannon shot reached me, which hit the angle of a battlement, and carried off enough of it to be the cause why I sustained no injury. The whole mass struck me in the chest and took my breath away. I lay stretched upon the ground like a dead man, and could hear what the bystanders were saying. Among uproar, one of my comrades ran up; he was called Gianfrancesco, and was a bandsman, but was far more naturally given to medicine than to music. On the spot he flew off, crying for a stoop of the very best Greek wine. Then he made a tile red-hot, and cast upon it a good handful of wormwood; after which he sprinkled the Greek wine; and when the wormwood was well soaked, he laid it on my breast, just where the bruise was visible to all. Such was the virtue of the wormwood that I immediately regained my scattered faculties. I wanted to begin to speak; but could not; for some stupid soldiers had filled my mouth with earth, imagining that by so doing they were giving me the sacrament; and indeed they were more like to have excommunicated me, since I could with difficulty come to myself again, the earth doing me more mischief than the blow. However, I escaped that danger, and returned to the rage and fury of the guns, pursuing my work there with all the ability and eagerness that I could summon.
Pope Clement, by this, had sent to demand assistance from the Duke of Urbino, who was with the troops of Venice; he commissioned the envoy to tell his Excellency that the Castle of S. Angelo would send up every evening three beacons from its summit accompanied by three discharges of the cannon thrice repeated, and that so long as this signal was continued, he might take for granted that the castle had not yielded. I was charged with lighting the beacons and firing the guns for this purpose; and all this while I pointed my artillery by day upon the places where mischief could be done. The Pope, in consequence, began to regard me with still greater favour, because he saw that I discharged my functions as intelligently as the task demanded. Aid from the Duke of Urbino [1] never came; on which, as it is not my business, I will make no further comment.

Note 1. Francesco Maria della Rovere, Duke of Urbino, commanded a considerable army as general of the Church, and was now acting for Venice. Why he effected no diversion while the Imperial troops were marching upon Rome, and why he delayed to relieve the city, was never properly explained. Folk attributed his impotent conduct partly to a natural sluggishness in warfare, and partly to his hatred for the house of Medici. Leo X had deprived him of his dukedom, and given it to a Medicean prince. It is to this that Cellini probably refers in the cautious phrase which ends the chapter.

XXXVI
WHILE I was at work upon that diabolical task of mine, there came from
time to time to watch me some of the cardinals who were invested in the
Gaddi. [1] I often told them not to show themselves, since their nasty
red caps gave a fair mark to our enemies. From neighbouring buildings,
at last I had them locked off, and gained thereby their deep ill-will. I
frequently received visits also from the general, Orazio Baglioni, who
was very well affected toward me. One day while he was talking with me,
he noticed something going forward in a drinking-place outside the Porta
di Castello, which bore the name of Baccanello. This tavern had for sign
a sun painted between two windows, of a bright red colour. The windows
being closed, Signor Orazio concluded that a band of soldiers were
carousing at table just between them and behind the sun. So he said to
breadth from the sun with your demi-cannon here, I believe you would be
doing a good stroke of business, for there is a great commotion there,
answered that I felt quite capable of hitting the sun in its centre, but
that a barrel full of stones, which was standing close to the muzzle of
the gun, might be knocked down by the shock of the discharge and the
the first place, it is not possible, where it is standing, that the
the Pope himself was underneath, the mischief would not be so great as
struck the sun in the centre, exactly as I said I should. The cask was
dislodged, as I predicted, and fell precisely between Cardinal Farnese
and Messer Jacopo Salviati. [2] It might very well have dashed out the
brains of both of them, except that just at that very moment Farnese was
reproaching Salviati with having caused the sack of Rome, and while they
stood apart from one another to exchange opprobrious remarks, my gabion fell without destroying them. When he heard the uproar in the court below, good Signor Orazio dashed off in a hurry; and I, thrusting my falconets toward the staircase, with mind resolved to let blaze on the first man who attempted to come up. The household of Cardinal Farnese must have received orders to go and do me some injury; accordingly I prepared to receive them, with a lighted match in hand. Recognising some staircase, I have got two cannon loaded, which will blow you into powder. Go and tell the Cardinal that I was acting at the order of superior officers, and that what we have done and are doing is in then came Signor Orazio Baglioni, running. I bade him stand back, else come up again, and to do quite the opposite of that which I intended neighbours, I was equally well able to defend myself too. He said that he was coming alone; and when he arrived at the top of the stairs, his features were more discomposed that I thought reasonable. So I kept my hand upon my sword, and stood eyeing him askance. Upon this he began to laugh, and the colour coming back into his face, he said to me with the proof of this. Would to God that you had killed those two rascals; for one of them is the cause of all this trouble, and the day perchance will then begged me, if I should be asked, not to say that he was with me when I fired the gun; and for the rest bade me be of good cheer. The
commotion which the affair made was enormous, and lasted a long while. However, I will not enlarge upon it further, only adding that I was within an inch of revenging my father on Messer Jacopo Salviati, who had unwittingly I gave the fellow a great fright. Of Farnese I shall say nothing here, because it will appear in its proper place how well it would have been if I had killed him.

Note 1. Benedetto Accolti of Arezzo, Archbishop of Ravenna in 1524, obtained the hat in 1527, three days before the sack of Rome. He was a

Note 2. Alessandro Farnese, Dean of the Sacred College, and afterwards Pope Paul III. Of Giacopo Salviati we have already heard, p. 14.

Note 3. 'Loro preti.' Perhaps 'their priests.'

XXXVII

I PURSUED my business of artilleryman, and every day performed some extraordinary feat, whereby the credit and the favour I acquired with the Pope was something indescribable. There never passed a day but what I killed one or another of our enemies in the besieging army. On one occasion the Pope was walking round the circular keep, [1] when he observed a Spanish Colonel in the Prati; he recognised the man by certain indications, seeing that this officer had formerly been in his
service; and while he fixed his eyes on him, he kept talking about him.

I, above by the Angel, knew nothing of all this, but spied a fellow down there, busying himself about the trenches with a javelin in his hand; he was dressed entirely in rose-colour; and so, studying the worst that I could do against him, I selected a gerfalcon which I had at hand; it is a piece of ordnance larger and longer than a swivel, and about the size of a demiculverin. This I emptied, and loaded it again with a good charge of fine powder mixed with the coarser sort; then I aimed it exactly at the man in red, elevating prodigiously, because a piece of that calibre could hardly be expected to carry true at such a distance.

I fired, and hit my man exactly in the middle. He had trussed his sword in front, for swagger, after a way those Spaniards have; and my ball, when it struck him, broke upon the blade, and one could see the fellow cut in two fair halves. The Pope, who was expecting nothing of this kind, derived great pleasure and amazement from the sight, both because it seemed to him impossible that one should aim and hit the mark at such a distance, and also because the man was cut in two, and he could not comprehend how this should happen. He sent for me, and asked about it. I explained all the devices I had used in firing; but told him that why the man was cut in halves, neither he nor I could know. Upon my bended knees I then besought him to give me the pardon of his blessing for that homicide; and for all the others I had committed in the castle in the service of the Church. Thereat the Pope, raising his hand, and making a large open sign of the cross upon my face, told me that he blessed me, and that he gave me pardon for all murders I had ever perpetrated, or should ever perpetrate, in the service of the Apostolic Church. When I felt him, I went aloft, and never stayed from firing to the utmost of my power; and few were the shots of mine that missed their
mark. My drawing, and my fine studies in my craft, and my charming art of music, all were swallowed up in the din of that artillery; and if I were to relate in detail all the splendid things I did in that infernal work of cruelty, I should make the world stand by and wonder. But, not to be too prolix, I will pass them over. Only I must tell a few of the most remarkable, which are, as it were, forced in upon me.

To begin then: pondering day and night what I could render for my own part in defence of Holy Church, and having noticed that the enemy changed guard and marched past through the great gate of Santo Spirito, which was within a reasonable range, I thereupon directed my attention to that spot; but, having to shoot sideways, I could not do the damage that I wished, although I killed a fair percentage every day. This induced our adversaries, when they saw their passage covered by my guns, to load the roof of a certain house one night with thirty gabions, which obstructed the view I formerly enjoyed. Taking better thought than I had done of the whole situation, I now turned all my five pieces of artillery directly on the gabions, and waited till the evening hour, when they changed guard. Our enemies, thinking they were safe, came on at greater ease and in a closer body than usual; whereupon I set fire to my blow-pipes, [3] Not merely did I dash to pieces the gabions which stood in my way; but, what was better, by that one blast I slaughtered more than thirty men. In consequence of this manœuvre, which I repeated twice, the soldiers were thrown into such disorder, that being, moreover, encumbered with the spoils of that great sack, and some of them desirous of enjoying the fruits of their labour, they oftentimes showed a mind to mutiny and take themselves away from Rome. However,
after coming to terms with their valiant captain, Gian di Urbino, [4]
they were ultimately compelled, at their excessive inconvenience, to
take another road when they changed guard. It cost them three miles of
march, whereas before they had but half a mile. Having achieved this
feat, I was entreated with prodigious favours by all the men of quality
who were invested in the castle. This incident was so important that I
thought it well to relate it, before finishing the history of things
outside my art, the which is the real object of my writing: forsooth, if
I wanted to ornament my biography with such matters, I should have far
too much to tell. There is only one more circumstance which, now that
the occasion offers, I propose to record.

converted into a fortress during the Middle Ages.

in front of him.’

Note 3. 'Soffioni,' the cannon being like tubes to blow a fire up.

Note 4. This captain was a Spaniard, who played a very considerable
figure in the war, distinguishing himself at the capture of Genoa and
the battle of Lodi in 1522, and afterwards acting as Lieutenant-General
to the Prince of Orange. He held Naples against Orazio Baglioni in 1528,
and died before Spello in 1529.
I SHALL skip over some intervening circumstances, and tell how Pope Clement, wishing to save the tiaras and the whole collection of the great jewels of the Apostolic Camera, had me called, and shut himself up together with me and the Cavalierino in a room alone. [1] This cavalierino had been a groom in the stable of Filippo Strozzi; he was French, and a person of the lowest birth; but being a most faithful servant, the Pope had made him very rich, and confided in him like himself. So the Pope, the Cavaliere, and I, being shut up together, they laid before me the tiaras and jewels of the regalia; and his Holiness ordered me to take all the gems out of their gold settings. This I accordingly did; afterwards I wrapt them separately up in bits of paper clothes. Then they gave me all the gold, which weighed about two hundred pounds, and bade me melt it down as secretly as I was able. I went up to the Angel, where I had my lodging, and could lock the door so as to be free from interruption. There I built a little draught-furnace of bricks, with a largish pot, shaped like an open dish, at the bottom of it; and throwing the gold upon the coals, it gradually sank through and dropped into the pan. While the furnace was working I never left off watching how to annoy our enemies; and as their trenches were less than damage on them with some useless missiles, [2] of which there were several piles, forming the old munition of the castle. I chose a swivel and a falconet, which were both a little damaged in the muzzle, and filled them with the projectiles I have mentioned. When I fired my guns, they hurtled down like mad, occasioning all sorts of unexpected mischief
in the trenches. Accordingly I kept these pieces always going at the same time that the gold was being melted down; and a little before vespers I noticed some one coming along the margin of the trench on muleback. The mule was trotting very quickly, and the man was talking to the soldiers in the trenches. I took the precaution of discharging my artillery just before he came immediately opposite; and so, making a good calculation, I hit my mark. One of the fragments struck him in the face; the rest were scattered on the mule, which fell dead. A tremendous uproar rose up from the trench; I opened fire with my other piece, doing them great hurt. The man turned out to be the Prince of Orange, who was carried through the trenches to a certain tavern in the neighbourhood, whither in a short while all the chief folk of the army came together.

When Pope Clement heard what I had done, he sent at once to call for me, and inquired into the circumstance. I related the whole, and added that the man must have been of the greatest consequence, because the inn to which they carried him had been immediately filled by all the chiefs of the army, so far at least as I could judge. The Pope, with a shrewd instinct, sent for Messer Antonio Santacroce, the nobleman who, as I have said, was chief and commander of the gunners. He bade him order all us bombardiers to point our pieces, which were very numerous, in one mass upon the house, and to discharge them all together upon the signal of an arquebuse being fired. He judged that if we killed the generals, the army, which was already almost on the point of breaking up, would take flight. God perhaps had heard the prayers they kept continually making, and meant to rid them in this manner of those impious scoundrels.
We put our cannon in order at the command of Santacroce, and waited for the signal. But when Cardinal Orsini [3] became aware of what was going forward, he began to expostulate with the Pope, protesting that the thing by no means ought to happen, seeing they were on the point of concluding an accommodation, and that if the generals were killed, the rabble of the troops without a leader would storm the castle and complete their utter ruin. Consequently they could by no means allow the assassinated both inside the castle and without, said that he left them to arrange it. On this, our orders were countermanded; but I, who chafed against the leash, [4] when I knew that they were coming round to bid me stop from firing, let blaze one of my demi-cannons, and struck a pillar in the courtyard of the house, around which I saw a crowd of people clustering. This shot did such damage to the enemy that it was like to have made them evacuate the house. Cardinal Orsini was absolutely for having me hanged or put to death; but the Pope took up my cause with spirit. The high words that passed between them, though I well know what they were, I will not here relate, because I make no profession of writing history. It is enough for me to occupy myself with my own affairs.

Note 1. This personage cannot be identified. The Filippo Strozzi mentioned as having been his master was the great opponent of the Medicean despotism, who killed himself in prison after the defeat of Medici.
XXXIX

AFTER I had melted down the gold, I took it to the Pope, who thanked me cordially for what I had done, and ordered the Cavalierino to give me twenty-five crowns, apologising to me for his inability to give me more. A few days afterwards the articles of peace were signed. I went with three hundred comrades in the train of Signor Orazio Baglioni toward Perugia; and there he wished to make me captain of the company, but I was unwilling at the moment, saying that I wanted first to go and see my father, and to redeem the ban which was still in force against me at Florence. Signor Orazio told me that he had been appointed general of the Florentines; and Sir Pier Maria del Lotto, the envoy from Florence, was with him, to whom he specially recommended me as his man. 1

In course of time I came to Florence in the company of several comrades. The plague was raging with indescribable fury. When I reached home, I found my good father, who thought either that I must have been killed in the sack of Rome, or else that I should come back to him a beggar.
However, I entirely defeated both these expectations; for I was alive, with plenty of money, a fellow to wait on me, and a good horse. My joy on greeting the old man was so intense, that, while he embraced and kissed me, I thought that I must die upon the spot. After I had narrated all the devilries of that dreadful sack, and had given him a good quantity of crowns which I had gained by my soldiering, and when we had exchanged our tokens of affection, he went off to the Eight to redeem my ban. It so happened that one of those magistrates who sentenced me, was now again a member of the board. It was the very man who had so inconsiderately told my father he meant to march me out into the country with the lances. My father took this opportunity of addressing him with some meaning words, in order to mark his revenge, relying on the favour which Orazio Baglioni showed me.

Matters standing thus, I told my father how Signor Orazio had appointed me captain, and that I ought to begin to think of enlisting my company. At these words the poor old man was greatly disturbed, and begged me for knew I should be fit for this or yet a greater business, adding that his other son, my brother, was already a most valiant soldier, and that I ought to pursue the noble art in which I had laboured so many years and with such diligence of study. Although I promised to obey him, he reflected, like a man of sense, that if Signor Orazio came to Florence, I could not withdraw myself from military service, partly because I had passed my word, as well as for other reasons; He therefore thought of a dear son, the plague in this town is raging with immitigable violence, and I am always fancying you will come home infected with it. I
remember, when I was a young man, that I went to Mantua, where I was
very kindly received, and stayed there several years. I pray and command
you, for the love of me, to pack off and go thither; and I would have

Note 1. Pier Maria di Lotto of S. Miniato was notary to the Florentine
Signoria. He collected the remnants of the Bandle Nere, and gave them
over to Orazio Baglioni, who contrived to escape from S. Angelo in
safety to Perugia.

XL

I HAD always taken pleasure in seeing the world; and having never been
in Mantua, I went there very willingly. Of the money I had brought to
Florence, I left the greater part with my good father, promising to help
him wherever I might be, and confiding him to the care of my elder
sister. Her name was Cosa; and since she never cared to marry, she was
admitted as a nun in Santa Orsola; but she put off taking the veil, in
order to keep house for our old father, and to look after my younger
sister, who was married to one Bartolommeo, a surgeon. So then, leaving
it to Mantua.

It would take too long to describe that little journey in detail. The
whole world being darkened over with plague and war, I had the greatest
difficulty in reaching Mantua. However, in the end, I got there, and
Milan, goldsmith to the Duke of Mantua. Having thus settled down to work, I went after two days to visit Messer Giulio Romano, that most excellent painter, of whom I have already spoken, and my very good friend. He received me with the tenderest caresses, and took it very ill that I had not dismounted at his house. He was living like a lord, and executing a great work for the Duke outside the city gates, in a place called Del Te. It was a vast and prodigious undertaking, as may still, I suppose, be seen by those who go there. [1]

Messer Giulio lost no time in speaking of me to the Duke in terms of the warmest praise. [2] That Prince commissioned me to make a model for a reliquary, to hold the blood of Christ, which they have there, and say was brought them by Longinus. Then he turned to Giulio, bidding him

Excellency will be very well able to judge when you shall see his

well adapted to contain the sacred phial. Then I made a little waxen model of the cover. This was a seated Christ, supporting his great cross aloft with the left hand, while he seemed to lean against it, and with the fingers of his right hand he appeared to be opening the wound in his side. When it was finished, it pleased the Duke so much that he heaped favours on me, and gave me to understand that he would keep me in his service with such appointments as should enable me to live in affluence.

Meanwhile, I had paid my duty to the Cardinal his brother, who begged the Duke to allow me to make the pontifical seal of his most reverend lordship. [3] This I began; but while I was working at it I caught a
quartan fever. During each access of this fever I was thrown into delirium, when I cursed Mantua and its master and whoever stayed there at his own liking. These words were reported to the Duke by the Milanese goldsmith, who had not omitted to notice that the Duke wanted to employ me. When the Prince heard the ravings of my sickness, he flew into a passion against me; and I being out of temper with Mantua, our bad feeling was reciprocal. The seal was finished after four months, together with several other little pieces I made for the Duke under the name of the Cardinal. His Reverence paid me well, and bade me return to Rome, to that marvellous city where we had made acquaintance.

I quitted Mantua with a good sum of crowns, and reached Governo, where the most valiant general Giovanni had been killed. [4] Here I had a slight relapse of fever, which did not interrupt my journey, and coming now to an end, it never returned on me again. When I arrived at Florence, I hoped to find my dear father, and knocking at the door, a hump-backed woman in a fury showed her face at the window; she drove me off with a torrent of abuse, screaming that the sight of me was a cross-grained hunchback, is there no other face to see here but your

by this dispute, a neighbour put her head out, from whom I learned that my father and all the people in the house had died of the plague. As I had partly guessed it might be so, my grief was not so great as it would otherwise have been. The woman afterwards told me that only my sister Liperata had escaped, and that she had taken refuge with a pious lady
I took my way from thence to the inn, and met by accident a very dear friend of mine, Giovanni Rigogli. Dismounting at his house, we proceeded to the piazza, where I received intelligence that my brother was alive, and went to find him at the house of a friend of his called Bertino Aldobrandini. On meeting, we made demonstrations of the most passionate affection; for he had heard that I was dead, and I had heard that he was dead; and so our joy at embracing one another was extravagant. Then he given our sister Liperata away again in marriage, and she holds it for the wonderful adventures we had met with; and when we reached the house where our sister dwelt, the surprise of seeing me alive threw her into a fainting fit, and she fell senseless in my arms. Had not my brother been present, her speechlessness and sudden seizure must have made her husband imagine I was some one different from a brother-as indeed at first it did. Cecchino, however, explained matters, and busied himself in helping the swooning woman, who soon come to. Then, after shedding some tears for father, sister, husband, and a little son whom she had lost, she began to get the supper ready; and during our merry meeting all that evening we talked no more about dead folk, but rather discoursed gaily about weddings. Thus, then, with gladness and great enjoyment we brought our supper-party to an end.

Note 1. This is the famous Palazzo del Te, outside the walls of Mantua.

Note 2. Federigo Gonzago was at this time Marquis of Mantua. Charles V
erected his fief into a duchy in 1530.

Note 3. Ercole Gonzaga, created Cardinal in 1527. After the death of his brother, Duke Federigo, he governed Mantua for sixteen years as regent for his nephews, and became famous as a patron of arts and letters. He died at Trento in 1563 while presiding over the Council there, in the pontificate of Pius IV.

Note 5. 'I. e.,' your ugly visage.

Note 6. Carpani states that between May and November 1527 about 40,000 persons died of plague in Florence.

ON the entreaty of my brother and sister, I remained at Florence, though my own inclination led me to return to Rome. The dear friend, also, who had helped me in some of my earlier troubles, as I have narrated (I mean Piero, son of Giovanni Landi) he too advised me to make some stay in Florence; for the Medici were in exile, that is to say, Signor Ippolito and Signor Alessandro, who were afterwards respectively Cardinal and Duke of Florence; and he judged it would be well for me to wait and see what happened. [1]
At that time there arrived in Florence a Sienese, called Girolamo Marretti, who had lived long in Turkey and was a man of lively intellect. He came to my shop, and commissioned me to make a golden medal to be worn in the hat. The subject was to be Hercules wrenching Buonarroti came oftentimes to see it. I had spent infinite pains upon the design, so that the attitude of the figure and the fierce passion of the beast were executed in quite a different style from that of any craftsman who had hitherto attempted such groups. This, together with the fact that the special branch of art was totally unknown to Michel Agnolo, made the divine master give such praises to my work that I felt incredibly inspired for further effort. However, I found little else to do but jewel-setting; and though I gained more thus than in any other way, yet I was dissatisfied, for I would fain have been employed upon some higher task than that of setting precious stones.

Just then I met with Federigo Ginori, a young man of a very lofty spirit. He had lived some years in Naples, and being endowed with great charms of person and presence, had been the lover of a Neapolitan princess. He wanted to have a medal made, with Atlas bearing the world upon his shoulders, and applied to Michel Agnolo for a design. Michel Benvenuto; he will serve you admirably, and certainly he does not stand in need of sketches by me. However, to prevent your thinking that I want to save myself the trouble of so slight a matter, I will gladly sketch you something; but meanwhile speak to Benvenuto, and let him also make a
Ginori came to me, and told me what he wanted, adding thereto how Michel Agnolo had praised me, and how he had suggested I should make a waxen model while he undertook to supply a sketch. The words of that great man so heartened me, that I set myself to work at once with eagerness upon the model; and when I had finished it, a painter who was intimate with Michel Agnolo, called Giuliano Bugiardini, brought me the drawing of Atlas. [2] On the same occasion I showed Giuliano my little model in Federigo, in concert with Bugiardini, agreed that I should work upon my model. So I took it in hand, and when Michel Agnolo saw it, he praised me to the skies. This was a figure, as I have said, chiselled on a plate of gold; Atlas had the heaven upon his back, made out of a crystal ball, engraved with the zodiac upon a field of lapis-lazuli. The whole composition produced an indescribably fine effect; and under it ran the legend 'Summa tulisse juvat!' [3] Federigo was so thoroughly well pleased that he paid me very liberally. Aluigi Alamanni was at that time in Florence. Federigo Ginori, who enjoyed his friendship, brought him often to my workshop, and through this introduction we became very intimate together. 4

Note 1. I may remind my readers that the three Medici of the ruling house were now illegitimate. Clement VII was the bastard son of Giuliano, brother of Lorenzo the Magnificent. Ippolito, the Cardinal, was the bastard of Giuliano, Duke of Nemours, son of Lorenzo the Magnificent. Alessandro was the reputed bastard of Lorenzo, Duke of Urbino, grandson of Lorenzo the Magnificent. Alessandro became Duke of Florence, and after poisoning his cousin, Cardinal Ippolito, was
line of Lorenzo the Magnificent was extinguished.

Note 2. This painter was the pupil of Bertoldo, a man of simple manners and of some excellence in his art. The gallery at Bologna has a fine specimen of his painting. Michel Agnolo delighted in his society.

Note 3. Cellini says ‘Summam.’

Note 4. This was the agreeable didactic poet Luigi Alamanni, who had to in 1522. He could never reconcile himself to the Medicean tyranny, and died at Amboise in 1556.

XLII

POPE CLEMENT had now declared war upon the city of Florence, which thereupon was put in a state of defence; and the militia being organised in each quarter of the town, I too received orders to serve in my turn. I provided myself with a rich outfit, and went about with the highest nobility of Florence, who showed a unanimous desire to fight for the defence of our liberties. Meanwhile the speeches which are usual upon such occasions were made in every quarter; [1] the young men met together more than was their wont, and everywhere we had but one topic of conversation.
It happened one day, about noon, that a crowd of tall men and lusty young fellows, the first in the city, were assembled in my workshop, when a letter from Rome was put into my hands. It came from a man called Maestro Giacopino della Barca. His real name was Giacopo della Sciorina, but they called him della Barca in Rome, because he kept a ferry boat upon the Tiber between Ponte Sisto and Ponte Santo Agnolo. He was a person of considerable talent, distinguished by his pleasantries and striking conversation, and he had formerly been a designer of patterns for the cloth-weavers in Florence. This man was intimate with the Pope, who took great pleasure in hearing him talk. Being one day engaged in conversation, they touched upon the sack and the defence of the castle.

highest terms, adding that if he knew where I was, he should be glad to get me back. Maestro Giacopo said I was in Florence; whereupon the Pope bade the man write and tell me to return to him. The letter I have mentioned was to the effect that I should do well if I resumed the service of Clement, and that this was sure to turn out to my advantage.

The young men who were present were curious to know what the letter contained; wherefore I concealed it as well as I could. Afterwards I wrote to Maestro Giacopo, begging him by no means, whether for good or evil, to write to me again. He however grew more obstinate in his officiousness, and wrote me another letter, so extravagantly worded, that if it had been seen, I should have got into serious trouble. The substance of it was that the Pope required me to come at once, wanting to employ me on work of the greatest consequence; also that if I wished to act aright, I ought to throw up everything, and not to stand against
a Pope in the party of those hare-brained Radicals. This letter, when I read it, put me in such a fright, that I went to seek my dear friend Piero Landi. Directly he set eyes on me, he asked what accident had happened to upset me so. I told my friend that it was quite impossible for me to explain what lay upon my mind, and what was causing me this trouble; only I entreated him to take the keys I gave him, and to return the gems and gold in my drawers to such and such persons, whose names he would find inscribed upon my memorandum-book; next, I begged him to pack up the furniture of my house, and keep account of it with his usual loving-kindness; and in a few days he should hear where I was. The prudent young man, guessing perhaps pretty nearly how the matter stood,

loyal friend, the wisest, the most worthy, the most discreet, the most affectionate that I have ever known. I left Florence and went to Rome, and from there I wrote to him.

XLIII

UPON my arrival in Rome, [1] I found several of my former friends, by whom I was very well received and kindly entertained. No time was lost before I set myself to work at things which brought me profit, but were not notable enough to be described. There was a fine old man, a goldsmith, called Raffaello del Moro, who had considerable reputation in the trade, and was to boot a very worthy fellow. He begged me to consent
to enter his workshop, saying he had some commissions of importance to
eexecute, on which high profits might be looked for; so I accepted his
proposal with goodwill.

More than ten days had elapsed, and I had not presented myself to
Maestro Giacopino della Barca. Meeting me one day by accident, he gave
me a hearty welcome, and asked me how long I had been in Rome. When I
told him I had been there about a fortnight, he took it very ill, and
said that I showed little esteem for a Pope who had urgently compelled
him to write three times for me. I, who had taken his persistence in the
matter still more ill, made no reply, but swallowed down my irritation.
The man, who suffered from a flux of words, began one of his long yarns,
and went on talking, till at the last, when I saw him tired out, I
merely said that he might bring me to the Pope when he saw fit. He
answered that any time would do for him, and I, that I was always ready.
So we took our way toward the palace. It was a Maundy Thursday; and when
we reached the apartments of the Pope, he being known there and I
expected, we were at once admitted.

The Pope was in bed, suffering from a slight indisposition, and he had
the Pope set eyes on me, he was exceedingly glad. I kissed his feet, and
then, as humbly as I could, drew near to him, and let him understand
that I had things of consequence to utter. On this he waved his hand,
and the two prelates retired to a distance from us. I began at once to

I have never been able to confess or to communicate, because they refuse
me absolution. The case is this. When I melted down the gold and worked at the unsetting of those jewels, your Holiness ordered the Cavalierino to give me a modest reward for my labours, of which I received nothing, but on the contrary he rather paid me with abuse. When then I ascended to the chamber where I had melted down the gold, and washed the ashes, I found about a pound and a half of gold in tiny grains like millet-seeds; and inasmuch as I had not money enough to take me home respectably, I thought I would avail myself of this, and give it back again when opportunity should offer. Now I am here at the feet of your Holiness, who is the only true confessor. I entreat you to do me the favour of granting me indulgence, so that I may be able to confess and communicate, and by the grace of your Holiness regain the grace of my thoroughly believe what you tell me; it is in my power to absolve you of any unbecoming deed you may have done, and, what is more, I have the will. So, then, speak out with frankness and perfect confidence; for if you had taken the value of a whole tiara, I am quite ready to pardon what I have confessed; and this did not amount to the value of 140 ducats, for that was the sum I received from the Mint in Perugia, and father has been as virtuous, good, and worthy a man as was ever born, and you have not degenerated from him. I am very sorry that the money was so little; but such as you say it was, I make you a present of it, and give you my full pardon. Assure your confessor of this, if there is nothing else upon your conscience which concerns me. Afterwards, when you have confessed and communicated, you shall present yourself to me
When I parted from the Pope, Messer Giacopo and the Archbishop approached, and the Pope spoke to them in the highest terms imaginable about me; he said that he had confessed and absolved me; then he commissioned the Archbishop of Capua to send for me and ask if I had any other need beyond this matter, giving him full leave to absolve me amply, and bidding him, moreover, treat me with the utmost kindness.

While I was walking away with Maestro Giacopino, he asked me very inquisitively what was the close and lengthy conversation I had had with his Holiness. After he had repeated the question more than twice, I said that I did not mean to tell him, because they were matters with which he had nothing to do, and therefore he need not go on asking me. Then I went to do what had been agreed on with the Pope; and after the two festivals were over, I again presented myself before his Holiness. He earlier to Rome, I should have commissioned you to restore my two tiaras, which were pulled to pieces in the castle. These, however, with the exception of the gems, are objects of little artistic interest; so I will employ you on a piece of the very greatest consequence, where you cope, which has to be made round like a trencher, and as big as a little trencher, one-third of a cubit wide. Upon this I want you to represent a God the Father in half-relief, and in the middle to set that magnificent big diamond, which you remember, together with several other gems of the greatest value. Caradosso began to make me one, but did not finish it; I want yours to be finished quickly, so that I may enjoy the use of it a shown me, and then I went off like a shot [3] to set myself to work.
Note 1. Cellini has been severely taxed for leaving Florence at this juncture and taking service under Pope Clement, the oppressor of her liberties. His own narrative admits some sense of shame. Yet we should remember that he never took any decided part in politics, and belonged to a family of Medicean sympathies. His father served Lorenzo and Piero; his brother was a soldier of Giovanni delle Bande Nere and Duke Alessandro. Many most excellent Florentines were convinced that the Medicean government was beneficial; and an artist had certainly more to expect from it than from the Republic.

Note 2. Nicolas Schomberg, a learned Dominican and disciple of Savonarola, made Archbishop of Capua in 1520. He was a faithful and able minister of Clement. Paul III gave him the hat in 1535, and he died in 1537.

Note 3. 'Affusolato.' Lit., straight as a spindle.

DURING the time when Florence was besieged, Federigo Ginori, for whom I made that medal of Atlas, died of consumption, and the medal came into the hands of Messer Luigi Alamanni, who, after a little while, took it to present in person to Francis, king of France, accompanied by some of his own finest compositions. The King was exceedingly delighted with the
gift; whereupon Messer Luigi told his Majesty so much about my personal qualities, as well as my art, and spoke so favourably, that the King expressed a wish to know me.

Meanwhile I pushed my model for the button forward with all the diligence I could, constructing it exactly of the size which the jewel itself was meant to have. In the trade of the goldsmiths it roused considerable jealousy among those who thought that they were capable of matching it. A certain Micheletto had just come to Rome; [1] he was very clever at engraving cornelians, and was, moreover, a most intelligent jeweller, an old man and of great celebrity. He had been employed upon that I had not applied to him, being as he was a man of intelligence and of large credit with the Pope. At last, when he saw that I was not commissioned me to superintend everything which is being made for his knowledge I ought to give him. He told me that I should repent, and departing in anger, had an interview with all the masters of the art; they deliberated on the matter, and charged Michele with the conduct of the whole affair. As was to be expected from a person of his talents, he ordered more than thirty drawings to be made, all differing in their details, for the piece the Pope had commissioned.

another jeweller, named Pompeo, a Milanese, who was in favour with the Pope, and related to Messer Traiano, the first chamberlain of the court; [2] these two together, then, began to insinuate that they had seen my
model, and did not think me up to a work of such extraordinary import.

The Pope replied that he would also have to see it, and that if he then
found me unfit for the purpose, he should look around for one who was
fit. Both of them put in that they had several excellent designs ready;
to which the Pope made answer, that he was very pleased to hear it, but
that he did not care to look at them till I had completed my model;
afterwards, he would take them all into consideration at the same time.

After a few days I finished my model, and took it to the Pope one
morning, when Messer Traiano made me wait till he had sent for
Micheletto and Pompeo, bidding them make haste and bring their drawings.
On their arrival we were introduced, and Micheletto and Pompeo
immediately unrolled their papers, which the Pope inspected. The
therefore, knew nothing about giving their right place to precious
stones; and the jewellers, on their side, had not shown them how; for I
ought to say that a jeweller, when he has to work with figures, must of
necessity understand design, else he cannot produce anything worth
looking at: and so it turned out that all of them had stuck that famous
diamond in the middle of the breast of God the Father. The Pope, who was
an excellent connoisseur, observing this mistake, approved of none of
them; and when he had looked at about ten, he flung the rest down, and

Benvenuto, so that I may see if you have made the same mistake as those

it better, as this proves. Those men there have found the right way to

Pope pointed out the difference between my model and the drawings. When
he had sufficiently commended it, the others standing terrified and

thing, and that is of the utmost consequence. Friend Benvenuto, wax is

Father, if I do not work it ten times better than the model, let it be

noblemen made a great stir, crying out that I was promising too much.

the fine physiognomy and bodily symmetry which I observed in this young

man, I predict that he will accomplish what he says, and think that he

Then he called his chamberlain, Messer Traiano, and bade him bring five

hundred golden ducats of the Camera.

While we were waiting for the money, the Pope turned once more to gaze

at leisure on the dexterous device I had employed for combining the

diamond with the figure of God the Father. I had put the diamond exactly

in the center of the piece; and above it God the Father was shown

seated, leaning nobly in a sideways attitude, [3] which made a perfect

right hand, he was in the act of giving the benediction. Below the

diamond I had place three children, who, with their arms upraised, were

supporting the jewel. One of them, in the middle, was in full relief,

the other two in half-relief. All around I set a crowd of cherubs, in

divers attitudes, adapted to the other gems. A mantle undulated to the

wind around the figure of the Father, from the folds of which cherubs

peeped out; and there were other ornaments besides which made a very

beautiful effect. The work was executed in white stucco on a black

stone. When the money came, the Pope gave it to me with his own hand,

and begged me in the most winning terms to let him have it finished in
his own days, adding that this should be to my advantage.

Note 1. Vasari calls this eminent engraver of gems Michelino.

Note 2. Messer Traiano Alicorno.

Note 3. 'In un certo bel modo svolto.' That means: turned aside, not fronting the spectator.

XLV

I TOOK the money and the model home, and was in the utmost impatience to begin my work. After I had laboured diligently for eight days, the Pope sent word by one of his chamberlains, a very great gentleman of Bologna, that I was to come to him and bring what I had got in hand. On the way, the chamberlain, who was the most gentle-mannered person in the Roman court, told me that the Pope not only wanted to see what I was doing, but also intended to intrust me with another task of the highest consequence, which was, in fact, to furnish dies for the money of the Mint; and bade me arm myself beforehand with the answer I should give; in short, he wished me to be prepared, and therefore he had spoken. When we came into the presence, I lost no time in exhibiting the golden plate, upon which I had as yet carved nothing but my figure of God the Father; but this, though only in the rough, displayed a grander style than that of the waxen model. The Pope regarded it with stupefaction,
intention to give you another commission, which, if you feel competent

proceeded to tell me that he wished to make dies for the coinage of his
realm, and asked me if I had ever tried my hand at such things, and if I
had the courage to attempt them. I answered that of courage for the task
I had no lack, and that I had seen how dies were made, but that I had
not ever made any. There was in the presence a certain Messer Tommaso,

upon this young man (and he by nature so extremely overbold) are enough
to make him promise you a new world. You have already given him one
great task, and now, by adding a greater, you are like to make them
to mind his own business. Then he commanded me to make the model for a
broad doubloon of gold, upon which he wanted a naked Christ with his
hands tied, and the inscription 'Ecce Homo;' the reverse was to have a
Pope and Emperor in the act together of propping up a cross which seemed
to fall, and this legend: 'Unus spiritus et una fides erat in eis.'

After the Pope had ordered this handsome coin, Bandinello the sculptor
came up; he had not yet been made a knight; and, with his wonted

him in a moment, and cried out that I did not want his drawings for my
art, but that I hoped before very long to give his art some trouble by
my drawings. The Pope expressed high satisfaction at these words, and

spirit to my service, and do not lend an ear to the chattering of these

So I went off, and very quickly made two dies of steel; then I stamped a
coin in gold, and one Sunday after dinner took the coin and the dies to
the Pope, who, when he saw the piece, was astonished and greatly
gratified, not only because my work pleased him excessively, but also
because of the rapidity with which I had performed it. For the further
satisfaction and amazement of his holiness, I had brought with me all
the old coins which in former times had been made by those able men who
served Popes Giulio and Leo; and when I noticed that mine pleased him
far better, I drew forth from my bosom a patient, [2] in which I prayed
for the post of stamp-master [3] in the Mint. This place was worth six
golden crowns a month, in addition to the dies, which were paid at the
rate of a ducat for three by the Master of the Mint. The Pope took my
patent and handed it to the Datary, telling him to lose no time in
dispatching the business. The Datary began to put it in his pocket,

thanked his Holiness, I went back, rejoicing above measure, to my work.

Note 1. His full name was Tommaso Cortese. The Papal Datario was the
chief secretary of the office for requests, petitions and patents. His
documents. The fees of this office, which was also called Datario,
brought in a large revenue to the Papacy.

Note 2. 'Moto proprio.' Cellini confuses his petition with the
instrument, which he had probably drawn up ready for signature.
I WAS still working in the shop of Raffaello del Moro. This worthy man had a very beautiful young daughter, with regard to whom he had designs on me; and I, becoming partly aware of his intentions, was very willing; but, while indulging such desires, I made no show of them: on the contrary, I was so discreet in my behaviour that I made him wonder. It so happened that the poor girl was attacked by a disorder in her right hand, which ate into the two bones belonging to the little finger and by an ignorant quack-doctor, who predicted that the poor child would be crippled in the whole of her right arm, if even nothing worse should happen. When I noticed the dismay of her father, I begged him not to believe all that this ignorant doctor had said. He replied that he had no acquaintance with physicians or with surgeons, and entreated me, if I knew of one, to bring him to the house. [2] I sent at once for a certain Maestro Giacomo of Perugia, a man of great skill in surgery, who examined the poor girl. [3] She was dreadfully frightened through having doctor declared that she would suffer nothing of consequence, and would be very well able to use her right hand; also that though the two last fingers must remain somewhat weaker than the others, this would be of no inconvenience at all to her. So he began his treatment; and after a few days, when he was going to extract a portion of the diseased bones, her
father called for me, and begged me to be present at the operation. Maestro Giacomo was using some coarse steel instruments; and when I observed that he was making little way and at the same time was inflicting severe pain on the patient, I begged him to stop and wait half a quarter of an hour for me. I ran into the shop, and made a little scalping-iron of steel, extremely thin and curved; it cut like a razor. On my return, the surgeon used it, and began to work with so gentle a hand that she felt no pain, and in a short while the operation was over. In consequence of this service, and for other reasons, the worthy man conceived for me as much love, or more, as he had for two male children; and in the meanwhile he attended to the cure of his beautiful young daughter.

I was on terms of the closest intimacy with one Messer Giovanni Gaddi, who was a clerk of the Camera, and a great connoisseur of the arts, although he had no practical acquaintance with any. [4] In his household were a certain Messer Giovanni, a Greek of eminent learning, Messer Lodovico of Fano, no less distinguished as a man of letters, Messer Antonio Allegretti, and Messer Annibale Caro, [5] at that time in his early manhood. Messer Bastiano of Venice, a most excellent painter, and I were admitted to their society; and almost every day we met together Being aware of this intimacy, the worthy goldsmith Raffaello said to to Benvenuto, and can think of no better intermediary than your worship. So I am come to crave your assistance, and to beg you to name for her
man hardly let my good friend finish what he had to say, before he put
discouraged, looked about at once for another husband for his girl;
while she and the mother and all the family lived on in a bad humour
with me. Since I did not know the real cause of this—I imagined they
were paying me with bastard coin for the many kindnesses I had shown
them—I conceived the thought of opening a workshop of my own in their
neighbourhood. Messer Giovanni told me nothing till the girl was
married, which happened in a few months.

Meanwhile, I laboured assiduously at the work I was doing for the Pope,
and also in the service of the Mint; for his Holiness had ordered
another coin, of the value of two carlins, on which his own portrait was
stamped, while the reverse bore a figure of Christ upon the waters,
holding out his hand to S. Peter, with this inscription 'Quare
dubitasti?' My design won such applause that a certain secretary of the
Pope, a man of the greatest talent, called Il Sanga, [7] was moved to
for his part, can boast of serving an emperor like me, who is able to
frequently to the Pope, who was very eager to see it, and each time
expressed greater admiration.

Note 1. 'Ossicina che seguitano il dito,' &c. Probably metacarpal bones.

Note 2. 'Che gnene avviasse.'
Note 3. Giacomo Rastelli was a native of Rimini, but was popularly known as of Perugia, since he had resided long in that city. He was a famous surgeon under several Popes until the year 1566, when he died at Rome, age seventy-five.

Note 4. Giovanni Gaddi of the Florentine family was passionately attached to men of art and letters. Yet he seems to have been somewhat disagreeable in personal intercourse; for even Annibale Caro, who owed much to his patronage, and lived for many years in his house, never became attached to him. We shall see how he treated Cellini during a fever.

Literary society of the age. Giovanni Greco may have been a Giovanni Vergezio, who presented Duke Cosimo with some Greek characters of exquisite finish. Lodovico da Fano is mentioned as an excellent Latin scholar. Annibale Caro was one of the most distinguished writers of Italian prose and verse in the later Renaissance. He spent the latter portion of his life in the service of the Farnesi.

Note 6. Messer Bastiano is the celebrated painter Sebastian del Piombo, born 1485, died 1547.

Note 7. Battista Sanga, a Roman, secretary to Gianmatteo Giberti, the good Archbishop of Verona, and afterwards to Clement VII. He was a great
Latinist, and one of those ecclesiastics who earnestly desired a reform
of the Church. He died, poisoned, at an early age.

MY brother, at this period, was also in Rome, serving Duke Alessandro,
on whom the Pope had recently conferred the Duchy of Penna. This prince
kept in his service a multitude of soldiers, worthy fellows, brought up
among these was my brother, whom the Duke esteemed as highly as the
bravest of them. One day my brother went after dinner to the shop of a
man called Baccino della Croce in the Banchi, which all those
men-at-arms frequented. He had flung himself upon a settee, and was
sleeping. Just then the guard of the Bargello passed by; [1] they were
taking to prison a certain Captain Cisti, a Lombard, who had also been a
captain, Cattivanza degli Strozzi, chanced to be in the same shop; [2]
those crowns I owed; if you want them, come for them before they go with
push, not caring to hazard his own person. So, finding there around him
several young fellows of the highest daring, more eager than apt for so
serious an enterprise, he bade them catch up Captain Cisti and get the
money from him, and if the guard resisted, overpower the men, provided
they had pluck enough to do so.

The young men were but four, and all four of them without a beard. The
first was called Bertino Aldobrandi, another Anguillotto of Lucca; I
cannot recall the names of the rest. Bertino had been trained like a pupil by my brother; and my brother felt the most unbounded love for him. So then, off dashed the four brave lads, and came up with the guard of the Bargello-upwards of fifty constables, counting pikes, arquebuses, and two-handed-swords. After a few words they drew their weapons, and the four boys so harried the guard, that if Captain Cattivanza had but shown his face, without so much as drawing, they would certainly have put the whole pack to flight. But delay spoiled all; for Bertino received some ugly wounds and fell; at the same time, Anguillotto was also hit in the right arm, and being unable to use his sword, got out of the fray as well as he was able. The others did the same. Bertino Aldobrandi was lifted from the ground seriously injured.

Note 1. The Bargello was the chief constable or sheriff in Italian towns. I shall call him Bargello always in my translation, since any English equivalent would be misleading. He did the rough work of policing the city, and was consequently a mark for all the men of spirit who disliked being kept in order. Giovio, in his Life of Cardinal Pompeo Colonna, quite gravely relates how it was the highest ambition of young Romans of spirit to murder the Bargello. He mentions, in particular, a certain Pietro Margano, who had acquired great fame and popularity by killing the Bargello of his day, one Cencio, in the Campo di Fiore. This man became an outlaw, and was favourably received by Cardinal Colonna, then at war with Clement VII.

Note 2. His baptismal name was Bernardo. Cattivanza was a nickname. He fought bravely for Florence in the siege.
WHILE these things were happening, we were all at table; for that
morning we had dined more than an hour later than usual. On hearing the

the stairs. Reaching the Banchi, where the great scrimmage was, and
seeing Bertino lifted from the ground, he ran towards home, and met my
brother Cecchino on the way, who asked what was the matter. Though some
of the bystanders signed to Giovanni not to tell Cecchino, he cried out
like a madman how it was that Bertino Aldobrandi had been killed by the

it was a man who had a big two-handed sword, with a blue feather in his
bonnet. My poor brother rushed ahead, and having recognised the homicide

by those signs, he threw himself with all his dash and spirit into the
middle of the band, and before his man could turn on guard, ran him

ground. Then he turned upon the rest with such energy and daring, that
his one arm was on the point of putting the whole band to flight, had it
not been that, while wheeling round to strike an arquebusier, this man
fired in self-defence, and hit the brave unfortunate young fellow above
the knee of his right leg. While he lay stretched upon the ground, the
constables scrambled off in disorder as fast as they were able, lest a
pair to my brother should arrive upon the scene.
Noticing that the tumult was not subsiding, I too rose from the table, and girding on my sword—for everybody wore one then—I went to the bridge coming up and being recognised by some of them, they gave way before me, and showed me what I least of all things wished to see, albeit I made mighty haste to view the sight. On the instant I did not know Cecchino, since he was wearing a different suit of clothes from that in which I had lately seen him. Accordingly, he recognised me first, and said:

might be expected in my profession: get me removed from here at once, event while he was speaking, in brief words befitting such occasion. So that could happen to me in the whole course of my life. But be of good cheer; for before you lose sight of him who did the mischief, you shall purport, but of the shortest.

is so emphatic, that, though it makes poor English, I have preserved it in my version.

XLIX

THE GUARD was now about fifty paces from us; for Maffio, their officer, had made some of them turn back to take up the corporal my brother killed. Accordingly, I quickly traversed that short space, wrapped in my cape, which I had tightened round me, and came up with Maffio, whom I
should most certainly have murdered, for there were plenty of people
round, and I had wound my way among them. With the rapidity of
lightning, I had half drawn my sword from the sheath, when Berlinghier
Berlinghieri, a young man of the greatest daring and my good friend,
threw himself from behind upon my arms; he had four other fellows of

hear more, he made haste for Torre di Nona; [1] and they said:

we turned and went back to my brother, whom I had at once conveyed into
a house. The doctors who were called in consultation, treated him with
medicaments, but could not decide to amputate the leg, which might
perhaps have saved him.

As soon as his wound had been dressed, Duke Alessandro appeared and most
affectionately greeted him. My brother had not as yet lost

that your Excellency is losing a servant than whom you may perchance
find men more valiant in the profession of arms, but none more lovingly
do all he could to keep alive; for the rest, he well knew him to be a
man of worth and courage, He then turned to his attendants, ordering
them to see that the brave young fellow wanted for nothing.

When he was gone, my brother lost blood so copiously, for nothing could
be done to stop it, that he went off his head, and kept raving all the
following night, with the exception that once, when they wanted to give
before; now it is impossible that I should receive the divine sacrament
in this already ruined frame; it will be enough if I partake of it by
the divine virtue of the eyesight, whereby it shall be transmitted into

Having spoken thus, the host was elevated; but he straightway relapsed
into the same delirious ravings as before, pouring forth a torrent of
the most terrible frenzies and horrible imprecations that the mind of
man could imagine; nor did he cease once all that night until the day
broke.

When the sun appeared above our horizon, he turned to me and said:

by making me do something tremendous, which may cause them to repent of
injured limb we had enclosed in a very heavy box-and made as though he

valiant spirit passed away.

At the proper hour, toward nightfall, I had him buried with due ceremony
in the church of the Florentines; and afterwards I erected to his memory
a very handsome monument of marble, upon which I caused trophies and
banners to be carved. I must not omit to mention that one of his friends
had asked him who the man was that had killed him, and if he could
recognise him; to which he answered that he could, and gave his
description. My brother, indeed, attempted to prevent this coming to my
ears; but I got it very well impressed upon my mind, as will appear in
the sequel. 2

Note 1. The Torre di Nona was one of the principal prisons in Rome, used
especially for criminals condemned to death.

Note 2. Varchi, in his 'Storia Florentina,' lib. xi., gives a short

Aldobrandi, in the attempt to revenge whom he lost his life.

RETURNING to the monument, I should relate that certain famous men of

letters, who knew my brother, composed for me an epitaph, telling me

that the noble young man deserved it. The inscription ran thus:-

Medicem ducem plures victorias retulit et signifer fuit, facile

He was twenty-five years of age; and since the soldiers called him

Cecchino del Piffero, [1] his real name being Giovanfrancesco Cellini, I

wanted to engrave the former, by which he was commonly known, under the

armorial bearings of our family. This name then I had cut in fine

antique characters, all of which were broken save the first and last. I

was asked by the learned men who had composed that beautiful epitaph,

wherefore I used these broken letters; and my answer was, because the

marvellous framework of his body was spoiled and dead; and the reason

why the first and last remained entire was, that the first should

symbolise the great gift God had given him, namely, of a human soul,
inflamed with his divinity, the which hath never broken, while the
second represented the glorious renown of his brave actions. The thought
gave satisfaction, and several persons have since availed themselves of
my device. Close to the name I had the coat of us Cellini carved upon
the stone, altering it in some particulars. In Ravenna, which is a most
ancient city, there exist Cellini of our name in the quality of very
honourable gentry, who bear a lion rampant or upon a field of azure,
holding a lily gules in his dexter paw, with a label in chief and three
little lilies or. [2] These are the true arms of the Cellini. My father
showed me a shield as ours which had the paw only, together with the
other bearings; but I should prefer to follow those of the Cellini of
Ravenna, which I have described above. Now to return to what I caused to

of a lily, I made the lion hold an axe, with the field of the scutcheon
quartered; and I put the axe in solely that I might not be unmindful to
revenge him.

vol. i. p. 233, and Plon, p. 2.

LI

I WENT on applying myself with the utmost diligence upon the gold-work

send for me two or three times a week, in order to inspect it; and his
delight in the work always increased. Often would he rebuke and scold

plunged me; and one day, observing me more downcast and out of trim than

mad. Have you only just learned that there is no remedy against death?

presence, I continued working at the jewel and the dies [1] for the
Mint; but I also took to watching the arquebusier who shot my brother,
as though he had been a girl I was in love with. The man had formerly
been in the light cavalry, but afterwards had joined the arquebusiers as

that brave young man, the least trifle of delay would have resulted in

fever caused by always seeing him about was depriving me of sleep and
appetite, and was bringing me by degrees to sorry plight, I overcame my
repugnance to so low and not quite praiseworthy an enterprise, and made
my mind up one evening to rid myself of the torment. The fellow lived in
a house near a place called Torre Sanguigua, next door to the lodging of
one of the most fashionable courtesans in Rome, named Signora Antea. It
had just struck twenty-four, and he was standing at the house-door, with
his sword in hand, having risen from supper. With great address I stole
up to him, holding a large Pistojan dagger, [2] and dealt him a
back-handed stroke, with which I meant to cut his head clean off; but as
he turned round very suddenly, the blow fell upon the point of his left
shoulder and broke the bone. He sprang up, dropped his sword,
half-stunned with the great pain, and took to flight. I followed after,
and in four steps caught him up, when I lifted my dagger above his head,
which he was holding very low, and hit him in the back exactly at the
juncture of the nape-bone and the neck. The poniard entered this point
so deep into the bone, that, though I used all my strength to pull it
out, I was not able. For just at that moment four soldiers with drawn
own sword to defend my life. Leaving the poniard then, I made off, and
fearing I might be recognised, took refuge in the palace of Duke
Alessandro, which was between Piazza Navona and the Rotunda. [3] On my
arrival, I asked to see the Duke; who told me that, if I was alone, I
need only keep quiet and have no further anxiety, but to go on working
at the jewel which the Pope had set his heart on, and stay eight days
indoors. He gave this advice the more securely, because the soldiers had
now arrived who interrupted the completion of my deed; they held the
dagger in their hand, and were relating how the matter happened, and the
great trouble they had to pull the weapon from the neck and head-bone of
the man, whose name they did not know. Just then Giovan Bandini came up,
their expressions of regret at having interrupted me, although my
vengeance had been amply satisfied.

More than eight days elapsed, and the Pope did not send for me according
to his custom. Afterwards he summoned me through his chamberlain, the
Bolognese nobleman I have already mentioned, who let me, in his own
modest manner, understand that his Holiness knew all, but was very well
inclined toward me, and that I had only to mind my work and keep quiet.
When we reached the presence, the Pope cast so menacing a glance towards
me, that the mere look of his eyes made me tremble. Afterwards, upon
examining my work his countenance cleared, and he began to praise me
beyond measure, saying that I had done a vast amount in a short time.

meaning, promised that I would. Immediately upon this, I opened a very
fine shop in the Banchi, opposite Raffaello, and there I finished the jewel after the lapse of a few months.

Note 1. 'Ferri.' I have translated this word 'dies;' but it seems to mean all the coining instruments, 'stampe' or 'conii' being the dies proper.

Note 2. 'Pugnal pistolese;' it came in time to mean a cutlass.

Note 3. That is, the Pantheon.

Note 4. Bandini bears a distinguished name in Florentine annals. He served Duke Alessandro in affairs of much importance; but afterwards he betrayed the interests of his master, Duke Cosimo, in an embassy to Charles V in 1543. It seems that he had then been playing into the hands of Filippo Strozzi, for which offence he passed fifteen years in a murder he had just committed.

THE POPE had sent me all those precious stones, except the diamond,
which was pawned to certain Genoese bankers for some pressing need he
had of money. The rest were in my custody, together with a model of the
diamond. I had five excellent journeymen, and in addition to the great
piece, I was engaged on several jobs; so that my shop contained property
of much value in jewels, gems, and gold and silver. I kept a shaggy dog,
very big and handsome, which Duke Alessandro gave me; the beast was
capital as a retriever, since he brought me every sort of birds and game
I shot, but he also served most admirably for a watchdog. It happened,
as was natural at the age of twenty-nine, that I had taken into my
service a girl of great beauty and grace, whom I used as a model in my
art, and who was also complaisant of her personal favours to me. Such
rooms, as well as from the shop; and this communicated by a little dark
with her; and though I sleep as lightly as ever yet did man upon this
earth, yet, after indulgence in sexual pleasure, my slumber is sometimes
very deep and heavy.

So it chanced one night: for I must say that a thief, under the pretext
of being a goldsmith, had spied on me, and cast his eyes upon the
precious stones, and made a plan to steal them. Well, then, this fellow
broke into the shop, where he found a quantity of little things in gold
and silver. He was engaged in bursting open certain boxes to get at the
jewels he had noticed, when my dog jumped upon him, and put him to much
trouble to defend himself with his sword. The dog, unable to grapple
with an armed man, ran several times through the house, and rushed into
the rooms of the journeymen, which had been left open because of the
great heat. When he found they paid no heed to his loud barking, he
dragged their bed-clothes off; and when they still heard nothing, he
pulled first one and then another by the arm till he roused them, and,
barking furiously, ran before to show them where he wanted them to go.
At last it became clear that they refused to follow; for the traitors,
cross at being disturbed, threw stones and sticks at him; and this they
could well do, for I had ordered them to keep all night a lamp alight
there; and in the end they shut their rooms tight; so the dog,
abandoning all hope of aid from such rascals, set out alone again on his
adventure. He ran down, and not finding the thief in the shop, flew
after him. When he got at him, he tore the cape off his back. It would
have gone hard with the fellow had he not called for help to certain
they, believing what he said, jumped out and drove the dog off with much
trouble.

After sunrise my workmen went into the shop, and saw that it had been
broken open and all the boxes smashed. They began to scream at the top
and I rushed out in a panic. Appearing thus before them, they cried out:

that I dared not go to my big chest and look if it still held the jewels
of the Pope. So intense was the anxiety, that I seemed to lose my
eyesight, and told them they themselves must unlock the chest, and see
their shirts; and when, on opening the chest, they saw the precious
is no harm done; your piece and all the stones are here; but the thief
has left us naked to the shirt, because last night, by reason of the
new suits of clothes; I will pay when I hear at leisure how the whole

senses, and take fright—so contrary to my real nature—was the dread lest
peradventure folk should fancy I had trumped a story of the robber up to
steal the jewels. It had already been paid to Pope Clement by one of his
most trusted servants, and by others, that is, by Francesco del Nero,

value to a young fellow, who is all fire, more passionate for arms than

if any one of them knew that I had done aught to justify such

most blessed Father, because he has not as yet had an opportunity.

and if I saw with my own eyes some crime he had committed, I should not

and who suddenly came up before my mind.

After telling the young men to provide themselves with fresh clothes, I
took my piece, together with the gems, setting them as well as I could
in their proper places, and went off at once with them to the Pope.
Francesco del Nero had already told him something of the trouble in my
shop, and had put suspicions in his head. So then, taking the thing
rather ill than otherwise, he shot a furious glance upon me, and cried

him the piece, and while he was inspecting it, I related to him the
whole story of the thief and of my agony, and what had been my greatest
trouble in the matter. During this speech, he oftentimes turned round to
look me sharply in the eyes; and Francesco del Nero being also in the
presence, this seemed to make him half sorry that he had not guessed the
truth. At last, breaking into laughter at the long tale I was telling,

Note 1. Of these people, we can trace the Bishop of Vasona. He was Girolamo Schio or Schedo, a native of Vicenza, the confidential agent and confessor of Clement VII., who obtained the See of Vaison in the county of Avignon in 1523, and died at Rome in 1533. His successor in the bishopric was Tomaso Cortesi, the Datary, mentioned above.

Note 2. Varchi gives a very ugly account of this man, Francesco del Giovio confirms the statement.

Note 3. 'Questo fu quello che.' This may be neuter: 'This was the circumstance which.'

LIII

I WENT on working assiduously at the button, and at the same time laboured for the Mint, when certain pieces of false money got abroad in Rome, stamped with my own dies. They were brought at once to the Pope, who, hearing things against me, said to Giacopo Balducci, the Master of this the Pope turned to the Governor of Rome, and bade him see he found
the malefactor. During those days the Pope sent for me, and leading cautiously in conversation to the topic of the coins, asked me at the

the rascals who gave their minds to such vile work; for fellows who practice lewd trades of that sort are not capable of earning money, nor are they men of much ability. I, on the contrary, with my poor wits could gain enough to keep me comfortably; for when I set dies for the Mint, each morning before dinner I put at least three crowns into my pocket; this was the customary payment for the dies, and the Master of the Mint bore me a grudge, because he would have liked to have them sufficed me, and by coining false money I should not have made so much.

The pope very well perceived my drift; and whereas he had formerly given orders that they should see I did not fly from Rome, he now told them to look well about and have no heed of me, seeing he was ill-disposed to anger me, and in this way run the risk of losing me. The officials who received these orders were certain clerks of the Camera, who made the proper search, as was their duty, and soon found the rogue. He was a stamper in the service of the Mint, named Cesare Macherone, and a Roman citizen. Together with this man they detected a metal-founder of the Mint. 1

Note 1. The word in Cellini is ovolatore di zecca.

LIV

ON that very day, as I was passing through the Piazza Navona, and had my
fine retriever with me, just when we came opposite the gate of the
Bargello, my dog flew barking loudly inside the door upon a youth, who
had been arrested at the suit of a man called Donnino (a goldsmith from
Parma, and a former pupil of Caradosso), on the charge of having robbed
him. The dog strove so violently to tear the fellow to pieces, that the
constables were moved to pity. It so happened that he was pleading his
own cause with boldness, and Donnino had not evidence enough to support
the accusation; and what was more, one of the corporals of the guard, a
what with the dog and with those other circumstances, they were on the
point of releasing their prisoner. When I came up, the dog had lost all
fear of sword or staves, and was flying once more at the young man; so
they told me if I did not call the brute off they would kill him. I held
him back as well as I was able; but just then the fellow, in the act of
readjusting his cape, let fall some paper packets from the hood, which
Donnino recognised as his property. I too recognised a little ring;
flew again upon the robber. On this the fellow craved for mercy,
promising to give back whatever he possessed of mine. When I had secured
the dog, he proceeded to restore the gold and silver and the rings which
he had stolen from me, and twenty-five crowns in addition. Then he cried
once more to me for pity. I told him to make his peace with God, for I
should do him neither good nor evil. So I returned to my business; and a
few days afterwards, Cesare Macherone, the false coiner, was hanged in
the Banchi opposite the Mint; his accomplice was sent to the galleys;
the Genoese thief was hanged in the Campo di Fiore, while I remained in
better repute as an honest man than I had enjoyed before.
WHEN I had nearly finished my piece, there happened that terrible
inundation which flooded the whole of Rome. [1] I waited to see what
would happen; the day was well-nigh spent, for the clocks struck
twenty-two and the water went on rising formidable. Now the front of my
house and shop faced the Banchi, but the back was several yards higher,
because it turned toward Monte Giordano; accordingly, bethinking me
first of my own safety and in the next place of my honour, I filled my
pockets with the jewels, and gave the gold-piece into the custody of my
workmen, and then descended barefoot from the back-windows, and waded as
well as I could until I reached Monte Cavallo. There I sought out Messer
Giovanni Gaddi, clerk of the Camera, and Bastiano Veneziano, the
painter. To the former I confided the precious stones, to keep in
safety: he had the same regard for me as though I had been his brother.
A few days later, when the rage of the river was spent, I returned to my
grace and my own great industry, that it was held to be the finest
masterpiece which had been ever seen in Rome. [2]

When then I took it to the Pope, he was insatiable in praising me, and
land as his eyes could survey; yet being nowadays but needy bankrupt
potentates, we will at any rate give him bread enough to satisfy his
vacant. He replied that he would grant me something of far greater
consequence. I begged his Holiness to bestow this little thing on me
meanwhile by way of earnest. He began to laugh, and said he was willing, but that he did not wish me to serve, and that I must make some arrangement with the other mace-bearers to be exempted. He would allow them through me a certain favour, for which they had already petitioned, namely, the right of recovering their fees at law. This was accordingly crowns a year. 4

Note 1. This took place on the 8th and 9th October, 1530.

Note 2. This famous masterpiece was preserved in the Castle of S. Angelo during the Papal Government of Rome. It was brought out on Christmas,

Note 3. 'Quella sua smania di parole.'

Note 4. Cellini received this post among the Mazzieri (who walked like beadles before the Pope) on April 14, 1531. He resigned it in favour of Pietro Cornaro of Venice in 1535.

LVI

I CONTINUED to work for the Pope, executing now one trifle and now another, when he commissioned me to design a chalice of exceeding richness. So I made both drawing and model for the piece. The latter was constructed of wood and wax. Instead of the usual top, I fashioned three
figures of a fair size in the round; they represented Faith, Hope, and Charity. Corresponding to these, at the base of the cup, were three circular histories in bas-relief. One was the Nativity of Christ, the second the Resurrection, and the third S. Peter crucified head downwards; for thus I had received commission. While I had this work in hand, the Pope was often pleased to look at it; wherefore, observing that his Holiness had never thought again of giving me anything, and knowing that a post in the Piombo was vacant, I asked for this one evening. The good Pope, quite oblivious of his extravagances at the worth more than 800 crowns a year, so that if I gave it you, you would spend your time in scratching your paunch, [1] and your magnificent

starving; and likewise honest men who possess some talent, exercise it to far nobler purport when they have the wherewithal to live abundantly; wherefore princes who provide such folk with competences, let your Holiness take notice, are watering the roots of genius; for genius and talent, at their birth, come into this world lean and scabby; and your Holiness should also know that I never asked for the place with the hope of getting it. Only too happy I to have that miserable post of mace-bearer. On the other I built but castles in the air. Your Holiness will do well, since you do not care to give it me, to bestow it on a man of talent who deserves it, and not upon some fat ignoramus who will

confessed an office of the same kind upon Bramante, that most admirable

Immediately on finishing this speech, I made my bow, and went off in a
blessed Father, may your Holiness be willing to grant it to one who
works assiduously in the exercise of some talent; and as your Holiness
knows that I am diligent in my art, I beg that I may be thought worthy
was inclined to give it him, but it is not right to be so haughty with a

blessed Father, Benvenuto is but young; and a sword becomes him better
person Bastiano. Some time or other you will be able to bestow on
Benvenuto a good thing, perhaps more suitable to him than this would

next you meet Benvenuto, let him know from me that it was he who got
that office in the Piombo for Bastiano the painter, and add that he may
reckon on obtaining the next considerable place that falls; meanwhile

The following evening, two hours after sundown, I met Messer Bartolommeo
Valori [3] at the corner of the Mint; he was preceded by two torches,
and was going in haste to the Pope, who had sent for him. On my taking
off my hat, he stopped and called me, and reported in the most friendly
manner all the messages the Pope had sent me. I replied that I should
complete my work with greater diligence and application than any I had
yet attempted, but without the least hope of having any reward whatever
from the Pope. Messer Bartolommeo reproved me, saying that this was not
the way in which one ought to reply to the advances of a Pope. I
answered that I should be mad to reply otherwise-mad if I based my hopes
on such promises, being certain to get nothing. So I departed, and went
off to my business.
Messer Bartolommeo must have reported my audacious speeches to the Pope, and more perhaps than I had really said; for his Holiness waited above two months before he sent to me, and during that while nothing would have induced me to go uncalled for to the palace. Yet he was dying with impatience to see the chalice, and commissioned Messer Ruberto Pucci to give heed to what I was about. [4] That right worthy fellow came daily to visit me, and always gave me some kindly word, which I returned. The time was drawing nigh now for the Pope to travel toward Bologna; [5] so at last, perceiving that I did not mean to come to him, he made Messer Ruberto bid me bring my work, that he might see how I was getting on. Accordingly, I took it; and having shown, as the piece itself proved, that the most important part was finished, I begged him to advance me five hundred crowns, partly on account, and partly because I wanted gold paid me the money. And so I went away.

Note 1. 'Grattare il corpo,' which I have translated scratch your paunch, is equivalent to 'twirl your thumbs.'

Note 2. The office of the Piombo in Rome was a bureau in which leaden seals were appended to Bulls and instruments of state. It remained for a long time in the hands of the Cistercians; but it used also to be conferred on laymen, among whom were Bremante and Sebastiano del Piombo. When the latter obtained it, he neglected his art and gave himself up to
Note 3. Bartolommeo or Baccio Valori, a devoted adherent of the Medici, commissary to the Prince of Orange during the siege. Afterwards, feeling himself ill repaid for his services, he joined Filippo Strozzi in his opposition to the Medicean rule, and was beheaded in 1537, together with his son and a nephew.

Note 4. Roberto Pucci was another of the devoted Medicean partisans who remained true to his colours. He sat among the forty-eight senators of Alessandro, and was made a Cardinal by Paul III. in 1534.

Note 5. On November 18, 1532, Clement went to meet Charles V. at Bologna, where, in 1529, he had already given him the Imperial crown.

WHEN the Pope took his journey to Bologna, he left Cardinal Salviati as Legate of Rome, and gave him commission to push the work that I was talents but slightly, and us less; look to it then that you keep him

That beast of a Cardinal sent for me after eight days, bidding me bring the piece up. On this I went to him without the piece. No sooner had I have not got my onion-stew ready, nor shall I make it ready, unless you
looked more like a donkey than a man, turned uglier by half than he was deeds worthy of them; but for my present laches, I snap my fingers at your galleys: and what is more, I tell you that, just because of you, I

After this, the good Cardinal tried several times to let me know that I ought to go on working, and to bring him what I was doing to look at. I so that he threw up the commission in despair.

Note 1. 'Cipollata.' Literally, a show of onions and pumpkins; metaphorically, a mess, gallimaufry.

Note 2. 'Arai di grazia di.' I am not sure whether I have given the right shade of meaning in the text above. It may mean: 'You will be permitted.'

LVIII

THE POPE came back from Bologna, and sent at once for me, because the Cardinal had written the worst he could of my affairs in his despatches. He was in the hottest rage imaginable, and bade me come upon the instant with my piece. I obeyed. Now, while the Pope was staying at Bologna, I
had suffered from an attack of inflammation in the eyes, so painful that
I scarce could go on living for the torment; and this was the chief
reason why I had not carried out my work. The trouble was so serious
that I expected for certain to be left without my eyesight; and I had
reckoned up the sum on which I could subsist, if I were blind for life.
Upon the way to the Pope, I turned over in my mind what I should put
forward to excuse myself for not having been able to advance his work. I
thought that while he was inspecting the chalice, I might tell him of my
personal embarrassments. However, I was unable to do so; for when I
to hold no man in regard, that, were it not for decency and order, I

Accordingly, when I perceived that the Pope had become no better than a
vicious beast, my chief anxiety was how I could manage to withdraw from
his presence. So, while he went on bullying, I tucked the piece beneath
minds, whether or not to dash at full speed down the staircase; then I
took my decision and threw myself upon my knees, shouting as loudly as I

your Holiness inquire of your physician, and you will find the truth

has happened to me is Cardinal Salviati; for he sent to me immediately
my work a stew of onions, and told me he would send me to complete it in
a galley; and such was the effect upon me of his knavish words, that in
my passion I felt my face in flame, and so intolerable a heat attacked
my eyes that I could not find my own way home. Two days afterwards, cataracts fell on both my eyes; I quite lost my sight, and after your

Rising from my knees, I left the presence without further license. It commissions, but not the prudence to perform them. I did not tell the Cardinal to go so brutally about this business. [1] If it is true that he is suffering from his eyes, of which I shall get information through intimate with the Pope, and a man of very distinguished parts, happened

Father, pardon if I put a question. I have seen you yield at one and the same time to the hottest anger I ever observed, and then to the warmest compassion; so I beg your Holiness to tell me who the man is; for if he is a person worthy to be helped, I can teach him a secret which may cure was ever born in his own craft; one day, when we are together, I will show you some of his marvellous works, and the man himself to boot; and I shall be pleased if we can see our way toward doing something to dinnertime, and I found that great noble in the presence. On my arrival, the Pope had my cope-button brought, and I in the meantime drew forth my chalice. The nobleman said, on looking at it, that he had never seen a more stupendous piece of work. When the button came, he was still more man is young, I trow, to be so able in his art, and still apt enough to flower-de-luces, stalk, blossom, root, together; then decoct them over a slack fire; and with the liquid bathe your eyes several times a day; you will most certainly be cured of that weakness; but see that you purge
IT was true indeed that I had got the sickness; but I believe I caught it from that fine young servant-girl whom I was keeping when my house was robbed. The French disease, for it was that, remained in me more than four months dormant before it showed itself, and then it broke out over my whole body at one instant. It was not like what one commonly observes, but covered my flesh with certain blisters, of the size of six-pences, and rose-coloured. The doctors would not call it the French disease, albeit I told them why I thought it was that. I went on treating myself according to their methods, but derived no benefit. At last, then, I resolved on taking the wood, against the advice of the first physicians in Rome; [1] and I took it with the most scrupulous discipline and rules of abstinence that could be thought of; and after a few days, I perceived in me a great amendment. The result was that at the end of fifty days I was cured and as sound as a fish in the water.

Some time afterwards I sought to mend my shattered health, and with this view I betook myself to shooting when the winter came in. That amusement, however, led me to expose myself to wind and water, and to staying out in marsh-lands; so that, after a few days, I fell a hundred times more ill than I had been before. I put myself once more under
worse. When the fever fell upon me, I resolved on having recourse again
to the wood; but the doctors forbade it, saying that I took it with
the fever on me, I should not have a week to live. However, I made my
mind up to disobey their orders, observed the same diet as I had
formerly adopted, and after drinking the decoction four days, was wholly
rid of fever. My health improved enormously; and while I was following
this cure, I went on always working at the models of the chalice. I may
add that, during the time of that strict abstinence, I produced finer
things and of more exquisite invention than at any other period of my
life. After fifty days my health was re-established, and I continued
with the utmost care to keep it and confirm it. When at last I ventured
to relax my rigid diet, I found myself as wholly free from those
infirmities as though I had been born again. Although I took pleasure in
fortifying the health I so much longed for, yet I never left off
working; both the chalice and the Mint had certainly as much of my
attention as was due to them and to myself.

Note 1. That is, Guiacum, called by the Italians 'legno santo.'

LX

IT happened that Cardinal Salviati, who, as I have related, entertained
an old hostility against me, had been appointed Legate to Parma. In that
city a certain Milanese goldsmith, named Tobbia, was taken up for false
coining, and condemned to the gallows and the stake. Representations in
his favour, as being a man of great ability, were made to the Cardinal,
who suspended the execution of the sentence, and wrote to the Pope,
saying the best goldsmith in the world had come into his hands,
sentenced to death for coining false money, but that he was a good
simple fellow, who could plead in his excuse that he had taken counsel
with his confessor, and had received, as he said, from him permission to

your Holiness will bring down the overweening arrogance of your

once; and when the man arrived, he made us both appear before him, and

horn, the finest which had ever been seen, and which had been sold for
17,000 ducats of the Camera. The Pope meant to give it to King Francis;
but first he wished it richly set in gold, and ordered us to make
sketches for this purpose. When they were finished, we took them to the
Pope. That of Tobbia was in the form of a candlestick, the horn being
stuck in it like a candle, and at the base of the piece he had

the thing, I could not refrain from laughing gently in my sleeve. The

the finest head imaginable; for I took partly from the horse and
partly from the stag, enriching it with fantastic mane and other
ornaments. Accordingly, no sooner was it seen, than every one decided in
my favour. There were, however, present at the competition certain

Father, your Holiness is sending this magnificent present into France;
please to reflect that the French are people of no culture, and will not

quicker. [1] Benvenuto will devote himself to completing your chalice,
and you will get two pieces done in the same time; moreover, this poor
man, whom you have brought to Rome, will have the chance to be
willingly adopted the advice of the Milanese gentlefolk.

and sent his Master of the Wardrobe to bid me finish the chalice. [2] I replied that I desired nothing in the world more than to complete the beautiful work I had begun: and if the material had been anything but gold, I could very easily have done so myself; but it being gold, his Holiness must give me some of the metal if he wanted me to get through the Pope for gold, unless you mean to drive him into such a fury as will me how one can make bread without flour? Even so without gold this piece inkling that I had made a fool of him, told me he should report all I had spoken to his Holiness; and this he did. The Pope flew into a bestial passion, and swore he would wait to see if I was so mad as not to finish it. More than two months passed thus; and though I had declared I would not give a stroke to the chalice, I did not do so, but always went on working with the greatest interest. When he perceived I was not going to bring it, he began to display real displeasure, and protested he would punish me in one way or another.

A jeweller from Milan in the Papal service happened to be present when these words were spoken. He was called Pompeo, and was closely related to Messer Trajano, the most favoured servant of Pope Clement. The two Holiness were to deprive Benvenuto of the Mint, perhaps he would take it two evil things would happen: first, I should be ill served in the Mint, which concerns me greatly; and secondly, I should certainly not get the
last so far prevailed that he deprived me of the Mint, and gave it to a
eyoung Perugian, commonly known as Fagiolo. [3] Pompeo came to inform me
that his Holiness had taken my place in the Mint away, and that if I did
not finish the chalice, he would deprive me of other things besides. I
the Mint, and that he will be doing the same with regard to those other
things of which he speaks; and that if he wants to confer the post on me
fellow went off like an arrow to find the Pope and report this
conversation; he added also something of his own invention. Eight days
later, the Pope sent the same man to tell me that he did not mean me to
finish the chalice, and wanted to have it back precisely at the point to
the Mint, which it was in his power to take away; but five hundred
crowns which I received belong to his Holiness, and I am ready to return
them; the piece itself is mine, and with it I shall do what I think
words which in my righteous anger I had let fly at himself.

Note 1. The word I have translated 'pyxes' is 'ciborii,' vessels for
holding the Eucharist.

Note 2. The Master of the Wardrobe was at that time Giovanni Aleotti. I
need hardly remind my readers that 'Guardaroba' or wardrobe was the
apartment in a palace where arms, plate, furniture, and clothes were
Cosimo, that princes spent much of their time in this place.

Note 3. Vasari mentions a Girolamo Fagiuoli, who flourished at this
period but calls him a Bolognese.

LXI

AFTER the lapse of three days, on a Thursday, there came to me two favourite Chamberlains of his Holiness; one of them is alive now, and a bishop; he was called Messer Pier Giovanni, and was an officer of the wardrobe; the other could claim nobler birth, but his name has escaped me. On arriving they spoke as follows: The Pope hath sent us. Benvenuto; and since you have not chosen to comply with his request on easy terms, his commands now are that either you should give us up his piece, or to his Holiness, I should be giving what is mine and not his, and at present I have no intention to make him this gift. I have brought it far forward with great labour, and do not want it to go into the hands of thus, the goldsmith Tobbia was standing by, who even presumptuously asked me for the models also of my work. What I retorted, in words worthy of such a rascal, need not here be repeated. Then, when those gentlemen, the Chamberlains, kept urging me to do quickly what I meant to do, I told them I was ready. So I took my cape up, and before I left the shop, I turned to an image of Christ, with solemn reverence and cap Lord, all the things thou doest are according to thy justice, which hath no peer on earth. Thou knowest that I have exactly reached the age of thirty, and that up to this hour I was never threatened with a prison for any of my actions. Now that it is thy will that I should go to
turned round to the two Chamberlains, and addressed them with a certain
than your lordships: place me between you, and take me as your prisoner
burst out laughing, and put me between them; and so we went off, talking
pleasantly, until they brought me to the Governor of Rome, who was
called Il Magalotto. [1] When I reached him (and the Procurator-Fiscal
see you take good care of him. We are very glad to have acted in the
place of your agents; for Benvenuto has told us that this being his
first arrest, he deserved no catchpoles of inferior station than we
minutely related the whole matter, he made at first as though he would
give way to passion, but afterwards he put control upon himself and
laughed, because there were then in the presence certain lords and
cardinals, my friends, who had warmly espoused my cause.

Meanwhile, the Governor and the Fiscal were at me, partly bullying,
partly expostulating, partly giving advice, and saying it was only
reason that a man who ordered work from another should be able to
withdraw it at his choice, and in any way which he thought best. To this
I replied that such proceedings were not warranted by justice, neither
could a Pope act thus; for that a Pope is not of the same kind as
certain petty tyrant princes, who treat their folk as badly as they can,
without regard to law or justice; and so a Vicar of Christ may not
commit any of these acts of violence. Thereat the Governor, assuming his
police-court style of threatening and bullying, began to say:
The Fiscal, who was a far more reasonable agent of police than the hundred words, if he likes: so long as he gives up the work, that is palace or a house to be built, he could with justice tell the and after paying him his labour, he would have the right to dismiss him. Likewise, if a nobleman gave commission for a jewel of a thousand

considerations apply; there is neither house nor jewel here; nobody can command me further than that I should return the five hundred crowns which I have had. Therefore, monsignori, do everything you can do; for you will get nothing from me beyond the five hundred crowns. Go and say this to the Pope. Your threats do not frighten me at all; for I am an rose, and said they were going to the Pope, and should return with orders which I should soon learn to my cost. So I remained there under guard. I walked up and down a large hall, and they were about three hours away before they came back from the Pope. In that while the flower of our nation among the merchants came to visit me, imploring me not to persist in contending with a Pope, for this might be the ruin of me. I answered them that I had made my mind up quite well what I wished to do.

Note 1. Gregorio Magalotti was a Roman. The Procurator-Fiscal was then Benedetto Valenti. Magalotti is said to have discharged his office with extreme severity, and to have run great risks of his life in consequence.
NO sooner had the Governor returned, together with the Procurator, from am certainly sorry to come back from the Pope with such commands as I have received; you must either produce the chalice on the instant, or that hour believed a holy Vicar of Christ could commit an unjust act, so I should like to see it before I did believe it; therefore do the utmost words more from the Pope to you, and then I will execute the orders given me. He says that you must bring your work to me here, and that after I have seen it put into a box and sealed, I must take it to him. He engages his word not to break the seal, and to return the piece to you untouched. But this much he wants to have done, in order to preserve laughing, that I would very willingly give up my work in the way he word was really worth.

Accordingly, I sent for my piece, and having had it sealed as described, gave it up to him. The Governor repaired again to the Pope, who took the box, according to what the Governor himself told me, and turned it several times about. Then he asked the Governor if he had seen the work; and he replied that he had, and that it had been sealed up in his presence, and added that it had struck him as a very admirable piece. authority to bind and loose things of far greater consequence than anger, taking off the string and seals with which it was done up. Afterwards he paid it prolonged attention; and, as I subsequently heard,
showed it to Tobbia the gold-smith, who bestowed much praise upon it.
Then the Pope asked him if he felt equal to producing a piece in that
style. On his saying yes, the Pope told him to follow it out exactly;
it up; for if he does, he shall be paid the value fixed on it by men of
knowledge in this art; but if he is really bent on finishing it himself,
let him name a certain time; and if you are convinced that he means to
this young man; so let me have authority to give him a sound rating

though he was sure he would make matters worse; and if at last he could
do nothing else, he must order me to take the five hundred crowns to his
jeweller, Pompeo.

The Governor returned, sent for me into his cabinet, and casting one of
authority to loose and bind the whole world, and what they do is
immediately ratified in heaven. Behold your box, then, which has been

bullying words and gestures; but perceiving that they came to nothing,
he gave up his attempt as desperate, and spoke in somewhat milder tones

your own interest; but since it is so, go and take the five hundred

and carried the crowns to Pompeo on the instant. It is most likely that
the Pope had counted on some want of money or other opportunity
preventing me from bringing so considerable a sum at once, and was
anxious in this way to repiece the broken thread of my obedience. When
then he saw Pompeo coming to him with a smile upon his lips and the
money in his hand, he soundly rated him, and lamented that the affair
treat him with all the courtesies of which your ignorant and brutal
nature is capable, and tell him that if he is willing to finish that
piece for a reliquary to hold the Corpus Domini when I walk in
procession, I will allow him the conveniences he wants in order to
called me outside the shop, and heaped on me the most mawkish caresses
of a donkey, [1] reporting everything the Pope had ordered. I lost no
world was to regain the favour of so great a Pope, which had been lost
to me, not indeed by my fault, but by the fault of my overwhelming
illness and the wickedness of those envious men who take pleasure in
making mischief; and since the Pope has plenty of servants, do not let
him send you round again, if you value your life... nay, look well to
your safety. I shall not fail, by night or day, to think and do
when you have reported these words to his Holiness, you never in any way
whatever meddle with the least of my affairs, for I will make you
everything to the Pope, but in far more brutal terms than I had used;
and thus the matter rested for a time while I again attended to my shop
and business.

LXIII

TOBBIA the goldsmith meanwhile worked at the setting and the decoration
chalice upon the model he had seen in mine. But when Tobbia came to show
him what he had done, he was very discontented, and greatly regretted
people who had introduced them to him; and several times Baccino della
Croce came from him to tell me that I must not neglect the reliquary. I
answered that I begged his Holiness to let me breathe a little after the
great illness I had suffered, and from which I was not as yet wholly
free, adding that I would make it clear to him that all the hours in
which I could work should be spent in his service. I had indeed begun to
make his portrait, and was executing a medal in secret. I fashioned the
steel dies for stamping this medal in my own house; while I kept a
partner in my workshop, who had been my prentice and was called Felice.

At that time, as is the wont of young men, I had fallen in love with a
Sicilian girl, who was exceedingly beautiful. On it becoming clear that
she returned my affection, her mother perceived how the matter stood,
and grew suspicious of what might happen. The truth is that I had
arranged to elope with the girl for a year to Florence, unknown to her
mother; but she, getting wind of this, left Rome secretly one night, and
went off in the direction of Naples. She gave out that she was gone by
Vecchia, and did a multitude of mad things to discover her. It would be
too long to narrate them all in detail; enough that I was on the point
of losing my wits or dying. After two months she wrote to me that she
was in Sicily, extremely unhappy. I meanwhile was indulging myself in
all the pleasures man can think of, and had engaged in another love
affair, merely to drown the memory of my real passion.
IT happened through a variety of singular accidents that I became intimate with a Sicilian priest, who was a man of very elevated genius and well instructed in both Latin and Greek letters. In the course of conversation one day we were led to talk about the art of necromancy; steadfastness of soul I should have enough and to spare, provided I upon attempting the adventure.

The priest one evening made his preparations, and bade me find a comrade, or not more than two. I invited Vincenzio Romoli, a very dear friend of mine, and the priest took with him a native of Pistoja, who also cultivated the black art. We went together to the Coliseum; and to describe circles on the earth with the finest ceremonies that can be imagined. I must say that he had made us bring precious perfumes and fire, and also drugs of fetid odour. When the preliminaries were completed, he made the entrance into the circle; and taking us by the hand, introduced us one by one inside it. Then he assigned our several functions; to the necromancer, his comrade, he gave the pentacle to hold; the other two of us had to look after the fire and the perfumes; and then he began his incantations. This lasted more than an hour and a half; when several legions appeared, and the Coliseum was all full of devils. I was occupied with the precious perfumes, and when the priest
perceived in what numbers they were present, he turned to me and said:

Sicilian Angelica. That night we obtained no answer; but I enjoyed the greatest satisfaction of my curiosity in such matters. The necromancer said that we should have to go a second time, and that I should obtain the full accomplishment of my request; but he wished me to bring with me a little boy of pure virginity.

I chose one of my shop-lads, who was about twelve years old, and invited Vincenzio Romoli again; and we also took a certain Agnolino Gaddi, who was a very intimate friend of both. When we came once more to the place appointed, the necromancer made just the same preparations, attended by the same and even more impressive details. Then he introduced us into the circle, which he had reconstructed with art more admirable and yet more wondrous ceremonies. Afterwards he appointed my friend Vincenzio to the ordering of the perfumes and the fire, and with him Agnolino Gaddi. He next placed in my hand the pentacle, which he bid me turn toward the points he indicated, and under the pentacle I held the little boy, my workman. Now the necromancer began to utter those awful invocations, calling by name on multitudes of demons who are captains of their legions, and these he summoned by the virtue and potency of God, the Uncreated, Living, and Eternal, in phrases of the Hebrew, and also of the Greek and Latin tongues; insomuch that in a short space of time the whole Coliseum was full of a hundredfold as many as had appeared upon the first occasion. Vincenzio Romoli, together with Agnolino, tended the fire and heaped on quantities of precious perfumes. At the advice of the necromancer, I again demanded to be reunited with Angelica. The sorcerer
me to stand firm by him, because the legions were a thousandfold more
than he had summoned, and were the most dangerous of all the denizens of
hell; and now that they had settled what I asked, it behoved us to be
civil to them and dismiss them gently. On the other side, the boy, who
was beneath the pentacle, shrieked out in terror that a million of the
fiercest men were swarming round and threatening us. He said, moreover,
that four huge giants had appeared, who were striving to force their way
inside the circle. Meanwhile the necromancer, trembling with fear, kept
doing his best with mild and soft persuasions to dismiss them. Vincenzio
Romoli, who quaked like an aspen leaf, looked after the perfumes. Though
I was quite as frightened as the rest of them, I tried to show it less,
and inspired them all with marvellous courage; but the truth is that I
had given myself up for dead when I saw the terror of the necromancer.
then covering his face with his hands, he groaned again that he was
dead, and that he could not endure the sight longer. The necromancer
appealed for my support, entreaty me to stand firm by him, and to have
assafetida flung upon the coals; so I turned to Vincenzio Romoli, and
told him to make the fumigation at once. While uttering these words I
looked at Agnolino Gaddi, whose eyes were starting from their sockets in
in time and place like this we must not yield to fright, but do the
utmost to bestir ourselves; therefore, up at once, and fling a handful
to do this, let fly such a volley from his breech, that it was far more
effectual than the assafetida. [1] The boy, roused by that great stench
and noise, lifted his face little, and hearing me laugh, he plucked up
courage, and said the devils were taking to flight tempestuously. So we
abode thus until the matinbells began to sound. Then the boy told us
again that but few remained, and those were at a distance. When the
and packed up a great bundle of books which he had brought with him;
then, all together, we issued with him from the circle, huddling as
close as we could to one another, especially the boy, who had got into
the middle, and taken the necromancer by his gown and me by the cloak.
All the while that we were going toward our houses in the Banchi, he
kept saying that two of the devils he had seen in the Coliseum were
gamboling in front of us, skipping now along the roofs and now upon the
ground. The necromancer assured me that, often as he had entered magic
circles, he had never met with such a serious affair as this. He also
tried to persuade me to assist him in consecrating a book, by means of
which we should extract immeasurable wealth, since we could call up
fiends to show us where treasures were, whereof the earth is full; and
after this wise we should become the richest of mankind: love affairs
like mine were nothing but vanities and follies without consequence. I
replied that if I were a Latin scholar I should be very willing to do
what he suggested. He continued to persuade me by arguing that Latin
scholarship was of no importance, and that, if he wanted, he could have
found plenty of good Latinists; but that he had never met with a man of
soul so firm as mine, and that I ought to follow his counsel. Engaged in
this conversation, we reached our homes, and each one of us dreamed all
that night of devils.

Note 1. 'Fece una istrombazzata di coregge con tanta abundanzia di
merda.'
AS we were in the habit of meeting daily, the necromancer kept urging me to join in his adventure. Accordingly, I asked him how long it would take, and where we should have to go. To this he answered that we might get through with it in less than a month, and that the most suitable locality for the purpose was the hill country of Norcia; [1] a master of his in the art had indeed consecrated such a book quite close to Rome, at a place called the Badia di Farfa; but he had met with some difficulties there, which would not occur in the mountains of Norcia; the peasants also of that district are people to be trusted, and have some practice in these matters, so that at a pinch they are able to render valuable assistance.

This priestly sorcerer moved me so by his persuasions that I was well disposed to comply with his request; but I said I wanted first to finish the medals I was making for the Pope. I had confided what I was doing about them to him alone, begging him to keep my secret. At the same time I never stopped asking him if he believed that I should be reunited to my Sicilian Angelica at the time appointed; for the date was drawing near, and I thought it singular that I heard nothing about her. The necromancer told me that it was quite certain I should find myself where she was, since the devils never break their word when they promise, as they did on that occasion; but he bade me keep my eyes open, and be on the look out against some accident which might happen to me in that
connection, and put restraint upon myself to endure somewhat against my inclination, for he could discern a great and imminent danger in it: well would it be for me if I went with him to consecrate the book, since this would avert the peril that menaced me, and would make us both most fortunate.

I was beginning to hanker after the adventure more than he did; but I said that a certain Maestro Giovanni of Castel Bolognese had just come to Rome, very ingenious in the art of making medals of the sort I made in steel, and that I thirsted for nothing more than to compete with him and take the world by storm with some great masterpiece, which I hoped would annihilate all those enemies of mine by the force of genius and prithee, Benvenuto, come with me and shun a great disaster which I see finish my medal, and we were now approaching the end of the month. I was so absorbed and enamoured by my work that I thought no more about Angelica or anything of that kind, but gave my whole self up to it.

Note 1. This district of the Central Apennines was always famous for witches, poisoners, and so forth. The Farfa mentioned below is a village of the Sabine hills.

brought him to Rome, where he was patronised by the Cardinals Salviati Pontifical mace-bearer. He died at Faenza in 1555.
IT happened one day, close on the hours of vespers, that I had to go at
an unusual time for me from my house to my workshop; for I ought to say
that the latter was in the Banchi, while I lived behind the Banchi, and
went rarely to the shop; all my business there I left in the hands of my
partner, Felice. Having stayed a short while in the workshop, I
remembered that I had to say something to Alessandro del Bene. So I
arose, and when I reached the Banchi, I met a man called Ser Benedetto,
who was a great friend of mine. He was a notary, born in Florence, son
of a blind man who said prayers about the streets for alms, and a
Sienese by race. This Ser Benedetto had been very many years at Naples;
afterwards he had settled in Rome, where he transacted business for some
Sienese merchants of the Chigi. [1] My partner had over and over again
asked him for some moneys which were due for certain little rings
confided to Ser Benedetto. That very day, meeting him in the Banchi, he
demanded his money rather roughly, as his wont was. Benedetto was
walking with his masters, and they, annoyed by the interruption, scolded
him sharply, saying they would be served by somebody else, in order not
to have to listen to such barking. Ser Benedetto did the best he could
to excuse himself, swore that he had paid the goldsmith, and said he had
no power to curb the rage of madmen. The Sienese took his words ill, and
dismissed him on the spot. Leaving them, he ran like an arrow to my
shop, probably to take revenge upon Felice. It chanced that just in the
middle of the street we met. I, who had heard nothing of the matter,
greeted him most kindly, according to my custom, to which courtesy he
replied with insults. Then what the sorcerer had said flashed all at
once upon my mind; and bridling myself as well as I was able, in the way
with me, for I have done you no harm, nor do I know anything about these
affairs of yours. Please go and finish what you have to do with Felice.
He is quite capable of giving you a proper answer; but inasmuch as I
know nothing about it, you are wrong to abuse me in this way, especially
retorted that I knew everything, and that he was the man to make me bear
a heavier load than that, and that Felice and I were two great rascals.
By this time a crowd had gathered round to hear the quarrel. Provoked by
his ugly words, I stooped and took up a lump of mud—for it had
rained—and hurled it with a quick and unpremeditated movement at his
face. He ducked his head, so that the mud hit him in the middle of the
skull. There was a stone in it with several sharp angles, one of which
striking him, he fell stunned like a dead man: whereupon all the
bystanders, seeing the great quantity of blood, judged that he was
really dead.

Note 1. The MS. has Figi; but this is probably a mistake of the
amanuensis.

LXVII

WHILE he was still lying on the ground, and people were preparing to
carry him away, Pompeo the jeweller passed by. The Pope had sent for him
to give orders about some jewels. Seeing the fellow in such a miserable
Father, Benvenuto has this very moment murdered Tobbia; I saw it with my
the presence, to take and hang me at once in the place where the
homicide had been committed, adding that he must do all he could to
catch me, and not appear again before him until he had hanged me.

When I saw the unfortunate Benedetto stretched upon the ground, I
thought at once of the peril I was in, considering the power of my
enemies, and what might ensue from this disaster. Making off, I took
refuge in the house of Messer Giovanni Gaddi, clerk of the Camera, with
the intention of preparing as soon as possible to escape from Rome. He,
however, advised me not to be in such a hurry, for it might turn out
perhaps that the evil was not so great as I imagined; and calling Messer
Annibale Caro, who lived with him, bade him go for information.

While these arrangements were being made, A Roman gentleman appeared,
by him. [1] Taking Messer Giovanni and me apart, he told us that the
Cardinal had reported to him what the Pope said, and that there was no
way of helping me out of the scrape; it would be best for me to shun the
first fury of the storm by flight, and not to risk myself in any house
shall aid myself alone; only I request you to put one of your horses at
finest and the best in Rome. I mounted with an arquebuse upon the
saddle-bow, wound up in readiness to fire, if need were. [2] When I
both horse and foot. So, making a virtue of necessity, I put my horse
by them, passed freely through. Then, with all the speed I could, I took
the road to Palombara, a fief of my lord Giovanbatista Savello, whence I
sent the horse back to Messer Giovanni, without, however, thinking it
well to inform him where I was. [3] Lord Giovanbatista, after very
kindly entertaining me two days, advised me to remove and go toward
Naples till the storm blew over. So, providing me with company, he set
me on the way to Naples.

While travelling, I met a sculptor of my acquaintance, who was going to

His name was Solosmeo, and he gave me the news that on the very evening
of the fray, Pope Clement sent one of his chamberlains to inquire how
Tobbia was getting on. Finding him at work, unharmed, and without even
knowing anything about the matter, the messenger went back and told the
rascal; but I promise you well that you have stirred a snake up which

he should be very sorry to let me slip through his fingers. And so
Solosmeo and I went on our way singing toward Monte Cassino, intending
to pursue our journey thence in company toward Naples.

inclination. When he went as Papal Legate to Hungary in 1532, he assumed
the airs and style of a Condottiere. His jealousy of his cousin
Alessandro led to his untimely death by poison in 1535.

Note 2. The gun was an 'arquebuso a ruola,' which had a wheel to cock it.
Note 3. A village in the Sabina, north of Tivoli. Giov. Battista Savelli, of a great Roman house, was a captain of cavalry in the Papal service after 1530. In 1540 he entered the service of Duke Cosimo, and died in 1553.

Note 4. This sculptor was Antonio Solosmeo of Settignano. The monument Cassino is by no means a brilliant piece of Florentine art. Piero was the exiled son of Lorenzo the Magnificent; and the Medici, when they regained their principality, erected this monument to his memory, employing Antonio da San Gallo, Francesco da San Gallo and a Neapolitan, this passage in Cellini to have taken the execution of it over.

LXVIII

WHEN Solosmeo had inspected his affairs at Monte Cassino, we resumed our journey; and having come within a mile of Naples, we were met by an innkeeper, who invited us to his house, and said he had been at Florence many years with Carlo Ginori; [1] adding, that if we put up at his inn, he would treat us most kindly, for the reason that we both were Florentines. We told him frequently that we did not want to go to him. However, he kept passing, sometimes in front and sometimes behind, perpetually repeating that he would have us stop at his hostelry. When this began to bore me, I asked if he could tell me anything about a certain Sicilian woman called Beatrice, who had a beautiful daughter
named Angelica, and both were courtesans. Taking it into his head that I

though he was resolved to leave us. I felt some pleasure at having rid

myself in so fair a manner of that ass of an innkeeper; and yet I was

rather the loser than the gainer; for the great love I bore Angelica had

come back to my mind, and while I was conversing, not without some

ago a woman and a girl came back to a house in my neighbourhood; they

had the names you mentioned, but whether they are Sicilians I cannot

We rode on all together with mine host into the town of Naples, and
descended at his house. Minutes seemed years to me till I had put my

things in order, which I did in the twinkling of an eye; then I went to

the house, which was not far from our inn, and found there my Angelica,

who greeted me with infinite demonstrations of the most unbounded

passion. I stayed with her from evenfall until the following morning,

and enjoyed such pleasure as I never had before or since; but while
drinking deep of this delight, it occurred to my mind how exactly on

that day the month expired, which had been prophesied within the

necromantic circle by the devils. So then let every man who enters into

relation with those spirits weigh well the inestimable perils I have

passed through!

Note 1. A Gonfalonier of the Republic in 1527.
I HAPPENED to have in my purse a diamond, which I showed about among the
goldsmiths; and though I was but young, my reputation as an able artist
was so well known even at Naples that they welcomed me most warmly.
Among others, I made acquaintance with a most excellent companion, a
jeweller, Messer Domenico Fontana by name. This worthy man left his shop
for the three days that I spent in Naples, nor even quitted my company,
but showed me many admirable monuments of antiquity in the city and its
neighbourhood. Moreover, he took me to pay my respects to the Viceroy of
Naples, who had let him know that he should like to see me. When I
presented myself to his Excellency, he received me with much honour; [1]
and while we were exchanging compliments, the diamond which I have
mentioned caught his eye. He made me show it him, and prayed me, if I
parted with it, to give him the refusal. Having taken back the stone, I
offered it again to his Excellency, adding that the diamond and I were
at his service. Then he said that the diamond pleased him well, but that
he should be much better pleased if I were to stay with him; he would
make such terms with me as would cause me to feel satisfied. We spoke
many words of courtesy on both sides; and then coming to the merits of
the diamond, his Excellency bade me without hesitation name the price at
which I valued it. Accordingly I said that it was worth exactly two
hundred crowns. He rejoined that in his opinion I had not overvalued it;
but that since I had set it, and he knew me for the first artist in the
world, it would not make the same effect when mounted by another hand.
To this I said that I had not set the stone, and that it was not well
set; its brilliancy was due to its own excellence; and that if I were to
mount it afresh, I could make it show far better than it did. Then I put
my thumb-nail to the angels of its facets, took it from the ring,
cleaned it up a little, and handed it to the Viceroy. Delighted and
astonished, he wrote me out a cheque [2] for the two hundred crowns I
had demanded.

Medici, in which he told me to come back post-haste to Rome, and to
dismount without delay at the palace of his most reverend lordship. I
read the letter to my Angelica, who begged me with tears of affection
either to remain in Naples or to take her with me. I replied that if she
was disposed to come with me, I would give up to her keeping the two
hundred ducats I had received from the Viceroy. Her mother perceiving us
to take my daughter to Rome, leave me a sum of fifteen ducats, to pay
harridan that I would very gladly leave her thirty if she would give me
my Angelica. We made the bargain, and Angelica entreated me to by her a
gown of black velvet, because the stuff was cheap at Naples. I consented
to everything, sent for the velvet, settled its price and paid for it;
then the old woman, who thought me over head and ears in love, begged
for a gown of fine cloth for herself, as well as other outlays for her
sons, and a good bit more money than I had offered. I turned to her with

was not enough for her would be quite enough for me; and having kissed
Angelica, we parted, she with tears, and I with laughter, and off at
once I set for Rome.
Note 1. The Spanish Viceroy was at this time Pietro Alvarez de Toledo, Marquis of Villafranca, and uncle of the famous Duke of Alva. He governed Naples for twenty years, from 1532 onwards.

Note 2. 'Mi fece una polizza.' A 'polizza' was an order for money, practically identical with our 'cheque.'

LXX

I LEFT Naples by night with my money in my pocket, and this I did to prevent being set upon or murdered, as is the way there; but when I came to Selciata, [1] I had to defend myself with great address and bodily prowess from several horsemen who came out to assassinate me. During the following days, after leaving Solosmeo at his work in Monte Cassino, I came one morning to breakfast at the inn of Adanagni; [2] and when I was near the house, I shot some birds with my arquebuse. An iron spike, which was in the lock of my musket, tore my right hand. Though the wound was not of any consequence, it seemed to be so, because it bled abundantly. Going into the inn, I put my horse up, and ascended to a large gallery, where I found a party of Neapolitan gentlemen just upon the point of sitting down to table; they had with them a young woman of quality, the loveliest I ever saw. At the moment when I entered the room, I was followed by a very brave young serving-man of mine holding a big partisan in his hand. The sight of us, our arms, and the blood, inspired those poor gentlemen with such terror, particularly as the place was known to be a nest of murderers, that they rose from table and
called on God in a panic to protect them. I began to laugh, and said
that God had protected them already, for that I was a man to defend them
against whoever tried to do them harm. Then I asked them for something
to bind up my wounded hand; and the charming lady took out a
handkerchief richly embroidered with gold, wishing to make a bandage
with it. I refused; but she tore the piece in half, and in the gentlest
manner wrapt my hand up with her fingers. The company thus having
regained confidence, we dined together very gaily; and when the meal was
over, we all mounted and went off together. The gentlemen, however, were
not as yet quite at their ease; so they left me in their cunning to
entertain the lady, while they kept at a short distance behind. I rode
at her side upon a pretty little horse of mine, making signs to my
servant that he should keep somewhat apart, which gave us the
opportunity of discussing things that are not sold by the apothecary.
[3] In this way I journeyed to Rome with the greatest enjoyment I have
ever had.

and having obtained an audience of his most reverend lordship, paid my
respects, and thanked him warmly for my recall. I then entreated him to
secure me from imprisonment, and even from a fine if that were possible.
The Cardinal was very glad to see me; told me to stand in no fear; then
turned to one of his gentlemen, called Messer Pier Antonio Pecci of
Siena, ordering him to tell the Bargello not to touch me. [4] He then
asked him how the man was going on whose head I had broken with the
stone. Messer Pier Antonio replied that he was very ill, and that he
would probably be even worse; for when he heard that I was coming back
to Rome, he swore he would die to serve me an ill turn. When the
fellow could not have taken a better way than this to make us know that

reputation and your own, refrain these four or five days from going
about in the Banchi; after that go where you like, and let fools die at

I went home and set myself to finishing the medal which I had begun,
with the head of Pope Clement and a figure of Peace on the reverse. The
figure was a slender woman, dressed in very thin drapery, gathered at
the waist, with a little torch in her hand, which was burning a heap of
arms bound together like a trophy. In the background I had shown part of
a temple, where was Discord chained with a load of fetters. Round about

During the time that I was finishing this medal, the man whom I had
wounded recovered, and the Pope kept incessantly asking for me. I,
face before him, his lordship gave me some commission of importance,
which hindered me from working at my medal to the end. Consequently
undertook to keep me in sight, and let me adroitly understand how much
the Pope desired my services. [6] I told him that in a few days I would
prove to his Holiness that his service had never been neglected by me.

Note 1. Ponte a Selice, between Capua and Aversa.

Note 2. Anagni, where Boniface VIII. was outraged to the death by the
French partisans of Philip le Bel.
Note 3. 'I. e.,' private and sentimental.

1551 he schemed to withdraw Siena from the Spanish to the French cause, and was declared a rebel.

Note 5. The medal was struck to celebrate the peace in Christendom between 1530 and 1536.

Note 6. Pietro Carnesecchi was one of the martyrs of free-thought in Italy. He adopted Protestant opinions, and was beheaded and burned in Rome, August 1567.

LXXI

NOT many days had passed before, my medal being finished, I stamped it in gold, silver, and copper. After I had shown it to Messer Pietro, he immediately introduced me to the Pope. It was on a day in April after dinner, and the weather very fine; the Pope was in the Belvedere. After entering the presence, I put my medals together with the dies of steel into his hand. He took them, and recognising at once their mastery of

While he and the others were inspecting them, taking up now the dies and
now the medals in their hands, I began to speak as submissively as I was
inauspicious stars, and hindered that with which they violently menaced
me, your Holiness, without your fault or mine, would have lost a
faithful and loving servant. It must, most blessed Father, be allowed
that in those cases where men are risking all upon one throw, it is not
wrong to do as certain poor and simple men are wont to say, who tell us
we must mark seven times and cut once. [1] Your Holiness will remember
how the malicious and lying tongue of my bitter enemy so easily aroused
your anger, that you ordered the Governor to have me taken on the spot
and hanged; but I have no doubt that when you had become aware of the
irreparable act by which you would have wronged yourself, in cutting off
from you a servant such as even now your Holiness hath said he is, I am
sure, I repeat, that, before God and the world, you would have felt no
trifling twinges of remorse. Excellent and virtuous fathers, and masters
of like quality, ought not to let their arm in wrath descend upon their
sons and servants with such inconsiderate haste, seeing that subsequent
repentance will avail them nothing. But now that God has overruled the
malign influences of the stars and saved me for your Holiness, I humbly
beg you another time not to let yourself so easily be stirred to rage

The Pope had stopped from looking at the medals and was now listening
attentively to what I said. There were many noblemen of the greatest
consequence present, which made him blush a little, as it were for
shame; and not knowing how else to extricate himself from this
entanglement, he said that he could not remember having given such an
order. I changed the conversation in order to cover his embarrassment.
His Holiness then began to speak again about the medals, and asked what method I had used to stamp them so marvelously, large as they were; for he had never met with ancient pieces of that size. We talked a little on this subject; but being not quite easy that I might not begin another lecture sharper than the last, he praised my medals, and said they gave him the greatest satisfaction, but that he should like another reverse made according to a fancy of his own, if it were possible to stamp them with two different patterns. I said that it was possible to do so. Then his Holiness commissioned me to design the history of Moses when he strikes the rock and water issues from it, with this motto: 'Ut bibat leave, the Pope proclaimed before the whole company that he would give me enough to live on wealthily without the need of labouring for any one but him. So I devoted myself entirely to working out this reverse with the Moses on it.

Note 1. 'Segnar sette e tagliar uno.' A proverb derived possibly from felling trees; or, as some commentators interpret, from the points made by sculptors on their marble before they block the statue out.

Note 2. The medal commemorated a deep well sunk by Clement at Orvieto.

LXXII

IN the meantime the Pope was taken ill, and his physicians thought the case was dangerous. Accordingly my enemy began to be afraid of me, and
engaged some Neapolitan soldiers to do to me what he was dreading I might do to him. [1] I had therefore much trouble to defend my poor life. In course of time, however, I completed the reverse; and when I took it to the Pope, I found him in bed in a most deplorable condition. Nevertheless, he received me with the greatest kindness, and wished to inspect the medals and the dies. He sent for spectacles and lights, but was unable to see anything clearly. Then he began to fumble with his fingers at them, and having felt them a short while, he fetched a deep sigh, and said to his attendants that he was much concerned about me, but that if God gave him back his health he would make it all right.

Three days afterwards the Pope died, and I was left with all my labour lost; yet I plucked up courage, and told myself that these medals had won me so much celebrity, that any Pope who was elected would give me work to do, and peradventure bring me better fortune. Thus I encouraged and put heart into myself, and buried in oblivion all the injuries which Pompeo had done me. Then putting on my arms and girding my sword, I went to San Piero, and kissed the feet of the dead Pope, not without shedding tears. Afterwards I returned to the Banchi to look on at the great commotion which always happens on such occasions.

While I was sitting in the street with several of my friends, Pompeo went by, attended by ten men very well armed; and when he came just opposite, he stopped, as though about to pick a quarrel with myself. My companions, brave and adventurous young men, made signs to me to draw my sword; but it flashed through my mind that if I drew, some terrible mischief might result for persons who were wholly innocent. Therefore I
considered that it would be better if I put my life to risk alone. When
Pompeo had stood there time enough to say two Ave Marias, he laughed
derisively in my direction; and going off, his fellows also laughed and
wagged their heads, with many other insolent gestures. My companions
wanted to begin the fray at once; but I told them hotly that I was quite
able to conduct my quarrels to an end by myself, and that I had no need
of stouter fighters than I was; so that each of them might mind his
business. My friends were angry and went off muttering. Now there was
among them my dearest comrade, named Albertaccio del Bene, own brother
to Alessandro and Albizzo, who is now a very rich man in Lyons. He was
the most redoubtable young man I ever knew, and the most high-spirited,
and loved me like himself; and insomuch as he was well aware that my
forbearance had not been inspired by want of courage, but by the most
daring bravery, for he knew me down to the bottom of my nature, he took
my words up and begged me to favour him so far as to associate him with
above all men that live, the time will very likely come when you shall
give me aid; but in this case, if you love me, do not attend to me, but
look to your own business, and go at once like our other friends, for

Note 1. The meaning of this is, that if Clement died, Cellini would have
had his opportunity of vengeance during the anarchy which followed a
vacancy of the Papal See.
IN the meanwhile my enemies had proceeded slowly toward Chiavica, as the place was called, and had arrived at the crossing of several roads, stood was the one which leads straight to the Campo di Fiore. Some the corner of Chiavica, and there he stayed a while transacting it. I had just been told that he had boasted of the insult which he fancied he had put upon me; but be that as it may, it was to his misfortune; for precisely when I came up to the corner, he was leaving the shop and his bravi had opened their ranks and received him in their midst. I drew a little dagger with a sharpened edge, and breaking the line of his defenders, laid my hands upon his breast so quickly and coolly, that none of them were able to prevent me. Then I aimed to strike him in the face; but fright made him turn his head round; and I stabbed him just beneath the ear. I only gave two blows, for he fell stone dead at the second. I had not meant to kill him; but as the saying goes, knocks are not dealt by measure. With my left hand I plucked back the dagger, and with my right hand drew my sword to defend my life. However, all those bravi ran up to the corpse and took no action against me; so I went back alone through Strada Giulia, considering how best to put myself in safety.

I had walked about three hundred paces, when Piloto the goldsmith, my embraced with measureless affection; and soon the whole flower of the young men of the Banchi, of all nations except the Milanese, came crowding in; and each and all made proffer of their own life to save
mine. Messer Luigi Rucellai also sent with marvellous promptitude and
courtesy to put his services at my disposal, as did many other great
folk of his station; for they all agreed in blessing my hands. [1]
judging that Pompeo had done me too great and unforgivable an injury,
and marvelling that I had put up with him so long.

LXXIV

CARDINAL CORNARO, on hearing of the affair, despatched thirty soldiers,
with as many partisans, pikes, and arquebuses, to bring me with all due
respect to his quarters. [1] This he did unasked; whereupon I accepted
the invitation, and went off with them, while more than as many of the
and first chamberlain to the Pope, sent a Milanese of high rank to
and calling on his most reverend lordship to chastise me. The Cardinal
not committed this lesser one; thank Messer Traiano from me for giving
turned and in presence of the nobleman said to the Bishop of Frulli, [2]
friend Benvenuto; I want to help and defend him; and whoso acts against
disconcerted, while the Bishop of Frulli come to visit me at Cardinal
protector. Now Cardinal Cornaro who had the touchy temper of a bear,
flew into a rage, and told the Bishop he was quite as well able to
allowed to speak with me on some matters of his patron which had nothing
to do with the affair. Cornaro bade him for that day make as though he
had already talked with me.

respects. Then I begged him to grant me the favour of leaving me where I
was, and told him of the great courtesy which Cornaro had shown me;
adding that if his most reverend lordship suffered me to stay, I should
gain one friend the more in my hour of need; otherwise his lordship
might dispose of me exactly as he thought best. He told me to do as I

Cardinal Farnese was elected Pope. 3

After he had put affairs of greater consequence in order, the new Pope
sent for me, saying that he did not wish any one else to strike his
coins. To these words of his Holiness a gentleman very privately
acquainted with him, named Messer Latino Juvinale, made answer that I
was in hiding for a murder committed on the person of one Pompeo of
Milan, and set forth what could be argued for my justification in the

at once made out for him, in order that he may be placed in perfect

Pope, happened to be there; he was a Milanese, called Messer Ambrogio.

know less about such matters than I do. Know then that men like

Benvenuto, unique in their profession, stand above the law; and how far

safe conduct had been drawn out, I began at once to serve him, and was
treated with the utmost favour.

Note 1. This was Francesco, brother to Cardinal Marco Cornaro. He received the hat in 1528, while yet a layman, and the Bishopric of Brescia in 1531.

Note 2. This was Francesco, brother to Cardinal Marco Cornaro. He received the hat in 1528, while yet a layman, and the Bishopric of Brescia in 1531.

Note 3. Paul III., elected October 13, 1534.

humane learning, much esteemed by his contemporaries.

Note 5. Ambrogio Recalcati. He was for many years the trusted secretary and diplomatic agent of Paul III.

LXXV

MESSER LATINO JUVINALE came to call on me, and gave me orders to strike the coins of the Pope. This roused up all my enemies, who began to look about how they should hinder me; but the Pope, perceiving their drift, scolded them, and insisted that I should go on working. I took the dies in hand, designing a S. Paul, surrounded with this inscription: "Vas
electionis.' This piece of money gave far more satisfaction than the models of my competitors; so that the Pope forbade any one else to speak to him of coins, since he wished me only to have to do with them. This encouraged me to apply myself with untroubled spirit to the task; and Messer Latino Juvinale, who had received such orders from the Pope, used to introduce me to his Holiness. I had it much at heart to recover the post of stamper to the Mint; but on this point the Pope took advice, and then told me I must first obtain pardon for the homicide, and this I Rome. [1] I may say that it is usual every year on this solemn festival to grant the freedom of twelve outlaws to these officers. Meanwhile he promised to give me another safe-conduct, which should keep me in security until that time.

When my enemies perceived that they were quite unable to devise the means of keeping me out of the Mint, they resorted to another expedient. The deceased Pompeo had left three thousand ducats as dowry to an illegitimate daughter of his; and they contrived that a certain marriage through the medium of his master. [2] Accordingly the match came off; but this fellow was an insignificant country lad, who had been brought up by his lordship; and, as folk said, he got but little of the money, since his lordship laid his hands on it and had the mind to use it. Now the husband of the girl, to please his wife, begged the prince to have me taken up; and he promised to do so when the first flush of my favour with the Pope had passed away. Things stood so about two months, off with pretexts, but assuring the woman that he would certainly
I did not omit to present myself pretty frequently to his lordship, who made show of treating me with great distinction. He had, however, decided to do one or other of two things—either to have me assassinated, or to have me taken up by the Bargello. Accordingly he commissioned a certain little devil of a Corsican soldier in his service to do the trick as cleverly as he could; and my other enemies, with Messer Traiano at the head of them, promised the fellow a reward of one hundred crowns. He assured them that the job would be as easy as sucking a fresh egg. Seeing into their plot, I went about with my eyes open and with good attendance, wearing an under-coat and armlets of mail, for which I had obtained permission.

The Corsican, influenced by avarice, hoped to gain the whole sum of money without risk, and imagined himself capable of carrying the matter through alone. Consequently, one day after dinner, he had me sent for in the name of Signor Pier Luigi. I went off at once, because his lordship had spoken of wanting to order several big silver vases. Leaving my home in a hurry, armed, however, as usual, I walked rapidly through Strada Giulia toward the Palazzo Farnese, not expecting to meet anybody at that hour of day. I had reached the end of the street and was making toward the palace, when, my habit being always to turn the corners wide, I observed the Corsican get up and take his station in the middle of the road. Being prepared, I was not in the least disconcerted; but kept upon my guard, and slackening pace a little, drew nearer toward the wall, in order to give the fellow a wide berth. He on his side came closer to the wall, and when we were now within a short distance of each other, I perceived by his gestures that he had it in his mind to do me mischief,
and seeing me alone thus, thought he should succeed. Accordingly, I
have said you had mistaken me, but since it is full day, you know well
enough who I am. I never had anything to do with you, and never injured
high-spirited way, without, however, making room for me to pass, that he
indeed what you want and what you are saying; but the job which you have
taken in hand is more dangerous and difficult than you imagine, and may
peradventure turn out the wrong way for you. Remember that you have to
do with a man who would defend himself against a hundred; and the
Meanwhile I also was looking black as thunder, and each of us had
changed colour. Folk too gathered round us, for it had become clear that
our words meant swords and daggers. He then, not having the spirit to

sent for me. When I returned to my shop, the Corsican informed me,
through an intimate friend of his and mine, that I need not be on my
guard against him, since he wished to be my good brother; but that I
ought to be much upon my guard against others, seeing I was in the
greatest peril, for folk of much consequence had sworn to have my life.
I sent to thank him, and kept the best look-out I could. Not many days
after, a friend of mine informed me that Signor Pier Luigi had given
strict orders that I should be taken that very evening. They told me
this at twenty; whereupon I spoke with some of my friends, who advised
me to be off at once. The order had been given for one hour after
sunset; accordingly at twenty-three I left in the post for Florence. It
seems that when the Corsican showed that he had not pluck enough to do
the business as he promised, Signor Pier Luigi on his own authority gave

who was always clamouring to know where her dower had gone to. When he
was unable to gratify her in this matter of revenge on either of the two
plans he had formed, he bethought him of another, which shall be related
in its proper place.

Note 1. 'Le sante Marie.' So the Feast of the Assumption is called at
Florence, because devotion is paid on that day to the various images of
the Virgin scattered through the town. The 'Caporioni' of Rome were,
like aldermen, wardens of the districts into which the city was divided.

Gonfaloniere of the Church, Duke of Castro, Marquis of Novara, and
finally Duke of Parma and Piacenza in 1545. He was murdered at Parma by
his own courtiers in 1547. He was a man of infamous habits, quite unfit
for the high dignities conferred on him.

LXXVI

I REACHED Florence in due course, and paid my respects to the Duke
Alessandro, who greeted me with extraordinary kindness and pressed me to
remain in his service. There was then at Florence a sculptor called Il
Tribolino, and we were gossips, for I had stood godfather to his son.
[1] In course of conversation he told me that a certain Giacopo del
Sansovino, his first master, had sent for him; and whereas he had never seen Venice, and because of the gains he expected, he was very glad to go there. [2] On his asking me if I had ever been at Venice, I said no; this made him invite me to accompany him, and I agreed. So then I told Duke Alessandro that I wanted first to go to Venice, and that afterwards I would return to serve him. He exacted a formal promise to this effect, and bade me present myself before I left the city. Next day, having made my preparations, I went to take leave of the Duke, whom I found in the palace of the Pazzi, at that time inhabited by the wife and daughters of Signor Lorenzo Cibo. [3] Having sent word to his Excellency that I found ready to start; and he asked me whether I had bound my sword. I answered that a man on horseback about to take a journey ought not to bind his sword. He said that the custom was so in Florence, since a certain Ser Maurizio then held office, who was capable of putting S. John the Baptist to the rack for any trifling peccadillo. [4]

passed. I laughed at this, and so we set off, joining the courier to Venice, who was nicknamed Il Lamentone. In his company we travelled through Bologna, and arrived one evening at Ferrara. There we halted at the inn of the Piazza, which Lamentone went in search of some Florentine exiles, to take them letters and messages from their wives. The Duke had given orders that only the courier might talk to them, and no one else,
under penalty of incurring the same banishment as they had. Meanwhile, since it was a little past the hour of twenty-two, Tribolo and I went to see the Duke of Ferrara come back from Belfiore, where he had been at a jousting match. There we met a number of exiles, who stared at us as though they wished to make us speak with them. Tribolo, who was the most and saw the Duke return; afterwards, when we regained our inn, we found his brother Piero, and another old man, whom I believe to have been Jacopo Nardi, [5] together with some young fellows, who began immediately to ask the courier news, each man of his own family in Florence. [6] Tribolo and I kept at a distance, in order to avoid speaking with them. After they had talked a while with Lamentone, told them that we had not the same permission as he had. Benintendi pretty flowers of speech. Then I raised my head as gently as I could, we cannot render you any assistance; and though you have flung words at us which we are far from deserving, we do not mean on that account to wrong toward us, since we had nothing to do with him or his affairs. Old Nardi took our part, telling Benintendi plainly that he was in the wrong, which made him go on muttering insults. On this I bade him know that I could say and do things to him which he would not like, and therefore he had better mind his business, and let us alone. Once more he cried out that he snapped his fingers at the Duke and us, and that we were all of us a heap of donkeys. [9] I replied by giving him the lie
direct and drawing my sword. The old man wanting to be first upon the staircase, tumbled down some steps, and all the rest of them came huddling after him. I rushed onward, brandishing my sword along the care not to do them any harm, as I might too easily have done. In the

they looked like a herd of swine. Then the host came with a light, while I withdrew upstairs and put my sword back in its scabbard. Lamentone the Duke were to know of your brawling, he would have you hanged. I will not do to you what you deserve; but take care you never show yourself to me, and when I began to make him my excuses, he would not suffer me to say a word, but told me that he knew I was entirely in the right, and bade me be upon my guard against those men upon my journey.

Tribolo in his boyhood, was a sculptor of some distinction. He worked on the bas-reliefs of San Petronio at Bologna, and helped Michel Agnolo da Siena to execute the tomb of Adrian VI. at Rome. Afterwards he was employed upon the sculpture of the Santa Casa at Loreto. He also made some excellent bronzework for the Medicean villas at Cestello and Petraja. All through his life Tribolo served the Medici, and during the siege of Florence in 1530 he constructed a cork model of the town for Clement VII. Born 1485, died 1550.

from his master, Andrea da Monte a Sansovino. His works at Florence,
Rome, and Venice are justly famous. He died in 1570, aged ninety-three.

Note 3. A brother of the Cardinal, and himself Marquis of Massa.

Note 4. Ser Maurizio was entitled Chancellor, but really superintended the criminal magistracy of Florence. Varchi and Segni both speak of him as harsh and cruel in the discharge of his office.

Note 5. Jacopo Nardi was the excellent historian of Florence, a strong anti-Medicean partisan, who was exiled in 1530.

Note 6. I have translated the word 'brigata' by 'family' above, because I find Cellini in one of his letters alluding to his family as 'la mia brigatina.'

was exiled by the Medici in 1530.

Note 8. The Florentine slang is 'Io ho in culo loro e il duca.'

Note 9. 'Un monte di asini.'
AFTER we had supped, a barge-man appeared, and offered to take us to Venice. I asked if he would let us have the boat to ourselves; he was willing, and so we made our bargain. In the morning we rose early, and mounted our horses for the port, which is a few miles distant from three comrades, waiting for me. They had among them two lances, and I had bought a stout pike in Ferrara. Being very well armed to boot, I was for God helps those who have the right on their side; and you shall see paces, dismounted and marched boldly forward with my pike. Tribolo stopped behind, all huddled up upon his horse, looking the very image of frost. Lamentone, the courier, meanwhile, was swelling and snorting like the wind. That was his usual habit; but now he did so more than he was wont, being in doubt how this devilish affair would terminate. When I reached the boat, the master presented himself and said that those Florentine gentlemen wanted to embark in it with us, if I was willing. I cause, together with my own strength of body and mind, possess the will prove he was in earnest, Magalotti then seized his own and came toward me. I sprang upon the gunwale and hit him such a blow, that, if he had not tumbled backward, I must have pierced his body. His comrades, in lieu of helping him, turned to fly; and when I saw that I could kill
go away. I have shown you that I cannot do what I do not want, and what

Tribolo, the boatman, and Lamentone to embark; and so we got under way
for Venice. When we had gone ten miles on the Po, we sighted those young
men, who had got into a skiff and caught us up; and when they were
due course we arrived at Venice, when I applied to a brother of Cardinal
Cornaro, begging him to procure for me the favour of being allowed to
carry arms. He advised me to do so without hesitation, saying that the
worst risk I ran was that I might lose my sword.

LXXVIII

ACCORDINGLY I girded on my sword, and went to visit Jacopo del
Sansovino, the sculptor, who had sent for Tribolo. He received me most
kindly, and invited us to dinner, and we stayed with him. In course of
conversation with Tribolo, he told him that he had no work to give him
at the moment, but that he might call again. Hearing this, I burst out

were free to do that and greater things besides. Tribolo shrugged up his

without regarding the copious dinner which Sansovino had given me, I
took the part of my comrade Tribolo, for he was in the right. All the
while at table Sansovino had never stopped chattering about his great
achievements, abusing Michel Agnolo and the rest of his
fellow-sculptors, while he bragged and vaunted himself to the skies.
This had so annoyed me that not a single mouthful which I ate had tasted

Jacopo, men of worth act like men of worth, and men of genius, who
produce things beautiful and excellent, shine forth far better when
other people praise them than when they boast so confidently of their
steam of our choler. The same day, happening to pass near the Rialto, I
met Piero Benintendi in the company of some men; and perceiving that
shop till the storm blew over. Afterwards I learned that the young
Magalotti, to whom I showed that courtesy, had scolded them roundly; and
thus the affair ended.

LXXIX

A FEW days afterwards we set out on our return to Florence. We lay one
night at a place on this side Chioggia, on the left hand as you go
toward Ferrara. Here the host insisted upon being paid before we went to
bed, and in his own way; and when I observed that it was the custom
everything their own way ought to make a world after their own fashion,
since things were differently managed here. Our host told me not to go
on bothering his brains, because he was determined to do as he had said.
Tribolo stood trembling with fear, and nudged me to keep quiet, lest
they should do something worse to us; so we paid them in the way they
wanted, and afterwards we retired to rest. We had, I must admit, the
most capital beds, new in every particular, and as clean as they could
be. Nevertheless I did not get one wink of sleep, because I kept on
thinking how I could revenge myself. At one time it came into my head to
set fire to his house; at another to cut the throats of four fine horses
which he had in the stable; I saw well enough that it was easy for me to
do all this; but I could not see how it was easy to secure myself and my
the boat; and so I did. When the towing-horses had been harnessed to the
cable, I ordered the people not to stir before I returned, for I had
left a pair of slippers in my bedroom. Accordingly I went back to the
inn and called our host, who told me he had nothing to do with us, and
that we might go to Jericho. [1] There was a ragged stable-boy about,
the Pope, because he has got a wench in bed with him, whom he has been
few Venetian coppers, and told him to make the barge-man wait till I had
found my slippers and returned. I went upstairs, took out a little knife
as sharp as a razor, and cut the four beds that I found there into
ribbons. I had the satisfaction of knowing I had done a damage of more
than fifty crowns. Then I ran down to the boat with some pieces of the
bed-covers [2] in my pouch, and bade the bargee start at once without
delay. We had not gone far before my gossip Tribolo said that he had
left behind some little straps belonging to his carpet-bag, and that he
must be allowed to go back for them. I answered that he need not take
thought for a pair of little straps, since I could make him as many big
ones as he liked. [3] He told me I was always joking, but that he must
really go back for his straps. Then he began ordering the bargee to
stop, while I kept ordering him to go on. Meanwhile I informed my friend
what kind of trick I had played our host, and showed him specimens of
the bed-covers and other things, which threw him into such a quaking
the gates of Florence.

love of God; and play me no more of your games, I beg; for all this

act the man upon that journey. When he heard the remark, he looked at

that I had been a bad travelling companion to him, because I resented
affronts and defended myself against folk who would have done us injury.
But I deemed that he had acted a far worse part with regard to me by
never coming to my assistance at such pinches. Let him judge between us
who stands by and has no personal interest in our adventures.

Note 1. 'E che noi andassimo al bordello.'

Note 2. 'Sarge. Sargia' is interpreted 'sopraccoperta del letto.'

Note 3. The Italian for straps, 'coregge,' has a double meaning, upon
which Cellini plays.

LXXX

NO sooner had I dismounted that I went to visit Duke Alessandro, and
thanked him greatly for his present of the fifty crowns, telling his
Excellency that I was always ready to serve him according to my
abilities. He gave me orders at once to strike dies for his coinage; and
side and San Cosimo and San Damiano on the other. [1] This was in
silver, and it gave so much satisfaction that the Duke did not hesitate
to say they were the best pieces of money in Christendom. The same said
all Florence and every one who saw them. Consequently I asked his
Excellency to make me appointments, [2] and to grant me the lodgings of
the Mint. He bade me remain in his service, and promised he would give
me more than I demanded. Meanwhile he said he had commissioned the
Master of the Mint, a certain Carlo Acciaiuoli, and that I might go to
him for all the money that I wanted. This I found to be true; but I drew
my monies so discreetly, that I had always something to my credit,
according to my account.

I then made dies for a giulio; [3] it had San Giovanni in profile,
seated with a book in his hand, finer in my judgment than anything which
I had done; and on the other side were the armorial bearings of Duke
Alessandro. Next I made dies for half-giulios on which I struck the full
face of San Giovanni in small. This was the first coin with a head in
full face on so thin a piece of silver that had yet been seen. The
difficulty of executing it is apparent only to the eyes of such as are
past-masters in these crafts. Afterwards I made dies for the golden
crowns; this crown had a cross upon one side with some little cherubim,

When I had struck these four sorts, I begged the Duke to make out my
appointments and to assign me the lodgings I have mentioned, if he was
contented with my service. He told me very graciously that he was quite
satisfied, and that he would grant me my request. While we were thus
talking, his Excellency was in his wardrobe, looking at a remarkable
little gun that had been sent him out of Germany. [4] When he noticed
that I too paid particular attention to this pretty instrument, he put
it in my hands, saying that he knew how much pleasure I took in such
things, and adding that I might choose for earnest of his promises an
arquebuse to my own liking from the armoury, excepting only this one
piece; he was well aware that I should find things of greater beauty,
and not less excellent, there. Upon this invitation, I accepted with
thanks; and when he saw me looking round, he ordered his Master of the
Wardrobe, a certain Pretino of Lucca, to let me take whatever I liked.
[5] Then he went away with the most pleasant words at parting, while I
remained, and chose the finest and best arquebuse I ever saw, or ever
had, and took it back with me to home.

Two days afterward I brought some drawings which his Excellency had
commissioned for gold-work he wanted to give his wife, who was at that
time still in Naples. [6] I again asked him to settle my affairs. Then
his Excellency told me that he should like me first to execute the die
of his portrait in fine style, as I had done for Pope Clement. I began
it in wax; and the Duke gave orders, while I was at work upon it, that
whenever I went to take his portrait, I should be admitted. Perceiving
that I had a lengthy piece of business on my hands, I sent for a certain
Pietro Pagolo from Monte Ritondo, in the Roman district, who had been
with me from his boyhood in Rome. [7] I found him with one
Bernardonaccio, [8] a goldsmith, who did not treat him well; so I
brought him away from there, and taught him minutely how to strike coins
oftentimes I found him napping after dinner with that Lorenzino of his, who afterwards murdered him, and no other company; and much I marvelled that a Duke of that sort showed such confidence about his safety. 9

Note 1. These were the special patrons of the Medicean family, being physician-saints.

Note 2. ‘Che mi fermassi una provvisione.’

Note 3. The ‘giulio’ was a coin of 56 Italian centimes or 8 Tuscan ‘crazie,’ which in Florence was also called ‘barile’ or ‘gabelotto,’ because the sum had to be paid as duty on a barrel of wine.

Note 4. See above, p. 120, for the right meaning of wardrobe.

Note 5. Messer Francesco of Lucca, surnamed Il Pretino.

Note 6. Margaret of Austria, natural daughter of Charles V., was

Note 7. Pietro Pagolo Galleotti, much praised by Vasari for his artistic skill.

Note 8. Perhaps Bernardo Sabatini.
Note 9. This is the famous Tuscan Brutus who murdered Alessandro. He was

LXXXI

appearances had got the government of everything in his own hands,

was called Bastiano Cennini, an artist of the antiquated school, and of
little skill in his craft. [2] Ottaviano mixed his stupid dies with mine
in the coinage of crown-pieces. I complained of this to the Duke, who,

no time; and when I had pointed out the injury that had been done to my

swallow it in this way, even if I burst. Then I returned to the Duke,

Medici and me, entreating his Excellency not to allow the fine coins
which I had made for him to be spoiled, and begging for permission to

That very day, which was a Thursday, I received from Rome a full
safe-conduct from the Pope, with advice to go there at once and get the

myself from the penalties attaching to my homicide. I went to the Duke,
whom I found in bed, for they told me he was suffering the consequence
of a debauch. In little more than two hours I finished what was wanted
for his waxen medal; and when I showed it to him, it pleased him
extremely. Then I exhibited the safe-conduct sent me at the order of the
Pope, and told him how his Holiness had recalled me to execute certain
pieces of work; on this account I should like to regain my footing in
the fair city of Rome, which would not prevent my attending to his
stay here; I will provide for your appointments, and will give you the
lodgings in the Mint, with much more than you could ask for, because
your requests are only just and reasonable. And who do you think will be
mine, a young Roman whom I have taught the art; he will serve your
Excellency very well till I return with your medal finished, to remain
for ever in your service. I have in Rome a shop open, with journeymen
and a pretty business; as soon as I have got my pardon, I will leave all
the devotion of Rome [4] to a pupil of mine there, and will come back,
present, and no one else. The Duke frequently signed to him that he
should join in pressing me to stay; but Lorenzino never said anything
answered that I wanted by all means to regain my hold on Rome. He made
no reply, but continued eyeing the Duke with very evil glances. When I
had finished the medal to my liking, and shut it in its little box, I
make you a much finer medal than the one I made for Pope Clement. It is
only reasonable that I should since that was the first I ever made.
Messer Lorenzo here will give me some exquisite reverse, as he is a
him sometimes for a fool and sometimes for a coward, turned about in
bed, and laughed at his bragging, words. I took my leave without further
ceremony, and left them alone together. The Duke, who did not believe
that I was really going, said nothing further. Afterwards, when he knew
that I was gone, he sent one of his servants, who caught me up at Siena,
and gave me fifty golden ducats with a message from the Duke that I
should take and use them for his sake, and should return as soon as

had left full directions to Petro Pagolo, the Roman above mentioned, how
he had to use the dies; but as it was a very delicate affair, he never
quite succeeded in employing them. I remained creditor to the Mint in a
matter of more than seventy crowns on account of dies supplied by me.

Note 1. This Ottaviano was not descended from either Cosimo or Lorenzo
great family. He married Francesca Salviati, the aunt of Duke Cosimo.
Though a great patron of the arts and an intimate friend of M. A.
Buonarroti, he was not popular, owing to his pride of place.

Note 2. Cellini praises this man, however, in the preface to the
'Oreficeria.'

Note 3. 'Mostragnene.' This is perhaps equivalent to 'mostraglielo.'

Note 4. 'Tutta la divozione di Roma.' It is not very clear what this
ON the journey to Rome I carried with me that handsome arquebuse which
the Duke gave me; and very much to my own pleasure, I used it several
times by the way, performing incredible feats by means of it. The little
house I had in Strada Giulia was not ready; so I dismounted at the house
of Messer Giovanni Gaddi, clerk of the Camera, to whose keeping I had
committed, on leaving Rome, many of my arms and other things I cared
for. So I did not choose to alight at my shop, but sent for Felice, my
partner, and got him to put my little dwelling forthwith into excellent
order. The day following, I went to sleep there, after well providing
myself with clothes and all things requisite, since I intended to go and
thank the Pope next morning.

I had two young serving-lads, and beneath my lodgings lived a laundress
who cooked extremely nicely for me. That evening I entertained several
friends at supper, and having passed the time with great enjoyment,
betook myself to bed. The night had hardly ended, indeed it was more
than an hour before daybreak, when I heard a furious knocking at the

Accordingly I called my elder servant, Cencio [1] (he was the man I took
into the necromantic circle), and bade him to go and see who the madman
was that knocked so brutally at that hour of the night. While Cencio was
on this errand, I lighted another lamp, for I always keep one by me at
night; then I made haste to pass an excellent coat of mail over my
shirt, and above that some clothes which I caught up at random. Cencio
guard; and he says that if you do not open at once, he will knock the

had before been done by Signor Pier Luigi, I seized an excellent dagger
with my right hand, and with the left I took the safe-conduct; then I
ran to the back-window, which looked out on gardens, and there I saw
more than thirty constables; wherefore I knew that I could not escape
upon that side. I made the two lads go in front, and told them to open
the door exactly when I gave the word to do so. Then taking up an
attitude of defence, with the dagger in my right hand and the

The Bargello, Vittorio, and the officers sprang inside at once, thinking
they could easily lay hands upon me; but when they saw me prepared in

saying he would look to the safe-conduct later. Thereat I presented my
crammed with men; they made as though they would resort to violence; I
stood upon my guard against them; so that the Bargello saw he would not
be able to have me except in the way I said. Accordingly he called his
clerk, and while the safe-conduct as being read, he showed by signs two
or three times that he meant to have me secured by his officers; but
this had no effect of shaking my determination. At last they gave up the
attempt, threw my safe-conduct on the ground, and went away without
their prize.

Note 1. 'I. e.,' Vincenzio Romoli.
WHEN I returned to bed, I felt so agitated that I could not get to sleep again. My mind was made up to let blood as soon as day broke. However, I asked advice of Messer Gaddi, and he referred to a wretched doctor-fellow he employed, [1] who asked me if I had been frightened. Now, just consider what a judicious doctor this was, after I had narrated an occurrence of that gravity, to ask me such a question! He was an empty fribbler, who kept perpetually laughing about nothing at all. Simpering and sniggering, then, he bade me drink a good cup of Greek wine, keep my spirits up, and not be frightened. Messer Giovanni, one of his meaningless laughs, and putting his fingers on my wrist, far beyond anything which that fool of a doctor had learned from his Hippocrates or Galen, knew at once how serious was my situation; yet wishing not to add to my uneasiness and to the harm I had already taken, I made show of being in good spirits. While this was happening, Messer Giovanni had ordered dinner, and we all of us sat down to eat in company. I remembered that Messer Lodovico da Fano, Messer Antonio Allegretti, Messer Giovanni Greco, all of them men of the finest scholarship, and Messer Annibal Caro, who was then quite young, were present. At table the conversation turned entirely upon my act of daring. They insisted on hearing the whole story over and over again from my apprentice Cencio, who was a youth of superlative talent, bravery, and extreme personal beauty. Each time that he described my
truculent behaviour, throwing himself into the attitudes I had assumed, and repeating the words which I had used, he called up some fresh detail to my memory. They kept asking him if he had been afraid; to which he answered that they ought to ask me if I had been afraid, because he felt precisely the same as I had.

All this chattering grew irksome to me; and since I still felt strongly agitated, I rose at last from table, saying that I wanted to go and get new clothes of blue silk and stuff for him and me; adding that I meant to walk in procession after four days at the feast of Our Lady, and meant Cencio to carry a white lighted torch on the occasion. Accordingly I took my leave, and had the blue cloth cut, together with a handsome jacket of blue sarcenet and a little doublet of the same; and I had a similar jacket and waistcoat made for Cencio.

When these things had been cut out, I went to see the Pope, who told me to speak with Messer Ambruogio; for he had given orders that I should execute a large piece of golden plate. So I went to find Messer Ambruogio, who had heard the whole of the affair of the Bargello, and had been in concert with my enemies to bring me back to Rome, and had scolded the Bargello for not laying hands on me. The man excused himself by saying that he could not do so in the face of the safe-conduct which

and bade me make drawings for it, saying that the business should be put at once in train. Meanwhile the feast of Our Lady came round. Now it is the custom for those who get a pardon upon this occasion to give themselves up to prison; in order to avoid doing which I returned to the
Pope, and told his Holiness that I was very unwilling to go to prison, and that I begged him to grant me the favour of a dispensation. The Pope answered that such was the custom, and that I must follow it. Thereupon I fell again upon my knees, and thanked him for the safe-conduct he had given me, saying at the same time that I should go back with it to serve my Duke in Florence, who was waiting for me so impatiently. On hearing Benvenuto get his grace without the prison, and see that his ‘moto drawn up, his Holiness signed it; it was then registered at the Capitol; afterwards, upon the day appointed, I walked in procession very honourably between two gentlemen, and so got clear at last.

Note 1. Possibly Bernardino Lili of Todi.

LXXXIV

FOUR days had passed when I was attacked with violent fever attended by extreme cold; and taking to my bed, I made my mind up that I was sure to die. I had the first doctors of Rome called in, among whom was Francesco da Norcia, a physician of great age, and of the best repute in Rome. [1] I told them what I believed to be the cause of my illness, and said that I had wished to let blood, but that I had been advised against it; and if it was not too late, I begged them to bleed me now. Maestro Francesco answered that it would not be well for me to let blood then, but that if I had done so before, I should have escaped without mischief; at present they would have to treat the case with other remedies. So they began to
doctor me as energetically as they were able, while I grew daily worse
and worse so rapidly, that after eight days the physicians despaired of
my life, and said that I might be indulged in any whim I had to make me
him, call me at all hours; for no one can divine what Nature is able to
work in a young man of this kind; moreover, if he should lose
consciousness, administer these five remedies one after the other, and
send for me, for I will come at any hour of the night; I would rather

Every day Messer Giovanni Gaddi came to see me two or three times, and
each time he took up one or other of my handsome fowling-pieces, coats
trifles, so that at last he drove me wild with annoyance. In his company
came a certain Matio Franzesi [2] and this man also appeared to be
waiting impatiently for my death, not indeed because he would inherit
anything from me, but because he wished for what his master seemed to
have so much at heart.

Felice, my partner, was always at my side, rendering the greatest
services which it is possible for one man to give another. Nature in me
was utterly debilitated and undone; I had not strength enough to fetch
my breath back if it left me; and yet my brain remained as clear and
strong as it had been before my illness. Nevertheless, although I kept
my consciousness, a terrible old man used to come to my bedside, and
make as though he would drag me by force into a huge boat he had with
him. This made me call out to my Felice to draw near and chase that
malignant old man away. Felice, who loved me most affectionately, ran
read Dante, and in the prostration of his sickness this apparition has

master, know that I am not raving, and that it is true that this old man
is really giving me annoyance; but the best that you can do for me would
be to drive that miserable Mattio from my side, who is laughing at my
affliction, afterwards if your lordship deigns to visit me again, let me
beg you to come with Messer Antonio Allegretti, or with Messer Annibale
Caro, or with some other of your accomplished friends, who are persons

Thereupon Messer Giovanni told Mattio in jest to take himself out of his
sight for ever; but because Mattio went on laughing, the joke turned to
earnest, for Messer Giovanni would not look upon him again, but sent for
Messer Antonio Allegretti, Messer Ludovico, and Messer Annibale Caro. On
the arrival of these worthy men, I was greatly comforted, and talked
reasonably with them awhile, not however without frequently urging
Felice to drive the old man away. Messer Ludovico asked me what it was I
seemed to see, and how the man was shaped. While I portrayed him
accurately in words, the old man took me by the arm and dragged me
violently towards him. This made me cry out for aid, because he was
going to fling me under hatches in his hideous boat. On saying that last
word, I fell into a terrible swoon, and seemed to be sinking down into
the boat. They say that during that fainting-fit I flung myself about
and cast bad words at Messer Giovanni Gaddi, to wit, that he came to rob
me, and not from any motive of charity, and other insults of the kind,
which caused him to be much ashamed. Later on, they say I lay still like
one dead; and after waiting by me more than an hour, thinking I was
growing cold, they left me for dead. When they returned home, Mattio
Franzesi was informed, who wrote to Florence to Messer Benedetto Varchi,
my very dear friend, that they had seen me die at such and such an hour
of the night. When he heard the news, that most accomplished man and my
dear friend composed an admirable sonnet upon my supposed but not real
death, which shall be reported in its proper place.

More than three long hours passed, and yet I did not regain
consciousness. Felice having used all the remedies prescribed by Maestro
Francesco, and seeing that I did not come to, ran post-haste to the
him rise, and begged him with tears to come to the house, for he thought
that I was dead. Whereto Maestro Francesco, who was a very choleric man,
is dead, I am more sorry than you are. Do you imagine that if I were to
come with my medicine I could blow breath up through his guts [4] and
fellow was going away weeping, he called him back and gave him an oil
with which to anoint my pulses, and my heart, telling him to pinch my
little fingers and toes very tightly, and to send at once to call him if
I should revive. Felice took his way, and did as Maestro Francesco had
ordered. It was almost bright day when, thinking they would have to
abandon hope, they gave orders to have my shroud made and to wash me.
Suddenly I regained consciousness, and called out to Felice to drive
away the old man on the moment, who kept tormenting me. He wanted to
send for Maestro Francesco, but I told him not to do so, but to come
close up to me, because that old man was afraid of him and went away at
once. So Felice drew near to the bed; I touched him, and it seemed to me
that the infuriated old man withdrew; so I prayed him not to leave me
for a second.
When Maestro Francesco appeared, he said it was his dearest wish to save my life, and that he had never in all his days seen greater force in a young man than I had. Then he sat down to write, and prescribed for me perfumes, lotions, unctions, plasters, and a heap of other precious things. Meanwhile I came to life again by the means of more than twenty leeches applied to my buttocks, but with my body bore through, bound, and ground to powder. Many of my friends crowded in to behold the miracle of the resuscitated dead man, and among them people of the first importance.

In their presence I declared that the small amount of gold and money I possessed, perhaps some eight hundred crowns, what with gold, silver, jewels, and cash, should be given by my will to my poor sister in Florence, called Mona Liperata; all the remainder of my property, armour and everything besides, I left to my dearest Felice, together with fifty golden ducats, in order that he might buy mourning. At those words Felice flung his arms around my neck, protesting that he wanted nothing alive, touch me as you did before, and threaten the old man, for he is that I was not raving, but talking to the purpose and with all my wits.

Thus my wretched malady went dragging on, and I got but little better. Maestro Francesco, that most excellent man, came four or five times a day; Messer Giovanni Gaddi, who felt ashamed, did not visit me again. My brother-in-law, the husband of my sister, arrived; he came from Florence for the inheritance; but as he was a very worthy man, he rejoiced exceedingly to have found me alive. The sight of him did me a world of
good, and he began to caress me at once, saying he had only come to take
care of me in person; and this he did for several days. Afterwards I
sent him away, having almost certain hope of my recovery. On this
occasion he left the sonnet of Messer Benedetto Varchi, which runs as
follows: 5

Who shall forbid the sad expense of tears?

Our friend hath flown, and left us here to grief.

Among the mighty dead he had no peers,
Nor shall earth see his like, in my belief.

O gentle sprite! if love still sway the blest,
Look down on him thou here didst love, and view
These tears that mourn my loss, not thy great good.

Who made our universe, and findest true

Note 1. Francesco Fusconi, physician to Popes Adrian VI., Clement VII.,
and Paul III.

Note 2. Franzesi was a clever Italian poet. His burlesque Capitoli are
printed with those of Berni and others.

Note 3. 'Inferno,' iii., the verses about Charon.

Note 4. 'Io ali possa soffiare in culo.'

art, so false to the far from saintly character of the man, that I would rather have declined translating it, had I not observed it to be a good example of that technical and conventional insincerity which was invading Italy at this epoch. Varchi was really sorry to hear the news vehicles of utterance. Cellini, meanwhile, had a right to prize it, since it revealed to him what friendship was prepared to utter after his decease.

LXXV

MY sickness had been of such a very serious nature that it seemed impossible for me to fling it off. That worthy man Maestro Francesco da Norcia redoubled his efforts, and brought me every day fresh remedies, trying to restore strength to my miserable unstrung frame. Yet all these endeavours were apparently insufficient to overcome the obstinacy of my what to do. I was tormented by thirst, but had abstained from drinking had done wonders in restoring me, never left my side. That old man
ceased to give so much annoyance, yet sometimes he appeared to me in
dreams.

One day Felice had gone out of doors, leaving me under the care of a
young apprentice and a servant-maid called Beatrice. I asked the
apprentice what had become of my lad Cencio, and what was the reason why
I had never seen him in attendance on me. The boy replied that Cencio
Felice had given them orders not to speak to me of this. On hearing the
news, I was exceedingly distressed; then I called the maid Beatrice, a
Pistojan girl, and asked her to bring me a great crystal water-cooler
which stood near, full of clear and fresh water. She ran at once, and
brought it to me full; I told her to put it to my lips, adding that if

her a new gown. This maid had stolen from me certain little things of
some importance, and in her fear of being detected, she would have been
very glad if I had died. Accordingly she allowed me twice to take as
much as I could of the water, so that in good earnest I swallowed more
than a flask full. [1] I then covered myself, and began to sweat, and
fell into a deep sleep. After I had slept about an hour, Felice came

know. Beatrice brought him that cooler full of water, and he has drunk

They say that my poor friend was on the point of falling to the ground,
so grieved was he to hear this. Afterwards he took an ugly stick and

and she screaming, I was in a dream; I thought the old man held ropes in
his hand, and while he was preparing to bind me, Felice had arrived and
had run into my bedroom shrieking loudly. This woke me up, and I called
more good than you were able to do with all your efforts. She may indeed
have saved my life; so lend me a helping hand, for I have sweated; and
comfortable; and I, being conscious of a great improvement in my state,
began to reckon on recovery.

When Maestro Francesco appeared and saw my great improvement, and the
servant-girl in tears, and the prentice running to and fro, and Felice
laughing, all this disturbance made him think that something
extraordinary must have happened, which had been the cause of my
amendment. Just then the other doctor, Bernardino, put in his
appearance, who at the beginning of my illness had refused to bleed me.

have been a terrible misfortune, and would to God that it may fall on
taken precisely what she wanted, neither more nor less. In like manner
she was asking for what she wanted when the poor young man begged you to
bleed him. If you knew that his recovery depended upon his drinking two
flasks of water, why did you not say so before? You might then have
departed, and never showed his face again.

Maestro Francesco then gave orders that I should be removed from my room
and carried to one of the hills there are in Rome. Cardinal Cornaro,
when he heard of my improvement, had me transported to a place of his on
Monte Cavallo. The very evening I was taken with great precautions in a
chair, well wrapped up and protected from the cold. No sooner had I
reached the place than I began to vomit, during which there came from my
stomach a hairy worm about a quarter of a cubit in length: the hairs
were long, and the worm was very ugly, speckled of divers colours,
green, black, and red. They kept and showed it to the doctor, who said
he had never seen anything of the sort before, and afterwards remarked
permit him any irregularities; for though he has escaped this time,
another disorder now would be the death of him. You see his malady has
been so grave, that if we had brought him the extreme unction, we might
not have been in time. Now I know that with a little patience and time
are quite recovered, I beg you to make me a Madonna with your own hand,
to do, and then asked him whether it would be safe for me to travel so
far as to Florence. He advised me to wait till I was stronger, and till
we could observe how Nature worked in me.

Note 1. 'Un fiasco,' holding more than a quart.

LXXXVI

WHEN eight days had come and gone, my amendment was so slight that life
itself became almost a burden to me; indeed I had been more than fifty
days in that great suffering. So I made my mind up, and prepared to
travel. My dear Felice and I went toward Florence in a pair of baskets;

and laughed over me all in one breath. That day many friends came to see
me; among others Pier Landi, who was the best and dearest friend I ever

would have done much better to die, because he is come to put his head

have you come to do here? Did you not know what you have done to
displease the Duke? I have heard him swear that you were thrusting your

that Pope Clement wanted to do as much to me before, and quite as
unjustly; tell him to keep his eye on me, and give me time to recover;
then I will show his Excellency that I have been the most faithful
servant he will ever have in all his life; and forasmuch as some enemy
must have served me this bad turn through envy, let him wait till I get
well; for I shall then be able to give such an account of myself as will

This bad turn had been done me by Giorgetto Vassellario of Arezzo, [2]
the painter; perchance in recompense for many benefits conferred on him.
I had harboured him in Rome and provided for his costs, while he had
turned my whole house upside down; for the man was subject to a species
of dry scab, which he was always in the habit of scratching with his
hands. It happened, then, that sleeping in the same bed as an excellent
workman, named Manno, who was in my service, when he meant to scratch
claws, the nails of which he never used to cut. The said Manno left my
service, and was resolutely bent on killing him. I made the quarrel up,
continually helped him. For these deserts, then, he told Duke Alessandro
that I had abused his Excellency, and had bragged I meant to be the
first to leap upon the walls of Florence with his foes the exiles. These

and my departure from Florence. I, being innocent of the crime falsely
ascribed to me, felt no fear whatever. Meanwhile that able physician
Francesco da Monte Varchi attended to my cure with great skill. He had
been brought by my very dear friend Luca Martini, who passed the larger
portion of the day with me. 4

Note 1. 'Un paio di ceste,' a kind of litter, here described in the
plural, because two of them were perhaps put together. I have thought it
best to translate the phrase literally. From a letter of Varchi to
Bembo, we learn that Cellini reached Florence, November 9, 1535.

Note 2. This is the famous Giorgio Vasari, a bad painter and worse
architect, but dear to all lovers of the arts for his anecdotic work
upon Italian artists.

Note 3. 'Galantuomo,' used ironically,

Note 4. Luca Martini was a member of the best literary society in his
days, and the author of some famous burlesque pieces.
DURING this while I had sent my devoted comrade Felice back to Rome, to
look after our business there. When I could raise my head a little from
the bolster, which was at the end of fifteen days, although I was unable
to walk upon my feet, I had myself carried to the palace of the Medici,
and placed upon the little upper terrace. There they seated me to wait
until the Duke went by. Many of my friends at court came up to greet me,
and expressed surprise that I had undergone the inconvenience of being
carried in that way, while so shattered by illness; they said that I
ought to have waited till I was well, and then to have visited the Duke.
A crowd of them collected, all looking at me as a sort of miracle; not
merely because they had heard that I was dead, but far more because I
had the look of a dead man. Then publicly, before them all, I said how
some wicked scoundrel had told my lord the Duke that I had bragged I
had abused him personally; wherefore I had not the heart to live or die
till I had purged myself of that infamy, and found out who the audacious
rascal was who had uttered such calumnies against me. At these words a
large number of those gentlemen came round, expressing great compassion
for me; one said one thing, one another, and I told them I would never
go thence before I knew who had accused me. At these words Maestro

Giorgio the painter, whom I have mentioned, happened just then to pass,

being able to leave my seat, I asked Giorgio if it was true that he had
accused me. He denied that it was so, and that he had ever said anything
could, repeating that he had not accused me. Then, after a short while, the Duke came by; whereupon I had myself raised up before his Excellency, and he halted. I told him that I had come therein that way solely in order to clear my character. The Duke gazed at me, and marvelled I was still alive; afterwards he bade me take heed to be an honest man and regain my health.

me that I had escaped one of the most dreadful perils in the world, quite contrary to all his expectations, for he had seen my ruin written with indelible ink; now I must make haste to get well, and afterwards take French leave, because my jeopardy came from a quarter and a man who answered that I had done nothing to displease him, but that he had injured me; and told him all the affair about the Mint. He repeated:

attention to my health, gave Pietro Pagolo advice about stamping the coins, and then went off upon my way to Rome without saying a word to the Duke or anybody else.

LXXXVIII

WHEN I reached Rome, and had enjoyed the company of my friends awhile, I it was the finest work of the kind which I had ever produced. At least once every day there came to visit me a sort of blockhead named Messer Francesco Soderini. [1] When he saw what I was doing, he used frequently
ferocious tyrant! You have never made anything so exquisite, which proves you our inveterate foe and their devoted friend; and yet the Pope and he have had it twice in mind to hang you without any fault of yours.

firmly believed that Duke Alessandro was the son of Pope Clement. Messer Francesco used also to say and swear by all his saints that, if he could, he would have robbed me of the dies for that medal. I responded that he had done well to tell me so, and that I would take such care of them that he should never see them more.

I now sent to Florence to request Lorenzino that he would send me the wrote back, saying that he had spoken to that mad melancholy philosopher Lorenzino for it; he had replied that he was thinking night and day of nothing else, and that he would finish it as soon as he was able. Nevertheless, I was not to set my hopes upon his reverse, but I had better invent one out of my own head, and when I had finished it, I might bring it without hesitation to the Duke, for this would be to my advantage.

I composed the design of a reverse which seemed to me appropriate, and pressed the work forward to my best ability. Not being, however, yet recovered from that terrible illness, I gave myself frequent relaxation by going out on fowling expeditions with my friend Felice. This man had no skill in my art; but since we were perpetually day and night together, everybody thought he was a first-rate craftsman. This being so, as he was a fellow of much humour, we used often to laugh together about the great credit he had gained. His name was Felice Guadagni
Gain-little if you had not enabled me to acquire such credit that I can

which one gains for others; so I praised him much more for the second
than the first, since he had gained for me my life.

We often held such conversations; but I remember one in particular on
the day of Epiphany, when we were together near La Magliana. It was
close upon nightfall, and during the day I had shot a good number of
ducks and geese; then, as I had almost made my mind up to shoot no more
that time, we were returning briskly toward Rome. Calling to my dog by
his name, Barucco, and not seeing him in front of me, I turned round and
noticed that the well-trained animal was pointing at some geese which
had settled in a ditch. I therefore dismounted at once, got my
fowling-piece ready, and at a very long range brought two of them down
with a single ball. I never used to shoot with more than one ball, and
was usually able to hit my mark at two hundred cubits, which cannot be
done by other ways of loading. Of the two geese, one was almost dead,
and the other, though badly wounded, was flying lamely. My dog retrieved
the one and brought it to me; but noticing that the other was diving
down into the ditch, I sprang forward to catch it. Trusting to my boots,
which came high up the leg, I put one foot forward; it sank in the oozy
ground; and so, although I got the goose, the boot of my right leg was
full of water. I lifted my foot and let the water run out; then, when I
had mounted, we made haste for Rome. The cold, however, was very great,

good Felice, without a word, leapt from his horse, and gathering some
thistles and bits of stick, began to build a fire. I meanwhile was
waiting, and put my hands among the breast-feathers of the geese, and
felt them very warm. So I told him not to make the fire, but filled my
boot with the feathers of the goose, and was immediately so much
comforted that I regained vitality.

Note 1. He had been banished in 1530 as a foe to the Medicean house.

LXXXIX

WE mounted, and rode rapidly toward Rome; and when we had reached a
certain gently rising ground—night had already fallen—looking in the
direction of Florence, both with one breath exclaimed in the utmost
gave out extraordinary lustre.

darkness was extreme; and when we came near the Banchi and our own
house, my little horse was going in an amble at a furious speed. Now
that day they had thrown a heap of plaster and broken tiles in the
middle of the road, which neither my horse nor myself perceived. In his
fiery pace the beast ran up it; but on coming down upon the other side
he turned a complete somersault. He had his head between his legs, and
it was only through the power of God himself that I escaped unhurt. The
noise we made brought the neighbours out with lights; but I had already
jumped to my feet; and so, without remounting, I ran home, laughing to
have come unhurt out of an accident enough to break my neck.
On entering the house, I found some friends of mine there, to whom,

chase and the diabolical apparition of the fiery beam which we had seen.

Francesco Soderini appeared jogging along upon a wretched mule he had,

though I had been the captain of the factions which make dukes.

Meanwhile a certain Baccio Bettini, [2] who had an ugly big head like a
bushel, came up and began to banter me in the same way about dukes,

quips of the same kind. I lost my patience at this nonsense, and said to

and you are jeering me as though I were a party-leader. However, this
shall not make me cast in your teeth the insatiable greediness, idiotcy,
and good-for-nothingness of your predecessors. But this one answer I
will make to all your silly railleries; that before two or three days at
the longest have passed by, you will have another duke, much worse

spend money in couriers, for you know things before they happen. What

the son of Signor Giovanni, was made Duke; but that certain conditions
had been imposed at his election, which would hold him back from kicking
up his heels at his own pleasure. I now had my opportunity for laughing
mattlesome horse; next they have buckled spurs upon his heels, and put the bridle freely in his hands, and turned him out upon a magnificent field, full of flowers and fruits and all delightful things; next they have bidden him not to cross certain indicated limits: now tell me, you, who there is that can hold him back, whenever he has but the mind to

So they left me alone, and gave me no further annoyance. [4]

Note 1. Alessandro was murdered by his cousin Lorenzino at Florence on the 5th of January 1537.

Note 2. Bettini was an intimate friend of Buonarroti and a considerable patron of the arts.

strong Medicean leanings, and also to the sagacity with which he judged the political situation.

Note 4. Cellini only spoke the truth on this occasion; for Cosimo soon kicked down the ladder which had lifted him to sovereignty, and showed himself the absolute master of Florence. Cosimo was elected Duke upon the 9th of January 1537.

XC

I NOW began to attend to my shop, and did some business, not however of
much moment, because I had still to think about my health, which was not
yet established after that grave illness I had undergone. About this
time the Emperor returned victorious from his expedition against Tunis,
and the Pope sent for me to take my advice concerning the present of
honour it was fit to give him. [1] I answered that it seemed to me most
appropriate to present his Imperial Majesty with a golden crucifix, for
which I had almost finished an ornament quite to the purpose, and which
would confer the highest honour upon his Holiness and me. I had already
made three little figures of gold in the round, about a palm high; they
were those which I had begun for the chalice of Pope Clement,
representing Faith, Hope, and Charity. To these I added in wax what was
wanting for the basement of the cross. I carried the whole to the Pope,
with the Christ in wax, and many other exquisite decorations which gave
him complete satisfaction. Before I took leave of his Holiness, we had
agreed on every detail, and calculated the price of the work.

This was one evening four hours after nightfall, and the Pope had
ordered Messer Latino Juvenale to see that I had money paid to me next
morning. This Messer Latino, who had a pretty big dash of the fool in
his composition, bethought him of furnishing the Pope with a new idea,
which was, however, wholly of his own invention. So he altered
everything which had been arranged; and next morning, when I went for
invent, and yours to execute; before I left the Pope last night we

think of anything better than a piece of which Christ plays a part; so
Without uttering one word, he left me in a rage, and tried to get the work given to another goldsmith. The Pope, however, refused, and sent for me at once, and told me I had spoken well, but that they wanted to make use of a Book of Hours of Our Lady, which was marvellously crowns. They thought that this would be an appropriate present to the Empress, and that for the Emperor they would afterwards make what I had suggested, which was indeed a present worthy of him; but now there was no time to lose, since the Emperor was expected in Rome in about a month and a half. He wanted the book to be enclosed in a case of massive gold, richly worked, and adorned with jewels valued at about six thousand crowns. Accordingly, when the jewels and the gold were given me, I began the work, and driving it briskly forward, in a few days brought it to such beauty that the Pope was astonished, and showed me the most distinguished signs of favour, conceding at the same time that that beast Juvenale should have nothing more to do with me.

I had nearly brought my work to its completion when the Emperor arrived, and numerous triumphal arches of great magnificence were erected in his honour. He entered Rome with extraordinary pomp, the description of which I leave to others, since I mean to treat of those things only which concern myself. [2] Immediately after his arrival, he gave the Pope a diamond which he had bought for twelve thousand crowns. This diamond the Pope committed to my care, ordering me to make a ring to the book in the state to which I had advanced it. I took it accordingly, and he was highly pleased with it; then he asked my advice concerning the
apology which could be reasonably made to the Emperor for the unfinished condition of my work. I said that my indisposition would furnish a sound excuse, since his Majesty, seeing how thin and pale I was, would very readily believe and accept it. To this the Pope replied that he approved of the suggestion, but that I should add on the part of his Holiness, when I presented the book to the Emperor, that I made him the present of myself. Then he told me in detail how I had to behave, and the words I had to say. These words I repeated to the Pope, asking him if he wished to admiration if you had the courage to address the Emperor as you are greater ease and freedom to the Emperor, seeing that the Emperor was clothed as I was, and that I should seem to be speaking to a man formed like myself; this was not the case when I addressed his Holiness, in whom I beheld a far superior deity, both by reason of his ecclesiastical adornments, which shed a certain aureole about him, and at the same time inspired in me more awe than the Imperial Majesty. To these words the

Note 1. Cellini returns to the year 1535, when Charles V. arrived in November from Tunis.

Note 2. The entry into Rome took place April 6, 1536.

XCI
THE POPE ordered out two Turkish horses, which had belonged to Pope Clement, and were the most beautiful that ever came to Christendom. Messer Durante, [1] his chamberlain, was bidden to bring them through the lower galleries of the palace, and there to give them to the Emperor, repeating certain words which his Holiness dictated to him. We both went down together, and when we reached the presence of the Emperor, the horses made their entrance through those halls with so much spirit and such a noble carriage that the Emperor and every one were struck with wonder. Thereupon, Messer Durante advanced in so graceless a manner, and delivered his speech with so much of Brescian lingo, mumbling his words over in his mouth, that one never saw or heard anything worse; indeed the Emperor could not refrain from smiling at him. I meanwhile had already uncovered my piece; and observing that the Emperor had turned his eyes towards me with a very gracious look, I

Paolo, sends this book of the Virgin as a present to your Majesty, the master who ever professed that art; and this rich cover of gold and jewels is unfinished, as you here behold it, by reason of my illness: wherefore his Holiness, together with the book, presents me also, and attaches me to your Majesty in order that I may complete the work; nor this alone, but everything which you may have it in your mind to execute desire you to complete it for me in Rome; when it is finished, and you course of conversation, he called me by my name, which made me wonder, because no words had been dropped in which my name occurred; and he said wrought so many wonderful figures. We continued talking in this way a whole half hour, touching on divers topics artistic and agreeable; then,
since it seemed to me that I had acquitted myself with more honour than
I had expected, I took the occasion of a slight lull in the conversation

Emperor. Messer Durante came forward and robbed me of my five hundred
crowns. I complained to the Pope, who told me not to be uneasy, for he
knew how everything had happened, and how well I had conducted myself in
addressing the Emperor, and of the money I should certainly obtain my
share.

Note 1. Messer Durante Duranti, Prefect of the Camera under Paul III,
who gave him the hat in 1544, and the Bishopric of Brescia afterwards.

WHEN I returned to my shop, I set my hand with diligence to finishing
the diamond ring, concerning which the four first jewellers of Rome were
sent to consult with me. This was because the Pope had been informed
that the diamond had been set by the first jeweller of the world in
Venice; he was called Maestro Miliano Targhetta; and the diamond being
somewhat thin, the job of setting it was too difficult to be attempted
without great deliberation. I was well pleased to receive these four
jewellers, among whom was a man of Milan called Gaio. He was the most
presumptuous donkey in the world, the one who knew least and who thought
he knew most; the others were very modest and able craftsmen. In the
should be preserved, and to do that, Benvenuto, you shall doff your cap;
[1] for just as giving diamonds a tint is the most delicate and
ejeweller that ever lived, and this is the most difficult diamond to
with so able a master in such an excellent profession. Afterwards I

That ass Gaio exclaimed that if I made a foil like that he would gladly
to compose my foils.

I took the very greatest pains in mixing the tints, the method of doing
which I will explain in the proper place. [2] It is certain that the
diamond in question offered more difficulties than any others which
made with true artistic skill. However, that did not dismay me; but
having sharpened my wits up, I succeeded not only in making something
quite as good, but in exceeding it by far. Then, when I saw that I had
surpassed him, I went about to surpass myself, and produced a foil by
new processes which was a long way better than what I had previously
made. Thereupon I sent for the jewellers; and first I tinted the diamond
own. When I showed it to the jewellers, one of the best among them, who
was called Raffael del Moro, took the diamond in his hand and said to

Then I begged them to wait for me a while, went up into a little
cabinet, and having tinted the diamond anew unseen by them, returned and

marvellous thing that I have ever seen in the course of my whole
lifetime. The stone is worth upwards of eighteen thousand crowns,

he hurried to the Pope and told him the whole story; whereupon his Holiness sent three times on that day to see if the ring was finished.

doors were always open to me, I lifted the curtain gently, and saw the Pope in private audience with the Marchese del Guasto. [3] The Marquis must have been pressing something on the Pope which he was unwilling to

when the Pope himself called me back; so I entered the room, and presented the diamond ring, upon which he drew me aside, and the Marquis retired to a distance. While looking at the diamond, the Pope whispered

shall seem important, and do not stop talking so long as the Marquis

occasion making for my advantage, I was very glad to discourse with him upon the methods I had used to tint the stone. The Marquis remained standing apart, leaning against a piece of tapestry; and now he balanced himself about on one foot, now on the other. The subject I had chosen to discourse upon was of such importance, if fully treated, that I could have talked about it at least three hours. The Pope was entertained to such a degree that he forgot the annoyance of the Marquis standing there. I seasoned what I had to say with that part of natural philosophy which belongs to our profession; and so having spoken for near upon an hour, the Marquis grew tired of waiting, and went off fuming. Then the Pope bestowed on me the most familiar caresses which can be imagined,
better reward for your virtues than the thousand crowns which Gaio tells

On this I took my leave; and the Pope praised me in the presence of his household, among whom was the fellow Latino Juvenale, whom I have previously mentioned. This man, having become my enemy, assiduously strove to do me hurt; and noticing that the Pope talked of me with so

that Benvenuto is a person of very remarkable genius; but while every one is naturally bound to feel more goodwill for his own countrymen than for others, still one ought to consider maturely what language it is right and proper to use when speaking of a Pope. He has had the audacity to say that Pope Clement indeed was the handsomest sovereign that ever reigned, and no less gifted; only that luck was always against him: and he says that your Holiness is quite the opposite; that the tiara seems to weep for rage upon your head; that you look like a truss of straw

These words, reported by a man who knew most excellently how to say them, had such force that they gained credit with the Pope. Far from having uttered them, such things had never come into my head. If the Pope could have done so without losing credit, he would certainly have taken fierce revenge upon me; but being a man of great tact and talent, he made a show of turning it off with a laugh. Nevertheless he harboured in his heart a deep vindictive feeling against me, of which I was not slow to be aware, since I had no longer the same easy access to his apartments as formerly, but found the greatest difficulty in procuring audience. As I had now for many years been familiar with the manners of the Roman court, I conceived that some one had done me a bad turn; and on making dexterous inquiries, I was told the whole, but not the name of
my calumniator. I could not imagine who the man was; had I but found him out, my vengeance would not have been measured by troy weight. 4

Note 1. In the 'Oreficeria' Cellini gives an account of how these foils were made and applied. They were composed of paste, and coloured so as to enhance the effect of precious stones, particularly diamonds.

Note 2. 'Oreficeria,' cap. i.

of Milan.

Note 4. 'Io ne arei fatte vendette a misura di carbone.'

XCII

I WENT on working at my book, and when I had finished it I took it to the Pope, who was in good truth unable to refrain from commending it greatly. I begged him to send me with it to the Emperor, as he had promised. He replied that he would do what he thought fit, and that I had performed my part of the business. So he gave orders that I should be well paid. These two pieces of work, on which I had spent upwards of two months, brought me in five hundred crowns: for the diamond I was paid one hundred and fifty crowns and no more; the rest was given me for the cover of the book, which, however, was worth more than a thousand,
being enriched with multitudes of figures, arabesques, enamellings, and 
jewels. I took what I could get and made my mind up to leave Rome 
without permission. The Pope meanwhile sent my book to the Emperor by 
the hand of his grandson Signor Sforza. [1] Upon accepting it, the 
Emperor expressed great satisfaction, and immediately asked for me. 
Young Signor Sforza, who had received his instructions, said that I had 
been prevented by illness from coming. All this was reported to me.

My preparations for the journey into France were made; and I wished to 
go alone, but was unable on account of a lad in my service called 
Ascanio. He was of very tender age, and the most admirable servant in 
the world. When I took him he had left a former master, named Francesco, 
a Spaniard and a goldsmith. I did not much like to take him, lest I 
that his master should write me a note informing me that I was free to 
take him. So he had been with me some months; and since he came to us 
amost thought he was one, partly because he was so good a servant, and 
partly because he was so clever that it seemed unlikely he should have 
such talent at thirteen years, which he affirmed his age to be. Now to 
go back to the point from which I started, he improved in person during 
those few months, and gaining in flesh, became the handsomest youth in 
Rome. Being the excellent servant which I have described, and showing 
marvellous aptitude for our art, I felt a warm and fatherly affection 
for him, and kept him clothed as if he had been my own son. When the boy 
perceived the improvement he had made, he esteemed it a good piece of 
luck that he had come into my hands; and he used frequently to go and 
thank his former master, who had been the cause of his prosperity. Now
In her petty spiteful way she took it very ill that Ascanio should speak
so; and having no reputation for chastity, she contrived to caress the
lad more perhaps than was quite seemly, which made me notice that he
began to visit her more frequently than his wont had been.

One day Ascanio took to beating one of our little shopboys, who, when I
came home from out of doors, complained to me with tears that Ascanio
had knocked him about without any cause. Hearing this, I said to

banded words with me, which made me jump on him and give him the
severest drubbing with both fists and feet that he had ever felt. As
soon as he escaped my clutches, he ran away without cape or cap, and for
two days I did not know where he was, and took no care to find him.

After that time a Spanish gentleman, called Don Diego, came to speak to
me. He was the most generous man in the world. I had made, and was
making, some things for him, which had brought us well acquainted. He
told me that Ascanio had gone back to his old master, and asked me, if I
thought it proper, to send him the cape and cap which I had given him.

Thereupon I said that Francesco had behaved badly, and like a low-bred
fellow; for if he had told me, when Ascanio first came back to him, that
he was in his house, I should very willingly have given him leave; but
now that he had kept him two days without informing me, I was resolved
he should not have him; and let him take care that I do not set eyes
upon the lad in his house. This message was reported by Don Diego, but
it only made Francesco laugh. The next morning I saw Ascanio working at
me, and his master almost laughed me in the face. He sent again to ask
through Don Diego whether I would not give Ascanio back the clothes he
had received from me; but if not, he did not mind, and Ascanio should not want for clothes. When I heard this, I turned to Don Diego and said:

worthy man I ever knew, but that Francesco is quite the opposite of you; he is nothing better than a worthless and dishonoured renegade. Tell him from me that if he does not bring Ascanio here himself to my shop before the bell for vespers, I will assuredly kill him; and tell Ascanio that if he does not quit that house at the hour appointed for his master, I

and inspired such terror in Francesco that he knew not what to do with himself. Ascanio meanwhile had gone to find his father, who had come to Rome from Tagliacozzo, his birthplace; and this man also, when he heard about the row, advised Francesco to bring Ascanio back to me. Francesco

serious will happen; you know better than I do what a man Benvenuto is;

prepared myself, and was pacing up and down the shop waiting for the bell to vespers; my mind was made up to do one of the bloodiest deeds which I had ever attempted in my life. Just then arrived Don Diego, Francesco, Ascanio, and his father, whom I did not know. When Ascanio entered, I gazed at the whole company with eyes of rage, and Francesco,

me. Then I turned and told the shopboy he had beaten to hand him the

stood astonished at this, which was quite the contrary of what he had expected; while Ascanio with his father besought me to pardon and take him back. On my asking who it was who spoke for him, he said it was his
I HAD formed the resolution, as I said a short while back, to go toward
France; partly because I saw that the Pope did not hold me in the same
esteem as formerly, my faithful service having been besmirched by lying
tongues; and also because I feared lest those who had the power might
play me some worse trick. So I was determined to seek better fortune in
a foreign land, and wished to leave Rome without company or license. On
the eve of my projected departure, I told my faithful friend Felice to
make free use of all my effects during my absence; and in the case of my
not returning; left him everything I possessed. Now there was a Perugian
workman in my employ, who had helped me on those commissions from the
Pope; and after paying his wages, I told him he must leave my service.
He begged me in reply to let him go with me, and said he would come at
his own charges; if I stopped to work for the King of France, it would
certainly be better for me to have Italians by me, and in particular
such persons as I knew to be capable of giving me assistance. His
entreaties and arguments persuaded me to take him on the journey in the
manner he proposed. Ascanio, who was present at this debate, said, half

the world would make me consent; but when I saw that the poor lad was
preparing to follow on foot, I engaged a horse for him too, put a small
valise upon the crupper, and loaded myself with far more useless baggage
than I should otherwise have taken. 1

From home I travelled to Florence, from Florence to Bologna, from
Bologna to Venice, and from Venice to Padua. There my dear friend
Albertaccio del Bene made me leave the inn for his house; and next day I
went to kiss the hand of Messer Pietro Bembo, who was not yet a
Cardinal. [2] He received me with marks of the warmest affection which

want Benvenuto to stay here, with all his followers, even though they be
a hundred men; make then your mind up, if you want Benvenuto also, to

Accordingly I spent a very pleasant visit at the house of that most
accomplished gentleman. He had a room prepared for me which would have
been too grand for a cardinal, and always insisted on my taking my meals
beside him. Later on, he began to hint in very modest terms that he
should greatly like me to take his portrait. I, who desired nothing in
the world more, prepared some snow-white plaster in a little box, and
set to work at once. The first day I spent two hours on end at my
modelling, and blocked out the fine head of that eminent man with so
much grace of manner that his lordship was fairly astounded. Now, though
he was a man of profound erudition and without a rival in poetry, he
understood nothing at all about my art; this made him think that I had
finished when I had hardly begun, so that I could not make him
comprehend what a long time it took to execute a thing of that sort
thoroughly. At last I resolved to do it as well as I was able, and to
spend the requisite time upon it; but since he wore his beard short
after the Venetian fashion, I had great trouble in modelling a head to
my own satisfaction. However, I finished it, and judged it about the
finest specimen I had produced in all the points pertaining to my art.

Great was the astonishment of Messer Pietro, who conceived that I should
have completed the waxen model in two hours and the steel in ten, when
he found that I employed two hundred on the wax, and then was begging
for leave to pursue my journey toward France. This threw him into much
care, and he implored me at least to design the reverse for his
medal, which was to be a Pegasus encircled with a wreath of myrtle. I
performed my task in the space of some three hours, and gave it a fine

seems to me ten times more difficult to do than the little portrait on
which you have bestowed so much pains. I cannot understand what made it

willing to make it there, but promised without fail to take it in hand

wherever I might stop to work.

While this debate was being carried on I went to bargain for three
horses which I wanted on my travels; and he took care that a secret
watch should be kept over my proceedings, for he had vast authority in
Padua; wherefore, when I proposed to pay for the horses, which were to
give them me; and from the generous donor I cannot accept them, seeing I

fellow said that, if I did not take them, I should get no other horses
in Padua, and should have to make my journey on foot. Upon that I
returned to the magnificent Messer Pietro, who affected to be ignorant
of the affair, and only begged me with marks of kindness to remain in
Padua. This was contrary to my intention, for I had quite resolved to
set out; therefore I had to accept the three horses, and with them we began our journey.

Note 1. He left Rome, April 1, 1537.

Note 2. I need hardly say that this is the Bembo who ruled over Italian literature like a dictator from the reign of Leo X. onwards. He was of a noble Venetian house; Paul III. made him Cardinal in 1539. He died, aged seventy-seven, in 1547.

XCV

I CHOSE the route through the Grisons, all other passes being unsafe on account of war. We crossed the mountains of the Alba and Berlina; it was the 8th of May, and the snow upon them lay in masses. [1] At the utmost hazard of our lives we succeeded in surmounting those two Alpine ridges; and when they had been traversed, we stopped at a place which, if I remember rightly, is called Valdista. There we took up quarters, and at nightfall there arrived a Florentine courier named Busbacca. I had heard him mentioned as a man of character and able in his profession, but I did not know that he had forfeited that reputation by his rogueries. When he saw me in the hostelry, he addressed me by my name, said he was going on business of importance to Lyons, and entreated me to lend him money for the journey. I said I had no money to lend, but that if he liked to join me, I would pay his expenses as far as Lyons. The rascal
employed on affairs of national consequence has fallen short of money,

was carrying things of the utmost importance from Messer Filippo
Strozzi; [2] and showing me a leather case for a cup he had with him,
whispered in my ear that it held a goblet of silver which contained
jewels to the value of many thousands of ducats, together with letters
of vast consequence, sent by Messer Filippo Strozzi. I told him that he
ought to let me conceal the jewels about his own person, which would be
much less dangerous than carrying them in the goblet; he might give that
up to me, and, its value being probably about ten crowns, I would supply
him with twenty-five on the security. To these words the courier replied
that he would go with me, since he could not do otherwise, for to give
up the goblet would not be to his honour.

Accordingly we struck the bargain so; and taking horse next morning,
came to a lake between Valdistate and Vessa; it is fifteen miles long
when one reaches Vessa. On beholding the boats upon that lake I took
fright; because they are of pine, of no great size and no great
thickness, loosely put together, and not even pitched. If I had not seen
four German gentlemen, with their four horses, embarking in one of the
same sort as ours, I should never have set my foot in it; indeed I
should far more likely have turned tail; but when I saw their
hare-brained recklessness, I took it into my head that those German
waters would not drown folk, as ours do in Italy. However, my two young

observe how those four gentlemen have taken boat before us, and are

water, I should say that they were going gladly to drown themselves in
it; but as it is but water, I know well that they have no more pleasure

about three broad; on one side rose a mountain very tall and cavernous, on the other some flat land and grassy. When we had gone about four miles, it began to storm upon the lake, and our oarsmen asked us to help in rowing; this we did awhile. I made gestures and directed them to land us on the farther shore; they said it was not possible, because there was not depth of water for the boat, and there were shoals there, which would make it go to pieces and drown us all; and still they kept on urging us to help them. The boatmen shouted one to the other, calling for assistance. When I saw them thus dismayed, my horse being an intelligent animal, I arranged the bridle on his neck and took the end of the halter with my left hand. The horse, like most of his kind, being not devoid of reason, seemed to have an instinct of my intention; for having turned his face towards the fresh grass, I meant that he should swim and draw me after him. Just at that moment a great wave broke over to throw himself upon my neck. Accordingly, I laid hand to my little dagger, and told them to do as I had shown them, seeing that the horses would save their lives as well as I too hoped to escape with mine by the same means; but that if he tried to jump on me, I should kill him. So we went forward several miles in this great peril of our lives.

He passed the Bernina and Albula mountains, descended the valley of the Rhine to Wallenstadt, travelled by Weesen and probably Glarus to Lachen and Zurich, thence to Solothurn, Lausanne, Geneva, Lyons.
Note 2. Filippo Strozzi was leader of the anti-Medicean party, now in exile. He fell into the hands of Duke Cosimo on the 1st of August in this year, 1537.

XCVI

WHEN we had reached the middle of the lake, we found a little bit of level ground where we could land, and I saw that those four German gentlemen had already come to shore there; but on our wishing to disembark, the boatmen would hear nothing of it. Then I said to my young however without difficulty, for they offered a stubborn resistance. When at last we got to land, we had to climb that mountain for two miles, and it was more troublesome than getting up a ladder. I was completely clothed in mail, with big boots, and a gun in my hand; and it was raining as though the fountains of the heavens were opened. Those devils, the German gentlemen, leading their little horses by the bridle, accomplished miracles of agility; but our animals were not up to the business, and we burst with the fatigue of making them ascend that hill excellent beast of Hungarian race, made a false step. He was going a few paces before the courier Busbacca to whom Ascanio had given his lance to carry for him. Well, the path was so bad that the horse stumbled, and went on scrambling backwards, without being able to regain his footing, till he stuck upon the point of the lance, which that rogue of a courier had not the wit to keep out of his way. The weapon passed right through his throat; and when my other workman went to help him, his horse also,
a black-coloured animal, slipped towards the lake, and held on by some shrub which offered but a slight support. This horse was carrying a pair of saddle-bags, which contained all my money and other valuables. I cried out to the young man to save his own life, and let the horse go to the devil. The fall was more than a mile of precipitous descent above the waters of the lake. Just below the place our boatmen had taken up their station; so that if the horse fell, he would have come precisely on them. I was ahead of the whole company, and we waited to see the horse plunge headlong; it seemed certain that he must go to perdition.

our lives, and give thanks to God for all that happens. I am only distressed for that poor fellow Busbacca, who tied his goblet and his saddle-bow, thinking that the safest place. My things are but a few

reached, truth must be spoken. I know that yours are crowns, and are so in good sooth; but that case in which I said I had so many jewels and from laughing; my young men laughed too; and he began to cry. The horse extricated itself by a great effort when we had given it up for lost. So then, still laughing, we summoned our forces, and bent ourselves to making the ascent. The four German gentlemen, having gained the top before us, sent down some folk who gave us aid. Thus at length we reached our lodging in the wilderness. Here, being wet to the skin, tired out, and famished, we were most agreeably entertained; we dried ourselves, took rest, and satisfied our hunger, while certain wild herbs were applied to the wounded horse. They pointed out to us the plant in question, of which the hedges were full; and we were told that if the
wound was kept continually plugged with its leaves, the beast would not
only recover, but would serve us just as if it had sustained no injury.
We proceeded to do as they advised. Then having thanked those gentlemen,
and feeling ourselves entirely refreshed, we quitted the place, and
travelled onwards, thanking God for saving us from such great perils.

XCVII

WE reached a town beyond Vessa, where we passed the night, and heard a
watchman through all the hours singing very agreeably; for all the

because of the fright he had had; and besides, he had got drunk in the
evening, because he would sit boozing with all the Germans who were

with that caviare suspended round his throat.

This night was so amusing that it turned all our troubles into laughter.
In the morning we rose with very fine weather, and went to dine in a
smiling little place called Lacca. Here we obtained excellent
entertainment, and then engaged guides, who were returning to a town
called Surich. The guide who attended us went along the dyked bank of a
lake; there was no other road; and the dyke itself was covered with
water, so that the reckless fellow slipped, and fell together with his
horse beneath the water. I, who was but a few steps behind him, stopped
my horse, and waited to see the donkey get out of the water. Just as if
nothing had happened, he began to sing again, and made signs to me to follow. I broke away upon the right hand, and got through some hedges, making my young men and Busbacca take that way. The guide shouted in German that if the folk of those parts saw me they would put me to death. However, we passed forward, and escaped that other storm.

So we arrived at Surich, a marvellous city, bright and polished like a little gem. There we rested a whole day, then left betimes one morning, and reached another fair city called Solutorno. Thence we came to Usanna, from Usanna to Ginevra, from Ginevra to Lione, always singing and laughing. At Lione I rested four days, and had much pleasant intercourse with some of my friends there; I was also repaid what I had spent upon Busbacca; afterwards I set out upon the road to Paris. This was a delightful journey, except that when we reached Palissa [1] a band of venturers tried to murder us, [2] and it was only by great courage and address that we got free from them. From that point onward we travelled to Paris without the least trouble in the world. Always singing and laughing, we arrived safely at our destination.

Note 1. La Palice.

Note 2. Cellini, in the narrative of his second French journey, explains that these 'venturieri' were a notable crew of very daring brigands in the Lyonese province.
AFTER taking some repose in Paris, I went to visit the painter Rosso, sincerest friends I had in the world, seeing that in Rome I had done him the greatest benefits which one man can confer upon another. As these may be described briefly, I will not here omit their mention, in order to expose the shamelessness of such ingratitude. While he was in Rome, then, being a man given to back-biting, he spoke so ill of Raffaello da murder him. From this peril I saved him by keeping a close watch upon him day and night. Again, the evil things said by Rosso against San Gallo, [1] that excellent architect, caused the latter to get work taken from him which he had previously procured for him from Messer Agnolo da Cesi; and after this San Gallo used his influence so strenuously against him that he must have been brought to the verge of starvation, had not I pitied his condition and lent him some scores of crowns to live upon. So then, not having been repaid, and knowing that he held employment under the King, I went, as I have said, to look him up. I did not merely expect him to discharge his debt, but also to show me favour and assist

When Rosso set eyes on me, his countenance changed suddenly, and he replied that I had brought money enough to take me back to Rome as I had come to Paris, and that this was not the proper return for the pains I had endured for him, and that now I began to believe what Maestro Antonio da San Gallo said of him. When he tried to turn the matter into jest on this exposure of his baseness, I showed him a letter of exchange
for five hundred crowns upon Ricciardo del Bene. Then the rascal was ashamed, and wanted to detain me almost by force; but I laughed at him, and took my leave in the company of a painter whom I found there. This man was called Sguazzella: [2] he too was a Florentine; and I went to lodge in his house, with three horses and three servants, at so much per week. He treated me very well, and was even better paid by me in return.

Afterwards I sought audience of the King, through the introduction of his treasurer, Messer Giuliano Buonaccorti. [3] I met, however, with considerable delays, owing, as I did not then know, to the strenuous exertions Rosso made against my admission to his Majesty. When Messer Giuliano became aware of this, he took me down at once to Fontana Bilio, [4] and brought me into the presence of the King, who granted me a whole hour of very gracious audience. Since he was then on the point of setting out for Lyons, he told Messer Giuliano to take me with him, adding that on the journey we could discuss some works of art his Majesty had it in his head to execute. Accordingly, I followed the court; and on the way I entered into close relations with the Cardinal of Ferrara, who had not at that period obtained the hat. [5] Every evening I used to hold long conversations with the Cardinal, in the course of which his lordship advised me to remain at an abbey of his in Lyons, and there to abide at ease until the King returned from this campaign, adding that he was going on to Grenoble, and that I should enjoy every convenience in the abbey.

When we reached Lyons I was already ill, and my lad Ascanio had taken a quartan fever. The French and their court were both grown irksome to me,
and I counted the hours till I could find myself again in Rome. On seeing my anxiety to return home, the Cardinal gave me money sufficient for making him a silver bason and jug. So we took good horses, and set our faces in the direction of Rome, passing the Simplon, and travelling for some while in the company of certain Frenchmen; Ascanio troubled by his quartan, and I by a slow fever which I found it quite impossible to throw off. I had, moreover, got my stomach out of order to such an extent, that for the space of four months, as I verily believe, I hardly ate one whole loaf of bread in the week; and great was my longing to reach Italy, being desirous to die there rather than in France.

Note 1. Antonio da San Gallo, one of the best architects of the later Renaissance.

Note 2. A pupil of Andrea del Sarto, who went with him to France and settled there.

Note 3. A Florentine exile mentioned by Varchi.

Note 4. Fontainebleau. Cellini always writes it as above.

Milan at the age of fifteen; Cardinal in 1539; spent a large part of his life in France.
WHEN we had crossed the mountains of the Simplon, we came to a river near a place called Indevedro. [1] It was broad and very deep, spanned by a long narrow bridge without ramparts. That morning a thick white frost had fallen; and when I reached the bridge, riding before the rest, I recognised how dangerous it was, and bade my servants and young men dismount and lead their horses. So I got across without accident, and rode on talking with one of the Frenchmen, whose condition was that of a gentleman. The other, who was a scrivener, lagged a little way behind, jeering the French gentleman and me because we had been so frightened by nothing at all as to give ourselves the trouble of walking. I turned round, and seeing him upon the middle of the bridge, begged him to come gently, since the place was very dangerous. The fellow, true to his French nature, cried out in French that I was a man of poor spirit, and that there was no danger whatsoever. While he spoke these words and urged his horse forward, the animal suddenly slipped over the bridge, and fell with legs in air close to a huge rock there was there. Now God is very often merciful to madmen; so the two beasts, human and equine, plunged together into a deep wide pool, where both of them went down below the water. On seeing what had happened, I set off running at full speed, scrambled with much difficulty on to the rock, and dangling over he was still submerged beneath the surface. He had drunk his bellyful of water, and was within an ace of being drowned. I then, beholding him out of danger, congratulated the man upon my having been the means of rescuing his life. The fellow to this answered me in French, that I had done nothing; the important things to save were his writings, worth many
scores of crowns; and these words he seemed to say in anger, dripping wet and spluttering the while. Thereupon, I turned round to our guides, and ordered them to help the brute, adding that I would see them paid. One of them with great address and trouble set himself to the business, them: the other guide refused to trouble himself by rendering any assistance.

I ought here to say that we had made a purse up, and that I performed the part of paymaster. So, when we reached the place I mentioned, and had dined, I drew some coins from the common purse and gave them to the guide who helped to draw him from the water. Thereupon the fellow called out that I might pay them out of my own pocket; he had no intention of giving the man more than what had been agreed on for his services as guide. Upon this I retorted with insulting language. Then the other guide, who had done nothing, came up and demanded to be rewarded also. I told him that the one who had borne the cross deserved the recompense. He cried out that he would presently show me a cross which should make me repent. I replied that I would light a candle at that cross, which should, I hoped, make him to be the first to weep his folly. The village we were in lay on the frontier between Venice and the Germans. So the guide ran off to bring the folk together, and came, followed by a crowd, with a boar-spear in his hand. Mounted on my good steed, I lowered the shot I shall bring that fellow down; do you likewise your duty, for these are highway robbers, who have used this little incident to one of the leaders, an imposing old man, and begged him to put a stop to
him to pieces, but he will certainly kill a lot of you, and perhaps will you would not have much to boast of against us, even if you had a indeed made up my mind to die among them; therefore, when no further certainly have done my utmost to prove I am no statue, but a man of first lodging we came to, settled our accounts together. There I parted for ever from that beast of a Frenchman, remaining on very friendly terms with the other, who was a gentleman. Afterwards I reached Ferrara, with my three horses and no other company.

Having dismounted, I went to court in order to pay my reverence to the Duke, and gain permission to depart next morning for Loreto. When I had waited until two hours after nightfall, his Excellency appeared. I kissed his hands; he received me with much courtesy, and ordered that water should be brought for me to wash my hands before eating. To this more than four months that I have eaten only just enough to keep life together; knowing therefore that I could not enjoy the delicacies of your royal table, I will stay and talk with you while your Excellency is supping; in this way we shall both have more pleasure than if I were to it for the next three hours. At that time I took my leave, and when I got back to the inn, found a most excellent meal ready; for the Duke had sent me the plates from his own banquet, together with some famous wine. Having now fasted two full hours beyond my usual hour for supping, I fell to with hearty appetite; and this was the first time since four months that I felt the power or will to eat.
LEAVING Ferrara in the morning, I went to Santa Maria at Loreto; and thence, having performed my devotions, pursued the journey to Rome. There I found my most faithful Felice, to whom I abandoned my old shop with all its furniture and appurtenances, and opened another, much larger and roomier, next to Sugherello, the perfumer. I thought for certain that the great King Francis would not have remembered me. Therefore I accepted commissions from several noblemen; and in the meanwhile began the bason and jug ordered by the Cardinal Ferrara. I had a crowd of workmen, and many large affairs on hand in gold and silver.

Now the arrangement I had made with that Perugian workman [1] was that he should write down all the monies which had been disbursed on his account, chiefly for clothes and divers other sundries; and these, together with the costs of travelling, amounted to about seventy crowns. We agreed that he should discharge the debt by monthly payments of three crowns; and this he was well able to do, since he gained more than eight through me. At the end of two months the rascal decamped from my shop, leaving me in the lurch with a mass of business on my hands, and saying that he did not mean to pay me a farthing more. I was resolved to seek redress, but allowed myself to be persuaded to do so by the way of justice. At first I thought of lopping off an arm of his; and assuredly

Note 1. Probably the Doveria in the Valdivedo.
I should have done so, if my friends had not told me that it was a mistake, seeing I should lose my money and perhaps Rome too a second time, forasmuch as blows cannot be measured, and that with the agreement I held of his I could at any moment have him taken up. I listened to their advice, though I should have liked to conduct the affair more freely. As a matter of fact, I sued him before the auditor of the Camera, and gained by suit; in consequence of that decree, for which I waited several months, I had him thrown into prison. At the same time I was overwhelmed with large commissions; among others, I had to supply all the ornaments of gold and jewels for the wife of Signor Gierolimo Orsino, father of Signor Paolo, who is now the son-in-law of our Duke Cosimo. These things I had nearly finished; yet others of the greatest consequence were always coming in. I employed eight work-people, and worked day and night together with them, for the sake alike of honour and of gain.

Note 1. In his 'Ricordi' Cellini calls the man Girolamo Pascucci.

Note 2. He was Duke of Bracciano, father of Duke Paolo, who married Vittoria Accoramboni. See my 'Renaissance in Italy,' vol. vi.

WHILE I was engaged in prosecuting my affairs with so much vigour, there arrived a letter sent post-haste to me by the Cardinal of Ferrara, which
ran as follows:-

King here made mention of you, and said that he should like to have you in his service. Whereto I answered that you had promised me, whenever I sent for you to serve his Majesty, that you would come at once. His Admiral to make me out an order for one thousand golden crowns upon at this conversation, advanced immediately, and told his Majesty that it was not necessary to make these dispositions, seeing that he had sent you money enough, and that you were already on the journey. If then, as I think probable, the facts are quite contrary to those assertions of Cardinal Gaddi, reply to me without delay upon the receipt of this letter; for I will undertake to gather up the fallen thread, and have

Now let the world take notice, and all the folk that dwell on it, what power malignant stars with adverse fortune exercise upon us human beings! I had not spoken twice in my lifetime to that little simpleton bumptiousness of his to do me any harm, but only, through lightheadedness and senseless folly, to make it seem as though he also held the affairs of artists, whom the King was wanting, under his own personal supervision, just as the Cardinal of Ferrara did. But afterwards he was so stupid as not to tell me anything at all about the matter; elsewise, it is certain that my wish to shield a silly mannikin out some excuse to mend the bungling of his foolish self-conceit.
if he had made overtures of that kind to me, I should not have left
Italy without informing his most reverend lordship. I also said that I
had more to do in Rome than at any previous time; but that if his most
Christian Majesty made sign of wanting me, one word of his, communicated
by so great a prince as his most reverend lordship, would suffice to
make me set off upon the spot, leaving all other concerns to take their
chance.

After I had sent my letter, that traitor, the Perugian workman, devised
a piece of malice against me, which succeeded at once, owing to the
avarice of Pope Paolo da Farnese, but also far more to that of his
bastard, who was then called Duke of Castro. [1] The fellow in question
me as workman several years, he was acquainted with all my affairs, on
the strength of which he gave his word to Signor Pier Luigi that I was
worth more than eighty thousand ducats, and that the greater part of
this property consisted in jewels, which jewels belonged to the Church,
Rome, and that all they had to do was to catch me on the spot with
secrecy.

It so happened that I had been at work one morning, more than three
hours before daybreak, upon the trousseau of the bride I mentioned;
then, while my shop was being opened and swept out, I put my cape on to
go abroad and take the air. Directing my steps along the Strada Giulia,
I turned into Chiavica, and at this corner Crespino, the Bargello, with

rushed on me, and would have seized by force a dagger which I wore, and

of you shall touch him: it is quite enough if you perform your duty, and

words of courtesy to surrender my arms. While I was engaged in doing

this, it crossed my mind that exactly on that very spot I had

assassinated Pompeo. They took me straightway to castle, and locked me

in an upper chamber in the keep. This was the first time that I ever

smelt a prison up to the age I then had of thirty-seven years.

Note 1. He had been invested with the Duchy of Castro in 1537.

which I stood accused; so he begged the reversion of it from his most

holy father, and asked that he might have the money made out to himself.

The Pope granted this willingly, adding that he would assist in its

recovery. Consequently, after having kept me eight whole days in prison,

they sent me up for examination, in order to put an end if possible to

the affair. I was summoned into one of the great halls of the papal

castle, a place of much dignity. My examiners were, first, the Governor

of Rome, called Messer Benedetto Conversini of Pistoja, [1] who

afterwards became Bishop of Jesi; secondly, the Procurator-Fiscal, whose
name I have forgotten; [2] and, thirdly, the judge in criminal cases,
Messer Benedetto da Cagli. These three men began at first to question me
in gentle terms, which afterwards they changed to words of considerable
is more than half-an-hour now since you have been pestering me with
questions about fables and such things, so that one may truly say you
are chattering or prattling; by chattering I mean talking without
reason, by prattling I mean talking nonsense: therefore I beg you to
tell me what it really is you want of me, and to let me hear from your
these words of mine, the Governor, who was a Pistoian, could no longer
rather far too arrogantly; but let me tell you that I will bring your
pride down lower than a spaniel by the words of reason you shall hear
from me; these will be neither jabberings nor nonsense, as you have it,
but shall form a chain of arguments to answer which you will be forced
know for certain that you were in Rome at the time when this unhappy
city was subject to the calamity of the sack; at that time you were in
you are a jeweller and goldsmith by trade, Pope Clement, being
previously acquainted with you, and having by him no one else of your
profession, called you into his secret counsels, and made you unset all
the jewels of his tiaras, mitres, and rings; afterwards, having
confidence in you, he ordered you to sew them into his clothes. While
thus engaged, you sequestered, unknown to his Holiness, a portion of
them, to the value of eighty thousand crowns. This has been told us by
one of your workmen, to whom you disclosed the matter in your
braggadocio way. Now, we tell you frankly that you must find the jewels,
WHEN I heard these words, I could not hold from bursting into a great

that God on this first occasion, when it has pleased His Divine Majesty
to imprison me, I should not be imprisoned for some folly, as the wont
is usually with young men. If what you say were the truth, I run no risk
of having to submit to corporal punishment, since the authority of the
law was suspended during that season. Indeed, I could excuse myself by
saying that, like a faithful servant, I had kept back treasure to that
amount for the sacred and Holy Apostolic Church, waiting till I could
restore it to a good Pope, or else to those who might require it of me;

spoken so far, the furious Governor would not let me conclude my

like best, Benvenuto; it is enough for us to have found the property
which we had lost; be quick about it, if you do not want us to use other

in a very angry temper, making as though they did not mean to listen to
a word I said, and at the same time half relieved, [1] as though they
had discovered all they wanted to know. I then began my speech, to this

since I first came to Rome, and I have never been sent to prison here or
not I; but if some one came to kill you, priest as you are, you would
defend yourself, and if you killed him, the sanctity of law would hold
you justified. Therefore let me continue my defence, if you wish to
report the case to the Pope, and to judge me fairly. Once more I tell
you that I have been a sojourner in this marvellous city Rome for nigh
on twenty years, and here I have exercised my art in matters of vast
importance. Knowing that this is the seat of Christ, I entertained the
reasonable belief that when some temporal prince sought to inflict on me
a mortal injury, I might have recourse to this holy chair and to this
Vicar of Christ, in confidence that he would surely uphold my cause. Ah
me! whither am I now to go? What prince is there who will protect me
from this infamous assassination? Was it not your business, before you
took me up, to find out what I had done with those eighty thousand
ducats? Was it not your duty to inspect the record of the jewels, which
have been carefully inscribed by this Apostolic Camera through the last
five hundred years? If you had discovered anything missing on that
record, then you ought to have seized all my books together with myself.
I tell you for a certainty that the registers, on which are written all
the jewels of the Pope and the regalia, must be perfectly in order; you
will not find there missing a single article of value which belonged to
Pope Clement that has not been minutely noted. The one thing of the kind
which occurs to me is this: When that poor man Pope Clement wanted to
make terms with those thieves of the Imperial army, who had robbed Rome
and insulted the Church, a certain Cesare Iscatinaro, if I rightly
remember his name, came to negotiate with him; [2] and having nearly
concluded the agreement, the Pope in his extremity, to show the man some
mark of favour, let fall a diamond from his finger, which was worth
about four thousand crowns, and when Iscatinaro stooped to pick it up,
the Pope told him to keep it for his sake. I was present at these transactions: and if the diamond of which I speak be missing, I have told you where it went; but I have the firmest conviction that you will find even this noted upon the register. After this you may blush at your leisure for having done such cruel injustice to a man like me, who has performed so many honourable services for the apostolic chair. I would have you know that, but for me, the morning when the Imperial troops entered the Borgo, they would without let or hindrance have forced their way into the castle. It was I who, unrewarded for this act, betook myself with vigour to the guns which had been abandoned by the cannoneers and soldiers of the ordnance. I put spirit into my comrade Raffaello da Montelupo, the sculptor, who had also left his post and hid himself all frightened in a corner, without stirring foot or finger; I woke his courage up, and he and I alone together slew so many of the enemies that the soldiers took another road. I it was who shot at Iscatinaro when I saw him talking to Pope Clement without the slightest mark of reverence, nay, with the most revolting insolence, like the Lutheran and infidel he was. Pope Clement upon this had the castle searched to find and hang the man who did it. I it was who wounded the Prince of Orange in the head down there below the trenches of the castle. Then, too, how many ornaments of silver, gold, and jewels, how many models and coins, so beautiful and so esteemed, have I not made for Holy Church! Is this then the presumptuous priestly recompense you give a man who has served and loved you with such loyalty, with such mastery of art? Oh, go and report the whole that I have spoken to the Pope; go and tell him that his jewels are all in his possession; that I never received from the Church anything but wounds and stonings at that epoch of the sack; that I never reckoned upon any gain beyond some small
remuneration from Pope Paolo, which he had promised me. Now at last I

While I was delivering this speech, they sat and listened in
astonishment. Then exchanging glances one with the other, and making
signs of much surprise, they left me. All three went together to report
what I had spoken to the Pope. The Pope felt some shame, and gave orders
that all the records of the jewels should be diligently searched. When
they had ascertained that none were missing, they left me in the castle
without saying a word more about it. Signor Pier Luigi felt also that he
had acted ill; and to end the affair, they set about to contrive my
death.

Note 1. 'Sollevati.' It may mean 'half-risen from their seats.'

day into the castle to negotiate a treaty, he was wounded in the arm by

CIV

DURING the agitations of this time which I have just related, King
Francis received news of how the Pope was keeping me in prison, and with
what injustice. He had sent a certain gentleman of his, named Monsignor
di Morluc, as his ambassador to Rome; [1] to him therefore he now wrote,
claiming me from the Pope as the man of his Majesty. The Pope was a
person of extraordinary sense and ability, but in this affair of mine he

envoy that his Majesty need pay me no attention, since I was a fellow
who gave much trouble by fighting; therefore he advised his Majesty to
leave me alone, adding that he kept me in prison for homicides and other
deviltries which I had played. To this the King sent answer that justice
in his realm was excellently maintained; for even as his Majesty was
wont to shower rewards and favours upon men of parts and virtue, so did
he ever chastise the troublesome. His Holiness had let me go, not caring
for the service of the said Benvenuto, and the King, when he saw him in
his realm, most willingly adopted him; therefore he now asked for him in
the quality of his own man. Such a demand was certainly one of the most
honourable marks of favour which a man of my sort could desire; yet it
proved the source of infinite annoyance and hurt to me. The Pope was
roused to such fury by the jealous fear he had lest I should go and tell
the whole world how infamously I had been treated, that he kept
revolving ways in which I might be put to death without injury to his
own credit.

Giorgio, a knight of the Ugolini family. [2] This worthy man showed me
the greatest courtesy, and let me go free about the castle on parole. He
was well aware how greatly I had been wronged; and when I wanted to give
security for leave to walk about the castle, he replied that though he
could not take that, seeing the Pope set too much importance upon my
affair, yet he would frankly trust my word, because he was informed by
every one what a worthy man I was. So I passed my parole, and he granted
me conveniences for working at my trade. I then, reflecting that the
because of the favour shown me by the King, kept my shop in Rome open, while Ascanio, my prentice, came to the castle and brought me things to work at. I could not indeed do much, feeling myself imprisoned so unjustly; yet I made a virtue of necessity, and bore my adverse fortune with as light a heart as I was able.

I had secured the attachment of all the guards and many soldiers of the castle. Now the Pope used to come at times to sup there, and on those occasions no watch was kept, but the place stood open like an ordinary palace. Consequently, while the Pope was there, the prisoners used to be shut up with great precautions; none such, however, were taken with me, who had the license to go where I liked, even at those times, about it precincts. Often then those soldiers told me that I ought to escape, and that they would aid and abet me, knowing as they did how greatly I had been wronged. I answered that I had given my parole to the castellan, who was such a worthy man, and had done me such kind offices. One very that a prisoner is not obliged, and cannot be obliged, to keep faith, any more than aught else which befits a free man. Do what I tell you; escape from that rascal of a Pope and that bastard his son, for both are rather to lose my life than to break the promise I had given that good man the castellan. So I bore the extreme discomforts of my situation, and had for companion of misery a friar of the Palavisina house, who was a very famous preacher. 3

Note 1. Jean de Montluc, brother of the celebrated Marshal, Bishop of Valence, a friend of Margaret of Navarre, and, like her, a protector of
the Huguenots. He negotiated the election of the Duke of Anjou to the
throne of Poland.

Note 2. It is only known of this man that he was a Knight of Jerusalem,
and had been Commendatore of Prato in 1511.

Note 3. Cellini means Pallavicini. Nothing seems to be known about him,
date 1540.

CV

THIS man had been arrested as a Lutheran. He was an excellent companion;
but, from the point of view of his religion, I found him the biggest
scoundrel in the world, to whom all kinds of vices were acceptable. His
fine intellectual qualities won my admiration; but I hated his dirty
vices, and frankly taxed him with them. This friar kept perpetually
reminding me that I was in no wise bound to observe faith with the
castellan, since I had become a prisoner. I replied to these arguments
that he might be speaking the truth as a friar, but that as a man he
spoke the contrary; for every one who called himself a man, and not a
monk, was bound to keep his word under all circumstances in which he
chanced to be. I therefore, being a man, and not a monk, was not going
to break the simple and loyal word which I had given. Seeing then that
he could not sap my honour by the subtle and ingenious sophistries he so
eloquently developed, the friar hit upon another way of tempting me. He
allowed some days to pass, during which he read me the sermons of Fra
Jerolimo Savonarola; and these he expounded with such lucidity and
learning that his comment was even finer than the text. I remained in
eccasies of admiration; and there was nothing in the world I would not
have done for him, except, as I have said, to break my promised word.
When he saw the effect his talents had produced upon my mind, he thought
of yet another method. Cautiously he began to ask what means I should
have taken, supposing my jailers had locked me up, in order to set the
dungeon doors open and effect my flight. I then, who wanted to display
the sharpness of my own wits to so ingenious a man, replied that I was
quite sure of being able to open the most baffling locks and bars, far
more those of our prison, to do which would be the same to me as eating
a bit of new cheese. In order then to gain my secret, the friar now made
light of these assertions, averring that persons who have gained some
credit by their abilities, are wont to talk big of things which, if they
had to put their boasts in action, would speedily discredit them, and
much to their dishonour. Himself had heard me speak so far from the
truth, that he was inclined to think I should, when pushed to proof, end
in a dishonourable failure. Upon this, feeling myself stung to the quick
by that devil of a friar, I responded that I always made a practice of
promising in words less than I could perform in deeds; what I had said
about the keys was the merest trifle; in a few words I could make him
understand that the matter was as I had told it; then, all too
heedlessly, I demonstrated the facility with which my assertions could
be carried into act. He affected to pay little attention; but all the
same he learned my lesson well by heart with keen intelligence.
As I have said above, the worthy castellan let me roam at pleasure over
the whole fortress. Not even at night did he lock me in, as was the
custom with the other prisoners. Moreover, he allowed me to employ
myself as I liked best, with gold or silver or with wax according to my
whim. So then, I laboured several weeks at the bason ordered by Cardinal
Ferrara, but the irksomeness of my imprisonment bred in me a disgust for
such employment, and I took to modelling in wax some little figures of
my fancy, for mere recreation. Of the wax which I used, the friar stole
a piece; and with this he proceeded to get false keys made, upon the
method I had heedlessly revealed to him. He had chosen for his
service. When the keys were ordered, the locksmith revealed their plot;
and the castellan who came at times to see me in my chamber, noticing
true that this poor fellow Benvenuto has suffered a most grievous wrong;
yet he ought not to have dealt thus with me, for I have ever strained my
sense of right to show him kindness. Now I shall keep him straitly under

Accordingly, he had me shut up with disagreeable circumstances, among
the worst of which were the words flung at me by some of his devoted
servants, who were indeed extremely fond of me, but now, on this
occasion, cast in my teeth all the kind offices the castellan had done
me; they came, in fact, to calling me ungrateful, light, and disloyal.
One of them in particular used those injurious terms more insolently
than was decent; whereupon I, being convinced of my innocence, retorted
hotly that I had never broken faith, and would maintain these words at
the peril of my life, and that if he or any of his fellows abused me so
unjustly, I would fling the lie back in his throat. The man, intolerant
with the model of the keys. No sooner had I seen the wax than I told him
that both he and I were in the right; but I begged him to procure for me
an audience with the castellan, for I meant to explain frankly how the
matter stood, which was of far more consequence than they imagined. The
castellan sent for me at once, and I told him the whole course of
events. This made him arrest the friar, who betrayed the registrar, and
the alter ran a risk of being hanged. However, the castellan hushed the
registrar from the gallows, and gave me the same freedom as I had before.

CVI

WHEN I saw how rigorously this affair was prosecuted, I began to think
rise, and the man should lose confidence in me, I should then be under
no obligation to him, and might wish to use my wits a little, which
would certainly work their end better than those of that rascally
did not send the dirty ones away. When my servants asked for them, I
bade them hold their tongues, saying I had given the sheets to some of
those poor soldiers; and if the matter came to knowledge, the wretched
fellows ran risk of the galleys. This made my young men and attendants,
especially Felice, keep the secret of the sheets in all loyalty. I
meanwhile set myself to emptying a straw mattress, the stuffing of which
I burned, having a chimney in my prison. Out of the sheets I cut strips,
the third of a cubit in breadth; and when I had made enough in my
told my servants that I had given away what I wanted; they must now
bring me others of a finer fabric, and I would always send back the
dirty ones. This affair was presently forgotten.
Now my workpeople and serving-men were obliged to close my shop at the order of the Cardinals Santi Quattro [1] and Cornaro, who told me openly that the Pope would not hear of setting me at large, and that the great favours shown me by King Francis had done far more harm that good. It seems that the last words spoken from the King by Monsignor di Morluc had been to this effect, namely, that the Pope ought to hand me over to the ordinary judges of the court; if I had done wrong, he could chastise me; but otherwise, it was but reason that he should set me at liberty.

This message so irritated the Pope that he made his mind up to keep me a prisoner for life. At the same time, the castellan most certainly did his utmost to assist me.

When my enemies perceived that my shop was closed, they lost no opportunity of taunting and reviling those servants and friends of mine who came to visit me in prison. It happened on one occasion that Ascanio, who came twice a day to visit me, asked to have a jacket cut out for him from a blue silk vest of mine I never used. I had only worn it once, on the occasion when I walked in procession. I replied that these were not the times nor was I in the place to wear such clothes.

The young man took my refusal of this miserable vest so ill that he told me he wanted to go home to Tagliacozzo. All in a rage, I answered that he could not please me better than by taking himself off; and he swore with passion that he would never show his face to me again. When these words passed between us, we were walking round the keep of the castle. It happened that the castellan was also taking the air there; so just
to the castellan, I begged him with all my heart to order the guards to
great trouble; I entreat you, therefore, my lord, not to let him enter
lad of marvellous talents; he was, moreover, so fair a person that every
one who once set eyes on him seemed bound to love him beyond measure.

The boy went away weeping. That day he had with him a small scimitar,
which it was at times his wont to carry hidden beneath his clothes.
Leaving the castle then, and having his face wet with tears, he chanced
to meet two of my chief enemies, Jeronimo the Perugian, [2] and a

Then, raising his hand, he struck two blows with the scimitar, both at
three fingers off his right hand, though it was aimed at his head. He
lay there like a dead man. The matter was at once reported to the Pope,
the commission which the Pope had given them.

The excellent castellan went off upon the spot to his Holiness, and
informed him that I was no accomplice in the matter, and that I had sent
Ascanio about his business. So ably did he plead my cause that he saved
my life from this impending tempest. Ascanio meanwhile escaped to
Tagliacozzo, to his home there, whence he wrote begging a thousand times
my pardon, and acknowledging his wrong in adding troubles to my grave
prison, he meant never to abandon me. I let him understand that he must
mind his art, and that if God set me a large again I would certainly
THE CASTELLAN was subject to a certain sickness, which came upon him every year and deprived him of his wits. The sign of its approach was that he kept continually talking, or rather jabbering, to no purpose. These humours took a different shape each year; one time he thought he was an oiljar; another time he thought he was a frog, and hopped about as frogs do; another time he thought he was dead, and then they had to bury him; not a year passed but he got some such hypochondriac notions into his head. At this season he imagined that he was a bat, and when he went abroad to take the air, he used to scream like bats in a high thin tone; and then he would flap his hands and body as though he were about to fly. The doctors, when they saw the fit coming on him, and his old servants, gave him all the distractions they could think of; and since they had noticed that he derived much pleasure from my conversation, they were always fetching me to keep him company. At times the poor man detained me for four or five stricken hours without ever letting me cease talking. He used to keep me at his table, eating opposite to him, and never stopped chatting and making me chat; but during those discourses I contrived to make a good meal. He, poor man, could neither
eat nor sleep; so that at last he wore me out. I was at the end of my
strength; and sometimes when I looked at him, I noticed that his
eyeballs were rolling in a frightful manner, one looking one way and the
other in another.

He took it into his head to ask me whether I had ever had a fancy to
fly. I answered that it had always been my ambition to do those things
which offer the greatest difficulties to men, and that I had done them;
as to flying, the God of Nature had gifted me with a body well suited
for running and leaping far beyond the common average, and that with the
talents I possessed for manual art I felt sure I had the courage to try
flying. He then inquired what methods I should use; to which I answered
that, taking into consideration all flying creatures, and wishing to
imitate by art what they derived from nature, none was so apt a model as
the bat. No sooner had the poor man heard the name bat, which recalled
the humour he was suffering under, than he cried out at the top of his
me at liberty, I felt quite up to flying down to Prati, after making
should be prepared to take flight; but since the Pope has bidden me
guard you as though you were his own eyes, and I know you a clever devil
who would certainly escape, I shall now have you locked up with a
then began to implore him, and remind him that I might have fled, but
that on account of the word which I had given him I would never have
betrayed his trust: therefore I begged him for the love of God, and by
the kindness he had always shown me, not to add greater evils to the
misery of my present situation. While I was pouring out these
entreaties, he gave strict orders to have me bound and taken and locked up in prison. On seeing that it could not be helped, I told him before the utmost care.

CVIII

I THEN began to deliberate upon the best way of making my escape. No sooner had I been locked in, than I went about exploring my prison; and when I thought I had discovered how to get out of it, I pondered the means of descending from the lofty keep, for so the great round central tower is called. I took those new sheets of mine, which, as I have said already, I had cut in strips and sewn together; then I reckoned up the quantity which would be sufficient for my purpose. Having made this estimate and put all things in order, I looked out a pair of pincers which I had abstracted from a Savoyard belonging to the guard of the castle. This man superintended the casks and cisterns; he also amused himself with carpentering. Now he possessed several pairs of pincers, among which was one both big and heavy. I then, thinking it would suit my purpose, took it and hid it in my straw mattress. The time had now come for me to use it; so I began to try the nails which kept the hinges of my door in place. [1] The door was double, and the clinching of the nails could not be seen; so that when I attempted to draw one out, I met with the greatest trouble; in the end, however, I succeeded. When I had drawn the first nail, I bethought me how to prevent its being noticed. For this purpose I mixed some rust, which I had scraped from old iron, with a little wax, obtaining exactly the same colour as the heads of the
long nails which I had extracted. Then I set myself to counterfeit these heads and place them on the holdfasts; for each nail I extracted I made a counterfeit in wax. I left the hinges attached to their door-posts at top and bottom by means of some of the same nails that I had drawn; but I took care to cut these and replace them lightly, so that they only just supported the irons of the hinges.

All this I performed with the greatest difficulty, because the castellan kept dreaming every night that I had escaped, which made him send from time to time to inspect my prison. The man who came had the title and behaviour of a catch-poll. He was called Bozza, and used always to bring with him another of the same sort, named Giovanni and nicknamed Pedignone; the latter was a soldier, and Bozza a serving-man. Giovanni never entered my prison without saying something offensive to me. He came from the district of Prato, and had been an apothecary in the town there. Every evening he minutely examined the holdfasts of the hinges

enmity between him and me, so that I was obliged to use precautions to conceal my tools, that is to say, my pincers and a great big poniard and other appurtenances. All these I put away together in my mattress, where I also kept the strips of linen I had made. When day broke, I used immediately to sweep my room out; and though I am by nature a lover of cleanliness, at that time I kept myself unusually spick and span. After sweeping up, I made my bed as daintily as I could, laying flowers upon it, which a Savoyard used to bring me nearly every morning. He had the care of the cistern and the casks, and also amused himself with carpentering; it was from him I stole the pincers which I used in order
to draw out the nails from the holdfasts of the hinges.

Note 1. The door seems to have been hung upon hinges with plates nailed into the posts. Cellini calls these plates 'bandelle.'

CIX

WELL, to return to the subject of my bed; when Bozza and Pedignone came, I always told them to give it a wide berth, so as not to dirty and spoil it for me. Now and then, just to irritate me, they would touch it of your swords there, and will do you a mischief that will make you wonder. Do you think you are fit to touch the bed of a man like me? When I chastise you I shall not heed my own life, for I am certain to take give me more annoyance than I have already; if not, I shall make you see castellan, who gave them express orders never to go near my bed, and when they came to me, to come without swords, but for the rest to keep a watchful guard upon me.

Having thus secured my bed from meddlers, I felt as though the main point was gained; for there lay all things needful to my venture. It happened on the evening of a certain feast-day that the castellan was seriously indisposed; his humours grew extravagant; he kept repeating that he was a bat, and if they heard that Benvenuto had flown away, they must let him go to catch me up, since he could fly by night most
certainly as well or better than myself; for it was thus he argued:

had passed several nights in this frenzy, and had worn out all his
servants, whereof I received full information through divers channels,
but especially from the Savoyard, who was my friend at heart.

On the evening of that feast-day, then, I made my mind up to escape,
come what might; and first I prayed most devoutly to God, imploring His
Divine Majesty to protect and succour me in that so perilous a venture.
Afterwards I set to work at all the things I needed, and laboured the
whole of the night. It was two hours before daybreak when at last I
removed those hinges with the greatest toil; but the wooden panel itself
and the bolt too offered such resistance that I could not open the door;
so I had to cut into the wood; yet in the end I got it open, and
shouldering the strips of linen which I had rolled up like bundles of
flax upon two sticks, I went forth and directed my steps towards the
latrines of the keep. Spying from within two tiles upon the roof, I was
able at once to clamber up with ease. I wore a white doublet with a pair
of white hose and a pair of half boots, into which I had stuck the
poniard I have mentioned.

After scaling the roof, I took one end of my linen roll and attached it
to a piece of antique tile which was built into the fortress wall; it
happened to jut out scarcely four fingers. In order to fix the band, I
gave it the form of a stirrup. When I had attached it to that piece of

myself go gently by degrees, supporting myself with the sinews of my
arms, until I touched the ground. There was no moonshine, but the light
of a fair open heaven. When I stood upon my feet on solid earth, I
looked up at the vast height which I had descended with such spirit, and
went gladly away, thinking I was free. But this was not the case; for
the castellan on that side of the fortress had built two lofty walls,
the space between which he used for stable and henyard; the place was
barred with thick iron bolts outside. I was terribly disgusted to find
there was no exit from this trap; but while I paced up and down debating
what to do, I stumbled on a long pole which was covered up with straw.
Not without great trouble I succeeded in placing it against the wall,
and then swarmed up it by the force of my arms until I reached the top.
But since the wall ended in a sharp ridge, I had not strength enough to
drag the pole up after me. Accordingly I made my mind up to use a
portion of the second roll of linen which I had there; the other was
left hanging from the keep of the castle. So I cut a piece off, tied it
to the pole, and clambered down the wall, enduring the utmost toil and
fatigue. I was quite exhausted, and had, moreover, flayed the inside of
my hands, which bled freely. This compelled me to rest awhile, and I
bathed my hands in my own urine. When I thought that my strength was
recovered, I advanced quickly toward the last rampart, which faces
toward Prati. There I put my bundle of linen lines down upon the ground,
meaning to fasten them round a battlement, and descend the lesser as I
had the greater height. But no sooner had I placed the linen, than I
became aware behind me of a sentinel, who was going the rounds. Seeing
my designs interrupted and my life in peril, I resolved to face the
guard. This fellow, when he noticed my bold front, and that I was
marching on him with weapon in hand, quickened his pace and gave me a
wide berth. I had left my lines some little way behind; so I turned with
hasty steps to regain them; and though I came within sight of another
sentinel, he seemed as though he did not choose to take notice of me.

Having found my lines and attached them to the battlement, I let myself
go. On the descent, whether it was that I thought I had really come to
earth and relaxed my grasp to jump, or whether my hands were so tired
that they could not keep their hold, at any rate I fell, struck my head
in falling, and lay stunned for more than an hour and a half, so far as
I could judge.

It was just upon daybreak, when the fresh breeze which blows an hour
before the sun revived me; yet I did not immediately recover my senses,
for I thought my head had been cut off and fancied that I was in
purgatory. With time, little by little, my faculties returned, and I
perceived that I was outside the castle, and in a flash remembered all
my adventures. I was aware of the wound in my head before I knew my leg
was broken; for I put my hands up, and withdrew them covered with blood.
Then I searched the spot well, and judged and ascertained that I had
sustained no injury of consequence there; but when I wanted to stand up,
I discovered that my right leg was broken three inches above the heel.

Not even this dismayed me: I drew forth my poniard with its scabbard;
the latter had a metal point ending in a large ball, which had caused
the fracture of my leg; for the bone, coming into violent contact with
the ball, and not being able to bend, had snapped at that point. I threw
the sheath away, and with the poniard cut a piece of the linen which I
had left. Then I bound my leg up as well as I could, and crawled on all
fours with the poniard in my hand toward the city gate. When I reached
it, I found it shut; but I noticed a stone just beneath the door which
did not appear to be very firmly fixed. This I attempted to dislodge; after setting my hands to it, and feeling it move, it easily gave way, and I drew it out. Through the gap thus made I crept into the town.

CX

I HAD crawled more than five hundred paces from the place where I fell, to the gate by which I entered. No sooner had I got inside than some mastiff dogs set upon me and bit me badly. When they returned to the attack and worried me, I drew my poniard and wounded one of them so sharply that he howled aloud, and all the dogs, according to their nature, ran after him. I meanwhile made the best way I could on all fours toward the church of the Trespontina.

turned off in the direction of San Piero; and now the dawn had risen over me, and I felt myself in danger. When therefore I chanced to meet a water-carrier driving his donkey laden with full buckets, I called the fellow, and begged him to carry me upon his back to the terrace by the escaping from a window in a love-adventure, have fallen and broken my leg. The place from which I made my exit is one of great importance; and

I clapped my hand to my purse, where I had a good quantity. He took me up at once, hitched me on his back, and carried me to the raised terrace by the steps to San Piero. There I bade him leave me, saying he must run back to his donkey.
I resumed my march, crawling always on all fours, and making for the palace of the Duchess, wife of Duke Ottavio and daughter of the Emperor.

[1] She was his natural child, and had been married to Duke Alessandro.

I chose her house for refuge, because I was quite certain that many of my friends, who had come with that great princess from Florence, were tarrying there; also because she had taken me into favour through something which the castellan had said in my behalf. Wishing to be of service to me, he told the Pope that I had saved the city more than a thousand crowns of damage, caused by heavy rain on the occasion when the Duchess made her entrance into Rome. He related how he was in despair, and how I put heart into him, and went on to describe how I had pointed several large pieces of artillery in the direction where the clouds were thickest, and whence a deluge of water was already pouring; then, when I began to fire, the rain stopped, and at the fourth discharge the sun shone out; and so I was the sole cause of the festival succeeding, to

Benvenuto is one of the artists of merit, who enjoyed the goodwill of my late husband, Duke Alessandro, and I shall always hold them in mind if to Duke Ottavio. For these reasons I meant to go straight to the house of her Excellency, which was a very fine palace situated in Borgio Vecchio.

I should have been quite safe from recapture by the Pope if I could have stayed there; but my exploits up to this point had been too marvellous for a human being, and God was unwilling to encourage my vainglory; accordingly, for my own good, He chastised me a second time worse even
than the first. The cause of this was that while I was crawling on all fours up those steps, a servant of Cardinal Cornaro recognized me. His master was then lodging in the palace; so the servant ran up to his room down there; he has escaped from the castle, and is crawling on all fours, streaming with blood; to all appearances he has broken a leg, and me to be under no apprehension, and sent for the first physicians of Rome to take my case in hand. Among them was Maestro Jacomo of Perugia, a most excellent and able surgeon. He set the bone with dexterity, then bound the limb up, and bled me with his own hand. It happened that my veins were swollen far beyond their usual size, and he too wished to make a pretty wide incision; accordingly the blood sprang forth so copiously, and spurted with such force into his face, that he had to abandon the operation. He regarded this as a very bad omen, and could hardly be prevailed upon to undertake my cure. Indeed, he often expressed a wish to leave me, remembering that he ran no little risk of punishment for having treated my case, or rather for having proceeded to the end with it. The Cardinal had me placed in a secret chamber, and went off immediately to beg me from the Pope.

Note 1. Margaret of Austria, who married Ottavio Farnese in November

CXI

DURING this while all Rome was in an uproar; for they had observed the
bands of linen fastened to the great keep of the castle, and folk were
running in crowds to behold so extraordinary a thing. The castellan had
gone off into one of his worst fits of frenzy; in spite of all his
servants, he insisted upon taking his flight also from the tower, saying
that no one could recapture me except himself if he were to fly after
me. Messer Ruberto Pucci, the father of Messer Pandolfo, [1] having
heard of the great event, went in person to inspect the place;
afterwards he came to the palace, where he met with Cardinal Cornaro,
who told him exactly what had happened, and how I was lodged in one of
men went together, and threw themselves upon their knees before the

man; surely his great talents entitle him to exceptional treatment;
moreover, he has displayed such audacity, blent with so much ingenuity,
that his exploit might seem superhuman. We know not for what crimes you
Holiness has kept him so long in prison; however, if those crimes are
too exorbitant, your Holiness is wise and holy, and may your will be
done unquestioned; still, if they are such as can be condoned, we

some of my people, since he is a little too violent in his behaviour;
but recognising his talents, and wishing to keep him near our person, we
had intended to treat him so well that he should have no reason to
return to France. I am very sorry to hear of his bad accident; tell him
to mind his health, and when he is recovered, we will make it up to him

Those two excellent men returned and told me the good news they were
bringing from the Pope. Meanwhile the nobility of Rome, young, old, and
all sorts, came to visit me. The castellan, out of his mind as he was, had himself carried to the Pope; and when he was in the presence of his Holiness, began to cry out, and to say that if he did not send me back he gave me; woe is me that he has flown away when he promised not to Governor to him to find out who helped him to escape; for if it is one is a brave fellow, and his exploit is something marvellous; all the same, when I was a young man, I also descended from the fortress at that imprisoned in the castle for forging a brief at the time when he was abbreviator ‘di Parco Majoris.’ [2] Pope Alexander kept him confined for some length of time; and afterwards, his offence being of too ugly a nature, had resolved on cutting off his head. He postponed the execution, however, till after Corpus Domini; and Farnese, getting wind and managed to corrupt some of the castle guards with money. Accordingly, upon the day of Corpus Domini, while the Pope was going in procession, Farnese got into a basket and was let down by a rope to the ground. At that time the outer walls had not been built around the castle; only the great central tower existed; so that he had not the same enormous difficulty that I met with in escaping; moreover, he had been imprisoned justly, and I against all equity. What he wanted was to brag before the Governor of having in his youth been spirited and brave; and it did not occur to him that he was calling attention to his own without apprehension to you, be the man who he may be, since I have
Note 1. See above, p. 114.

Note 2. The Collegium Abbreviatorum di Parco Majori consisted of seventy-two members. It was established by Pius II. Onofrio Panvinio in the Papacy of Innocent VIII. See ‘Vita Pauli’ III., in continuation of Platina.

CXII

SO the Governor came to see me. Two days before he had been made Bishop office is wont to frighten men, I come to set your mind at rest, and to company, else he would not have been able to accomplish it. I swear by the sacraments which I carry on my person (for I was consecrated Bishop two days since) that the Pope has set you free and pardoned you, and is very sorry for your accident. Attend to your health, and take all things for the best; for your imprisonment, which you certainly underwent without a shadow of guilt, will have been for your perpetual welfare. Henceforward you will tread down poverty, and will have to go back to France, wearing out your life in this place and in that. Tell me then frankly how the matter went, and who rendered you assistance; afterwards related the whole story exactly as it had happened, giving him the most minute countersigns, down to the water-carrier who bore me on his back.

too great exploits for one man alone; no one but you could have
good courage and comfort your heart, for by this hand which I am holding

conversing with me, he had kept a whole heap of great lords and noblemen

by me, and one made me offers of kindness, and another made me presents.

While I was being entertained in this way, the Governor returned to the
Pope, and reported all that I had said. As chance would have it, Signor

something still more marvellous, because he has by far too bold a
spirit. I will tell you another story about him which you do not know.
That Benvenuto of yours, before he was imprisoned, came to words with a
gentleman of Cardinal Santa Fiore, [2] about some trifle which the

insolent that it amounted to throwing down a cartel. The gentleman
referred the matter to the Cardinal, who said that if he once laid hands
on Benvenuto he would soon clear his head of such folly. When the fellow
heard this, he got a little fowling-piece of his ready, with which he is
acustomed to hit a penny in the middle; accordingly, one day when the

palace of the Cardinal, he took his gun and pointed it upon the
Cardinal. The Cardinal, however, had been warned, and presently
withdrew. Benvenuto, in order that his intention might escape notice,
aimed at a pigeon which was brooding high up in a hole of the palace,
and hit it exactly in the head—a feat one would have thought incredible.

Now let your Holiness do what you think best about him; I have
discharged my duty by saying what I have. It might even come into his
head, imagining that he had been wrongly imprisoned, to fire upon your
Holiness. Indeed he is too truculent, by far too confident in his own powers. When he killed Pompeo, he gave him two stabs with a poniard in the throat, in the midst of ten men who were guarding him; then he escaped, to their great shame, and yet they were no inconsiderable

Note 1. Cellini confuses Jesi with Forlimpopoli. See above, p. 203, note.

Note 2. Ascanio Sforza, son of Bosio, Count of Santa Fiore, and grandson of Paul III. He got the hat in 1534, at the age of sixteen.

CXIII

WHILE these words were being spoken, the gentleman of Santa Fiore with whom I had that quarrel was present, and confirmed to the Pope what had been spoken by his son. The Pope swelled with rage, but said nothing. I shall now proceed to give my own version of the affair, truly and honestly.

This gentleman came to me one day, and showed me a little gold ring which had been discoloured by quicksilver, saying at the same time:

the moment upon jewel-work of gold and gems of great importance: besides, I did not care to be ordered about so haughtily by a man I had never seen or spoken to; so I replied that I did not happen to have by me the proper tool for cleaning up his ring, [1] and that he had better
go to another goldsmith. Without further provocation he retorted that I
was a donkey; whereupon I said that he was not speaking the truth; that
I was a better man than he in every respect, but that if he kept on
irritating me I would give him harder kicks than any donkey could. He
related the matter to the Cardinal, and painted me as black as the devil
in hell. Two days afterwards I shot a wild pigeon in a cleft high up
behind the palace. The bird was brooding in that cleft, and I had often
seen a goldsmith named Giovan Francesco della Tacca, from Milan, fire at
it; but he never hit it. On the day when I shot it, the pigeon scarcely
showed its head, being suspicious because it had been so often fired at.
Now this Giovan Francesco and I were rivals in shooting wildfowl; and
some gentlemen of my acquaintance, who happened to be at my shop, called
pigeon, at which he has so often fired; look now, the poor creature is

protested that even the man who invented firearms could not hit it. I
keeps, that if it keeps quiet long enough for me to point my good
Broccardo (so I used to call my gun), I will hit it in that portion of

using no other rest, and did what I had promised, without thinking of
the Cardinal or any other person; on the contrary, I held the Cardinal
for my very good patron. Let the world, then, take notice, when Fortune
has the will to ruin a man, how many divers ways she takes! The Pope,
swelling with rage and grumbling, remained revolving what his son had
told him.

Note 1. Cellini calls it 'isvivatioio.' It is properly 'avvivatioio,' a
sort of brass rod with a wooden handle.

CXIV

TWO days afterwards the Cardinal Cornaro went to beg a bishopric from the Pope for a gentleman of his called Messer Andrea Centano. The Pope, in truth, had promised him a bishopric; and this being now vacant, the Cardinal reminded him of his word. The Pope acknowledged his obligation, but said that he too wanted a favour from his most reverend lordship, which was that he would give up Benvenuto to him. On this the Cardinal

want Benvenuto, you want the bishopric; let the world say what it

bishopric, and for the rest to think the matter over, and then to act according as his Holiness decided. The Pope, feeling a certain amount of shame at so wickedly breaking his word, took what seemed a middle

have, will put him in those rooms which open on my private garden; there he can attend to his recovery, and I will not prevent any of his friends from coming to visit him. Moreover, I will defray his expenses until his

The Cardinal came home, and sent the candidate for this bishopric on the spot to inform me that the Pope was resolved to have me back, but that he meant to keep me in a ground-floor room in his private garden, where I could receive the visits of my friends, as I had done in his own house. I implored this Messer Andrea to ask the Cardinal not to give me up to the Pope, but to let me act on my own account. I would have myself
wrapped up in a mattress, and carried to a safe place outside Rome; for if he gave me up to the Pope, he would certainly be sending me to death.

It is believed that when the Cardinal heard my petition he was not ill-disposed to grant it; but Messer Andrea, wanting to secure the bishopric, denounced me to the Pope, who sent at once and had me lodged in the ground-floor chamber of his private garden. The Cardinal sent me word not to eat the food provided for me by the Pope; he would supply me with provisions; meanwhile I was to keep my spirits up, for he would work in my cause till I was set free. Matters being thus arranged, I received daily visits and generous offers from many great lords and gentlemen. Food came from the Pope, which I refused to touch, only eating that which came from Cardinal Cornaro; and thus I remained awhile.

I had among my friends a young Greek of the age of twenty-five years. He was extremely active in all physical exercises, and the best swordsman in Rome; rather poor-spirited, however, but loyal to the backbone; honest, and ready to believe what people told him. He had heard it said that the Pope made known his intention of compensating me for all I had gone through. It is true that the Pope began by saying so, but he ended by saying quite the opposite. I then determined to confide in the young now the time has come to help me. Do they imagine, when they heap those extraordinary favours on me, that I am not aware they are done to betray the Pope has bestowed on you an office with an income of five hundred crowns; I beseech you therefore not to let those suspicions deprive you aid me in escaping from that place, saying I knew well that a Pope of that sort, though he could do me much good if he chose, was really
studying secretly, and to save appearances, how he might best destroy me; therefore we must be quick and try to save me from his clutches. If my friend would get me out of that place by the means I meant to tell him, I should always regard him as the saviour of my life, and when occasion came would lay it down for him with gladness. The poor young destruction on your head, I cannot but fulfil your wishes; so explain your plan, and I will do whatever you may order, albeit much against my details of my scheme, which was certain to have succeeded without difficulty. When I hoped that he was coming to execute it, he came and told me that for my own good he meant to disobey me, being convinced of understood the real state of my affairs. Having nothing else to rely upon, I remained in despair and misery. This passed on the day of Corpus Domini 1539.

CXV

AFTER my conversation with the Greek, the whole day wore away, and at night there came abundant provisions from the kitchen of the Pope; the Cardinal Cornaro also sent good store of viands from his kitchen; and some friends of mine being present when they arrived, I made them stay to supper, and enjoyed their society, keeping my leg in splints beneath the bed-clothes. An hour after nightfall they left me; and two of my servants, having made me comfortable for the night, went to sleep in the antechamber. I had a dog, black as a mulberry, one of those hairy ones, who followed me admirably when I went out shooting, and never left my
side. During the night he lay beneath my bed, and I had to call out at least three times to my servant to turn him out, because he howled so fearfully. When the servants entered, the dog flew at them and tried to bite them. They were frightened, and thought he must be mad, because he went on howling. In this way we passed the first four hours of the night. At the stroke of four the Bargello came into my room with a band of constables. Then the dog sprang forth and flew at them with such fury, tearing their capes and hose, that in their fright they fancied he

the nature of good dogs to divine and foretell the mischance coming on their masters. Two of you take sticks and beat the dog off; while the others strap Benvenuto on this chair; then carry him to the place you

The officers carried me, well shut up and covered, and four of them went in front, making the few passengers who were still abroad get out of the way. So they bore me to Torre di Nona, such is the name of the place, and put me in the condemned cell. I was left upon a wretched mattress under the care of a guard, who kept all night mourning over my bad luck,

happen to me, partly by the place in which I found myself, and also by what the man had told me. [1] During a portion of that night I kept racking my brains what the cause could be why God thought fit to try me so, and not being able to discover it, I was violently agitated in my soul. The guard did the best he could to comfort me; but I begged him for the love of God to stop talking, seeing I should be better able to compose myself alone in quiet. He promised to do as I asked; and then I turned my whole heart to God, devoutly entreating Him to deign to take
me into His kingdom. I had, it is true, murmured against my lot, because it seemed to me that, so far as human laws go, my departure from the world in this way would be too unjust; it is true also that I had committed homicides, but His Vicar had called me from my native city and pardoned me by the authority he had from Him and from the laws; and what I had done had all been done in defence of the body which His Majesty had lent me; so I could not admit that I deserved death according to the dispensation under which man dwells here; but it seemed that what was happening to me was the same as what happens to unlucky people in the street, when a stone falls from some great height upon their head and kills them; this we see clearly to be the influence of the stars; not indeed that the stars conspire to do us good or evil, but the effect results from their conjunctions, to which we are subordinated. At the same time I know that I am possessed of free-will, and if I could exert the faith of a saint, I am sure that the angels of heaven would bear me from this dungeon and relieve me of all my afflictions, yet inasmuch as God has not deemed me worthy of such miracles, I conclude that those celestial influences must be wreaking their malignity upon me. In this long struggle of the soul I spent some time; then I found comfort, and fell presently asleep.

Note 1. Cellini thought he was going to have his throat cut. And indeed the Torre di Nona was a suspicious place, it being one of the worst criminal prisons in Rome.

CXVI
worthy man, you have no more time to go on sleeping, for one is waiting

earthly prison, the happier shall I be; especially as I am sure my soul
is saved, and that I am going to an undeserved death. Christ, the
glorious and divine, elects me to the company of His disciples and
friends, who, like Himself, were condemned to die unjustly. I too am
sentenced to an unjust death, and I thank God with humility for this
sign of grace. Why does not the man come forward who has to pronounce my

Then I called him by his name of Messer Benedetto da Cagli, [1] and
resolved and in good frame of mind; far greater glory is it for me to
die unjustly than if I had deserved this fate. Come forward, I beg, and
let me have a priest, in order that I may speak a couple of words with
him. I do not indeed stand in need of this, for I have already made my
ordinances of our Holy Mother Church; for though she has done me this
abominable wrong, I pardon her with all my soul. So come, friend Messer
Benedetto, and despatch my business before I lose control over my better

After I had uttered these words, the worthy man told the guard to lock
the door, because nothing could be done without his presence. He then
company with the Duchess of whom I spoke above. [2] Presenting himself
entreat you for the love of God to tell the Pope, that he must send some
one else to pronounce sentence upon Benvenuto and perform my office; I
sighing, he departed with the strongest signs of inward sorrow. The
particularly esteemed this man for his good qualities and eminent abilities; he was unwilling to let him return to Rome, and would gladly called Signora Jerolima, betook herself to the Pope, and threw herself upon her knees before him in the presence of several cardinals. She pleaded my cause so warmly that she woke the Pope to shame; whereupon he cardinals who were around him, and had listened to the eloquence of that brave-spirited lady.

Meanwhile I abode in extreme discomfort, and my heart kept thumping against my ribs. Not less was the discomfort of the men appointed to discharge the evil business of my execution; but when the hour for dinner was already past, they betook themselves to their several affairs, and my meal was also served me. This filled me with a glad the malice of the stars! I pray God, therefore, that, if it be His pleasure, He will save me from this fearful peril. Then I fell to eating with the same stout heart for my salvation as I had previously prepared for my perdiction. I dined well, and afterwards remained without seeing or hearing any one until an hour after nightfall. At that time the Bargello arrived with a large part of his guard, and had me replaced in the chair which brought me on the previous evening to the prison. He spoke very kindly to me, bidding me be under no apprehension; and bade his constables take good care not to strike against my broken leg, but to treat me as though I were the apple of their eye. The men obeyed, and brought me to the castle whence I had escaped; then, when we had mounted to the keep, they left me shut up in a dungeon opening upon a little
court there is there.

Note 1. It will be remembered that Benedetto da Cagli was one of

Note 2. The wife of Pier Luigi Farnese was Jeronima, daughter of Luigi
Orsini, Count of Pitigliano.

CXVII

THE CASTELLAN, meanwhile, ill and afflicted as he was, had himself

And if I had not been sold by a Venetian Cardinal, under Papal
guarantee, for the price of a bishopric, the Pope a Roman and a Farnese
(and both of them have scratched with impious hands the face of the most
sacred laws), you would not have recovered me. But now that they have
opened this vile way of dealing, do you the worst you can in your turn;

fellow whether he lives or dies, and behold, he is more fiery than when
he was in health. Put him down there below the garden, and do not speak

So I was taken into a gloomy dungeon below the level of a garden, which
swam with water, and was full of big spiders and many venomous worms.
They flung me a wretched mattress of course hemp, gave me no supper, and
locked four doors upon me. In that condition I abode until the
nineteenth hour of the following day. Then I received food, and I requested my jailers to give me some of my books to read. None of them spoke a word, but they referred my prayer to the unfortunate castellan, who had made inquiries concerning what I said. Next morning they brought me an Italian Bible which belonged to me, and a copy of the Chronicles of Giovanni Villani. [1] When I asked for certain other of my books, I was told that I could have no more, and that I had got too many already.

Thus, then, I continued to exist in misery upon that rotten mattress, which in three days soaked up water like a sponge. I could hardly stir because of my broken leg; and when I had to get out of bed to obey a call of nature, I crawled on all fours with extreme distress, in order not to foul the place I slept in. For one hour and a half each day I got a little glimmering of light, which penetrated that unhappy cavern through a very narrow aperture. Only for so short a space of time could I read; the rest of the day and night I abode in darkness, enduring my lot, nor ever without meditations upon God and on our human frailty. I thought it certain that a few more days would put an end of my unlucky life in that sad place and in that miserable manner. Nevertheless, as well as I was able, I comforted my soul by calling to mind how much more painful it would have been, on passing from this life, to have suffered should depart with the anodyne of sleepiness, which robbed death of half its former terrors. Little by little I felt my vital forces waning, until at last my vigorous temperament had become adapted to that purgatory. When I felt it quite acclimatised, I resolved to put up with all those indescribable discomforts so long as it held out.
Note 1. This mention of an Italian Bible shows that we are still in the
days before the Council of Trent.

CXVIII

I BEGAN the Bible from the commencement, reading and reflecting on it so
devoutly, and finding in it such deep treasures of delight, that, if I
had been able, I should have done naught else but study it. However,
light was wanting; and the thought of all my troubles kept recurring and
gnawing at me in the darkness, until I often made my mind up to put an
end somehow to my own life. They did not allow me a knife, however, and
so it was no easy matter to commit suicide. Once, notwithstanding, I
took and propped a wooden pole I found there, in position like a trap. I
meant to make it topple over on my head, and it would certainly have
dashed my brains out; but when I had arranged the whole machine, and was
approaching to put it in motion, just at the moment of my setting my
hand to it, I was seized by an invisible power and flung four cubits
from the spot, in such a terror that I lay half dead. Like that I
remained from dawn until the nineteenth hour, when they brought my food.
The jailers must have visited my cell several times without my taking
notice of them; for when at last I heard them, Captain Sandrino Monaldi

my eyes, and caught sight of priests with long gowns on their backs, who

and after shaking up the mattress, which was now as soppy as a dish of
maccaroni, they flung it outside the dungeon. The castellan, when these
things were reported to him, sent me another mattress. Thereafter, when I searched my memory to find what could have diverted me from that design of suicide, I came to the conclusion that it must have been some power divine and my good guardian angel.

Note 1. A Florentine, banished in 1530 for having been in arms against the Medici.

CXIX

DURING the following night there appeared to me in dreams a marvellous being in the form of a most lovely youth, who cried, as though he wanted to spoil it? Commit thyself unto His guidance, and lose not hope in His the thousandth part of which I cannot now remember.

I began to consider that the angel of my vision spoke the truth. So I cast my eyes around the prison, and saw some scraps of rotten brick, with the fragments of which, rubbing one against the other, I composed a paste. Then, creeping on all fours, as I was compelled to go, I crawled up to an angle of my dungeon door, and gnawed a splinter from it with my teeth. Having achieved this feat, I waited till the light came on my prison; that was from the hour of twenty and a half to twenty-one and a half. When it arrived, I began to write, the best I could, on some blank
pages in my Bible, and rebuked the regents of my intellectual self for being too impatient to endure this life; they replied to my body with excuses drawn from all that they had suffered; and the body gave them hope of better fortune. To this effect, then, by way of dialogue, I wrote as follows:-

'Benvenuto in the body.

'Afflicted regents of my soul!
Ah, cruel ye! have ye such hate of life?

'The Spirits of his soul.

'If Heaven against you roll,
Who stands for us? who saves us in the strife?
Let us, O let us go toward better life!

'Benvenuto.

'Nay, go not yet awhile!
Ye shall be happier and lighter far-
Heaven gives this hope-than ye were ever yet!

'The Spirits.
'We will remain some little while,
If only by great God you promised are
Such grace that no worse woes on us be set.

After this I recovered strength; and when I had heartened up myself, I continued reading in the Bible, and my eyes became so used to that darkness that I could now read for three hours instead of the bare hour and a half I was able to employ before.

those men of great simplicity, who believed so fervently that He would mercy, and also because of my own innocence; and at all hours, sometimes in prayer and sometimes in communion with God, I abode in those high thoughts of Him. There flowed into my soul so powerful a delight from these reflections upon God, that I took no further thought for all the anguish I had suffered, but rather spent the day in singing psalms and divers other compositions on the theme of His divinity.

I was greatly troubled, however, by one particular annoyance: my nails had grown so long that I could not touch my body without wounding it; I could not dress myself but what they turned inside or out, to my great torment. Moreover, my teeth began to perish in my mouth. I became aware of this because the dead teeth being pushed out by the living ones, my gums were gradually perforated, and the points of the roots pierced
through the tops of their cases. When I was aware of this, I used to
pull one out, as though it were a weapon from a scabbard, without any
pain or loss of blood. Very many of them did I lose in this way.
 Nevertheless, I accommodated myself to these new troubles also; at times
I sang, at times I prayed, and at times I wrote by means of the paste of
brick-dust I have described above. At this time I began composing a
Capitolo in praise of my prison, relating in it all the accidents which
had befallen me. [1] This poem I mean to insert in its proper place.

Note 1. Capitolo is the technical name for a copy of verses in 'terza
rima' on a chosen theme. Poems of this kind, mostly burlesque or
on trifling or obscene subjects in a mock-heroic style. Berni stamped
the character of high art upon the species, which had long been in use

'Renaissance in Italy,' vol. v. chap. xiv.

CXX

THE GOOD castellan used frequently to send messengers to find out
secretly what I was doing. So it happened on the last day of July that I
was rejoicing greatly by myself alone while I bethought me of the
festival they keep in Rome upon the 1st of August; and I was saying to
frailties of the world; this year I shall keep it in communion with God.

me speak these words reported them to the castellan. He was greatly

infinite distress, while I lack all things in the midst of comfort, and
am dying only on account of him! Go quickly, and fling him into that
deepest of the subterranean dungeons where the preacher Foiano was
starved to death. [1] Perhaps when he finds himself in such ill plight

Captain Sandrino Monaldi came at once into my prison with about twenty
turn at their approach, but went on paying my orisons before a God the
Father, surrounded with angels, and a Christ arising victorious from the
grave, which I had sketched upon the wall with a little piece of
charcoal I had found covered up with earth. This was after I had lain
four months upon my back in bed with my leg broken, and had so often
dreamed that angels came and ministered to me, that at the end of those
four months the limb became as sound as though it never had been
fractured. So then these fellows entered, all in armour, as fearful of
me as though I were a poison-breathing dragon. The captain spoke as

When I heard these words, I was well able to conceive what greater harm
might happen to me, but being used and hardened to misfortune, I said to
soul, my contemplation, and all my vital spirits; to you I have turned
precisely what belongs to you. What there is of good in me, you are not
worthy to behold, nor can you touch it. Do then to that which is under
not knowing what I might be on the point of doing, said to four of his

think he is the devil, that so many of us should be afraid of him? Hold

and roughly handled, and anticipating something far worse than what
Thou paiedst all our debts upon that high-raised cross of Thine;
wherefore then must my innocence be made to pay the debts of whom I do
carrying me away with a great lighted torch; and I thought that they
were about to throw me down the oubliette of Sammabo. This was the name
given to a fearful place which had swallowed many men alive; for when
they are cast into it, the fall to the bottom of a deep pit in the
foundation of the castle. This did not, however, happen to me; wherefore
I thought that I had made a very good bargain when they placed me in
that hideous dungeon I have spoken of, where Fra Foiano died of hunger,
and left me there without doing me further injury.

When I was alone, I began to sing a 'De profundis clamavi,'
'Miserere,' and 'In te Domine speravi.' During the whole of that first
day of August I kept festival with God, my heart rejoicing ever in the
strength of hope and faith. On the second day they drew me from that
hole, and took me back again to the prison where I had drawn those
representations of God. On arriving there, the sight of them filled me
with such sweetness and such gladness that I wept abundantly. On every
day that followed, the castellan sent to know what I was doing and
saying. The Pope, who had heard the whole history (and I must add that
the doctors had already given the castellan over), spoke as follows:

any way he likes, for he is the cause of his death, and so the good man
Benvenuto, and wishes me to take my vengeance on him? Dismiss the matter
ill-disposed against me, that of the castellan was now at the
commencement savage and cruel in the extreme. At this juncture the
invisible being who had diverted me from my intention of suicide, came to me, being still invisible, but with a clear voice, and shook me, and

In a sudden consternation I fell upon my knees, and recited several of my prayers in a loud voice; after this I said 'Qui habitat in adjutorio;' then I communed a space with God; and in an instant the same

The meaning of this was, that the castellan, after giving the most cruel

Benvenuto the man whom I have so warmly defended, whom I know of a surety to be innocent, and who has been so greatly wronged? Oh, how will God have mercy on me and my sins if I do not pardon those who have done me the greatest injuries? Oh, why should I injure a man both worthy and innocent, who has only done me services and honour? Go to! instead of

written that none shall demand of him the heavy debt for his expenses

it very ill indeed.

Note 1. Fra Benedetto da Foiano had incurred the wrath of Pope Clement VII. by preaching against the Medici in Florence. He was sent to Rome and imprisoned in a noisome dungeon of S. Angelo in the year 1530, where Clement made him perish miserably by diminishing his food and water

CXXI

I MEANWHILE continued to pray as usual, and to write my Capitolo, and every night I was visited with the gladdest and most pleasant dreams
that could be possibly imagined. It seemed to me while dreaming that I
was always in the visible company of that being whose voice and touch,
while he was still invisible, I had so often felt. To him I made but one
request, and this I urged most earnestly, namely, that he would bring me
where I could behold the sun. I told him that this was the sole desire I
had, and that if I could but see the sun once only, I should die
contented. All the disagreeable circumstances of my prison had become,
as it were, to me friendly and companionable; not one of them gave me
who were waiting for him to hang me from the battlement whence I had
made my escape, when they saw that he had changed his mind to the exact
opposite of what he previously threatened, were unable to endure the
disappointment. Accordingly, they kept continually trying to inspire me
with the fear of imminent death by means of various terrifying hints.
But, as I have already said, I had become so well acquainted with
troubles of this sort that I was incapable of fear, and nothing any
longer could disturb me; only I had that one great longing to behold the
sphere of the sun, if only in a dream.

Thus then, while I spent many hours a day in prayer with deep emotion of
pray Thee by Thy birth, by Thy death upon the cross, and by Thy glorious
resurrection, that Thou wilt deign to let me see the sun, if not
otherwise, at least in dreams. But if Thou wilt grant me to behold it
with these mortal eyes of mine, I engage myself to come and visit Thee
made upon the 2nd of October in the year 1539. Upon the following
morning, which was the 3rd of October, I woke at daybreak, perhaps an
hour before the rising of the sun. Dragging myself from the miserable
lair in which I lay, I put some clothes on, for it had begun to be cold; then I prayed more devoutly than ever I had done in the past, fervently imploring Christ that He would at least grant me the favour of knowing by divine inspiration what sin I was so sorely expiating; and since His Divine Majesty had not deemed me worthy of beholding the sun even in a dream I besought Him to let me know the cause of my punishment.

CXXII

I HAD barely uttered these words, when that invisible being, like a whirlwind, caught me up and bore me away into a large room, where he made himself visible to my eyes in human form, appearing like a young man whose beard is just growing, with a face of indescribable beauty, crowd of men thou seest in this place are all those who up to this day coat of mail; and so he led me through that vast hall, pointing out the people who were walking by innumerable thousands up and down, this way and that. He led me onward, and went forth in front of me through a little low door into a place which looked like a narrow street; and when he drew me after him into the street, at the moment of leaving the hall, behold I was disarmed and clothed in a white shirt, with nothing on my head, and I was walking on the right hand of my companion. Finding myself in this condition, I was seized with wonder, because I did not recognise the street; and when I lifted my eyes, I discerned that the splendour of the sun was striking on a wall, as it were a house-front,
to be able to ascend so high that I may gaze upon the sphere of the sun

ascended the stairs backwards, and gradually began to come within the region of the sunlight. Then I hastened my steps, and went on, always walking backwards as I have described, until I discovered the whole sphere of the sun. The strength of his rays, as is their wont, first made me close my eyes; but becoming aware of my misdoing, I opened them whom I have passionately yearned! Albeit your rays may blind me, I do

eyes fixed steadily on him; and after a brief space I beheld in one moment the whole might of those great burning rays fling themselves upon the left side of the sun; so that the orb remained quite clear without its rays, and I was able to contemplate it with vast delight. It seemed to me something marvellous that the rays should be removed in that manner. Then I reflected what divine grace it was which God had granted

Thy virtue! How far greater is the grace which Thou art granting me than bath of the purest molten gold, neither more nor less. While I stood contemplating this wondrous thing, I noticed that the middle of the sphere began to swell, and the swollen surface grew, and suddenly a Christ upon the cross formed itself out of the same substance as the sun. He bore the aspect of divine benignity, with such fair grace that the mind of man could not conceive the thousandth part of it; and while Divine! O immeasurable Goodness! what is it Thou hast deigned this day toward that part where his rays were settled, and the middle of the sun once more bulged out as it had done before; the boss expanded, and suddenly transformed itself into the shape of a most beautiful Madonna,
who appeared to be sitting enthroned on high, holding her child in her
arms with an attitude of the greatest charm and a smile upon her face.

imagination. I also saw within the rondure of the sun, upon the right
hand, a figure robed like a priest; this turned its back to me, and kept
its face directed to the Madonna and the Christ. All these things I
beheld, actual, clear, and vivid, and kept returning thanks to the glory
of God as loud as I was able. The marvellous apparition remained before
me little more than half a quarter of an hour: then it dissolved, and I
was carried back to my dark lair.

me all His glory, the which perchance no mortal eye hath ever seen
before. Therefore I know surely that I am free and fortunate and in the
grace of God; but you miscreants shall be miscreants still, accursed,
and in the wrath of God. Mark this, for I am certain of it, that on the
day of All Saints, the day upon which I was born in 1500, on the first
of November, at four hours after nightfall, on that day which is coming
you will be forced to lead me from this gloomy dungeon; less than this
you will not be able to do, because I have seen it with these eyes of
mine and in that throne of God. The priest who kept his face turned to
God and his back to me, that priest was S. Peter, pleading my cause, for
the shame he felt that such foul wrongs should be done to Christians in
his own house. You may go and tell it to whom you like; for none on
earth has the power to do me harm henceforward; and tell that lord who
keeps me here, that if he will give me wax or paper and the means of
portraying this glory of God which was revealed to me, most assuredly
THE PHYSICIANS gave the castellan no hope of his recovery, yet he remained with a clear intellect, and the humours which used to afflict him every year had passed away. He devoted himself entirely to the care of his soul, and his conscience seemed to smite him, because he felt that I had suffered and was suffering a grievous wrong. The Pope received information from him of the extraordinary things which I related; in answer to which his Holiness sent word—as one who had no faith either in God or aught beside—that I was mad, and that he must do his best to mend his health. When the castellan received this message, he sent to cheer me up, and furnished me with writing materials and wax, and certain little wooden instruments employed in working wax, adding many words of courtesy, which were reported by one of his servants who bore me good-will. This man was totally the opposite of that rascally gang who had wished to see me hanged. I took the paper and the wax, and began to work; and while I was working I wrote the following sonnet addressed to the castellan:

Of that Eternal Light to me by Heaven
In this low life revealed, you sure had given

Believe how God this soul with sight hath shriven
Of glory unto which no wight hath striven
The gates of Justice, holy and austere,
Would roll asunder, and rude impious Rage
Fall chained with shrieks that should assail the skies.

Had I but light, ah me! my art should rear

CXXIV

ON the following day, when the servant of the castellan who was my friend brought me my food, I gave him this sonnet copied out in writing.

Without informing the other ill-disposed servants who were my enemies, he handed it to the castellan. At that time this worthy man would gladly have granted me my liberty, because he fancied that the great wrong done to me was a main cause of his death. He took the sonnet, and having read delay he ordered his secretary to take it to the Pope, and place it in his own hands, adding a request for my deliverance.

While the secretary was on his way with my sonnet to the Pope, the castellan sent me lights for day and night, together with all the conveniences one could wish for in that place. The result of this was that I began to recover from my physical depression, which had reached a very serious degree.
The Pope read the sonnet several times. Then he sent word to the castellan that he meant presently to do what would be pleasing to him. Certainly the Pope had no unwillingness to release me then; but Signor force.

The death of the castellan was drawing near; and while I was engaged in drawing and modelling that miracle which I had seen, upon the morning of light to see by except what this murky cavern gives, and that is not enough to test the quality of precious stones. But, as regards my deliverance from this dungeon, the day will not end before you come to fetch me out. It shall and must be so, and you will not be able to

remained away two hours by the clock, he returned without armed men, bringing only a couple of lads to assist my movements; so after this fashion he conducted me to the spacious rooms which I had previously occupied (that is to say, in 1538), where I obtained all the conveniences I asked for.

CXXV

AFTER the lapse of a few days, the castellan, who now believed that I was at large and free, succumbed to his disease and departed this life.
In his room remained his brother, Messer Antonio Ugolini, who had informed the deceased governor that I was duly released. From what I learned, this Messer Antonio received commission from the Pope to let me occupy that commodious prison until he had decided what to do with me.

Messer Durante of Brescia, whom I have previously mentioned, engaged the soldier (formerly druggist of Prato) to administer some deadly liquor in my food; [1] the poison was to work slowly, producing its effect at the end of four or five months. They resolved on mixing pounded diamond with my victuals. Now the diamond is not a poison in any true sense of the word, but its incomparable hardness enables it, unlike ordinary stones, to retain very acute angles. When every other stone is pounded, that extreme sharpness of edge is lost; their fragments becoming blunt and rounded. The diamond alone preserves its trenchant qualities; wherefore, if it chances to enter the stomach together with food, the peristaltic motion [2] needful to digestion brings it into contact with the coats of the stomach and the bowels, where it sticks, and by the action of fresh food forcing it farther inwards, after some time perforates the organs. This eventually causes death. Any other sort of stone or glass mingled with the food has not the power to attach itself, but passes onward with the victuals. Now Messer Durante entrusted a diamond of trifling value to one of the guards; and it is said that a certain Lione, a goldsmith of Arezzo, my great enemy, was commissioned to pound it. [3] The man happened to be very poor, and the diamond was worth perhaps some scores of crowns. He told the guard that the dust he gave him back was the diamond in question properly ground down. The morning when I took it, they mixed it with all I had to eat; it was a Friday, and I had it in
salad, sauce, and pottage. That morning I ate heartily, for I had fasted on the previous evening; and this day was a festival. It is true that I felt the victuals scrunch beneath my teeth; but I was not thinking about knaveries of this sort. When I had finished, some scraps of salad remained upon my plate, and certain very fine and glittering splinters caught my eye among these remnants. I collected them, and took them to the window, which let a flood of light into the room; and while I was examining them, I remembered that the food I ate that morning had scrunched more than usual. On applying my senses strictly to the matter, the verdict of my eyesight was that they were certainly fragments of pounded diamond. Upon this I gave myself up without doubt as dead, and in my sorrow had recourse with pious heart to holy prayers. I had resolved the question, and thought that I was doomed. For the space of a whole hour I prayed fervently to God, returning thanks to Him for so merciful a death. Since my stars had sentenced me to die, I thought it no bad bargain to escape from life so easily. I was resigned, and blessed the world and all the years which I had passed in it. Now I was returning to a better kingdom with the grace of God, the which I thought I had most certainly acquired.

While I stood revolving these thoughts in my mind, I held in my hand some flimsy particles of the reputed diamond, which of a truth I firmly believed to be such. Now hope is immortal in the human breast; therefore I felt myself, as it were, lured onward by a gleam of idle expectation. Accordingly, I took up a little knife and a few of those particles, and point with a slow strong grinding pressure to bear upon the stone, and felt it crumble. Examining the substance with my eyes, I saw that it was
so. In a moment new hope took possession of my soul, and I exclaimed:

resolved to remain quiet and to die in peace; now I revolved other
plans, but first I rendered thanks to God and blessed poverty; for
though poverty is oftentimes the cause of bringing men to death, on this
occasion it had been the very cause of my salvation. I mean in this way:
Messer Durante, my enemy, or whoever it was, gave a diamond to Lione to
 pound for me of the worth of more than a hundred crowns; poverty induced
him to keep this for himself, and to pound for me a greenish beryl of
the value of two carlins, thinking perhaps, because it also was a stone,
that it would work the same effect as the diamond.

Note 1. For Messer Durante, see above, p. 180. For the druggist of Prato
employed as a warder in S. Angelo, see above, p. 216.

clearness used the technical phrase above.

Note 3. The name of Leone Leoni is otherwise known as a goldsmith and
Medighino, in the Cathedral of Milan.

CXXVI

AT this time the Bishop of Pavia, brother of the Count of San Secondo,
imprisoned in the castle for some troublesome affairs at Pavia. [1]
Knowing him to be my friend, I thrust my head out of the hole in my cell, and called him with a loud voice, crying that those thieves had given me a pounded diamond with the intention of killing me. I also sent some of the splinters which I had preserved, by the hand of one of his servants, for him to see. I did not disclose my discovery that the stone was not a diamond, but told him that they had most assuredly poisoned me, after the death of that most worthy man the castellan. During the short space of time I had to live, I begged him to allow me one loaf a day from his own stores, seeing that I had resolved to eat nothing which came from them. To this request he answered that he would supply me with victuals.

Messer Antonio, who was certainly not cognisant of the plot against my life, stirred up a great noise, and demanded to see the pounded stone, being also persuaded that it was a diamond; but on reflection that the Pope was probably at the bottom of the affair, he passed it over lightly after giving his attention to the incident.

Henceforth I ate the victuals sent me by the Bishop, and continued writing my Capitolo on the prison, into which I inserted daily all the new events which happened to me, point by point. But Messer Antonio also sent me food; and he did this by the hand of that Giovanni of Prato, the druggist, then soldier in the castle, whom I have previously mentioned. He was a deadly foe of mine, and was the man who had administered the powdered diamond. So I told him that I would partake of nothing he brought me unless he tasted it before my eyes. [2] The man replied that
the meat for Popes; in like measure, you, soldier, druggist, peasant

He retorted with coarse words, which I was not slow to pay back in kind.

Now Messer Antonio felt a certain shame for his behaviour; he had it also in his mind to make me pay the costs which the late castellan, poor man, remitted in my favour. So he hunted out another of his servants, tasted for me now with good grace, and no need for altercation. The servant in question told me that the Pope was being pestered every day by Monsignor di Morluc, who kept asking for my extradition on the part of the French King. The Pope, however, showed little disposition to give me up; and Cardinal Farnese, formerly my friend and patron, had declared that I ought not to reckon on issuing from that prison for some length of time. [3] I replied that I should get out in spite of them all. The excellent young fellow besought me to keep quiet, and not to let such words of mine be heard, for they might do me some grave injury; having firm confidence in God, it was my duty to await. His mercy, remaining in the meanwhile tranquil. I answered that the power and goodness of God are not bound to stand in awe before the malign forces of iniquity.

historian of secondary importance.

Note 2. 'Me ne faceva la credenza.'

Note 3. This was the Cardinal Alessandro, son of Pier Luigi Farnese.
A FEW days had passed when the Cardinal of Ferrara arrived in Rome. He went to pay his respects to the Pope, and the Pope detained him up to supper-time. Now the Pope was a man of great talent for affairs, and he wanted to talk at his ease with the Cardinal about French politics. Everybody knows that folk, when they are feasting together, say things which they would otherwise retain. This therefore happened. The great King Francis was most frank and liberal in all his dealings, and the Cardinal was well acquainted with his temper. Therefore the latter could indulge the Pope beyond his boldest expectations. This raised his Holiness to a high pitch of merriment and gladness, all the more because he was accustomed to drink freely once a week, and went indeed to vomit after his indulgence. When, therefore, the Cardinal observed that the Pope was well disposed, and ripe to grant favours, he begged for me at Majesty had it much at heart. Upon this the Pope laughed aloud; he felt the moment for his vomit at hand; the excessive quantity of wine which this purpose, he rose from table. The Cardinal immediately sent for me, before Signor Pier Luigi could get wind of the affair; for it was certain that he would not have allowed me to be loosed from prison.

me from my prison, and brought me into the presence of the Cardinal, who received me with indescribable kindness. I was well lodged, and left to
enjoy the comforts of my situation.

office, insisted on extracting from me the costs for food and other fees and perquisites claimed by sheriffs and such fry, paying no heed to his crowns; but I paid them, because the Cardinal told me to be well upon my guard if I wanted to preserve my life, adding that had he not extracted me that evening from the prison, I should never have got out. Indeed, he had already been informed that the Pope greatly regretted having let me go.

THIS CAPITOLO I WRITE TO LUCA MARTIN
ADDRESSING HIM IN IT AS WILL APPEAR [1]

And how a man resembles that high good,
Must lie in prison, is my firm opinion:

On grievous thoughts and cares of home must brood, '
'Opressed with carking pains in flesh and bone,
Far from his native land full many a rood.

If you would fain by worthy deeds be known,
Seek to be prisoned without cause, lie long, '
'And find no friend to listen to your moan.
See that men rob you of your all by wrong;
Add perils to your life; be used with force,
Hopeless of help, by brutal foes and strong. ' 

'Be driven at length to some mad desperate course;
Burst from your dungeon, leap the castle wall;
Recaptured, find the prison ten times worse.
,
'Now listen, Luca, to the best of all!

Never one friendly word; your victuals cold '
' Are brought with sorry news by some base groom
Of Prato-soldier now-druggist of old.

Mark well how Glory steeps her sons in gloom!
You have no seat to sit on, save the stool: '

The knave who serves hath orders strict and cool
To list no word you utter, give you naught,
Scarcely to ope the door; such is their rule. '

'These toys hath Glory for her nursling wrought!
No paper, pens, ink, fire, or tools of steel,
'Alack that I so little can reveal!
Fancy one hundred for each separate ill:

But now my former purpose to fulfil,'
For this angelic tongues were scant of skill.

Here never languish honest men and true,
'Jealousies, anger, or some spiteful crew.

To tell the truth whereon my mind is bent,
Here man knows God, nor ever stints to pray,

'Let one be famed as bad as mortal may,
Send him in jail two sorry years to pine,

'Here soul, flesh, clothes their substance gross refine;
Each bulky lout grows light like gossamere;
Celestial thrones before purged eyeballs shine.

'The fancy took me on one day to write:
Learn now what shifts one may be put to here.
My cell I search, prick brows and hair upright,
Then turn me toward a cranny in the door, '
' And with my teeth a splinter disunite;

Next find a piece of brick upon the floor,
Crumble a part thereof to powder small,

'Then, then came Poesy with fiery call
Into my carcass, by the way methought
Whence bread goes forth—there was none else at all.
',

'Now to return unto my primal thought:
Who wills to know what weal awaits him, must
First learn the ill that God for him hath wrought.

The jail contains all arts in act and trust; '

Next there is something in itself that will
Make you right eloquent, a bold brave spark, '
' Big with high-soaring thoughts for good and ill.

Blessed is the man who lies in dungeon dark,
Languishing many a month, then takes his flight
Of war, truce, peace he knows, and tells the mark. '

'Needs be that all things turn to his delight;
The jail has crammed his brains so full of wit,

Nor is it true the jail can teach thee lore,

Yet would I like one law passed—that the man
Whose acts deserve it should not scape this score.

Whoso hath gotten the poor folk in ban,

Nor dare to swerve from truth and right aside,
Nor would confusion in the realm prevail.

While I was bound in prison to abide,
Foison of priests, friars, soldiers I could see;
But those who best deserved it least I spied.

Ah! could you know what rage came over me,
When for such rogues the jail relaxed her hold!
This makes one weep that one was born to be!

Such gold as none flings lightly to the wind,

Another point hath passed into my mind,

Was in the book of one our kith and kind. [3]

There down the margins I was wont to note
Each torment grim that crushed me like a vice:
The paste my hurrying thoughts could hardly float.

To make an O, I dipped the splinter thrice
In that thick mud; worse woe could scarcely grind
Spirits in hell debarred from Paradise.

Wherein I rack for rage both heart and mind.

I praise it more than other tongues will tell;
And, for advice to such as do not know,
Swear that without it none can labour well.
Yet oh! for one like Him I learned but now,

Take thy clothes, Benvenuto, rise and go!

Morn after morn on blind folk, lame, and poor.

Ah me! how many a time my cheek must grow
Blanched by those lilies! Shall I then forswear
Florence and France through them for evermore? [4]

If to the hospital I come, and fair

Else shall I show myself a brute beast there. [5]

These words flout not Her worshipped sanctity,
Nor those Her lilies, glorious, holy, pure,
The which illumine earth and heaven high!

But for I find at every coign obscure
Base lilies which spread hooks where flowers should blow
Needs must I fear lest these to ruin lure. [6]

To think how many walk like me in woe!
Born what, how slaved to serve that hateful sign!
Souls lively, graceful, like to gods below!

I saw that lethal heraldry decline
From heaven like lightning among people vain;
Then on the stone I saw strange lustre shine.

Thence issued; and these things Who speaketh true
In heaven on earth, to me made wondrous plain. [7]

Next I beheld a bier of sombre hue
Adorned with broken lilies; crosses, tears;
And on their beds a lost woe-stricken crew. [8]

I saw the Death who racks our souls with fears;
This man and that she menaced, while she cried:

That worthy one then on my brow wrote wide
To speak them thrice-within my breast I hide. [9]

Him I beheld who drives and checks the sun,

Then did a solitary sparrow cry
Loud from the keep; hearing which note, I said:

I sang, and wrote my hard case, head by head,
Asking from god pardon and aid in need,
For now I felt mine eyes outworn and dead.

Hungrier than that man felt for human blood;
Nor viper with more venomous fang did feed. [11]

Worst of the worst among a gang of knaves;

Say, have ye seen catchpools, the famished slaves,
Smashing down Christs, Madonnas, with their staves?

So on the first of August did that train
Dislodge me to a tomb more foul, more cold:-

I at mine ears a trumpet had which told
Truth; and each word to them I did repeat,

They, when they saw their final hope retreat,
Gave me a diamond, pounded, no fair ring,
Deeming that I must die if I should eat.

My food, I bade taste first; but meanwhile thought:

Yet erst my mind unto high God I brought
Beseecching Him to pardon all my sin,
And spoke a Miserere sorrow-fraught.

Then when I gained some respite from that din
Of troubles, and had given my soul to God,
Contented better realms and state to win,

I saw along the path which saints have trod,
From heaven descending, glad, with glorious palm,

Live longer thou! Through Him who heard thy psalm,
Those foes shall perish, each and all, in strife,
While thou remainest happy, free, and calm,

pieces written, as escribed above, in the dungeon of S. Angelo, and of passages which he afterwards composed to bring these pieces into a
coherent whole. He has not displayed much literary skill in the
redaction, and I have been at pains to preserve the roughness of the
original.

Note 2. The Italian is 'acqua morta;' probably a slang phrase for urine.

Note 3. 'Un nostro parente.' He says above that he wrote the Capitolo on
the leaves of his Bible.

Note 4. 'Un nostro parente.' He says above that he wrote the Capitolo on
the leaves of his Bible.

Note 5. Gabriel holds the lily in Italian paintings when he salutes the
Virgin Mary with 'Ave Virgo!'

Note 6. That is, he finds everywhere in Italy the arms of the Farnesi.

Note 9. Allusion to the angel who visited him in prison.

Note 10. Allusion to his vision of the sun in the dungeon.
regarded in general by everybody, and much more visited even than I had previously been. Everybody was astonished that I should have come out of prison and have been able to live through such indescribable afflictions; [1] and while I was recovering my breath and endeavouring to resume the habit of my art, I had great pleasure in re-writing the Capitolo. Afterwards, with a view to re-establishing my strength, I determined to take a journey of a few days for change of air. My good friend the Cardinal gave me permission and lent me horses; and I had two young Romans for my companions, one of them a craftsman in my trade, the other only a comrade in our journey. We left Rome, and took the road to Tagliacozzo, intending to visit my pupil Ascanio, who lived there. On our arrival, I found the lad, together with his father, brothers, sisters, and stepmother. I was entertained by them two days with
indescribable kindness; then I turned my face towards Rome, taking
Ascanio with me. On the road we fell to conversing about our art, which
made me die of impatience to get back and recommence my labours.

Having reached Rome, I got myself at once in readiness to work, and was
fortunate enough to find again a silver basin which I had begun for the
Cardinal before I was imprisoned. Together with this basin I had begun a
very beautiful little jug; but this had been stolen, with a great
quantity of other valuable articles. I set Pagolo, whom I have
previously mentioned, to work upon the basin. At the same time I
recommenced the jug, which was designed with round figures and
bas-reliefs. The basin was executed in a similar style, with round
figures and fishes in bas-relief. The whole had such richness and good
keeping, that every one who beheld it expressed astonishment at the
force of the design and beauty of invention, and also at the delicacy
[2] with which these young men worked.

The Cardinal came at least twice a day to see me, bringing with him
Messer Luigi Alamanni and Messer Gabriel Cesano; [3] and here we used to
pass an hour or two pleasantly together. Notwithstanding I had very much
to do, he kept giving me fresh commissions. Among others, I had to make
his pontifical seal of the size of the hand of a boy of twelve. On it I
engraved in intaglio two little histories, the one of San Giovanni
Arians [4] on horseback with a lash in his hand. The fire and
correctness of design of this piece, and its nicety of workmanship, made
every one say that I had surpassed the great Lautizio, who ranked alone
in this branch of the profession. The Cardinal was so proud of it that he used to compare it complacently with the other seals of the Roman cardinals, which were nearly all from the hand of Lautizio.

Note 1. This assertion is well supported by contemporary letters of Caro and Alamanni.

Note 2. 'Pulitezza.' This indicates precision, neatness, cleanness of execution.

Note 3. The name of Cesano is well known in the literary correspondence of those times.

Note 4. It will be remembered that the Cardinal was Archbishop of Milan.

II

IN addition to these things the Cardinal ordered me to make the model for a salt-cellar; but he said he should like me to leave the beaten track pursued by such as fabricated these things. Messer Luigi, apropos of this salt-cellar, made an eloquent description of his own idea; Messer Gabriello Cesano also spoke exceedingly well to the same purpose. The Cardinal, who was a very kindly listener, showed extreme satisfaction with the designs which these two able men of letters had
design of Messer Luigi and that of Messer Gabriello please me both so
well that I know not how to choose between them; therefore I leave the
kings and emperors, and what a marvellous brightness of divinity appears
in them; nevertheless, if you ask some poor humble shepherd which he
loves best, those royal children or his sons, he will certainly tell you
that he loves his own sons best. Now I too have a great affection for
the children which I bring forth from my art; consequently the first
which I will show you, most reverend monsignor my good master, shall be
of my own making and invention. There are many things beautiful enough
witty things, with the greatest charm of manner, in my praise; they
became him well, for he was handsome of face and figure, and had a
gentle voice. Messer Gabriello Cesano was quite the opposite, as ugly
and displeasing as the other was agreeable; accordingly he spoke as he
looked.

Messer Luigi had suggested that I should fashion a Venus with Cupid,
surrounded by a crowd of pretty emblems, all in proper keeping with the
subject. Messer Gabriello proposed that I should model an Amphitrite,
the wife of Neptune, together with those Tritons of the sea, and many
such-like fancies, good enough to describe in words, but not to execute
in metal.

I first laid down an oval framework, considerably longer than half a
cubit--almost two-thirds, in fact; and upon this ground, wishing to
suggest the interminglement of land and ocean, I modelled two figures, considerably taller than a palm in height, which were seated with their legs interlaced, suggesting those lengthier branches of the sea which run up into the continents. The sea was a man, and in his hand I placed a ship, elaborately wrought in all its details, and well adapted to hold a quantity of salt. Beneath him I grouped the four sea-horses, and in his right hand he held his trident. The earth I fashioned like a woman, with all the beauty of form, the grace, and charm of which my art was capable. She had a richly decorated temple firmly based upon the ground at one side; and here her hand rested. This I intended to receive the pepper. In her other hand I put a cornucopia, overflowing with all the natural treasures I could think of. Below this goddess, in the part which represented earth, I collected the fairest animals that haunt our globe. In the quarter presided over by the deity of ocean, I fashioned such choice kinds of fishes and shells as could be properly displayed in that small space. What remained of the oval I filled in with luxuriant ornamentation.

Then I waited for the Cardinal; and when he came, attended by the two accomplished gentlemen, I produced the model I had made in wax. On beholding it, Messer Gabriel Cesano was the first to lift his voice up, finish: do not expect, most reverend monsignor, if you order it, to get it in your lifetime. Benvenuto, it seems, has chosen to display his children in a vision, but not to give them to the touch, as we did when we spoke of things that could be carried out, while he has shown a thing Cardinal said he did not care to undertake so important an affair. Then
fulfilled with learning; I tell you that I hope to complete this piece
for whosoever shall be destined to possess it; [1] and each one of you
shall live to I see it executed a hundred times more richly than the
model. Indeed, I hope that time will be left me to produce far greater
the King, to whom I mean to take you, I do not think that you will make
under one heading, bade him return as soon as possible, bringing
Benvenuto with him. At this I raised my hands to heaven, exclaiming:

myself in readiness, and arrange the affairs I had in Rome. He gave me
ten days for these preparations.

III

WHEN the time came to travel, he gave me a fine and excellent horse. The
animal was called Tornon, because it was a gift from the Cardinal
Tornon. [1] My apprentices, Pagolo and Ascanio, were also furnished with
good mounts.

The Cardinal divided his household, which was very numerous, into two
sections. The first, and the more distinguished, he took with him,
following the route of Romagna, with the object of visiting Madonna del
Loreto, and then making for Ferrara, his own home. The other section he
sent upon the road to Florence. This was the larger train; it counted a
great multitude, including the flower of his horse. He told me that if I
wished to make the journey without peril, I had better go with him, otherwise I ran some risk of my life. I expressed my inclination to his most reverend lordship to travel in his suite. But, having done so, since the will of Heaven must be accomplished, it pleased God to remind me of my poor sister, who had suffered greatly from the news of my misfortunes. I also remembered my cousins, who were nuns in Viterbo, the one abbess and the other camerlinga, [2] and who had therefore that rich convent under their control. They too had endured sore tribulation for my sake, and to their fervent prayers I firmly believed that I owed the grace of my deliverance by God. Accordingly, when these things came into my mind, I decided for the route to Florence. I might have travelled free of expense with the Cardinal or with that other train of his, but I chose to take my own way by myself. Eventually I joined company with a very famous clockmaker, called Maestro Cherubino, my esteemed friend. Thrown together by accident, we performed the journey with much enjoyment on both sides.

I had left Rome on Monday in Passion Week, together with Pagolo and Ascanio. [3] At Monte Ruosi we joined the company which I have mentioned. Since I had expressed my intention of following the Cardinal, I did not anticipate that any of my enemies would be upon the watch to harm me. Yet I ran a narrow risk of coming to grief at Monte Ruosi; for a band of men had been sent forward, well armed, to do me mischief there. It was so ordained by God that, while we were at dinner, these retinue arrived, and I was glad enough to travel with their escort safely to Viterbo. From that place onward I had no apprehension of
danger, especially as I made a point of travelling a few miles in front, and the best men of the retinue kept a good watch over me. [4] I arrived at the convent received me with the greatest kindness.

Note 2. This official in a convent was the same as cellarer or superintendent of the cellar and provisions.

Note 3. This was March 22, 1540.

Note 4. 'Tenevano molto conto di me.' This is perhaps equivalent to 'held me in high esteem.' But Cellini uses the same phrase with the meaning I have given above, in Book I, chap. lxxvi.

IV

I bought a new pair of stirrups, although I still hoped to regain my good pad by persuasion; and since I was very well mounted, and well armed with shirt and sleeves of mail, and carried an excellent arquebuse upon my saddle-bow, I was not afraid of the brutality and violence which that mad beast was said to be possessed of. I had also accustomed my young men to carry shirts of mail, and had great confidence in the Roman, who, while we were in Rome together, had never left it off, so
as I could see; Ascanio too, although he was but a stripling, was in the habit of wearing one. Besides, as it was Good Friday, I imagined that the madnesses of madmen might be giving themselves a holiday. When we came to the Camollia gate, I at once recognised the postmaster by the indications given me; for he was blind of the left eye. Riding up to him then, and leaving my young men and companions at a little distance, I did not override your horse, why are you unwilling to give me back my

a Christian? or do you want upon Good Friday to force us both into a

same to him, and that if I did not take myself away, he would fell me to the ground with a spontoon which he had taken up--me and the arquebuse I had my hand on. Upon hearing these truculent words, an old gentleman of Siena joined us; he was dressed like a citizen, and was returning from the religious functions proper to that day. It seems that he had gathered the sense of my arguments before he came up to where we stood; and this impelled him to rebuke the postmaster with warmth, taking my

passing strangers; so that their manners were an offence to God and a disgrace to the city of Siena. The two young fellows wagged their heads without saying a word, and withdrew inside the house. Their father, stung to fury by the scolding of that respectable gentleman, poured out a volley of abusive blasphemies, and levelled his spontoon, swearing he would murder me. When I saw him determined to do some act of bestial violence, I pointed the muzzle of my arquebuse, with the object only of keeping him at a distance. Doubly enraged by this, he flung himself upon me. Though I had prepared the arquebuse for my defence, I had not yet levelled it exactly at him; indeed it was pointed too high. It went off
of itself; and the ball, striking the arch of the door and glancing
backwards, wounded him in the throat, so that he fell dead to earth.

Upon this the two young men came running out; one caught up a partisan
from the rack which stood there, the other seized the spontoone of his
father. Springing upon my followers, the one who had the spontoone smote
Pagolo the Roman first above the left nipple. The other attacked a
Milanese who was in our company, and had the ways and manners of a
perfect fool. This man screamed out that he had nothing in the world to
do with me, and parried the point of the partisan with a little stick he
held; but this availed him naught: in spite of his words and fencing, he
received a flesh wound in the mouth. Messer Cherubino wore the habit of
a priest; for though he was a clockmaker by trade, he held benefices of
some value from the Pope. Ascanio, who was well armed, stood his ground
without trying to escape, as the Milanese had done; so these two came
off unhurt. I had set spurs to my horse, and while he was galloping, had
charged and got my arquebuse in readiness again; but now I turned back,
burning with fury, and meaning to play my part this time in earnest. I
thought that my young men had been killed, and was resolved to die with
them. The horse had not gone many paces when I met them riding toward
me, and asked if they were hurt. Ascanio answered that Pagolo was

chain-mail in Rome to swagger before ladies, but where there is danger,
and one wants it, one keeps it locked up in a portmanteau? You deserve
what you have got, and you are now the cause of sending me back to die
onward; but both the young men implored me for the love of God to save
myself and them, and not to rush on certain death. Just then I met
Messer Cherubino and the wounded Milanese. The former cried out that no
one was badly wounded; the blow given to Pagolo had only grazed the
skin. [2] but the old postmaster was stretched out dead; his sons with
other folk were getting ready for attack, and we must almost certainly
from this first tempest, do not tempt her again, for things may not go

that I sinned by taking a little broth this morning, having nothing else
not help laughing a little at the donkey and his silly speeches. Then we
set spurs to our horses, and left Messer Cherubino and the Milanese to
follow at their leisure.

original. It seems to have been a sort of cushion flung upon the saddle,
and to which the stirrups were attached.

Note 2. The Italian is peculiar: 'il colpo di Pagolo era ito tanto ritto
che non era isfandato.'

Note 3. Staggia is the next post on the way to Florence.

V

WHILE we were making our escape, the sons of the dead man ran to the
Duke of Melfi, and begged for some light horsemen to catch us up and
take us prisoners. [1] The Duke upon being informed that we were the
follow. We meanwhile arrived at Staggia, where we were in safety. There
we sent for a doctor, the best who could be had in such a place; and on
his examining Pagolo, we discovered that the wound was only skin-deep;
so I felt sure [2] that he would escape without mischief. Then we
ordered dinner; and at this juncture there arrived Messer Cherubino and
been able to say a single Paternoster on that holy morning. He was very
ugly, and his mouth, which nature had made large, had been expanded at
least three inches by his wound; so that what with his ludicrous
Milanese jargon and his silly way of talking, he gave us so much matter
for mirth, that, instead of bemoaning our ill-luck, we could not hold
from laughing at every word he uttered. When the doctor wanted to sew up
his wound, and had already made three stitches with his needle, the
fellow told him to hold hard a while, since he did not want him out of
malice to sew his whole mouth up. Then he took up a spoon, and said he
wished to have his mouth left open enough to take that spoon in, in
order that he might return alive to his own folk. These things he said
with such odd waggings of the head, that we never stopped from laughing,
and so pursued our journey mirthfully to Florence.

We dismounted at the house of my poor sister, who, together with her
husband, overwhelmed us with kind attentions. Messer Cherubino and the
Milanese went about their business. In Florence we remained four days,
during which Pagolo got well. It was lucky for us that whenever we
talked about that Milanese donkey, we laughed as much as our misfortunes
made us weep, so that we kept laughing and crying both at the same
moment.

Pagolo recovered, as I have said, with ease; and then we travelled toward Ferrara, where we found our lord the Cardinal had not yet arrived. He had already heard of all our accidents, and said, when he sent me to reside at a palace of his, a very handsome place called Belfiore, close under the city walls. There he provided me with all things necessary for my work. A little later, he arranged to leave for France without me; and observing that I was very ill pleased with this, you out of Italy, I want you to know exactly what you will have to do when you come to France. Meanwhile, push on my basin and the jug with all the speed you can. I shall leave orders with my factor to give you

He then departed, and I remained sorely dissatisfied, and more than once I was upon the point of taking myself off without license. The only thing which kept me back was that he had procured my freedom from Pope Paolo; for the rest, I was ill-contented and put to considerable losses. However, I clothed my mind with the gratitude due to that great benefit, and disposed myself to be patient and to await the termination of the business. So I set myself to work with my two men, and made great progress with the jug and basin. The air was unwholesome where we lodged, and toward summer we all of us suffered somewhat in our health. During our indisposition we went about inspecting the domain; it was very large, and left in a wild state for about a mile of open ground, haunted too by multitudes of peacocks, which bred and nested there like
wildfowl. This put it into my head to charge my gun with a noiseless
kind of powder; then I tracked some of the young birds, and every other
day killed one, which furnished us with abundance of meat, of such
excellent quality that we shook our sickness off. For several months
following we went on working merrily, and got the jug and basin forward;
but it was a task that required much time.

Note 1. The Duke of Melfi, or Amalfi, was at this time Alfonso
Piccolomini, acting as captain-general of the Sienese in the interests
of Charles V.

Note 2. 'Cognobbi.' The subject to this verb may be either Cellini or
the doctor.

VI

AT that period the Duke of Ferrara came to terms with Pope Paul about
some old matters in dispute between them relating to Modena and certain
other cities. The Church having a strong claim to them, the Duke was
forced to purchase peace by paying down an enormous sum of money; I
think that it exceeded three hundred thousand ducats of the Camera.
There was an old treasurer in the service of the Duke, who had been
brought up by his father, Duke Alfonso, and was called Messer Girolamo
Giliolo. He could not endure to see so much money going to the Pope, and
have attacked and taken Rome with this money than have shown it to the
Duke compelled him to make the payments, which caused the old man such

his portrait; this I did upon a circular piece of black stone about the

size of a little trencher. The Duke took so much pleasure in my work and

conversation, that he not unfrequently posed through four or five hours

at a stretch for his own portrait, and sometimes invited me to supper.

It took me eight days to complete his likeness; then he ordered me to
design the reverse. On it I modelled Peace, giving her the form of a
woman with a torch in her hand, setting fire to a trophy of arms; I
portrayed her in an attitude of gladness, with very thin drapery, and
below her feet lay Fury in despair, downcast and sad, and loaded with
chains. I devoted much study and attention to this work, and it won me
the greatest honour. The Duke was never tired of expressing his
satisfaction, and gave me inscriptions for both sides of the medal. That
on the reverse ran as follows: "Pretiosa in conspectu Domini;" it meant
that his peace with the Pope had been dearly bought.

VII

WHILE I was still engaged upon the reverse of this medal, the Cardinal
sent me letters bidding me prepare for my journey, since the King had
asked after me. His next communication would contain full details
respecting all that he had promised. Accordingly, I had my jug and basin
packed up, after showing them to the Duke. Now a Ferrarese gentleman
years confined to his house, without once leaving it, by reason of some
physical infirmity. One day he sent in a vast hurry for me, saying I
must take the post at once, in order to present myself before the King of France, who had eagerly been asking for me, under the impression that I was in France. By way of apology, the Cardinal told him that I was staying, slightly indisposed, in his abbey at Lyons, but that he would have me brought immediately to his Majesty. Therefore I must lose no time, but travel with the post.

Now Messer Alberto was a man of sterling worth, but proud, and illness had made his haughty temper insupportable. As I have just said, he bade me to get ready on the spot and take the journey by the common post. I said that it was not the custom to pursue my profession in the post, and that if I had to go, it was my intention to make easy stages and to take with me the workmen Ascanio and Pagolo, whom I had brought from Rome. Moreover, I wanted a servant on horseback to be at my orders, and money sufficient for my costs upon the way. The infirm old man replied, upon a tone of mighty haughtiness, that the sons of dukes were wont to travel as I had described, and in no other fashion. I retorted that the sons of my art travelled in the way I had informed him, and that not being a me to language with which my ears were unfamiliar, I would not go at all; the Cardinal having broken faith with me, and such scurvty words having been spoken, I should make my mind up once for all to take no further trouble with the Ferrarese. Then I turned my back, and, he threatening, I grumbling, took my leave.

I next went to the Duke with my medal, which was finished. He received me with the highest marks of honour and esteem. It seems that he had
given orders to Messer Girolamo Giliolo to reward me for my labour with a diamond ring worth two hundred crowns, which was to be presented by Fiaschino, his chamberlain. Accordingly, this fellow, on the evening after I had brought the medal, at one hour past nightfall, handed me a ring with a diamond of showy appearance, and spoke as follows on the

and found the stone to be a miserable thin diamond, worth about ten crowns. I felt sure that the Duke had not meant to accompany such magnificent compliments with so trifling a gift, but that he must have intended to reward me handsomely. Being then convinced that the trick proceeded from his rogue of a treasurer, I gave the ring to a friend of mine, begging him to return it to the chamberlain, Fiaschino, as he best could. The man I chose was Bernardo Saliti, who executed his commission admirably. Fiaschino came at once to see me, and declared, with vehement expostulations, that the Duke would take it very ill if I refused a present he had meant so kindly; perhaps I should have to repent of my waywardness. I answered that the ring his Excellency had given me was worth about ten crowns, and that the work I had done for him was worth more than two hundred. Wishing, however, to show his Excellency how highly I esteemed his courtesy, I should be happy if he bestowed on me only one of those rings for the cramp, which come from England and are worth tenpence. [1] I would treasure that so long as I lived in remembrance of his Excellency, together with the honourable message he had sent me; for I considered that the splendid favours of his Excellency had amply recompensed my pains, whereas that paltry stone insulted them. This speech annoyed the Duke so much that he sent for his treasurer, and scolded him more sharply than he had ever done before. At
the same time he gave me orders, under pain of his displeasure, not to leave Ferrara without duly informing him; and commanded the treasurer to present me with a diamond up to three hundred crowns in value. The miserly official found a stone rising a trifle above sixty crowns, and let it be heard that it was worth upwards of two hundred.

Note 1. 'Anello del granchio,' a metal ring of lead and copper, such as are now worn in Italy under the name of 'anello di salute.'

MEANWHILE Messer Alberto returned to reason, and provided me with all I had demanded. My mind was made up to quit Ferrara without fail that very day, that I should get no horses then. I had loaded a mule with my baggage, far advanced in years, and a person of excessive affectation; a great dilettante of the arts, but one of those men who are very difficult to satisfy, and who, if they chance to stumble on something which suits their taste, exalt it so in their own fancy that they never expect to see the like of it again. Well, this Messer Alonso arrived, and Messer basin we are sending to the Cardinal in France have been already his servant, sent him home to fetch a jug in white Faenzo clay, the workmanship of which was very exquisite. During the time the servant tell you why I do not care any longer to look at vases; it is that I
once beheld a piece of silver, antique, of such beauty and such finish
that the human imagination cannot possibly conceive its rarity.
Therefore I would rather not inspect any objects of the kind, for fear
of spoiling the unique impression I retain of that. I must tell you that
a gentleman of great quality and accomplishments, who went to Rome upon
matters of business, had this antique vase shown to him in secret. By
adroitly using a large sum of money, he bribed the person in whose hands
it was, and brought it with him to these parts; but he keeps it
jealously from all eyes, in order that the Duke may not get wind of it,

spinning out this lengthy yarn, Messer Alfonso did not look at me,
because we were not previously acquainted. But when that precious clay
model appeared, he displayed it with such airs of ostentation, pomp, and
mountebank ceremony, that, after inspecting it, I turned to Messer

copy from a little silver goblet, of such and such weight, which I made
at such and such a time for that charlatan Maestro Jacopo, the surgeon
from Carpi. He came to Rome and spent six months there, during which he
bedaubed some scores of nobleman and unfortunate gentlefolk with his
dirty salves, extracting many thousands of ducats from their pockets. At
that time I made for him this vase and one of a different pattern. He
paid me very badly; and at the present moment in Rome all the miserable
people who used his ointment are crippled and in a deplorable state of
health. [3] It is indeed great glory for me that my works are held in
such repute among you wealthy lords; but I can assure you that during
these many years past I have been progressing in my art with all my
might, and I think that the vase I am taking with me into France is far more worthy of cardinals and kings than that piece belonging to your

After I had made this speech, Messer Alfonso seemed dying with desire to see the jug and basin, but I refused to open the box. We remained some while disputing the matter, when he said that he would go to the Duke and get an order from his Excellency to have it shown him. Then Messer Alberto Bendedio, in the high and mighty manner which belonged to him,

took my leave, and left Ascanio and Pagolo to show it. They told me afterwards that he had spoken enthusiastically in my praise. After this he wanted to become better acquainted with me; but I was wearying to leave Ferrara and get away from all its folk. The only advantages I had enjoyed there were the society of Cardinal Salviati and the Cardinal of Ravenna, and the friendship of some ingenious musicians; [4] no one else had been to me of any good: for the Ferrarese are a very avaricious hands on it; they are all the same in this respect.

At the hour of twenty-two Fiaschino arrived, and gave me the diamond of sixty crowns, of which I spoke above. He told me, with a hang-dog look presence, I set off upon my travels without further leave-taking. The man noted down my act and words, and reported them to the Duke, who was highly incensed, and showed a strong inclination to make me retrace my steps.
Note 1. This man was a member of a very noble Ferrarese family, and much esteemed for his official talents.

meant to hint that he had seen it before.

Note 3. See above, book i., p. 51, for this story.

Note 4. Cardinal Giovanni Salviati was Archbishop of Ferrara; Cardinal Benedetto Accolti, Archbishop of Ravenna, was then staying at Ferrara; the court was famous for its excellent orchestra and theatrical display of all kinds.

IX

THAT evening I rode more than ten miles, always at a trot; and when, upon the next day, I found myself outside the Ferrarese domain, I felt excessively relieved; indeed I had met with nothing to my liking there, except those peacocks which restored my health. We journeyed by the Monsanese, avoiding the city of Milan on account of the apprehension I have spoken of, [1] so that we arrived safe and sound at Lyons. Counting Pagolo and Ascanio and a servant, we were four men, with four very good horses. At Lyons we waited several days for the muleteer, who carried the silver cup and basin, as well as our other baggage; our lodging was
our goods upon a little cart, and then set off toward Paris. On the road we met with some annoyances, but not of any great moment.

ourselves to the Cardinal, who provided us at once with lodgings, and that evening we were comfortable. On the following day the cart turned up; so we unpacked our things, and when the Cardinal heard this he told the King, who expressed a wish to see me at once. I went to his Majesty with the cup and basin; then, upon entering his presence, I kissed his knee, and he received me very graciously. I thanked his Majesty for freeing me from prison, saying that all princes unique for generosity upon this earth, as was his Majesty, lay under special obligations to set free men of talent, and particularly those that were innocent, as I was; such benefits, I added, were inscribed upon the book of God before any other good actions. The King, while I was delivering this speech, continued listening till the end with the utmost courtesy, dropping a few words such as only he could utter. Then he took the vase and basin, piece so beautiful as this. I well remember to have inspected all the best works, and by the greatest masters of all Italy, but I never set my King addressed in French to the Cardinal of Ferrara, with many others of even warmer praise. Then he turned to me and said in Italian:

your time in pleasure; in the meanwhile we will think of giving you the

Note 1. The 'Monsanese' is the 'Mont Cenis.' Cellini forgets that he has not mentioned this apprehension which made him turn aside from Milan. It
may have been the fear of plague, or perhaps of some enemy.

Note 2. It is thus that Cellini always writes Fontainebleau.

X

THE CARDINAL OF FERRARA saw that the King had been vastly pleased by my arrival; he also judged that the trifles which I showed him of my handicraft had encouraged him to hope for the execution of some considerable things he had in mind. At this time, however, we were following the court with the weariest trouble and fatigue; the reason of this was that the train of the King drags itself along with never less than 12,000 horse behind it; this calculation is the very lowest; for when the court is complete in times of peace, there are some 18,000, which makes 12,000 less than the average. Consequently we had to journey after it through places where sometimes there were scarcely two houses to be found; and then we set up canvas tents like gipsies, and suffered at times very great discomfort. I therefore kept urging the Cardinal to put the King in mind of employing me in some locality where I could stop and work. The Cardinal answered that it was far better to wait until the King should think of it himself, and that I ought to show myself at times to his Majesty while he was at table. This I did then; and one morning, at his dinner, the King called me. He began to talk to me in Italian, saying he had it in his mind to execute several great works, and that he would soon give orders where I was to labour, and provide me with all necessaries. These communications he mingled with discourse on
divers pleasant matters. The Cardinal of Ferrara was there, because he
conversation, and when the King rose, he spoke in my favour to this
Benvenuto is very eager to get to work again; it seems almost a sin to
had spoken well, and told him to arrange with me all things for my
support according to my wishes.

Upon the evening of the day when he received this commission, the
Cardinal sent for me after supper, and told me that his Majesty was
resolved to let me begin working, but that he wanted me first to come to
seems to me that if his Majesty allows you three hundred crowns a year,
you will be able to keep yourself very well indeed, furthermore, I
advise you to leave yourself in my hands, for every day offers the
opportunity of doing some service in this great kingdom, and I shall

me a promise, which I had never asked for, not to bring me out of Italy
before I clearly understood the terms on which I should be placed here
with his Majesty. Instead of sending to communicate these details, your
most reverend lordship urgently ordered me to come by the post, as if an
art like mine was carried on post-haste. Had you written to tell me of
three hundred crowns, as you have now spoken, I would not have stirred a
foot for twice that sum. Nevertheless, I thank God and your most
reverend lordship for all things, seeing God has employed you as the
instrument for my great good in procuring my liberation from
imprisonment. Therefore I assure your lordship that all the troubles you
are now causing me fall a thousand times short of the great good which
you have done me. With all my heart I thank you, and take good leave of you; wherever I may be, so long as I have life, I will pray God for fellow sets great store on himself, for he is refusing three hundred will never find his equal, and our Cardinal wants to cheapen him, as to the above effect, as I was afterwards informed. All this happened on not remember.

XI

ON leaving the Cardinal I repaired to my lodging, which was three miles distant, in company with a secretary of the Cardinal returning to the same quarters. On the road, this man never stopped asking me what I meant to do with myself, and what my own terms regarding the appointment would have been. I gave him only one word back for answer which was that—\~I knew all. When we came to our quarters, I found Pagolo and Ascanio there; and seeing me much troubled, they implored me to tell them what was the matter. To the poor young men, who were all dismayed, for your journey home. I mean myself to go about a most important business without you, which for a long time I have had it in my mind to improbable that he wrote to the Cardinal, and informed him of my purpose. However, I never knew anything for certain about this. The night passed without sleep, and I kept wearying for the day, in order to carry out my resolution.
No sooner did it dawn than I ordered out the horses, made my preparations in a moment, and gave the two young men everything which I had brought with me, and fifty ducats of gold in addition. I reserved the same sum for myself, together with the diamond the Duke had given me; I only kept two shirts and some well-worn riding-clothes which I had upon my back. I found it almost impossible to get free of the two young men, who insisted upon going with me, whatever happened. At last I was has his first beard, and the other is just getting it; and both of you have learned as much from me as I could teach in my poor art, so that you are now the first craftsmen among the youths of Italy. Are you not ashamed to have no courage to quit this go-cart, but must always creep about in leading-strings? The thing is too disgraceful! Or if I were to send you away without money, what would you say then? Come, take yourselves out of my sight, and may God bless you a thousand times.

I turned my horse and left them weeping. Then I took my way along a very fair road through a forest, hoping to make at least forty miles that day, and reach the most out-of-the-way place I could. I had already ridden about two miles, and during that short time had resolved never to revisit any of those parts where I was known. I also determined to abandon my art so soon as I had made a Christ three cubits in height, reproducing, so far as I was able, that infinite beauty which He had Himself revealed to me. So then, being thoroughly resolved, I turned my face toward the Holy Sepulchre. [1] Just when I thought I had got so far that nobody could find me, I heard horses galloping after. They filled
me with some uneasiness, because that district is infested with a race of brigands, who bear the name of Venturers, and are apt to murder men upon the road. Though numbers of them are hanged every day, it seems as though they did not care. However, when the riders approached, I found they were a messenger from the King and my lad Ascanio. The former came bring me, he had authority to raise the folk, and they would take me bound hand and foot like a prisoner. Ascanio, for his part, did all he could to persuade me, reminding me that when the King sent a man to prison, he kept him there five years at least before he let him out again. This word about the prison, when I remembered what I had endured in Rome, struck such terror into me, that I wheeled my horse round chattering in French through all our journey, up to the very precincts of the court, at one time bullying, now saying one thing, then another, till I felt inclined to deny God and the world.

XII

ON our way to the lodgings of the King we passed before those of the Cardinal of Ferrara. Standing at his door, he called to me and said:

appointments which his Majesty allowed the painter Lionardo da Vinci, that is, a salary of seven hundred crowns; in addition, he will pay you for all the works you do for him; also for your journey hither he gives
you five hundred golden crowns, which will be paid you before you quit

offers worthy of the great King he was. The messenger, not knowing
anything about me, and hearing what splendid offers had been made me by
the King, begged my pardon over and over again. Pagolo and Ascanio

On the day following I went to thank the King, who ordered me to make
the models of twelve silver statues, which were to stand as candelabra
round his table. He wanted them to represent six gods and six goddesses,
and to have exactly the same height as his Majesty, which was a trifle
under four cubits. Having dictated this commission, he turned to his
treasurer, and asked whether he had paid me the five hundred crowns. The
official said that he had received no orders to that effect. The King
took this very ill, for he had requested the Cardinal to speak to him
about it. Furthermore, he told me to go to Paris and seek out a place to
live in, fitted for the execution of such work; he would see that I
obtained it.

I got the five hundred crowns of gold, and took up my quarters at Paris
work, and fashioned four little waxen models, about two-thirds of a
cubit each in height. They were Jupiter, Juno, Apollo, and Vulcan. In
this while the King returned to Paris; whereupon I went to him at once,
taking my models with me, and my two prentices, Ascanio and Pagolo. On
perceiving that the King was pleased with my work, and being
commissioned to execute the Jupiter in silver of the height above
described, I introduced the two young men, and said that I had brought
them with me out of Italy to serve his Majesty; for inasmuch as they had
been brought up by me, I could at the beginning get more help from them
than from the Paris workmen. To this the King replied that I might name
a salary which I thought sufficient for their maintenance. I said that a
hundred crowns of gold apiece would be quite proper, and that I would
make them earn their wages well. This agreement was concluded. Then I
said that I had found a place which seemed to me exactly suited to my
Nello. The Provost of Paris was then in possession of it from his
Majesty; but since the Provost made no use of the castle, his Majesty
perhaps might grant it me to employ in his service. [1] He replied upon
gave it to does not inhabit or use it. So you shall have it for the work

This officer made some resistance, pleading that he could not carry out
the order. The King answered in anger that he meant to bestow his
property on whom he pleased, and on a man who would serve him, seeing
that he got nothing from the other; therefore he would hear no more
about it. The lieutenant then submitted that some small force would have
to be employed in order to effect an entrance. To which the King

The officer took me immediately to the castle, and there put me in
possession, not, however, without violence; after that he warned me to
take very good care that I was not murdered. I installed myself,
enrolled serving-men, and bought a quantity of pikes and partisans; but
I remained for several days exposed to grievous annoyances, for the
Provost was a great nobleman of Paris, and all the other gentlefolk took
part against me; they attacked me with such insults that I could hardly
hold my own against them. I must not omit to mention that I entered the
service of his Majesty in the year 1540, which was exactly the year in
which I reached the age of forty.

Note 1. This was the castle of Le Petit Nesle, on the site of which now
stands the Palace of the Institute. The Provost of Paris was then Jean

XIII

THE AFFRONTS and insults I received made me have recourse to the King,
begging his Majesty to establish me in some other place. He answered:
could not comprehend what he meant. Holding my tongue thus, the King
repeated the same words a second time angrily. Then I said my name was

favour; for the rest, I knew of nothing that could harm me. He gave a
to see me provided and accommodated with all I needed. 1

This Villerois was an intimate friend of the Provost, to whom the castle
had been given. It was built in a triangle, right up against the city
walls, and was of some antiquity, but had no garrison. The building was
of considerable size. Monsignor di Villerois counselled me to look about
for something else, and by all means to leave this place alone, seeing
that its owner was a man of vast power, who would most assuredly have me
killed. I answered that I had come from Italy to France only in order to serve that illustrious King; and as for dying, I knew for certain that die I must; a little earlier or a little later was a matter of supreme indifference to me.

Now Villerois was a man of the highest talent, exceptionally distinguished in all points, and possessed of vast wealth. There was nothing he would not gladly have done to harm me, but he made no open demonstration of his mind. He was grave, and of a noble presence, and spoke slowly, at his ease. To another gentleman, Monsignor di Marmagna, the treasurer of Languedoc, he left the duty of molesting me. [2] The first thing which this man did was to look out the best apartments in the castle, and to have them fitted up for himself. I told him that the King had given me the place to serve him in, and that I did not choose it should be occupied by any but myself and my attendants. The fellow, who was haughty, bold, and spirited, replied that he meant to do just what he liked; that I should run my head against a wall if I presumed to oppose him, and that Villerois had given him authority to do what he was nor Villerois could do it. When I said that he gave vent to offensive language in French, whereat I retorted in my own tongue that he lied. Stung with rage, he clapped his hand upon a little dagger which he had; then I set my hand also to a large dirk which I always wore for my moment or two Marmagna stood in doubt, not knowing exactly what to do,

me draw my dirk, throw yourselves upon those serving-men, and kill them
if you can; I mean to kill this fellow at the first stroke, and then we

purpose, was glad enough to get alive out of the castle.

All these things, toning them down a trifle, I wrote to the Cardinal of Ferrara, who related them at once to the King. The King, deeply irritated, committed me to the care of another officer of his bodyguard accommodated with all that I required in the most gracious way imaginable.

Note 1. M. Nicholas de Neufville, lord of Villeroy.

Viscount.

XIV

AFTER fitting up my own lodgings in the castle and the workshop with all conveniences for carrying on my business, and putting my household upon a most respectable footing, I began at once to construct three models exactly of the size which the silver statues were to be. These were Jupiter, Vulcan and Mars. I moulded them in clay, and set them well up on irons; then I went to the King, who disbursed three hundred pounds weight of silver, if I remember rightly, for the commencement of the
undertaking. While I was getting these things ready, we brought the little vase and oval basin to completion, which had been several months in hand. Then I had them richly gilt, and they showed like the finest piece of plate which had been seen in France.

Afterwards I took them to the Cardinal, who thanked me greatly; and, without requesting my attendance, carried and presented them to the King. He was delighted with the gift, and praised me as no artist was ever praised before. In return, he bestowed upon the Cardinal an abbey worth seven thousand crowns a year, and expressed his intention of rewarding me too. The Cardinal, however, prevented him, telling his Majesty that he was going ahead too fast, since I had as yet produced I will allow him a pension of at least three hundred crowns when have be tedious to relate all the knavish tricks of this prelate. I prefer to dwell on matters of greater moment.

XV

WHEN I returned to Paris, the great favour shown me by the King made me statue of Jupiter. Many journeymen were now in my employ; and the work went onward briskly day and night; so that, by the time I had finished the clay models of Jupiter, Vulcan, and Mars, and had begun to get the silver statue forward, my workshop made already a grand show.
The King now came to Paris, and I went to pay him my respects. No sooner had his Majesty set eyes upon me than he called me cheerfully, and asked if I had something fine to exhibit at my lodging, for he would come to inspect it. I related all I had been doing; upon which he was seized with a strong desire to come. Accordingly, after this dinner, he set off with Madame de Tampes, the Cardinal of Lorraine, and some other of his greatest nobles, among whom were the King of Navarre, his cousin, and that upon that day the very flower of the French court came to visit me.

[1] I had been some time at home, and was hard at work. When the King arrived at the door of the castle, and heard our hammers going, he bade his company keep silence. Everybody in my house was busily employed, so that the unexpected entrance of his Majesty took me by surprise. The first thing he saw on coming into the great hall was myself with a huge plate of silver in my hand, which I was beating for the body of my Jupiter; one of my men was finishing the head, another the legs; and it is easy to imagine what a din we made between us. It happened that a little French lad was working at my side, who had just been guilty of some trifling blunder. I gave the lad a kick, and, as my good luck would have it, caught him with my foot exactly in the fork between his legs, and sent him spinning several yards, so that he came stumbling up against the King precisely at the moment when his Majesty arrived. The King was vastly amused, but I felt covered with confusion. He began to ask me what I was engaged upon, and told me to go on working; then he said that he would much rather have me not employ my strength on manual labour, but take as many men as I wanted, and make them do the rough work; he should like me to keep myself in health, in order that he might
enjoy my services through many years to come. I replied to his Majesty
that the moment I left off working I should fall ill; also that my art
itself would suffer, and not attain the mark I aimed at for his Majesty.
Thinking that I spoke thus only to brag, and not because it was the
truth, he made the Cardinal of Lorraine repeat what he had said; but I
explained my reasons so fully and clearly, that the Cardinal perceived
my drift; he then advised the King to let me labour as much or little as
I liked.

daughter of Lorenzo, Duke of Urbino.

XVI

BEING very well satisfied with what he had seen, the King returned to
his palace, after bestowing on me too many marks of favour to be here
recorded. On the following day he sent for me at his dinner-hour. The
Cardinal of Ferrara was there at meat with him. When I arrived, the King
had reached his second course; he began at once to speak to me, saying,
with a pleasant cheer, that having now so fine a basin and jug of my
workmanship, he wanted an equally handsome salt-cellar to match them;
and begged me to make a design, and to lose no time about it. I replied:

commanded; for while I was making the basin, I thought there ought to be
a saltcellar to match it; therefore I have already designed one, and if
turned with a lively movement of surprise and pleasure to the lords in his company—they were the King of Navarre, the Cardinal of Lorraine,

Then he told me that he would very gladly see my model.

I set off, and returned in a few minutes; for I had only to cross the river, that is, the Seine. I carried with me the wax model which I had before the King and uncovered my piece, he cried out in astonishment:

to me with a beaming countenance, and told me that he greatly liked the piece, and wished me to execute it in gold. The Cardinal of Ferrara looked me in the face, and let me understand that he recognised the model as the same which I had made for him in Rome. I replied that I had already told him I should carry it out for one who was worthy of it. The Cardinal, remembering my words, and nettled by the revenge he thought enormous undertaking; I am only afraid that we shall never see it finished. These able artists who have great conceptions in their brain are ready enough to put the same in execution without duly considering when they are to be accomplished. I therefore, if I gave commission for things of such magnitude, should like to know when I was likely to get termination of a work, he would never begin anything at all; these words he uttered with a certain look, which implied that such enterprises were put heart and courage in their servants, as your Majesty does by deed and word, render undertakings of the greatest magnitude quite easy. Now that God has sent me so magnificent a patron, I hope to perform for him
the King, and rose from table. Then he called me into his chamber, and

Viscount of Orbec, and ordered him that very day to disburse to me a
thousand crowns of good weight and old gold.

When I left his Majesty, I went for the two notaries who had helped me
in procuring silver for the Jupiter and many other things. Crossing the
Seine, I then took a small hand-basket, which one of my cousins, a nun,
had given me on my journey through Florence. It made for my good fortune
that I took this basket and not a bag. So then, thinking I could do the
business by daylight, for it was still early, and not caring to
interrupt my workmen, and being indisposed to take a servant with me, I
set off alone. When I reached the house of the treasurer, I found that
he had the money laid out before him, and was selecting the best pieces
as the King had ordered. It seemed to me, however, that that thief of a
treasurer was doing all he could to postpone the payment of the money;
nor were the pieces counted out until three hours after nightfall.

I meanwhile was not wanting in despatch, for I sent word to several of
my journeymen that they should come and attend me, since the matter was
one of serious importance. When I found that they did not arrive, I
asked the messenger if he had done my errand. The rascal of a groom whom
I had sent replied that he had done so, but that they had answered that
they could not come; he, however, would gladly carry the money for me. I
answered that I meant to carry the money myself. But this time the
contract was drawn up and signed. On the money being counted, I put it
all into my little basket, and then thrust my arm through the two
handles. Since I did this with some difficulty, the gold was well shut in, and I carried it more conveniently than if the vehicle had been a bag. I was well armed with shirt and sleeves of mail, and having my sword and dagger at my side, made off along the street as quick as my two legs would carry me.

XVII

JUST as I left the house, I observed some servants whispering among themselves, who also went off at a round pace in another direction from the one I took. Walking with all haste, I passed the bridge of the Exchange, [1] and went up along a wall beside the river which led to my lodging in the castle. I had just come to the Augustines—now this was a very perilous passage, and though it was only five hundred paces distant from my dwelling, yet the lodging in the castle being quite as far removed inside, no one could have heard my voice if I had shouted—when I saw four men with four swords in their hands advancing to attack me. [2] My resolution was taken in an instant. I covered the basket with my cape, drew my sword, and seeing that they were pushing hotly forward, spread out my arms, in order that, if the ruffians were put on by the servants who had seen me take my money, they might be led to judge I was not carrying it. The encounter was soon over; for they retired step by step, with thrust and slash so hotly that I narrowly missed killing one or the
other. My skill in using the sword made them think I was a soldier
rather than a fellow of some other calling. They drew together and began
to fall back, muttering all the while beneath their breath in their own
tongue. I meanwhile continued always calling out, but not too loudly,
that those who wanted my cape and blade would have to get them with some
trouble. Then I quickened pace, while they still followed slowly at my
heels; this augmented my fear, for I thought I might be falling into an
ambuscade, which would have cut me off in front as well as rear.
Accordingly, when I was at the distance of a hundred paces from my home,
four of my young men came running, with four pikes in their hands. They
wanted to pursue the ruffians, who could still be seen; but I stopped
yonder, four against one man alone, had not pluck enough to capture a
thousand golden crowns in metal, which have almost broken this arm of
mine. Let us haste inside and put the money away; then I will take my
inside to secure the gold; and my lads, while expressing deep concern
too much alone; the time will come when you will make us all bemoan your
adversaries took to flight; and we all sat down and supped together with
mirth and gladness, laughing over those great blows which fortune
strikes, for good as well as evil, and which, what time they do not hit
the mark, are just the same as though they had not happened. [3] It is
ways, quite unforeseen by our imagination.

Note 1. The Pont du Change, replaced by the Pont Neuf.
Note 2. The excitement of his recollection makes Cellini more than usually incoherent about this episode. The translator has to collect the whole sense of the passage.

XVIII

ON the morning which followed these events, I made the first step in my work upon the great salt-cellar, pressing this and my other pieces forward with incessant industry. My workpeople at this time, who were pretty numerous, included both sculptors and goldsmiths. They belonged to several nations, Italian, French, and German; for I took the best I could find, and changed them often, retaining only those who knew their business well. These select craftsmen I worked to the bone with perpetual labour. They wanted to rival me; but I had a better constitution. Consequently, in their inability to bear up against such a continuous strain, they took to eating and drinking copiously, some of the Germans in particular, who were more skilled than their comrades, and wanted to march apace with me, sank under these excesses, and perished.

While I was at work upon the Jupiter, I noticed that I had plenty of silver to spare. So I took in hand, without consulting the King, to make
a great two-handled vase, about one cubit and a half in height. I also
conceived the notion of casting the large model of my Jupiter in bronze.
Having up to this date done nothing of the sort, I conferred with
certain old men experienced in that art at Paris, and described to them
the methods in use with us in Italy. They told me they had never gone
that way about the business; but that if I gave them leave to act upon
their own principles, they would bring the bronze out as clean and
perfect as the clay. I chose to strike an agreement, throwing on them
the responsibility, and promising several crowns above the price they
bargained for. Thereupon they put the work in progress; but I soon saw
that they were going the wrong way about it, and began on my own account

which I modelled from a reduced copy of a splendid antique portrait I
had brought with me from Rome. I also undertook another head of the same
size, studied from a very handsome girl, whom I kept for my own
pleasures. I called this Fontainebleau, after the place selected by the
King for his particular delight.

We constructed an admirable little furnace for the casting of the
bronze, got all things ready, and baked our moulds; those French masters
undertaking the Jupiter, while I looked after my two heads. Then I said:

provided sufficient vents beneath for the air to circulate; therefore

work proved a failure, they would pay back the money I had given on
account, and recoup me for current expenses; but they bade me give good
heed to my own proceedings, [1] for the fine heads I meant to cast in my
Italian fashion would never succeed.
At this dispute between us there were present the treasurers and other
gentlefolk commissioned by the King to superintend my proceedings.
Everything which passed by word or act was duly reported to his Majesty.
The two old men who had undertaken to cast my Jupiter postponed the
experiment, saying they would like to arrange the moulds of my two
heads. They argued that, according to my method, no success could be
expected, and it was a pity to waste such fine models. When the King was
informed of this, he sent word that they should give their minds to
learning, and not try to teach their master.

So then they put their now piece into the furnace with much laughter;
while I, maintaining a firm carriage, showing neither mirth nor anger
(though I felt it), placed my two heads, one on each side of the
Jupiter. The metal came all right to melting, and we let it in with joy
and gladness; it filled the mould of the Jupiter most admirably, and at
the same time my two heads. This furnished them with matter for
rejoicing and me with satisfaction; for I was not sorry to have
predicted wrongly of their work, and they made as though they were
delighted to have been mistaken about mine. Then, as the custom in
France is, they asked to drink, in high good spirits. I was very
willing, and ordered a handsome collation for their entertainment. When
this was over, they requested me to pay the money due to them and the
fear, may make you weep. On reflection, it seems to me that too much
metal flowed into you mould. Therefore I shall wait until to-morrow
chewed the cud of them; then they went home without further argument.
At daybreak they began, quite quietly, to break into the pit of the furnace. They could not uncover their large mould until they had extracted my two heads; these were in excellent condition, and they placed them where they could be well seen. When they came to Jupiter, and had dug but scarcely two cubits, they sent up such a yell, they and their four workmen, that it woke me up. Fancying it was a shout of triumph, I set off running, for my bedroom was at the distance of more than five hundred paces. On reaching the spot, I found them looking like terrified. Casting a hasty glance upon my two heads, and seeing they were all right, I tempered my annoyance with the pleasure that sight bad is your deficiency of knowledge; had I only seen you put the soul [2] into your mould, I could have taught you with one word how to cast the figure without fault. This would have brought me great honour and you much profit. I shall be able to make good my reputation; but you will now lose both your honour and your profit. Let then this lesson

Note 1. 'Ma che io guardassi bene, che, &c.' This is perhaps: 'but they bade me note well that.'

Note 2. I have here translated the Italian 'anima' literally by the English word soul. It is a technical expression, signifying the block, somewhat smaller than the mould, which bronze-founders insert in order to obtain a hollow, and not a solid cast from the mould which gives form
ABOUT this time the illustrious soldier Piero Strozzi arrived in France, and reminded the King that he had promised him letters of naturalisation. These were accordingly made out; and at the same time them immediately to his house, and let him have them without the payment

Messer Antonio Massone, [2] This gentleman presented them with many gift of these, in order that you may be encouraged to serve him.;; they to Piero Strozzi at his particular request, and only after a long time of waiting, as a special mark of favour; the King had sent mine of his own accord, and such an act of grace had never been heard of in that realm before. When I heard these words, I thanked his Majesty with heartiness; but I begged the secretary to have the kindness to tell me what letters of naturalisation meant. He was a man accomplished and polite, who spoke Italian excellently. At first my question made him laugh; then he recovered his gravity, and told me in my own language what the papers signified, adding that they conferred one of the highest

When he left me, he returned and told his Majesty, who laughed awhile, letters of naturalisation. Go and install him lord of the castle of the
Little Nello, where he lives, and which is a part of my demesne, he will
know what that means better than he understood about the letters of
to give him a gratuity. He refused to accept it, saying that his Majesty
had so ordered. These letters of naturalisation, together with the
patent for the castle, I brought with me when I returned to Italy;
wherever I go and wherever I may end my days, I shall endeavour to
preserve them. 3

Note 1. Piero was the son of Filippo Strozzi, and the general who lost
the battle of Montemurlo, so disastrous to the Florentine exiles, in
1537.

Note 2. Antoine le Macon, secretary to Margaret of Navarre. He
translated the 'Decameron' at her instance into French.

Note 3. The letter of naturalisation exists. See 'Bianchi,' p. 583. For
the grant of the castle, see 'ibid.,' p. 585.

XX

I SHALL now proceed with the narration of my life. I had on hand the
following works already mentioned, namely, the silver Jupiter, the
golden salt-cellar, the great silver vase, and the two bronze heads. I
also began to cast the pedestal for Jupiter, which I wrought very richly
in bronze, covered with ornaments, among which was a bas-relief,
representing the rape of Ganymede, and on the other side Leda and the
Swan. On casting this piece it came out admirably. I also made another
pedestal of the same sort for the statue of Juno, intending to begin
that too, if the King gave me silver for the purpose. By working briskly
I had put together the silver Jupiter and the golden salt-cellar; the
vase was far advanced; the two bronze heads were finished. I had also
made several little things for the Cardinal of Ferrara, and a small
silver vase of rich workmanship, which I meant to present to Madame
Count of Anguillara, the Count of Pitigliano, the Count of Mirandola,
and many others, gave me employment also. 1

For my great King, as I have said, I had been working strenuously, and
the third day after he returned to Paris, he came to my house, attended
by a crowd of his chief nobles. He marvelled to find how many pieces I
had advanced, and with what excellent results. His mistress, Madame
his Majesty he ought to commission me to execute something beautiful for
the decoration of his favourite residence. He answered on the instant:

appropriate for that beautiful fountain. [2] I suggested several ideas,
and his Majesty expressed his own opinion. Afterwards he said that he
was going to spend fifteen or twenty days at San Germano del Aia, [3] a
place twelve leagues distant from Paris; during his absence he wished me
to make a model for that fair fountain of his in the richest style I
could invent, seeing he delighted in that residence more than in
anything else in his whole realm. Accordingly he commanded and besought
me to do my utmost to produce something really beautiful; and I promised
that I would do so.

When the King saw so many finished things before him, he exclaimed to who deserved better to be well rewarded; we must contrive to keep him with us. He spends freely, is a boon companion, and works hard; we must therefore take good thought for him. Only think, madam, all the times that he has come to me or that I have come to him, he has never once asked for anything; one can see that his heart is entirely devoted to his work. We ought to make a point of doing something for him quickly, had begun, I now took the model of the fountain in hand, at which I worked assiduously.

Note 1. Anguillara and Pitigliano were fiefs of two separate branches of the Orsini family. The house of Pico lost their lordship of Mirandola in 1536, when Galeotto Pico took refuge with his sons in France. His descendants renewed their hold upon the fief, which was erected into a duchy in 1619.

Note 2. 'Per quella bella fonte.' Here, and below, Cellini mixes up Fontainebleau and the spring which gave its name to the place.

Note 3. S. Germain-en-laye is not so far from Paris as Cellini thought.
AT the end of a month and a half the King returned to Paris; and I, who had been working day and night, went to present myself before him, taking my model, so well blocked out that my intention could be clearly understood. Just about that time, the devilries of war between the Emperor and King had been stirred up again, so that I found him much harassed by anxieties. [1] I spoke, however, with the Cardinal of Ferrara, saying I had brought some models which his Majesty had ordered, and begging him, if he found an opportunity, to put in a word whereby I might be able to exhibit them; the King, I thought, would take much pleasure in their sight. This the Cardinal did; and no sooner had he spoken of the models, than the King came to the place where I had set them up. The first of these was intended for the door of the palace at Fontainebleau. I had been obliged to make some alterations in the architecture of this door, which was wide and low, in their vicious French style. The opening was very nearly square, and above it was a hemicircle, flattened like the handle of a basket; here the King wanted a figure placed to represent the genius of Fontainebleau. I corrected the proportions of the doorway, and placed above it an exact half circle; at the sides I introduced projections, with socles and cornices properly corresponding: then, instead of the columns demanded by this disposition of parts, I fashioned two satyrs, one upon each side. The first of these was in somewhat more than half-relief, lifting one hand to support the cornice, and holding a thick club in the other; his face was fiery and menacing, instilling fear into the beholders. The other had the same posture of support; but I varied his features and some other details; in his hand, for instance, he held a lash with three balls attached to
chains. Though I call them satyrs, they showed nothing of the satyr except little horns and a goatish head; all the rest of their form was human. In the lunette above I placed a female figure lying in an fawns in half relief, with some wild boars and other game in lower relief; on the other side were hounds and divers dogs of the chase of several species, such as may be seen in that fair forest where the fountain springs. The whole of this composition was enclosed in an oblong, each angle of which contained a Victory in bas-relief, holding torches after the manner of the ancients. Above the oblong was a appropriate to the Ionic architecture of the whole design.

Note 1. Cellini refers to the renewal of hostilities in May 1542.

XXII

WHEN the King had seen this model, it restored him to cheerfulness, and distracted his mind from the fatiguing debates he had been holding during the past two hours. Seeing him cheerful as I wished, I uncovered the other model, which he was far from expecting, since he not unreasonably judged that the first had work in it enough. This one was a little higher than two cubits; it figured a fountain shaped in a perfect square, with handsome steps all round, intersecting each other in a way which was unknown in France, and is indeed very uncommon in Italy. In the middle of the fountain I set a pedestal, projecting somewhat above the margin of the basin, and upon this a nude male figure, of the right
proportion to the whole design, and of a very graceful form. In his right hand he raised a broken lance on high; his left hand rested on a scimitar; he was poised upon the left foot, the right being supported by a helmet of the richest imaginable workmanship. At each of the four angles of the fountain a figure was sitting, raised above the level of the base, and accompanied by many beautiful and appropriate emblems.

The King began by asking me what I meant to represent by the fine fancy I had embodied in this design, saying that he had understood the door without explanation, but that he could not take the conception of my fountain, although it seemed to him most beautiful; at the same time, he knew well that I was not like those foolish folk who turn out something with a kind of grace, but put no intention into their performances. I then addressed myself to the task of exposition; for having succeeded in pleasing him with my work, I wanted him to be no less pleased with my whole of this model is so exactly made to scale, that if it should come to being executed in the large, none of its grace and lightness will be sacrificed. The figure in the middle is meant to stand fifty-four feet

The other figures embody those arts and sciences in which your Majesty takes pleasure, and which you so generously patronise. This one, upon the right hand, is designed for Learning; you will observe that the accompanying emblems indicate Philosophy, and her attendant branches of knowledge. By the next I wished to personify the whole Art of Design, including Sculpture, Painting, and Architecture. The third is Music, which cannot be omitted from the sphere of intellectual culture. That other, with so gracious and benign a mien, stands for Generosity,
lacking which the mental gifts bestowed on us by God will not be brought
to view. I have attempted to portray your Majesty, your very self, in
the great central statue; for you are truly a god Mars, the only brave
upon this globe, and all your bravery you use with justice and with

who were appointed for my supplies, and told them to disburse whatever I
required, let the cost be what it might. Next, he laid his hand upon my

not whether the pleasure be greater for the prince who finds a man after
his own heart, or for the artist who finds a prince willing to furnish

was really the man his Majesty described, my good fortune was by far the

XXIII

MY ill-luck willed that I was not wide-awake enough to play the like

those fine things of his, he would have given me some reason to be

he made no impression on her temper. Being informed of what had passed,
I waited fifteen days, during which they made a tour through Normandy,
visiting Rouen and Dieppe; then, when they returned to S.

Germain-en-Laye, I took the handsome little vase which I had made at the

favour I had lost. With this in my hand, then, I announced my presence
to her nurse, and showed the gift which I had brought her mistress; the
woman received me with demonstrations of good-will, and said that she
would speak a word to Madame, who was still engaged upon her toilette; I should be admitted on the instant, when she had discharged her embassy. The nurse made her report in full to Madame, who retorted scornfully:

which of all things I find the most difficult. Nevertheless, I kept myself under control until the hour for dinner was past. Then, seeing that time dragged on, and being maddened by hunger, I could no longer hold out, but flung off, sending her most devoutly to the devil.

I next betook myself to the Cardinal of Lorraine, and made him a present good graces. He said there was no need for this; and if there were need he would gladly speak for me. Then he called his treasurer, and whispered a few words in his ear. The treasurer waited till I took my

have but one glass of wine and a mouthful of bread; for I am really fainting for want of food. I have fasted since early this morning up to that fine piece of silver-gilt plate, and took pains that she would be informed of my intention; but she, with the mere petty will to vex me, bade me wait; now I am famished, and feel my forces failing; and, as God willed it, I have bestowed my gift and labour upon one who is far more worthy of them. I only crave of you something to drink; for being rather too bilious by nature, fast upsets me so that I run the risk now of words with difficulty, they brought some admirable wine and other delicacies for a hearty meal. I refreshed myself, and having recovered my vital spirits, found that my exasperation had departed from me.
The good treasurer handed me a hundred crowns in gold. I sturdily refused to accept them. He reported this to the Cardinal, who swore at him, and told him to make me take the money by force, and not to show himself again till he had done so. The treasurer returned, much irritated, saying he had never been so scolded before by the Cardinal; but when he pressed the crowns upon me, I still offered some resistance. Then, quite angry, he said he would use force to make me take them. So I accepted the money. When I wanted to thank the Cardinal in person, he sent word by one of his secretaries that he would gladly do me a service whenever the occasion offered. I returned the same evening to Paris. The in their company. This increased her animosity against me, and led to an attack upon my life, of which I shall speak in the proper time and place.

XXIV

FAR back in my autobiography I ought to have recorded the friendship which I won with the most cultivated, the most affectionate, and the most companionable man of worth I ever knew in this world. He was Messer Guido Guidi, an able physician and doctor of medicine, and a nobleman of Florence. [1] The infinite troubles brought upon me by my evil fortune caused me to omit the mention of him at an earlier date; and though my remembrance may be but a trifle, I deemed it sufficient to keep him always in my heart. Yet, finding that the drama of my life requires his presence, I shall introduce him here at the moment of my greatest trials, in order that, as he was then my comfort and support, I may now
recall to memory the good he did me. 2

Well, then, Messer Guido came to Paris; and not long after making his acquaintance, I took him to my castle, and there assigned him his own suite of apartments. We enjoyed our lives together in that place for

Rossi, brother of the Count of San Secondo, also arrived. [3] This gentleman I removed from his hotel, and took him to my castle, assigning him in like manner his own suite of apartments, where he sojourned many months with serving-men and horses. On another occasion I lodged Messer to me that I should thus, in my poor station, be able to render services to men of great position and acquirements.

But to return to Messer Guido. We enjoyed our mutual friendship during all the years I stayed in Paris, and often did we exult together on being able to advance in art and knowledge at the cost of that so great and admirable prince, our patron, each in his own branch of industry. I can indeed, and with good conscience, affirm that all I am, whatever of good and beautiful I have produced, all this must be ascribed to that extraordinary monarch. So, then, I will resume the thread of my discourse concerning him and the great things I wrought for him.

Note 1. Son of Giuliano Guidi and Costanza, a daughter of Domenico him his own physician, and professor of medicine in the Royal College. He returned to Florence in 1548.
Note 2. Qui mi faccia memoria di quel bene. This is obscure. 'Quel bene' may mean 'the happiness of his friendship.'

Note 3. We have already met with him in the Castle of S. Angelo. His brother, the Count, was general in the French army. This brought the Bishop to Paris, whence he returned to Italy in 1545.

XXV

I HAD a tennis-court in my castle, from which I drew considerable profit. The building also contained some little dwellings inhabited by different sorts of men, among whom was a printer of books of much excellence in his own trade. Nearly the whole of his premises lay inside

book on medicine. [1] Wanting to make use of his lodging, I turned him out, but not without some trouble. There was also a manufacturer of saltpetre; and when I wished to assign his apartments to some of my German workmen, the fellow refused to leave the place. I asked him over and over again in gentle terms to give me up my rooms, because I wanted to employ them for my work-people in the service of the King. The more moderately I spoke, the more arrogantly did the brute reply; till at

and said that he would begin to think of it at the end of three years. I had not then learned that he was under the protection of Madame that lady made me a little more circumspect than I was wont to be, I should have ousted him at once; now, however, I thought it best to keep
my temper for three days. When the term was over, I said nothing, but
took Germans, Italians, and Frenchmen, bearing arms, and many
hand-labourers whom I had in my employ, and in a short while gutted all
his house and flung his property outside my castle. I resorted to these
somewhat rigorous measures because he had told me that no Italian whom
he knew of had the power of spirit to remove one ring of iron from its
place in his house. Well, after the deed was done, he came to find me,

have done nothing to you in comparison with what I have the heart to do,

menace and abuse. The man, dumbfounded and affrighted, got his furniture

and painted a picture of me like the very fiend. She being my great
enemy, painted my portrait still blacker to the King, with all her
greater eloquence and all her greater weight of influence. As I was
afterwards informed, his Majesty twice showed signs of irritation and
was minded to use me roughly: but Henry the Dauphin, his son, now King
of France, who had received some affronts from that imperious woman,
together with the Queen of Navarre, sister to King Francis, espoused my
cause so cleverly that he passed the matter over with a laugh. So with

Cal. Mai.’ 1544. So this printer was Pierre Sauthier.

XXVI

I HAD to deal in like manner with another fellow, but I did not ruin his
house; I only threw all his furniture out of doors. This time Madame

was only quite right to defend myself from the low rabble who put
obstacles in the way of my serving him.

The rage of this vindictive woman kept continually on the increase. She
sent for a painter who was established at Fontainebleau, where the King
resided nearly all his time. The painter was an Italian and a Bolognese,
known then as Il Bologna; his right name, however, was Francesco

the fountain which his Majesty had given me, adding that she would
support him with all her ability; and upon this they agreed. Bologna was
in an ecstasy of happiness, and thought himself sure of the affair,
although such things were not in his line of art. He was, however, an
excellent master of design, and had collected round him a troop of
work-people formed in the school of Rosso, our Florentine painter, who
was undoubtedly an artist of extraordinary merit; his own best qualities
indeed were derived from the admirable manner of Rosso, who by this time
had died.

These ingenious arguments, and the weighty influence of Madame

and day, Madame at one time, and Bologna at another. What worked most

is it possible, sacred Majesty, that Benvenuto should accomplish the
twelve silver statues which you want? He has not finished one of them
yet. If you employ him on so great an undertaking, you will, of
necessity, deprive yourself of those other things on which your heart is
set. A hundred of the ablest craftsmen could not complete so many great works as this one able man has taken in hand to do. One can see clearly that he has a passion for labour; but this ardent temper will be the a favourable opportunity, the King consented to their petition; and yet Bologna had at this time produced neither designs nor models for the fountain.

Note 1. Primaticcio, together with Rosso, introduced Italian painting into France. Vasari says he came to Paris in 1541. He died in 1570. He was, like many other of the Lombard artists, an excellent master of stucco.

XXVII

IT happened that just at this period an action was brought against me in Paris by the second lodger I had ousted from my castle, who pretended that on that occasion I had stolen a large quantity of his effects. This lawsuit tormented me beyond measure, and took up so much of my time that I often thought of decamping in despair from the country. Now the French are in the habit of making much capital out of any action they commence against a foreigner, or against such persons as they notice to be indolent in litigation. No sooner do they observe that they are getting some advantage in the suit, than they find the means to sell it; some have even been known to give a lawsuit in dowry with their daughters to men who make a business out of such transactions. They have another ugly
custom, which is that the Normans, nearly all of them, traffic in false
evidence; so that the men who buy up lawsuits, engage at once the
services of four or six of these false witnesses, according to their
need; their adversary, if he neglect to produce as many on the other
side, being perhaps unacquainted with the custom, is certain to have the
verdict given against him.

All this happened in my case, and thinking it a most disgraceful breach
of justice, I made my appearance in the great hall of Paris, to defend
my right. There I saw a judge, lieutenant for the King in civil causes,
enthroned upon a high tribunal. He was tall, stout, and fat, and of an
extremely severe countenance. All round him on each side stood a crowd
of solicitors and advocates, ranged upon the right hand and the left.
Others were coming, one by one, to explain their several causes to the
judge. From time to time, too, I noticed that the attorneys at the side
of the tribunal talked all at once: and much admiration was roused in me
by that extraordinary man, the very image of Pluto, who listened with
marked attention first to one and then to the other, answering each with
learning and sagacity. I have always delighted in watching and
experiencing every kind of skill; so I would not have lost this
spectacle for much. It happened that the hall being very large, and
filled with a multitude of folk, they were strict in excluding every one
who had no business there, and kept the door shut with a guard to hold
it. Sometimes the guardian, in his effort to prevent the entrance of
some improper person, interrupted the judge by the great noise he made,
and the judge in anger turned to chide him. This happened frequently, so
that my attention was directed to the fact. On one occasion, when two
gentlemen were pushing their way in as spectators, and the porter was opposing them with violence, the judge raised his voice, and spoke the French tongue well; and on hearing this sentence, the meaning of that phrase used by Dante came into my memory, when he and his master Virgil entered the doors of Hell. Dante and the painter Giotto were together in France, and particularly in the city of Paris, where, owing to the circumstances I have just described, the hall of justice may be truly called a hell. Dante then, who also understood French well, made use of the phrase in question, and it has struck me as singular that this interpretation has never yet been put upon the passage; indeed, it confirms my opinion that the commentators make him say things which never came into his head.

Note 1. 'Paix, paix, Satan, allez, paix.' The line in Dante to which Cellini alludes is the first of the seventh canto of the 'Inferno.' His suggestion is both curious and ingenious; but we have no reason to think that French judges used the same imprecations, when interrupted, in the thirteenth as they did in the sixteenth century, or that what Cellini heard on this occasion was more than an accidental similarity of sounds, striking his quick ear and awakening his lively memory.

XXVIII

WELL, then, to return to my affairs. When certain decisions of the court were sent me by those lawyers, and I perceived that my cause had been
unjustly lost, I had recourse for my defence to a great dagger which I carried; for I have always taken pleasure in keeping fine weapons. The first man I attacked was the plaintiff who had sued me; and one evening I wounded him in the legs and arms so severely, taking care, however, not to kill him, that I deprived him of the use of both his legs. Then I sought out the other fellow who had brought the suit, and used him also in such wise that he dropped it.

Returning thanks to God for this and every other dispensation, and hoping to be left awhile without worries, I bade the young men of my diligently to the work I set him, and to help me till such time as I could finish the things I had in hand. I thought they might soon be completed, and then I meant to return to Italy, being no longer able to put up with the rougeries of those Frenchmen; the good King too, if he once grew angry, might bring me into mischief for many of my acts in self-defence. I will describe who these Italians were; the first, and the one I liked best, was Ascanio, from Tagliacozzo in the kingdom of Naples; the second was Pagolo, a Roman of such humble origin that he did now know his own father. These were the two men who had been with me in Rome, and whom I had taken with me on the journey. Another Roman had also come on purpose to enter my service; he too bore the name of Pagolo, and was the son of a poor nobleman of the family of the Macaroni; he had small acquirements in our art, but was an excellent and courageous swordsman. I had another from Ferrara called Bartolommeo Chioccia. There was also another from Florence named Pagolo Micceri; his much money in managing the property of Tommaso Guadagni, a very wealthy
merchant. This Gatta put in order for me the books in which I wrote the accounts of his most Christian Majesty and my other employers. Now Pagolo Micceri, having learned how to keep them from his brother, went on doing this work for me in return for a liberal salary. He appeared, so far as I could judge, to be a very honest lad, for I noticed him to be devout, and when I heard him sometimes muttering psalms, and sometimes telling his beads, I reckoned much upon his feigned virtue.

dearest brother, you know what a good place you have with me, and how you had formerly nothing to depend on; besides, you are a Florentine. I have also the greater confidence in you because I observe that you are pious and religious, which is a thing that pleases me. I beg you therefore to assist me, for I cannot put the same trust in any of your companions: so then I shall ask you to keep watch over two matters of the highest importance, which might prove a source of much annoyance to me. In the first place, I want you to guard my property from being stolen, and not touch it yourself. In the next place, you know that poor cannot do without a model; but being a man also, I have used her for my pleasures, and it is possible that she may bear me a child. Now I do not an insult. If any one in this house had the audacity to attempt anything of the sort, and I were to become aware of it, I verily believe that I should kill both her and him. Accordingly, dear brother, I entreat you to be my helper; should you notice anything, tell it me at once; for I am sure to send her and her mother and her fellow to the gallows. Be you blessed Jesus! God preserve me from ever thinking of such a thing! In
the first place, I am not given to those evil ways; in the next place,

heard these words, which he uttered with all appearance of simplicity
and affection for me, I believed that matters stood precisely as he
asserted.

XXIX

TWO days after this conversation, M. Mattio del Nazaro took the occasion
of some feast-day to invite me and my workpeople to an entertainment in
same art as we did with remarkable ability. I got myself in readiness,
and told Pagolo that he might go abroad too and amuse himself with us;
the annoyances arising from that lawsuit being, as I judged, now settled
great mistake to leave the house so unprotected. Only look how much of
gold, silver, and jewels you have here. Living as we do in a city of
thieves, we ought to be upon our guard by day and night. I will spend
the time in religious exercises, while I keep watch over the premises.
Go then with mind at rest to take your pleasure and divert your spirits.

Thinking that I could go of with a quiet mind, I took Pagolo, Ascanio,
and Chioccia to the garden, where we spent a large portion of the day
agreeably. Toward the middle of the afternoon, however, when it began to
draw toward sundown, a suspicion came into my head, and I recollected
the words which that traitor had spoken with his feigned simplicity. So
I mounted my horse, and with two servants to attend me, returned to the
castle, where I all but caught Pagolo and that little wretch Caterina 'in flagrante.' No sooner had I reached the place, than that French

When I saw the pair advancing, overcome with fright, their clothes in disorder, not knowing what they said, nor, like people in a trance, where they were going, it was only too easy to guess what they had been about. The sight drowned reason in rage, and I drew my sword, resolved to kill them both. The man took to his heels; the girl flung herself upon her knees, and shrieked to Heaven for mercy. In my first fury I wanted to strike at the male; but before I had the time to catch him up, second thoughts arose which made me think it would be best for me to drive them both away together. I had so many acts of violence upon my hands, that if I killed him I could hardly hope to save my life. I said behaviour and appearance force me to believe, I should have run you with this sword here ten times through the guts. Get out of my sight; and if whole lot forth, mother and daughter, lamming into them with fist and foot. They made their minds up to have the law of me, and consulted a Norman advocate, who advised them to declare that I had used the girl after the Italian fashion; what this meant I need hardly explain. [3] after, he will pay down several hundred ducats, knowing how great the this they were agreed. The accusation was brought against me, and I received a summons from the court.

Note 1. Matteo del Nassaro, a native of Verona, was employed in France as engraver, die-caster, and musician.
THE MORE I sought for rest, the more I was annoyed with all sorts of embarrassments. Being thus daily exposed to divers persecutions, I pondered which of two courses I ought to take; whether to decamp and leave France to the devil, or else to fight this battle through as I had done the rest, and see to what end God had made me. For a long while I kept anxiously revolving the matter. At last I resolved to make off, dreading to tempt my evil fortune, lest this should bring me to the gallows. My dispositions were all fixed; I had made arrangements for putting away the property I could not carry, and for charging the lighter articles, to the best of my ability, upon myself and servants; yet it was with great and heavy reluctance that I looked forward to such a departure.

I had shut myself up alone in a little study. My young men were advising me to fly; but I told them that it would be well for me to meditate this step in solitude, although I very much inclined to their opinion. Indeed, I reasoned that if I could escape imprisonment and let the storm pass over, I should be able to explain matters to the King by letter, setting forth the trap which had been laid to ruin me by the malice of
my enemies. And as I have said above, my mind was made up to this point; when, just as I rose to act on the decision, some power took me by the shoulder and turned me round, and I heard a voice which cried with

instant, I changed the whole course of my plans, and said to my

have no other thought, for I am now determined to put in my appearance.
If I were to leave Paris, you would vanish the next day in smoke; so do

is our duty to go with him and bear him out so long as we have life to
execute what he proposes. He has hit the mark better than we did in this matter; for on the instant when he leaves the place, his enemies will send us to the devil. Let us keep well in mind what great works we have begun here, and what vast importance they possess; we should not know how to finish them without him, and his enemies would say that he had

things bearing weightily upon the subject were said among them. But it was the young Roman, Macaroni, who first put heart into the company; and he also raised recruits from the Germans and the Frenchmen, who felt well disposed toward me.

We were ten men, all counted. I set out, firmly resolved not to let myself be taken and imprisoned alive. When we appeared before the judges for criminal affairs, I found Caterina and her mother waiting; and on the moment of my arrival, the two women were laughing with their advocate. I pushed my way in, and called boldly for the judge, who was seated, blown out big and fat, upon a tribunal high above the rest. On catching sight of me, he threatened with his head, and spoke in a
her after the Italian fashion, I have only done the same as you folk of
some French habit, seeing she knew all about it, while I was ignorant;
and I commanded her to explain precisely how I had consortcd with her.
Then the impudent baggage entered into plain and circumstantial details
regarding all the filth she lyingly accused me of. I made her repeat her
deposition three times in succession. When she had finished, I cried out
call on you for justice. Well I know that by the laws of his Most
Christian Majesty both agent and patient in this kind of crime are
punished with the stake. The woman confesses her guilt; I admit nothing
whatsoever of the sort with regard to her; her go-between of a mother is
here, who deserves to be burned for either one or the other offence.

did not send her to prison there before me, I would go to the King at
once, and tell him how his lieutenant in criminal affairs of justice had
wronged me. When they heard what a tumult I was making, my adversaries
lowered their voices, but I lifted mine the more. The little hussy and

matter was not going as he intended, began to use soft words and excuse
the weakness of the female sex. Thereupon I felt that I had won the
victory in a nasty encounter; and, muttering threats between my teeth, I
took myself off, not without great inward satisfaction. Indeed, I would
gladly have paid five hundred crowns down to have avoided that
appearance in court. However, after escaping from the tempest, I thanked
God with all my heart, and returned in gladness with my young men to the
castle.
WHEN adverse fortune, or, if we prefer to call it, our malignant planet, 
undertakes to persecute a man, it never lacks new ways of injuring him. 

So now, when I thought I had emerged from this tempestuous sea of 
troubles, and hoped my evil star would leave me quiet for a moment, it 
began to set two schemes in motion against me before I had recovered my 
breath from that great struggle. Within three days two things happened, 
each of which brought my life into extreme hazard. One of these occurred 
in this way: I went to Fontainebleau to consult with the King; for he 
had written me a letter saying he wanted me to stamp the coins of his 
whole realm, and enclosing some little drawings to explain his wishes in 
the matter; at the same time he left me free to execute them as I liked; 
upon which I made new designs according to my own conception, and 
according to the ideal of art. When I reached Fontainebleau, one of the 
treasurers commissioned by the King to defray my expenses (he was called 
painter Bologna has obtained commission from the King to execute your 
great Colossus, and all the orders previously given as on your behalf 
have been transferred to him. [2] We are all indignant; and it seems to 
us that that countryman of yours has acted towards you in a most 
unwarrantable manner. The work was assigned you on the strength of your 
models and studies. He is robbing you of it, only through the favour of 
since his Majesty at first would not concede it; only the importunity of
When I felt how greatly and how wrongfully I had been betrayed, and saw
a work which I had gained with my great toil thus stolen from me, I made
my mind up for a serious stroke of business, and marched off with my
good sword at my side to find Bologna. [3] He was in his room, engaged
in studies; after telling the servant to introduce me, he greeted me
with some of his Lombard compliments, and asked what good business had
to engage in does not call for drinking at the commencement; after it is
it to be seen that they are so by their actions; if they do the
contrary, they lose the name of honest men. I am aware that you knew the
King had commissioned me with that great Colossus; it had been talked of
these eighteen months past; yet neither you nor anybody else came
forward to speak a word about it. By my great labours I made myself
known to his Majesty, who approved of my models and gave the work into
my hands. During many months I have heard nothing to the contrary; only
this morning I was informed that you have got hold of it, and have
filched it from me. I earned it by the talents I displayed, and you are

Note 1. His name in full was Jacques de la Fa. He and his son Pierre

Note 2. By Colossus, Cellini means the fountain with the great statue of
Mars.
to say against it? You would only throw away your time, because I have
it now, and it is mine. Now tell me what you choose, and I will listen
could say much which would prove irrefragably, and make you admit, that
such ways of acting as you have described and used are not in vogue
among rational animals. I will, however, come quickly to the point at
issue; give close attention to my meaning, because the affair is
sitting, since he saw my colour heightened and my features greatly
discomposed. I told him that the time had not yet come for moving; he
you know that I first received the work, and that the time has long gone
by during which my right could be reasonably disputed by any one. Now I
tell you that I shall be satisfied if you will make a model, while I
make another in addition to the one I have already shown. Then we will
take them without any clamour to our great King; and whosoever in this
way shall have gained the credit of the best design will justly have
deserved the commission. If it falls to you, I will dismiss from my mind
the memory of the great injury you have done me, and will bless your
hands, as being worthier than mine of so glorious a performance. Let us
abide by this agreement, and we shall be friends; otherwise we must be
enemies; and God, who always helps the right, and I, who know how to
and reasonable, I will show you another which shall be like your own, 
that is to say, ugly and disagreeable. I tell you plainly that if I ever 
hear that you have spoken one single word about this work of mine, I 
will kill you like a dog. We are neither in Rome, nor in Bologna, nor in 
Florence; here one lives in quite a different fashion; if then it comes 
to my ears that you talk about this to the King or anybody else, I vow 
that I will kill you. Reflect upon the way you mean to take, whether 
that for good which I formerly described, or this latter bad one I have 

The man did not know what to say or do, and I was inclined to cut the 
matter short upon the spot rather than to postpone action. Bologna found 

Upon this I left him, and betook myself to the King. With his Majesty I 
disputed some time about the fashion of his coinage, a point upon which 
we were not of the same opinion; his council, who were present, kept 
persuading him that the monies ought to be struck in the French style, 
as they had hitherto always been done. I urged in reply that his Majesty 
had sent for me from Italy in order that I might execute good work; if 
he now wanted me to do the contrary, I could not bring myself to submit. 
So the matter was postponed till another occasion, and I set off again 
at once for Paris.

XXXIII

I HAD but just dismounted from my horse, when one of those excellent
people who rejoice in mischief-making came to tell me that Pagolo
Micceri had taken a house for the little hussy Caterina and her mother,
and that he was always going there, and whenever he mentioned me, used
grapes, [1] and thought I would not eat them! Now he is satisfied with
going about and talking big, and thinks I am afraid of him. But I have

girt this sword and dagger to my side in order to show him that my steel
can cut as well as his, and that I too am a Florentine, of the Micceri,

poisonous gossip spoke it with such good effect that I felt a fever in
the instant swoop upon me; and when I say fever, I mean fever, and no
mere metaphor. The insane passion which took possession of me might have
been my death, had I not resolved to give it vent as the occasion
offered. I ordered the Ferrarese workman, Chioccia, to come with me, and
made a servant follow with my horse. When we reached the house where
that worthless villain was, I found the door ajar, and entered. I
noticed that he carried sword and dagger, and was sitting on a big chest
hear that he and her mother were talking about me. Pushing the door
open, I drew my sword, and set the point of it at his throat, not giving
him the time to think whether he too carried steel. At the same instant

take his life, half my fury ebbed away when I heard this idiotic
exclamation. I ought to add that I had told Chioccia not to let the girl
or her mother leave the house, since I meant to deal with those trollops
after I had disposed of their bully. So I went on holding my sword at
his throat, and now and then just pricked him with the point, pouring
out a torrent of terrific threats at the same time. But when I found he
did not stir a finger in his own defence, I began to wonder what I
should do next; my menacing attitude could not be kept up for ever; so
at last it came into my head to make them marry, and complete my
vengeance at a later period. Accordingly, I formed my resolution, and

Bidding Chioccia go for the lawyers, I turned to the girl and her

witnesses are coming; the first of you who blabs about this affair will
be killed upon the spot; nay, I will murder you all three. So beware,
you offer any resistance to what I shall propose, upon the slightest
due form, was drawn up; then my heat and fever left me. I paid the
lawyers and took my departure.

On the following day Bologna came to Paris on purpose, and sent for me
through Mattio del Nasaro. I went to see him; and he met me with a glad
face, entreating me to regard him as a brother, and saying that he would
never speak about that work again, since he recognised quite well that I
was right.

Note 1. 'Aveva dato a guardia la lattuga ai paperi.'

XXXIV
IF I did not confess that in some of these episodes I acted wrongly, the
world might think I was not telling the truth about those in which I say
I acted rightly. Therefore I admit that it was a mistake to inflict so
singular a vengeance upon Pagolo Micceri. In truth, had I believed him
to be so utterly feeble, I should not have conceived the notion of
branding him with such infamy as I am going to relate.

Not satisfied with having made him take a vicious drab to wife, I
completed my revenge by inviting her to sit to me as a model, and
dealing with her thus. I gave her thirty sous a day, paid in advance,
and a good meal, and obliged her to pose before me naked. Then I made
her serve my pleasure, out of spite against her husband, jeering at them
both the while. Furthermore, I kept her for hours together in position,
greatly to her discomfort. This gave her as much annoyance as it gave me
pleasure; for she was beautifully made, and brought me much credit as a
model. At last, noticing that I did not treat her with the same
consideration as before her marriage, she began to grumble and talk big
in her French way about her husband, who was now serving the Prior of
Capua, a brother of Piero Strozzi. [1] On the first occasion when she
did this, the mere mention of the fellow aroused me to intolerable fury;
still I bore it, greatly against the grain, as well as I was able,
reflecting that I could hardly find so suitable a subject for my art as
different kinds of revenge. In the first place, she is married; and what
I am doing to her husband is something far more serious than what he did
to me, when she was only a girl of loose life. If then I wreak my spite
so fully upon him, while upon her I inflict the discomfort of posing in
such strange attitudes for such a length of time—which, beside the
pleasure I derive, brings me both profit and credit through my art—what
wretch redoubled her insulting speeches, always prating big about her
husband, till she goaded me beyond the bounds of reason. Yielding myself
up to blind rage, I seized her by the hair, and dragged her up and down
my room, beating and kicking her till I was tired. There was no one who
could come to her assistance. When I had well pounded her she swore that
she would never visit me again. Then for the first time I perceived that
I had acted very wrongly; for I was losing a grand model, who brought me
honour through my art. Moreover, when I saw her body all torn and
bruised and swollen, I reflected that, even if I persuaded her to
return, I should have to put her under medical treatment for at least a
fortnight before I could make use of her.

Note 1. Leone, son of Filippo Strozzi, Knight of Jerusalem and Prior of
Capua, was, like his brother Piero, a distinguished French general.

XXXV

WELL, to return to Caterina. I sent my old serving-woman, named Ruberta,
who had a most kindly disposition, to help her dress. She brought food
and drink to the miserable baggage; and after rubbing a little bacon fat
into her worst wounds, they ate what was left of the meat together. When
she had finished dressing, she went off blaspheming and cursing all
to her home.
Assuredly, upon that first occasion, I felt I had done very wrong, and narrating all the tricks which she and her mother had played off upon me under my own roof, Ruberta scoldingly replied that 'that' was nothing--that was only French manners, and she was sure there was not a husband in France without his horns. When I heard this argument, I laughed aloud, and then told Ruberta to go and see how Caterina was, since I should like to employ her again while finishing the work I had on hand. The old woman took me sharply up, saying that I had no 'savoir if you send to ask after her or visit her, she will give herself airs.

On the following morning Caterina came to our door, and knocked so violently, that, being below, I ran to see whether it was a madman or some member of the household. When I opened, the creature laughed and fell upon my neck, embracing and kissing me, and asked me if I was still of it at the same table in sign of reconciliation. Afterwards I began to model from her, during which occurred some amorous diversions; and at last, just at the same hour as on the previous day, she irritated me to such a pitch that I gave her the same drubbing. So we went on several days, repeating the old round like clockwork. There was little or no variation in the incidents.

Meanwhile, I completed my work in a style which did me the greatest
credit. Next I set about to cast it in bronze. This entailed some difficulties, to relate which would be interesting from the point of view of art; but since the whole history would occupy too much space, I must omit it. Suffice it to say, that the figure came out splendidly, and was as fine a specimen of foundry as had ever been seen. 1

Note 1. This figure was undoubtedly the Nymph of Fontainebleau.

XXXVI

WHILE this work was going forward, I set aside certain hours of the day for the salt-cellar, and certain others for the Jupiter. There were more men engaged upon the former than I had at my disposal for the latter, so the salt-cellar was by this time completely finished. The King had now returned to Paris; and when I paid him my respects, I took the piece with me. As I have already related, it was oval in form, standing about two-thirds of a cubit, wrought of solid gold, and worked entirely with the chisel. While speaking of the model, I said before how I had represented Sea and Earth, seated, with their legs interlaced, as we observe in the case of firths and promontories; this attitude was therefore metaphorically appropriate. The Sea carried a trident in his right hand, and in his left I put a ship of delicate workmanship to hold the salt. Below him were his four sea-horses, fashioned like our horses from the head to the front hoofs; all the rest of their body, from the middle backwards, resembled a fish, and the tails of these creatures were agreeably inter-woven. Above this group the Sea sat throned in an
attitude of pride and dignity; around him were many kinds of fishes and other creatures of the ocean. The water was represented with its waves, and enameled in the appropriate colour. I had portrayed Earth under the form of a very handsome woman, holding her horn of plenty, entirely nude like the male figure; in her left hand I placed a little temple of Ionic architecture, most delicately wrought, which was meant to contain the pepper. Beneath her were the handsomest living creatures which the earth produces; and the rocks were partly enameled, partly left in gold. The whole piece reposed upon a base of ebony, properly proportioned, but with a projecting cornice, upon which I introduced four golden figures in rather more than half-relief. They represented Night, Day, Twilight, and Dawn. I put, moreover, into the same frieze four other figures, similar in size, and intended for the four chief winds; these were executed, and in part enameled, with the most exquisite refinement. 1

When I exhibited this piece to his Majesty, he uttered a loud outcry of astonishment, and could not satiate his eyes with gazing at it. Then he bade me take it back to my house, saying he would tell me at the proper time what I should have to do with it. So I carried it home, and sent at once to invite several of my best friends; we dined gaily together, placing the salt-cellar in the middle of the table, and thus we were the first to use it. After this, I went on working at my Jupiter in silver, and also at the great vase I have already described, which was richly decorated with a variety of ornaments and figures.

Note 1. This salt-cellar is now at Vienna. It is beautifully represented
AT that time Bologna, the painter, suggested to the King that it would be well if his Majesty sent him to Rome, with letters of recommendation, to the end that he might cast the foremost masterpieces of antiquity, namely, the Laocoon, the Cleopatra, the Venus, the Commodus, the Zingara, and the Apollo. [1] These, of a truth, are by far the finest things in Rome. He told the King that when his Majesty had once set eyes upon those marvellous works, he would then, and not till then, be able to criticise the arts of design, since everything which he had seen by us moderns was far removed from the perfection of the ancients. The King accepted his proposal, and gave him the introductions he required. Accordingly that beast went off, and took his bad luck with him. Not having the force and courage to contend with his own hands against me, he adopted the truly Lombard device of depreciating my performances by becoming a copyist of antiques. In its own proper place I shall relate how, though he had these statues excellently cast, he obtained a result quite contrary to his imagination.

I had now done for ever with that disreputable Caterina, and the unfortunate young man, her husband, had decamped from Paris. Wanting then to finish off my Fontainebleau, which was already cast in bronze, as well as to execute the two Victories which were going to fill the angles above the lunette of the door, I engaged a poor girl of the age of about fifteen. She was beautifully made and of a brunette complexion.
Being somewhat savage in her ways and spare of speech, quick in movement, with a look of sullenness about her eyes, I nicknamed her Scorzone; [2] her real name was Jeanne. With her for model, I gave perfect finish to the bronze Fontainebleau, and also to the two Victories.

Now this girl was a clean maid, and I got her with child. She gave birth to a daughter on the 7th of June, at thirteen hours of the day, in 1544, when I had exactly reached the age of forty-four. I named the infant intimate friend, as I have previously related, held her at the font. He was the only godfather; for it is customary in France to have but one godfather and two godmothers. One of the latter was Madame Maddalena, wife to M. Luigi Alamanni, a gentleman of Florence and an accomplished poet. The other was the wife of M. Ricciardo del Bene, our Florentine burgher, and a great merchant in Paris; she was herself a French lady of distinguished family. This was the first child I ever had, so far as I remember. I settled money enough upon the girl for dowry to satisfy an aunt of hers, under whose tutelage I placed her, and from that time forwards I had nothing more to do with her.

Note 1. The Cleopatra is that recumbent statue of a sleeping Ariadne or Bacchante now in the Vatican. The Venus (neither the Medicean nor the Capitoline) represents the goddess issuing from the bath; it is now in the Museo Pio Clementino of the Vatican. The Commodus is a statue of the Vatican. The Zingara may be a statue of Diana forming part of the Borghese collection. The Apollo is the famous Belvedere Apollo of the
Vatican.

'Scorzone' is also the name for a little black venomous serpent.

XXXVIII

BY labouring incessantly I had now got my various works well forward; the Jupiter was nearly finished, and the vase also; the door began to reveal its beauties. At that time the King came to Paris; and though I still in 1543; but an opportunity of mentioning my daughter having arisen, I availed myself of it, so as not to interrupt the narrative of more important things. Well, the King, as I have said, came to Paris, and paid me a visit soon after his arrival. The magnificent show of eye; and indeed it gave that glorious monarch no less contentment than the artist who had worked so hard upon them desired. While inspecting these things, it came into his head that the Cardinal of Ferrara had fulfilled none of his promises to me, either as regarded a pension or anything else. Whispering with his Admiral, he said that the Cardinal of Ferrara had behaved very badly in the matter; and that he intended to make it up to me himself, because he saw I was a man of few words, who in the twinkling of an eye might decamp without complaining or asking leave.

On returning home, his Majesty, after dinner, told the Cardinal to give
orders to his treasurer of the Exchequer that he should pay me at an early date seven thousand crowns of gold, in three or four instalments, according to his own convenience, provided only that he executed the commission faithfully. At the same time he repeated words to this fit of generosity was over. Meanwhile wars and rumours of wars were on the increase; it was the moment when the Emperor with a huge army was marching upon Paris. [1] Seeing the realm of France to be in great need Majesty, acting for the best, I have not had that money given to Benvenuto. First, it is sorely wanted now for public uses. Secondly, so great a donation would have exposed you to the risk of losing Benvenuto altogether; for if he found himself a rich man, he might have invested his money in Italy, and the moment some caprice took of him, he would have decamped without hesitation. I therefore consider that your kingdom, if you want to keep him in your service for any length of arguments; nevertheless, like the noble soul he was, and truly worthy of his royal station, he judged rightly that the Cardinal had acted thus in order to curry favour rather than from any clear prevision of distressed finances in so vast a realm.

Note 1. In 1544 Charles V. advanced toward Champagne and threatened Paris, while the English were besieging Boulogne.

XXXIX
AS I have just said, his Majesty affected to concur with the Cardinal, but his own private mind was otherwise made up. Accordingly, upon the day after his arrival, without solicitation upon my part, he came of his own accord to my house. I went to meet him, and conducted him through several rooms where divers works of art were on view. Beginning with the less important, I pointed out a quantity of things in bronze; and it was long since he had seen so many at once. Then I took him to see the Jupiter in silver, now nearly completed, with all its splendid decorations. It so happened that a grievous disappointment which he had suffered a few years earlier, made him think this piece more admirable than it might perhaps have appeared to any other man. The occasion to which I refer was this: After the capture of Tunis, the Emperor passed through Paris with the consent of his brother-in-law, King Francis, [1] who wanted to present him with something worthy of so great a potentate. Having this in view, he ordered a Hercules to be executed in silver, exactly of the same size as my Jupiter. The King declared this Hercules to be the ugliest work of art that he had ever seen, and spoke his opinion plainly to the craftsmen of Paris. They vaunted themselves to be the ablest craftsmen in the world for works of this kind, and informed the King that nothing more perfect could possibly have been produced in silver, insisting at the same time upon being paid two thousand ducats for their filthy piece of work. This made the King, when he beheld mine, affirm that the finish of its workmanship exceeded his highest expectations. Accordingly he made an equitable judgment, and had my men no salary; Cellini, who gets about a thousand crowns a year from me, can surely let me have this masterpiece for two thousand crowns of gold,
in gold and silver, and a variety of models for new undertakings. At the
last, just when he was taking leave, I pointed out upon the lawn of the
castle that great giant, which roused him to higher astonishment than
any of the other things he had inspected. Turning to his Admiral, who
him no provision, we must do so, and all the more because the man
himself is so slow at asking favours--to cut it short, I mean to have
him well provided for; yes, these men who ask for nothing feel that
their masterpieces call aloud for recompense; therefore see that he gets
the first abbey that falls vacant worth two thousand crowns a year. If
this cannot be had in one benefice, let him have two or three to that

standing by, I could hear what the King said, and thanked his Majesty at
once for the donation, as though I were already in possession. I told
him that as soon as his orders were carried into effect, I would work
for his Majesty without other salary or recompense of any kind until old
age deprived me of the power to labour, when I hoped to rest my tired
body in peace, maintaining myself with honour on that income, and always
bearing in mind that I had served so great a monarch as his Majesty. At
the end of this speech the King turned toward me with a lively gesture
he departed, highly satisfied with what he had seen there.

Note 1. In the year 1539 Charles V obtained leave to traverse France
with his army on the way Flanders.

in 1538; Admiral of France in 1543.
rule the world to-day, and a little fellow like that snaps his fingers at me! She put every iron into the fire which she could think of, in order to stir up mischief against me. Now a certain man fell in her way, who enjoyed great fame as a distiller; he supplied her with perfumed waters, which were excellent for the complexion, and hitherto unknown in France. This fellow she introduced to the King, who was much delighted by the processes for distilling which he exhibited. While engaged in these experiments, the man begged his Majesty to give him a tennis-court I had in my castle, together with some little apartments which he said I did not use. The good King, guessing who was at the bottom of the which women know so well to work on men, and very easily succeeded in her enterprise; for having taken the King at a moment of amorous weakness, to which he was much subject, she wheedled him into conceding what she wanted.

The distiller came, accompanied by Treasurer Grolier, a very great nobleman of France, who spoke Italian excellently, and when he entered my castle, began to jest with me in that language. [1] Watching his possession of that tennis-court, together with the lodgings that pertain so then you might have effected an entrance with more freedom: coming thus with notaries and people of the court looks more like a fraud than
the mandate of a powerful monarch. I assure you that, before I carry my
complaints before the King, I shall defend my right in the way his
Majesty gave me orders two days since to do. I shall fling the man whom
you have put upon me out of windows if I do not see a warrant under the
threatening and grumbling, and I remained doing the same, without,
however, beginning the attack at once. Then I went to the notaries who
had put the fellow in possession. I was well acquainted with them; and
they gave me to understand that this was a formal proceeding, done
if I had offered some trifling opposition the fellow would not have
installed himself as he had done. The formalities were acts and customs
of the court, which did not concern obedience to the King; consequently,
if I succeeded in ousting him, I should have acted rightly, and should
not incur any risk.

This hint was enough for me, and next morning I had recourse to arms;
and though the job cost me some trouble, I enjoyed it. Each day that
followed, I made an attack with stones, pikes and arquebuses, firing,
however, without ball; nevertheless, I inspired such terror that no one
dared to help my antagonist. Accordingly, when I noticed one day that
his defence was feeble, I entered the house by force, and expelled the
fellow, turning all his goods and chattels into the street. Then I
betook me to the King, and told him that I had done precisely as his
Majesty had ordered, by defending myself against every one who sought to
hinder me in his service. The King laughed at the matter, and made me
out new letters-patent to secure me from further molestation. 3
IN the meantime I brought my silver Jupiter to completion, together with its gilded pedestal, which I placed upon a wooden plinth that only showed a very little; upon the plinth I introduced four little round balls of hard wood, more than half hidden in their sockets, like the nut of a crossbow. They were so nicely arranged that a child could push the statue forward and backwards, or turn it round with ease. Having arranged it thus to my mind, I went with it to Fountainebleau, where the King was then residing.

At that time, Bologna, of whom I have already said so much, had brought from Rome his statues, and had cast them very carefully in bronze. I knew nothing about this, partly because he kept his doings very dark, and also because Fontainebleau is forty miles distant from Paris. On asking the King where he wanted me to set up my Jupiter, Madame appropriate than his own handsome gallery. This was, as we should say in...
Tuscany, a loggia, or, more exactly, a large lobby; it ought indeed to be called a lobby, because what we mean by loggia is open at one side. The hall was considerably longer than 100 paces, decorated, and very rich with pictures from the hand of that admirable Rosso, our Florentine master. Among the pictures were arranged a great variety of sculptured works, partly in the round, and partly in bas-relief. The breadth was about twelve paces. Now Bologna had brought all his antiques into this gallery, wrought with great beauty in bronze, and had placed them in a handsome row upon their pedestals; and they were, as I have said, the choicest of the Roman antiquities. Into this same gallery I took my Jupiter; and when I saw that grand parade, so artfully planned, I said waited for the coming of the King. The Jupiter was raising his thunderbolt with the right hand in the act to hurl it; his left hand held the globe of the world. Among the flames of the thunderbolt I had detained the King till nightfall, wishing to do one of two mischiefs, either to prevent his coming, or else to spoil the effect of my work by its being shown off after dark; but as God has promised to those who trust in Him, it turned out exactly opposite to her calculations; for when night came, I set fire to the torch, which standing higher than the head of Jupiter, shed light from above and showed the statue far better than by daytime.

his brother-in-law, Madame Marguerite his daughter, [2] and several against me. When the King appeared, I made my prentice Ascanio push the
Jupiter toward his Majesty. As it moved smoothly forwards, my cunning in
its turn was amply rewarded, for this gentle motion made the figure seem
alive; the antiques were left in the background, and my work was the
is by far the finest thing that has ever been seen; and I, although I am
an amateur and judge of art, could never have conceived the hundredth
seemed as though they could not praise my masterpiece enough. Madame
all those fine bronzes from the antique behind there? In those consists
the King advanced, and the others with him. After casting a glance at
the bronzes, which were not shown to advantage from the light being
him a great service; for the comparison of these admirable statues
demonstrates the immeasurable superiority of his work in beauty and in
art. Benvenuto deserves to be made much of, for his performances do not
a show by daylight; besides, one had to consider that I had put a veil
upon my statue to conceal its faults. I had indeed flung a gauze veil
with elegance and delicacy over a portion of my statue, with the view of
augmenting its majesty. This, when she had finished speaking, I lifted
from beneath, uncovering the handsome genital members of the god; then
tore the veil to pieces with vexation. She imagined I had disclosed
those parts of the statue to insult her. The King noticed how angry she
was, while I was trying to force some words out in my fury; so he wisely
you to speak; hold your tongue, and you shall have a thousand times more
in a rage; this made her grumble with redoubled spite; and the King
departed sooner than he would otherwise have done, calling aloud,
I LEFT the Jupiter there, meaning to depart the next morning. Before I took horse, one thousand crowns were paid me, partly for my salary, and partly on account of monies I had disbursed. Having received this sum, I returned with a light heart and satisfied to Paris. No sooner had I reached home and dined with merry cheer, than I called for all my wardrobe, which included a great many suits of silk, choice furs, and also very fine cloth stuffs. From these I selected presents for my workpeople, giving each something according to his own desert, down to the servant-girls and stable-boys, in order to encourage them to aid me heartily.

Being then refreshed in strength and spirits, I attacked the great statue of Mars, which I had set up solidly upon a frame of well-connected woodwork. [1] Over this there lay a crust of plaster, about the eighth of a cubit in thickness, carefully modelled for the flesh of the Colossus. Lastly, I prepared a great number of moulds in separate pieces to compose the figure, intending to dovetail them together in accordance with the rules of art; and this task involved no
difficulty.

I will not here omit to relate something which may serve to give a
notion of the size of this great work, and is at the same time highly
comic. It must first be mentioned that I had forbidden all the men who
lived at my cost to bring light women into my house or anywhere within
the castle precincts. Upon this point of discipline I was extremely
strict. Now may lad Ascanio loved a very handsome girl, who returned his
passion. One day she gave her mother the slip, and came to see Ascanio
at night. Finding that she would not take her leave, and being driven to
last upon the plan of installing her inside the statue. There, in the
head itself, he made her up a place to sleep in; this lodging she
occupied some time, and he used to bring her forth at whiles with
secrecy at night. I meanwhile having brought this part of the Colossus
almost to completion, left it alone, and indulged my vanity a bit by
exposing it to sight; it could, indeed be seen by more than half Paris.
The neighbours, therefore, took to climbing their house-roofs, and
crowds came on purpose to enjoy the spectacle. Now there was a legend in
the city that my castle had from olden times been haunted by a spirit,
though I never noticed anything to confirm this belief; and folk in
movements to and fro from being perceptible through its eye-holes; this
made stupid people say that the ghost had got into the body of the
figure, and was setting its eyes in motion, and its mouth, as though it
were about to talk. Many of them went away in terror; others, more
incredulous, came to observe the phenomenon, and when they were unable
credence in a spirit—not guessing that there was a spirit there, and
sound young flesh to boot.

Note 1. This was what he called the Colossus above, p. 310. He meant it
for the fountain of Fontainebleau. See p. 295.

Note 2. Properly, 'Le Moine Bourru,' the ghost of a monk dressed in
drugget ('bure'). Le Petit Nesle had a bad reputation on account of the
murders said to have been committed there in the fourteenth century by
Queen Jeanne, wife of Philip V.

XLIII

ALL this while I was engaged in putting my door together, with its
several appurtenances. As it is no part of my purpose to include in this
autobiography such things as annalists record, I have omitted the coming
whole army. [1] At the time when these events took place, his Majesty
sought my advice with regard to the instantaneous fortification of
Paris. He came on purpose to my house, and took me all round the city;
and when he found that I was prepared to fortify the town with
expedition on a sound plan, he gave express orders that all my
suggestions should be carried out. His Admiral was directed to command
the citizens to obey me under pain of his displeasure.
rather than from any proof of his ability, for he was a man of little

made it sound like Monsignore Asino Bue. [2] This animal then referred

summon Girolamo Bellarmato without loss of time. [3] He was an engineer

journey distant from the capital. He came at once, and set the work of
fortification going on a very tedious method, which made me throw the
job up. If the Emperor had pushed forward at this time, he might easily
have taken Paris. People indeed said that, when a treaty of peace was

anybody else, betrayed the King. [4] I shall pass this matter over
without further words, since it has nothing to do with the plan of my
'Memoirs.' Meanwhile, I worked diligently at the door, and finished the
vase, together with two others of middling size, which I made of my own
silver. At the end of those great troubles, the King came to take his
ease awhile in Paris.

That accursed woman seemed born to be the ruin of the world. I ought
therefore to think myself of some account, seeing she held me for her
mortal enemy. Happening to speak one day with the good King about my
matters, she abused me to such an extent that he swore, in order to
appease her, he would take no more heed of me thenceforward than if he
had never set eyes upon my face. These words were immediately brought me
by a page of Cardinal Ferrara, called Il Villa, who said he had heard
the King utter them. I was infuriated to such a pitch that I dashed my
tools across the room and all the things I was at work on, made my
arrangements to quit France, and went upon the spot to find the King.
When he had dined, I was shown into a room where I found his Majesty in
the company of a very few persons. After I had paid him the respects due
to kings, he bowed his head with a gracious smile. This revived hope in
me; so I drew nearer to his Majesty, for they were showing him some
things in my own line of art; and after we had talked awhile about such
matters, he asked if I had anything worth seeing at my house, and next
inquired when I should like him to come. I replied that I had some
pieces ready to show his Majesty, if he pleased, at once. He told me to
go home and he would come immediately.

Note 1. Toward the end of August 1544, the Imperial army advanced as far
as Epernay, within twenty leagues of Paris.

Note 2. 'i. e.,' ass-ox, 'Ane-et-bo.'

Note 3. Girolamo Bellarmati, a learned mathematicians and military
architect, banished from Siena for political reasons. He designed the
harbour of Havre.

in her jealousy of the Dauphin and Diane de Poitiers, played false, and
enabled the Imperialists to advance beyond Epernay.

XLIV
he was bound, adding that she would accompany him; but when he informed
her, she told him that she would not go, and begged him as a special
favour not to go himself that day. She had to return to the charge more
not come to visit me that day. Next morning I went to his Majesty at the
same hour; and no sooner had he caught sight of me, than he swore it was
his intention to come to me upon the spot. Going then, according to his
her influence had not been able to divert him from his purpose; so she
began with that biting tongue of hers to say the worst of me that could
be insinuated against a deadly enemy of this most worthy crown of
France. The good King appeased her by replying that the sole object of
his visit was to administer such a scolding as should make me tremble in
my shoes. This he swore to do upon his honour. Then he came to my house,
and I conducted him through certain rooms upon the basement, where I had
put the whole of my great door together. Upon beholding it, the King was
struck with stupefaction, and quite lost his cue for reprimanding me, as
without finding some opportunity for scolding; so he began in this wise:

though full of talent, ought always to bear in mind; it is that you
cannot bring your great gifts to light by your own strength alone; you
show your greatness only through the opportunities we give you. Now you
ought to be a little more submissive, not so arrogant and headstrong. I
remember that I gave you express orders to make me twelve silver
statues; and this was all I wanted. You have chosen to execute a
salt-cellar, and vases and busts and doors, and a heap of other things,
which quite confounded me, when I consider how you have neglected my
wishes and worked for the fulfillment of your own. If you mean to go on
in this way, I shall presently let you understand what is my own method
of procedure when I choose to have things done in my own way. I tell
you, therefore, plainly: do your utmost to obey my commands; for if you

lips, seeing him shake his head, frown, and gesticulate, now with one
hand and now with the other. The whole company of attendants, therefore,
quaked with fear for me; but I stood firm, and let no breath of fear
pass over me.

XLV

WHEN he had wound up this sermon, agreed upon beforehand with his

I admit that all that you have said is true. Only, in reply, I protest
that my heart has ever been, by day and night, with all my vital forces,
bent on serving you and executing your commands. If it appears to your
Majesty that my actions contradict these words, let your Majesty be sure
that Benvenuto was not at fault, but rather possibly my evil fate or
adverse fortune, which has made me unworthy to serve the most admirable
prince who ever blessed this earth. Therefore I crave your pardon. I was
under the impression, however, that your Majesty had given me silver for
one statue only; having no more at my disposal, I could not execute
others; so, with the surplus which remained for use, I made this vase,
to show your Majesty the grand style of the ancients. Perhaps you never
had seen anything of the sort before. As for the salt-cellar, I thought,
if my memory does not betray me, that your Majesty on one occasion
ordered me to make it of your own accord. The conversation falling upon
something of the kind which had been brought for your inspection, I
showed you a model made by me in Italy; you, following the impulse of your own mind only, had a thousand golden ducats told out for me to execute the piece withal, thanking me in addition for my hint; and what is more, I seem to remember that you commended me highly when it was completed. As regards the door, it was my impression that, after we had chanced to speak about it at some time or other, your Majesty gave orders to your chief secretary, M. Villerois, from whom the order passed to M. de Marmagne and M. de la Fa, to this effect, that all these gentlemen should keep me going at the work, and see that I obtained the necessary funds. Without such commission I should certainly not have been able to advance so great an undertaking on my own resources. As for the bronze heads, the pedestal of Jupiter and other such-like things, I will begin by saying that I cast those heads upon my own account, in order to become acquainted with French clays, of which, as a foreigner, I had no previous knowledge whatsoever. Unless I had made the experiment, I could not have set about casting those large works. Now, touching the pedestals, I have to say that I made them because I judged them necessary to the statues. Consequently, in all that I have done, I expressed wishes. It is indeed true that I set that huge Colossus up to satisfy my own desire, paying for it from my own purse, even to the point which it has reached, because I thought that, you being the great King you are, and I the trifling artist that I am, it was my duty to erect for your glory and my own a statue, the like of which the ancients never saw. Now, at the last, having been taught that God is not inclined to make me worthy of so glorious a service, I beseech your Majesty, instead of the noble recompense you had in mind to give me for my labours, bestow upon me only one small trifle of your favour, and
therewith the leave to quit your kingdom. At this instant, if you
condescend to my request, I shall return to Italy, always thanking God

XLVI

THE KING stretched forth his own hands and raised me very graciously.

Then he told me that I ought to continue in his service, and that all
that I had done was right and pleasing to him. Turning to the lords in

speaking, although his speech had been entirely in my favour, I again
thanked him respectfully, repeating, however, my request for leave to
travel; for the heat of my indignation had not yet cooled down. His
Majesty, feeling that I set too little store upon his unwonted and
extraordinary condescension, commanded me with a great and terrible
voice to hold my tongue, unless I wanted to incur his wrath; afterwards
he added that he would drown me in gold, and that he gave me the leave I
asked; and over and above the works he had commissioned, [1] he was very
well satisfied with what I had done on my account in the interval; I
should never henceforth have any quarrels with him, because he knew my
character; and for my part, I too ought to study the temper of his
Majesty, as my duty required. I answered that I thanked God and his
Majesty for everything; then I asked him to come and see how far I had
advanced the Great Colossus. So he came to my house, and I had the
statue uncovered; he admired it extremely, and gave orders to his
secretary to pay me all the money I had spent upon it, be the sum what
it might, provided I wrote the bill out in my own hand. Then he departed
Note 1. The MSS. in this phrase vary, and the meaning is not quite
use of the word 'dipoi.'

AFTER returning to his palace, he called to mind the words I had spoken
in our previous interview, some of which were so excessively humble, and
others so proud and haughty, that they caused him no small irritation.

Monsignor di San Polo, a great baron of France. [1] This man had always
professed much friendship for me in the past, and certainly, on that
occasion, he showed his good-will, after the French fashion, with great
cleverness. It happened thus: the King in the course of a long
conversation complained that the Cardinal of Ferrara, to whose care he
had entrusted me, never gave a thought to my affairs; so far as he was
concerned, I might have decamped from the realm; therefore he must
certainly arrange for committing me to some one who would appreciate me
better, because he did not want to run a farther risk of losing me. At
these words Monsieur de Saint Paul expressed his willingness to
undertake the charge, saying that if the King appointed him my guardian,
he would act so that I should never have the chance to leave the
kingdom. The King replied that he was very well satisfied, if only Saint
Paul would explain the way in which he meant to manage me. Madame sat by
with an air of sullen irritation and Saint Paul stood on his dignity,
Benvenuto of yours by the neck, and thus you would keep him for ever in
richly deserved it. The King, to keep them company, began to laugh, and
said he had no objection to Saint Paul hanging me, if he could first
produce my equal in the arts; and although I had not earned such a fate,
he gave him full liberty and license. In this way that day ended, and I
came off safe and sound, for which may God be praised and thanked.

XLVIII

THE KING had now made peace with the Emperor, but not with the English,
and these devils were keeping us in constant agitation. [1] His Majesty
had therefore other things than pleasure to attend to. He ordered Piero
Strozzi to go with ships of war into the English waters; but this was a
very difficult undertaking, even for that great commander, without a
paragon in his times in the art of war, and also without a paragon in
his misfortunes. Several months passed without my receiving money or
commissions; accordingly, I dismissed my work people with the exception
of the two Italians, whom I set to making two big vases out of my own
silver; for these men could not work in bronze. After they had finished
these, I took them to a city which belonged to the Queen of Navarre; it

[2] On arriving at this place, I found that the King was indisposed; and
the Cardinal of Ferrara told his Majesty that I was come. He made no
answer, which obliged me to stay several days kicking my heels. Of a
truth, I never was more uncomfortable in my life; but at last I

inspection. He was excessively delighted, and when I saw him in good

homier, I begged his Majesty to grant me the favour of permitting me to
travel into Italy; I would leave the seven months of my salary which
were due, and his Majesty might condescend to pay me when I required
money for my return journey. I entreated him to grant this petition,
seeing that the times were more for fighting than for making statues;
moreover, his Majesty had allowed a similar license to Bologna the
painter, wherefore I humbly begged him to concede the same to me. While
I was uttering these words the King kept gazing intently on the vases,
and from time to time shot a terrible glance at me; nevertheless, I went
on praying to the best of my ability that he would favour my petition.
All of a sudden he rose angrily from his seat, and said to me in

then departed.

I went up to the Cardinal of Ferrara, who was present, and besought him,
since he had already conferred upon me the great benefit of freeing me
from prison in Rome, with many others besides, to do me this one favour
more of procuring for me leave to travel into Italy. He answered that he
should be very glad to do his best to gratify me in this matter; I might
leave it without farther thought to him, and even if I chose, might set
off at once, because he would act for the best in my interest with the
King. I told the Cardinal that since I was aware his Majesty had put me
under the protection of his most reverend lordship, if he gave me leave,
I felt ready to depart, and promised to return upon the smallest hint
from his reverence. The Cardinal then bade me go back to Paris and wait
for me; if his Majesty refused to let me go, he would without fail
inform me; but if I received no letters, that would be a sign that I
might set off with an easy mind.

had taken Boulogne four days earlier. Peace between France and England
was not concluded till June 7, 1546.

Note 2. Argentan, the city of the Duchy of Alencon. Margaret, it will be
death retained his fiefs.

XLIX

I OBEYED the Cardinal, and returned to Paris, where I made excellent
cases for my three silver vases, After the lapse of twenty days, I began
my preparations, and packed the three vases upon a mule. This animal had
been lent me for the journey to Lyons by the Bishop of Pavia, who was
now once more installed in my castle.

Then I departed in my evil hour, together with Signor Ippolito Gonzaga,
at that time in the pay of the King, and also in the service of Count
Galeotto della Mirandola. Some other gentlemen of the said count went
with us, as well as Lionardo Tedaldi, our fellow-citizen of Florence.

I made Ascanio and Pagolo guardians of my castle and all my property,
including two little vases which were only just begun; those I left behind in order that the two young men might not be idle. I had lived very handsomely in Paris, and therefore there was a large amount of costly household furniture: the whole value of these effects exceeded 1500 crowns. I bade Ascanio remember what great benefits I had bestowed upon him, and that up to the present he had been a mere thoughtless lad; the time was now come for him to show the prudence of a man; therefore I thought fit to leave him in the custody of all my goods, as also of my honour. If he had the least thing to complain of from those brutes of Frenchmen, he was to let me hear at once, because I would take post and fly from any place in which I found myself, not only to discharge the great obligations under which I lay to that good King, but also to defend my honour. Ascanio replied with the tears of a thief and things which a good son is bound to perform for a good father will I a little French lad.

friends of mine, made a visit to my castle. The rascally fellows began vases; if not, they would themselves despatch a messenger to get them back, and do me some great mischief. The Bishop and Messer Guido were much more frightened than was necessary; so they sent that traitor Ascanio by the post off on the spot. He made his appearance before me about midnight. I had not been able to sleep, and kept revolving sad property, my castle? Oh, what a fate is this of mine, which forces me to take this journey! May God grant only that the Cardinal is not of one
WHILE I was thus dismally debating with myself, I heard Ascanio calling me. On the instant I jumped out of bed, and asked if he brought good or must only send back those three vases, for the rascally treasurers keep absolutely send them back. For the rest you need have no anxiety, but immediately, two of them being my own property, together with the silver and much else besides. [1] I had meant to take them to the Cardinal of carry them into Italy, everybody knows quite well that it is impossible to export money, gold, or silver from France without special license. Consider, therefore, whether I could have crossed the frontier with those three great vases, which, together with their cases, were a whole great value and the highest beauty, I felt uneasiness in case the King should die, and I had lately left him in a very bad state of health;

Well, to cut the story short, I sent back the mule with the vases, and other things of importance; then, upon the following morning, I travelled forward with the company I have already mentioned, nor could I, through the whole journey, refrain from sighing and weeping.

before whose eyes the truth lies open! Thou knowest that my object in this journey is only to carry alms to six poor miserable virgins and
their mother, my own sister. They have indeed their father, but he is very old, and gains nothing by his trade; I fear, therefore, lest they might too easily take to a bad course of life. Since, then, I am performing a true act of piety, I look to Thy Majesty for aid and

We were one day distant from Lyons, and it was close upon the hour of twenty-two, when the heavens began to thunder with sharp rattling claps, although the sky was quite clear at the time. [2] I was riding a cross-bow shot before my comrades. After the thunder the heavens made a noise so great and horrible that I thought the last day had come; so I reined in for a moment, while a shower of hail began to fall without a drop of water. A first hail was somewhat larger than pellets from a popgun, and when these struck me, they hurt considerably. Little by little it increased in size, until the stones might be compared to balls from a crossbow. My horse became restive with fright; so I wheeled round, and returned at a gallop to where I found my comrades taking refuge in a fir-wood. The hail now grew to the size of big lemons. I began to sing a Miserere; and while I was devoutly uttering this psalm to God, there fell a stone so huge that it smashed the thick branches of the pine under which I had retired for safety. Another of the hailstones hit my horse upon the head, and almost stunned him; one struck me also, but not directly, else it would have killed me. In like manner, poor old Lionardo Tedaldi, who like me was kneeling on the ground, received so shrewd a blow that he fell grovelling upon all fours. When I saw that the fir bough offered no protection, and that I ought to act as well as to intone my Misereres, I began at once to wrap my mantle round my head. At the same time I cried to Lionardo, who was shrieking for succour,
raged for some while, but at last it stopped; and we, who were pounded
black and blue, scrambled as well as we could upon our horses. Pursuing
the way to our lodging for the night, we showed our scratches and
bruises to each other; but about a mile farther on we came upon a scene
of devastation which surpassed what we had suffered, and defies
description. All the trees were stripped of their leaves and shattered;
the beasts in the field lay dead; many of the herdsman had also been
killed; we observed large quantities of hailstones which could not have
been grasped with two hands. Feeling then that we had come well out of a
great peril, we acknowledged that our prayers to God and Misereres had
helped us more than we could have helped ourselves. Returning thanks to
God, therefore, we entered Lyons in the course of the next day, and
tarried there eight days. At the end of this time, being refreshed in
strength and spirits, we resumed our journey, and passed the mountains
without mishap. On the other side I bought a little pony, because the
baggage which I carried had somewhat overtired my horses.

vases: 'the silver and everything pertaining to them.'

air blazed with lightnings.' Goethe takes it as I do above.

LI

AFTER we had been one day in Italy, the Count Galeotto della Mirandola
joined us. He was travelling by post; and stopping where we were, he
told me that I had done wrong to leave France; I ought not to journey forwards, for, if I returned at once, my affairs would be more prosperous than ever. On the other hand, if I persisted in my course, I was giving the game up to my enemies, and furnishing them with opportunities to do me mischief. By returning I might put a stop to their intrigues; and those in whom I placed the most confidence were just the men who played most traitorously. He would not say more than that he knew very well all about it; and, indeed, the Cardinal of Ferrara had now conspired with the two rogues I left in charge of all my business. Having repeated over and over again that I ought absolutely to turn back, he went onward with the post, while I, being influenced by my companions, could not make my mind up to return. My heart was sorely torn asunder, at one moment by the desire to reach Florence as quickly as I could, and at another by the conviction that I ought to regain France. At last, in order to end the fever of this irresolution, I determined to take the post for Florence. I could not make arrangements with the first postmaster, but persisted in my purpose to press forward and endure an anxious life at Florence. 1

I parted company with Signor Ippolito Gonzaga, who took the route for Mirandola, while I diverged upon the road to Parma and Piacenza. In the latter city I met Duke Pier Luigi upon the street, who stared me in the face, and recognised me. [2] Since I knew him to have been the sole cause of my imprisonment in the castle of St. Angelo, the sight of him made my blood boil. Yet being unable to escape from the man, I decided to pay him my respects, and arrived just after he had risen from table in the company of the Landi, who afterwards murdered him. On my
appearance he received me with unbounded marks of esteem and affection, among which he took occasion to remark to the gentlemen present that I was the first artist of the world in my own line, and that I had been Benvenuto, I was deeply grieved for your misfortune, and knew well that you were innocent, but could not do anything to help you. In short, it was my father, who chose to gratify some enemies of yours, from whom, moreover, he heard that you had spoken ill of him. I am convinced this words he kept piling up and repeating until he seemed to be begging my pardon. Afterwards he inquired about the work I had been doing for his Most Christian Majesty; and on my furnishing him with details, he listened as attentively and graciously as possible. Then he asked if I had a mind to serve him. To this I replied that my honour would not allow me to do so; but that if I had completed those extensive works begun for the King, I should be disposed to quit any great prince merely

Hereby it may be seen how the power and goodness of God never leave unpunished any sort or quality of men who act unjustly toward the innocent. This man did what was equivalent to begging my pardon in the presence of those very persons who subsequently took revenge on him for me and many others whom he had massacred. Let then no prince, however are doing, and who have cruelly maltreated me, as I shall relate at the proper time. I do not write these things in any worldly spirit of boasting, but only to return thanks to God, my deliverer in so many trials. In those too which daily assail me, I always carry my complaint to Him, and call on Him to be my defender. On all occasions, after I
have done my best to aid myself; if I lose courage and my feeble forces fail, then is the great might of God manifested, which descends unexpectedly on those who wrongfully injure their neighbours, or neglect the grave and honourable charge they have received from Him.

Note 1. The text here is obscure. The words 'venire a tribulare' might chosen another interpretation in the text, as more consonant with the i. 112, 'andando a tribolare la vita tua.'

Note 2. Pier Luigi Farnese was not formally invested with the Duchy of Parma and Piacenza until September 1545. Cellini, therefore, gives him this title as Duke of Castro. He was assassinated on September 10, 1547. The Landi, among other noblemen of the duchy, took part in a conspiracy his intolerable misgovernment and infamous private life.

LII

WHEN I returned to my inn, I found that the Duke had sent me abundance to eat and drink of very excellent quality. I made a hearty meal, then mounted and rode toward Florence. There I found my sister with six daughters, the eldest of whom was marriageable and the youngest still at nurse. Her husband, by reason of divers circumstances in the city, had lost employment from his trade. I had sent gems and French jewellery, more than a year earlier, to the amount of about two thousand ducats,
and now brought with me the same wares to the value of about one
thousand crowns. I discovered that, whereas I made them an allowance of
four golden crowns a month, they always drew considerable sums from the
current sale of these articles. My brother-in-law was such an honest
fellow, that, fearing to give me cause for anger, he had pawned nearly
everything he possessed, and was devoured by interest, in his anxiety to
leave my monies untouched. It seems that my allowance, made by way of
charity, did not suffice for the needs of the family. When then I found
him so honest in his dealings, I felt inclined to raise his pension; and
it was my intention, before leaving Florence, to make some arrangement
for all of his daughters. 1

Note 1. Though this paragraph is confused, the meaning seems to be that
sale of jewellery, and got into debt, because his allowance was
inadequate, and he was out of work.]

LIII

THE DUKE OF FLORENCE at this time, which was the month of August 1545,
had retired to Poggio a Cajano, ten miles distant from Florence. Thither
then I went to pay him my respects, with the sole object of acting as
duty required, first because I was a Florentine, and next because my
forefathers had always been adherents of the Medicean party, and I
yielded to none of them in affection for this Duke Cosimo. As I have
said, then, I rode to Poggio with the sole object of paying my respects,
and with no intention of accepting service under him, as God, who does
all things well, did then appoint for me.

When I was introduced, the Duke received me very kindly; then he and the Duchess put questions concerning the works which I had executed for the King. [1] I answered willingly and in detail. After listening to my story, he answered that he had heard as much, and that I spoke the recompense for such great and noble masterpieces! Friend Benvenuto, if you feel inclined to execute something for me too, I am ready to pay you far better than that King of yours had done, for whom your excellent

I described the deep obligations under which I lay to his Majesty, who first obtained my liberation from that iniquitous prison, and afterwards supplied me with the means of carrying out more admirable works than any artist of my quality had ever had the chance to do. While I was thus speaking, my lord the Duke writhed on his chair, and seemed as though he could not bear to hear me to the end. Then, when I had concluded, he

that will astonish you, provided the fruits of your labours give me

with desire to show the noble school [2] of Florence that, after leaving her in youth, I had practised other branches of the art than she imagined, gave answer to the Duke that I would willingly erect for him in marble or in bronze a mighty statue on his fine piazza. He replied that, for a first essay, he should like me to produce a Perseus; he had long set his heart on having such a monument, and he begged me to begin a model for the same. [3] I very gladly set myself to the task, and in a few weeks I finished my model, which was about a cubit high, in yellow wax and very delicately finished in all its details. I had made it with
The Duke returned to Florence, but several days passed before I had an opportunity of showing my model. It seemed indeed as though he had never set eyes on me or spoken with me, and this caused me to augur ill of my future dealings with his Excellency. Later on, however, one day after dinner, I took it to his wardrobe, where he came to inspect it with the Duchess and a few gentlemen of the court. No sooner had he seen it than he expressed much pleasure, and extolled it to the skies; wherefrom I gathered some hope that he might really be a connoisseur of art. After having well considered it for some time, always with greater little model, Benvenuto, with the same perfection on a large scale, it lord, upon the piazza are now standing works by the great Donatello and the incomparable Michel Angelo, the two greatest men who have ever lived since the days of the ancients. [5] But since your Excellence encourages my model with such praise, I feel the heart to execute it at least declaration; the Duke protesting that he understood these matters perfectly, and was quite aware what could be done. I rejoined that my achievements would resolve his dubitations and debates; I was absolutely sure of being able to perform far more than I had promised for his Excellency, but that he must give me means for carrying my work out, else I could not fulfil my undertaking. In return for this his Excellency bade me formulate my demands in a petition, detailing all my requirements; he would see them liberally attended to.
It is certain that if I had been cunning enough to secure by contract all I wanted for my work, I should not have incurred the great troubles which came upon me through my own fault. But he showed the strongest desire to have the work done, and the most perfect willingness to arrange preliminaries. I therefore, not discerning that he was more a merchant than a duke, dealt very frankly with his Excellency, just as if I had to do with a prince, and not with a commercial man. I sent in my petition, to which he replied in large and ample terms. The memorandum validity and compacts between us of any value do not rest upon words or writings; the whole point is that I should succeed in my work according to my promise; and if I so succeed, I feel convinced that your most illustrious Excellency will very well remember what you have engaged to acting and of speaking that he and the Duchess began to treat me with extraordinary marks of favour.

Note 1. This Duchess was Eleonora di Toledo, well known to us through

Note 2. This school was the Collegio dei Maestri di Belle Arti in Florence, who had hitherto known of Cellini mainly as a goldsmith.

Note 3. Cosimo chose the subject of Perseus because it symbolised his own victory over the Gorgon of tyrannicide and Republican partisanship.

overbearing usurper, already decorated the Florentine piazza. Until lately, both of these masterpieces stood together there with the Perseus...
of Cellini.

Note 4. This is probably the precious model now existing in the Bargello Palace at Florence, in many points more interesting than the completed

Note 6. It is difficult to give the exact sense of ‘pertanto’ and above.

LIV

BEING now inflamed with a great desire to begin working, I told his Excellency that I had need of a house where I could install myself and erect furnaces, in order to commence operations in clay and bronze, and also, according to their separate requirements, in gold and silver. I knew that he was well aware how thoroughly I could serve him in those several branches, and I required some dwelling fitted for my business. In order that his Excellency might perceive how earnestly I wished to work for him, I had already chosen a convenient house, in a quarter much to my liking. [1] As I did not want to trench upon his Excellency for money or anything of that sort, I had brought with me from France two jewels, with which I begged him to purchase me the house, and to keep them until I earned it with my labour. These jewels were excellently executed by my workmen, after my own designs. When he had inspected them
with minute attention, he uttered these spirited words, which clothed my

signed a rescript underneath the petition I had drawn up, and which I
have always preserved among my papers. The rescript ran as follows:

thought that this would secure me in possession of the house; being over
and above convinced that my performances must far exceed what I promised.

His Excellency committed the execution of these orders to his majordomo,
who was named Ser Pier Francesco Riccio. [3] The man came from Prato,
described my requirements, for there was a garden adjoining the house,
on which I wanted to erect a workshop. He handed the matter over to a
paymaster, dry and meagre, who bore the name of Lattanzio Gorini. This

he sent me stones, sand, and lime enough to build perhaps a pigeon-house
with careful management. When I saw how coldly things were going

heart by noticing how many thousand ducats had recently been squandered
upon ugly pieces of bad sculpture turned out by that beast of a Buaccio
Bandinelli. [4] So I rallied my spirits and kept prodding at Lattanzio
Gorini, to make him go a little faster. It was like shouting to a pack
of lame donkeys with a blind dwarf for their driver. Under these
difficulties, and by the use of my own money, I had soon marked out the
foundations of the workshop and cleared the ground of trees and vines,
labouring on, according to my wont, with fire, and perhaps a trifle of
impatience.
On the other side, I was in the hands of Tasso the carpenter, a great
friend of mine, who had received my instructions for making a wooden
framework to set up the Perseus. This Tasso was a most excellent
craftsman, the best, I believe, who ever lived in his own branch of art.
[5] Personally, he was gay and merry by temperament; and whenever I went
to see him, he met me laughing, with some little song in falsetto on his
lips. Half in despair as I then was, news coming that my affairs in
France were going wrong, and these in Florence promising but ill through
the luke-warmness of my patron, I could never stop listening till half
the song was finished; and so in the end I used to cheer up a little
with my friend, and drove away, as well as I was able, some few of the
gloomy thoughts which weighed upon me.

Note 1. This house is in the Via del Rosaio, entered from Via della
Pergola, No. 6527.

Note 2. The petition and the rescript are in existence, and confirm

Note 3. Varchi, 'St. Fior.,' lib. XV. 44, gives to this man the
character of a presumptuous conceited simpleton.

Note 4. Cellini calls this man, his bitter foe and rival, 'Buaccio' or
the 'great ox, blockhead,' instead of Baccio, which is shortened for
Bartolommeo.
favoured artists, in a fresco of the Palazzo Vecchio at Florence. See Plon, p. 124.

LV

I HAD got all the above-mentioned things in order, and was making vigorous preparations for my great undertaking--indeed a portion of the lime had been already used--when I received sudden notice to appear

hall of the clock. [1] On entering, I paid him marked respect, and he received me with the greatest stiffness. Then he asked who had installed me in the house, and by whose authority I had begun to build there, saying he marvelled much that I had been so headstrong and foolhardy. I answered that I had been installed in the house by his Excellency, and that his lordship himself, in the name of his Excellency, had given the

When I had thus spoken, the brute turned upon me with still greater tartness, vowing that neither I nor any of those whom I had mentioned

majordomo, so long as your lordship [2] chooses to use language befitting the high office which you hold, I shall revere you, and speak to you as respectfully as I do to the Duke; if you take another line

flew into such a rage that I thought he meant to go mad upon the spot, anticipating the time ordained by Heaven for him to do so. [3] Pouring forth a torrent of abuse, he roared out that he was surprised at himself
for having let me speak at all to a man of his quality. Thereupon my

Riccio! I will tell you what sort of men are my equals, and who are

with a spasm, while he raised his voice and repeated the same words in a
still more insulting tone. I, too, assumed an air of menace, and
matching his own arrogance with something of the same sort, told him
plainly that men of my kind were worthy to converse with popes and
emperors, and great kings, and that perhaps there were not two such men
alive upon this earth, while ten of his sort might be met at every
doorway. On hearing these words he jumped upon a window-seat in the hall
there, and defied me to repeat what I had said. I did so with still
greater heat and spirit, adding I had no farther mind to serve the Duke,
and that I should return to France, where I was always welcome. The
brute remained there stupefied and pale as clay; I went off furious,
resolved on leaving Florence; and would to God that I had done so!

The Duke cannot, I think, have been informed at once of this diabolical
scene, for I waited several days without hearing from him. Giving up all
thoughts of Florence, except what concerned the settlement of my

well as I could with the small amount of money I had brought, and then
to return to France and never set my foot in Italy again. This being my
firm purpose, I had no intention to ask leave of the Duke or anybody,
but to decamp as quickly as I could; when one morning the majordomo, of
his own accord, sent very humbly to entreat my presence, and opened a
long pedantic oration, in which I could discover neither method, nor
elegance, nor meaning, nor head, nor tail. I only gathered from it that
he professed himself a good Christian, wished to bear no man malice, and
Hearing this, I stood a while on guard, and made no answer, being firmly resolved not to engage myself. When he saw that I refused to reply, he would gladly reply, and told him to report to the Duke that I could not accept a position inferior to that of any one employed by him as artist.

upon these terms, adding that what I might earn in addition by the merit of my performances, could be given after they were seen; that point I left entirely to the good judgment of his Excellency. Thus, then, against my will, I pieced the broken thread again, and set to work; the Duke continually treating me with the highest imaginable marks of favour.

Note 1. One of the rooms in the Palazzo Vecchio, so called because the by Lorenzo della Volpaia, stood there.

Note 2. It was the custom at that epoch to address princes by the title of 'Signore' or 'Vostra Signoria;' gentlemen (armigeri) had the title of 'Messer;' simple 'Ser' was given to plebeians with some civil or ecclesiastical dignity.

Note 3. Vasari, in his 'Life of Montorsoli,' says in effect that this Riccio died about 1559, after having been insane several years.
I RECEIVED frequent letters from France, written by my most faithful friend Messer Guido Guidi. As yet they told nothing but good news; and Ascanio also bade me enjoy myself without uneasiness, since, if anything happened, he would let me know at once.

Now the King was informed that I had commenced working for the Duke of subject to my two workmen, both of whom replied that I kept writing I was well off where I was, adding they thought I did not want to re-enter the service of his Majesty. Incensed by these presumptuous words, which the thievish brigands brought matters exactly to the pass they desired; for if I had returned to France, they would have become mere workmen under me once more, whereas, while I remained away, they were their own masters and in my place; consequently, they did everything in their power to prevent my coming back.

LVII

WHILE the workshop for executing my Perseus was in building, I used to work in a ground-floor room. Here I modelled the statue in plaster, giving it the same dimensions as the bronze was meanst to have, and intending to cast it from this mould. But finding that it would take rather long to carry it out in this way, I resolved upon another expedient, especially as now a wretched little studio had been erected,
brick on brick, so miserably built that the mere recollection of it
gives me pain. So then I began the figure of Medusa, and constructed the
skeleton in iron. Afterwards I put on the clay, and when that was
modelled, baked it.

I had no assistants except some little shopboys, among whom was one of
great beauty; he was the son of a prostitute called La Gambetta. I made
use of the lad as a model, for the only books which teach this art are
the natural human body. Meanwhile, as I could not do everything alone, I
looked about for workmen in order to put the business quickly through;
but I was unable to find any. There were indeed some in Florence who
would willingly have come, but Bandinello prevented them, and after
keeping me in want of aid awhile, told the Duke that I was trying to
entice his work-people because I was quite incapable of setting up so
great a statue by myself. I complained to the Duke of the annoyance
which the brute gave me, and begged him to allow me some of the
labourers from the Opera. [1] My request inclined him to lend ear to

utmost by myself alone. The labour was enormous: I had to strain every
muscle night and day; and just then the husband of my sister sickened,
six girls of all ages, on my hands. This was the first great trial I
endured in Florence, to be made the father and guardian of such a
distressed family.

Note 1. That is, the Opera del Duomo, or permanent establishment for
attending to the fabric of the Florentine Cathedral.
IN my anxiety that nothing should go wrong, I sent for two hand-labourers to clear my garden of rubbish. They came from Ponte Vecchio, the one an old man of sixty years, the other a young fellow of eighteen. After employing them about three days, the lad told me that the old man would not work, and that I had better send him away, since, beside being idle, he prevented his comrade from working. The little I had to do there could be done by himself, without throwing money away on other people. The youth was called Bernardino Mannellini, of Mugello. When I saw that he was so inclined to labour, I asked whether he would enter my service, and we agreed upon the spot. He groomed my horse, gardened, and soon essayed to help me in the workshop, with such success that by degrees he learned the art quite nicely. I never had a better assistant than he proved. Having made up my mind to accomplish the whole lying, and that I could get on famously without his workpeople.

Just at this time I suffered slightly in the loins, and being unable to couple of young goldsmiths called Gianpagolo and Domenico Poggini, [1] who made a little golden cup under my direction. It was chased in bas-relief with figures and other pretty ornaments, and his Excellency meant it for the Duchess to drink water out of. He furthermore commissioned me to execute a golden belt, which I enriched with gems and delicate masks and other fancies. The Duke came frequently into the wardrobe, and took great pleasure in watching me at work and talking to
me. When my health improved, I had clay brought, and took a portrait of his Excellency, considerably larger than life-size, which I modelled while he stayed with me for pastime. He was highly delighted with this piece, and conceived such a liking for me that he earnestly begged me to take up my working quarters in the palace, selecting rooms large enough for my purpose, and fitting them up with furnaces and all I wanted, for he greatly enjoyed watching the processes of art. I replied that this was impossible; I should not have finished my undertakings in a hundred years.

Note 1. These two brothers were specially eminent as die-casters. Gianpagolo went to Spain, and served Philip II.

LIX

THE DUCHESS also treated me with extraordinary graciousness, and would have been pleased if I had worked for her alone, forgetting Perseus and everything besides. I for my part, while these vain favours were being showered upon me knew only too well that my perverse and biting fortune could not long delay to send me some fresh calamity, because I kept ever before my eyes the great mistake I had committed while seeking to do a good action. I refer to my affairs in France. The King could not swallow the displeasure he felt at my departure; and yet he wanted me to return, if only this could be brought about without concessions on his part. I thought that I was entirely in the right, and would not bend submissively, because I judged that if I wrote in humble terms, those
enemies of mine would say in their French fashion that I had confessed myself to blame, and that certain misdoings with which they wrongfully taxed me were proved true. Therefore I stood upon my honour, and wrote in terms of haughty coldness, which was precisely what those two traitors, my apprentices, most heartily desired. In my letters to them I boasted of the distinguished kindness shown me in my own birthplace by a prince and princess the absolute masters of Florence. Whenever they received one of these despatches, they went to the King, and besieged his Majesty with entreaties for the castle upon the same terms as he had granted it to me. The King, who was a man of great goodness and perspicacity, would never consent to the presumptuous demands of those scoundrels, since he scented the malignity of their aims. Yet, wishing to keep them in expectation, and to give me the opportunity of coming back, he caused an angry letter to be written to me by his treasurer, Messer Giuliano Buonaccorsi, a burgher of Florence. The substance was as follows: If I wanted to preserve the reputation for honesty which I had hitherto enjoyed, it was my plain duty, after leaving France with no cause whatsoever, to render an account of all that I had done and dealt with for his Majesty.

The receipt of this letter gave me such pleasure that, if I had consulted my own palate, I could not have wished for either more or less. I sat down to write an answer, and filled nine pages of ordinary paper. In this document I described in detail all the works which I had executed, and all the adventures I had gone through while performing them, and all the sums which had been spent upon them. The payments had treasurers; and I could show receipts from all the men into whose hands
they passed, whether for goods supplied or labour rendered. I had not pocketed one penny of the money, nor had I received any reward for my completed works. I brought back with me into Italy nothing but some marks of favour and most royal promises, truly worthy of his Majesty.

appointed for my maintenance in France, seven hundred golden crowns of which are still due, inasmuch as I abstained from drawing them until I could employ them on my return-journey: yet knowing that malicious foes out of their envious hearts have played some knavish trick against me, I feel confident that truth will prevail. I take pride in his Most Christian Majesty and am not moved by avarice. I am indeed aware of having performed for him far more than I undertook; and albeit the promised reward has not been given me, my one anxiety is to remain in been. If your Majesty entertains the least doubt upon this point, I will fly to render an account of my conduct, at the risk even of my life. But noticing in what slight esteem I am held I have had no mind to come back and make an offer of myself, knowing that I shall never lack for bread whithersoever I may go. If, however, I am called for, I will always despatching it, I took it to the Duke, who read it with interest; then I sent it into France, addressed to the Cardinal of Ferrara.

LX

ABOUT this time Bernardone Baldini, [1] broker in jewels to the Duke, brought a big diamond from Venice, which weighed more than thirty-five carats. Antonio, son of Vittorio Landi, was also interested in getting
the Duke to purchase it. [2] The stone had been cut with a point; but since it did not yield the purity of lustre which one expects in such a diamond, its owners had cropped the point, and, in truth, it was not exactly fit for either point or table cutting. [3] Our Duke, who greatly delighted in gems, though he was not a sound judge of them, held out good hopes to the rogue Bernardaccio that he would buy this stone; and the fellow, wanting to secure for himself alone the honour of palming it off upon the Duke of Florence, abstained from taking his partner Antonio Landi into the secret. Now Landi had been my intimate friend from called me aside (it was just before noon at a corner of the Mercato will show you a diamond, which he seems disposed to buy; you will find it a big stone. Pray assist the purchase; I can give it for seventeen thousand crowns. I feel sure he will ask your advice; and if you see professed great confidence in being able to complete the bargain for the jewel at that price. In reply, I told him that if my advice was taken, I would speak according to my judgment, without prejudice to the diamond.

workshop for several hours; and about a week after this conversation with Antonio Landi he showed me one day after dinner the diamond in question, which I immediately recognised by its description, both as to form and weight. I have already said that its water was not quite transparent, for which reason it had been cropped; so, when I found it of that kind and quality, I felt certainly disinclined to recommend its acquisition. However, I asked his Excellency what he wanted me to say; because it was one thing for jewellers to value a stone after a prince
had bought it, and another thing to estimate it with a view to purchase.
He replied that he bought it, and that he only wanted my opinion. I did
not choose to abstain from hinting what I really thought about the
stone. Then he told me to observe the beauty of its great facets. [4] I
answered that this feature of the diamond was not so great a beauty as
his Excellency supposed, but came from the point having been cropped. At
these words my prince, who perceive that I was speaking the truth, made
a wry face, and bade me give good heed to valuing the stone, and saying
what I thought it worth. I reckoned that, since Landi had offered it to
me for 17,000 crowns, the Duke might have got it for 15,000 at the
highest; so, noticing that he would take it ill if I spoke the truth, I
made my mind up to uphold him in his false opinion, and handing back the

you attend to maintaining the credit of your diamond, while I attend to
understanding my trade. But pray tell me at least how much you paid, in
order that I may learn to understand it according to the way of your

Having thus spoken he departed. Giovanpagolo and Domenico Poggini, the
goldsmiths, were present; and Bachiacca, the embroiderer, who was
working in an adjacent room, ran up at the noise. [5] I told them that I
should never have advised the Duke to purchase it; but if his heart was
set on having it, Antonio Landi had offered me the stone eight days ago
for 17,000 crowns. I think I could have got it for 15,000 or less. But
the Duke apparently wishes to maintain his gem in credit; for when
Antonio Landi was willing to let it go at that price, how the devil can
Bernardone have played off such a shameful trick upon his Excellency?

Never imagining that the matter stood precisely as the Duke averred, we
laughingly made light of his supposed credulity.

Note 1. Varchi and Ammirato both mention him as an excellent jeweller.

Note 2. Antonio Landi was a Florentine gentleman, merchant, and author.
A comedy of his called 'Commodo' is extant.

Note 3. Italians distinguished cut diamonds of three sorts: 'in tavola,
a faccette,' and 'in punta.' The word I have translated 'cropped' is
'ischericato,' which was properly applied to an unfrocked or degraded
ecclesiastic.

Note 4. 'Filetti,' the sharp lines which divide one facet from another.

friend in Rome. See p. 56. He enjoyed great reputation, and was praised
by Varchi in a sonnet for his mastery of embroidery.

LXI

MEANWHILE I was advancing with my great statue of Medusa. I had covered
the iron skeleton with clay, which I modelled like an anatomical
subject, and about half an inch thinner than the bronze would be. This I
baked well, and then began to spread on the wax surface, in order to complete the figure to my liking. [1] The Duke, who often came to inspect it, was so anxious lest I should not succeed with the bronze, that he wanted me to call in some master to case it for me.

He was continually talking in the highest terms of my acquirements and accomplishments. This made his majordomo no less continually eager to devise some trap for making me break my neck. Now his post at court gave him authority with the chief-constables and all the officers in the poor unhappy town of Florence. Only to think that a fellow from Prato, our hereditary foeman, the son of a cooper, and the most ignorant creature in existence, should have risen to such a station of influence, merely became Duke! Well, as I have said, he kept ever on the watch to serve me some ill turn; and finding that he could not catch me out on any side, he fell at last upon this plan, which meant mischief. He betook himself to Gambetta, the mother of my apprentice Cencio; and this precious pair together—that knave of a pedant and that rogue of a strumpet—invented a scheme for giving me such a fright as would make me leave Florence in hot haste. Gambetta, yielding to the instinct of her trade, went out, acting under the orders of that mad, knavish pedant, the majordomo—I must add that they had also gained over the Bargello, a Bolognese, whom the Duke afterwards dismissed for similar conspiracies. Well, one evening, after sunset, Gambetta came to my house with her son, and told me she had kept him several days indoors for my welfare. I answered that there was no reason to keep him shut up on my account; and laughing her whorish arts to scorn, I turned to the boy in her presence, and said
to keep the lad hidden in my house, because the Bargello was after him, and would seize him anywhere outside my house, but there they would not dare to touch him. I made answer that in my house lived my widowed sister and six girls of holy life, and that I wanted nobody else there. Upon that she related that the majordomo had given orders to the Bargello, and that I should certainly be taken up: only, if I would not harbour her son, I might square accounts by paying her a hundred crowns; the majordomo was her crony, and I might rest assured that she could work him to her liking, provided I paid down the hundred crowns. This shameful strumpet! Were it not for my good reputation, and for the innocence of this unhappy boy of yours here, I should long ago have cut your throat with the dagger at my side; and twice or thrice I have and many ugly blows to boot, I drove the woman and her son into the street.

Note 1. This is an important passage, which has not, I think, been
he now employed in preparing a mould for bronze-casting. First, it seems, he made a solid clay model, somewhat smaller than the bronze was meant to be. This he overlaid with wax, and then took a hollow mould of the figure thus formed. Farther on we shall see how he withdrew the wax from the hollow mould, leaving the solid model inside, with space enough between them for the metal to flow in.
WHEN I reflected on the roguery and power of that evil-minded pedant, I judged it best to give a wide berth to his infernal machinations; so early next morning I mounted my horse and took the road for Venice,
two thousand crowns. I took with me my servant Bernardino of Mugello; and when I reached Ferrara, I wrote word to his Excellency the Duke, that though I had gone off without being sent, I should come back again without being called for.

On arriving at Venice, and pondering upon the divers ways my cruel fortune took to torment me, yet at the same time feeling myself none the less sound in health and hearty, I made up my mind to fence with her according to my wont. While thus engrossed in thoughts about my own affairs, I went abroad for pastime through that beautiful and sumptuous city, and paid visits to the admirable painter Titian, and to Jacopo del Sansovino, our able sculptor and architect from Florence. The latter enjoyed an excellent appointment under the Signoria of Venice; and we had been acquainted during our youth in Rome and Florence. These two men of genius received me with marked kindness. The day afterwards I met me the warmest welcome which could be imagined, because we had known each other in Florence when I was coining for Duke Alessandro, and sojourned in the house of Messer Giuliano Buonaccorsi, and having nowhere else to go for pastime without the greatest peril of his life, he used to spend a large part of the day in my house, watching me working at the great pieces I produced there. As I was saying, our former acquaintance led him to take me by the hand and bring me to his
dwelling, where I found the Prior degli Strozzi, brother of my lord Peiro. While making good cheer together, they asked me how long I intended to remain in Venice, thinking that I was on my return journey into France. To these gentlemen I replied that I had left Florence on account of the events I have described above, and that I meant to go back after two or three days, in order to resume my service with the Duke. On hearing this, the Prior and Messer Lorenzo turned round on me with such sternness that I felt extremely uneasy; then they said to me:

well known; for if you go back to Florence, you will lose all that you have gained in France, and will earn nothing there but annoyances.

I made no answer to these words, and departed the next day as secretly as I was able, turning my face again towards Florence. In the meanwhile that infernal plot had come to a head and broken, for I had written to my great master, the Duke, giving him a full account of the causes of my escapade to Venice. I went to visit him without any ceremony, and was received with his usual reserve and austerity. Having maintained this attitude awhile, he turned toward me pleasantly, and asked where I had been. I answered that my heart had never moved one inch from his most illustrious Excellency, although some weighty reasons had forced me to go a roaming for a little while. Then softening still more in manner, he began to question me concerning Venice, and after this wise we conversed some space of time. At last he bade me apply myself to business, and complete his Perseus. So I returned home glad and light-hearted, and comforted my family, that is to say, my sister and her six daughters. Then I resumed my work, and pushed it forward as briskly as I could.
was himself assassinated by two Tuscan bravi in 1548. See 'Renaissance in Italy,' vol. vi. chap. 6.

LXIII

THE FIRST piece I cast in bronze was that great bust, the portrait of suffering from those pains in my back. [1] It gave much pleasure when it was completed, though my sole object in making it was to obtain experience of clays suitable for bronze-casting. I was of course aware that the admirable sculptor Donatello had cast his bronzes with the clay of Florence; yet it seemed to me that he had met with enormous difficulties in their execution. As I thought that this was due to some fault in the earth, I wanted to make these first experiments before I undertook my Perseus. From them I learned that the clay was good enough, but had not been well understood by Donatello, inasmuch as I could see that his pieces had been cast with the very greatest trouble. Accordingly, as I have described above, I prepared the earth by artificial methods, and found it serve me well, and with it I cast the bust; but since I had not yet constructed my own furnace, I employed that of Maestro Zanobi di Pagno, a bell-founder.

When I saw that this bust came out sharp and clean, I set at once to construct a little furnace in the workshop erected for me by the Duke, after my own plans and design, in the house which the Duke had given me.
No sooner was the furnace ready than I went to work with all diligence upon the casting of Medusa, that is, the woman twisted in a heap beneath the feet of Perseus. It was an extremely difficult task, and I was anxious to observe all the niceties of art which I had learned, so as not to lapse into some error. The first cast I took in my furnace succeeded in the superlative degree, and was so clean that my friends thought I should not need to retouch it. It is true that certain Germans and Frenchmen, who vaunt the possession of marvellous secrets, pretend that they can cast bronzes without retouching them; but this is really nonsense, because the bronze, when it has first been cast, ought to be worked over and beaten in with hammers and chisels, according to the manner of the ancients and also to that of the moderns—I mean such moderns as have known how to work in bronze.

The result of this casting greatly pleased his Excellency, who often came to my house to inspect it, encouraging me by the interest he showed to do my best. The furious envy of Bandinello, however, who kept always my first successes with a single figure or two proved nothing; I should never be able to put the whole large piece together, since I was new to the craft, and his Excellency ought to take good heed he did not throw his money away. These insinuations operated so efficiently upon the withdrawn. I felt compelled to complain pretty sharply to his necessary for my task, which makes me fear that your Excellency has lost confidence in me. Once more then I tell you that I feel quite able to execute this statue three times better than the model, as I have before
I COULD see that this speech made no impression on the Duke, for he kept silence; then, seized with sudden anger and a vehement emotion, I began school of the most noble talents. Yet when a man has come to know what he is worth, after gaining some acquirements, and wishing to augment the glory of his town and of his glorious prince, it is quite right that he should go and labour elsewhere. To prove the truth of these words, I need only remind your Excellency of Donatello and the great Lionardo da Vinci in the past, and of our incomparable Michel Angelo Buonarroti in the present; they augment the glory of your Excellency by their genius. I in my turn feel the same desire and hope to play my part like them; therefore, my lord, give me the leave to go. But beware of letting Bandinello quit you; rather bestow upon him always more than he demands; for if he goes into foreign parts, his ignorance is so presumptuous that he is just the man to disgrace our most illustrious school. Now grant me my permission, prince! I ask no further reward for my labours up to this he saw the firmness of my resolution, he turned with some irritation and to show those envious folk that I had it in me to execute the promised work. When I left his Excellency, I received some slight assistance; but this not being sufficient, I had to put my hand into my own purse, in
Domenico Poggini and his brother Gianpagolo were at work upon that
golden cup for the Duchess and the girdle I have already described. His
Excellency had also commissioned me to make a little model for a pendent
to set the great diamond which Bernardone and Antonio Landi made him buy. I tried to get out of doing it, but the Duke compelled me by all
sorts of kindly pressure to work until four hours after nightfall. He
kept indeed enticing me to push this job forward by daytime also; but I
would not consent, although I felt sure I should incur his anger. Now
one evening I happened to arrive rather later than usual, whereupon he
name; my name is Welcome! But, as I suppose your Excellency is joking, I
earnest. I had better look to my conduct, for it had come to his ears
that I relied upon his favour to take in first one man and then another.
I begged his most illustrious Excellency to name a single person whom I

listen to four words. It is true that he lent me a pair of old scales,
two anvils, and three little hammers, which articles I begged his
workman, Giorgio da Cortona, fifteen days ago, to fetch back. Giorgio
came for them himself. If your Excellency can prove, on referring to
those who have spoken these calumnies, or to others, that I have ever,
from the day of my birth till now, got any single thing by fraud from
anybody, be it in Rome or be it in France, then let your Excellency

mighty passion, he assumed the air of a prudent and benevolent lord,
as you say, I shall always receive you with the same kindness as
that the rascalities of Bernardone compel me to ask as a favor how much
that big diamond with the cropped point cost you. I hope to prove on

Mercato Nuovo, Antonio Landi, the son of Vittorio, begged me to induce
your Excellency to buy it, and at my first question he asked 16,000
ducats for the diamond; [2] now your Excellency knows what it has cost
you. Domenico Poggini and Gianpagolo his brother, who are present, will
confirm my words; for I spoke to them at once about it, and since that
time have never once alluded to the matter, because your Excellency told
me I did not understand these things, which made me think you wanted to
keep up the credit of your stone. I should like you to know, my lord,
that I do understand, and that, as regards my character, I consider
myself no less honest than any man who ever lived upon this earth. I
shall not try to rob you of eight or ten thousand ducats at one go, but
shall rather seek to earn them by my industry. I entered the service of
your Excellency as sculptor, goldsmith, and stamper of coin; but to blab

I say in self-defence; I do not want my fee for information. [3] If I
speak out in the presence of so many worthy fellows as are here, it is
because I do not wish your Excellency to believe what Bernardone tells

When he had heard this speech, the Duke rose up in anger, and sent for
Bernardone, who was forced to take flight as far as Venice, he and
Antonio Landi with him. The latter told me that he had not meant that
diamond, but was talking of another stone. So then they went and came
again from Venice; whereupon I presented myself to the Duke and spoke as
said about the tools he lent me is a lie. You had better put this to the

in smoke, and I heard not one more word about it. I applied myself to

finishing his jewel; and when I took it to the Duchess, her Grace said

that she esteemed my setting quite as highly as the diamond which

Bernardaccio had made them buy. She then desired me to fasten it upon

her breast, and handed me a large pin, with which I fixed it, and took

my leave in her good favour. [4] Afterwards I was informed that they had

the stone reset by a German or some other foreigner—whether truly or

show better in a less elaborate setting.

Note 1. Benvenuto and 'Malvenuto.'

Note 2. He forgets that he has said above that it was offered him by

Landi for 17,000 ducats.

fine, which came to the delator.

Note 4. It is worthy of notice that from this point onward the MS. is

written by Cellini in his own hand.
I believe have already narrated how Domenico and Giovanpagolo Poggini,

little golden vases, after my design, chased with figures in bas-relief,

and other ornaments of great distinction. I oftentimes kept saying to

I am ready to strike coins for your mint and medals with your portrait. 

I am willing to enter into competition with the ancients, and feel able 

to surpass them; for since those early days in which I made the medals  
of Pope Clement, I have learned so much that I can now produce far 

better pieces of the kind. I think I can also outdo the coins I struck 

for Duke Alessandro, which are still held in high esteem; in like manner 

I could make for you large pieces of gold and silver plate, as I did so 

often for that noble monarch, King Francis of France, thanks to the 

great conveniences he allowed me, without ever losing time for the 

never supplied me with conveniences or aid of any kind.

One day his most illustrious Excellency handed me several pounds weight 

and at the same time I wished to serve the Duke, so I entrusted the 

metal, together with my designs and models in wax, to a rascal called 

Piero di Martino, a goldsmith by trade. He set the work up badly, and 

moreover ceased to labour at it, so that I lost more time than if I had 

taken it in hand myself. After several months were wasted, and Piero 

would neither work nor put men to work upon the piece, I made him give 

it back. I moved heaven and earth to get back the body of the vase, 

which he had begun badly, as I have already said, together with the 

remainder of the silver. The Duke, hearing something of these disputes,
sent for the vase and the models, and never told me why or wherefore.
Suffice it to say, that he placed some of my designs in the hands of
divers persons at Venice and elsewhere, and was very ill served by them.

replied that everybody, nay, all Italy, knew well I was an excellent
goldsmith; but Italy had not yet seen what I could do in sculpture.
Among artists, certain enraged sculptors laughed at me, and called me

God shall grant me the boon of finishing my Perseus for that noble

at home, working day and night, not even showing my face in the palace.
I wished, however, to keep myself in favour with the Duchess; so I got
some little cups made for her in silver, no larger than two penny
milk-pots, chased with exquisite masks in the rarest antique style. When
I took them to her Excellency, she received me most graciously, and
repaid the gold and silver I had spent upon them. Then I made my suit to
her and prayed her tell the Duke that I was getting small assistance for
so great a work; I begged her also to warn him not to lend so ready an

Perseus. In reply to these lamentable complaints the Duchess shrugged

worked them, however, rather at a loss than profit.

LXVI
I NOW stayed at home, and went rarely to the palace, labouring with
great diligence to complete my statue. I had to pay the workmen out of
my own pocket; for the Duke, after giving Lattanzio Gorini orders to
discharge their wages, at the end of about eighteen months, grew tired,
and withdrew this subsidy. I asked Lattanzio why he did not pay me as
usual. The man replied, gesticulating with those spidery hands of his,

So I went home with despair at heart to my unlucky Perseus, not without
weeping, when I remembered the prosperity I had abandoned in Paris under
the patronage of that marvellous King Francis, where I had abundance of
all kinds, and here had everything to want for. Many a time I had it in
my soul to cast myself away for lost. One day on one of these occasions,
I mounted a nice nag I had, put a hundred crowns in my purse, and went
to Fiesole to visit a natural son of mine there, who was at nurse with
my gossip, the wife of one of my workpeople. When I reached the house, I
found the boy in good health, and kissed him, very sad at heart. On
taking leave, he would not let me go, but held me with his little hands
and a tempest of cries and tears. Considering that he was only two years
resolved, in the heat of my despair, if I met Bandinello, who went every
evening to a farm of his above San Domenico, that I would hurl him to
destruction; so I disengaged myself from my baby, and left the boy there
sobbing his heart out. Taking the road toward Florence, just when I
entered the piazza of San Domenico, Bandinello was arriving from the
other side. On the instant I decided upon bloodshed; but when I reached
the man and raised my eyes, I saw him unarmed, riding a sorry mule or
rather donkey, and he had with him a boy of ten years old. No sooner did he catch sight of me than he turned the colour of a corpse, and trembled from head to foot. Perceiving at once how base the business would be, I looked at me submissively and said nothing. Thereupon I recovered command of my faculties, and thanked God that His goodness had withheld me from so great an act of violence. Then, being delivered from that me to execute my work, I hope by its means to annihilate all my scoundrelly enemies; and thus I shall perform far greater and more

Having this excellent resolve in heart, I reached my home. At the end of three days news was brought me that my only son had been smothered by his nurse, my gossip, which gave me greater grief than I have ever had in my whole life. However, I knelt upon the ground, and, not without gavest me the child, and Thou hast taken him; for all Thy dealings I depriving me of reason; yet, according to my habit, I made a virtue of necessity, and adapted myself to circumstances as well as I was able.

LXVII

ABOUT this time a young fellow called Francesco, the son of a smith,

him work. I agreed, and sent him to retouch my Medusa, which had been new cast in bronze. After a fortnight he mentioned that he had been speaking with his master, that is, Bandinello, who told him, if I cared to make a marble statue, he would give me a fine block of stone. I
prove a stumbling block to him, for he keeps on provoking me, and does not bear in mind the great peril he ran upon the piazza of San Domenico.

Tell him I will have the marble by all means. I never speak about him, and the beast is perpetually causing me annoyance. I verily believe you came to work here at his orders for the mere purpose of spying upon me. Go, then, and tell him I insist on having the marble, even against his

LXVIII

MANY days had elapsed during which I had not shown my face in the palace, when the fancy took me to go there one morning just as the Duke was finishing his dinner. From what I heard, his Excellency had been talking of me that morning, commending me highly, and in particular praising my skill in setting jewels. Therefore, when the Duchess saw me, she called for me by Messer Sforza; [1] and on my presenting myself to her most illustrious Excellency, she asked me to set a little point-diamond in a ring, saying she wished always to wear it; at the same time she gave me the measure and the stone, which was worth about a hundred crowns, begging me to be quick about the work. Upon this the Benvenuto was formerly without his peer in this art; but now that he has abandoned it, I believe it will be too much trouble for him to make a little ring of the sort you want. I pray you, therefore, not to importune him about this trifle, which would be no trifle to him owing begged him to let me render this trifling service to the Duchess. Then I took the ring in hand, and finished it within a few days. It was meant
for the little finger; accordingly I fashioned four tiny children in the round and four masks, which figures composed the hoop. I also found room for some enamelled fruits and connecting links, so that the stone and setting went uncommonly well together. Then I took it to the Duchess, who told me graciously that I had produced a very fine piece, and that she would remember me. She afterwards sent the ring as a present to King Philip, and from that time forward kept charging me with commissions, so kindly, however, that I did my best to serve her, although I saw but very little of her money. God knows I had great need of that, for I was eager to finish my Perseus, and had engaged some journeymen, whom I paid out of my own purse. I now began to show myself more often than I had recently been doing.

Cosimo killed this man with his own hand in the year 1566.

LXIX

It happened on one feast-day that I went to the palace after dinner, and when I reached the clockroom, I saw the door of the wardrobe standing open. As I drew nigh it, the Duke called me, and after a friendly by my lord Stefano of Palestrina. [1] Open it, and let us see what it this is a statue in Greek marble, and it is a miracle of beauty. I must so fine a style among all the antiques I have inspected. If your Excellency permits, I should like to restore it--head and arms and feet.
I will add an eagle, in order that we may christen the lad Ganymede. It is certainly not my business to patch up statues, that being the trade of butchers, who do it in all conscience villainously ill; yet the art displayed by this great master of antiquity cries out to me to help in what consists the skill of this old master, which so excites your beauty of workmanship, the consummate science, and the rare manner displayed by the fragment. I spoke long upon these topics, and with the greater pleasure because I saw that his Excellency was deeply interested.

Note 1. Stefano Colonna, of the princely house of Palestrina. He was a general of considerable repute in the Spanish, French, and Florentine services successively.

WHILE I was thus pleasantly engaged in entertaining the Duke, a page happened to leave the wardrobe, and at the same moment Bandinello entered. When the Duke saw him, his countenance contracted, and he asked cast a glance upon the box, where the statue lay uncovered. Then breaking into one of his malignant laughs and wagging his head, he truth of what I have so often told your Excellency. You must know that the ancients were wholly ignorant of anatomy, and therefore their works saying; nay, indeed, I had turned my back on him. But when the brute had
Benvenuto, this is the exact opposite of what you were just now demonstrating with so many excellent arguments. Come and speak a word in must please to know that Baccio Bandinello is made up of everything bad, and thus has he ever been; therefore, whatever he looks at, be the thing superlatively excellent, becomes in his ungracious eyes as bad as can be. I, who incline to the good only, discern the truth with purer sense. Consequently, what I told your Excellency about this lovely statue is mere simple truth; whereas what Bandinello said is but a portion of the amusement; but Bandinello writhed and made the most ugly faces--his face itself being by nature hideous beyond measure--which could be imagined by the mind of man.

The Duke at this point moved away, and proceeded through some ground floor rooms, while Bandinello followed. The chamberlains twitched me by the mantle, and sent me after; so we all attended the Duke until he reached a certain chamber, where he seated himself, with Bandinello and me standing at his right hand and his left. I kept silence, and the among themselves about the speech I had made in the room above. So then uncovered my Hercules and Cacus, I verily believe a hundred sonnets were written on me, full of the worst abuse which could be invented by the displayed his Sacristy to view, with so many fine statues in it, the men of talent in our admirable school of Florence, always appreciative of truth and goodness, published more than a hundred sonnets, each vying with his neighbour to extol these masterpieces to the skies. [2] So
must know that it pains me to point out the faults of your statue; I
shall not, however, utter my own sentiments, but shall recapitulate what
kept making disagreeable remarks and gesticulating with his hands and
feet, until he enraged me so that I began again, and spoke far more
rudely than I should otherwise have done, if he had behaved with
shave the hair of your Hercules, there would not be skull enough left to
hold his brain; it says that it is impossible to distinguish whether his
features are those of a man or of something between a lion and an ox;
the face too is turned away from the action of the figure, and is so
badly set upon the neck, with such poverty of art and so ill a grace,
that nothing worse was ever seen; his sprawling shoulders are like the
the body are not portrayed from a man, but from a big sack full of
melons set upright against a wall. The loins seem to be modelled from a
bag of lanky pumpkins; nobody can tell how his two legs are attached to
that vile trunk; it is impossible to say on which leg he stands, or
which he uses to exert his strength; nor does he seem to be resting upon
both, as sculptors who know something of their art have occasionally set
the figure. It is obvious that the body is leaning forward more than
one-third of a cubit, which alone is the greatest and most insupportable
fault committed by vulgar commonplace pretenders. Concerning the arms,
they say that these are both stretched out without one touch of grace or
one real spark of artistic talents, just as if you had never seen a
naked model. Again, the right leg of Hercules and that of Cacus have got
one mass of flesh between them, so that if they were to be separated,
not only one of them, but both together, would be left without a calf at
the point where they are touching. They say, too, that Hercules has one
of his feet underground, while the other seems to be resting on hot

Note 1. Vasari confirms this statement. The statue, which may still be
seen upon the great piazza, is, in truth, a very poor performance. The
Florentines were angry because Bandinello had filched the commission
away from Michel Angelo. It was uncovered in 1534, and Duke Alessandro
had to imprison its lampooners.

Note 2. Cellini alludes of course to the Sacristy of S. Lorenzo,
designed by Michel Angelo, with the portraits of the Medici and statues
of Day, Night, Dawn, and Twilight.

THE FELLOW could not stand quiet to hear the damning errors of his Cacus
in their turn enumerated. For one thing, I was telling the truth; for
another, I was unmasking him to the Duke and all the people present, who
showed by face and gesture first their surprise, and next their

good draughtsman can never produce bad works; therefore I am inclined to

bystanders, he let his insolence get the better of him, and turned to me

others pursed their lips up and looked with knitted grows toward him.
The horrible affront half maddened me with fury; but in a moment I
madman! you exceed the bounds of decency. Yet would to God that I understood so noble an art as you allude to; they say that Jove used it with Ganymede in paradise, and here upon this earth it is practised by some of the greatest emperors and kings. I, however, am but a poor humble creature, who neither have the power nor the intelligence to

speech, the Duke and his attendants could control themselves no longer, but broke into such shouts of laughter that one never heard the like. You must know, gentle readers, that though I put on this appearance of pleasantry, my heart was bursting in my body to think that a fellow, the foulest villain who ever breathed, should have dared in the presence of so great a prince to cast an insult of that atrocious nature in my teeth; but you must also know that he insulted the Duke, and not me; for had I not stood in that august presence, I should have felled him dead to earth. When the dirty stupid scoundrel observed that those gentlemen kept on laughing, he tried to change the subject, and divert them from that if I wished to work in marble you would give me a block? I accepted he had flung at me, I lost my self-control, forgot I was in the presence you do not send the marble to my house, you had better look out for another world, for if you stay upon this earth I will most certainly rip the wind out of your carcass. [2] Then suddenly awaking to the fact that I was standing in the presence of so great a duke, I turned submissively follies of this man have blinded me for a moment to the glory of your
demurred that the man had promised to sent it home to me. The words that passed between us were awful, and I refused to take the stone in any other way. Next morning a piece of marble was brought to my house. On asking who had sent it, they told me it was Bandinello, and that this was the very block which he had promised. 3

Note 1. 'Oh sta cheto, sodomitaccio.'

Note 3. Vasari, in his 'Life of Bandinello,' gives a curious of the speeches which passed between the two rival artists. Yet he had latter has made Bandinello play a less witty part in the wordy strife than the former assigned him.

LXXII

I HAD it brought at once in to my studio, and began to chisel it. While I was rough-hewing the block, I made a model. But my eagerness to work in marble was so strong, that I had not patience to finish the model as correctly as this art demands. I soon noticed that the stone rang false beneath my strokes, which made me often-times repent commencing on it. Yet I got what I could out of the piece--that is, the Apollo and Hyacinth, which may still be seen unfinished in my workshop. While I was
took chisel and mallet, and went at it blithely. He asked about the
is all cracked, but I shall carve something from it in spite of that;
therefore I have not been able to settle the model, but shall go on

His Excellency sent to Rome post-haste for a block of Greek marble, in
order that I might restore his antique Ganymede, which was the cause of
that dispute with Bandinello. When it arrived, I thought it a sin to cut
it up for the head and arms and other bits wanting in the Ganymede; so I
provided myself with another piece of stone, and reserved the Greek
marble for a Narcissus which I modelled on a small scale in wax. I found
that the block had two holes, penetrating to the depth of a quarter of a
cubit, and two good inches wide. This led me to choose the attitude
which may be noticed in my statue, avoiding the holes and keeping my
figure free from them. But rain had fallen scores of years upon the
stone, filtering so deeply from the holes into its substance that the
marble was decayed. Of this I had full proof at the time of a great
inundation of the Arno, when the river rose to the height of more than a
cubit and a half in my workshop. [1] Now the Narcissus stood upon a
square of wood, and the water overturned it, causing the statue to break
in two above the breasts. I had to join the pieces; and in order that
the line of breakage might not be observed, I wreathed that garland of
flowers round it which may still be seen upon the bosom. I went on
working at the surface, employing some hours before sunrise, or now and
then on feast-days, so as not to lose the time I needed for my Perseus.

It so happened on one of those mornings, while I was getting some little
chisels into trim to work on the Narcissus, that a very fine splinter of
steel flew into my right eye, and embedded itself so deeply in the pupil
that it could not be extracted. I thought for certain I must lose the

Pilli, the surgeon, who obtained a couple of live pigeons, and placing
me upon my back across a table, took the birds and opened a large vein
they have beneath the wing, so that the blood gushed out into my eye. I
felt immediately relieved, and in the space of two days the splinter
came away, and I remained with eyesight greatly improved. Against the
feast of S. Lucia, [2] which came round in three days, I made a golden
eye out of a French crown, and had it presented at her shrine by one of
my six nieces, daughters of my sister Liperata; the girl was ten years
of age, and in her company I returned thanks to God and S. Lucia. For
some while afterwards I did not work at the Narcissus, but pushed my
Perseus forward under all the difficulties I have described. It was my
purpose to finish it, and then to bid farewell to Florence.

Note 1. Cellini alludes to a celebrated inundation of the year 1547.

Note 2. S. Lucy, I need hardly remark, is the patroness of the eyes. In
Italian art she is generally represented holding her own eyes upon a
plate.

LXXIII

HAVING succeeded so well with the cast of the Medusa, I had great hope
of bringing my Perseus through; for I had laid the wax on, and felt
confident that it would come out in bronze as perfectly as the Medusa.
The waxen model produced so fine an effect, that when the Duke saw it
and was struck with its beauty--whether somebody had persuaded him it
could not be carried out with the same finish in metal, or whether he
thought so for himself--he came to visit me more frequently than usual,

very little confidence you have in me; and I believe the reason of this
is that your most illustrious Excellency lends too ready an ear to my

a prince, not like an artist; for if your Excellency understood my trade
as well as you imagine, you would trust me on the proofs I have already
given. These are, first, the colossal bronze bust of your Excellency,
which is now in Elba; [1] secondly, the restoration of the Ganymede in
marble, which offered so many difficulties and cost me so much trouble,
that I would rather have made the whole statue new from the beginning;
thirdly, the Medusa, cast by me in bronze, here now before your

strength and skill than any of my predecessors in this fiendish art have
yet achieved. Look you, my lord! I constructed that furnace anew on
principles quite different from those of other founders; in addition to
many technical improvements and ingenious devices, I supplied it with
two issues for the metal, because this difficult and twisted figure
could not otherwise have come out perfect. It is only owing to my
intelligent insight into means and appliances that the statue turned out
as it did; a triumph judged impossible by all the practitioners of this
art. I should like you furthermore to be aware, my lord, for certain,
that the sole reason why I succeeded with all those great arduous works
in France under his most admirable Majesty King Francis, was the high
courage which that good monarch put into my heart by the liberal
allowances he made me, and the multitude of workpeople he left at my
disposal. I could have as many as I asked for, and employed at times
above forty, all chosen by myself. These were the causes of my having
there produced so many masterpieces in so short a space of time. Now
then, my lord, put trust in me; supply me with the aid I need. I am
confident of being able to complete a work which will delight your soul.
But if your Excellency goes on disheartening me, and does not advance me
the assistance which is absolutely required, neither I nor any man alive

Note 1. At Portoferraio. It came afterwards to Florence.

LXXIV

IT was as much as the Duke could do to stand by and listen to my
pleadings. He kept turning first this way and then that; while I, in
despair, poor wretched I, was calling up remembrance of the noble state
I held in France, to the great sorrow of my soul. All at once he cried:

of Medusa, so high up there in the grasp of Perseus, should ever come

your Excellency possessed that knowledge of the craft which you affirm
you have, you would not fear one moment for the splendid head you speak
of. There is good reason, on the other hand, to feel uneasy about this
these words, the Duke turned, half in anger, to some gentlemen in

with a touch of mockery, upon which his attendants did the like, and
can possibly produce in explanation of your statement, which may

sound an argument that your Excellency shall perceive the full force of

famously; but since it is not in the nature of fire to descend, and I
must force it downwards six cubits by artificial means, I assure your
Excellency upon this most convincing ground of proof that the foot
cannot possibly come out. It will, however, be quite easy for me to

thick as my leg; and so I might have forced the molten metal by its own
weight to descend so far. Now, my pipe, which runs six cubits to the

it was not worth the trouble and expense to make a larger; for I shall
easily be able to mend what is lacking. But when my mould is more than
half full, as I expect, from this middle point upwards, the fire
ascending by its natural property, then the heads of Perseus and Medusa

expounded these convincing arguments, together with many more of the
same kind, which it would be tedious to set down here, the Duke shook
his head and departed without further ceremony.

LXXV

ABANDONED thus to my own resources, I took new courage, and banished the
sad thoughts which kept recurring to my mind, making me often weep
bitter tears of repentance for having left France; for though I did so
only to revisit Florence, my sweet birthplace, in order that I might
charitably succour my six nieces, this good action, as I well perceived,
had been the beginning of my great misfortune. Nevertheless, I felt
convinced that when my Perseus was accomplished, all these trials would
be turned to high felicity and glorious well-being.

Accordingly I strengthened my heart, and with all the forces of my body
and my purse, employing what little money still remained to me, I set to
work. First I provided myself with several loads of pinewood from the
forests of Serristori, in the neighbourhood of Montelupo. While these
were on their way, I clothed my Perseus with the clay which I had
prepared many months beforehand, in order that it might be duly
seasoned. After making its clay tunic (for that is the term used in this
art) and properly arming it and fencing it with iron girders, I began to
draw the wax out by means of a slow fire. This melted and issued through
numerous air-vents I had made; for the more there are of these, the
better will the mould fill. When I had finished drawing off the wax, I
constructed a funnel-shaped furnace all round the model of my Perseus.
[1] It was built of bricks, so interlaced, the one above the other, that
numerous apertures were left for the fire to exhale at. Then I began to
lay on wood by degrees, and kept it burning two whole days and nights.
At length, when all the wax was gone, and the mould was well baked, I
set to work at digging the pit in which to sink it. This I performed
with scrupulous regard to all the rules of art. When I had finished that
part of my work, I raised the mould by windlasses and stout ropes to a
perpendicular position, and suspending it with the greatest care one
cubit above the level of the furnace, so that it hung exactly above the
middle of the pit, I next lowered it gently down into the very bottom of
the furnace, and had it firmly placed with every possible precaution for
its safety. When this delicate operation was accomplished, I began to
bank it up with the earth I had excavated; and, ever as the earth grew
higher, I introduced its proper air-vents, which were little tubes of
earthenware, such as folk use for drains and such-like purposes. [2] At
length, I felt sure that it was admirably fixed, and that the filling-in
of the pit and the placing of the air-vents had been properly performed.
I also could see that my work people understood my method, which
differed very considerably from that of all the other masters in the
trade. Feeling confident, then, that I could rely upon them, I next
turned to my furnace, which I had filled with numerous pigs of copper
and other bronze stuff. The pieces were piled according to the laws of
art, that is to say, so resting one upon the other that the flames could
play freely through them, in order that the metal might heat and liquefy
the sooner. At last I called out heartily to set the furnace going. The
logs of pine were heaped in, and, what with the unctuous resin of the
wood and the good draught I had given, my furnace worked so well that I
was obliged to rush from side to side to keep it going. The labour was
more than I could stand; yet I forced myself to strain every nerve and
muscle. To increase my anxieties, the workshop took fire, and we were
afraid lest the roof should fall upon our heads; while, from the garden,
such a storm of wind and rain kept blowing in, that it perceptibly
cooled the furnace.
Battling thus with all these untoward circumstances for several hours, and exerting myself beyond even the measure of my powerful constitution, I could at last bear up no longer, and a sudden fever, [3] of the utmost possible intensity, attacked me. I felt absolutely obliged to go and fling myself upon my bed. Sorely against my will having to drag myself away from the spot, I turned to my assistants, about ten or more in all, what with master-founders, hand-workers, country-fellows, and my own special journeymen, among whom was Bernardino Mannellini of Mugello, my dear Bernardino, that you observe the rules which I have taught you; do your best with all despatch, for the metal will soon be fused. You cannot go wrong; these honest men will get the channels ready; you will easily be able to drive back the two plugs with this pair of iron crooks; and I am sure that my mould will fill miraculously. I feel more ill than I ever did in all my life, and verily believe that it will kill me before a few hours are over. [4] Thus, with despair at heart, I left them, and betook myself to bed.

Note 1. This furnace, called 'manica,' was like a grain-hopper, so that the mould could stand upright in it as in a cup. The word 'manica' is the same as our 'manuch,' an antique form of sleeve.

Note 2. These air-vents, or 'sfiatatoi,' were introduced into the outer mould, which Cellini calls the 'tonaca,' or clay tunic laid upon the original model of baked clay and wax. They served the double purpose of drawing off the wax, whereby a space was left for the molten bronze to enter, and also of facilitating the penetration of this molten metal by
allowing a free escape of air and gas from the outer mould.

Note 4. Some technical terms require explanation in this sentence. The 'canali' or channels were sluices for carrying the molten metal from the furnace into the mould. The 'mandriani,' which I have translated by 'iron crooks,' were poles fitted at the end with curved irons, by which the openings of the furnace, 'plugs,' or in Italian 'spine,' could be partially or wholly driven back, so as to the molten metal flow through the channels into the mould. When the metal reached the mould, it entered in a red-hot stream between the 'tonaca,' or outside mould, and the ‘anima,’ or inner block, filling up exactly the space which had previously been occupied by the wax extracted by a method of slow burning alluded to above. I believe that the process is known as one hollow (‘la tonaca’), which gave shape to the bronze; one solid and rounded (‘la anima’), which stood at a short interval within the former, and regulated the influx of the metal. See above, p. 354, note.

LXXVI

NO sooner had I got to bed, than I ordered my serving-maids to carry food and wine for all the men into the workshop; at the same time I arguing that my illness would pass over, since it came from excessive fatigue. In this way I spent two hours battling with the fever, which
very notable manager and no less warm-hearted, kept chiding me for my
discouragement; but, on the other hand, she paid me every kind attention
which was possible. However, the sight of my physical pain and moral
dejection so affected her, that, in spite of that brave heart of hers,
she could not refrain from shedding tears; and yet, so far as she was
able, she took good care I should not see them. While I was thus
terribly afflicted, I beheld the figure of a man enter my chamber,
twisted in his body into the form of a capital S. He raised a
lamentable, doleful voice, like one who announces their last hour to men

sooner had I heard the shriek of that wretch than I gave a howl which
might have been heard from the sphere of flame. Jumping from my bed, I
seized my clothes and began to dress. The maids, and my lads, and every
one who came around to help me, got kicks or blows of the fist, while I

of treason, done by malice prepense! But I swear by God that I will sift
it to the bottom, and before I die will leave such witness to the world

When I had got my clothes on, I strode with soul bent on mischief toward
the workshop; there I beheld the men, whom I had left erewhile in such
high spirits, standing stupefied and downcast. I began at once and
willing to obey the directions I gave you, obey me now that I am with
you to conduct my work in person. Let no one contradict me, for in cases

had uttered these words, a certain Maestro Alessandro Lastricati broke
enterprise which the laws of art do not sanction, and which cannot
orders! We will obey your least commands, so long as life is left in
fall shortly dead upon the ground. I went immediately to inspect the
furnace, and found that the metal was all curdled; an accident which we
and fetch from the house of the butcher Capretta a load of young
oak-wood, which had lain dry for above a year; this wood had been
previously offered me by Madame Ginevra, wife of the said Capretta. So
soon as the first armfuls arrived, I began to fill the grate beneath the
furnace. [2] Now oak-wood of that kind heats more powerfully than any
other sort of tree; and for this reason, where a slow fire is wanted, as
in the case of gun-foundry, alder or pine is preferred. Accordingly,
when the logs took fire, oh! how the cake began to stir beneath that
awful heat, to glow and sparkle in a blaze! At the same time I kept
stirring up the channels, and sent men upon the roof to stop the
conflagration, which had gathered force from the increased combustion in
the furnace; also I caused boards, carpets, and other hangings to be set
up against the garden, in order to protect us from the violence of the
rain.

Note 1. 'Essersi fatto un migliaccio.'

Note 2. The Italian is 'bracciaiuola,' a pit below the grating, which
receives the ashes from the furnace.

LXXVII
WHEN I had thus provided against these several disasters, I roared out

the point of melting, they did my bidding, each fellow working with the
strength of three. I then ordered half a pig of pewter to be brought,
which weighed about sixty pounds, and flung it into the middle of the
cake inside the furnace. By this means, and by piling on wood and
stirring now with pokers and now with iron rods, the curdled mass
rapidly began to liquefy. Then, knowing I had brought the dead to life
again, against the firm opinion of those ignoramuses, I felt such vigour
fill my veins, that all those pains of fever, all those fears of death,
were quite forgotten.

All of a sudden an explosion took place, attended by a tremendous flash
of flame, as though a thunderbolt had formed and been discharged amongst
us. Unwonted and appalling terror astonished every one, and me more even
than the rest. When the din was over and the dazzling light
extinguished, we began to look each other in the face. Then I discovered
that the cap of the furnace had blown up, and the bronze was bubbling
over from its source beneath. So I had the mouths of my mould
immediately opened, and at the same time drove in the two plugs which
kept back the molten metal. But I noticed that it did not flow as
rapidly as usual, the reason being probably that the fierce heat of the
fire we kindled had consumed its base alloy. Accordingly I sent for all
my pewter platters, porringers, and dishes, to the number of some two
hundred pieces, and had a portion of them cast, one by one, into the
channels, the rest into the furnace. This expedient succeeded, and every
one could now perceive that my bronze was in most perfect liquefaction,
and my mould was filling; whereupon they all with heartiness and happy
cheer assisted and obeyed my bidding, while I, now here, now there, gave

Thy immeasurable power didst rise from the dead, and in Thy glory didst

and seeing my work finished, I fell upon my knees, and with all my heart
gave thanks to God.

After all was over, I turned to a plate of salad on a bench there, and
ate with hearty appetite, and drank together with the whole crew.
Afterwards I retired to bed, healthy and happy, for it was now two hours
before morning, and slept as sweetly as though I had never felt a touch
of illness. My good housekeeper, without my giving any orders, had
prepared a fat capon for my repast. So that, when I rose, about the hour
for breaking fast, she presented herself with a smiling countenance, and

think the blows and kicks you dealt us last night, when you were so
enraged, and had that demon in your body as it seemed, must have
frightened away your mortal fever! The fever feared that it might catch

anxiety and overwhelming labour, went at once to buy earthen vessels in
order to replace the pewter I had cast away. Then we dined together
joyfully; nay, I cannot remember a day in my whole life when I dined
with greater gladness or a better appetite.

After our meal I received visits from the several men who had assisted
me. They exchanged congratulations, and thanked God for our success,
saying they had learned and seen things done which other masters judged
impossible. I too grew somewhat glorious; and deeming I had shown myself
a man of talent, indulged a boastful humour. So I thrust my hand into my purse, and paid them all to their full satisfaction.

That evil fellow, my mortal foe, Messer Pier Francesco Ricci, majordomo of the Duke, took great pains to find out how the affair had gone. In answer to his questions, the two men whom I suspected of having caked my metal for me, said I was no man, but of a certainty some powerful devil, since I had accomplished what no craft of the art could do; indeed they did not believe a mere ordinary fiend could work such miracles as I in other ways had shown. They exaggerated the whole affair so much, possibly in order to excuse their own part in it, that the majordomo wrote an account to the Duke, who was then in Pisa, far more marvellous and full of thrilling incidents than what they had narrated.

LXXVIII

AFTER I had let my statue cool for two whole days, I began to uncover it by slow degrees. The first thing I found was that the head of Medusa had come out most admirably, thanks to the air-vents; for, as I had told the Duke, it is the nature of fire to ascend. Upon advancing farther, I discovered that the other head, that, namely, of Perseus, had succeeded no less admirably; and this astonished me far more, because it is at a considerably lower level than that of the Medusa. Now the mouths of the mould were placed above the head of Perseus and behind his shoulders; and I found that all the bronze my furnace contained had been exhausted in the head of this figure. It was a miracle to observe that not one
fragment remained in the orifice of the channel, and that nothing was wanting to the statue. In my great astonishment I seemed to see in this the hand of God arranging and controlling all.

I went on uncovering the statue with success, and ascertained that everything had come out in perfect order, until I reached the foot of the right leg on which the statue rests. There the heel itself was formed, and going farther, I found the foot apparently complete. This gave me great joy on the one side, but was half unwelcome to me on the other, merely because I had told the Duke that it could not come out. However, when I reached the end, it appeared that the toes and a little piece above them were unfinished, so that about half the foot was wanting. Although I knew that this would add a trifle to my labour, I was very well pleased, because I could now prove to the Duke how well I understood my business. It is true that far more of the foot than I expected had been perfectly formed; the reason of this was that, from causes I have recently described, the bronze was hotter than our rules of art prescribe; also that I had been obliged to supplement the alloy with my pewter cups and platters, which no one else, I think, had ever done before.

Having now ascertained how successfully my work had been accomplished, I lost no time in hurrying to Pisa, where I found the Duke. He gave me a most gracious reception, as did also the Duchess; and although the majordomo had informed them of the whole proceedings, their Excellencies deemed my performance far more stupendous and astonishing when they heard the tale from my own mouth. When I arrived at the foot of Perseus,
and said it had not come out perfect, just as I previously warned his Excellency, I saw an expression of wonder pass over his face, while he related to the Duchess how I had predicted this beforehand. Observing the princes to be so well disposed towards me, I begged leave from the Duke to go to Rome. He granted it in most obliging terms, and bade me return as soon as possible to complete his Perseus; giving me letters of recommendation meanwhile to his ambassador, Averardo Serristori. We were then in the first years of Pope Giulio de Monti. 1

Note 1. Gio Maria del Monte Sansovino was elected Pope, with the title of Julius III., in February 1550.

LXXIX

BEFORE leaving home, I directed my workpeople to proceed according to the method I had taught them. The reason of my journey was as follows. I had made a life-sized bust in bronze of Bindo Altoviti, [1] the son of Antonio, and had sent it to him at Rome. He set it up in his study, which was very richly adorned with antiquities and other works of art; but the room was not designed for statues or for paintings, since the windows were too low, so that the light coming from beneath spoiled the effect they would have produced under more favourable conditions. It happened one day that Bindo was standing at his door, when Michel Agnolo Buonarroti, the sculptor, passed by; so he begged him to come in and see his study. Michel Agnolo followed, and on entering the room and looking you in so fine a manner? You must know that that bust pleases me as
much, or even more, than those antiques; and yet there are many fine
things to be seen among the latter. If those windows were above instead
of beneath, the whole collection would show to greater advantage, and
your portrait, placed among so many masterpieces, would hold its own

Benvenuto, I have known you for many years as the greatest goldsmith of
whom we have any information; and henceforward I shall know you for a
sculptor of like quality. I must tell you that Master Bindo Altoviti
took me to see his bust in bronze, and informed me that you had made it.
I was greatly pleased with the work; but it annoyed me to notice that it
was placed in a bad light; for if it were suitably illuminated, it would
with the most affectionate and complimentary expressions towards myself;
and before I left for Rome, I showed it to the Duke, who read it with

and can persuade him to return to Florence, I will make him a member of
carried; but not wanting to make any mistake, I showed this to the Duke

deserves more than you have promised, and I will bestow on him still

the Duke was much offended with him.

Note 1. This man was a member of a very noble Florentine family. Born in
still exists in the Palazzo Altoviti at Rome.

Note 2. This was one of the three Councils created by Clement VII. in
1532, when he changed the Florentine constitution. It corresponded to a
me at once how he had shown his bronze bust to Michel Agnolo, and how the latter had praised it. So we spoke for some length upon this topic.

I ought to narrate the reasons why I had taken this portrait. Bindo had in his hands 1200 golden crowns of mine, which formed part of 5000 he had lent the Duke; 4000 were his own, and mine stood in his name, while I received that portion of the interest which accrued to me. [1] This led to my taking his portrait; and when he saw the wax model for the bust, he sent me fifty golden scudi by a notary in his employ, named Ser Giuliano Paccalli. I did not want to take the money, so I sent it back satisfied if you keep that sum of mine for me at interest, so that I may

I observed that he was ill disposed towards me, since, instead of treating me affectionately, according to his previous wont, he put on a stiff air; and although I was staying in his house, he was never good-humoured, but always surly. However, we settled our business in a few words. I sacrificed my pay for his portrait, together with the bronze, and we arranged that he should keep my money at 15 per cent. during my natural life.

Note 1. To make the sum correct, 5200 ought to have been lent the Duke.
while I was speaking with his Holiness, Messer Averardo Serristori, our
I think he would have agreed upon, and I should have been very glad to
return to Rome on account of the great difficulties which I had at
Florence. But I soon perceived that the ambassador had countermined me.

Then I went to visit Michel Agnolo Buonarroti, and repeated what I had
from leaving Rome. I rejoined that, as he had decided on the model of
that building, he could leave its execution to his man Urbino, who would
carry out his orders to the letter. I added much about future favours,
in the form of a message from the Duke. Upon this he looked me hard in
contented and was very well treated by his Excellency, he showed that he
was acquainted with the greater part of my annoyances, and gave as his
final answer that it would be difficult for him to leave Rome. To this I
added that he could not do better than to return to his own land, which
was governed by a prince renowned for justice, and the greatest lover of
the arts and sciences who ever saw the light of this world. As I have
remarked above, he had with him a servant of his who came from Urbino,
and had lived many years in his employment, rather as valet and
housekeeper than anything else; this indeed was obvious, because he had
acquired no skill in the arts. [2] Consequently, while I was pressing
Michel Agnolo with arguments he could not answer, he turned round
sharply to Urbino, as though to ask him his opinion. The fellow began to
These stupid words forced me to laugh, and without saying farewell, I lowered my shoulders and retired.

Note 1. His despatches form a valuable series of historical documents.
'Firenze,' Le Monnier, 1853.

Note 2. Upon the death of this Urbino, Michel Agnolo wrote a touching sonnet and a very feeling letter to Vasari.

LXXXII

THE MISERABLE bargain I had made with Bindo Altoviti, losing my bust and leaving him my capital for life, taught me what the faith of merchants is; so I returned in bad spirits to Florence. I went at once to the palace to pay my respects to the Duke, whom I found to be at Castello beyond Ponte a Rifredi. In the palace I met Messer Pier Francesco Ricci, the majordomo, and when I drew nigh to pay him the usual compliments, he with the same air of surprise, clapping his hands together, he cried:

form the least idea why the beast behaved in such an extraordinary manner to me.

Proceeding at once to Castello, and entering the garden where the Duke was, I caught sight of him at a distance; but no sooner had he seen me than he showed signs of surprise, and intimated that I might go about my
business. I had been reckoning that his Excellency would treat me with the same kindness, or even greater, as before I left for Rome; so now, when he received me with such rudeness. I went back, much hurt, to Florence. While resuming my work and pushing my statue forward, I racked my brains to think what could have brought about this sudden change in

the former what the matter was. He only replied with a sort of smile:

Duke, who received me with a kind of grudging grace, and asked me what I had been doing at Rome. To the best of my ability I maintained the

It was evident that he listened with attention; so I went on talking about Michel Agnolo Buonarroti. At this he showed displeasure; but

There can be no doubt that Ser Pier Francesco, the majordomo, must have served me some ill turn with the Duke, which did not, however, succeed; for God, who loves the truth, protected me, as He hath ever saved me, from a sea of dreadful dangers, and I hope will save me till the end of this my life, however full of trials it may be. I march forward, therefore, with a good heart, sustained alone by His divine power; nor let myself be terrified by any furious assault of fortune or my adverse stars. May only God maintain me in His grace!

LXXXIII

I MUST beg your attention now, most gracious reader, for a very terrible
I used the utmost diligence and industry to complete my statue, and went
goldsmiths who were working for his Excellency. Indeed, they laboured
mainly on designs which I had given them. Noticing that the Duke took
pleasure in seeing me at work and talking with me, I took it into my
head to go there sometimes also by day. It happened upon one of those
days that his Excellency came as usual to the room where I was occupied,
and more particularly because he heard of my arrival. His Excellency
entered at once into conversation, raising several interesting topics,
upon which I gave my views so much to his entertainment that he showed
more cheerfulness than I had ever seen in him before. All of a sudden,
one of his secretaries appeared, and whispered something of importance
in his ear; whereupon the Duke rose, and retired with the official into
another chamber. Now the Duchess had sent to see what his Excellency was

Duchess heard this, she came immediately to the wardrobe, and not
finding the Duke there, took a seat beside us. After watching us at work
a while, she turned to me with the utmost graciousness, and showed me a
necklace of large and really very fine pearls. On being asked by her
what I thought of them, I said it was in truth a very handsome ornament.

so I beg you, my dear Benvenuto, to praise them to him as highly as you

pearls belonged already to your most illustrious Excellency. Now that I
am aware you have not yet acquired them, it is right, nay, more, it is
my duty to utter what I might otherwise have refrained from saying,
namely, that my mature professional experience enables me to detect very
grave faults in the pearls, and for this reason I could never advise

them for six thousand crowns; and were it not for some of those trifling

I could not advise any one to bid up to five thousand crowns for it; for

of time must lose their freshness. Diamonds, rubies, emeralds, and
sapphires, on the contrary, never grow old; these four are precious

have a mind to possess these pearls; so, prithee, take them to the Duke,
and praise them up to the skies; even if you have to use some words
beyond the bounds of truth, speak them to do me service; it will be well

I have always been the greatest friend of truth and foe of lies: yet
compelled by necessity, unwilling to lose the favour of so great a
princess, I took those confounded pearls sorely against my inclination,
and went with them over to the other room, whither the Duke had

the rarest quality, and truly worthy of your Excellency; I do not
believe it would be possible to put together eighty pearls which could
show better than these do in a necklace. My counsel therefore is, that

pearls of the quality and goodness you affirm; I have seen the necklace,

pearls exceed in rarity and beauty any which were ever brought together

listening to all I said. Well, when I had praised the pearls a
thousandfold more warmly than I have described above, the Duke turned

that you have an excellent judgment in these matters. If the pearls are

as rare as you certify, I should not hesitate about their purchase,

partly to gratify the Duchess, and partly to possess them, seeing I have

always need of such things, not so much for her Grace, as for the

having once begun to tell fibs, I stuck to them with even greater

boldness; I gave all the colour of truth I could to my lies, confiding

in the promise of the Duchess to help me at the time of need. More than

two hundred crowns were to be my commission on the bargain, and the

Duchess had intimated that I should receive so much; but I was firmly

resolved not to touch a farthing, in order to secure my credit, and

convince the Duke I was not prompted by avarice. Once more his

you are consummate judge of these things; therefore, if you are the

flushed up to my eyes, which at the same time filled with tears, and

truth, I shall make a mortal foe of the Duchess; this will oblige me to

depart from Florence, and my enemies will begin at once to pour contempt

upon my Perseus, which I have announced as a masterpiece to the most

noble school of your illustrious Excellency. Such being the case, I

LXXXIV

THE DUKE was now aware that all my previous speeches had been, as it
engagement upon honour I replied by telling the truth according to my
judgment, namely, that the pearls were not worth above two thousand
crowns. The Duchess, thinking we had stopped talking, for we now were
speaking in as low a voice as possible, came forward, and began as

I have set my heart on them, and your Benvenuto here has said he never

Benvenuto, in whom you place such well-merited confidence, has told me

necklace, I shall be throwing my money away, inasmuch as the pearls are
neither round nor well-matched, and some of them are quite faded. To
prove that this is so, look here! look there! consider this one and then

Duchess cast a glance of bitter spite at me, and retired with a
threatening nod of her head in my direction. I felt tempted to pack off
at once and bid farewell to Italy. Yet my Perseus being all but
finished, I did not like to leave without exposing it to public view.
But I ask every one to consider in what a grievous plight I found myself!

The Duke had given orders to his porters in my presence, that if I
appeared at the palace, they should always admit me through his
apartments to the place where he might happen to be. The Duchess
commanded the same men, whenever I showed my face at that palace, to
drive me from its gates. Accordingly, no sooner did I present myself,
than these fellows left their doors and bade me begone; at the same time
they took good care lest the Duke should perceive what they were after;
for if he caught sight of me before those wretches, he either called me,
or beckoned to me to advance.

At this juncture the Duchess sent for Bernardone, the broker, of whom she had so often complained to me, abusing his good-for-nothingness and utter worthlessness. She now confided in him as she had previously done rascal presented himself before the Duke with that necklace in his hands. No sooner did the Duke set eyes on him than he bade him begone. But the rogue lifted his big ugly voice, which sounded like the braying

if by blowing out his cheeks or singing 'La Bella Frances-china,' [2] he could bring the Duke to make that purchase, then he gained the good grace of the Duchess, and to boot his own commission, which rose to some hundreds of crowns. Consequently he did blow out his chaps. The Duke smacked them with several hearty boxes, and, in order to get rid of him, struck rather harder than his wont was. The sound blows upon his cheeks not only reddened them above their natural purple, but also brought

my lord, a faithful servant of his prince, who tries to act rightly, and is willing to put up with any sort of bad treatment, provided only that

either to recompense the cuffs which he had dealt him, or for the

From this incident we may learn to know how evil Fortune exerts her rage against a poor right-minded man, and how the strumpet Luck can help a
miserable rascal. I lost the good graces of the Duchess once and for
me. He acquired that thumping fee for his commission, and to boot their
favour. Thus it will not serve us in this world to be merely men of
honesty and talent.

Note 2. A popular ballad of the time.

LXXXV

ABOUT this time the war of Siena broke out, [1] and the Duke, wishing to
fortify Florence, distributed the gates among his architects and
sculptors. I received the Prato gate and the little one of Arno, which
is on the way to the mills. The Cavaliere Bandinello got the gate of San
San Gallo, the sculptor, called Il Margolla, got the gate of Santa
Croce; and Giovan Battista, surnamed Il Tasso, the gate Pinti. [2] Other
bastions and gates were assigned to divers engineers, whose names I do
not recollect, nor indeed am I concerned with them. The Duke, who
certainly was at all times a man of great ability, went round the city
himself upon a tour of inspection, and when he had made his mind up, he
sent for Lattanzio Gorini, one of his paymasters. Now this man was to
some extent an amateur of military architecture; so his Excellency
commissioned him to make designs for the fortifications of the gates, and sent each of us his own gate drawn according to the plan. After examining the plan for mine, and perceiving that it was very incorrect in many details, I took it and went immediately to the Duke. When I tried to point out these defects, the Duke interrupted me and exclaimed that you should cede statuary, but in this art of fortification I choose that you should cede illustrious Excellency has taught me something even in my own fine art of statuary, inasmuch as we have always exchanged ideas upon that subject; I beg you then to deign to listen to me upon this matter of your fortifications, which is far more important than making statues. If I am permitted to discuss it also with your Excellency, you will be induced him to discuss the plans with me; and when I had clearly demonstrated that they were not conceived on a right method, he said:

for fortifying those two gates, and took them to him; and when he distinguished the true from the false system, he exclaimed good

Note 1. In the year 1552, when Piero Strozzi acted as general for the French King, Henri II., against the Spaniards. The war ended in the capitulation of Siena in 1555. In 1557 it was ceded by Philip II. to

Note 2. These artists, with the exception of pasqualino, are all known to us in the conditions described by Cellini. Francesco da San Gallo was
the son of Giuliano, and nephew of Antonio da San Gallo.

LXXXVI

THERE was on guard at the gate of Prato a certain Lombard captain; he was a truculent and stalwart fellow, of incredibly coarse speech, whose presumption matched his utter ignorance. This man began at once to ask me what I was about there. I politely exhibited my drawings, and took infinite pains to make him understand my purpose. The rude brute kept rolling his head, and turning first to one side and then to the other, shifting himself upon his legs, and twirling his enormous moustachios; to threaten me with his head, and, setting his left hand on the pommel

trouble to run you through the body than to build the bastion of this
drawing; for a number of honest folk, citizens of Florence, and others of them courtiers, came running up. The greater part of them rated the captain, telling him that he was in the wrong, that I was a man to give
would be the worse for him. Accordingly he went off on his own business, and I began with my bastion.

After setting things in order there, I proceeded to the other little
gate of Arno, where I found a captain from Cesena, the most polite, well-mannered man I ever knew in that profession. He had the air of a
gentle young lady, but at need he could prove himself one of the boldest
and bloodiest fighters in the world. This agreeable gentleman observed
me so attentively that he made me bashful and self-conscious; and seeing
that he wanted to understand what I was doing, I courteously explained
my plans. Suffice it to say, that we vied with each other in civilities,
which made me do far better with this bastion than with the other.

people struck such terror into the countryfolk of Prato that they began
to leave it in a body, and all their carts, laden with the household
goods of each family, came crowding into the city. The number of them
was so enormous, cart jostling with cart, and the confusion was so
great, that I told the guards to look out lest the same misadventure
should happen at this gate as had occurred at the gates of Turin; for if
we had once cause to lower the portcullis, it would not be able to
perform its functions, but must inevitably stick suspended upon one of
the waggons. When that big brute of a captain heard these words, he
replied with insults, and I retorted in the same tone. We were on the
point of coming to a far worse quarrel than before. However, the folk
kept us asunder; and when I had finished my bastions, I touched some
score of crowns, which I had not expected, and which were uncommonly
welcome. So I returned with a blithe heart to finish my Perseus.

LXXXVII

DURING those days some antiquities had been discovered in the country
be seen in the rooms adjacent to the great hall of the palace. [1]

bronze, had been brought to light; they were covered with earth and rust, and each of them lacked either head or hands or feet. The Duke amused his leisure hours by cleaning up these statuettes himself with certain little chisels used by goldsmiths. It happened on one occasion that I had to speak on business to his Excellency; and while we were talking, he reached me a little hammer, with which I struck the chisels the Duke held, and so the figures were disengaged from their earth and rust. In this way we passed several evenings, and then the Duke commissioned me to restore the statuettes. He took so much pleasure in these trifles that he made me work by day also, and if I delayed coming, he used to send for me. I very often submitted to his Excellency that if I left my Perseus in the daytime, several bad consequences would ensue. The first of these, which caused me the greatest anxiety, was that, seeing me spend so long a time upon my statue, the Duke himself might get disgusted; which indeed did afterwards happen. The other was that I had several journeymen who in my absence were up to two kinds of mischief; first, they spoilt my piece, and then they did as little work as possible. These arguments made his Excellency consent that I should

I had now conciliated the affection of his Excellency to such an extent, that every evening when I came to him he treated me with greater kindness. About this time the new apartments were built toward the lions; [2] the Duke then wishing to be able to retire into a less public part of the palace, fitted up for himself a little chamber in these new lodgings, and ordered me approach to it by a private passage. I had to
pass through his wardrobe, then across the stage of the great hall, and afterwards through certain little dark galleries and cabinets. The Duchess, however, after a few days, deprived me of this means of access by having all the doors upon the path I had to traverse locked up. The consequence was that every evening when I arrived at the palace, I had to wait a long while, because the Duchess occupied the cabinets for her personal necessities. [3] Her habit of body was unhealthy, and so I never came without incommoding her. This and other causes made her hate the very sight of me. However, notwithstanding great discomforts and were so precise, that no sooner did I knock at those doors, than they were immediately opened, and I was allowed to pass freely where I chose. The consequence was that occasionally, while walking noiselessly and unexpectedly through the private rooms, I came upon the Duchess at a highly inconvenient moment. Bursting then into such a furious storm of mending up those statuettes? Upon my word, this perpetual going and than to serve you loyally and with the strictest obedience. This work to which the Duke has put me will last several months; so tell me, most illustrious Excellency, whether you wish me not to come here any more. In that case I will not come, whoever calls me; nay, should the Duke himself send for me, I shall reply that I am ill, and by no means will I come, nor do I bid you to disobey the Duke; but I repeat that your work

Whether the Duke heard something of this encounter, or whatever the
continued, always with the same inconveniences, to put in an appearance on several successive evenings. Upon one occasion among others, arriving in my customary way, the Duke, who had probably been talking with the Duchess about private matters, turned upon me in a furious anger. I was

While I was passing onward, Don Garzia, then quite a little fellow, plucked me by the cape, and played with me as prettily as such a child

Note 1. Now in the Uffizzi.

Note 2. Lions from a very early period had always been kept in part of the Palazzo Vecchio.

LXXXVIII

WHILE I was working at these bagatelles, the Prince, and Don Giovanni, and Don Arnando, and Don Garzia kept always hovering around me, teasing

Another evening, after I had finished the small bronze figures which are wrought into the pedestal of Perseus, that is to say, the Jupiter,
work, and arranged them in a row, raised somewhat above the line of
vision, so that they produced a magnificent effect. The Duke heard of
this, and made his entrance sooner than usual. It seems that the person
who informed his Excellency praised them above their merit, using terms
came talking pleasantly with the Duchess about my doings. I rose at once
and went to meet them. With his fine and truly princely manner he
received me, lifting his right hand, in which he held as superb a

Excellency really mean that I should plant it in the garden of my house?

manner, with the best politeness I could use.

After this they both took seats in front of the statues, and for more
than two hours went on talking about nothing but the beauties of the
work. The Duchess was wrought up to such an enthusiasm that she cried
pedestal down there in the piazza, where they will run the risk of being
injured. I would much rather have you fix them in one of my apartments,
where they will be preserved with the respect due to their singular

but when I saw that she was determined I should not place them on the
pedestal where they now stand, I waited till next day, and went to the

were out riding, and having already prepared the pedestal, I had the
statues carried down, and soldered them with lead into their proper
niches. Oh, when the Duchess knew of this, how angry she was! Had it not
been for the Duke, who manfully defended me, I should have paid dearly
for my daring. Her indignation about the pearls, and now again about
this matter of the statues, made her so contrive that the Duke abandoned
his amusements in our workshop. Consequently I went there no more, and
was met again with the same obstructions as formerly whenever I wanted
to gain access to the palace.

Note 1. The Prince was Don Francesco, then aged twelve; Don Giovanni was
ten, Don Garzia was six, and Don Ferdinando four.

LXXXIX

I RETURNED to the Loggia, [1] whither my Perseus had already been
brought, and went on putting the last touches to my work, under the old
difficulties always; that is to say, lack of money, and a hundred
untoward accidents, the half of which would have cowed a man armed with
adamant.

However, I pursued my course as usual; and one morning, after I had
heard mass at San Piero Scheraggio, that brute Bernardone, broker,
passed by me. No sooner had he got outside the church than the dirty pig
let fly four cracks which might have been heard from San Miniato. I

in the mint; while I stationed myself inside my housedoor, which I left
ajar, setting a boy at watch upon the street to warn me when the pig
should leave the mint. After waiting some time, I grew tired, and my
heat cooled. Reflecting, then, that blows are not dealt by contract, and
that some disaster might ensue, I resolved to wreak my vengeance by another method. The incident took place about the feast of our San Giovanni, one or two days before; so I composed four verses, and stuck them up in an angle of the church where people go to ease themselves.

The verses ran as follows:--

Spy, broker, thief, in whom Pandora planted

All her worst evils, and from thence transplanted

Both the incident and the verses went the round of the palace, giving the Duke and Duchess much amusement. But, before the man himself knew what I had been up to, crowds of people stopped to read the lines and laughed immoderately at them. Since they were looking towards the mint and fixing their eyes on Bernardone, his son, Maestro Baccio, taking notice of their gestures, tore the paper down with fury. The elder bit his thumb, shrieking threats out with that hideous voice of his, which comes forth through his nose; indeed he made a brave defiance.
Note 2. If I understand the obscure lines of the original, Cellini wanted to kill two birds with one stone by this epigram--both Bernardone and his son Baccio. But by Buaccio he generally means Baccio Bandinelli.

Note 3. To bite the thumb at any one was, as students of our old drama know, a sign of challenge or provocation.

XC

WHEN the Duke was informed that the whole of my work for the Perseus could be exhibited as finished, he came one day to look at it. His manner showed clearly that it gave him great satisfaction; but this statue seems in our eyes a very fine piece, still it has yet to win the favour of the people. Therefore, my Benvenuto, before you put the very last touches on, I should like you, for my sake, to remove a part of the scaffolding on the side of the piazza, some day toward noon, in order that we may learn what folk think of it. There is no doubt that when it is thrown open to space and light, it will look very differently as good a show. Oh, how is it that your most illustrious Excellency has forgotten seeing it in the garden of my house? There, in that large extent of space, it showed so bravely that Bandinello, coming through the garden of the Innocents to look at it, was compelled, in spite of his evil and malignant nature, to praise it, he who never praised aught or any one in all his life! I perceive that your Excellency lends too
When the Duke had left, I gave orders to have the screen removed. Yet some trifles of gold, varnish, and various other little finishings were still wanting; wherefore I began to murmur and complain indignantly, cursing the unhappy day which brought me to Florence. Too well I knew already the great and irreparable sacrifice I made when I left France; nor could I discover any reasonable ground for hope that I might prosper in the future with my prince and patron. From the commencement to the middle and the ending, everything that I had done had been performed to my great disadvantage. Therefore, it was with deep ill-humour that I disclosed my statue on the following day.

Now it pleased God that, on the instant of its exposure to view, a shout of boundless enthusiasm went up in commendation of my work, which consoled me not a little. The folk kept on attaching sonnets to the posts of the door, which was protected with a curtain while I gave the last touches to the statue. I believe that on the same day when I opened it a few hours to the public, more than twenty were nailed up, all of them overflowing with the highest panegyrics. Afterwards, when I once more shut it off from view, every day brought sonnets, with Latin and Greek verses; for the University of Pisa was then in vacation, and all the doctors and scholars kept vying with each other who could praise it best. But what gratified me most, and inspired me with most hope of the entered into the same generous competition. I set the highest value on the eulogies of that excellent painter Jacopo Pontormo, and still more on those of his able pupil Bronzino, who was not satisfied with merely
own house. [1] They spoke so generously of my performance, in that fine
style of his which is most exquisite, that this alone repaid me somewhat
for the pain of my long troubles. So then I closed the screen, and once
more set myself to finishing my statue.

Note 1. Jacopo Carrucci da Pantormo was now an old man. He died in 1558,
aged sixty-five years. Angelo Allori, called Il Bronzino, one of the
last fairly good Florentine painters, won considerable distinction as a
writer of burlesque poems. He died in 1571, aged sixty-nine years. We
possess his sonnets of the perseus.

XCI

THE GREAT compliments which this short inspection of my Perseus had
elicited from the noble school of Florence, though they were well known
Benvenuto has had this trifling satisfaction, which will spur him on to
the desired conclusion with more speed and diligence. Do not, however,
let him imagine that, when his Perseus shall be finally exposed to view
from all sides, folk in general will be so lavish of their praises. On
the contrary, I am afraid that all its defects will then be brought home
to him, and more will be detected than the statue really has. So let him
del Verrocchio, who made that fine bronze of Christ and S. Thomas on the
front of Orsammichele; at the same time he referred to many other
statues, and dared even to attack the marvellous David of divine Michel
Agnolo Buonarroti, accusing it of only looking well if seen in front;
finally, he touched upon the multitude of sarcastic sonnets which were called forth by his own Hercules and Cacus, and wound up with abusing the people of Florence. Now the Duke, who was too much inclined to credit his assertions, encouraged the fellow to speak thus, and thought in his own heart that things would go as he had prophesied, because that envious creature Bandinello never ceased insinuating malice. On one occasion it happened that the gallows bird Bernardone, the broker, was on a large scale are quite a different dish of soup from little figures.

I do not refuse him the credit of being excellent at statuettes in miniature. But you will soon see that he cannot succeed in that other

XCII

NOW it pleased my glorious Lord and immortal God that at last I brought the whole work to completion: and on a certain Thursday morning I exposed it to the public gaze. [1] Immediately, before the sun was fully in the heavens, there assembled such a multitude of people that no words could describe them. All with one voice contended which should praise it most. The Duke was stationed at a window low upon the first floor of the palace, just above the entrance; there, half hidden, he heard everything the folk were saying of my statue. After listening through several hours, he rose so proud and happy in his heart that he turned to his Benvenuto; tell him from me that he has delighted me far more than I expected: say too that I shall reward him in a way which will astonish
In due course, Messer Sforza discharged this glorious embassy, which
message, and also because the folk kept pointing me out as something
marvellous and strange. Among the many who did so, were two gentlemen,
these two agreeable persons met me upon the piazza: I had been shown
them in passing, and now they made monstrous haste to catch me up; then,
with caps in hand, they uttered an oration so ceremonious, that it would
have been excessive for a Pope. I bowed, with every protestation of
humility. They meanwhile continued loading me with compliments, until at
company, because the folk were stopping and staring at me more than at
my Perseus. In the midst of all these ceremonies, they went so far as to
propose that I should come to Sicily, and offered to make terms which
constructed a fountain for them, complete in all parts, and decorated
with a multitude of figures; but it was not in the same good style they
recognised in Perseus, and yet they had heaped riches on the man. I
give me much cause for wonder, seeking as you do to make me quit the
service of a prince who is the greatest patron of the arts that ever
lived; and I too here in my own birthplace, famous as the school of
could have stayed in France, with that great monarch Francis, who gave
me a thousand golden crowns a year for board, and paid me in addition
the price of all my labour. In his service I gained more than four

With these and such like words I cut their ceremonies short, thanking
them for the high praises they had bestowed upon me, which were indeed
the best reward that artists could receive for their labours. I told
them they had greatly stimulated my zeal, so that I hoped, after a few
years were passed, to exhibit another masterpiece, which I dared believe
would yield far truer satisfaction to our noble school of Florence. The
two gentlemen were eager to resume the thread of their complimentary
proposals, whereupon I, lifting my cap and making a profound bow, bade
them a polite farewell.

Note 1. April 27, 1554.

Note 2. Don Juan de Vega.

Note 3. Giovanni Angelo Montorsoli entered the Order of the Servites in
1530. This did not prevent him from plying his profession of sculptor.
The work above alluded to is the fountain at Messina.

WHEN two more days had passed, and the chorus of praise was ever on the
increase, I resolved to go and present myself to the Duke, who said with
but I promise that I will reward you in such wise as will make you
hearing this most welcome assurance, I turned all the forces of my soul
and body to God, fervently offering up thanks to Him. At the same moment
I approached the Duke, and almost weeping for gladness, kissed his robe.

Arts, and of those who exercise them! I entreat your most illustrious Excellency to allow me eight days first to go and return thanks to God; for I alone know what travail I have endured, and that my earnest faith has moved Him to assist me. In gratitude for this and all other marvellous mercies, I should like to travel eight days on pilgrimage, continually thanking my immortal God, who never fails to help those who come back again, for of a truth you please me; but do not forget to send

Camaldoli and the Ermo, afterwards I shall proceed to the Bagni di Santa Maria, and perhaps so far as Sestile, because I hear of fine antiquities to be seen there. [1] Then I shall retrace my steps by San Francesco della Vernia, and, still with thanks to God, return light-hearted to come back again, for of a truth you please me; but do not forget to send

I wrote four lines that very day, in which I thanked his Excellency for expected favours, and gave these to Messer Sforza, who placed them in see them; for if Benvenuto comes back and finds I have not despatched Excellency asked to be reminded. Messer Sforza reported these precise words to me on the same evening, laughing too and expressing wonder at

Note 1. The Ermo is more correctly Eremo, and Vernia is Alvernia.
prayers in His honour upon all that journey. I enjoyed it extremely; for
the season was fine, in early summer, and the country through which I
travelled, and which I had never seen before, struck me as marvellously
beautiful. Now I had taken with me to serve as guide a young workman in
my employ, who came from Bagno, and was called Cesare. Thanks to him,
then, I received the kindest hospitality from his father and all his
family, among whom was an old man of more than seventy, extremely
profession, and a dabbler in alchemy. This excellent person made me
observe that the Bagni contained mines of gold and silver, and showed me
many interesting objects in the neighbourhood; so that I enjoyed myself
as much as I have ever done.

One day, when we had become intimate and he could trust me, he spoke as
Excellency might with advantage pay attention. It is, that not far from
Camaldoli there lies a mountain pass so ill defended, that Piero Strozzi
could not only cross it without risk, but might also seize on Poppi [1]
of paper from his pouch, upon which the good old man had drawn the whole
country, so that the seriousness of the danger could be manifest upon
inspection of the map. I took the design and left Bagno at once,
travelling homeward as fast as I could by Prato Magno and San Francesco
della Vernia. On reaching Florence, I only stopped to draw off my
riding-boots, and hurried to the palace. Just opposite the Badia I met
the Duke, who was coming by the palace of the Podesta. When he saw me he
gave me a very gracious reception, and showing some surprise, exclaimed:

brings me back, else I should very willingly have stayed some few days

followed him to the palace, and when we were there, he took me privately
into a chamber where we stayed a while alone together. I then unfolded
the whole matter and showed him the little map, with which he seemed to
be much gratified. When I told his Excellency that one ought to take
inform you that we have agreed with the Duke of Urbino that he should
great demonstrations of good-will, and I went home.

Note 1. A village in the Castenino. Piero Strozzi was at this time in
Valdichiana.

XCV

NEXT day I presented myself, and, after a few words of conversation, the

that he meant what he said, waited with great impatience for the morrow.
When the longed-for day arrived, I betook me to the palace; and as it
always happens that evil tidings travel faster than good news, Messer
Giacopo Guidi, [1] secretary to his Excellency, called me with his wry
mouth and haughty voice; drawing himself up as stiff as a poker, he

astonished; yet I quickly replied that it was not my custom to put
prices on my work, and that this was not what his Excellency had
promised me two days ago. The man raised his voice, and ordered me
displeasure, to say how much I wanted. Now I had hoped not only to gain
some handsome reward, trusting to the mighty signs of kindness shown me
by the Duke, but I had still more expected to secure the entire good
graces of his Excellency, seeing I never asked for anything, but only
for his favour. Accordingly, this wholly unexpected way of dealing with
me put me in a fury, and I was especially enraged by the manner which
that venomous toad assumed in discharging his commission. I exclaimed
that if the Duke gave me ten thousand crowns I should not be paid
enough, and that if I had ever thought things would come to this
haggling, I should not have settled in his service. Thereupon the surly
fellow began to abuse me, and I gave it him back again.

Upon the following day, when I paid my respects to the Duke, he beckoned

Excellency can find multitudes of men who are able to build you cities
and palaces, but you will not, perhaps, find one man in the world who
doing anything farther. A few days afterwards the Duchess sent for me,
and advised me to put my difference with the Duke into her hands, since
she thought she could conduct the business to my satisfaction. On
hearing these kindly words I replied that I had never asked any other
recompense for my labours than the good graces of the Duke, and that his
most illustrious Excellency had assured me of this; it was not needful
frankly left to them from the first days when I undertook their service.
I farther added that if his most illustrious Excellency gave me but a
'crazia,' [2] which is worth five farthings, for my work, I should consider myself contented, provided only that his Excellency did not deprive me of his favour. At these words the Duchess smiled a little and turned her back and left me. I thought it was my best policy to speak with the humility I have above described; yet it turned out that I had done the worst for myself, because, albeit she had harboured some angry feelings toward me, she had in her a certain way of dealing which was generous.

Note 1. It appears from a letter written by Guidi to Bandinelli that he hated Cellini, whom he called 'pessimo mostro di natura.' Guidi was made Bishop of Penna in 1561, and attended the Council of Trent.

Note 2. A small Tuscan coin.

ABOUT that time I was very intimate with Girolamo degli Albizzi, [1] Benvenuto, it would not be a bad thing to put your little difference of opinion with the Duke to rights; and I assure you that if you repose confidence in me, I feel myself the man to settle matters. I know what I am saying. The Duke is getting really angry, and you will come badly out.

Now, subsequently to that conversation with the Duchess, I had been told by some one, possibly a rogue, that he had heard how the Duke said upon
then, made me anxious, and induced me to entrust Girolamo degli Albizzi with the negotiations, telling him anything would satisfy me provided I retained the good graces of the Duke. That honest fellow was excellent in all his dealings with soldiers, especially with the militia, who are for the most part rustics; but he had no taste for statuary, and therefore could not understand its conditions. Consequently, when he

with much skill and greatly to my honour, fixing the sum which the Duke would have to pay me at 3500 golden crowns in gold; and this should not be taken as my proper recompense for such a masterpiece, but only as a kind of gratuity; enough to say that I was satisfied; with many other phrases of like tenor, all of which implied the price which I have mentioned.

The Duke signed this agreement as gladly as I took it sadly. When the he had placed himself in my hands; I could have got him five thousand

same words to me in the presence of Messer Alamanno Salviati, [2] and laughed at me a little, saying that I deserved my bad luck.

The Duke gave orders that I should be paid a hundred golden crowns in gold per month, until the sum was discharged; and thus it ran for some business, began to give me fifty, and sometimes later on he gave me twenty-five, and sometimes nothing. Accordingly, when I saw that the settlement was being thus deferred, I spoke good-humouredly to Messer
Antonio, and begged him to explain why he did not complete my payments.

He answered in a like tone of politeness; yet it struck me that he

exposed his own mind too much. Let the reader judge. He began by saying

that the sole reason why he could not go forward regularly with these

payments, was the scarcity of money at the palace; but he promised, when

hear him speak in that way; yet I resolved to hope that he would pay me

when he had the power to do so. But when I observed that things went

quite the contrary way, and saw that I was being pillaged, I lost temper

with the man, and recalled to his memory hotly and in anger what he had

declared he would be if he did not pay me. However, he died; and five

hundred crowns are still owing to me at the present date, which is nigh

upon the end of 1566. [3] There was also a balance due upon my salary

which I thought would be forgotten, since three years had elapsed

without payment. But it so happened that the Duke fell ill of a serious

malady, remaining forty-eight hours without passing water. Finding that

the remedies of his physicians availed nothing, it is probable that he

betook himself to God, and therefore decreed the discharge of all debts

to his servants. I too was paid on this occasion, yet I never obtained

what still stood out upon my Perseus.


Note 1. A warm partisan of the Medici. He was a cousin of Maria

distinguished place in Florentine annals as partisans of the Medici.
Note 3. Cellini began to write his 'Memoirs' in 1558. Eight years had therefore now elapsed.

I HAD almost determined to say nothing more about that unlucky Perseus; but a most remarkable incident, which I do not like to omit, obliges me to do so; wherefore I must now turn back a bit, to gather up the thread of my narration. I thought I was acting for the best when I told the Duchess that I could not compromise affairs which were no longer in my hands, seeing I had informed the Duke that I should gladly accept whatever he chose to give me. I said this in the hope of gaining favour; and with this manifestation of submissiveness I employed every likely means of pacifying his resentment; for I ought to add that a few days before he came to terms with Albizzi, the Duke had shown he was excessively displeased with me. The reason was as follows: I complained of some abominable acts of injustice done to me by Messer Alfonso Quistelli, Messer Jacopo Polverino of the Exchequer, and more than all by Ser Giovanbattista Brandini of Volterra. When, therefore, I set forth my cause with some vehemence, the Duke flew into the greatest rage as with your Perseus, when you asked those ten thousand crowns. You let yourself be blinded by mere cupidity. Therefore I shall have the statue words I replied with too much daring and a touch of indignation, which possible that my work should be valued at its proper worth when there is
is in Florence at this day a man well able to make such a statue, and

illustrious Excellency gave me the means of producing an important and
very difficult masterpiece in the midst of this the noblest school of
the world; and my work has been received with warmer praises than any
other heretofore exposed before the gaze of our incomparable masters. My
chief pride is the commendation of those able men who both understand
and practise the arts of design—as in particular Bronzino, the painter;
this man set himself to work, and composed four sonnets couched in the
choicest style, and full of honour to myself. Perhaps it was his example
which moved the whole city to such a tumult of enthusiasm. I freely
admit that if sculpture were his business instead of painting, then
Bronzino might have been equal to task like mine. Michel Agnolo
Buonarroti, again, whom I am proud to call my master; he, I admit, could
have achieved the same success when he was young, but not with less
fatigue and trouble than I endured. But now that he is far advanced in
years, he would most certainly be found unequal to the strain. Therefore
I think I am justified in saying that no man known upon this earth could
have produced my Perseus. For the rest, my work has received the
greatest reward I could have wished for in this world; chiefly and
especially because your most illustrious Excellency not only expressed
yourself satisfied, but praised it far more highly than any one beside.
What greater and more honourable prize could be desired by me? I affirm
most emphatically that your Excellency could not pay me with more
glorious coin, nor add from any treasury a wealth surpassing this.
Therefore I hold myself overpaid already, and return thanks to your most
from your Excellency; yet I account myself amply remunerated by that
first reward which the school of Florence gave me. With this to console
me, I shall take my departure on the instant, without returning to the
house you gave me, and shall never seek to set my foot in this town
to the palace. When he heard these choleric words, he turned upon me in

Half terrified, I then followed him to the palace.

On arriving there, his Excellency sent for the Archbishop of Pisa, named
De, Bartolini, and Messer Pandolfo della Stufa, [2] requesting them to
order Baccio Bandinelli, in his name, to examine well my Perseus and
value it, since he wished to pay its exact price. These excellent men
went forthwith and performed their embassy. In reply Bandinello said
that he had examined the statue minutely, and knew well enough what it
was worth; but having been on bad terms otherwise with me for some time
past, he did not care to be entangled anyhow in my affairs. Then they
tell you, under pain of his displeasure, that you are to value the
statue, and you may have two or three days to consider your estimate.

answered that his judgment was already formed, that he could not disobey
the Duke, and that my work was rich and beautiful and excellent in
execution; therefore he thought sixteen thousand crowns or more would
not be an excessive price for it. Those good and courteous gentlemen
reported this to the Duke, who was mightily enraged; they also told the
same to me. I replied that nothing in the world would induce me to take

why the Duchess wanted me to place the matter in her hands. All that I
have written is the pure truth. I will only add that I ought to have
trusted to her intervention, for then I should have been quickly paid,
and should have received so much more into the bargain.

Note 1. Bandinelli was a Knight of S. James of Compostella.

the age of about seventeen. He was a devoted adherent of the Medici. He
was shut up with Clement in S. Angelo, and sent as hostage to the

XCVIII

THE DUKE sent me word by Messer Lelio Torello, [1] his Master of the
Rolls, [2] that he wanted me to execute some bas-reliefs in bronze for
the choir of S. Maria del Fiore. Now the choir was by Bandinello, and I
did not choose to enrich his bad work with my labours. He had not indeed
designed it, for he understood nothing whatever about architecture; the
wood-carver, who spoiled the cupola. [3] Suffice it to say that it shows
no talent. For both reasons I was determined not to undertake the task,
although I told the Duke politely that I would do whatever his most
illustrious Excellency ordered. Accordingly, he put the matter into the
hands of the Board of Works for S. Maria del Fiore, [4] telling them to
come to an agreement with me; he would continue my allowance of two
hundred crowns a year, while they were to supply the rest out of their
funds.
In due course I came before the Board, and they told me what the Duke had arranged. Feeling that I could explain my views more frankly to these gentlemen, I began by demonstrating that so many histories in bronze would cost a vast amount of money, which would be totally thrown away, giving all my reasons, which they fully appreciated. In the first place, I said that the construction of the choir was altogether incorrect, without proportion, art, convenience, grace, or good design. In the next place, the bas-reliefs would have to stand too low, beneath the proper line of vision; they would become a place for dogs to piss at, and be always full of ordure. Consequently, I declined positively to execute them. However, since I did not wish to throw away the best years of my life, and was eager to serve his most illustrious Excellency, whom I had the sincerest desire to gratify and obey, I made the following proposal. Let the Duke, if he wants to employ my talents, give me the middle door of the cathedral to perform in bronze. This would be well seen, and would confer far more glory on his most illustrious Excellency. I would bind myself by contract to receive no remuneration unless I produced something better than the finest of the Baptistery doors. [5] But if I completed it according to my promise, then I was willing to have it valued, and to be paid one thousand crowns less than the estimate made by experts.

The members of the Board were well pleased with this suggestion, and went at once to report the matter to the Duke, among them being Piero Salviati. They expected him to be extremely gratified with their communication, but it turned out just the contrary. He replied that I
was always wanting to do the exact opposite of what he bade me; and so Piero left him without coming to any conclusion. On hearing this, I went off to the Duke at once, who displayed some irritation when he saw me. However, I begged him to condescend to hear me, and he replied that he was willing. I then began from the beginning, and used such convincing arguments that he saw at last how the matter really stood, since I made it evident that he would only be throwing a large sum of money away. Then I softened his temper by suggesting that if his most illustrious Excellency did not care to have the door begun, two pulpits had anyhow to be made for the choir, and that these would both of them be considerable works, which would confer glory on his reign; for my part, I was ready to execute a great number of bronze bas-reliefs with appropriate decorations. In this way I brought him round, and he gave me orders to construct the models.

Accordingly I set at work on several models, and bestowed immense pains on them. Among these there was one with eight panels, carried out with far more science than the rest, and which seemed to me more fitted for the purpose. Having taken them several times to the place, his Excellency sent word by Messer Cesare, the keeper of his wardrobe, that I should leave them there. After the Duke had inspected them, I perceived that he had selected the least beautiful. One day he sent for me, and during our conversation about the models, I gave many reasons why the octagonal pulpit would be far more convenient for its destined uses, and would produce a much finer effect. He answered that he wished me to make it square, because he liked that form better; and thus he went on conversing for some time very pleasantly. I meanwhile lost no
opportunity of saying everything I could in the interests of art. Now whether the Duke knew that I had spoken the truth, or whether he wanted to have his own way, a long time passed before I heard anything more about it.

Grand Chancellor, 1546. He was a great jurist.

Note 2. 'Suo auditore.'

cupola. Buonarroti used to say that he made it look like a cage for crickets. His work remained unfinished.

Note 4. 'Operai di S. Maria del Fiore.'

XCIX

ABOUT this time the great block of marble arrived which was intended for the Neptune. It had been brought up the Arno, and then by the Grieve [1] to the road at Poggio a Caiano, in order to be carried to Florence by that level way; and there I went to see it. Now I knew very well that the Duchess by her special influence had managed to have it given to Bandinello. No envy prompted me to dispute his claims, but rather pity
for that poor unfortunate piece of marble. Observe, by the way, that everything, whatever it may be, which is subject to an evil destiny, although one tries to save it from some manifest evil, falls at once into far worse plight; as happened to this marble when it came into the hands of Bartolommeo Ammanato, [2] of whom I shall speak the truth in its proper place. After inspecting this most splendid block, I measured it in every direction, and on returning to Florence, made several little models suited to its proportions. Then I went to Poggio a Caiano, where the Duke and Duchess were staying, with their son the Prince. I found them all at table, the Duke and Duchess dining in a private apartment; so I entered into conversation with the Prince. We had been speaking for a long while, when the Duke, who was in a room adjacent, heard my voice, and condescended very graciously to send for me. When I presented myself before their Excellencies, the Duchess addressed me in a very pleasant tone; and having thus opened the conversation, I gradually introduced the subject of that noble block of marble I had seen. I then proceeded to remark that their ancestors had brought the magnificent school of Florence to such a pitch of excellence only by stimulating competition among artists in their several branches. It was thus that the wonderful cupola and the lovely doors of San Giovanni had been produced, together with those multitudes of handsome edifices and statues which made a crown of artistic glory for their city above anything the world had seen since the days of the ancients. Upon this the Duchess, with some anger, observed that she very well knew what I meant, and bade me never mention that block of marble in her presence, since she did not like it. I

Excellencies, and to do my utmost to ensure your being better served?

Reflect upon it, my lady; if your most illustrious Excellencies think
fit to open the model for a Neptune to competition, although you are
resolved to give it to Bandinello, this will urge Bandinello for his own
credit to display greater art and science than if he knew he had no
rivals. In this way, my princes, you will be far better served, and will
not discourage our school of artists; you will be able to perceive which
of us is eager to excel in the grand style of our noble calling, and

The Duchess, in a great rage, told me that I tired her patience out; she

years ago I had that fine block quarried especially for Bandinello, and

illustrious Excellency to lend a patient hearing while I speak four

which Bandinello used for his Hercules and Cacus was quarried for our
incomparable Michel Agnolo Buonarroti. He had made the model for a
Samson with four figures, which would have been the finest masterpiece
in the whole world; but your Bandinello got out of it only two figures,
both ill-executed and bungled in the worst manner; wherefore our school
still exclaims against the great wrong which was done to that
magnificent block. I believe that more than a thousand sonnets were put
up in abuse of that detestable performance; and I know that your most
illustrious Excellency remembers the fact very well. Therefore, my
powerful prince, seeing how the men to whose care that work was

marble away from him, and gave it to Bandinello, who spoilt it in the
way the whole world knows, oh! will you suffer this far more splendid
block, although it belongs to Bandinello, to remain in the hands of that
man who cannot help mangling it, instead of giving it to some artist of
talent capable of doing it full justice? Arrange, my lord, that every
one who likes shall make a model; have them all exhibited to the school;
you then will hear what the school thinks; your own good judgment will
enable you to select the best; in this way, finally, you will not throw
away your money, nor discourage a band of artists the like of whom is
not to be found at present in the world, and who form the glory of your

The Duke listened with the utmost graciousness; then he rose from table,

fine marble for yourself; for what you say is the truth, and I

know not what angry sentences.

I made them a respectful bow and returned to Florence, burning with
eagerness to set hands upon my model.

Note 1. Instead of the Grieve, which is not a navigable stream, it
appears that Cellini ought to have written the Ombrone.

Note 2. This sculptor was born in 1511, and died in 1592. He worked
under Bandinelli and Sansovino.

WHEN the Duke came to Florence, he sought me at my house without giving
me previous notice. I showed him two little models of different design. Though he praised them both, he said that one of them pleased him better than the other; I was to finish the one he liked with care; and this would be to my advantage. Now his Excellency had already seen informed by many of his courtiers who had heard him, he commended mine far above the rest. Among other matters worthy of record and of great weight upon this point, I will mention the following. The Cardinal of Santa Fiore was on a visit to Florence, and the Duke took him to Poggio a Caiano. Upon the road, noticing the marble as he passed, the Cardinal praised it highly, inquiring of his Excellency for what sculptor he whom I could trust.

Hearing what the Duke had said, I went to the Duchess, and took her some in hand for my pleasure one of the most laborious pieces which have ever been produced. It is a Christ of the whitest marble set upon a cross of the blackest, exactly of the same size as a tall man. She immediately that I would not sell it for two thousand golden ducats; it is of such difficult execution that I think no man ever attempted the like before; nor would I have undertaken it at the commission of any prince whatever, for fear I might prove inadequate to the task. I bought the marbles with my own money, and have kept a young man some two years as my assistant in the work. What with the stone, the iron frame to hold it up, and the wages, it has cost me above three hundred crowns. Consequently, I would not sell it for two thousand. But if your Excellency deigns to grant me
a favour which is wholly blameless, I shall be delighted to make you a present of it. All I ask is that your Excellency will not use your influence either against or for the models which the Duke has ordered to

I offering to give you what I value at two thousand ducats? But I have such confidence in my laborious and well-trained studies, that I hope to win the palm, even against the great Michel Agnolo Buonarroti, from whom and from no one else I have learned all that I know. Indeed, I should be much better pleased to enter into competition with him who knows so much than with those others who know but little of their art. Contending with my sublime master, I could gain laurels in plenty, whereas there are but rose in a half-angry mood, and I returned to work with all the strength I had upon my model.

When it was finished, the Duke came to see it, bringing with him two ambassadors, one from the Duke of Ferrara, the other from the Signory of Lucca. They were delighted, and the Duke said to those two gentlemen:

paid me the highest compliments, especially the envoy from Lucca, who was a person of accomplishments and learning. [1] I had retired to some distance in order that they might exchange opinions freely; but when I heard that I was being complimented, I came up, turned to the Duke, and another admirable device: decree that every one who likes shall make a model in clay exactly of the same size as the marble has to be. In this way you will be able to judge far better who deserves the commission; and I may observe that if your Excellency does not give it to the
sculptor who deserves it, this will not wrong the man so much, but will reflect great discredit upon yourself, since the loss and shame will fall on you. On the other hand, if you award it to the one who has deserved it, you will acquire great glory in the first place, and will employ your treasure well, while artists will believe that you speaking than the Duke shrugged his shoulders, and began to move away. While they were taking leave the ambassador of Lucca said to the Duke:

he were a little less terrible; then he would possess at the present reported to me by the envoy, by way of chiding and advising me to change my conduct. I told him that I had the greatest wish to oblige my lord as his affectionate and faithful servant, but that I did not understand the arts of flattery. Several months after this date, Bandinello died; and it was thought that, in addition to his intemperate habits of life, the mortification of having probably to lose the marble contributed to his decline.

Note 1. Probably Girolamo Lucchesini.

CI

BANDINELLO had received information of the crucifix which, as I have said above, I was now engaged upon. Accordingly he laid his hands at the church of the Annunziata. Now I had offered my crucifix to S. Maria Novella, and had already fixed up the iron clamps whereby I meant to
fasten it against the wall. I only asked for permission to construct a little sarcophagus upon the ground beneath the feet of Christ, into which I might creep when I was dead. The friars told me that they could not grant this without the consent of their building committee. [1] I you allowed me to place my crucifix? Without their leave you suffered me

On this account I refused to give those fruits of my enormous labours to the church of S. Maria Novella, even though the overseers of the fabric came and begged me for the crucifix. I turned at once to the church of the Annunziata, and when I explained the terms on which I had sought to make a present of it to S. Maria Novella, those virtuous friars of the Nunziata unanimously told me to place it in their church, and let me make my grave according to my will and pleasure. When Bandinello became aware of this, he set to work with great diligence at the completion of for his monument. This he obtained with some difficulty; and on not altogether completed when he died.

The Duchess then said that, even as she had protected him in life, so would she protect him in the grave, and that albeit he was dead, I need never try to get that block of marble. Apropos of which, the broken Bernardone, meeting me one day in the country, said that the Duchess had Bandinello it would certainly have come to grief; but in those of from the Duke to make a clay model, of the same size as the marble would allow; he also provided me with wood and clay, set up a sort of screen
in the Loggia where my Perseus stands, and paid me one workman. I went about my business with all diligence, and constructed the wooden framework according to my excellent system. Then I brought the model successfully to a conclusion, without caring whether I should have to execute it in marble, since I knew the Duchess was resolved I should not get the commission. Consequently I paid no heed to that. Only I felt very glad to undergo this labour, hoping to make the Duchess, who was after all a person of intelligence, as indeed I had the means of observing at a later period, repent of having done so great a wrong both to the marble and herself. Giovanni the Fleming also made a model in the cloister of S. Croce; Vinzenzio Danti of Perugia another in the house of and Bartolommeo Ammanato a fourth in the Loggia, which we divided between us. 2

When I had blocked the whole of mine out well, and wanted to begin upon the details of the head, which I had already just sketched out in outline, the Duke came down from the palace, and Giorgetto, the painter, with his own hands several days, in company with Ammanato and all his received intelligence that he seemed but little pleased with it. In Duke shook his head, and turning to Messer Gianstefano, [4] exclaimed:

this embassy with great tact, and in the most courteous terms. He added that if I did not think my work quite ready to be seen yet, I might say so frankly, since the Duke knew well that I had enjoyed but little assistance for so large an undertaking. I replied that I entreated him
to do me the favour of coming; for though my model was not far advanced, 
yet the intelligence of his Excellency would enable him to comprehend 
perfectly how it was likely to look when finished. This kindly gentleman 
took back my message to the Duke, who came with pleasure. No sooner had 
he entered the enclosure and cast his eyes upon my work, than he gave 
signs of being greatly satisfied. Then he walked all round it, stopping 
at each of the four points of view, exactly as the ripest expert would 
have done. Afterwards he showed by nods and gestures of approval that it

Note 1. 'I loro Operai.'

Note 2. Gian Bologna, or Jean Boullogne, was born at Douai about 1530. 
He went, while a very young man, to Rome, and then settled at Florence. 
There he first gained reputation by a Venus which the Prince Francesco 
bought. The Neptune on the piazza at Bologna, which is his work, may 
probably have been executed from the model he made in competition upon 
this occasion. Vincenzo Danti was born at Perugia in 1530. He produced 
the bronze statue of Pope Julius III., which may still be seen in his 
native city. Simone Cioli, called Il Mosca, was a very fair sculptor who 
died in 1554, leaving a son, Francesco, called Il Moschino, who was also 
a sculptor, and had reached the age of thirty at this epoch. It is 
therefore to this Moschino probably that Cellini refers above.

Note 3. Giorgio Vasari.
IT pleased God, who rules all things for our good--I mean, for those who acknowledge and believe in Him; such men never fail to gain His protection--that about this time a certain rascal from Vecchio called me. He is a sheep-grazer; and being closely related to Messer Guido Guidi, the physician, who is now provost of Pescia, I lent ear to his proposals. The man offered to sell me a farm of his for the term of my natural life. I did not care to go and see it, since I wanted to complete the model of my colossal Neptune. There was also no reason why I should visit the property, because Sbietta only sold it to me for the income. [1] This he had noted down at so many bushels of grain, so much of wine, oil, standing corn, chestnuts, and other produce. I reckoned that, as the market then ran, these together were worth something considerably over a hundred golden crowns in gold; and I paid him 650 crowns, which included duties to the state. Consequently, when he left a memorandum written in his own hand, to the effect that he would always keep up these products of the farm in the same values during my lifetime, I did not think it necessary to inspect it. Only I made inquiries, to the best of my ability, as to whether Sbietta and his brother Ser Filippo were well off enough to give me good security. Many persons of divers sorts, who knew them, assured me that my security was excellent. We agreed to call in Ser Pierfrancesco Bertoldi, notary at
memorandum, expecting that this would be recited in the deed. But the notary who drew it up was so occupied with detailing twenty-two boundaries described by Sbietta, [2] that, so far as I can judge, he neglected to include in the contract what the vendor had proposed to furnish. While he was writing, I went on working; and since it took him

After the contract was signed and sealed, Sbietta began to pay me the most marked attentions, which I returned in like measure. He made me presents of kids, cheese, capons, fresh curds, and many sorts of fruits, until I began to be almost ashamed of so much kindness. In exchange for these courtesies I always took him from the inn to lodge with me when he came into Florence, often inviting a relative or two who happened to attend him. On one of these occasions he told me with a touch of pleasantry that it was really shameful for me to have bought a farm, and, after the lapse of so many weeks, not yet to have left my business for three days in the hands of my workpeople, so as to have come to look at it. His wheedling words and ways induced me to set off, in a bad hour for my welfare, on a visit to him. Sbietta received me in his own house with such attentions and such honours as a duke might covet. His wife caressed me even more than he did; and these excellent relations continued between us until the plans which he and his brother Ser Filippo had in mind were fully matured.

Note 1. What Cellini means is that Sbietta was to work the farm, paying Cellini its annual value. It appears from some particulars which follow that the ‘entrate’ were to be paid in kind.
Note 2. The word 'confini,' which I have translated 'boundaries,' may
mean 'limiting conditions.'

MEANWHILE I did not suspend my labours on the Neptune, which was now
quite blocked out upon an excellent system, undiscovered and unknown
before I used it. Consequently, although I knew I should not get the
marble for the reasons above narrated, I hoped to have it soon
completed, and to display it on the piazza simply for my satisfaction.

It was a warm and pleasant season; and this, together with the
attentions of those two rascals, disposed me to set out one Wednesday,
which happened to be a double holiday, for my country-house at
Trespiano. [1] Having spent some time over an excellent lunch, it was
met Ser Filippo, who appeared to know already whither I was bound. He

I gave the woman a straw hat of the very finest texture, the like of
which she told me she had never seen. Still, up to this time, Sbietta
had not put in his appearance.

Toward the end of the afternoon we all sat down to supper in excellent
spirits. Later on, they gave me a well appointed bedroom, where I went
to rest in a bed of the most perfect cleanliness. Both of my servants,
according to their rank, were equally well treated. On the morrow, when I rose, the same attentions were paid me. I went to see my farm, which pleased me much; and then I had some quantities of grain and other produce handed over. But when I returned to Vicchio, the priest Ser found here quite everything you had the right to look for, yet put your mind to rest; it will be amply made up in the future, for you have to deal with honest folk. You ought, by the way, to know that we have sent question bore the name of Mariano Rosegli; and this man now kept country-fellow, when he spoke those words, smiled with an evil kind of

I was to some extent unfavourably influenced by these hints, yet far from forming a conception of what actually happened to me. So, when I returned from the farm, which is two miles distant from Vicchio, toward the Alpi, [2] I met the priest, who was waiting for me with his customary politeness. We then sat down together to breakfast; it was not so much a dinner as an excellent collation. Afterwards I took a walk through Vicchio--the market had just opened--and noticed how all the inhabitants fixed their eyes upon me, as on something strange. This struck me particularly in the case of a worthy old man, who has been living for many years at Vicchio, and whose wife bakes bread for sale. He owns some good property at the distance of about a mile; however, he prefers this mode of life, and occupies a house which belongs to me in the town of Vicchio. This had been consigned to me together with the farm above mentioned, which bears the name of Della Fonte. The worthy
due I shall pay you your rent; but if you want it earlier, I will act according to your wishes. You may reckon on never having any disputes

worthless priest, Ser Filippo, not many days since, went about boasting

farm to an old man for his lifetime, and that the purchaser could hardly live the year out. You have got mixed up with a set of rogues; therefore take heed to living as long as you are able, and keep your eyes open,

this village, north-east of Florence, on October 26, 1548. In 1556 he also purchased land there.

Note 2. The Alpi are high mountain pastures in the Apennines.

CIV

DURING my promenade through the market, I met Giovan Battista Santini, and he and I were taken back to supper by the priest. As I have related above, we supped at the early hour of twenty, because I made it known that I meant to return to Trespiano. Accordingly they made all ready; the wife of Sbietta went bustling about in the company of one Cecchino Buti, their knave of all work. After the salads had been mixed and we were preparing to sit down to table, that evil priest, with a certain
cannot sup with you; the reason is that some business of importance has occurred which I must transact for my brother Sbieta. In his absence I alter his determination; so he departed and we began our supper. After we had eaten the salads on some common platters, and they were preparing to serve the boiled meat, each guest received a porringer for himself.

that the crockery they give you is different from the rest? Did you ever Cecchino Buti kept running hither and thither in the most extraordinary fuss and hurry. At last I induced the woman to join us; when she began I answered by praising the supper over and over again, and saying that I had never eaten better or with heartier appetite. Finally, I told her that I had eaten quite enough. I could not imagine why she urged me so persistently to eat. After supper was over, and it was past the hour of twenty-one, I became anxious to return to Trespiano, in order that I might recommence my work next morning in the Loggia. Accordingly I bade farewell to all the company, and having thanked our hostess, took my leave.

I had not gone three miles before I felt as though my stomach was on fire, and suffered such pain that it seemed a thousand years till I arrived at Trespiano. However, it pleased God that I reached it after nightfall with great toil, and immediately proceeded to my farm, where I went to bed. During the night I got no sleep, and was constantly disturbed by motions of my bowels. When day broke, feeling an intense heat in the rectum, I looked eagerly to see what this might mean, and found the cloth covered with blood. Then in a moment I conceived that I
had eaten something poisonous, and racked my brains to think what it
had set before me plates, and porringer, and saucers different from the
himself such pains to do me honour, had yet refused to sup with us.
such a fine stroke of business by the sale of his farm to an old man for
life, who could not be expected to survive a year. Giovanni Sardella had
reported these words to me. All things considered, I made my mind up
that they must have administered a dose of sublimate in the sauce, which
was very well made and pleasant to the taste, inasmuch as sublimate
produces all the symptoms. I was suffering from. Now it is my custom to
take but little sauce or seasoning with my meat, excepting salt; and yet
I had eaten two moderate mouthfuls of that sauce because it was so
tasteful. On further thinking, I recollected how often that wife of
Sbietta had teased me in a hundred ways to partake more freely of the
sauce. On these accounts I felt absolutely certain that they had given
me sublimate in that very dish.

CV

ALBEIT I was suffering so severely, I forced myself to work upon my
Colossus in the Loggia; but after a few days I succumbed to the malady
and took to my bed. No sooner did the Duchess hear that I was ill, than
she caused the execution of that unlucky marble to be assigned to
Bartolommeo Ammanato. [1] He sent word to me through Messer&hellip;:
living&hellip; Street, that I might now do what I liked with my model
since he had won the marble. This Messer&hellip; was one of the lovers
of his gentle manners and discretion, Ammanato made things easy for him.

There would be much to say upon this topic; however, I do not care to
imitate his master, Bandinello, who always wandered from the subject in
always imagined it would turn out thus; let the man strain himself to
the utmost in proof of gratitude to Fortune for so great a favour so
undeservedly conferred on him by her.

All this while I stayed with sorry cheer in bed, and was attended by
that most excellent man and physician, Maestro Francesco da Montevarchi.

part of my case, forasmuch as the sublimate had so corroded the
intestines that I was unable to retain my motions. When Maestro
Francesco saw that the poison had exerted all its strength, being indeed
insufficient in quantity to overcome my vigorous constitutions, he said

Have no anxiety, since I mean to cure you in spite of the rogues who
one of the finest and most difficult cures which was ever heard of; for
I can tell you, Benvenuto, that you swallowed a good mouthful of

we all were silent. They attended me more than six full months, and I
remained more than a whole year before I could enjoy my life and vigour.

own hand, in the autograph, that it is illegible. Laura Battiferra,

himself praised in a sonnet.
AT this time [1] the Duke went to make his triumphal entry into Siena, and Ammanato had gone there some months earlier to construct the arches. A bastard of his, who stayed behind in the Loggia, removed the cloths with which I kept my model of Neptune covered until it should be finished. As soon as I knew this, I complained to Signor Don Francesco, had disclosed my still imperfect statue; had it been finished, I should not have given the fact a thought. The Prince replied with a threatening uncovered, because these men are only working against themselves; yet if other words in my honour before a crowd of gentlemen who were there. I then begged his Excellency to give me the necessary means for finishing it, saying that I meant to make a present of it together with the little model to his Highness. He replied that he gladly accepted both gifts, and that he would have all the conveniences I asked for put at my disposal. Thus, then, I fed upon this trifling mark of favour, which, in fact, proved the salvation of my life; for having been overwhelmed by so many evils and such great annoyances all at one fell swoop, I felt my forces failing; but this little gleam of encouragement inspired me with some hope of living.

Note 1. October 28, 1560.
A YEAR had now passed since I bought the farm of Della Fonte from Sbietta. In addition to their attempt upon my life by poisoning and their numerous robberies, I noticed that the property yielded less than half what had been promised. Now, in addition to the deeds of contract, himself before witnesses to pay me over the yearly income I have mentioned. Armed with these documents, I had recourse to the Lords Counsellors. At that time Messer Alfonso Quistello was still alive and Chancellor of the Exchequer; he sat upon the Board, which included of all of them, but I know that one of the Alessandri was a member. Suffice it to say, the counsellors of that session were men of weight and worth. When I had explained my cause to the magistracy, they all with one voice ruled that Sbietta should give me back my money, except prevented them from despatching the affair. Averardo Serristori and Alessandri in particular made a tremendous stir about it, but Federigo managed to protect matters until the magistracy went out of office; whereupon Serristori, meeting me one morning after they had come out not intend to say more upon this topic, since it would be too offensive to the supreme authorities of state; enough that I was cruelly wronged at the will of a rich citizen, only because he made use of that shepherd-fellow.

CVIII
THE DUKE was staying at Livorno, where I went to visit him in order merely to obtain release from his service. Now that I felt my vigour returning, and saw that I was used for nothing, it pained me to lose time which ought to have been spent upon my art. I made my mind up, therefore, went to Livorno, and found my prince, who received me with exceeding graciousness. Now I stayed there several days, and went out riding daily with his Excellency. Consequently I had excellent ride four miles out of Livorno along the sea-coast to the point where he was erecting a little fort. Not caring to be troubled with a crowd of people, he liked me to converse with him. So then, on one of these occasions, having observed him pay me some remarkable attentions, I should like to narrate to your most illustrious Excellency a very singular incident, which will explain why I was prevented from finishing that clay model of Neptune on which I was working in the Loggia. Your cut the matter short, I related the whole story in detail, without contaminating truth with falsehood. Now when I came to the poison, I remarked that if I had ever proved an acceptable servant in the sight of his most illustrious Excellency, he ought not to punish Sbietta or those who administered the poison, but rather to confer upon them some great benefit, inasmuch as the poison was not enough to kill me, but had exactly sufficed to cleanse me of a mortal viscosity from which I well, that whereas, before I took it, I had perhaps but three or four years to live, I verily believe now that it has helped me to more than twenty years by bettering my constitution. For this mercy I return
thanks to God with greater heartiness than ever; and this proves that a proverb I have sometimes heard spoken is true, which runs as follows:--

The Duke listened to my story through more than two miles of travel,
said, in conclusion, that I felt obliged to them, and opened other and more cheerful subjects of conversation.

I kept upon the look-out for a convenient day; and when I found him well disposed for what I wanted, I entreated his most illustrious Excellency to dismiss me in a friendly spirit, so that I might not have to waste the few years in which I should be fit to do anything. As for the balance due upon my Perseus, he might give this to me when he judged it opportune. Such was the pith of my discourse: but I expanded it with lengthy compliments, expressing my gratitude toward his most illustrious Excellency. To all this he made absolutely no answer, but rather seemed to have taken my communication ill. On the following day Messer Duke bids me tell you that if you want your dismissal, he will grant it; but if you choose work, he will give you plenty: God grant you may have more than work to do, and would rather take it from the Duke than from any man whatever in the world. Whether they were popes, emperors, or kings, I should prefer to serve his most illustrious Excellency for a halfpenny than any of the rest of them for a ducat. He then remarked:
of further speech. So, then, go back to Florence, and be unconcerned;

again to Florence.

Note 1. This man was the son of a peasant at Terranuova, in Valdarno. He acquired great wealth and honour at the court of Duke Cosimo, and was

CIX

IMMEDIATELY after my arrival, there came to visit me a certain Raffaellone Scheggia, whose trade was that of a cloth-of-gold weaver. He except the Lords Counsellors; in the present court Sbietta would not

of a couple of fatted kids, without respect of God or of his honour, to back so infamous a cause and do so vile a wrong to sacred justice. When I had uttered these words, and many others to the like effect, Raffaello kept on blandly urging that it was far better to eat a thrush in peace

sure to get it, after a hot fight. He further reminded me that lawsuits had a certain way of dragging on, and that I could employ the time far better upon some masterpiece of art, which would bring me not only greater honour, but greater profit to boot. I knew that he was speaking the mere truth, and began to lend ear to his arguments. Before long, therefore, we arranged the matter of this way: Sbietta was to rent the farm from me at seventy golden crowns in gold the year during the whole term of my natural life. But when we came to the contract, which was
drawn up by Ser Giovanni, son of Ser Matteo da Falgano, Sbietta objected that the terms we had agreed on would involve our paying the largest duties to the revenue. He was not going to break his word; therefore we had better draw the lease for five years, to be renewed on the expiry of the term. He undertook to abide by his promise to renew, without raising further litigation. That rascal, the priest, his brother, entered into similar engagements; and so the lease was drawn for five years.

CX

THOUGH I want to enter upon other topics, and to leave all this rascality alone awhile, I am forced to narrate what happened at the promised word, those two rogues declared they meant to give me up my farm, and would not keep it any longer upon lease. I not unnaturally complained, but they retorted by ostentatiously unfolding the deed; and I found myself without any defense against their chicanery. When it came to this, I told them that Duke and Prince of Florence would not suffer folk to be so infamously massacred in their cities. That menace worked so forcibly upon their minds that they once more despatched Raffaello Schegcia, the same man who negotiated the former arrangement. I must add that they professed their unwillingness to pay the same rent of seventy crowns as during the five years past, while I replied that I would not take a farthing less. So then Raffaello came to look me up, and spoke to showed me a writing to this effect signed by them. Not being aware that he was their close relative, I thought he would be an excellent
arbitrator, and therefore placed myself also absolutely in his hands.

This man of delicate honour then came one evening about a half hour
after sunset, in the month of August, and induced me with the strongest
pressure to draw up the contract then and there. He did so because he
knew that if he waited till the morning, the deceit he wished to
practise on me must have failed. Accordingly the deed was executed, to
the effect that they were to pay me a rent of sixty-five crowns, in two
half-yearly installments, during the term of my natural life.

Notwithstanding I rebelled against it, and refused to sit down quietly
under the injustice, all was to no purpose. Raffaello exhibited my
signature, and every one took part against me. At the same time he went
on protesting that he acted altogether in my interest and as my
supporter. Neither the notary nor any others who heard of the affair,
knew that he was a relative of those two rogues; so they told me I was
in the wrong. Accordingly, I was forced to yield with the best grace I
could; and what I have now to do is to live as long as I can manage.

Close after these events, that is to say, in the December of 1566
following, I made another blunder. I bought half of the farm Del Poggio
from them, or rather from Sbietta, for two hundred crowns. [1] It
marches with my property of La Fonte. Our terms were that the estate
should revert at the term of three years, [2] and I gave them a lease of
it. I did this for the best; but I should have to dilate too long upon
the topic were I to enter into all the rascalities they practised on me.
Therefore, I refer my cause entirely to God, knowing that He hath ever
defended me from those who sought to do me mischief.
Note 2. This seems to be the meaning of 'compare con riservo di tre anni.' Cellini elsewhere uses the equivalent term 'patto resolutivo.'


CXI

HAVING quite completed my crucifix, I thought that if I raised it some feet above the ground, it would show better than it did upon a lower level. After I had done so, it produced a far finer effect than even it had made before, and I was greatly satisfied. So then I began to exhibit it to every one who had the mind to see it.

As God willed, the Duke and the Duchess heard about it. On their arrival then from Pisa, both their Excellencies arrived one day quite unexpectedly, attended by all the nobles of their court, with the sole purpose of inspecting my crucifix. They were so much delighted, that each of these princes lavished endless praises on it, and all the lords and gentlefolk of their suites joined in chorus. Now, when I saw how greatly they were taken with the piece, I began to thank them with a touch of humour, saying that, if they had not refused me the marble for the Neptune, I should never have undertaken so arduous a task, the like yet they have been well expended, especially now when your most illustrious Excellencies have bestowed such praises on it. I cannot hope
to find possessors of it worthier than you are; therefore I gladly

After speaking to this effect, I prayed them, before they took their
leave, to deign to follow me into the ground-floor of my dwelling. They
rose at once with genial assent, left the workshop, and on entering the
house, beheld my little model of the Neptune and the fountain, which had
not yet been by the Duchess. This struck her with such force that she
raised a cry of indescribable astonishment, and turning to the Duke,
greatly in my honour. Afterwards the Duchess called me to her side; and
when she had uttered many expressions of praise which sounded like
excuses (they might indeed have been construed into asking for
forgiveness), she told me that she should like me to quarry a block of
marble to my taste, and then to execute the work. In reply to these
gracious speeches I said that, if their most illustrious Excellencies
would provide me with the necessary accommodations, I should gladly for
their sakes put my hand to such an arduous undertaking. The Duke
accommodations you can ask for; and I will myself give you more besides,

left me, and I remained highly satisfied.

Note 1. The Duchess would not take the crucifix as a gift. The Duke
bought it for fifteen hundred golden crowns, and transferred it to the
Pitti in 1565. It was given by the Grand Duke Francesco in 1576 to
Philip II., who placed it in the Escorial, where it now is.
MANY weeks passed, but of me nothing more was spoken. This neglect drove me half mad with despair. Now about that time the Queen of France sent Messer Baccio del Bene to our Duke for a loan of money, which the Duke very graciously supplied, as rumour went. Messer Baccio del Bene and I had been intimate friends in former times; so when we renewed our acquaintance in Florence, we came together with much mutual satisfaction. In course of conversation he related all the favours shown him by his most illustrious Excellency, and asked me what great works I had in hand. In reply, I narrated the whole story of the Neptune and the fountain, and the great wrong done me by the Duchess. He responded by telling me how her Majesty of France was most eager to complete the monument of her husband Henri II., and how Daniello da Volterra [1] had undertaken a great equestrian statue in bronze, but the time had already elapsed in which he promised to perform it, and that a multitude of the richest ornaments were required for the tomb. If, then, I liked to return to France and occupy my castle, she would supply me with all the conveniences I could ask for, provided only I cared to enter her service. These proposals he made on the part of the Queen. I told Messer Baccio to beg me from the Duke; if his most illustrious Excellency was satisfied, I should very willingly return to France. He answered settled. Accordingly, next day, in course of conversation with the Duke, he alluded to myself, declaring that if his Excellency had no objection, the Queen would take me into her employ. The Duke replied without a
the whole world; but at the present time he does not care to go on

I called on Messer Baccio, who reported what had passed between them.

Excellency gave me nothing to do, while I was bringing to perfection one
of the most difficult master-pieces ever executed in this world; and it
stands me in more than two hundred crowns, which I have paid out of my
poverty! Oh, what could I not have done if his Excellency had but set me
to work! I tell you in pure truth, that they have done me a great

answered. The Duke told him we were joking, and that he wanted me for
his own service. The result was that in my irritation I more than once
made up my mind to make off without asking leave. However, the Queen
preferred to drop negotiations, in fear of displeasing the Duke; and so
I remained here, much to my regret.

CXIII

ABOUT that time the Duke went on a journey, attended by all his court
and all his sons, except the prince, who was in Spain. They travelled
through the Sienese Maremma, and by this route he reached Pisa. The
poison from the bad air of those marshes first attacked the Cardinal,
who was taken with a pestilential fever after a few days, and died at
good, and his loss was most severely felt. I allowed several days to
elapse, until I thought their tears were dried, and then I betook myself
to Pisa.

End of Part Two

End of Autobiography of Benvenuto Cellini