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THE BROCHURE SERIES  
**The Duomo and the  
Campanile: Florence.**  
**Grotesques from Notre Dame,  
Paris.**  
JUNE, 1900

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**PLATE XLIII**

**THE DUOMO AND THE CAMPANILE**

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THE  
**Brochure Series**  
OF ARCHITECTURAL  
ILLUSTRATION.

1900.

JUNE

No. 6.

**THE DUOMO AND THE CAMPANILE: FLORENCE.**

"It was in the middle of the thirteenth century," writes Symonds, "during the long struggle for independence carried on by the republics of Lombardy and Tuscany against the Empire and the nobles, that some of the most durable and splendid public works were executed. The domes and towers of Florence and of Pisa were rising above the city walls, while the burghers who subscribed for their erection were staining the waves of Meloria and the cane-brakes of the Arbia with their blood. Sismondi remarks with just pride, that these great works were republican. They were set on foot for the public use, and were constructed at the expense of the commonwealths. It is, however, right to add that what the communes had begun the princes continued. The Despots held their power at the price of magnificence in schemes of public utility. So much at least of the free spirit of the communes survived in them, that they were always rivalling each other in great works of architecture. Italian tyranny implied æsthetic taste and liberality of expenditure."

"In the year 1294," wrote Giovanni Villani, who was a youth in Florence at the time, "the city of Florence being in a state of tranquility, the citizens agreed to rebuild the chief church, which was very rude in form and in small proportion to such a city, and that it should be enlarged, and that it should be made all of marble and with carven figures. And the foundation was laid on the day of St. Mary, in September, by the Cardinal Legate of the Pope, in the presence of all the ranks of the Signory of Florence. And it was consecrated to the honor of God and St. Mary, under the name of St. Mary of the Flower (Santa Maria del Fiore). And for the building of the church taxes were ordered, and the Legate and bishops bestowed great indulgences and pardons to everyone who should contribute aid and alms to the work."

The design for the new cathedral was entrusted to Arnolfo di Cambio, who was at that time the official architect of the Commune of Florence,—a remarkable man to whom Florence in a great measure owes her present physiognomy; for not only are the tower of the Palazzo Vecchio, Santa Croce and the bulk of the Duomo his, but Giotto's Campanile, Brunelleschi's cupola and the church of Or San Michele are placed where he had planned.



[Pg 88]

**PLATE  
XLIV**

**FACADE OF THE DUOMO AND THE  
CAMPANILE**

In the design for Santa Croce, Arnolfo had shown a preference for the Gothic forms, then newly [Pg 89]

imported into Italy, and he now projected a design for the new Cathedral in which the pointed should take the place of the round arch, the stone vaulted roof should be substituted for the flat timber ceiling, and the façade should form a splendid screen, adorned with gable and pinnacle, rich with carving, glowing with mosaics and shining with gold. That the Florentines approved his project is evident from a decree passed before the work had been long in progress, in which "Master Arnolfo" is declared to be exempt from any civic tax during his life, because of his design for the Cathedral, "since" reads the Chronicle, "judging from the magnificent and visible beginnings of the new church, the Commune and people of Florence are like to have a more beautiful and honorable temple than any other in the region of Tuscany."

But before the work had far advanced the building came almost to a standstill, for the strife of parties, which had been but temporarily smothered, broke out anew in Florence, and for some thirty years work on the Cathedral was suspended. Meantime Arnolfo had died, but he left the building so far advanced that his successors would find little difficulty in continuing the main parts of the construction according to his design.

In 1331, however, a portion of the communal tax was set apart for the prosecution of the work, and Giotto di Bondone, already the most famous painter of all Italy, was appointed architect of the Cathedral. "It is not often," says Mrs. Jameson, "that a man takes up a new trade when he is approaching sixty, or even goes into a new path out of his familiar routine. But Giotto seems to have turned without a moment's hesitation from his paints and panels to the less easily wrought materials of the builder and sculptor, without either faltering from the great enterprise or doubting his own power to do it."

"To his new charge," writes Mr. C. E. Norton, "Giotto gave himself with the effectual ardor of genius. No written record of his work on the Duomo remains, but the walls themselves seem to bear witness to it. Stretches on the north and south, running eastward from the façade, more beautiful in composition and design than the later work joined to it, may be assigned with probability to the period of his oversight.

"But Giotto's labor was not limited to the Duomo alone. He now designed and speedily began the construction of the most exquisite building of modern times, the one in which the quality of classic art is most completely and beautifully harmonized with the spirit and fancy of modern times. The unsurpassed bell-tower of the Duomo, known and admired by all men as the Campanile of Giotto, is the most splendid memorial of the arts of Florence. In 1334, scarcely three months after his appointment, the foundations of the Campanile were laid with great pomp and ceremony. The tower, so quickly begun, was so vigorously lifted that it may have reached somewhat more than a third of its proposed height, when in 1337 Giotto died." He was buried in the unfinished Cathedral on the side nearest the Campanile.

"In its first appeal to the stranger's eye," says Mr. Ruskin in writing of the Campanile, "there is something unpleasing; a mingling, it seems to him, of over severity with over minuteness. But let him give it time, as he should all other consummate art. I remember well how, when a boy, I used to despise that Campanile, and think it meanly smooth and finished. But I have since lived beside it many a day, and looked out upon it from my windows by sunlight and moonlight, and I shall not soon forget how profound and gloomy appeared to me the savageness of the Northern Gothic when I afterwards stood, for the first time, beneath the front of Salisbury. The contrast is indeed strange, if it could be quickly felt, between the rising of those gray walls out of their quiet swarded space, like dark and barren rocks out of a green lake, and that bright, smooth, sunny surface of glowing jasper, those spiral shafts and fairy traceries, so white, so faint, so crystalline, that their slight shapes are hardly traced in darkness on the pallor of the eastern sky, that serene height of mountain alabaster, colored like a morning cloud and chased like a sea shell. And this, I believe to be the model and mirror of perfect architecture...."

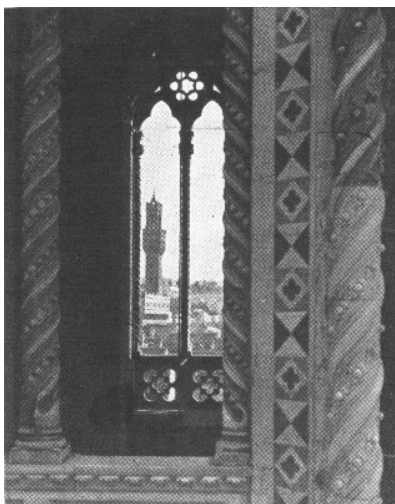


**PLATE XLV**

**REAR OF THE DUOMO**

"Considerable size exhibited by simple terminal lines; projection towards the top; breadth of flat surface; square compartments of that surface; varied and visible masonry; vigorous depth of shadow, exhibited especially by pierced traceries; varied proportion in ascent; lateral symmetry; sculpture most delicate at the base; enriched quantity of ornament at the top; sculpture abstract in inferior ornaments and mouldings, complete in animal forms, both to be executed in white marble; vivid colors introduced in flat geometrical patterns, and obtained by the use of naturally colored stone,—these characteristics occur more or less in different buildings, some in one, some in another—but all together and all in their highest possible relative degrees, they exist, as far as I know, only in one building in the world, the Campanile of Giotto."

[Pg 91]



**WINDOW THE CAMPANILE**

After Giotto's death there is a wide gap in the annals of the Duomo, for in 1348 the great plague desolated Florence, and the work came to a standstill. After it had passed, however, there followed, as a natural consequence, a sudden outbreak of pious superstition. Immense sums had been bequeathed by dying men to the Church to purchase salvation; and the Duomo, begun sixty years before, seemed hardly to correspond with the demands of the present age. It was accordingly resolved to adopt a new design for it on a grander scale than that planned by Arnolfo; and while the breadth was to remain the same, the height and length were to be increased, and the eastern end of the church to be larger. The oversight of the work was entrusted to Francesco di Talenti, and in 1357 the new foundations were begun. The main forms of the new building were, in great part, determined by such of the old structure of Giotto's time as was left standing, and by the original scheme of Arnolfo. But the taste of the age had changed, and in grafting the newly arisen classical ideas upon the original, the architects achieved a result which was neither good Gothic nor good Classic. For some years

the work was now carried slowly but steadily forward, and in 1407 the eastern tribune with its five chapels was completed, and the work was ready to be crowned by a dome.

But here a great difficulty was encountered. The increase in the original dimensions and the height of the walls had made it necessary to span an enormous space, for the diameter of the octagon to be covered was now one hundred and thirty-five feet. The records of architecture could show no such dome as this must be. The overseers of the work were confounded, and knew not how to proceed; and, in their desperation made a public proclamation in 1418, that whoever wished, might make a model for the dome, or of anything pertaining to its construction. Fifteen models were presented, and over them there were months of public deliberation and discussion. It was not until March, 1420, that a final conclusion was reached, and the celebrated plan of Filippo Brunelleschi was adopted.

No more characteristic or remarkable design was produced during the whole period of the Renaissance than this, with which its great architectural achievements began. Not only were

apparently insurmountable difficulties of construction overcome, but the new dome was also to be a masterpiece of beauty. The great domes of former times—the dome of the Pantheon, the dome of Aya Sophia—had been designed solely for their interior effect; they were not impressive or noble structures from without. But Brunelleschi had conceived a dome which, grand in its interior aspect, should be even more superb from without, and which, in its stately dimensions and proportions, in its magnificent lift above all the other edifices of the city of which it formed the centre, in its absolute unity and symmetry, in the beautiful shape and proportions of its broad divisions, the strong, simple energy of its upwardly converging lines, should be such that, more than a century later, when Michelangelo was told that he had an opportunity to surpass it in his cupola of St. Peter's at Rome, he replied sadly, with a shake of his head,—

*"Io farò la sorella  
Più grande già; ma non più bella!"*

"I will make her sister dome  
Larger, indeed, but not more beautiful!"

Brunelleschi's plan was to build *two* octagonal domes, separated by a space wide enough for a passage and stairways, and united by eight strong ribs of masonry at the angles. The inner and smaller dome was for constructive purposes, to bridge the vault and to furnish a support for the outer, which was to be merely a light shell to secure the magnificent swelling lines. The whole was to be crowned by a lantern. We have not space to quote Vasari's animated account of Brunelleschi's difficulties in persuading the authorities of the practicability of his plan, of his jealous bickerings with his troublesome and incompetent confrère, Ghiberti, of the obstacles, difficulties and persecutions that he underwent,—suffice it to say that, in 1434, under his untiring supervision, just fourteen years from its beginning, the splendid dome closed over the central space of the Duomo, and Brunelleschi's fame was forever established.



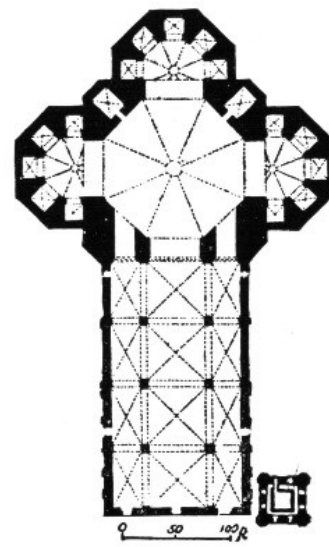
**PLATE XLVI                      INTERIOR OF THE DUOMO**

Without waiting for the completion of the cupola and lantern, the Florentines took advantage of the presence in their city of Pope Eugenius IV., to have him consecrate the Cathedral in person, with most impressive ceremony, on the Florentine New Year's day, the feast of the Annunciation, March 25, 1436.

Not long after the consecration of the Duomo, the work on the cupola was completed (August, 1436), and to the fulfilment of Brunelleschi's plan remained only the construction of a surmounting lantern. But for some undiscovered reason there was delay for year after year, and it was fated that Brunelleschi should not see the completion of his work, for "finally," says Vasari, "Filippo Brunelleschi being now very old, that is sixty-nine years old in the year 1446, on the 16th of April, went to a better life, after having toiled greatly in the performance of works which made him deserve on earth an honored name, and obtain in heaven an abode of peace." More than twenty years passed after Brunelleschi's death before the lantern was at last completed. On the 23d of April, 1467, the last and highest stone was set.

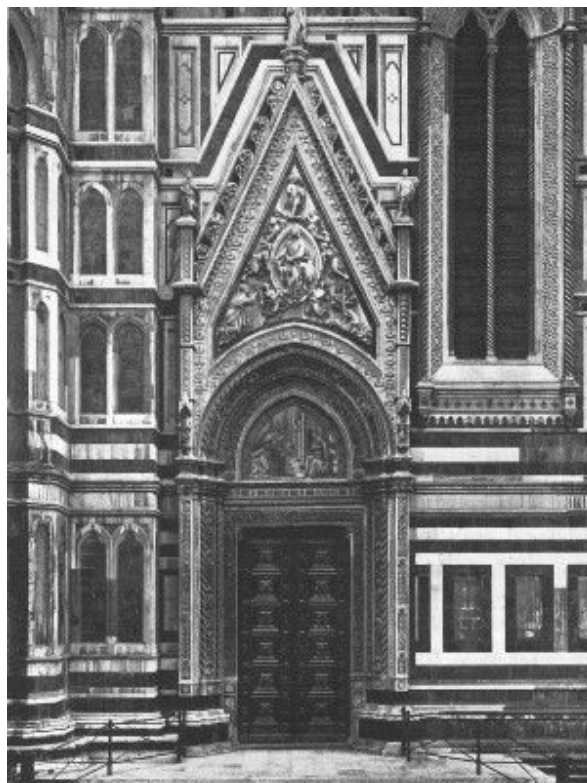
Meantime, not until some twenty years after the death of Giotto had work on the unfinished façade been recommenced. The design for it, which was Gothic, with columns and niches containing statues of the Madonna and Child, of saints and prophets, and even of distinguished Florentine citizens, was the joint composition of several

architects, among them Orcagna, Gaddi and Tommasi. But this façade had only reached one-third of the height of the edifice, when, for some unexplained reason it was abandoned, and remained in an unfinished state until the reign of the Grand Duke Francis I. (1575-1587), when it was demolished to make way for the accomplishment of a new design, one which was, however, never executed; and the whole face of the Cathedral remained a bare expanse of rubble and cement until, in 1689, it was painted and frescoed to represent columns and other architectural decorations. Shortly after Tuscany was incorporated with the kingdom of Italy, the Florentine municipality again took up the matter, and invited architects to submit designs for a new façade. The design of Commendatore de Fabris, a Florentine, was selected. In 1875 the scaffolding was erected, and white marble from Seravezza, red marble from Montiere and green marble from Prato were brought to Florence to begin the façade which now exists, and which was completed and unveiled in 1887.



**PLAN OF DUOMO AND CAMPANILE**

Writing of the Duomo as a whole, Mr. C. E. Norton says: "Its size gives it dignity, and its effect is powerful from the simplicity and largeness of its design. A nave of four enormous bays is stopped upon a vast octagonal space, from which, at the east, the north, and the south, are built out three pentagonal tribunes or apses, which, as seen on the outside, give to the church the common cruciform shape. The proportions of the interior are on an enormous scale, by which the apparent size of the building is diminished rather than increased. There is nothing either in the general conception or in the working-out of the details which corresponds with that principle, characteristic of the best Northern Gothic, of complex organization, in which each minor part contributes to the vital unity of the whole edifice. The Duomo presents, on the contrary, an assemblage of separate vast features arbitrarily associated, rather than united by any law of mutual relation into a completely harmonious whole. It does not display that lavish wealth of fancy in ever-changing variety and abundance of detail which gives inexhaustible charm to a true Gothic edifice. But it is impressive within from its vast open spaces, and from the stately and simple, though barren, grandeur of its piers and vaults and walls.



**PLATE XLVII NORTH DOOR OF THE DUOMO**

"The effect of the building from without is imposing from its mass, but, in a near view, it is only on the east that the lines compose into forms of beauty. The side walls are incrustated, after the old Tuscan style, with simple rectangular patterns of white and red marble, interrupted by the rich decoration of gable and pinnacle over the doors and windows.

"It is when seen from a distance that the full worth and power of the great Cathedral force themselves upon the beholder. Looking down upon Florence from one of the neighboring heights, the beautiful city seems to lie gathered under the shelter of its mighty Duomo. The stretch of its wall is ample for the house in which the whole people shall gather, and, lifting itself above the

clustering towers and belfries of palaces and churches, the unrivalled dome crowns the edifice, and with its noble elliptic lines not merely concentrates the scattered forms of the buildings beneath and around it far and near, but to the inward eye seems equally to concentrate all the divergent energies of the historic life of Florence, and lift them along its curves to the foot of the cross upon its heaven-reaching summit. It seems of equal date with the mountains that close the background to the landscape of which it forms the central interest; and they seem to look down upon this work of man as one not unworthy of their guardianship."

[Pg 96]



**PLATE XLVIII**

**FACADE OF THE DUOMO**

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[Pg 97]



## Grotesques from Notre Dame, Paris.

The representation of physical beauty being with the Gothic carver subordinated to the purpose of enforcing the idea that the soul is superior to the body, and of illustrating the doctrine of the salvation of the soul by goodness of life, and the loss of the soul by evil life, it was necessary that beings and objects not beautiful should enter into his sculptured ornamental schemes. The evils that beset the lives and tempt the souls of men had to be in some way set forth, no less than the human virtues and the heavenly ideals. The unhappy lot of the wicked had to be figured as well as the felicities of the good. Hence figures which embody the mediæval notions of the monstrous and the grotesque are conspicuous elements in Gothic sculpture, especially after the beginning of the thirteenth century. The grotesque, in the finest Gothic art, while often apparently introduced in a playful spirit, had thus primarily a serious purpose.



**GROTESQUE NOTRE DAME, PARIS**

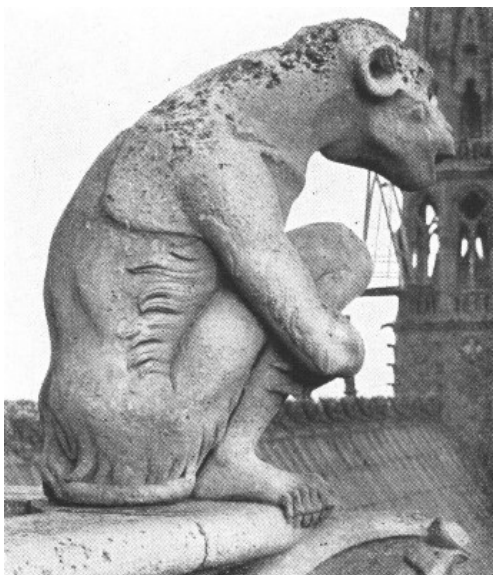


**GROTESQUE NOTRE DAME, PARIS**

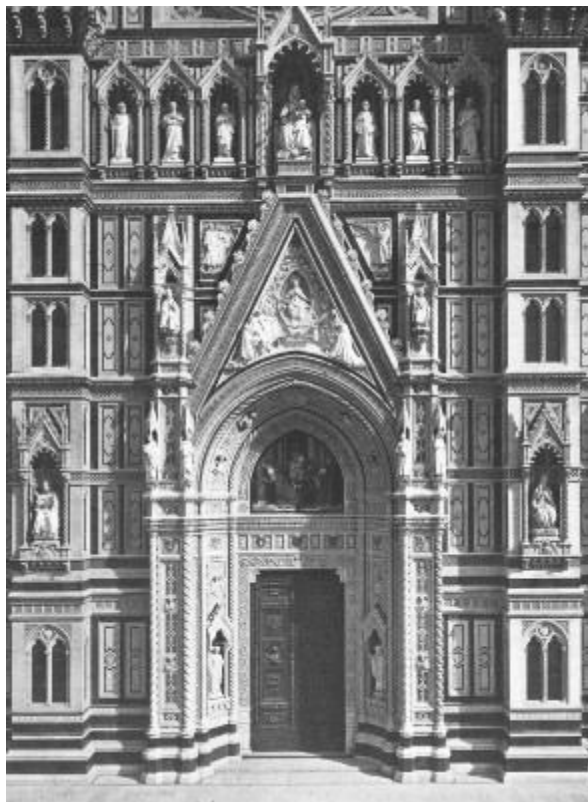
The Romanesque imagery, consisting of fantastic creations of animal life which embodied distorted traditions of the Roman mythology, combined with forms originating in the rude imagination of the Northern races, was largely rejected by the early Gothic artists. The imaginary creatures which they sometimes introduced were, for the most part, confined to the symbolic animals of the Bible—such as those seen by St. John in the Apocalypse. But by degrees other imaginary creations were introduced, until finally, during the thirteenth century, the grotesque animal life of the Gothic edifice became even more extended in range than that of the richest Romanesque monuments had been, and an imaginary fauna was created, which, while it derived much from the older conceptions, embodied so much that was new as to constitute a distinctly Gothic class. This development grew primarily out of the old popular belief in the symbolic character of animals and imaginary creatures. As symbols of human qualities, both good and evil, these animals, real and imaginary, were now wrought, for encouragement and for warning, upon the stones of the sacred edifice. A further purpose of this fauna, as of the sculpture of the human figure and the flora with which it was associated, apparently was that the Gothic monument might present a compendious illustration of the known world of creation, imagination and faith.



**GROTESQUE NOTRE DAME, PARIS**



**GROTESQUE NOTRE DAME, PARIS**



**PLATE XLIX CENTRAL PORTAL, FACADE OF THE DUOMO**

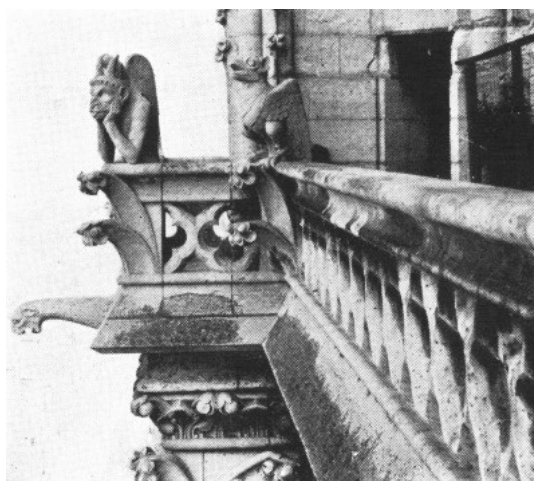
A remarkable quality of the grotesque creations of Gothic art is the close and accurate observation of nature which they, no less than the images of real things, display. However fabulous the imagined creature may be, the materials out of which he is made are derived from nature, and manifest a keen appreciation of animal structure. Vertebra or claw, wing or beak, eye or nostril, throat or paw,—every anatomical member displays an intimate familiarity with real organic form and function, and an imaginative sense of its possible combinations in creative design. Take, for instance, those strange beasts, or terrible demons of the parapet of the Cathedral of Paris. Each of them seems animated with a living spirit, and has an almost startling appearance of reality. And besides this lifelikeness and functional truth, a highly ornamental play of lines, and a subtle elaboration of finely modelled surfaces, are shown in these grotesque forms. In the early and early mature periods they exhibit a noticeable restraint of posture and movement; extravagantly contorted forms and violent movements occur, for the most part, only in the decline of Gothic, when jaded sensibilities had ceased to appreciate the value of moderation in design.—CHARLES H. MOORE: "*Gothic Architecture*."

[Pg 99]

In addition to Notre Dame at Paris, the churches of Rheims, Amiens, Rouen, Laon, Vézelay, Auxerre and the religious edifices throughout Poitou, Saintonge, Guyenne and Burgundy, and the borders of the Loire, in France are rich in examples of grotesque animal sculpture.



**GROTESQUE NOTRE DAME, PARIS**



**GROTESQUE NOTRE DAME, PARIS**

[Pg 100]



**PLATE L**

**THE CAMPANILE**

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