

CHAPTER XXI.

AGNOLO GADDI AND CENNINO CENNINI.

Whilst Orcagna successfully raised the standard of Florentine art in composition, in colour, and in form, and presented to his countrymen the pleasing prospect of artistic qualities hardly alloyed with a single fault, the family of the Gaddi studied and practised the profession of their ancestors with fruit. They had, however, already diverted their attention to mercantile pursuits and it became evident that the two occupations could scarcely be coexistent in one family. Taddeo had already established a branch of his business in Venice,¹ where he kept open house; and Agnolo his son divided his time between the labours of the brush and those of the counting house. In his youth he had given promise of great things. Taddeo, at his death, had left him, as we have seen, under the joint tutorship of Giovanni da Milano and of Jacopo di Casentino, hoping, says Vasari, that amongst his many disciples this son would become the most excellent in painting, but Agnolo's mature age, far from yielding the expected fruit, was marked by a gradual decline..² He inherited, however, many of his father's talents and developed others in a measure to which Taddeo had not attained. There is no record of his birth, but one may infer from his father's dying wish, as preserved in Vasari,³ that Agnolo was yet in the age of adolescence when he became master of his own actions. That Taddeo was still alive

¹ Vas. Vol. II. p. 155.

² Vas. Vol. II. p. 150.

³ Ibid. Vol. II.

p. 150.