

## CHAPTER XXV.

## MASACCIO.

A noble array of talents of the first order illustrated Florence in the fifteenth century. Their spirited rivalry in a field which, like the lists of chivalry, had been more than once expressly opened to all comers, yielded results of unparalleled importance. Art was enriched with new and great advantages, and gained something even from the faults of its votaries. Lorenzo Ghiberti, by introducing into the sculpture of reliefs the purely pictorial element of perspective and of distance,<sup>1</sup> did as much practically for the development of general truth as Paolo Uccelli by the study of pure science. His example might have proved to Donatello that there were other roads to fame than that of naturalism. Brunelleschi<sup>2</sup> revealed to an incredulous and self sufficient public that an artist's time might with advantage be devoted to the exclusive study of architecture. To him and to Paolo Uccelli linear perspective was indebted for some great improvements.

Masaccio, whilst he introduced into painting the plastic boldness of Donatello, deserves the credit of having successfully carried out, not merely the laws which Uccelli and Brunelleschi were beginning to codify and base upon mathematical rules, but that other perspective which deals with atmosphere, which places objects on their planes by force of relief and rounding, and by the increase or decrease of the density of the medium in

<sup>1</sup> See Rumohr's excellent remarks on this point. *Forsch.* Vol. II. p. 232. See also Sir Joshua

Reynold's objections in *Lectures*.  
<sup>2</sup> Born 1377. Vide Gaye, *Carteggio*. Vol. I. p. 114.