

CHAPTER XXVI.

LORENZO AND OTHER FRIARS OF THE ORDER OF
THE CAMALDOLES.

Before devoting special attention to Angelico, the cotemporary and rival in greatness of Masaccio, before endeavouring to explain or to illustrate the characteristic features of his style, the reader shall be requested to cast a preliminary glance at the productions of a monk who inherited some of the manner of Agnolo Gaddi, and who, transferring into the fifteenth century the character of the fourteenth, may be said to have worthily continued the line of the Giottesques. It would be needless here to collect authorities for the admitted fact that art was cultivated from early times in monasteries. The reader may bear in mind the examples set by the Benedictines of Montecassino in the eleventh century, who were courageous enough to attempt the revival of a school of mosaists. He may recollect what the Dominicans of Florence and Pisa did for sculpture and for architecture, and he may have had occasion to convince himself that the art of miniature at least was practised in most, and particularly in the Italian, convents of the middle ages. Don Lorenzo of the Camaldoles of Florence produced works displaying in an eminent degree the qualities which might fit him for the direction of a monkish school of miniature. He undoubtedly belongs to the class of first rate artists. Older than Angelico, he did not disdain at one time to act as his assistant; but, independently of the Dominican, he also executed large and important works, more prized