

Fra Angelico

GEORGE BELL & SONS

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Alinari, photo.

Pinacoteca Perugia

The Madonna of Perugia.

Luna Electric Engraving Co.

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BY

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PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

SOME six or seven years ago I began to make the art of Fra Angelico a special subject of study. In course of time, becoming more and more intimately acquainted with the master through his works, the conviction came to me that the popular conception of him was mistaken *au fond*, and that, as an artist, Fra Angelico had never received fair and adequate treatment. The present work owes its inception to that fact.

In seeking to reconstruct for myself his artistic personality, I have not put trust in the conclusions of any other critic, however eminent, but have relied only upon evidence obtained from the artist's paintings and drawings, and upon the testimony of contemporary documents.

There are some who will think that I have attached too much importance to Fra Angelico's studies of Nature and of antique art. They will, perhaps, condemn my whole point of view as "academic" and "stylistic," so applying to it two epithets which to their ears are the most damning that can be conceived. "If," they will say, "this conception of Fra Angelico is the right one, then so much the worse for Fra Angelico."

But, indeed, it seems to my judgment that in the great and endless controversy which divides the realm of art, the truth lies, as it so often does in this world, somewhere in the middle ground between two extreme positions. It dwells neither with the *intransigenti* of classicalism on the one hand, nor with the propounders of that creed of artistic anarchism which is now so fashionable, on the other. The perfect