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Issued Monthly



Bates and Guild Company
Publishers
144 Congress Street
Boston



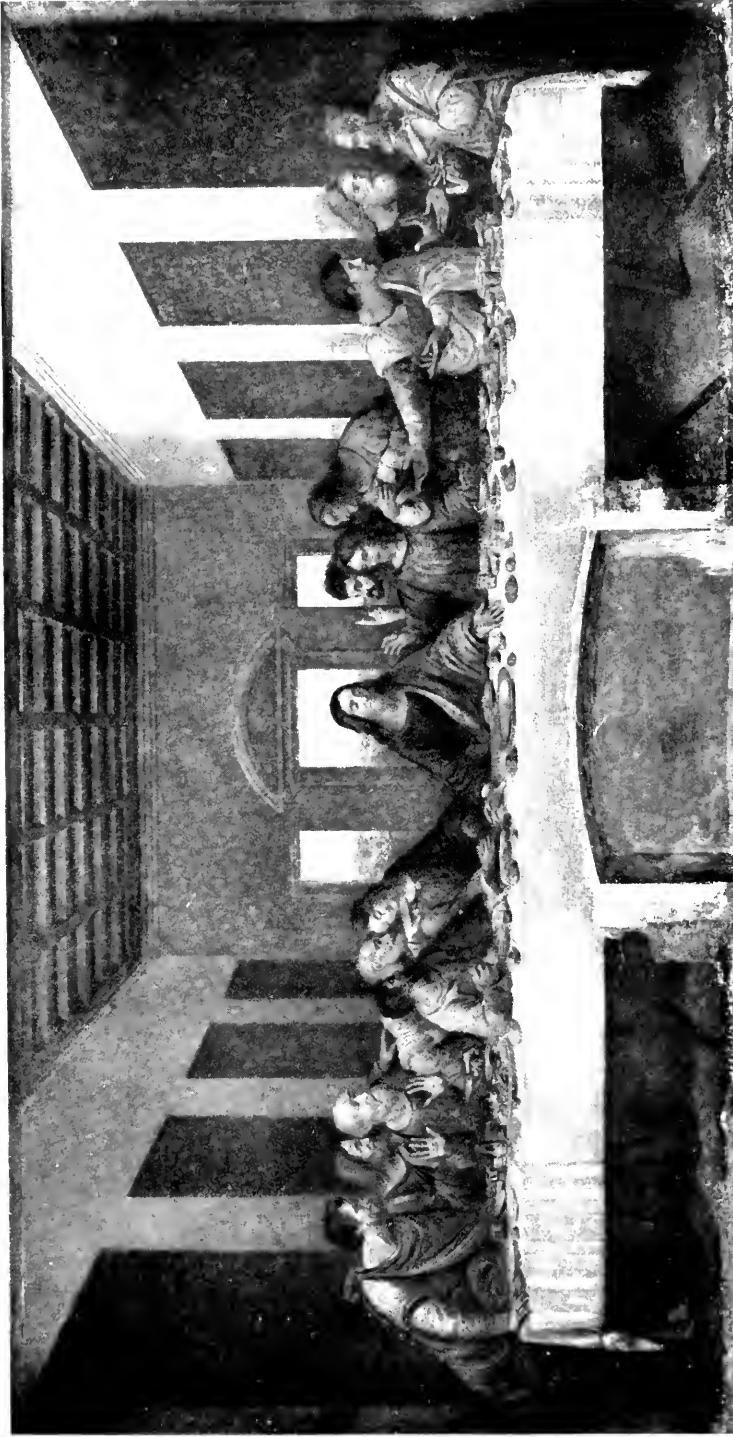
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LEONARDO DA VINCI
ADORATION OF THE MAGI [UNFINISHED]
UFFIZI GALLERY, FLORENCE



PORTRAIT OF LEONARDO DA VINCI

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It is regrettable that we have no portrait of Leonardo in that wonderful youthful beauty which all his contemporaries agree to extol. "His figure," says the anonymous biographer, "was beautifully proportioned, he usually wore a rose-colored coat and long hose, and his hair fell in luxuriant curls as far as his waist." The only authentic likeness we have of him, however, is the red-chalk drawing here reproduced, executed by his own hand during the last years of his life, when the character of sage and philosopher had fully imprinted itself upon the majestic face.

Leonardo da Vinci

BORN 1452: DIED 1519
FLORENTINE SCHOOL

QUARTERLY REVIEW

VOL. 190 [1899]

THE place which Leonardo da Vinci holds in the history of art must always be unique. He stands alone among the painters of the Renaissance, by reason not only of the rare perfection of the high intellectual qualities of his art, but of the extraordinary influence which he exerted upon his contemporaries, and the universal character of his genius. Never before or since in the annals of the human race has the same passionate desire for knowledge been combined with the same ardent love of beauty, never have artistic and scientific powers been united in the same degree as in this wonderful man. Painting was only one of the varied forms in which his activity was displayed. As sculptor, architect, and engineer Leonardo was alike illustrious in his day; as a philosopher and man of science he has been justly hailed as the precursor of Galileo, of Bacon, and of Descartes. Alexander von Humboldt proclaimed him to be the greatest physicist of the fifteenth century, the one man of his age who "united a remarkable knowledge of mathematics with the most admirable intuition of nature;" and scholars of our day have recognized in him — to use the words of Hallam — "a thinker who anticipated the grander discoveries of modern science."

Leonardo da Vinci was born in the year 1452, at Vinci, a fortified town half-way between Florence and Pisa. He was the natural son of Ser Piero Antonio da Vinci, a notary who soon acquired a connection in Florence, where he held important offices, and occupied a house on the Piazza San Firenze. There Leonardo lived until he was twenty-four years of age. As he grew up he attracted attention not only by his personal beauty and great strength, but also by his passion for learning. Music and mathematics were among his favorite studies, but he was still fonder of drawing and modelling. At fifteen he entered the studio of Andrea Verocchio, who, as the representative of the scientific school of Florentine artists, was well fitted to develop Leonardo's peculiar genius. Here the brilliant youth became a great favorite, both with his master and comrades, among whom were Perugino and Lorenzo di Credi. In 1472 his name was inscribed on the roll of the Painters' Guild,

and soon afterwards he received a pension from Lorenzo de' Medici. Through this influential patron he obtained a commission in 1478 to paint an altar-piece for the chapel of the Palazzo Vecchio, and in 1480 he signed a contract by which he agreed to complete another for the monks of San Donato. Neither of these pictures was ever executed; but the cartoon of the 'Adoration of the Magi,' which still hangs in the Uffizi, was probably a design for one of the two. . . .

In July, 1481, Leonardo was living in his own house in Florence. After that his name disappears from contemporary records; and it is not until 1487 that we find any mention of him again. By that time he was a painter and architect of great renown, and was living in Milan in the service of Lodovico Sforza. This silence of documents has given rise to all manner of strange theories accounting for Leonardo's occupations during the interim of five or six years. Dr. Richter ventured on the bold conjecture that the painter visited the East, and entered the service of the Sultan of Cairo as engineer; but this ingenious theory has been refuted by convincing arguments. In the absence of other documents we turn to the narrative of the Anonimo who wrote Leonardo's biography early in the sixteenth century. That writer tells us that when Leonardo was thirty years old he was sent to Milan by Lorenzo de' Medici, to bear a silver lute to his friend Lodovico Sforza. This would fix the date of Leonardo's arrival at the Milanese Court in 1482, or early in the following year.

Lodovico Sforza, from the moment of his accession to power in 1480, had determined to raise a colossal statue in memory of his father, the famous Duke Francesco. He had probably applied to his friend, Lorenzo de' Medici, for a sculptor who could execute the work, and it was then, no doubt, that Leonardo wrote the famous letter in which he offered his services to the duke, and proudly enumerated his different talents and capabilities. After dwelling on his capacity as military engineer and his ability to construct cannons and scaling-ladders, mortars and engines of beautiful and useful shape, he concludes: "In time of peace, I believe I can equal any one in architecture, in constructing public and private buildings, and in conducting water from one place to another. I can execute sculpture, whether in marble, bronze, or terra-cotta; and in painting I can do as much as any other, be he who he may. Further, I could engage to execute the bronze horse in eternal memory of your father and the illustrious house of Sforza."

Lodovico soon recognized the rare genius of the young Florentine master, and manifold were the lines in which Leonardo's talents were employed during the sixteen years which he spent in the duke's service. But the equestrian statue was probably the first important commission which he received. Endless were the preparations which Leonardo made for this great task. He applied himself to an elaborate study of the structure and anatomy of the horse, and wrote a whole treatise on the subject. Unfortunately, he could not satisfy himself, and tried one design after another, without deciding upon any of them, until even the duke began to lose patience. Three years and a half later, however, at the wedding of Lodovico's niece Bianca, Leo-

nardo's model was sufficiently advanced to be placed on the piazza of the Castello, under a triumphal arch. Poets and chroniclers hailed the great statue as one of the wonders of the age. They compared Leonardo to Phidias and Praxiteles, and Lodovico to Pericles and Augustus. Luca Pacioli, the famous mathematician, tells us that the monument was twenty-six feet high, and when cast in bronze was expected to weigh 200,000 pounds. Unfortunately, by this time Lodovico's dominions were already threatened by foreign invaders, and financial difficulties put an end to his most cherished schemes. The statue was never cast, and after the fall of Lodovico and the occupation of Milan by the French, Leonardo's model was allowed to perish.

This statue was the chief, but by no means the only work to which Leonardo's time and labors were devoted during the first ten years of his residence at Milan. Whether in the capacity of architect or engineer, of painter or decorator, the Florentine master's services were in continual request. In 1487 he made a model for the cupola of Milan Cathedral. In 1490 he was summoned to Pavia, to give his opinion on the new Duomo in that city, but was hastily recalled to superintend the decorations of the ball-room in the Castello on the occasion of Lodovico's marriage. Later, he was appointed ducal engineer, and, if he did not actually have a share in the famous Martesana canal, he was no doubt consulted by the duke in the construction of the vast scheme of irrigation by which Lodovico fertilized the Lomellina. These varied occupations left Leonardo little time for painting; yet, during the years which he spent in Lodovico's service, several of his most important works of art were executed, and his famous treatise on painting was written. The one genuine easel-picture of this period which remains is 'The Virgin of the Rocks,' now in the Louvre. Further, in the last years of Lodovico's rule Leonardo painted the masterpiece of his life, 'The Last Supper,' in the refectory of Santa Maria delle Grazie.

After the fall of Duke Lodovico, in 1499, Leonardo left Milan; and the next sixteen years of his life were spent in constant journeyings up and down Italy. During fifteen months he remained in Florence, working at a cartoon for the Servite monks, who had commissioned him to paint an altar-piece for their church of the Annunziata. "For a long time," says Vasari, "he kept them waiting and did nothing at all. At last he produced a cartoon with the Madonna, St. Anne, and the Christ, a work which not only filled all the artists with admiration, but brought a continuous procession of men and women, old and young, to the hall in the convent where it was exhibited. The whole town was stirred, and you might have fancied it was a procession on some solemn feast-day." It was without doubt this composition that he afterwards repeated in oils for Francis I., and which is now in the Louvre.

In July, 1502, we find Leonardo at Urbino, inspecting fortifications for Cæsar Borgia, who had taken him into his service as military engineer and architect. He travelled through Romagna, — "the realm of all stupidity," as he calls it in one passage, — sketching fortresses and drawing plans, and not-

ing any curiosities which he saw on his journey. But early in 1503 he was back in Florence, once more absorbed in the study of mathematics. In July he made elaborate plans for a canal between Pisa and Florence. In the following January he was present at the consultation held between the leading artists of the day, to decide upon the site for Michelangelo's statue of 'David.'

By this time both Leonardo and Michelangelo had been commissioned to prepare plans for the decoration of the Council Hall in the Palazzo Vecchio. The subject assigned to Leonardo was the battle between the Florentines and the Milanese at Anghiari in 1440; and the Signory agreed to pay him fifteen florins a month, on condition that his cartoon should be completed by the end of the following February. Throughout the autumn and winter Leonardo worked with unremitting ardor; and by February, 1505, the great cartoon was completed. The subject especially appealed to him, and the rivalry with Michelangelo impelled him to put forth all his powers. Unfortunately he had read of a recipe for a stucco ground employed by the ancient Romans, which he determined to try. But after devoting endless time and labor to the preparation of the wall in the Council Hall, and after painting the central group of horsemen fighting round the standard, Leonardo found that the substance was too soft and that his color began to run. This unhappy result filled him with disgust; and before long he gave up his task and abandoned the work in despair. Leonardo's failure in this case is the more lamentable because of the unanimous testimony borne by his contemporaries to the magnificence of his design. All alike dwell with enthusiasm on the heroic beauty of the armed warriors and the noble forms of the horses in the central group. In 1513 the Signory ordered a balustrade to be placed in the Council Hall "for the protection of the figures painted by Leonardo da Vinci on the wall." After that we hear no more of the painting, which was probably allowed to perish. Leonardo's cartoon was placed in the Pope's Hall, and that of Michelangelo was hung in the Medici Palace. Benvenuto Cellini saw them in 1559, and describes them as the school of the whole world. In the course of the next century both of these priceless works vanished, and to-day nothing remains to us of Leonardo's masterpiece but a few studies of separate groups and figures in different collections, and Rubens' sketch of the central group.

A better fortune has attended the other great creation of these last years of the painter's residence in his native city. This is the portrait, now in the Louvre, of 'Mona Lisa,' the fair Neapolitan wife of Francesco del Giocondo, magistrate and prior of Florence.

The bitter disappointment which Leonardo felt at the failure of his painting in the Palazzo Vecchio was increased by a vexatious lawsuit into which he was drawn, owing to the refusal of his half-brothers to allow him to share in his father's and uncle's inheritance; and just at this time, when worries and vexations weighed heavily upon his mind, the painter received an invitation to enter the service of the French king, Louis XII. In May, 1506, he went to Milan, then in the possession of the French, having ob-

tained three months' leave of absence from the gonfaloniere of Florence, Piero Soderini, and was once more employed on architectural and engineering works in Lombardy. But when the French viceroy in Milan, Charles d'Amboise, begged for an extension of the artist's leave, Soderini refused sternly. "Leonardo," he wrote, "has not treated the Republic well. He received a large sum of money, but has only made a beginning of the work which was entrusted to him. He has, in fact, acted like a traitor." The painter offered to return the money which he had received for the cartoon in the Palazzo Vecchio, but Soderini refused to take it; and when, in January, 1507, Louis XII. himself addressed a pressing letter to the Signory, begging that Leonardo might await his arrival in Milan, his request was granted.

In 1512 an unexpected change of fortune restored Lodovico's son, Maximilian Sforza, to the throne of his fathers. The French were driven out, but Leonardo remained in Milan until the following summer. Then the disturbed state of affairs sent him back to Florence; and in the following autumn he accompanied Giuliano de' Medici to Rome, to attend the coronation of his brother, the new pope, Leo X. There he received a cordial welcome from Pope Leo; but his sojourn in the Eternal City proved neither pleasant nor productive. Leonardo spent his time in anatomical studies, in vain attempts to realize his old dream of a flying-machine, and in writing a dissertation on the papal coinage. In fact, he did everything except work at his art. "Alas!" exclaimed Pope Leo, when he found the painter distilling herbs to make a new varnish, "this man will do nothing, for he thinks about finishing his picture before he begins it."

Tired of Rome, Leonardo's thoughts turned back to his old French patrons. Louis XII. was dead, but the new king, Francis I., was already well disposed in his favor; and when, in August, 1515, Francis entered Italy, Leonardo hastened to meet him at Pavia. The new monarch gave him a pension of seven hundred crowns, and treated him with the greatest honor. "King Francis," writes Cellini, "was passionately enamored of the great master's talents, and told me himself that never any man had come into the world who knew as much as Leonardo." Leonardo not only accompanied his new patron to Milan, but followed him to France in 1516, and settled at the Hôtel de Cloux, a manor-house between the royal palace and the town of Amboise. His faithful pupil Melzi accompanied him, and watched tenderly over the great man's declining years. But one picture of this period remains, — the 'St. Anne,' now in the Louvre.

Leonardo's health had begun to fail, and before long his right arm became paralyzed, but his powers of mind were still as active as ever. He sketched out plans for a new palace at Amboise, and devoted his attention to the construction of a canal near Romorantin, which should connect Touraine and the Lyonnais. But his strength gradually gave way. He could no longer paint, and soon gave up writing. The last entry in his note-book bears the date June 24, 1518. He lingered on through the next autumn and winter, until, on Easter eve, April 23, 1519, feeling his end to be drawing near, he

sent for a notary and dictated his will. Ten days afterwards, on the second of May, he died, and was buried in the royal chapel of St. Florentin, at Amboise.

The Art of Leonardo da Vinci

JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS

'THE RENAISSANCE IN ITALY'

LEONARDO is the wizard or diviner; to him the Renaissance offers her mystery and lends her magic. Art and science were never separated in his work; and both were not unfrequently subservient to some fanciful caprice, some bizarre freak of originality. Curiosity and love of the uncommon ruled his nature.

"While he was a boy," says Vasari, "Leonardo modelled in terra-cotta certain heads of women smiling." When an old man, he left 'Mona Lisa' on the easel, not quite finished,—the portrait of a subtle, shadowy, uncertain smile. This smile, this enigmatic revelation of a movement in the soul, this seductive ripple on the surface of the human personality, was to Leonardo a symbol of the secret of the world, an image of the universal mystery. It haunted him all through his life, and innumerable were the attempts he made to render by external form the magic of this fugitive and evanescent charm. . . .

Leonardo's turn for physical science led him to study the technicalities of art with fervent industry. Whatever his predecessors had acquired in the knowledge of materials, the chemistry of colors, the mathematics of composition, the laws of perspective, and the illusions of chiaroscuro, he developed to the utmost. To find a darker darkness and a brighter brightness than had yet been shown upon the painter's canvas, to solve problems of foreshortening, to deceive the eye by finely graduated tones and subtle touches, to submit the freest play of form to simple figures of geometry in grouping, were among the objects he most earnestly pursued. Wherever he perceived a difficulty he approached and conquered it. Love, which is the soul of art—Love, the bond-slave of Beauty and the son of Poverty by Craft—led him to these triumphs.

Art, nature, life, the mysteries of existence, the infinite capacity of human thought, the riddle of the world, all that the Greeks called Pan, so swayed and allured him that, while he dreamed and wrought and never ceased from toil, he seemed to have achieved but little. The fancies of his brain were, perhaps, too subtle and too fragile to be made apparent to the eyes of men. He was wont, after years of labor, to leave his work still incomplete, feeling that he could not perfect it as he desired; yet even his most fragmentary sketches have a finish beyond the scope of lesser men. "Extraordinary power," says Vasari, "was in his case conjoined with remarkable facility, a mind of regal boldness, and magnanimous daring." Yet he was constantly accused of indolence and inability to execute. Often and often he made vast

preparations and accomplished nothing. It is well known how the prior of Santa Maria delle Grazie complained that Leonardo stood for days looking at his fresco, and for weeks never came near it; how the monks of the Annunziata at Florence were cheated out of their painting, for which elaborate designs had yet been made. A good answer for the delay was always ready on the painter's lips, as that the man of genius works most when his hands are idlest; Judas, sought in vain through all the thieves' resorts in Milan, is not found; "I cannot hope to see the face of Christ except in Paradise." "I can do anything possible to man," he wrote to Lodovico Sforza, "and as well as any living artist either in sculpture or painting;" but he would do nothing as task-work, and his creative brain loved better to invent than to execute. . . .

He set before himself aims infinite instead of finite. His designs of wings to fly with symbolize his whole endeavor. He believed in solving the insoluble; and nature had so richly dowered him in the very dawn-time of discovery that he was almost justified in this delusion. Having caught the Proteus of the world, he tried to grasp him; but the god changed shape beneath his touch. Having surprised Silenus asleep, he begged from him a song; but the song Silenus sang was so marvellous in its variety, so subtle in its modulations, that Leonardo could do no more than recall scattered phrases. His Proteus was the spirit of the Renaissance. The Silenus from whom he forced the song was the double nature of man and of the world.

JEAN PAUL RICHTER

'LEONARDO DA VINCI'

DA VINCI stands alone in the history of art, as one who both conceived and realized ideals which were wholly independent of the antique. In all his numerous writings he never quotes the antique as a means of instruction for the artist. Indeed, he only once mentions the "Graeci et Romani," and then merely as masters of the treatment of flowing drapery. He was the first who ventured to base all art instruction exclusively and entirely upon the study of nature; and it is not too much to say that in his genius the aims of his numerous predecessors culminate, making art no longer dependent upon tradition, but upon the immediate study of nature herself.

Unlike those ideals which contemporary artists set before them, he imparted to his figures a grace and a sensibility at once strange and unaccountable. None of his paintings awe one in the sense that do the powerful creations of Michelangelo, which as it were enthrall the soul. His charm is reserved for those who by deeper examination are enabled to discern and appreciate those subtle and hidden meanings with which his works are charged. Leonardo da Vinci's name has been and ever will be a popular one; his art can never be that; it is too lofty, too sublime.

WALTER PATER

'STUDIES IN THE HISTORY OF THE RENAISSANCE'

IT is by a certain mystery in his work, and something enigmatical beyond the usual measure of great men, that Leonardo fascinates, or perhaps half repels. Curiosity and the desire of beauty — these are the two elementary

forces in his genius ; curiosity often in conflict with the desire of beauty, but generating, in union with it, a type of subtle and curious grace.

The movement of the fifteenth century was twofold ; partly the Renaissance, partly also the coming of what is called the " modern spirit," with its realism, its appeal to experience : it comprehended a return to antiquity, and a return to nature. Raphael represented the return to antiquity, and Leonardo the return to nature. In this return to nature, he was seeking to satisfy a boundless curiosity by her perpetual surprises, a microscopic sense of finish by her *finesse*, or delicacy of operation, that *subtilitas naturae* which Bacon notices. His observations and experiments fill thirteen volumes of manuscript ; and those who can judge describe him as anticipating long before, by rapid intuition, the later ideas of science.

He who thus penetrated into the most secret parts of nature preferred always the more to the less remote, what, seeming exceptional, was an instance of law more refined, the construction about things of a peculiar atmosphere and mixed lights. In him first appears the taste for what is bizarre or *recherché* in landscape ; hollow places full of the green shadow of bituminous rocks, ridged reefs of trap-rock, which cut the water into quaint sheets of light — their exact antitype is in our own western seas ; all the solemn effects of moving water. His landscape is the landscape, not of dreams or of fancy, but of places far withdrawn, and hours selected from a thousand with a miracle of *finesse*. Through Leonardo's strange veil of sight things reach him so ; in no ordinary night or day, but as in faint light of eclipse, or in some brief interval of falling rain at daybreak, or through deep water.

And not into nature only ; but he plunged also into human personality, and became above all a painter of portraits : faces of a modelling more skilful than has been seen before or since, embodied with a reality which almost amounts to illusion, on dark air. To take a character as it was, and delicately sound its stops, suited one so curious in observation, curious in invention.

Sometimes this curiosity came in conflict with the desire of beauty ; it tended to make him go too far below that outside of things in which art begins and ends. This struggle between the reason and its ideas, and the senses, the desire of beauty, is the key to Leonardo's life at Milan — his restlessness, his endless re-touchings, his odd experiments with color. How much must he leave unfinished, how much recommence ! His problem was the transmutation of ideas into images. What he had attained so far had been the mastery of that earlier Florentine style, with its naïve and limited sensuousness. Now he was to entertain in this narrow medium those divinations of a humanity too wide for it, that larger vision of the opening world, which is only not too much for the great, irregular art of Shakespeare.

H. TAINE

'VOYAGE EN ITALIE'

THE world, perhaps, contains no example of a genius so universal as Leonardo's, so creative, so incapable of self-contentment, so athirst for the infinite, so naturally refined, so far in advance of his own and of subsequent ages. His countenances express incredible sensibility and mental

power; they overflow with unexpressed ideas and emotions. Alongside of them Michelangelo's personages are simply heroic athletes; Raphael's virgins are only placid children whose souls are still asleep. His beings feel and think through every line and trait of their physiognomy. Time is necessary to enter into communion with them; not that their sentiment is too slightly marked, for, on the contrary, it emerges from the whole investiture; but it is too subtle, too complicated, too far above and beyond the ordinary, too unfathomable and inexplicable. Their immobility and silence lead one to divine two or three latent thoughts and to suspect still others concealed behind the most remote; we have a confused glimpse of an inner and secret world, like an unknown delicate vegetation at the bottom of transparent waters.—FROM THE FRENCH.

THÉOPHILE GAUTIER 'GUIDE DE L'AMATEUR AU MUSÉE DU LOUVRE'

NO painter is Leonardo da Vinci's superior. Raphael, Michelangelo, and Correggio may stand beside him on the mountain top; but none has ever scaled a loftier height. In respect of time the first of the great Florentines, it was he who led the way to that pitch of perfection which has never since been surpassed.

To be thus the leader and the unexcelled in art seems enough of glory; yet painting was but one of Leonardo's talents. So all-embracing was his genius, so endowed was he with every faculty, that he might have been equally great in any other domain of human effort. Not only was all the knowledge of the time his, but — a rarer quality — he had learned to look direct to nature, and to look with unclouded eyes.

If you would take the full measure of his genius, remember that he worked after no set pattern or model; that each of his productions was an exploration along a new line. He did not, like other painters, multiply his works; but once having attained the especial goal at which he aimed, once the especial ideal realized, he abandoned *that* pursuit forever. He was the man to make an immense number of studies for a single picture, never using them again, but passing on at once to some different exercise. The model made, he broke the mould. His search was ever for the rare, the fundamental. Thus he has left traces of his passage in every path of art; his foot has scaled all summits, but he seems to have climbed only for the mere pleasure of the ascent, and thereafter to have at once come down, in haste to attempt some other height. To make himself rich or famous by availing himself of any of the superiorities he had acquired was quite outside his desire; he labored only to prove to *himself* that he was superior. Having created the one most beautiful of portraits, the one most beautiful picture, the one most beautiful fresco, the one most beautiful cartoon, he was content, and gave his mind to other things,—to the modelling of an immense horse, to the building of the Naviglio canal, to the contriving of engines of war, to the invention of a diving-armor, flying-machines, and other more or less chimerical imaginations. He suspected the usefulness of steam, and predicted the balloon; he manufactured mechanical birds which flew and animals which walked. He made a

silver lyre fashioned in the shape of a horse's head, and played upon it exquisitely. He studied anatomy, and drew admirable myologies of which he made no use. He manufactured all the materials he used, even to his varnishes and colors. He was distinguished as a military and civil engineer, as a geologist, geographer, and astronomer; he rediscovered the principles of the lever and of hydraulics; he was a great mathematician and machinist, a physiologist, and a chemist. He invented many serviceable instruments that are still in use, like the saws employed to-day at the quarries of Carrara. He designed breech-loading cannon, and demonstrated the advantages of conical bullets. He invented the camera obscura. He planned the great works of engineering that have controlled the courses of the Arno and the Po. He walked beside the sea, and understood that the waters were composed of countless molecules. He watched the billows in their rhythmical advance, and comprehended that light and sound moved onward in succeeding waves. He looked into the heavens, and perceived that the world was not the centre of created things, forestalling the discovery of Copernicus; and he saw that the universe is held together by the attraction of gravitation. He knew that the tides obeyed the moon, and that the waters of the sea must rise highest at the equator. Long before Bacon he evolved a philosophy, looking to human experiences and to nature for all solution of his doubts.

And yet you will be strangely astray, if, knowing of all these attainments, you conceive him as a dry pedant, or bent alchemist, toiling in some airless laboratory-like studio. No man was ever more human, more lovable, or more fascinating than this same Leonardo da Vinci. He was witty, graceful, polished. His bodily strength was so great that he could bend an iron horseshoe like lead. His physical beauty was flawless,—the beauty of an Apollo. Great painter that he was, painting was but one among his splendid gifts. . . .

His ideal, though it had all the purity, all the grace and perfection, of the antique, is in sentiment wholly modern. He invented, or rather he discovered in nature, a beauty as perfect as was the beauty of Greece, and yet which has no link with it. He is the only painter who has known how to be beautiful without being antique. He expresses subtleties, suavities, elegancies, quite unknown to the ancients. The beautiful Greek heads are, in their irreproachable correctness, merely serene; those of Leonardo are sweet, but not from any weakness of soul—rather from a sort of indulgent and benign superiority. It seems as if spirits of quite another nature than our own look out at us from his canvases, through the eye-holes of the human physical mask, with something of pitying commiseration, and something like a hint of malice. And the smile, half voluptuous, half ironical, which floats evasively upon those flexible lips—who has ever yet deciphered the enigma of it? It mocks and fascinates, it promises and refuses, it intoxicates and makes afraid! Has such a smile ever really hovered on human lips, or was it caught from the face of that mocking sphinx who forever guards the Palace of the Beautiful?

Painter of the mysterious, the ineffable, the twilight, Leonardo's pictures may be compared to music in a minor key. Time, which has robbed other

ancient paintings of half their charm, has but added charm to his, by deepening the shadows in which the imagination loves to wander — shadows like veils, which half dissolve to show the vision of a secret thought; colors that are dead, like the colors of things in moonlight. Leonardo's figures seem to have come from some superior sphere to glance at themselves for a moment in a glass darkly, or rather, in a mirror of smoked steel, and, lo! their reflections, caught by some such subtle alchemy as that of the daguerreotype, remain forever fixed. Truly we have seen them before — not on this earth indeed; but perhaps in some far pre-existence of which they awaken the faint echo of a memory. — FROM THE FRENCH.

GEORGE B. ROSE

'RENAISSANCE MASTERS'

LEONARDO DA VINCI was the first perfect painter among the moderns. Compared with him his predecessors are all primitives. Between their art and his there yawns an immense chasm. They are striving, with doubtful success, to give tangible form to simple ideas; he bodies forth with consummate power thoughts too subtle and profound for vocal utterance. Childlike and sincere, their vision ranges over a narrow field, and depicts imperfectly the things that it beholds; while his powerful mind grasps the most hidden secrets of nature and of the human heart, and his wizard fingers transfer them to the canvas with unerring skill. They are still mediæval, while he is modern, belonging not to the past, but to our own and all succeeding generations. Their art is an attempt; his the perfection of achievement. They are fascinating by their immaturity; he by the plenitude of his power. They are suggestive because we seek to realize what they are trying to express; he is infinitely more so because he represents more than our minds can seize. We feel that he was familiar with all the thoughts that haunt us now, perhaps with some that will only come to our remote descendants. He was the first modern artist in whom absolute technical skill and a great creative mind went hand in hand, and in neither respect has he ever been surpassed.

No man has ever made greater changes in the technique of painting. Before his day men were content with line and color as the means of artistic utterance. He was the first to perceive that light and shade were equally important, and were capable of producing the most poetical and illusive effects. He did not invent chiaroscuro, but he was the first to handle it as a master. In his pictures lights and shadows are treated with all the truth of nature, and they are full of bewitching loveliness, of mystery and charm. His chiaroscuro is not brilliant like Correggio's, it is not full of luminous splendor like that of Rembrandt; but it is deep and true. He experimented much with pigments; and as the effect of time upon them could only be determined with the lapse of years, he fell into errors, never sufficiently to be deplored, the effects of which are only too visible in all his works, and which have lost for us 'The Last Supper' and the portion of 'The Battle of the Standard' that was executed upon the wall. To deepen his shadows he painted upon a sombre groundwork, and the pigment of this having come through, it has darkened all his pictures. . . .

Some complain of Leonardo that he enticed men from the pleasant paths of primitive art, so that after him it was impossible to paint with the old simple directness. The observation is just, but the reproach unfounded. A man who innovated so much as Leonardo, who converted the works of his predecessors into relics of the past, and lifted art to a higher and a broader plane, necessarily bore it away from many a sweet dell where at times we still delight to linger; but his services were none the less conspicuous. He did nothing to degrade art; he only exalted it to a perfection where certain charming qualities of the delicious primitives became impossible.

Leonardo is the most thoughtful of all painters, unless it be Albrecht Dürer. The mind and its infinite suggestions are his realm. With Raphael it is beauty and harmony; with Michelangelo it is passion and strength; with him it is thought and feeling — thought so deep that voice can never utter it, feelings so sensitively delicate, so preternaturally refined, that they elude our grasp; and he is full of all sorts of curious questionings, of intricate caprices mingled with sublime conceptions. No mind of power so versatile and penetrating was ever devoted to artistic effort. The time that he spent in scientific investigation has been regretted, but it was not lost, even to art. Had he been less intent to know the hidden mystery of things he might have produced more; but would it have been worth the smile of the 'Mona Lisa' or the faces of the London cartoon? His mind was too vast, too subtle, for him to be a largely creative artist. He saw too deeply into the essence of things to be content with facile hand to depict their surfaces. His visions were so beautiful that he despaired of giving them tangible shapes, and preferred to leave them in the realm of dreams. Perhaps he wished to do more than art could do, and so accomplished less than it might. But the little that we possess gives us a deeper insight into nature and the human heart than we should otherwise have had, and is as precious as it is rare.

The Works of Leonardo da Vinci

DESCRIPTIONS OF THE PLATES

THERE remain in the world but five known pictures which are without dissent assigned to Leonardo da Vinci. So far as we know, no voice has yet been raised to question the authenticity of the ruined 'Last Supper,' the unfinished 'Mona Lisa,' and the but just begun 'Adoration of the Magi.' In addition to these are the cartoon study for the 'St. Anne' in Burlington House, London, and the barely outlined monochrome sketch of 'St. Jerome' in the Vatican Gallery. Endless controversy has raged and still rages over the authorship of the 'St. John,' the 'Virgin of the Rocks,' and the 'St. Anne,' in the Louvre, and the angel of Verocchio's 'Baptism,' in the Academy at Florence. The greater number of authoritative modern critics

are now, however, disposed to admit these as genuine ; while, on the contrary, they consider that the 'Virgin of the Rocks' in the National Gallery, the 'Belle Féronnière,' in the Louvre, and the 'Portrait of an Unknown Princess,' in the Ambrosiana at Milan, are not Leonardo's work, although each of them has its stout partisans. Other paintings formerly attributed to Leonardo da Vinci seem to have no just claims to be reckoned as his work.

PORTRAIT OF MONA LISA

LOUVRE: PARIS

"FOR Francesco del Giocondo," wrote Vasari, "Leonardo undertook to paint the portrait of Mona Lisa, his wife ; but, after loitering over it for four years, he finally left it unfinished. Mona Lisa was exceedingly beautiful, and while Leonardo was painting her portrait he took the precaution of keeping some one constantly near her to sing or play on instruments, or to jest and otherwise amuse her, to the end that she might continue cheerful." It was probably in 1500 that Leonardo began this, the most marvelous of all portraits, antique or modern.

"'La Gioconda' is," writes Walter Pater, "in the truest sense, Leonardo's masterpiece, the revealing instance of his mode of thought and work. We all know the face and hands of the figure, set in its marble chair, in that cirque of fantastic rocks, as in some faint light under sea. Perhaps of all ancient pictures time has chilled it least. As often happens with works in which invention seems to reach its limit, there is an element in it given to, not invented by, the master. From childhood we see this image defining itself on the fabric of his dreams ; and but for express historical testimony, we might fancy that this was but his ideal lady, embodied and beheld at last. What was the relationship of a living Florentine to this creature of his thought ? By means of what strange affinities had the person and the dream grown up thus apart, and yet so closely together ? Present from the first incorporeally in Leonardo's thought, dimly traced in the designs of Verocchio, she is found present at last in Il Giocondo's house.

"The presence that thus rose so strangely beside the waters is expressive of what in the ways of a thousand years men had come to desire. Hers is the head upon which all 'the ends of the world are come,' and the eyelids are a little weary. It is a beauty wrought out from within upon the flesh, the deposit, little cell by cell, of strange thoughts and fantastic reveries and exquisite passions. Set it for a moment beside one of those white Greek goddesses or beautiful women of antiquity, and how would they be troubled by this beauty, into which the soul with all its maladies has passed ! She is older than the rocks among which she sits ; like the vampire, she has been dead many times, and learned the secrets of the grave ; and has been a diver in deep seas, and keeps their fallen day about her ; and trafficked for strange webs with Eastern merchants ; and, as Leda, was the mother of Helen of Troy ; and, as St. Anne, the mother of Mary ; and all this has been to her but as the sound of lyres and flutes, and lives only in the delicacy with which it has moulded the changing lineaments, and tinged the eyelids and the hands."

THE VIRGIN OF THE ROCKS

LOUVRE: PARIS

“HOW mysterious, how charming, and how strange,” writes Théophile Gautier, “is this ‘Virgin of the Rocks’! A kind of basaltic cave, in which flows a stream that through its limpid water shows the pebbles of its bed, shelters the holy group, while beyond, through the arched entrance to the grotto, lies a rocky landscape, sparsely set with trees, wherein a river runs; — and all of this is of such an indefinable color that it seems like those faint wonderlands through which we wander in our dreams. And the adorable Madonna, with the pure oval of her cheeks, her exquisite chin, her downcast eyes circled by a shadowy penumbra, on her lips that vague, enigmatic smile which Da Vinci loved to give the faces of his women, — she is a type all Leonardo’s own, and recalls nothing of Perugino’s Virgins or of Raphael’s. The attendant angel has, perhaps, the finest head and the proudest that ever pencil traced on canvas. Half youth, half heavenly maid, she must belong to the highest order of heaven’s hierarchy, with that face so pure, so ethereal in its loveliness, the omnipresent smile half hidden at the corner of her lips. Hers surpasses all human beauty, and her face seems rather that face of which men may only dream. The little St. John, whom the Virgin presents to the divine Child, kneels among delicate flowers on the sward; while the latter, with upraised fingers, blesses him. Nothing could be more admirable than the foreshortening of the two tender little crouching bodies, nothing more finely modelled than the little limbs, with their infinitely delicate gradations of shadow. The coloring of the picture, though time has blackened it, still keeps a subtle harmony, more in accord, perhaps, with the subject than fresher and brighter tones. The colors have faded in such perfect accord that there results a sort of neutral tone, abstract, ideal, mysterious, which shrouds the forms as if with some unearthly veil.”

THE VIRGIN OF THE ROCKS

• NATIONAL GALLERY: LONDON

THOUGH very similar in general effect, ‘The Virgin of the Rocks’ in the National Gallery differs from that in the Louvre in one important particular. In the former the angel does not look directly out of the picture nor point to the infant Baptist. The ill-drawn gilt nimbuses over the heads of the three principal figures, as well as the clumsy reed cross which rests on St. John’s shoulder, are additions of a comparatively late period, probably of the seventeenth century, and the right hand of the Virgin has been coarsely repainted. In general the National Gallery picture is softer in outline and less severe.

There has been almost unending controversy as to which of the two pictures is by the hand of Leonardo; but the weight of criticism is now in favor of the hypothesis that the Louvre picture is the original, and that ‘The Virgin of the Rocks’ in the National Gallery is a replica, probably painted under the master’s supervision and perhaps in his studio. A recent writer in ‘The Quarterly Review’ has summed up the conclusions with which most critics now agree. “There can be little doubt,” he says, “that in the

Louvre 'Virgin' we have the original altar-piece, which Leonardo executed about 1490, or even earlier, for the chapel of the Conception in San Francesco at Milan, and which he asked the duke's leave to retain, seeing that another patron had offered to give one hundred florins for the picture, while the friars refused to pay more than twenty-five. The painter's request, we can well believe, was readily granted, and his picture became the property of some munificent patron, from whom it passed into the collection of Francis I. at Fontainebleau. The replica in the National Gallery was perhaps painted by Ambrogio de Predis, — who had already agreed to execute the angels on the wings of the altar-piece, — and was substituted for the master's original work. It hung over the altar of the Franciscan church until the year 1777, when it was bought by Gavin Hamilton for thirty ducats, and brought to England. The smallness of the sum is the best proof that the picture was not regarded as a genuine Leonardo, since the great master's works were held in the highest estimation at Milan, and Charles I. had vainly offered three hundred ducats for any one of his manuscripts in that city. Moreover, a series of original drawings at Windsor and Paris, including the heads of the children, and the angel with the outstretched finger, bear witness to the genuineness of the Louvre picture, and the finer and more delicate quality of the painting reveals the master's hand; while the slight alterations and improvements in the composition of the National Gallery group afford a further proof that it was a later work, probably executed under Leonardo's eye."

On the other hand, Mündler, Springer, Walter Armstrong, Sidney Colvin, and other eminent critics are strong in the belief that the National Gallery 'Virgin' is by Leonardo's own hand.

PORTRAIT OF AN UNKNOWN PRINCESS AMBROSIAN LIBRARY: MILAN

FOR a long time this exquisite picture was considered to be Leonardo's portrait of Princess Beatrice d'Este, wife of Lodovico Sforza, Duke of Milan. Morelli was the first critic to doubt the authenticity of the work, and his opinion has been endorsed by Frizzoni, Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Berenson, Woltmann and Woermann. On the other hand Rumohr, Mündler, Brun, Burckhardt, and Müntz believe that the picture is by Leonardo's own hand; and the controversy still continues. Dr. Bode, who has devoted much study to the picture, is convinced of its authenticity, although he has proved that it represents neither Beatrice d'Este, nor, as later critics believed, Bianca Maria Sforza, wife of the Emperor Maximilian. "It is," writes Burckhardt, "beyond all description beautiful; and of a perfection in the execution which, even if it does not show all the characteristics of Leonardo's hand, excludes the possibility of any other authorship."

The princess wears a red bodice, in harmony with her chestnut hair, which is drawn down along her cheeks, and fastened under a pearl embroidered net. "The whole work," says Müntz, "breathes an air of youth, of tender grace, and of freshness that none but Leonardo could have imparted to it."

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST

LOUVRE: PARIS

IN all probability a genuine work, this picture, once in the collection of Francis I., has darkened greatly, and bears signs of having been repainted in some parts; but the delicacy and refinement of modelling in the face, and the characteristic and subtle type of beauty, could have come from Leonardo's hand alone.

"Surely this enigmatic figure, glowing suddenly out of the profoundest shadow, whose face wears an expression half voluptuous, half sardonic, and altogether disturbing and impenetrable," writes Théophile Gautier, "cannot, in spite of the cross of reeds and the heaven-pointing finger, be the ascetic hermit of the Scriptures, whose loins were bound with hides, and whose meat was locusts and wild honey. Nay, rather is he one of those decayed gods, Pan, perhaps, that Heine tells us of, who, to maintain themselves after the fall of paganism, took employment in the new religion. He makes the accustomed gesture indeed, but he knows more secret rites, and smiles his subtle smile at those whom he would take into his confidence."

THE LAST SUPPER¹

SANTA MARIA DELLE GRAZIE: MILAN

"MOST important of all Leonardo's works," write Woltmann and Woermann, "is 'The Last Supper.' Painted within a few years of the end of the fifteenth century, in oils, on a wall in the refectory of Santa Maria delle Grazie, it cast everything that art had up to then produced altogether into the shade. What now remains is but the pale ghost of what the picture originally was; for Leonardo's attempt to apply the technique of oil-painting to wall decoration on so vast a scale has been fatal; and as early as 1566 Vasari speaks of the work as a ruin. Moreover, it has suffered every kind of damage; a door was cut through it in the seventeenth century, over which an escutcheon was nailed to the wall, and in the eighteenth a bungling restorer continued the work of destruction. The *coup de grâce* was given during Napoleon's invasion, when the hall was put to every variety of base use. At last came a time of more intelligent restoration, and the defacements of later painters, at any rate, were removed. At the present time, in spite of its deplorable condition, the spectator cannot fail to be struck by the grandeur of the figures — almost twice the size of life — and by the sculptural simplicity of the composition."

"It is the first masterpiece of the perfected Renaissance," writes Symonds. "Other painters had represented the Last Supper as a solemn prologue to the Passion, or as the mystical inauguration of the greatest Christian sacrament; but none had dared to break the calm of the event by dramatic action. The school of Giotto, Fra Angelico, Ghirlandajo, Perugino, even Signorelli, remained within the sphere of symbolical suggestion; and their work gained in dignity what it lost in intensity. Leonardo combined both. He under-

¹ The negative from which our engraving of this picture is made has been carefully retouched to hide the scaling of plaster from the wall, and to partially restore some of the darkened lights. Therefore, though faithful in general effect, it gives a less ruinous impression than does the original.

took to paint a moment, to delineate the effect of a single word upon twelve men seated at a table, and to do this without sacrificing the tranquillity demanded by ideal art, and without impairing the divine majesty of Him from whose lips that word has fallen. The ideal representation of a dramatic moment, the life breathed into each part of the composition, the variety of the types chosen to express the varieties of character, and the scientific distribution of the twelve apostles in four groups of three around the central Christ, mark the appearance of a new spirit of power and freedom in the arts. What had hitherto been treated with religious timidity, with conventional stiffness, or with realistic want of grandeur, was now humanized, and at the same time transported into a higher intellectual region; and though Leonardo discrowned the apostles of their aureoles, he for the first time in the history of painting created a Christ not unworthy to be worshipped as the *praesens Deus*."

LA BELLE FÉRONNIÈRE

LOUVRE: PARIS

"OF works ordinarily claimed for Leonardo," writes Sidney Colvin, "the best and nearest to his manner, if not actually his, is the portrait known as 'La Belle Féronnière.'" This picture, formerly believed without question to be the work of Leonardo, has of recent years been the subject of much controversy among the critics, of whom Morelli, Frizzoni, Richter, Armstrong, Berenson, and others see in it no mark of Leonardo's hand; while Müntz, Rosenberg, Lübke, Brun, Gruyer, and others uphold the authorship of that master. Conjectures as to the identity of the person represented have also been numerous. That the lady was the wife of the French advocate Féron, a theory which won for the picture the title by which it is still known, is no longer credited. According to some critics, the portrait is a likeness of Isabella of Mantua; according to others it represents a Milanese lady, Lucrezia Crivelli by name.

Although disfigured by cracks and injured by repainting, the picture still possesses great charm. "It has all the freshness and simplicity of the primitives," writes Müntz, "with an added grace and liberty." Rosenberg, who gives the picture unreservedly to Leonardo, assigning it to the early part of the master's stay in Milan, reasons that, "notwithstanding a certain sharpness in the modelling, and notwithstanding that it shows no sign of that celebrated *sfumato* of Leonardo's, — the blending of colors and dissolving of outlines in a vaporous light, — if we think not of Leonardo as he was in later days, but only of those who were his contemporaries when this picture was painted, it will be difficult to name any who could have so fathomed the human soul and caused it to speak through the eyes as Leonardo has succeeded in doing in this portrait."

ANGEL FROM VEROCCHIO'S 'BAPTISM'

ACADEMY: FLORENCE

IN the year 1470, or 1472, when Leonardo was but eighteen or twenty years of age, Vasari tells us that he painted "an angel holding some vestments" in Verocchio's picture of the 'Baptism of Christ,' and that "al-

though but a youth, he completed the figure in such a manner that the angel was much better than the portion executed by his master, which caused the latter never to touch colors more." The last part of this story is certainly exaggerated, and probably false; but no one who has seen Leonardo's angel — "a space of sunlight in the cold, labored old picture," as Walter Pater calls it — can doubt that the marked ability of the pupil must have forcibly struck Verocchio, and that Leonardo's youthful work influenced, although it assuredly did not discourage, the older master.

A few authorities, Richter among them, believe that more than the left-hand kneeling angel in this picture was Leonardo's work, because much of it is painted in oils, while Verocchio's medium was tempera; but the majority of critics still consider that Leonardo's share in the work was confined to the figure assigned to him by Vasari.

ST. ANNE, THE VIRGIN, AND THE CHRIST-CHILD LOUVRE: PARIS

THIS picture, which represents the Virgin, the young Christ, and St. Anne (usually called merely the 'St. Anne'), is a work of singular nobility, of the most idyllic poetry, and of splendid virtuosity," writes Gruyer; "but one in which Leonardo, as in his picture of 'St. John the Baptist' has ruthlessly sacrificed religious conventions. What would Fra Angelico have thought of it? Seated on the knees of St. Anne, her mother, the Virgin leans towards Christ, who holds a lamb by both ears, attempting, with a most charmingly childlike action, to bestride it. His figure may possibly have been painted by a pupil or by an imitator; it is unfinished, but there are weak points in the technical execution. With St. Anne and the Virgin the case is quite different, for into these figures Leonardo has put all his genius, and in them the interest of the picture centres. One is the mother of the other; but Leonardo chose to represent them both as young with the same youth, beautiful with the same haunting beauty, and no logical objections prevented his carrying out this design. The pure loveliness and harmony of the two figures is entralling. They are both enchantresses, dowered with a strange, mysterious and sensuous beauty that seems made up of light and shade,— pure spirit, with no admixture of human clay. Nowhere more fully than in the Virgin's face has the master expressed that seductive and profane loveliness which haunted his own visions. The landscape which serves as a background to the figures — a landscape of strewn rocks and water and purple distances hemmed in by azure mountains with the rugged and broken outlines that he loved — adds an ineffable something to their mystery, and their grandeur."

ADORATION OF THE MAGI

UFFIZI GALLERY: FLORENCE

THIS unfinished work is generally believed to be the altar-piece which Leonardo was commissioned by the monks of San Donato at Scopeto to paint for their church, on condition that it should be finished within two years and a half. As Leonardo failed to comply with this condition, the work was intrusted to Filippino Lippi.

A writer in 'The Athenæum,' in describing the study, says, "There are few pictures that awaken more ardent curiosity in the student of painting than this panel. Little more than a dark monochrome, at first glance almost chaotic, and with many of the figures veiled in obscurity, it is without any of the alluring qualities which solicit popular attention. The figures are firmly outlined with a pen, and the shadows rubbed in with umber. Only a portion of the background—the sky and some foliage—is commenced in solid pigments, but Leonardo's dramatic conception fortunately remains in all its force and intensity. He has placed the Virgin, holding the Saviour in her arms, in the centre of the panel and in the immediate foreground. A choir of angels lean over the grassy bank behind her. On either side two compact groups of men press forward towards the Child. There is no stable nor manger, but in the background are antique ruins, with large flights of steps, and on these are groups of armed men. Other groups of horsemen, dimly apparent behind the principal figures, are in violent action, and really anticipate the composition of 'The Battle of the Standard,' designed more than twenty years later."

THE PAINTINGS OF LEONARDO DA VINCI, WITH THEIR PRESENT
LOCATIONS

FRANCE. PARIS, LOUVRE: Portrait of Mona Lisa (Plate 1); St. John the Baptist (Plate vi); Virgin of the Rocks (Plate II); St. Anne, the Virgin, and the Christ-child (Plate IX)—ITALY. FLORENCE, ACADEMY: Angel in Verocchio's 'Baptism' (Plate VIII)—FLORENCE, UFFIZI GALLERY: Adoration of the Magi (Plate x)—MILAN, STA. MARIA DELLE GRAZIE: The Last Supper (Plate v)—ROME, VATICAN GALLERY: St. Jerome.

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